



Information Note SD 0001/2021

To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary Schools, Special Schools and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards.

Further supplementary measures to increase the availability of substitute teachers for recognised primary schools – 2021/2022 school year

This note is additional to the measures put in place and notified to schools on 1st November to assist with increasing the availability of primary substitute teachers.

It follows ongoing engagement between the Department of Education and the education stakeholders on issues raised about the difficulty accessing substitutes for teacher absences at this time.

The following additional temporary arrangements have been put in place in the context of COVID-19 to assist with the availability of substitutes until the February mid-term break, when it will be reviewed.

Student teachers

Following positive engagement with the Higher Education Institutions who provide primary initial teacher education programmes they have agreed to facilitate release of PME and B.Ed. year 3 and year 4 students to support schools up to the end of term.

They have also agreed to explore flexible options in relation to the assessment requirement for programmes in the context of students being available to support schools.

The Education Stakeholders, including the Department, the HEI Colleges and the Teaching Council, will continue to work together to address any practical issues and ensure the ongoing availability of student teachers to support schools pre and post-Christmas.

Retired teachers

Retired teachers returning to classrooms until the end of the current school term will not have their pension abated.



Qualified Teachers on secondment to the Department's Teacher Education Support Services

The Teacher Education support services funded by the Department have been asked to release teachers who are on secondment to make themselves available to provide substitute cover in schools. Arrangements will be made for available teachers from these services to register with an existing Primary Supply Panel or on Subseeker.ie.

Suspension of Continual Professional Development (CPD) at primary where substitution is required

All CPD where substitution is required should be deferred until after the February 2022 mid-term. This measure is being taken on an exceptional basis.

It is intended that this CPD will be re-scheduled in the period following the February mid-term break. The temporary suspension of CPD will not affect the completion of the Droichead process for NQTs whose contracts are due to end prior to mid-term break in February.

Supply Panels:

There are now almost 480 posts sanctioned to provide substitute cover to primary schools as part of the Primary Schools Substitute Teacher Supply Panels.

In the context of the current substitute supply issues particularly in certain areas, a further 200 posts, are being made available, bringing the total to 680 to existing/new areas where significant challenges in sourcing substitution have continued. Engagement will take place with the base schools to allocate these posts so that base schools can make arrangements for the recruitment of additional staff immediately.

Teachers on Supply panels completing Droichead:

In order to assist with the recruitment of teachers onto supply panels, and in the context of the pandemic, the Teaching Council has confirmed that teachers who secure posts on supply panels in the 2021/2022 academic year may complete Droichead. This is an exceptional time bound measure. Further guidance will be provided by the NIPT regarding the role of the base school and partner schools in the process.

Treoraithe (formerly co-operating teachers) who host student teachers on school placement

It is acknowledged that *Treoraithe* play a very important role in supporting the development of student teachers.



In exceptional circumstances where there is no substitute available it may be possible for the *Treoraí* of a registered student teacher to provide substitute cover for absences of a very short duration in their own school if another substitute cannot be sourced at short notice. This should be for the shortest time possible until a substitute can be recruited.

Deirdre Shanley
Assistant Secretary
23 November 2021