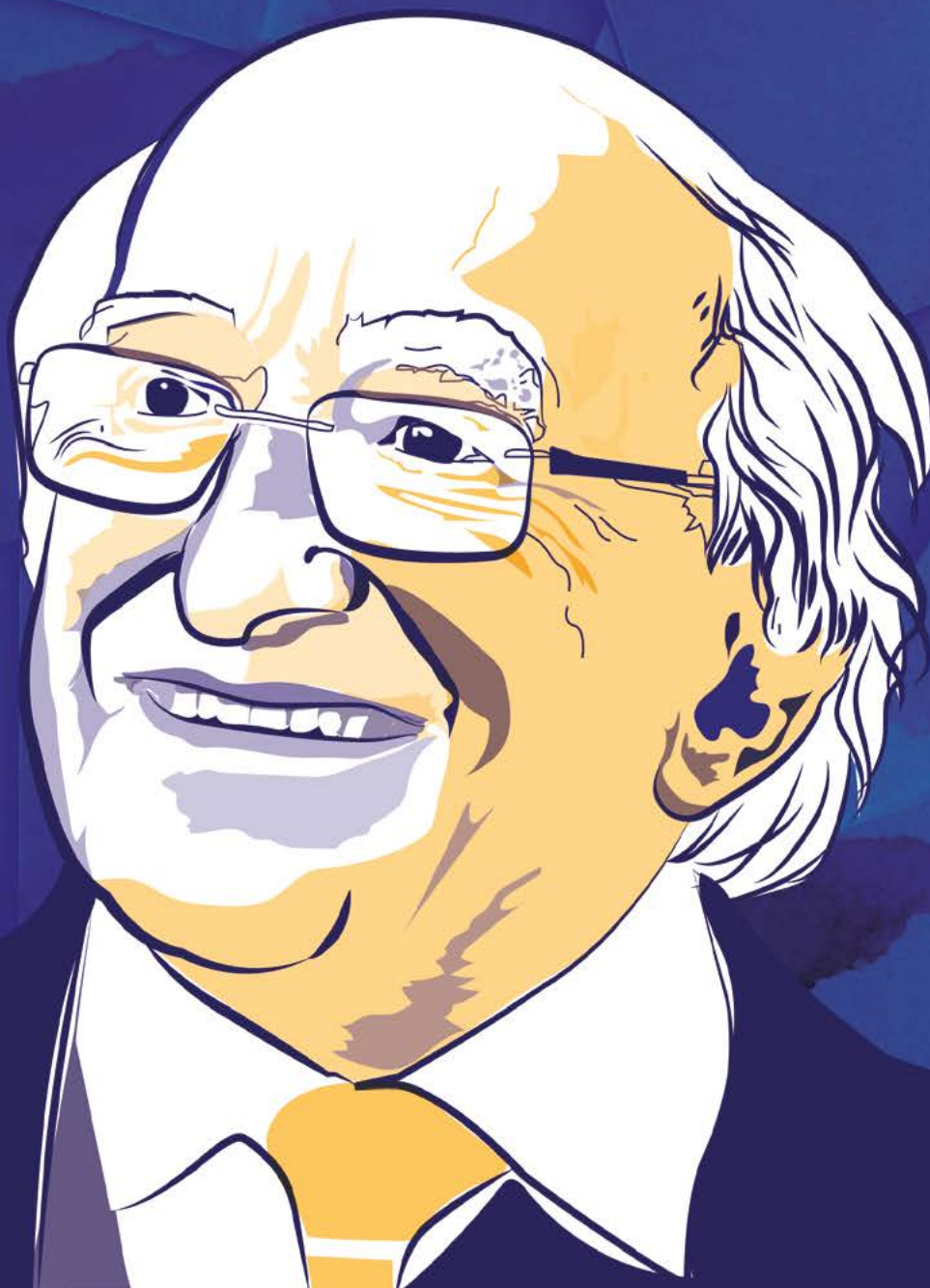


intouch

Presidential message
to sixth class pupils





When our country asked, you have stepped up!

The end of a very strange year is in sight. I know that many of you found the last nine school weeks stressful and challenging. You have certainly earned your summer break. While you all have worked miracles to ensure that your pupils continued to learn during this pandemic, the face-to-face interactions and rhythm of the school day that keep us passionate about our jobs, simply could not be replicated no matter how hard you tried. Society now has a much deeper understanding of the complexity of the learning process and the importance of teacher-pupil-parent relationships in the education system.

This month will be something of an emotional rollercoaster for many of you. Those who only began their teaching careers last September will no doubt feel short-changed, some substitute teachers have been unemployed for months, plans for career breaks have had to be altered as financial circumstances are different, the availability of CIDs has been delayed in some cases and other best-laid plans have been changed.

While these issues are important, the most important thing is life itself. As long as our members and their pupils remain healthy, we will eventually look back on the middle of 2020 and the way we supported our students with tremendous pride.

Facilitating remote learning has been nerve-wracking for teachers who are used to working on their feet instead of at a computer all day. As we begin the last month of the school year, some teachers will write end-of-year school reports, recording all that their classes achieved in the first 25 weeks of the year, principals will take some leadership and management days to catch up on administrative tasks, job interviews will be scheduled and many members will turn their attention to the next school year.

An orderly and safe reopening of our schools

Engagement has commenced on the future reopening of schools. The Central Executive Committee consulted with members elected to positions in branches and districts and with our national committee members. This process, alongside research led by our officials, has enabled us to approach these important consultations with confidence and conviction. We have also worked closely with other teacher unions throughout Europe to ensure that we can learn from their experiences. We will continue to press our government for comprehensive testing and contact tracing systems and statutory guidance for the safe reopening

of schools. This guidance must take account of the specific needs of vulnerable pupils and teachers, teachers who are pregnant, self-isolating and those with caring responsibilities.

Additional resources for enhanced school cleaning will be crucial, while appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) may also be necessary. We are keen to ensure that, when you are directed to return to school buildings, every precaution and practical step has been taken to protect teachers, pupils and their families from the coronavirus.

A very different future

The public health crisis and the economic crisis to follow have concentrated minds on our lives post-pandemic. INTO noted reports that the secretary general of the Department of Education and Skills cast doubt on the full reopening of schools next September, due to Ireland's overcrowded classes, which are the largest in the Eurozone.

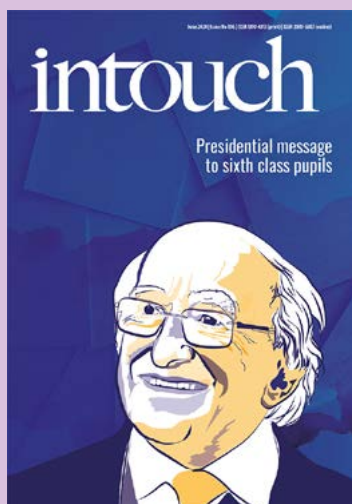
If only they had listened to our call for smaller classes for the last decade. INTO lobbyists have recently been in contact with politicians to emphasise that the next government must, once and for all, reduce our class sizes to the EU average of 20, with pro-rata reductions for DEIS schools. If a programme for government is agreed and a government formed, our lobbyists will then be in contact with all public representatives to focus on the next budget, pressing home our key messages that smaller classes and equal pay for post-2010 entrants and school leaders must be delivered. I appeal to every member to contact your political representatives and demand fair treatment for primary educators. The choices government makes this October can ensure that the primary schools of today become the drivers of tomorrow's economic recovery. Smaller classes will help us to develop creative, diplomatic, entrepreneurial, insightful, open-minded citizens, equipped with the skills to respond to the challenges of tomorrow.

After nearly a year as general secretary, I wish to thank all of our members, activists and staff for your support. Our union has faced many big challenges in the past and prevailed. This time will be no different.

Nil tuile dá mhéad nach dtránn. Bíodh samhradh deas agat.

John Boyle

intouch



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A message from the President of Ireland to sixth class pupils

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Photo of President Michael D Higgins courtesy of D. Ribeiro / Shutterstock.com

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Professional development in standardised testing



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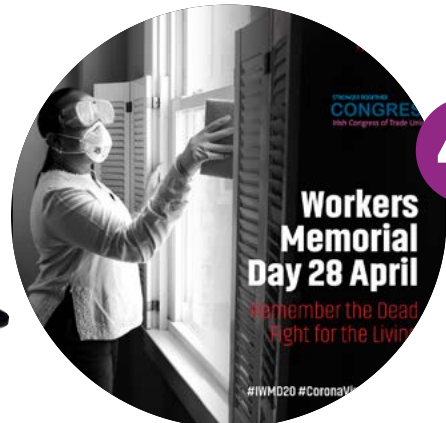
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One week left to bag €20K in prizes

Support CMRF Crumlin through INTO's member-only draw

We are very proud of our members' support of children's medical research through our annual draw. This year, we again have some wonderful prizes to give away and, by buying a ticket, you will play your part in developing treatments for children suffering from serious illnesses.

We have €20,000 of prizes to give away

This year's prizes

1st	€10,000
2nd	€3,000
3rd	€1,500
4th	€1,500
5th	€1,000
6th	€1,000
7th	€500
8th	€500
9th	€500
10th	€500



including a top prize of €10,000. Tickets cost €10 and the prizes are exclusively for INTO members, so don't miss out, buy your ticket today.

Our charity partner for the 2020 Members' Draw is the Children's Medical and Research Foundation (CMRF) at Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin. The proceeds from this year's members' draw will help fund the team's research into inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), to find effective treatment strategies for children suffering from chronic IBD, including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, and your support is greatly appreciated.

