



Newsletter

No. 80 December 2024

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Christmas Message of Peace

The Christmas Truce during World War1 in 1914 and again in 1915 is well remembered in song and story as we recall how the soldiers sang out “Silent Night” and “Stille Nacht” into the night air on Christmas Eve from their opposing trenches, united in seeking peace that night. The words “All is calm” had a significant meaning for their war-time situation. Tommy Fleming’s “[Christmas 1915](#)” is a moving tribute to this time.

As we know, our schools are anything but “calm” at this time of year, as excitement mounts for the festive season and nativity plays vie with carol services, Santa visits, and the all important “Christmas art”. Thank you for everything you do to make this time so special for the children.

CPSMA would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff and board members for their work throughout the year and wish each and every one of you the peace of Christmas in your hearts, homes and schools this Christmas. We hope and pray that “All is Calm” around the world this Christmas.

Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi mhaoise daoibh go leir.

Seo daoibh Enya le “[Oíche Chiúin](#)”.

Seamus Mulcahy



All of the team at CPSMA wish our members a happy Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Our offices will be closed from 23rd December and will re-open on 7th January 2025.

We look forward to working with you in the New Year.

Catholic Schools Week 2025

19th to 25th January 2025

Alive in Christ!

“Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!”

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, Section 1.



Reflecting on the theme, Catholic schools will explore what it means to be fully alive as a human being – living life to the full in Christ. Sensitive to the age appropriateness of the various classes and years, the theme will explore how we exist for one another in Christ, building from the wellbeing of the individual, extending the notion of true wellbeing to others, to our families and communities, and to The Other, in God. The theme will mediate on hope, the true purpose

and meaning of human life, and, in the more senior years, on true freedom. As is usual, the theme will be connected at primary level with Grandparents’ Day on the Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week:

CSW 2025: Primary Resources		
Junior and Senior Infants	Gaeilge	English
1st & 2nd Class	Gaeilge	English
3rd & 4th Class	Gaeilge	English
5th & 6th Class	Gaeilge	English
Parish Resources	Gaeilge	English
Prayer Service – Grandparents’ Day	Gaeilge	English

Anti-Bullying

[Circular 0055/2024](#) provides that each board of management must develop its Anti-Bullying (*Bí Cineálta*) policy during the 2024/2025 school year and that the policy and procedures should be formally adopted prior to the commencement of the 2025/2026 school year.

The new procedures include:

- An updated definition of bullying behaviour based on *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022)*
- Increased focus on a partnership approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour:
- Increased oversight
- New template documents



What assistance is available to schools?

Phase 1

This involved the provision of Information Seminars to School Principals where the Inspectorate introduced the new Wellbeing Promotion inspection model. This Seminar is now available to all School Leaders and can be viewed [in English](#) or [as Gaeilge](#). Slides for the above Seminars can be viewed on PowerPoint, [English](#) or [Gaeilge](#).

Phase 2

This involves the provision of *Teacher Professional Learning* by Oide who will provide in-person professional learning to two members of school staff from all schools and centres for education during the 2024/2025 school year. This Professional Learning Event will address; 'a whole education approach' to bullying prevention, the definition of bullying and addressing and preventing bullying behaviour. Two registered teachers are invited to attend per school, one to be a school leader. Substitute cover is also provided, where required.

Oide are currently inviting bookings for the training via this [link](#). (Please note that the *Bí Cineálta* training for primary schools currently commences on page 13 of the link.) As the *Bí Cineálta* procedures will come into effect from the start of the 2025/26 school year, member schools are advised to avail of the training being offered by Oide.

Phase 3:

All recognised primary schools and special schools may avail of a half-day school closure during the 2024/2025 school year to facilitate engagement of all school staff with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. This half-day closure is in addition to other school closures sanctioned by the Department.

Schools have full discretion on how to structure the half-day engagement with all school staff, which includes SNAs, secretaries, caretakers and bus escorts, and what resources are used, as schools are best placed to determine how they should work together with their school community to develop their *Bí Cineálta* policy.

It is important that all school staff participate in this engagement, as all school staff have a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour that occurs in our schools.

[Resources to support engagement with school staff.](#)

Additional Cineáltas Resources for Schools

- [Bí Cineálta Resources for Primary Schools, Post-Primary Schools and Parents](#)
- [Additional guidance to support Bi Cineálta Procedures \(December 2024\)](#)

Board of Management Training

CPSMA is developing training for boards of management which will be available next term.





