



Circular 0007/2008

To the Management Authorities of Primary Schools.

On Line Claim System

Arrangements for Absence Notification for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants

1. Introduction.

The Minister for Education & Science wishes to inform Management Authorities of the arrangements regarding leave of absence notification arising from the introduction of the On Line Claim System (OLCS). This circular is of immediate relevance to all schools operating the OLCS. The OLCS is currently being extended to remaining schools and these schools should retain this circular for future reference.

2. Recording of Absences.

All absences, both substitutable and non substitutable, for teachers and special needs assistants must be recorded on the OLCS from the date of introduction of the system to your school. The Department requires that **all** leave absences including where no substitute teacher is employed are recorded to ensure that all staff members are paid correctly.

Leave absences for brief periods should be recorded on the OLCS as they occur and **must be entered in date order**.

3. Applications for unpaid leave

Applications for unpaid leave must be made to and approved by the management authority of the school at least six weeks before the date of commencement of the leave to facilitate the Board in making timely arrangements for the recruitment of a replacement staff member.

All unpaid absences, both substitutable and non-substitutable must be recorded on the OLCS at least four weeks prior to the date of commencement of the leave. This is to ensure that payment can be ceased for the relevant period and that overpayment situations are avoided.

4. Parental Leave / Carer's Leave

The applicant for parental leave must submit a copy of the child's birth certificate or, where applicable, evidence of the adoption order to the managerial authority with the application for parental leave. If an applicant does not submit the documentation referred to, the managerial authority of the school has no option but to refuse to approve the application pending the submission of the documentation. A copy of the documentation must be retained in the school for audit purposes. For the purposes of parental leave, a week is defined as a seven day period e.g. a teacher who takes one week parental leave will be removed from the payroll for seven days. Each week of parental leave should therefore be recorded as seven days on the OLCS.

The applicant for Carer's leave must submit a copy of the approval decision from Carer's Benefit Section, Department of Social and Family Affairs to the managerial authority with the application for Carer's leave. If the applicant does not submit the documentation referred to, the managerial authority has no option but to refuse to approve the application pending the submission of the documentation. A copy of the documentation must be retained in the school for audit purposes.

Documentation essential to a decision in connection with applications for unpaid leave (such as Parental leave, Carer's leave, unpaid Maternity Leave and unpaid Adoptive Leave), and required under the terms of the relevant Circular Letters, must be retained by the school.

5. Sick Leave

- (a) A medical certificate must be submitted to the managerial authority in respect of teacher absences owing to illness in accordance with the terms of Primary Circular 10/05 and subsequent future amendments available on the Department's website www.education.ie. The details regarding sick leave for special needs assistants are outlined in Appendix A of Circular 12/05. In the absence of medical certification the substitution costs will not be paid by the Department. When a staff member is on sick leave on the last day immediately prior to school closure in respect of vacation periods including July and August and remains on sick leave on the day immediately after the vacation, sick leave in respect of the full vacation period must be recorded on OLCS.
- (b) Medical Certificates must be retained securely in the school for audit purposes for a period of not less than five years or five years and one additional year in respect of each year of a teacher on career break.
- (c) In the case of Class A PRSI Contributors the MC1 Social Welfare Certificate must be submitted to this Department after three sick days for referral to the Department of Social and Family Affairs. This is required for PRSI compliance. Failure to submit the MC1 form on time may result in the loss of salary. A general practitioner (G.P.) will normally have MC1 forms for completion. Teachers appointed on or after 6 April 1995 pay PRSI class A.

6. Paid Maternity Leave and Paid Adoptive Leave

Applications must be submitted to the Board of Management of the school six weeks in advance of the proposed commencement date. Leave details must be entered on OLCS not later than four weeks in advance of the commencement date. Forms MB10 and AB1 where applicable should be submitted to the Department at least four weeks prior to the commencement of the leave. It is recommended that a copy of the completed calculation of both paid and unpaid Maternity and Adoptive Leave be given to the applicant. The original calculation should be retained in the school for record and auditing purposes.

8. Substitute Teacher / Special Needs Staff Member

A person should not serve as a substitute Special Needs Assistant and a sub teacher in the same school year.

9. Data Protection

To ensure the integrity of the system is maintained it is important that schools comply with the necessary control and security measures. In that context there are three different user roles - data entry, data approver and local administrator. The data entry person enters the data and will normally be a member of the administrative staff. The data approver shall approve the data entered and will normally be the principal of the school. The local administrator role will be initially assigned to the Principal. Passwords should remain strictly confidential and access to the OLCS should be limited to authorised users only.

10. School Closures

A facility to add school closures is available in OLCS. The table is pre-populated with the standard closures agreed under the standardisation of the school year. It is important that the records for Summer Holidays are amended to show the actual closing and opening dates for your school. The February Mid-Term break should also be amended to reflect the actual school closures. Accurate calculation of leave in lieu is dependant on full information regarding school closures. Planned school closures should be entered in advance and emergency closures should be entered immediately after the event.

11. Copies of Circular

School management authorities are requested to bring the contents of this Circular to the attention of staff in the school, including those on maternity leave, sick leave etc.

An Irish version of this circular is available on the Department of Education and Science's website at www.education.ie

P. Maloney
Principal Officer.
February 2008