The draw will take place on Friday, 12 June and the winners will be posted



**BUY YOUR
TICKET
ONLINE!**

on the INTO website immediately afterwards. Make sure you're in with a chance. Buy your ticket online today and please encourage all your teaching colleagues to do the same. You can get your ticket, or donate to the CMRF, at <https://ti.to/into-events/into-annual-members-draw>.



Closing date for primary staffing appeals – 15 June

The Primary Staffing Appeals Board will have its next meeting in June to deal with appeals for the 2020/21 school year.

[DES Circular 0018/2020](#) sets out the staffing allocation for each school and details cases in which schools can appeal their staffing allocation.

As you finish primary school



A message from the President of Ireland to sixth class pupils

May I send my very best wishes to all of you children as you enter the final weeks of your primary school years.

I know that these last two months have been difficult for you, for your teachers and your parents. To those of you who have lost loved ones may I offer my deepest sympathies. Many of you, I know too, are worried about relatives who are ill or maybe lonely. I know, from so many who have written to me, that you are of course missing grand-parents, cousins or neighbours that you haven't seen for some time.

All of you will have greatly missed being with all your school friends and teachers. For example, the cancellation or postponement of Confirmations, sports days, school concerts, graduation ceremonies and other events which would traditionally mark and celebrate the end of your time in primary school will, no doubt, have been a source of disappointment for so many of you.

As President of Ireland I have been very impressed with the way in which all of you have responded, risen to the challenges, continued to learn at home, working with your teachers and parents. You have found all sorts of imaginative ways to remain in touch with your friends and pursue your hobbies, while at the same time always putting the safety of others, including your relatives and neighbours, ahead of your own wishes and plans. Those are achievements of which you can all be very proud indeed.

While this last term in primary school has, in many ways, been difficult for you, it is my great hope that it has also allowed you to experience something very important about your school days. You have learned that your school is not just a building containing a series of classrooms where lessons are held, tests are sat and homework is

corrected. A school is so much more than that.

School is where you have been making friends, working together in teams, discovering your talents and developing them to the best of your ability. School is where we celebrate all that we have in common with each other while recognising and respecting the differences that make each of us unique.

School is where we learn how to be part of a community and, most importantly, how to include others in that sense of community, by being kind and supportive and generous.

School and home are places where we release our creativity and begin to realise our great potential as citizens, and the importance of becoming a person who works with others to make our society a better place.

Although your school buildings have been closed now for many weeks, the fact that you have remained united has shown that there are some things that no lockdown can ever postpone, shut down, cancel or take from you, including the connection you share with your fellow pupils, your teachers, and with all those who have made school and your community such an important part of your life.

In September you will be commencing a new and exciting chapter of your lives during which I hope that all of you will be able to look back on your years in primary school with gratitude, affection, and humour too.

As you now say goodbye to your primary school years, and look forward to your first year in secondary school, may I wish each and every one of you every happiness as you continue your educational journey.

Beir beannacht d'on todcháí.

School and home are places where we release our creativity and begin to realise our great potential as citizens, and the importance of becoming a person who works with others to make our society a better place.





Agus tú ag fágáil na bunscoile



Teachtaireacht ó Uachtarán na hÉireann do dhaltaí i rang a sé

Dia dhíbh a pháistí. Sibhse ar fad nach bhfuil ach seachtainí fágtha agaibh sula críochnaíonn sibh bhur leathanta sa bhunscoil, seolaim mo bheannachtaí chugaibh uilig.

Is ait an saol atá againn le cúpla mí anuas. Tuigim go maith cé chomh deacair is a raibh sé oraibhse, ar bhur múinteoirí agus ar bhur dtuismitheoirí le linn na hama sin. Daoibhse ar chaill gaolta libh le déanaí, ba mhaith liom mo chomhbhrón óm' chroí a chur in iúl díbh.

Is ar scoil agus sa bhaile a scaoilimid saor ár gcruthaitheacht agus a thosaímid ag traisiú ár gcumas mar shaoránaigh, agus a thuigimid an tábhacht a bhaineann le bheith mar dhaoine a oibríonn le daoine eile chun cuma níos fearr a chur ar ár sochaí.

B'fhéidir go bhfuil inní oraibh chomh maith faoi ghaolta atá tinn nó i mbaol. Tá a fhios agam, ó na litreacha ar fad atá faighte agam, go n-airíonn sibh uaibh sean-máthaireacha, sean-athaireacha, colceathracha agus comharsana nach bhfaca sibh le tamall.

Táim cinnte freisin, go n-airíonn sibh uaibh bhur gcáirde scoile agus bhur múinteoirí. Tá díomá ar go leor díbh, ar ndóigh, toisc, mar shampla, gur cuireadh Cóineartú, laethanta spóirt, ceolchoirmeacha scoile, searmanais fágála scoile agus imeachtaí eile ina ndéantar ceiliúradh ar dheireadh na bunscoile go traidisiúnta ar athló nó ar ceal.

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, tá mé an-bhródúil as an gcaoi inar fhreagair sibh na dúshlán seo. Lean sibh libh ag foghlaim sa bhaile, ag oibriú le bhur múinteoirí agus bhur dtuismitheoirí. Tá bealaí

nua aimsithe agaibh freisin le fanacht i dteagmháil le bhur gcairde agus chun tabhairt faoi bhur gcaitheamh aimsire. An t-am ar fad, tá sábháilteacht daoine eile, bhur ngaolta agus comharsana san áireamh, curtha chun tosaigh agaibh thar bhur mianta agus pleananna féin. Molaim sibh. Is éachtaí iad sin agus is féidir libh a bheith an-bhródúil astu.

Fiú go raibh an téarma deiridh seo sa bhunscoil deacair daoibh ar go leor bealaí, tá nithe dearfacha le tógaint as b'fhéidir. Tá súil agam gur fhoghlaim sibh rud éigin an-tábhachtach faoi bhur leathanta scoile. D'fhoghlaim sibh nach iad na foirgneamh amháin atá tabhachtach sa scoil ina bhfuil seomraí ranga ina ndéantar ceachtanna, scrúduithe agus ina gceartaítear obair bhaile. Tá i bhfad níos mó ná sin i gceist le scoil.

Is ar scoil a bhí sibh ag foghlaim cáirdeas, ag oibriú le chéile i bhfoirne, ag aimsiú agus ag forbairt bhur mbuanna. Is ar scoil a rinne sibh ceiliúradh ar na rudaí atá againn i gcoiteann mar chomhluadar agus ina n-aithnímid agus ina mbíonn meas againn ar na héagsúlachtaí atá eadrainn.

Is ar scoil a d'fhoghlaim sibh le bheith mar baill consiasaigh de phobal agus, an rud is tábhachtaí, conas miantraí, dualgaisí agus ceartanna daoine eile a áireamh sa phobal sin, trína bheith cineálta agus tacúil agus flaithiúil.

Is ar scoil agus sa bhaile a scaoilimid saor ár gcruthaitheacht agus a thosaímid ag traisiú ár gcumas mar shaoránaigh, agus a thuigimid an tábhacht a bhaineann le bheith mar dhaoine a oibríonn le daoine eile chun cuma níos fearr a chur ar ár sochaí.

Cé go bhfuil an foirgneamh scoile dúnta anois le seachtainí, tá sibh aontaithe go fóill. Is léir nach féidir le COVID19 ar bith an nasc atá agaibh leis na daltaí eile agus le foireann na scoile a chealú ná a bhriseadh.

I Meán Fómhair beidh sibh ag tosú ar chaibidil nua, spleodrach in bhur saol agus tá súil agam go mbeidh sibh in ann breathnú siar ar bhur mblianta sa bhunscoil le buíochas, gean agus greann freisin.

Agus sibh ag fágáil slán le bhur mblianta bunscoile, agus ag féachaint chun cinn i dtreo an chéad bhliain sa mheánscoil, guím gach sonas oraibh uilig agus sibh ag leanúint ar aghaidh ar bhur dturas san oideachas.

Beir beannacht don todhcháí.

Teachers call for CPD on standardised testing

Almost a decade has passed since a chief inspector’s report highlighted the need to provide primary teachers with ‘guidance on the administration of standardised tests, interpretation of the results and use of the results to inform teaching and learning’. (DES, p. 50) In the intervening period, considerable efforts have been made in response by a broad constituency including the DES, NCCA and PDST to address teachers’ needs. Against this backdrop, the findings of a recent research collaboration, spearheaded by the Centre for Assessment Research, Policy and Practice in Education (CARPE) at DCU and the INTO, are noteworthy, particularly those relating to teachers’ CPD needs as shown in Table 1.

Statements in the table have been ranked in descending order in accordance with teachers’ stated CPD priorities; those in red were highlighted as ‘important’ by teachers. Additionally, the statements have been colour coded according to the type of CPD being sought (blue: using test data; pink: reporting to stakeholders; yellow: mechanisms and operations of standardised testing). So what do



teachers want? Well there are a number of take away points.

First, teachers expressed a very strong desire for CPD in the area of standardised testing, with over 80% prioritising guidance in relation to how to use standardised testing (ST) results to make decisions about children with special educational needs (SEN), how to guide planning, teaching and learning and how to communicate the results to parents/guardians.

Second, more than two thirds of teachers (70%+) indicated that they

were interested in learning more about the technical aspects of ST, including the meaning of different standardised scores, validity and the application of the standard error of measurement (SEM).

