



Circular 0065/2008

**To: The Management Authorities of Primary, Voluntary Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools, and the Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees**

**Introduction of Occupational Health Service for Teachers**

The Minister for Education and Science wishes to inform management authorities of the commencement with immediate effect of an Occupational Health Service for teachers to be provided by Medmark Occupational Healthcare.

The first stage in the development of the overall Occupational Health Strategy for teachers, the Employee Assistance Service, managed by VHI Corporate Solutions, was put in place at the start of the 2006/2007 school year. The second stage of the Occupational Health Strategy for teachers incorporates pre-employment health assessments, sickness absence assessments, medical assessments of fitness for work and ill health retirement. It is intended that both initiatives will help to create a supportive working environment for teachers and reduce the incidence of stress related illnesses.

Two booklets - Occupational Health Service Guide for Boards of Management/VECs and Standard Operating Procedures Manual for Boards of Management/VECs have been prepared in consultation with the Occupational Health Service provider to assist employers of teachers in accessing the service. The Occupational Health Service will be rolled out in two phases as set out below:

Phase	Service	Effective From	
1	Assessment of Medical Fitness Prior to Appointment as a teacher (Pre-employment Medical Questionnaire)	May 2008	See part 2 of Standard Operating Procedures Manual
1	Sickness absence and Medical Fitness to Return to Work – Non discretionary	July 2008	See part 3 of Standard Operating Procedures Manual
1	Ill-Health Retirement and Appeals	May 2008	See parts 4 and 5 of Standard Operating Procedures Manual
2	Sickness absence and Medical Fitness to Return to Work – Discretionary referrals	January 2009	See part 3 of Standard Operating Procedures Manual

Both booklets are being printed at present and will issue in hard copy format in both English and Irish shortly.

In the interim both booklets can be accessed (English version only) on the [Department's website](#). Please read both booklets carefully and in particular note the changes to the process for assessing medical fitness prior to appointment as a teacher.

I trust the service will be of benefit to you and your staff.

Hubert Loftus  
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Primary Teachers Unit

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Post-Primary Teachers Unit

May 2008

**Download Booklets**

[Occupational Health Strategy](#)