



# Newsletter

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## Welcome

Welcome to the May edition of the CPSMA Newsletter. This edition launches the new design and layout. The newsletter will now be available and circulated electronically to facilitate ease of access by all Board members. We hope that you find this new format interesting and helpful. We continue to welcome your input and feedback regarding the content of future editions.

This, and subsequent editions, will retain some familiar elements such as a synopsis of recently released circulars from the Department of Education and Skills and initiatives in the field of primary education. However, it will also explore new themes such as supporting religious ethos, financial advice and commentary on recent legal developments that may be pertinent to the management of primary education in Ireland. We will also strive to address in detail issues that are frequently raised by way of queries to the CPSMA Office in Maynooth.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in and contributed to our AGM 2015. The theme chosen was Catholic Schools: On a rugged path with faith and courage. The Annual General Meeting was addressed by An tUasal Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General DES, Fr. Michael Drumm, Catholic Schools Partnership and Professor John Haldane, St Andrew's University, Edinburgh. Archbishop Charles Brown, Apostolic

Nuncio celebrated Mass on Saturday morning.

Fr. Michael Drumm, Executive Chairperson of the Catholic Schools Partnership launched [Catholic Primary Schools in a Changing Ireland: Sharing Good Practice on the Inclusion of all Pupils](#). This is a valuable resource which has been posted to all schools and additional copies are available from the Catholic Schools Partnership.

Workshops were presented on School Self Evaluation, Financial Best Practice for Boards of Management and Dealing with Pupils with Challenging Behaviours. Delegates found the content of the workshops to be valuable and the feedback was very positive!

*Tá súil agam go mbeidh an imlitir seo suimiúil agus úsáideach duit i do chuid oibre ar do Bhord Bainistíochta. Buíochas ó chroí as do thacaíocht i gconaí.*

*Le gach dea-ghuí.*

Fr. Tom Deenihan  
General Secretary



# Circular 0023/2015 – CID and Fixed Term Contracts

Circular 0023/2015: Implementation of the Recommendations of the Expert Group on Fixed-Term and Part-Time Employment in Primary and Second Level Education in Ireland has issued. The main points to note from the circular are as follows:

Reduction in the qualification period of continuous employment with the same employer from three years to two years.

1. Post providing cover for a teacher absent on an approved scheme of leave of absence does not provide eligibility for a CID except covering absence of:
  - Teacher on a career break
  - Teacher on a secondment
2. Where CID is being awarded, the hours for the CID will be those hours that the teacher was engaged on the fixed term contract for the full school year prior to issuing of the CID.
3. A Teacher employed on a CID holds same employment status as permanent teacher.
4. All first fixed term contracts must be terminated at the end of the school year and MUST be re-advertised and a new recruitment process undertaken for the filling of the post for the second year. Accordingly

a second year fixed term contract cannot issue to a teacher until the position has been advertised and interviews held.

5. NB: Boards of Management please note that the sanction of the Department must first be obtained before a CID can be awarded.
6. The Department may audit the practices within schools in relation to the implementation of this circular.

The Circular can be accessed here: [Circular 0023/2015](#)

CPSMA recently received clarification from the DES in relation to circular 23/2015 which can be accessed here: <http://cpsma.ie/clarification-on-circular-00232015/>.

### Operation of Panels

Please refer to Circular 0005/2015 and to the CPSMA February Newsletter for information regarding staffing schedules for 2015/2016 and engagement with the Main/CID employment panel in your diocese. The panel list for each Diocese was released on Monday March 30th 2015..

The Circular can be accessed here: [Circular 05/2015](#)

## Our Faith

# Feast of Corpus Christi

The Feast of Corpus Christi is the name of the feast that celebrates the Holy Eucharist. The Thursday after Trinity Sunday was the day chosen by the Church for the feast because Thursday was believed to be the day Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist (The Last Supper - Thursday of Holy Week). Celebrated throughout the Catholic Church, outdoor processions of the Blessed Sacrament, Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction are some of the practices that mark this feast day. The feast of Corpus Christi is owed, in part, to St. Juliana of Liege in Belgium, who was led by Christ to start a celebration of the Eucharist around AD 1230. In AD 1264, a papal bull issued by Pope Urban IV commanded the universal observance of the feast day. Today, it has become more customary to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi on the following Sunday. This year the feast is celebrated on Sunday 7th June. Many parishes have processions to celebrate this feast and the children who recently received First Holy Communion are invited to participate.



# New vetting requirements – Key date 31 July 2015

### Current Vetting system

At present, Circular 0063/2010 deals with Garda vetting of teaching and non-teaching staff. Currently the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) issues outcome of vetting to the Teaching Council for teachers.

