

into



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A nation's greatness depends upon the education of its people



BULLETIN 6

Advice on recent Literacy Service and Work Experience Directives

10th January 2020

More changes from Education Authority without proper and meaningful consultation

INTO has been contacted by a considerable number of its members within the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) of the Education Authority over concerns relating to their excessive workload arising from changes proposed by their Management. These changes suggest that teaching staff are gradually being moved towards a different work model, away from their substantive task of following a teaching timetable in schools. Staff have reported that morale in the service has never been lower, and that they feel that their health and well-being is not a priority of Management.

These changes, as well as impacting on the members within the service, have the potential to negatively impact on the pupils that they serve, and to increase the workload of teachers in all schools, as they will be expected to take on the work so ably performed previously by the service.

As part of the proposed changes, a large amount of time will be taken up with testing, rather than teaching children. As all members will be aware, this was one of the key concerns in relation to end of key stage assessment, and one of the reasons that INTO boycotted the assessments. INTO is further concerned that the number of pupils that will be eligible for support will be greatly reduced due to proposed changes to the screening of pupils, which will raise the threshold required for support to be offered. These changes have been proposed without reference to any academic research to support the change.

All of the changes that are being imposed on the members within EA have been done without any meaningful consultation with teaching unions.

Following a decision taken by the INTO Northern Committee at their meeting of Friday 13 December 2019, INTO is instructing its members within the EA Literacy Service, until notified to the contrary, not to engage in any new working practices proposed by EA Management until proper consultation has taken place, and that these changes have been workload proofed and are deemed fit for purpose.

New EA Work Experience Arrangements: Advice

INTO has been contacted by a number of its members raising concerns in relation to the new guidance on work experience arrangements for controlled, maintained and Irish medium schools which was published in September 2019.

The detail of this guidance will undoubtedly result in the generation of excess workload for teachers tasked with a career role. At this juncture, INTO contends that, without the additional participation by several teachers, taken off normal timetable duties, it cannot be feasible to have a bespoke visit for every pupil on work experience.

Additionally, INTO has concerns with placing children in vulnerable positions in regard to Employer Access NI checks and pupils potentially being left in one to one workplace situations.

In light of these and other issues, INTO is left with no other option than to advise its membership that, until such times as INTO have had been afforded the opportunity to meet with EA to discuss the impact of these new arrangements, teachers should not engage with these new work experience arrangements so that they do not place themselves or their pupils in potential positions of jeopardy.

Where work placements are a compulsory element of recognised qualifications and where adequate time and resources are provided to complete the necessary preparations, workplace visits and Access NI checks, INTO advises that members organise such placements with caution and seek advice from their Northern Committee Representative where necessary.



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