Third, the area of least interest to teachers was how standardised tests are constructed, even though it could be argued that this information is fundamental to an understanding of what standardised test scores mean.

In light of these findings, a website called U2canlearn.

com is under construction with the financial support of the Teaching Council (John Coolahan Research Support Framework Award) and a DCU Research Fellowship. The site will provide open access to a range of resources tailored to meet teachers’ CPD needs in relation to standardised testing. Details of the launch of the site will be provided in the September edition of *InTouch*.

DR ZITA LYSAGHT is a member of the School of Policy and Practice at DCU.

Table 1: Professional development priorities*	Important %	Undecided %	Unimportant %
1. Using standardised test scores to make judgements about special needs	81	9	10
2. Communicating standardised results to parents/guardians	81	9	10
3. Using standardised test results to guide planning and teaching	80	10	11
4. Using standardised tests as assessments for learning (AfL)	81	11	8
5. The meaning of STen scores	76	6	19
6. The validity of standardised test content	76	10	14
7. The meaning of Percentile Ranks	75	6	19
8. The meaning of Standard Scores	74	8	18
9. The validity and reliability of standardised test norms	73	12	15
10. Applying the Standard Error of Measurement when interpreting test scores	70	17	13
11. Irish and international research on standardised testing	65	21	14
12. Providing pupils with feedback on their standardised test results	62	20	18
13. Administering standardised tests	61	7	32
14. The implications of reporting aggregated standardised test results to the BOM/DES	61	23	17
15. Preparing pupils to take standardised tests	59	14	27
16. How standardised tests are constructed	54	15	32

* Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

** Combined percentage: Extremely Important and Important

*** Combined percentage: Relatively Important and Not Important at all



INTO bursaries open for applications

The INTO Bursary Scheme for members will be continued for 2020. Up to six bursaries will be awarded with awards of €3,000 for doctorate level and €1,500 for masters level/ other. Bursaries are open to all INTO members, north and south. Any project which has been approved as a research endeavour by a recognised third level institute will be considered for grant purposes.

CEC have decided that one of the

INTO bursaries in 2020 will be ring-fenced for research into educational disadvantage in honour of Vere Foster, INTO's first president, who was born just over 200 years ago and who was particularly active in addressing educational disadvantage.

All applications received by the closing date of 5pm Friday, 25 September 2020 will be examined by an independent assessor who will make recommendations on the

applications. Bursaries will be awarded at a ceremony at this year's INTO Consultative Conference on Education, which is taking place on Friday 13 and Saturday, 14 November 2020 at the Mullingar Park Hotel.

Application forms should be returned to: Education Section (Bursary Scheme), INTO, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1 or via email to education@into.ie. [Terms and conditions and application forms can be found here.](#)

Increment skips will continue for post-2011 entrants

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has published [Circular 0033/2020](#) which confirms the continuation of increment skips negotiated by the INTO under the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 (PSSA).

Increment skips, which speed teachers' progress up the pay scale, were an important measure secured in the campaign to secure pay equality.

The previous circular ([0021/2019](#)) had set out how the skips

were applied between 1 March 2019 and 29 February 2020. A new circular was needed to ensure continuation of increment skips for the teachers concerned, and to clarify aspects of implementation of the measure.

INTO was involved in detailed discussions with the DES about continuation of skips and these discussions are now reflected in the new circular. The terms of the process remain the same and will apply in the manner agreed under the PSSA.

Main panel is now in operation

The Main Panel came into operation on 20 May. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) sent a list of permanent teachers available for redeployment to the panel operator in each diocese, or under each patron body.

The panel operators will circulate the list to principals of all the schools in their panel area who have a permanent vacancy arising in the 2020/21 school year. Principals must fill their permanent vacancies from this list.

There were 257 teachers on redeployment panels on 20 May.

The DES has confirmed that teachers from the main panel could be offered, and accept, posts which are becoming vacant due to retirements in the first week of

October.

The INTO has created some short informational animations about the panel which you can [watch on our website](#). These videos explain what the main panel is, how and why you can defer panel rights and the process of making appointments from the panel.

The INTO encourages all schools with vacancies and teachers on the panel to engage fully with the panel process. Teachers on the panel should ensure that they complete a Panel Update Form and return it to the Primary Allocations Section of the DES when they have secured a job (or if they are deferring their panel rights) to ensure that their name is removed from the panel list in a timely manner.

Hundreds of teachers awarded CIDs

Since January of this year the INTO has been advising and assisting members in relation to claiming a contract of indefinite duration (CID) under the provisions contained in DES Circular 0023/2015. In recent weeks, members have been notified of the decisions in respect of these applications via their schools.

The majority of the approximately 850 applications have been successful with teachers having been granted a CID. Members should note that any appeal of the refusal to grant a CID or with the terms of the contract of the CID (if awarded) must be made within 4 working weeks from the date of notification. The adjudication process is outlined in DES [Circular 0030/2018](#).

Members should continue to email any queries regarding CIDs including the adjudication process to info@into.ie.

Tá an cúrsa samhraidh ‘An Ghaeilge: Cumarsáid, Comhlúadar agus Craic’ curtha ar ceal

Mar gheall ar srianta COVID-19, ní bheidh an cúrsa samhraidh i nDún Chaoin ar siúl i mbliana.

Due to COVID-19, the INTO’s summer course ‘An Ghaeilge: Cumarsáid, Comhlúadar agus Craic’ will not take place this year.

INTO committees continue their work

The INTO’s national committees are continuing their business remotely. The Education Committee recently held their first online meeting, with the Equality Committee and Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Committee to follow suit in the coming weeks.

Online elections are underway in districts with committee vacancies and the results will be declared on the INTO website.

Class size, pay equality and the government programme

The CEC decided at its May meeting to undertake an urgent lobby of TDs from the three parties which were discussing a programme for government. As members will be aware, negotiations are ongoing between three political parties and several independents to agree a programme for government.

Members of the CEC contacted all 84 TDs concerned using email, phone,

through video conference calls and via social media platforms. Material developed by INTO on class sizes and applicable statistics, as well as previous commitments made by the relevant political parties were sent to the TDs. All contacts highlighted:

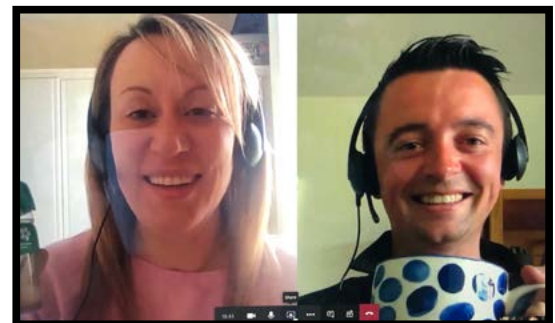
- That class sizes here are the largest of any schools in the EU and the vital importance for the quality of our

education service to bring our class sizes down, and

- The remaining pay discrimination affecting some teachers recruited since 2010 and the importance of completing the journey to pay equality.

CEC members sought that commitments on both of these priorities be included in any negotiated government programme.

Virtual tea break for Alzheimers



Thursday, 7 May was Alzheimer’s Tea Day. While we normally mark the occasion in INTO Head Office, this year INTO staff and members of the Central Executive Committee came together in small groups online for a virtual cuppa and made donations to the Irish Alzheimer’s Society.

The INTO urges Teaching Council to review interim Droichead measures

On 22 May, the Teaching Council published an update for NQTs involved in the Droichead process during the 2019/20 school year. This update was to clarify matters for NQTs who have been affected by the closure of schools due to COVID-19.

INTO members have contacted their CEC representatives and Head Office regarding the interim measures as notified by the Teaching Council.

INTO has contacted and is continuing to engage with the Teaching Council

on this issue. We will be seeking a more flexible approach from the council to take account of the ongoing engagement of NQTs and PSTs with the Droichead process since school buildings closed on 12 March, 2020.



As we move past the pandemic, INTO President Mary Magner calls time on large class sizes and pay inequality

I have been overawed by your dedication and professionalism as you work diligently from your kitchen tables reaching out to pupils and families throughout the country, supporting them with incredible care and empathy. Teachers will always do right by their pupils. Across the island of Ireland, while there may have been different approaches taken to the current health crisis, the resolve and professionalism of our members was the same.

Every day, I hear numerous stories of your kindness in sustaining vulnerable children, distributing school meals and constantly checking in on our pupils' wellbeing.

Thank you most especially for not only providing a continuation of learning opportunities for our primary pupils but for being sensitive and compassionate to those who are vulnerable and hungry, those who have special educational needs and for those children and parents who are anxious and worried and in fear of losing family and friends.

You have certainly risen to the challenges, upskilling and providing new learning platforms for our pupils, often going beyond the call of duty. Balancing 'distance learning' and 'on-line' work with your personal and family lives are undoubtedly demanding and stressful. It was heartening to note that Minister McHugh rightly acknowledged the tremendous work that teachers and schools are doing throughout the country. It has been tough, but people are cheering for you and appreciating you. I applaud you and thank you for doing what you do best.

LOOKING AHEAD

In facing the uncertain future ahead, the INTO is already starting to look past the current pandemic. The immediate task at hand relates to the reopening of our schools, which must be led by public health advice and engagement with



You have certainly risen to the challenges, upskilling and providing new learning platforms for our pupils, often going beyond the call of duty.

this union. In his editorial, our general secretary has outlined how we have consulted, on our feet, and entered formal consultation in good faith to represent our members. Despite the pressures we are all under, it's worth thanking all those elected branch, district and national officers who took the time to support this member consultation.