### New changes under the Vetting Act

In 2012, The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 (the “Vetting Act”) was enacted. The Vetting Act is not yet operational. When The Vetting Act comes in to force it will bring about the following changes:

- The Garda Central Vetting Unit will be replaced by the National Vetting Bureau.
- Only a *vetting disclosure* from the National Vetting Bureau will suffice.
- A vetting letter from the Teaching Council for teachers issued after the coming into force of the Vetting Act will not suffice.

### Implications for Board of Management

1. Failure by a Board of Management to employ a teacher without a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau will be a criminal offence.

2. It is imperative that prior to letters of offer or contracts of employment being offered to teaching staff, Boards of Management are first in receipt of a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau.

Please note however that until the Vetting Act is commenced, Circular 0063/2010 continues to apply.

### So what does a Board of Management do prior to the Vetting Act coming in to force?

The DES has published Circular 0026/2015 which outlines actions that should be taken by all school authorities in order to facilitate, as far as possible, a smooth transition to the statutory vetting requirements that will apply when the Vetting Act is commenced.

The DES has identified the 31 July 2015 as the date by which the advance actions set out in the circular should be completed by registered teachers and school employers.

What does a Board of Management need to do before the 31 July 2015?

1. Check and update the school’s list of teachers available for substitute teaching work for school year 2015/16. If it does not already have a copy of the Teaching Council vetting disclosure letter for each of the teachers on the substitution list, it should be

obtained BEFORE 31 JULY 2015.

2. Contractual arrangements in respect of the initial employment of a new employee should, where possible, be made by 31 July 2015 so that the new employee can commence work in September 2015 without the school authority having to firstly wait for a vetting disclosure from the Bureau.

### What about the position of Volunteers and other Non-Teaching staff

Circular 0026/2015 states that any other type of new employment (teaching or non-teaching) the Board of Management, should where possible, have the contractual arrangements made by 31 July 2015 (and have received the appropriate GCVU vetting outcome from their relevant diocesan/ regional office as appropriate) so that the employment can commence without the Board of Management having to firstly wait for a vetting disclosure.

When the timeframe for commencement of the Vetting Act is confirmed by the Minister for Justice and Equality, and once CPSMA have been notified by the DES, we will advise our members accordingly.

The Circular can be accessed here: [Circular 0026/2015](#)

# Circular 0027/2015: Information in relation to Actions under Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Standardised testing, Reporting, Library Support and Other Matters

This circular deals primarily with the *Education Passport*. The *Education Passport* is required to assist with the transfer of information in relation to pupils moving from primary to second level schools. From this academic year 2014/2015, schools are required to assemble and submit NCCA *Education Passport* materials in respect of every sixth class child to be sent to the relevant second level school. Confirmation of enrolment of the pupil in the second level school must be obtained prior to the submission of any data.

The *Education Passport* materials include:

- a. The standard 6th class *Report Card Template*;
- b. The *My Profile* sheet for completion by the relevant pupils in 6th class; and
- c. The *My Child's Profile* sheet for completion by parents/guardians.

Please note that (a) and (b) must be completed and sent to parents/guardians by the end of the second week in June at the latest. Parents/guardians have the option to complete (c) and return it to the school. The completed documents (a), (b) and (c) (if returned) will be sent by the primary school, to the relevant second level school on or before June 30th 2015.

The circular also deals with the return of standardised test results to schools, resource teaching and learning support, educational supports for parents/guardians, the Public Library Service and the proposed review of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy,

For access to this Circular click here: [Circular 0027/2015](#).

Please go to [www.ncca.ie/transfer](http://www.ncca.ie/transfer) for more details in relation to the Education Passport.

## Schools Finance

# To certify or audit annual accounts

Schools regularly query whether they should certify or audit their annual accounts. The advice below will provide some guidance on this for Boards of Management. CPSMA advise that a copy of the report from the school accountant is forwarded to the Patron's Office by the Chairperson. Section 18 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states that a Board of Management "... shall ensure that in each year all such accounts are properly audited or certified in accordance with best account practice."

Certification is ensuring that accounts are in agreement with underlying records where there is little or no review of the supporting evidence. On the other hand, an audit involves a detailed examination including a review of supporting documentation to ascertain if books and records are correct. Due to less work being completed, certification is cheaper (€300+) than completing an audit (€2000+). The result of a certification is an accountant's report which places responsibility for completeness and accuracy of underlying records on the Board of Management. An audit results in an auditor's report giving his/her opinion on the financial statements. The Board of Management is required to ensure that the school accounts are audited or certified.

# Mary Stokes V CBS High School Clonmel

On 24 February 2015, the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal brought by Mary Stokes against CBS High School Clonmel ("the School"). Mary Stokes case against the school focused on the inclusion of the parental rule in its Admissions Policy. Mary Stokes argued that her son, as a member of the traveller community, had less of a chance of having a father who went to the School as many travellers have not attended second level over the past few decades. Mary Stokes was successful before the Equality Tribunal, failed before the Circuit Court (on full appeal) and failed before the High Court on a point of law.

