



Circular: 0047/2021

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Post Primary,
Community and Comprehensive Schools
and Chief Executive Officers of Education and Training Boards**

Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools

Issued by: Department of Education

Date Issued: 16 September 2021



1. Purpose of circular

The purpose of this circular is to inform school management authorities that Guidelines on the use of Reduced School Days (hereinafter referred to as “the guidelines”) have been developed to provide clarity to school authorities and parents/guardians around the use of reduced school days in schools. This is to ensure that Reduced School Days are only used in a manner that is limited, appropriate and absolutely necessary, in line with the Department of Education’s guidelines.

The guidelines can be accessed at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/63545-the-use-of-reduced-school-days/>

The guidelines have been developed following consultation with the education partners.

2. General

The purpose of these guidelines is to give direction to school authorities around the process to be followed where the use of reduced school days is under consideration for a student, to ensure that the use of reduced school days are limited to only those circumstances where it is absolutely necessary and, that where such usage occurs, schools follow best practice with the interests of the student to the fore.

These guidelines apply to all recognised primary and post-primary schools and will be subject to review by the Department of Education

3. Next steps

The guidelines come into effect on January 1, 2022.

All boards of management are now required to: review arrangements currently in place and in particular to review the circumstances for any students currently on reduced school days, and plan to ensure that the school authorities are in a position to comply with the terms of the guidelines with effect from January 1 2022.

This will give schools time to adapt and plan to meet the needs of students.



4. Use of reduced school days arrangements

From January 1, 2022, schools must:

- (a) comply with the guidelines with respect to the process preceding the implementation of a reduced school day and,
- (b) follow the processes outlined in the guidelines and,
- (c) notify Tusla Education Support Service of the use of a reduced school day arrangement for any student for whom a reduced school day is in place.

From January 1, 2022, Tusla must be notified of any new or existing reduced school day arrangements; this includes arrangements which, having commenced prior to January 1, 2022 are in operation on or from that date.

5. Key points as set out in the Guidelines

The guidelines set out the process to be followed prior to consideration of a reduced school day, the process on implementation and the notification process to be followed where a reduced school day is being used.

6. Queries

Any queries in relation to this circular may be directed to the Department at the following e-mail addresses:

social_inclusion@education.gov.ie

or where such queries relate to students with special educational needs to

special_education@education.gov.ie

For queries relevant to Tusla:

Contact details for Tusla Education Support Services regional offices are available at www.tusla.ie/tess/get-in-touch/

7. Dissemination of Circular

Please ensure this circular is circulated to all members of the board of management/education and training board and that its contents are brought to the attention of all principals and teachers in your employment, including those on leave of absence.



A copy of these guidelines must be made available to parents/guardians/ students on request and must always be provided to parents/guardians (or student in the case of a student over 18) where a reduced school day is being put in place.

An Irish version of this circular is also available on the Department's website.

The guidelines come into effect from 1 January, 2022.

Mary Cregg
Principal Officer
Social Inclusion

Eddie Ward
Principal Officer
Special Education

September 2021