Clear, unambiguous public guidelines must be in place with health and safety being paramount. We will continue to engage with the Department of Education and Skills and management bodies along with key stakeholders during the months ahead and throughout the summer. I encourage you to keep an eye on the

website for regular updates and accurate, clear-cut information, particularly throughout the summer.

WE MUST REDUCE OUR CLASS SIZES

The issue of class sizes has never been more crucial, not only for the impact it has on pupils learning but more relevant now in our 'new normal' of social distancing. Class sizes in Ireland remain well above both EU and OECD averages. Your district executive representatives and lobbyists are now focussed on lobbying TDs to influence the forthcoming programme for government, contacting every politician across the country. I appeal for your help to emphasise the importance of reducing class size with your local politicians and public representatives.

WE MUST DELIVER AN END TO PAY INEQUALITY

Our campaign to end the blight of pay inequality on our profession is, hopefully, nearing an end. Last year's commitment from the government to secure a conclusion to this long-standing issue, should and must now be delivered in the context of the next public sector pay deal. Our long-standing principals' award too, must finally be delivered, ensuring we attract and retain strong school leaders in our school, ever more important in the coming months and years.

NORTHERN PAY DEAL

I want to acknowledge our colleagues in the North who worked diligently to conduct a ballot of members on the recent pay deal. With significant support for the deal, the team will now focus on delivering on outstanding issues related to workload and other matters.

A WELL-EARNED BREAK

As we approach the summer holidays in the weeks ahead, enjoy a well-earned rest, concentrate on rejuvenation, eating and exercising well and being kind to yourselves. Enjoy the simple things in life, spend time with family and those you love, look out for each other and begin each day with a grateful heart. Be assured that the INTO will protect and represent you to the best of our ability.

MARY MAGNER, INTO President 2020/21.

W.B. Yeat's echoing lines "All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born" certainly resonates during this pandemic crisis and like the Easter Rebellion, life as we know it, is totally altered. The poet witnessed "a world one has worked with or against for years suddenly overwhelmed. As yet, one knows nothing of the future, except that it must be very unlike the past". Though everyday life is "transformed utterly", it is not entirely negative.

How do we reopen our schools?

Following consultation with our members, the INTO made a detailed submission to the Department of Education and Skills outlining the key issues that will need consideration in advance of schools reopening.

Principles underpinning a return to school

INTO is seeking agreement from the stakeholders on a number of principles governing the operation of schools/ education provision during the COVID-19 period, including that:

- Priority must be given to the safety and physical/mental health and well-being of staff, pupils and parents in primary schools;
- Children's learning and development, including their well-being, must be supported by schools and relevant support services such as NEPS and CAMHS, which must be increased to cope with the needs of school communities;
- A collaborative approach to developing and implementing procedures and protocols at a national level is essential. Individual schools cannot be asked to develop their own guidance;
- All key decision-makers should approach the health, safety and wellbeing of each other with compassion and understanding;
- Adequate resources must be allocated to schools by the DES to implement the comprehensive health and safety measures required for schools to operate safely; and

- There must be an acknowledgement that, for the duration of the public health crisis, there will be a need to accommodate a changing school environment. This must be taken into account by the Inspectorate, NCSE and other DES sections and agencies. It will be necessary to suspend inspections and initiatives, other than those that are aimed at contributing to the school's efforts to maintain the health and well-being of the school community for the duration of the crisis.

A safe environment for staff and pupils

Comprehensive public health advice must be available to parents and teachers to indicate that it is safe for schools to open and a comprehensive media and public information campaign must be carried out to assure parents of the safety of their children in the school setting. Schools must have adequate notice of reopening and appropriate guidance, resources and support must be provided to schools to ensure that measures are in place to prevent the spread of the virus.

Clear occupational health advice must be available for teachers and other staff in schools, including pregnant women and those in at risk categories. Procedures must

be in place for preventing and dealing with a COVID-19 case in the school. If a school believes, following an assessment, that it cannot provide a safe environment for children, then all steps must be taken to remedy this. A school which is judged by the BOM/ DES/ HSA to be an unsafe environment, it should not reopen.

Cleaning and hygiene

Schools will need an appropriate and robust cleaning regime in place in advance of return and at regular intervals, to prevent the spread of the virus. Clear guidance must be given to school cleaning staff about cleaning practices that meet the advice of public health officials and training for cleaners will be required.

In order to implement this, extra funding will be required by schools. In addition, funding will be required to ensure that appropriate facilities are in place to accommodate good hygiene practices, e.g. access to warm water, soap, hand gel and disposable paper towels. Staff, pupils and essential visitors should have access to any protective equipment (e.g. masks) which are recommended by public health advice and such equipment should be centrally procured by DES/HSE and provided to schools

... it will be necessary for almost all schools to reduce the number of children attending at one time. This will pose huge organisational challenges for schools and clear communication with parents will be necessary.





Physical distancing

Decisions on how many children and staff a school can safely accommodate must be made in line with recommendations of public health experts and the HSA, in consultation with the board of management of the school. Given the current guidelines of physical distancing, it will be necessary for almost all schools to reduce the number of children attending at one time. This will pose huge organisational challenges for schools and clear communication with parents will be necessary

It's also clear that it's not possible to observe physical distancing in a primary/ special school in the same way as it is in other workplaces, particularly among younger children, including those starting school and some children with special educational needs. Appropriate measures should be in place to assist children with physical distancing, including providing for smaller class groups, floor markings, removal/rearrangement of furniture, arrangements for assembly and dismissal, arrangements for playing, one-way access systems, access to toilets etc. Lesson

plans should be developed to teach and reinforce the concept of physical distancing to pupils.

Conditions of employment issues

Teachers must feel reassured that they are returning to a safe workplace. Clarification will be needed concerning some conditions of employment matters such as:

- Access to paid, substitutable, COVID-19 leave that doesn't count as sick leave for those who are ill with COVID-19 or who are self isolating;
- Teachers in at-risk groups should be permitted to work from home. Clarification will be needed in relation to the process for teachers in this group, and how schools can operate if a significant cohort of teachers is in this category.
- Public health authorities need to clarify the level of risk, or additional risk if any, to pregnant teachers.
- Clarification is needed for teachers with childcare responsibilities,

given that there may be disruption to childcare arrangements due to capacity issues in schools/childcare settings.

- Specific guidance is needed for teachers living with or caring for vulnerable people.

The INTO is keen to ensure that our members can be confident that, when they return to school on a full-time basis, their return will be to working environments where every precaution and practical step has been taken to protect both themselves and their pupils from COVID-19. We don't want to see schools opened prematurely and having to face a second period of enforced closure, which would only compound an already difficult situation. We know that our membership is up for the challenge of re-starting the formal school system, but we expect that these concerns will be considered and addressed before we do.

You can read the INTO's full submission on reopening schools at <https://bit.ly/reopeningschoolssubmission>.



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GOAL presents 'Global Sparks Series'

An online tool to learn more about the UN Global Goals

COVID-19 has posed significant, widespread disruption to education across the world. It has transferred the classroom into homes and forced an unprecedented shift in how we interact, learn and teach.

Classrooms will look different when children come back to school in September. Every child will have a story to tell, as each one will have been affected by the extremity of this pandemic in one way or another. Now more than ever we need to stand together as we adapt our innovative role as educators.

With the most vulnerable in our communities in Ireland being brought to the forefront of our minds during this health crisis, we have learned that

COVID-19 has no boundaries, that the world is indeed a very small place, that what happens in one part of the world affects other parts of the world, and that the most vulnerable are affected first and most severely.

People around the globe are standing together to support those who need support and protection the most. Children and adults are showing solidarity by staying at home, helping their neighbours, by social distancing.

As a humanitarian aid agency, GOAL is responding to the current health crisis through its programmes in 13 countries around the globe. And GOAL is acutely aware that, like COVID-19, there are many challenges the global community is facing into the future that can only be

tackled if we work together as a global community. These challenges include climate change, poverty, migration, hunger and global injustices.

With these challenges in mind, we are passionate about ensuring children in Ireland believe a sustainable and fair future is achievable and equipping them with the tools to help contribute to this future. Through our [Development Education Programme](#), we support understanding of and reflection on global issues and support young people in taking actions for a sustainable and fair future.

While classrooms are changing, GOAL endeavours to continue supporting schools and teachers in any way we can as children settle into the world of education post-COVID-19. We want to do this with sensitivity and awareness of the individual stories children have to tell, and the potential new logistical situations in the classroom. We want to continue equipping teachers to continue fostering global citizenship within their classroom while adhering to the new restrictions that COVID-19 may pose for the classroom.

In the month of June, while we can't deliver our workshops in classrooms, we are inviting all primary school children to learn about the [UN Global Goals](#) through weekly activities on our online [Global Sparks Series](#). We know you have lots on your minds, so we're keeping this super easy and hopefully, the activities will 'spark' some inspiration for your students. The programme helps inspire children to imagine and act for a world without climate change and poverty, where oceans, animals and people are healthy.

From September onwards, the [GOAL Changermaker](#) will offer learning resources that are implementable and relevant to the new learning environment. Supporting teachers and children in making the connection between their most recent experience of the health crisis to learning about the interconnectedness of the world and taking action in solidarity for the [UN Global Goals](#).

Visit [GOALs Global Citizenship page](#) for all the information on our programme

NINA SACHAU and JESSICA SARGEANT, GOAL Global.