Child Protection

Our updated Child Protection webinars reflect the changes made in the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023)*. They comprise:

1. Webinar – [Introduction for boards of management](#)
2. Webinar – [Child Protection Oversight Report](#)
3. Webinar – [Child Safeguarding Statement](#)
4. Webinar – [Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse regarding School Employees](#)
5. Podcast – [Child Protection Level One Inspections – School Considerations](#)
6. Podcast – [Child Safeguarding Statement](#)

The Department of Education has the following Online training resources for Child Protection and Safeguarding:

For all school personnel

- [Children First E-Learning Programme Tusla – Child and Family Agency](#)

For mandated persons

- [Mandated Persons Tusla – Child and Family Agency](#)

For DLPs/DDLPs

- [Designated Liaison Person\(s\) Tusla – Child and Family Agency](#)
- [Child Protection E-Learning PDST](#)

Child Protection and Safeguarding for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023

- [Child Protection E-Learning PDST](#)

Online Safety Advice and Resources

- [Webwise.ie](#)

Department Wellbeing Directory

- See [Wellbeing information for primary schools](#)

Members should note that the Child Protection Procedures are currently being reviewed in the light of the recommendations of the [High Level Independent Review of the Department of Education Current Child Protection Policies and Processes \(2021\)](#). CPSMA will advise schools in relation to the new procedures when they are released.

An Scéim Aitheantais Scoileanna Gaeltachta

Seoladh an Polasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta in 2016 leis an sprioc uileghabhálach “a chinntiú go bhfuil eispéireas oideachais ardchaighdeáin agus ábhartha trí mheán na Gaeilge ar fáil do na daoine óga uile atá ina gcónaí i limistéir Ghaeltachta”. Chun tacú le cur i bhfeidhm na sprice seo, bunaíodh an [Scéim Aitheantais Scoileanna Gaeltachta](#), a thugann deis do scoileanna i limistéir pleanála teanga Ghaeltachta a lorg mar Scoileanna Gaeltachta.

Ní mór do scoileanna sainchritéir theangabhunaithe a chomhlíonadh chun an t-aitheantas sin a ghnóthú. Cuirtear tacaíochtaí spriocdhírthe breise ar fáil do scoileanna chun tacú leo an Scéim a chur i bhfeidhm. I mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2022, cuireadh tús le próiseas deimhnithe chun a chinntiú go bhfuil na critéir theangabhunaithe le haghaidh aitheantas mar Scoil Ghaeltachta á gcomhlíonadh ag na scoileanna atá páirteach sa Scéim. Mar chuid den phróiseas deimhnithe seo, bhí cuairt mheastóireachta á tabhairt ar gach scoil sa Scéim ó Chigireacht na Roinne idir mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2022 agus deireadh mhí an Mhárta 2024. Bronnadh aitheantas mar scoil Ghaeltachta ar 120 scoil le linn mí Dheireadh Fómhair. Tréaslaíonn CPSMA le chuile duine a bhí páirteach san obair thabhachtach seo sna scoileanna gaeltachta- ár mboird bainistíochtaí, ar bhfoirne scoile, na pobail scoile uile agus gan amhras na daltaí óga. Is féidir liosta iomlán de na scoileanna a fuair aitheantas mar Scoil Ghaeltachta a fháil anseo anseo.

Ta tuilleadh eolais faoin scéim agus faoin feidhmiú leanúnach na Scéime (2024/25) san imlitir 20/2024 ag an nasc [seo](#).



Séaghan Ó Súilleabháin, a bhfuil clú agus cáil air ar na meáin shóisialta ag tógáil ‘féinín’ de féin ag bronnadh na ngradam i Siamsa Tíre



Gary Ó Donnachadh, Leas Príomh Chigire na Roinne, Séán Ó Beaglaoich, Deirdre Aghas, Ruán Ó Loingsigh agus David Skerry as Scoil Mhaoilchéadair, Baile na nGall, Co Chiarraí I dteannta Séaghan agus Louise Ni Mhuircheartaigh

Boards of Management – A Guide to Teaching and Learning

[Supporting Boards of Management – A guide to Teaching and Learning \(DE Dec 2023\)](#) provides a very helpful guide to board members in relation to teaching and learning in their school and their role as board members in this area. The following extract from the Introduction highlights the value being placed on the work of board members:

“Since boards of management were introduced in our primary schools, in 1975, thousands of volunteers, have contributed to the management and operation of primary and special schools. Huge thanks are due to each board member, who volunteers to give their time to this very valuable work. The Department of Education extends a warm welcome to each board member as you take up your position on the board of management of your primary school. Thousands of pupils, all across the country, benefit each year from the hard work and dedication of boards of management.”

It would be helpful for board members to be issued with a link [as Gaeilge](#) and [in English](#) to this document.

