



Information Note TC 0002/2022

To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and The Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

**COVID-19:
Changes to Special Leave with Pay from 7th February 2022 for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Information Note notifies employers of changes to COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay for the public service, as directed by the Department of Expenditure and Public Reform (DPER).
- 1.2 These changes are to take account of the recent changes to self-isolation period requirements in line with current public health advice.
- 1.3 The rules that govern COVID-19 Special Leave With Pay are kept under review by DPER and may change again at short notice.
- 1.4 The changes in this Information Note apply to teachers and special needs assistants (employees) in recognised schools, who commence COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay from 7th February 2022 onwards.
- 1.5 Please note this Information Note should be read in conjunction with [Circular 0042/2021](#) and [Information Note 0001/2022](#) in relation to working and leave arrangements for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.6 The changes to COVID-19 Special Leave With Pay must be implemented by each employer with immediate effect and all employees must adhere to these changes.
- 1.7 The Department plans to publish an updated COVID-19 Circular shortly, to reflect the recent changes to working and leave arrangements for employees.

2. COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay

- 2.1 In line with paragraph 2.4 of [Information Note 0001/2022](#), Special Leave With Pay applies where an employee:

- displays [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
 - received a positive COVID-19 PCR test result
 - received a positive COVID-19 antigen test result (where acceptable, based on [most recent HSE advice](#))
- 2.2 The current HSE advice in relation to self-isolation is available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/positive-result/>. The HSE advises a person must self-isolate for a minimum period of 7 up to a maximum of 10 days.
- 3. Changes to COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay from 7th February 2022**
- 3.1 Where an employee begins to display COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 on any date from 7th February onwards, a maximum limit of 10 consecutive days Special Leave with Pay, in any one instance will apply.
- 3.2 Where the employee is medically unfit for work after the 10 day period, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme will apply.
- 3.3 To cater for this change on the Department's Payroll system, a new leave code is now available to schools on the On-Line Claims System (OLCS) to record this COVID-19 Special Leave With Pay. The leave must be recorded on the OLCS by the employer under 'Personal Leave', sub-category titled 'COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay'. ETB schools must record this leave on their relevant ETB system.
- 3.4 The Application Form for COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay at [Appendix A](#) of this Information Note must be used for employees who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 from 7th February 2022 onwards.
- 3.5 There are examples of scenarios provided at [Appendix B](#) of this Information Note.
- 4. COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay prior to 7th February 2022**
- 4.1 An employee who commenced COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay prior to 7th February, the maximum limit of 28 days still applies, in line with paragraph 2.4 of [Circular 0042/2021](#). A further extension is available, where the specific criteria as detailed in paragraph 2.5 of [Circular 0042/2021](#) apply.
- 4.2 For non-ETB schools, the COVID-19 Special Leave With Pay which commenced prior to 7th February should continue to be recorded by the employer under 'Personal Leave', sub-category titled 'COVID-19: Diagnosis'. ETB schools must record this leave on their relevant ETB system.
- 4.3 From 7th February, any new approved COVID-19 Special Leave With Pay applications cannot be recorded under COVID-19: Self Isolation' or 'COVID-19: Diagnosis' as paragraph 3 above will apply.
- 4.4 There are examples of scenarios provided at [Appendix B](#) of this Information Note.

5. Restricted Movement (COVID-19:Restricted Movement)

5.1 In the limited circumstances where employees who are close contacts are required to restrict their movements, paragraph 3 of [Information Note 0001/2022](#) will apply.

6. Circulation of Information Note

- 6.1 Please ensure that this Information Note is circulated to all members of the Board of Management/Education and Training Boards and its contents are brought to the attention of all teachers and SNAs in your employment, including those on leave of absence.
- 6.2 This Information Note can be accessed on the Department's website at [gov.ie](#).

Clare Butler
Principal Officer
Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions Section
3 February, 2022

Sinéad Keenaghan
Principal Officer
Payroll Division

Appendix A

Appendix A – Application for COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay from 7th February 2022 onwards displaying COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19

The Application Form should be fully completed by the employee and submitted to the employer as soon as possible. The completed Application Form must be accompanied by supporting evidence i.e. positive antigen or PCR test result, as appropriate including the date of fitness to return to work (where this date is available).

Part 1 - Employee Details

Employee's Name: _____ Contact No: _____

Home Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

PPSN: _____

School Name: _____ Roll No: _____

Part 2 – Details of Special Leave with Pay

I wish to apply for Special Leave With Pay, for the reason indicated below (tick relevant box).

I am:

- Displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Received a positive COVID-19 antigen test result.
- Received a positive COVID-19 PCR test result.

Start Date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____ Estimated End Date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Declaration

I wish to apply for Special Leave with Pay in accordance with the terms and conditions of Information Note TC 0002/2022 titled '*COVID-19: Changes to Special Leave With Pay from 7th February 2022 for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools*'.

The completed Application Form is accompanied by supporting evidence.

I confirm that the information provided in the Application Form is true and accurate.