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THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development





Áine Ní Ghlinn is new Laureate na nÓg

Irish language author Áine Ní Ghlinn has been announced as the sixth Laureate na nÓg, Ireland's children's literature laureate. Áine is the first author who writes exclusively in Irish to be awarded the honour, and will hold the title from now until 2022.

Laureate na nÓg was established in 2010 to engage young people with high quality literature and to underline the importance of children's literature in our cultural and imaginative lives. It is an initiative of the Arts Council, administered by Children's Books Ireland with the support of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Poetry Ireland.

Áine Ní Ghlinn has written over thirty children's books, including poetry collections and an array of books and novels for children and teenagers. Her ambition as Laureate is to lift the cloak of invisibility from Irish language authors and books, and to encourage children

and young people to read for pleasure as Gaeilge.

Speaking as new Laureate na nÓg, Áine Ní Ghlinn said: "I am humbled and excited at being appointed Laureate na nÓg. It is the high point of my writing career and an incredible honour to be the first Irish language writer awarded the honour. As a central part of my laureate term, I want to raise the profile of children's literature as Gaeilge and to bring leabhair Ghaeilge do pháistí into the mainstream conversation. I want children, parents, grandparents, teachers to have the same access to high quality children's literature as Gaeilge as they already have in English. Children deserve the opportunity to engage with Irish language literature for pleasure and not just as schoolwork."

Áine is originally from County Tipperary. She worked for a number of years in RTÉ and Raidió na Gaeltachta, and now divides her time between writing, delivering creative writing workshops in

schools around the country and part-time lecturing in Dublin City University. Her books have won the Gradam Reics Carló Book of the Year Award three times, most recently in 2019 for her novel *Boscadán*. In 2015, her YA novel *Daideo* won the Honour Award for Fiction at the Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year Awards, as well as the Literacy Association of Ireland Book of the Year.

Áine is a former chair of the Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year Awards and is a strong advocate for Irish writers and illustrators. She has been engaged for many years in the wider children's literature sector as a visible, vocal and measured champion of books that are written for children in the Irish language. Áine was selected as one of Children's Books Ireland's 20 'Bold Girls' in 2018, a project celebrating strong girls and women in children's literature and highlighting Irish women artists whose work is remarkable.

First aid in primary schools – Teachers' views requested

The School of Health and Human Performance at Dublin City University are undertaking a national study to learn more about Irish primary school teachers' views on first aid at school. The aim of the study is to learn more about what types of injuries and illnesses teachers are exposed to when working, and how competent teachers feel in administering first aid to children. Furthermore, the study wishes to gain an understanding of teachers' current first aid knowledge and to hear more about attitudes towards first aid as a teacher in Ireland.

This novel study aims to highlight the responsibility placed on teachers, views on first aid education and how first aid training can be improved.

This research has never been done in Ireland to date and participation in this study can potentially help to find out ways of supporting teachers in this area. This study is fully anonymous and participants will not be identified in the findings.

If you are interested in taking part in the study, please click the following link: <https://forms.gle/5zrZXxWZsVYLk4VJ7>

Global Citizenship School summer course

Plans to host the second Global Citizenship School (GCS) face-to-face summer course this August in Dublin are in train. These plans are entirely subject to COVID-19 public health guidelines and social distancing requirements being in place. At this stage, GCS is seeking expressions of interest for attendance at this course. It will be a 5 day, EPV-approved course and was described as a successful and very practical event by last year's attendees.

Cost: €35 with lunch provided.

To indicate your expression of interest, please send your name, branch and email address to nfo@globalcitizenshipschool.ie

INTO Learning are also hosting an updated on-line course "Global Citizenship School" in early July.

Check out www.into.ie/learning for info re applying. Never before in the history of the world has global action been more important. Please consider one of the above courses or browse our website for ideas for September!

Check out www.GlobalCitizenshipSchool.ie for more information.



Take an adventure with



In response to the COVID-19 crisis, an unprecedented coalition has come together to launch 'Earth School', an initiative that provides free, high-quality educational content to help students, parents and teachers around the world who are currently at home.

Initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and TED-Ed, Earth School takes students on a 30-day 'adventure' through the natural world.

The curated Earth School content features videos, reading materials and activities – which will be translated into over ten languages – to help students gain an understanding of the environment while considering their role within it. This is the biggest online learning initiative in UNEP's history and is available for free on TED-Ed's website.

According to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), more than 1.5 billion learners are affected by COVID-19 school closures. The pandemic has caused a health, economic, and education crisis; in the age of physical and social constraints, there is a strong need for global science literacy.

That is why UNEP and TED-Ed – in coordination with more than 50 collaborators, including National Geographic, WWF and UNESCO – have come together to create this Earth School. Built for children and youth ages five to 18, it spans 30 school days that run between Earth Day and World Environment Day on 5 June, which this year will take place under the banner of 'Time for Nature'.

TED-Ed creates free, video-based lessons on everything from animals and climate change to underwater farms. It is the educational arm of TED, whose library of thousands of interactive lessons – built by a network of 500,000 educators from across the world – spans all ages and subjects.

Each 'adventure' has been carefully selected by a panel of expert practitioners and caters to different age groups and consists of a hands-on experiment and nature discovery. In addition to TED-Ed's own content, Earth School will feature videos from notable media organisations, including National Geographic and the BBC, with the goal of empowering participating students to be caretakers of our planet.

"Billions of children are currently out of school because of COVID-19. But learning cannot stop. COVID-19 has revealed how deeply interconnected all life on this planet is," said UNEP's Executive Director, Inger Andersen. "I am delighted that UNEP, along with TED-Ed and other collaborators, are launching Earth School. Learning about the natural world will be critical to building a better and sustainable future for all."

"These unprecedented times highlight just how important it is for young people to connect with the natural world and understand science," said Vicki Phillips, executive vice president and chief education officer at the National Geographic Society. "We're thrilled to join forces with trusted organisations like UNEP and TED-Ed to cultivate a spirit of exploration and build empathy for the

Earth, no matter where students are in the world – even if it's from inside their homes, from a window, or on a short walk in the neighborhood."

"Despite being confined to their homes, this project shows that students, parents and teachers throughout the world can still engage in science-based learning and adventures together. Earth School is a collaboration between so many talented educators and incredible partners from around the world, which is why we're proud and thrilled to see the initiative feeding the global curiosity of home-bound students, all of whom are the future environmental stewards of our planet. This platform is a gateway to some of the most inspiring lessons on nature and the environment, and each lesson comes with practical and fun activities that students can engage with and share," said Logan Smalley, founding director of TED's youth and education initiative, TED-Ed.

The lessons were curated by a team of environmental education experts including Kathleen Usher PhD, Jessie Oliver and Juliane Voss, who are working with over 100 contributors in creating Earth School. The initiative is in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 and the Decade of Delivery and will contribute towards the Global Education Coalition launched by UNESCO to convene governments, technology partners and leaders in the education field to keep pupils learning. As part of this coalition, UNEP will be exploring how this content can be adapted and shared with children who aren't able to access the Internet.

Children's book award winners announced

The winners of the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards were announced by book-loving broadcaster Rick O'Shea, in a ceremony shared online for the first time in the awards' 30 years history.

- Book Of The Year Award Winner: Máire Zepf for *Nóinín*
- Honour Award For Fiction Winner: Sarah Crossan for *Toffee*
- Honour Award For Illustration Winner: Ashling Lindsay for *The Tide*
- Eilís Dillon Award Winner: Kim Sharkey for *Mór agus Muilc*
- The Judges' Special Award Winner: Meg Grehan for *The Deepest Breath*

Máire Zepf, the first children's writing fellow at Queen's University Belfast and Seamus Heaney Centre has won the coveted Book of the Year Award for her compelling verse novel *Nóinín* that depicts, with beguiling subtlety and nuance, the online grooming of a shy teenage girl, the slow build-up to a shocking crime and the aftermath from the perspective of her best friend. Judges praised the rich imagery, poetic language and intertextual references to fairy tales and Irish myth which lend resonance in this very modern and accessible tale of the dangers of social media.

Ireland's former Laureate na nÓg Sarah Crossan has won the Honour Award for Fiction for her verse novel *Toffee*, a lyrical and moving portrayal of the relationship between a teenage girl who has run away from her abusive father, and an elderly woman with dementia, who mistakes the girl for a close childhood friend. Judges commented that each poem is a gem in itself and that through deft storytelling and masterful characterisation, complex themes of identity, child and elder abuse, memory loss, loneliness and connection are explored with sensitivity, honesty, warmth and respect.

Ashling Lindsay has won the Honour Award for Illustration for her artwork in



The Tide written by Clare Helen Welsh, a poignant portrayal of a young girl coming to an understanding of her grandfather's memory loss which is ultimately uplifting and enlightening for child and adult readers alike. Judges noted the exquisite illustrations, with gentle rhythms mirroring the ebb and flow of the tide, memory and the passage of time, and in particular, a stunning double spread depicting the pair dancing at sunset creating a glorious sense of harmony that assuages earlier moments of disquiet.

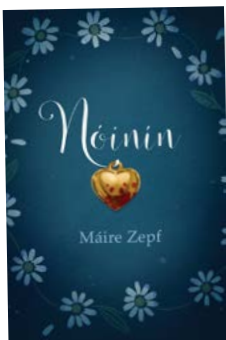
The Eilís Dillon Award for a first children's book went to Kim Sharkey for *Mór agus Muilc*, a stunning retelling in picture and text of an unusual and dark tale from oral Irish culture as told by John Óg Hiúdaí Neidí Ó Colla. Judges remarked on the rhythmic repetition of dialogue and the sumptuous and evocative illustrations which create a hypnotic sense of movement as a growing cast of characters join the elongated Mór and the jester-like Muilc in a dance towards their doom. This award is named in honour of the revered Irish children's author Eilís Dillon, whose birth centenary was on 7th March of this year.