Finance Matters

The Cost of Living Grant

[Circular 0088/2024](#) advises that additional funding is being provided as part of the Budget 2025 cost of living measures. This is to ensure that financial supports are available for recognised primary schools in the Free Education Scheme to meet additional energy costs and other increased day to day running costs.

Main features of the grant

- The grant will be calculated based on recognised pupil enrolment at 30th of September 2023 and is based on a minimum enrolment of 60 pupils.
- Enhanced rates are payable in respect of pupils attending special schools, special classes approved by the NCSE and traveller pupils attached to mainstream schools.
- Board of managements should continue to seek support in relation to procurement for bulk heating fuels and electricity rates from the Schools Procurement Unit website www.spu.ie.

The FSSU have provided [guidance](#) in relation to this grant.

Training for Treasurers

The FSSU recently invited Treasurers of Boards of Management in Primary Schools to attend a [training webinar](#) to cover the role of the Treasurer and provide practical information and support in carrying out this important function. There was a focus on the finance reports that are to be prepared for a board of management meeting. The FSSU have also issued a [Guidance Manual for Treasurers in Primary Schools](#) agus [Treoirleabhar le haghaidh an Chisteora Boird Bainistíochta i mbunscoil aitheanta](#).

Equality of Funding for primary and post-primary pupils

The General Secretary of CPSMA recently called for equality of capitation funding in a recent [interview](#) with iCatholic.

School Meals Scheme

Schools are reminded to contact the Schools Procurement Unit (www.spu.ie) in relation to the appointment of school meals providers. Schools should check with their insurance company before accepting additional equipment/items from school meal providers.



Legal Issues Webinar

[CPSMA Webinar on Legal Issues](#), dated 7th November 2024 with David Ruddy and Rory D'Arcy is now available for members to view.

Recent Departmental Publications

- [SET Guidelines and supporting documentation to aid schools in supporting Children/Young people with Special Education Needs](#)
- [Resources to support engagement with school staff](#)
- [Information Seminar for School Leaders](#)
- [Resourcing Schools to Address Educational Disadvantage](#)
- [Student Participation in Education](#)

Recent Circulars

- [0076/2024](#) Revision of Salaries of Clerical Officers and Caretakers employed under the 1978/1979 Scheme under The Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026 effective from 01 October 2024
- [0078/2024](#) Revision of Salaries for School Secretaries Previously Grant Funded Effective from 01 October 2024
- [0080/2024](#) New measures to support the Forward Planning for Special Education Provision
- [0085/2024](#) New pay rate for School Transport Escorts
- [0088/2024](#) Cost-of-living measure to support increased school running costs
- [0090/2024](#) Panel access for fixed-term/temporary (this includes substitute) and part-time teachers to the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2025/26 school year
- [0064/2024](#) The Operation/application and deployment of Special Education Teacher resources. (CPSMA will issue further guidance on this Circular in the New Year)
- [0092/2024](#) Special Leave with Pay for Sporting Purposes for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools
- [0093/2024](#) Special Leave with Pay for Sporting Purposes for Special Needs Assistants employed in Recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools

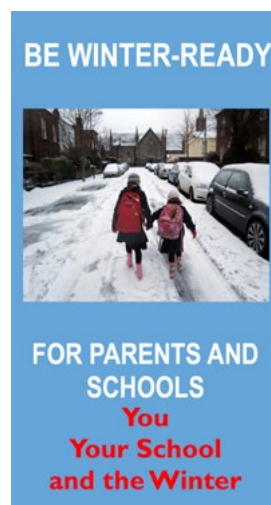
Be Winter Ready

Guidance for schools on time lost due to unforeseen closures, as a result of severe weather, is set out in [Circular 0072/2022](#).

Remember to:

- Develop a plan
- Know your contact details
- Prepare your school
- Ensure everyone knows their role
- Stay safe!

Download the leaflet "Be Winter-Ready", for schools and families, [here](#).



Employee Assistance Service

The Employee Assistance Service is a free and confidential service that provides wellbeing support to teachers, SNAs and all school staff. This service is provided by Spectrum. Life.

Your Employee Assistance Service is available
24/7, 365 days a year, providing*:

- ✓ Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- ✓ 'In The Moment' Support
- ✓ Referral to Counselling



Scan the QR Code
to head to our app



*On the initial contact, our case manager will complete a quick assessment and when appropriate, referral to short term counselling will be made.

Register for your wellbeing app:

<https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login> | Organisation code: yV8IU17

SMS

Text 'Hi' to 087 145 2056

WhatsApp

Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

Freephone IRE

1800 411 057