The School argued that the Act provides that no further appeal from the Circuit Court lies other than to the High Court on a point of law. Mr Justice Hardiman and Mr. Justice McKechnie agreed that there was therefore no right of appeal from the High Court to the Supreme Court and they dismissed the appeal on that basis.

Mr. Justice Clarke, Mr. Justice O'Donnell and Mr. Justice Murray held that an appeal from the High Court to the Supreme Court was in fact permitted. However, they were not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence and materials before the Equality or Circuit Court to enable a proper assessment to be carried out as to whether the parental rule resulted in a particular disadvantage to members of the Traveller Community. On that basis, Mrs Stokes appeal was dismissed.

A more detailed analysis of the case can be found at CPSMA website <http://cpsma.ie/education-update/>.

# CPSMA Annual Membership Subscription

The Annual Membership Subscription for the period September 2015 to 31 August 2016 is now due. You will have received a letter referring to this which includes the subscription rates and bands as well as the payment options. The DES has confirmed that membership of CPSMA is an appropriate

school expense payable by the Board of Management.

Membership benefits include the following:

- Specialised advice tailored to individual schools
- Access to the members section of the CPSMA website
- Guidance notes and FAQs

- Publications – newsletters, Ezines, Board of Management Handbook
- Board of Management training
- Seminars for Principals
- Seminars on education matters

## Recent Circulars

| Circular No. | Circular Title   |
|--------------|--|
| 0030/2015    | <a href="#">Primary Book &amp; Book Rental Scheme Grants.</a>  |
| 0027/2015    | <a href="#">Information in relation to Actions under the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Standardised Testing, Reporting, Library Support and Other Matters – Academic Year 2014/15 and Subsequent Years.</a> |
| 0026/2015    | <a href="#">Advance preparation for the commencement of statutory requirements for Garda vetting under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.</a>                           |
| 0025/2015    | <a href="#">Primary Online Database (POD)</a>  |
| 23/2015      | <a href="#">Implementation of the Recommendations of the Expert Group on Fixed Term and Part Time Employment in Primary and Second Level Education in Ireland.</a>   |
| 17/2015      | <a href="#">Teacher Exchange Scheme for Registered Teachers in Recognised Schools.</a>   |

# Catholic Primary Schools in a Changing Ireland

## *Sharing Good Practice on the Inclusion of all Pupils*

This new publication is a resource for Catholic schools in developing policies and in sharing best practice. The document was launched at the CPSMA AGM in March 2015. It is published in response to two documents:

1. *Report of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector 2012*; and
2. *Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector: Progress to date and Future Directions 2014*.

Welcoming the publication Fr Michael Drumm, Chairperson of the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) said: "Catholic schools have adapted to demographic change with significant net migration into Ireland and many of them have led the way in integrating migrants into local communities. They have been leaders in areas such as social inclusion, special needs and traveller education." He added that the *Chief Inspector's Report 2010-12* made clear that almost all parents and pupils described their schools' as cultivating an inclusive, child-centred ethos.

This document notes that "an ESRI study found that non-Catholic schools have a significantly higher proportion of children from professional, managerial and technical backgrounds and that 80% of parents with the top incomes send their children to these schools. In contrast, children in Catholic schools come from just

20% of the top income families. The report also found a significantly higher number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities in Catholic schools than in other school types". (p.7)

Given their notable record in social inclusion, this new publication aims to help schools in developing good practice with regard to religious issues. As the DES has noted, there is no one size that fits all in this regard. Rather schools need to develop policies and practices that address the context of the particular school.

The CSP has consulted widely in the preparation of this document. Part 1 deals with foundational issues while Part 2 gives concrete examples of good practices.

Fr Drumm noted that the document draws on the new curriculum in Religious Education which will be introduced from September 2015. "There is a notable emphasis on other religions and world-views in this new programme", he said.

The document gives many suggestions on how to celebrate the diversity of faiths within the school community. It describes a holistic approach to Religious Education which is open to all children. It also offers ideas on inter-cultural dialogue in a Catholic school.

Access the Catholic Schools Partnership website here: [www.catholicschools.ie](http://www.catholicschools.ie)

## The Standardised School Year

The issue of the Standardised School Year caused significant difficulties for schools this year due to the scheduled opening on January 5th and Holy day of Obligation on January 6th. In 2016, Schools are due to re-open after the Christmas Holiday on January 6th 2016. Circular 0016/2014 makes provision for the extension of the Christmas and Easter Breaks to facilitate religious observance. Accordingly, Catholic schools may extend their Christmas Holidays of December 2015 by a day, returning on January 7th 2016. We are aware that a number of Patrons have issued instructions in their own Diocese.

The content of this publication is to assist access to information and does not constitute legal advice or otherwise. CPSMA advises all Boards of Management of Primary Schools to read all circulars carefully.