The Judges' Special Award this year goes to Meg Grehan for *The Deepest Breath*, a thoughtful, exquisitely gentle and heart-rending verse novel that explores with a superb lightness of touch important themes relating to anxiety,



emerging sexual identity, friendship and love. The lyrical narrative captures with great delicacy the fragile voice of an eleven-year-old girl, whose feelings for her friend both excite and confuse her as she seeks understanding and affirmation from her mother. The motif of water, of drowning and breathing, lends a dreamy atmosphere to this tender, courageous and ultimately uplifting story.

And last but far from least, the new KPMG Reading Hero award was presented to Harry Darcy, a young reader from Gorey, Co Wexford. Harry's best friend Rossa nominated him as his 'book guru', saying "Harry always has his head in a book no matter where he is. On the bus, on school trips, in the car, on the subs bench at matches waiting to take to the field, in class when he is supposed to be doing something else (driving the teacher mad) and even at his own birthday party. Reading and rugby are his two favourite things, and he has been known to do both together. I don't know any other person in the world that reads as much as my friend Harry." Teachers, parents, guardians, relatives, friends and librarians from all across Ireland were asked to nominate their KPMG Reading Hero.



COVID crisis and the German perspective

Marlis Tepe, president of the German Education Union (GEW) talks about the impact of COVID-19 and the reopening of schools in Germany.

What is your conclusion after five weeks of lockdown: how did education workers cope with the closing of schools – income-wise and workwise?

Most teachers in Germany are state employees, they were paid all through, also teachers with permanent working contracts who are paid according to collective bargaining agreements. We also haven't heard of problems for colleagues with fixed-term contracts. So, teachers have come out adequately in terms of income.

In kindergartens, however, there were plans for short-time work and short time pay in some cases, that is what we fight against presently. However, employees of municipal kindergartens are paid through the crisis.

For those working in further education and training, it is more difficult because they are paid by honoraria. We have achieved that they now have access to social grants. For students, the time limit for the payment of grants will be extended by one term.

Lecturers who are teaching on contracts work under precarious conditions. Dependent on where they work, they have access to varying short-term support measures in the different federal states. This inequality is one of the shortcomings of our federal system.

How did teachers manage the challenge in terms of implementing distant teaching methods?

That was more dramatic. During our meeting with the federal state education ministers on 12 March, only Bavaria wanted to close schools. Consultation with virus experts then made the politicians change their position on the same evening and opt for closure on very short notice late on Friday, 13 March. Anticipating the closure, many teachers asked their students to take their books and papers home that Friday. Others went to school the following Monday and sent parcels to their pupils with the



material they needed.

Changing to digital teaching was a challenge. It was easier in schools which already had platforms for e-learning. However, many students only have access to mobile phones and could not manage their tasks without laptops or personal computers. Many schools and teachers have been very creative. Recording and sending lessons and contacting their students online and by telephone. For us, it became apparent that while there are many opportunities with digital learning, there is still an urgent need for personal contact, specifically for the younger pupils who cannot read yet.

How did the students cope with distant learning?

That varies in terms of their social background. Those living in difficult circumstances with very small homes, alcohol abuse and violence, it is very hard to learn, according to their teachers' reports who sometimes are becoming aware of this situation for the first time. Children from poorer homes are clearly at a disadvantage. It has become obvious that at the end of this crisis, we will need more measures to compensate for this. As a union, for many years we have demanded additional support for schools

in socially disadvantaged areas. Also, their teachers need to focus less on teaching duties and allow more time for social interaction.

Is there any gain for teachers from this crisis for their lessons when schools reopen in May?

Our colleagues have worked with digital programmes in many schools, they shared their digital concepts and videos. Many are now more aware of the positive aspects of digital learning. Others discovered that some of their pupils who are normally difficult to motivate respond better to learning this way. As social restrictions and isolation applied to everyone, it was easier to prioritise learning as nothing else was happening.

What does the plan for the gradual reopening of schools look like, and how did GEW influence it?

The decision to reopen schools from 4 May was made by the chancellor and the heads of the federal states. This date is important for those federal states who start their summer holidays early this year, and applies to those in the North and Berlin, also North Rhine-Westphalia. They wanted the older students back even earlier to make sure that they finish their final examinations before the holidays begin. As a union, we tried to change the fact that so much attention is paid to the examinations. We argued that in all federal states the reopening of schools requires time for preparation.

Now the reopening date will be different from region to region. Regional representatives from GEW are part of the crisis management teams in some of the federal states, in others, they are not consulted at all. At a national level, the president of the committee of education ministers from the 16 federal states has invited GEW and the teachers' association Verband Bildung und Erziehung (VBE) together with the federal parents' representatives to give their expertise, before schools reopen.

What conditions should be met to protect teachers' health when schools reopen?

We think that each school needs a proper assessment in terms of sanitary conditions and also to confirm the necessary distance of 1.5 metres can be kept. Representative bodies of teachers in the schools should be consulted in these health and safety assessments: is there enough washing facilities, soap, disinfection liquid.

School by school, they need to decide which age groups can come back first, which of the staff is ready for teaching and which is at a higher risk of infection as defined by the experts. These teachers need to continue working from home. Schools also need to plan how to organise lessons with only half of the students present. This is very complex.

Do you think teachers and students need protective equipment?

According to the standards of the ministry of labour published in April, they might have to wear masks on the corridors if it is impossible to keep the prescribed distance, for example during the breaks and when they enter or leave the building. However, even masks can become a risk if not properly used. These decisions should be left to each school.

From our point of view, it is problematic that in so many schools you don't have

committees responsible for safety and security at work. Long ago we criticised that safety and security at work is being neglected in public schools. Now the offices for public health will have to monitor and advise schools.

What does it mean for teachers who may have to organise their lessons into shifts?

They will have to prepare lessons in both ways: lessons for the students who are present in the classroom, and tasks for those who are still learning at home.

A decision needs to be made on what makes more sense, to have one group of students in school for the first three hours of the day and the other group for the last three hours, or to have them change shifts on a daily or weekly basis. It will be quite a challenge to make a timetable and coordinate a system with colleagues. It also needs time for proper planning. Additionally, all these aspects have to be coordinated with school transport services.

What should be the conditions for examinations in schools during the crisis?

We think that there shouldn't be examinations in schools this year because teachers have been unable to properly prepare students. Instead, they should get a final certificate based on

their performance before the closing of schools, acknowledging what they have achieved to date – as other countries in Europe do it.

From our perspective, the decision to enforce examinations during the crisis inappropriately focuses attention on those students who are doing their final examinations. It increases regional differences and detracts attention from all other students.

How did and how does GEW support its members in this process?

We have developed a homepage on our website which answers questions about the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have addressed politicians at all levels of government on their behalf. We spoke to the ministers of labour and finances to clarify the financial aid available.

We also approached the minister of economic cooperation and development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. All humans worldwide are affected by the coronavirus. This is also true for refugees, we advocated for relocation from camps where good sanitary conditions cannot be maintained. Solidarity and human rights are international.

MARLIS TEPE, President German Education Union was interviewed by SIGRID THOMSEN on 23 April 2020.





Focusing on your mental health and wellbeing during tough times

We would be forgiven for thinking the last few weeks were just a strange dream.

For many of us, life as we know it has been turned inside out and upside down, and we are adjusting to a very different day-to-day than we are used to.

Queuing for shopping, cabin fever, physical distancing and 'flattening the curve' have become common day language among work colleagues, friends and family.

Many of us will find ourselves facing new decisions every day, and even the things that used to feel easy, like doing the housework or exercising, will take extra planning and mental energy.

As a teacher, you may have experienced a range of emotions

over the past number of weeks. The demanding home life, balanced with teaching in a new way can bring its own challenges. In times of uncertainty, an increase in levels of worry and anxiety is common. This can affect how we are feeling, thinking and behaving.

At this time, we may be concerned for our students but it is also important to look after our own wellbeing in this and prioritise self-care. Focusing on the things we can control at this time is vital to staying focused and supporting our own mental health and wellbeing.

Planning our days and giving our self a healthy routine that includes movement, relaxation, and connection can help in giving us purpose and belonging, both, which are essential for

promoting positive wellbeing.

It can feel as if we do not have any control over what is happening around us, and of the outcome of the current situation, but please remember that we have the power to support ourselves and each other during this time.

The Five Ways for Wellbeing as developed by the New Economics Foundation in 2008 who reviewed more than 400 scientific papers to identify key things that contribute to our wellbeing

Today, these five actions can be simply adapted in line with the World Health Organisation and our government's recommendations, to help us stay focused, give our day purpose and maintain that sense of belonging in the world.

#FIVEWAYSFORTOUGHTIMES FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING FOR TOUGH TIMES

Stay Connected

Social distancing is different to social isolation. We can do many things to stay connected with our friends and family even if we cannot see them in person.

Emailing, calling, texting or even writing a letter to loved ones is great ways to keep in touch. Set aside some time each day to catch up with an old friend or relative.

The increased time spent at home can be challenging for some families but it can also be an opportunity to reconnect with our loved ones once again.

Connecting with others can help give us a sense of purpose and belonging especially if we had been feeling more disconnected physically from family.