Signature of Employee: _____ Date: _____

Part 3 – Employer Record

- (A) COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay:
Employee is displaying COVID-19 symptoms
- (B) COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay:
Evidence of positive COVID-19 PCR test result (including test date) provided
(HSE text message screenshot is acceptable)
- (C) COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay:
Employee aged 39 years or under - Evidence of positive COVID-19 antigen test result (including test date) provided (HSE confirmation of employee's record on HSE portal is acceptable)
- (D) COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay:
Employee aged 40 years or older - Evidence of positive COVID-19 antigen test result (including test date) provided

Recorded on OLCS/relevant ETB system under 'COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay' (as appropriate)

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Employer)

Application Form/Supporting Documentation should NOT be submitted to the Department of Education. They should be retained in the school/ETB with any other relevant documentation for record and audit purposes with the relevant personnel records.

Data Protection Privacy Statement

The main purpose for which the Department requires you to provide this personal data to your employer is to enable your Special Leave with Pay to be processed. Your employer will retain your Application Form and accompanying documents in accordance with their Data Protection policy. Further information in relation to this policy is available on request from your employer.

The Privacy Notice outlining further information in relation to this Application Form can be found on [gov.ie](#). Full details of the Department's Data Protection policy setting out how we will use your personal data as well as information regarding your rights as a data subject are available on [gov.ie](#). Details of this policy are also available in hard copy from Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions Section, Department of Education, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 X659, upon request.

Appendix B

Special Leave With Pay – Scenario Examples (from 7th February 2022)

- **Scenario 1**

On 7th February 2022, employee is recorded as on Day 1 of Special Leave With Pay because they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.

The maximum Special Leave With Pay entitlement for this employee is 10 consecutive days under this Information Note.

This leave period must be recorded by the employer under the OLCS leave sub-category ‘Personal Leave’, sub-category titled ‘COVID-19: Special Leave with Pay’ or on the relevant ETB system.

If the employee is medically unfit for work on Day 11, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme will apply.

- **Scenario 2**

On 7th February 2022, employee is recorded as on Day 11 of Special Leave With Pay because they tested positive for COVID-19.

The maximum Special Leave With Pay entitlement for this employee is 28 consecutive days, in line with paragraph 2.4 of [Circular 0042/2021](#). Subject to specific criteria, there is extended entitlement to Special Leave with Pay beyond 28 days in line with paragraph 2.5 of [Circular 0042/2021](#).

Where the employee remains absent up to 28 days, this leave which commenced prior to 7th February should continue to be recorded by the employer under ‘Personal Leave’, sub-category titled ‘COVID-19: Diagnosis’ or on the relevant ETB system.

- **Scenario 3**

On 6th February 2022, employee is recorded as on Day 1 of Special Leave With Pay because they tested positive for COVID-19.

The maximum Special Leave With Pay entitlement for this employee is 28 consecutive days, in line with paragraph 2.4 of [Circular 0042/2021](#). Subject to specific criteria, there is extended entitlement to Special Leave with Pay beyond 28 days in line with paragraph 2.5 of [Circular 0042/2021](#).

Where the employee remains absent up to 28 days, this leave which commenced prior to 7th February should continue to be recorded by the employer under ‘Personal Leave’, sub-category titled ‘COVID-19: Diagnosis’ or on the relevant ETB system.

- **Scenario 4**

On 6th February 2022, employee is recorded as on Day 1 of Special Leave With Pay (COVID-19: Isolation) because they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19. On 7th February, the employee tests positive for COVID-19.

The maximum Special Leave With Pay entitlement for this employee is 28 consecutive days, in line with paragraph 2.4 of [Circular 0042/2021](#). Subject to specific criteria, there is extended entitlement to Special Leave with Pay beyond 28 days in line with paragraph 2.5 of [Circular 0042/2021](#).

As the OLCS leave code 'COVID-19: Diagnosis' cannot be used from 7th February to record this absence, the leave period must be recorded by the employer under the OLCS leave sub-category 'Personal Leave', sub-category titled 'COVID-19: Special Leave with Pay'. ETB schools must record the absence on the relevant ETB system.

For non-ETB schools, the maximum number of days that can be recorded under the new OLCS leave code 'COVID-19: Special Leave with Pay' is 10 days. Where the absence is in excess of 10 days, the employer should contact the Department's OLCS Helpdesk for assistance at: onlineclaims@education.gov.ie

- **Scenario 5**

On 5th February 2022, employee tested positive for COVID-19 but it was not recorded on the OLCS/ETB system until 7th February or after.

The maximum Special Leave With Pay entitlement for this employee is 28 consecutive days, in line with paragraph 2.4 of [Circular 0042/2021](#). Subject to specific criteria, there is extended entitlement to Special Leave with Pay beyond 28 days in line with paragraph 2.5 of [Circular 0042/2021](#).

This leave which commenced prior to 7th February should continue to be recorded by the employer under 'Personal Leave', sub-category titled 'COVID-19: Diagnosis' or on the relevant ETB system. As schools will no longer have access to this leave code from 7th February to enter new leave records, the employer should contact the Department's OLCS Helpdesk for assistance at: onlineclaims@education.gov.ie.

Note:

From 7th February, 2022, where an employee is displaying COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 on or beyond that date, there will be only one OLCS leave code to record new absence(s). This new OLCS code is available on the drop-down under 'Personal Leave', sub-category 'COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay'.

For similar absences, that commenced prior to 7th February, 2022 and extend beyond that date, COVID-19 Special Leave With Pay should continue to be recorded by the employer under 'Personal Leave', sub-category titled 'COVID-19: Diagnosis' or on the relevant ETB system.