Be active

Get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can. Keep a routine that involves walking, running, dancing or gardening. Spending time in green space can benefit both our mental and physical wellbeing. It can improve our mood, reduce feelings of stress or anger, and make us feel more relaxed.

A number of fitness instructors are also offering free online short workouts to complete at the same time each day with the online



community or in your own time.

We can stay active while maintaining the two meters of social distancing that is required. Be mindful that others will be getting outside too, say hello but avoid congregating in crowds where possible. Adhere to the most up to date government recommendations for the limitations on the area outside your home you can partake in individual exercise.

Take notice

Being mindful of how we are feeling at this time is important. Noticing these feelings can help us to address them. If consuming too much information on the current outbreak is causing increased stress, step back and reduce/limit the time spent reading/listening to this information. Actively include digital disconnection time in your day.

Be mindful of where you source your information from; only use reputable sources such as the HSE website at www.hse.ie or government information at www.gov.ie. For information on mental health and wellbeing supports/services at this time please visit www.mentalhealthireland.ie.



Give

Giving back is an opportunity to provide people who need it with some of our unique skills, information or advice.

We have seen an increase in the number of community response groups offering services to the elderly or most vulnerable in our community.

Volunteering your time with these services, if safe to do so, can help give you a sense of belonging.

Giving can also include something as simple as making someone a cup of tea. One final note, our sleep can be disrupted during times of increased worry or changes in our routine. Aim to keep a good routine by going to bed and getting up at the same time each day. Aim to get between six and eight hours sleep for adults, eight to ten hours for younger adults and ten to twelve hours for children. If the uncertainty of the current situation is causing you to lose sleep, talk about your worries with friends and family rather than coping alone.

At this time, we may be concerned for our students but it is also important to look after our own wellbeing ... and prioritise self-care.



Taking notice can include spotting the changing seasons while on a walk, the birds, and trees. Taking notice of ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, and the world around us is linked to improved mood and sense of wellbeing.

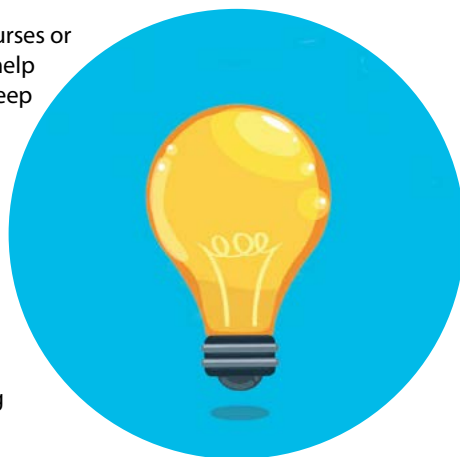
Keep learning

We may find we have increased time in our day. We can use this an opportunity to try something new we may never have done in the past.

Signing up for short online courses or trying to cook a new recipe can help give us a sense of purpose and keep our mind active.

Make time to learn something new like a card game, a breathing technique or learning a new word in a different language each day.

Learning something new or improving a skill you already have is a way of shutting out the outside world for a bit and giving you a sense of achievement.



Further support

- The Samaritans telephone service is available 24 hours a day for confidential, non-judgmental support on 116 123.
- Inspire Wellbeing provides teachers the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Services which includes a free confidential service accessible by means of a free phone telephone helpline available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, providing counselling on a range of personal health and wellbeing issues given by qualified clinicians. The service is accessible through the Freephone Helpline at 1800 411 057.
- Jigsaw, in collaboration with ESCI Education Support Centres Ireland, has developed a number of interactive online training courses for teachers. For more information visit <https://jigsawonline.ie>.
- To find mental health supports and services near you, free phone anytime the information line on 1800 111 888 or visit <https://yourmentalhealth.ie>.

Mental Health Ireland is a national voluntary organisation whose aim is to promote positive mental health, wellbeing and recovery to all individuals and communities in Ireland. We have a dedicated list of resources for minding your mental health and wellbeing during this time, which include a number of key resources for people who use mental health services and their families/carers, more information at www.mentalhelathireland.ie.

Ready, set, go

Top tips from Aaron Purcell on preparing for interviews.

“How are you set for the interview?”. This question is rarely, if ever, greeted with optimism in staffrooms around the country. Irish people are masters at deflecting compliments, we do self-deprecation on a grand scale and are not overly skilled in the art of ‘blowing our own trumpet’. It is easy to understand how the prospect of getting grilled before an interview panel about one’s suitability for a position is not every múinteoir’s cup of tea. However, you can prepare for these critical moments and persuade interviewers to judge in your favour.

Know the school

You must know your audience. *DES Circular 0044/2019* states that if the vacancy you apply for is for 24 weeks or more in duration, the interview board will consist of the chairperson of the board of management (BOM), the principal and an independent assessor.

Of course, every school context is unique but an informed and enthusiastic disposition towards the school is a good starting point.

Those interviewing for a position in a school in which they have taught will understand the school’s culture. Those applying to a school where they have no experience need to do their homework in advance. Examining the school’s mission statement and ethos will give you an understanding of what the school is trying to achieve for its community. Researching the school via the website and any social media platforms that the school (or indeed the parents’ association) utilise, will give you an insight into what the school values. Investigating the initiatives, programmes and extracurricular activities that the school engages with will paint a picture of daily school life. When you are familiar with the school’s ethos, it is your job to then describe how you can promote this among pupils and colleagues.

Know the job

In advance of the interview, the interview board will establish agreed criteria, reflecting the specific needs of the school, to assess a candidate’s suitability for the position. These criteria will be communicated in the advertisement. Competency-based interviews are used to identify if a candidate has the essential skills to carry out the responsibilities of the position. When you audit the skills required to both teach and work within a school community successfully, you uncover a multitude: communication, collaboration, time management, organisation, planning, etc.

Those applying for an assistant principal position, where management and leadership skills will be interrogated, need to be familiar with the domains, standards and statements of effective practice outlined in the *Looking at Our School 2016* document.

During the interview process, you need to explain your ability to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the position. Tangible examples from previous experience, enveloped in factual anecdotes, will highlight your capabilities and provide the panel with the evidence they need. Interviewers remember stories. Also give consideration to transferrable skills that you have developed in roles outside of a school environment, maybe through involvement with a local club or volunteering with an organisation, and how these can enhance your contribution to school life.

Prepare

The first time you verbalise answers to predicted interview questions should not be in front of the interview panel. This is when you must call on the assistance of a trusted friend, housemate or family member that can assist in your preparation. Practicing answers out loud will allow you to refine your thought processes.

First impressions count. The interview

might commence with an invitation to tell the panel about yourself. This gives you a prime opportunity to communicate a succinct, polished and persuasive account of why the combination of your experience, skillset and achievements make you the ideal ‘fit’ for the school.

Throughout the interview, you will need to showcase your pedagogical knowledge and be comfortable speaking about curriculum developments, planning requirements, assessment methods, differentiation, special education etc. You should be fully aware of policies, such as child protection, the code of behaviour, anti-bullying and data protection, that guide vital decision-making processes in schools. Be mindful of open-ended questions that you should be able to answer. For example; why do you want this position? Why should we hire you? These questions appear obvious and are easy to prepare for but require some self-reflection in advance of the interview to avoid a ‘rabbit in the headlights’ moment.

Technology

Schools are permitted to facilitate the interview process using digital tools. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital technology may become a more frequent method of hosting interviews. You need to establish what video conferencing tool is to be used and then become familiar with its associated features and settings. Conduct a ‘test-run’ using the equipment, checking for sound quality, lighting and how you present on screen. Unflattering camera angles (the dreaded nostril shot) should be avoided – use some books or a box to elevate your device so the camera is positioned slightly above eye level. Finally, give some consideration to your background and what the interview panel can see when conducting the interview to avoid unnecessary embarrassment or distraction.

AARON PURCELL, Rush NS, Co Dublin.



Salary protection

Career break and job-sharing advice for members of the INTO Salary Protection Scheme

From health to finances, there's so much uncertainty right now; as a result of COVID-19. We know that the need for expert advice is so important at this time, particularly where your salary protection is concerned. While some of your plans for this year may have changed, if you are planning to take a career break or go job-sharing this year we want you to have the information you need regarding your scheme cover and the actions you should take.

Career break

INTO Salary Protection Scheme members who are due to take a career break may be able to apply for one of the following options:

1. Maintain death and specified illness benefit for the duration of your career break. To maintain this cover during this period you are required to pay a premium.
2. Have no benefits in place for the duration of your career break. During this period you would not be required to pay any premiums, as no cover will be in place.

To apply for one of these options you must:

- Apply to Cornmarket within 4 months of commencing your career break
- Provide the start and end date of your career break to spsadmin@cornmarket.ie.

- **ie** – Cornmarket will then advise on which option above is available to you
- Continue to maintain your INTO union membership while on your career break
- Ensure that premiums resume at the end of your career break
- Inform Cornmarket if you decide to extend your career break.

Five years is the maximum length of time that an INTO Salary Protection Scheme member can be on a career break and remain in the scheme. Other terms and conditions may apply.

Important: if you don't apply for one of the above options, your membership of the INTO Salary Protection Scheme may lapse. If this happens you will have to re-apply for scheme membership and this may require medical underwriting, which means you may not be accepted back into the scheme.

Job-sharing

INTO Salary Protection Scheme members who apply to go job-sharing, which means working 50% or less of the normal working week, may be able to apply for one of the following options:

1. Base scheme premiums and cover on job-sharing salary
2. Base scheme premiums and cover on full-time salary

To apply for one of these options you must:

- Apply to Cornmarket in advance of your job-sharing start date
- Provide your job-sharing start and end date to spsadmin@cornmarket.ie
- Continue to maintain your INTO union membership
- Notify Cornmarket if you return to a full-time position so that premiums and level of cover can be amended appropriately
- Inform Cornmarket immediately if you decide to extend your job-sharing contract with your employer.

Five years is the maximum length of time for which you can cover your full-time salary. Other terms and conditions apply.

Important: If you don't apply for one of the above options, your cover and premiums will automatically be based on your job-sharing salary.

As a valued INTO Salary Protection Scheme member, we're here to help you with your career break and job-sharing options; so please get in touch if you would like to discuss your personal circumstances. Call us today on (01) 408 4195 or email spsadmin@cornmarket.ie.

IVAN AHERNE, CEO, Cornmarket Group

Health insurance refunds

Cornmarket's Dermot Wells talks health insurance refunds and what we can expect.



What insurance refund to expect if you have health insurance?

COVID-19 has changed how we use and access private health insurance. For an initial three months period, April to June 2020, private hospitals will fall under the remit of the HSE. There is the option to extend this partnership if necessary.

As a result, many elective appointments and procedures in private hospitals have had to be postponed. Each of the three health insurers (VHI, Irish Life Health and Laya Healthcare) expect a decrease in private hospital claims over the next few months and as such have announced rebates for their members while this remains the case. The amount of rebate differs slightly from provider to provider:

VHI

VHI members are being given an average rebate of 50% for the three months (April – June). 80% of members will see a 45% rebate while those insured on older legacy plans and high-cost plans will get a rebate of between 55% – 60%. More info available [here](#).

Irish Life Health

Irish Life Health members will be given different rates of refunds depending on the plan they are on. Those insured on

'advanced' plans which provide access to both public and private hospitals will be given a rebate of between 36% – 60%. These plans account for 90% of the plans available to Irish Life customers. Those insured on 'non-advanced' (public hospital only) plans will receive a rebate between 17% – 21%. More info available [here](#).

LAYA Healthcare

LAYA Healthcare has taken a slightly different approach. Each adult insured will receive a rebate of €195 while each child will get a rebate of €60. More info available [here](#).

Take a few minutes to read your health insurance pack from your provider and if you have queries, don't hesitate to get in touch

There is still great value in having yourself and your loved ones insured through

the everyday benefits available on many plans. Don't forget, depending on your plan you can use benefits such as:

- GP online (phone and online appointments)
- Nurse online
- Minor injury clinics – by appointment due to COVID-19
- Virtual wellness and counselling
- Maternity and fertility benefits

Take a few minutes to read your health insurance pack from your provider and if you have queries, don't hesitate to get in touch with Cornmarket and we can help explain your benefits.

There is much debate at present about whether the current deal with private hospitals will or should be maintained. We will keep you informed of any developments in this regard. Insurers expect a surge in procedures and claims once this deal expires and maintaining your cover will ensure you will not run the risk of having to re-serve waiting periods

DERMOT WELLS, head of health insurance, Cornmarket.





Consumer rights

Online shopping and deliveries

The COVID-19 situation has changed how we buy goods and services, with an increasing number of us shopping online. The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) answers its most frequently asked questions when it comes to your consumer rights, online shopping and deliveries.

What happens if my online deliveries are delayed due to COVID-19?

Because of the current circumstances, many people have turned to online shopping as business premises are closed. Many businesses, during this time, are also facing challenges in terms of meeting production demands or agreed delivery timescales. This could mean that you may experience delays or even non-delivery. Your rights will depend on whether you bought the item from an EU or a non-EU country.

If you bought from a website within the EU, you have strong rights. The time it takes for your item to be delivered, depends on what you agreed when you bought the item and if the delivery time was not agreed, the item should be delivered within 30 days.

If the item is not delivered within the agreed timeframe you have the following options:

1. You can agree on a new delivery date that suits you if this is suitable for your circumstances.
2. Where it is not suitable to agree to a new delivery date, or where the trader has refused to deliver the goods, you can cancel the contract and get a full refund.

You do not have the same level of

protection if you buy from a website based in a country outside the EU. In this case, you will need to check the terms and conditions of the website you made the purchase from.

Find out more about your rights when you [buy online](#) on [ccpc.ie](#).

Is there any other way to get a refund for non-delivery of goods?

If you can't get a refund for non-delivery of goods from a business and you have paid by credit or debit card you could try a 'chargeback' option. You should contact your credit or debit card provider – usually your bank – who may agree to reverse the transaction. More information can be found about [chargebacks](#) on [ccpc.ie](#).

What can you do if you have paid money to a business that closes down before your item is delivered or the service is provided?

- If the business goes into liquidation before you receive your product or service, and you have purchased a product, contact the liquidator to see if you can get the item.
- Check the website of the business and also the website of the liquidator, examiner or receiver to get the latest

news on the situation. Contact the official appointed to look after the affairs of the business for further details.

- If you paid by credit/debit card, contact your card provider to find out if it is possible for them to reverse the transaction using a [chargeback](#).

If you are trying to contact a business and they are not replying to you and you think they are gone out of business you should contact the [Companies Registration Office \(CRO\)](#) as they may be able to give you more information.

For further information on your consumer rights, visit the CCPC's dedicated [COVID-19 information hub](#) at [ccpc.ie](#). Be sure to check back regularly and follow [@CCPCIreland](#) on Twitter for the latest updates and information.

DOIREANN SWEENEY,
 head of corporate communications,
 Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.
 More information on financial wellbeing and the tools available can be found at [www.ccpc.ie](#).



Registering with the Teaching Council during COVID-19 restrictions

The Teaching Council's office closed to the public on 12 March 2020 in line with government recommendations. Since then staff are operating remotely with very limited access to the office. The council has modified several key processes to help facilitate teachers. The following is a list of frequently asked questions that we hope will help teachers during this unprecedented time:

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta
The Teaching Council



My registration renewal date is approaching, what do I do?

When you receive your renewal notice by email and text, follow the instructions to renew online. You are asked not to delay your renewal. Teachers who do not renew on time will be contacted in advance of removal from the register.

I started Droichead but don't know what to do now?

During these unprecedented times, the process of completing Droichead during the 2019/20 academic year was interrupted for some teachers. Solutions for completing Droichead in the 2019/20 academic year will be published on the [Teaching Council website](#). Please refer to the website and follow the guidelines accordingly.

Where can I get my certificate of registration?

Teachers who wish to access their certificate of registration may do so by logging on to the [My Registration](#) area of the website. Teachers using this service for the first time will need to create a password by entering a combination of personal details, which you provided during the registration process.

I am returning to Ireland from overseas/career break, what must I do?

Teachers returning from a career break and/or possibly returning from working overseas for the 2020/21 school year are advised to check that they are registered with the Teaching Council. The [public register](#) can be searched on www.teachingcouncil.ie. If they are not registered, teachers should start the application and vetting processes immediately. Please ensure a full application is submitted as omissions cause unnecessary delays.

I need to apply for vetting, what should I do?

Registered teachers and teachers returning to the register who wish to apply for vetting should check the Teaching Council's website and follow the instructions. Due to the current crisis, the council will accept documentation by email from registered or previously registered teachers. Please double-check that all the documentation is complete and that your signature is provided on the required form.

Will summer graduates be registered in time for the start of the new school year?

The Teaching Council has reviewed its summer application process and is implementing some system changes to support graduate registrations. Please note that the universities/colleges must finalise the results at their exam boards before transferring the details to the Teaching Council for the registration process to commence.

Can student teachers get a provisional or temporary registration number?

There is no such thing as a provisional or temporary registration number. Some student teachers may hold registration under route three further education as they already had completed an undergraduate degree and were granted registration before the COVID-19 restrictions.

What is the impact of COVID-19 on the Teaching Council's registration processes?

Due to the closure of the council's office, there will be delays in the processing of documentation. It is important that you allow additional time and double-check all documentation for completeness before submission. Any errors or omissions will cause additional delays for both you and others.

JEAN HARRINGTON, communications associate,
The Teaching Council.



Decrypting relationship and sexuality education (RSE) in primary school

If you're trying to get your head around RSE, PDST has some resources and guidance to help you.

What is RSE?

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is a key component of the social personal and health education (SPHE) curriculum in primary school. RSE provides children with opportunities to develop knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practical skills necessary to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships with self and others. In addition to learning about relationships, RSE invites children to explore concepts such as physical development and human sexuality. Topics are explored with children in a developmentally appropriate, spiral nature throughout their primary education.

Topics addressed in RSE include exploration of feelings, friendships, inclusive families, puberty, pregnancy and conception. Each school has an individual RSE policy which details exactly how the school intends to provide sexuality education. If you would like to view the RSE curriculum, policy support documents and teaching resources, please do so on the [link](#) by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

Why teach RSE?

Research tells us that sexuality education has a positive impact on young people's sexual health knowledge, self-esteem and their related behaviours. It also tells us that sexuality education



NEW on the PDST website

- [Guidance for schools regarding the implementation of RSE during school closures](#)
- [Information sheet for parents on RSE at home](#)

can help to change attitudes and societal norms around gender and rights (UNESCO 2018). In 1996, The NCCA produced the first *Interim Curriculum Guidelines for RSE* as an aspect of SPHE and RSE has been a mandatory part of the SPHE curriculum since 2003. More recently in 2019, the NCCA completed

a major national review of the teaching and learning of RSE in primary and post-primary schools. A summary of this report is available on the [NCCA's site](#).

Junior infants – 2nd class RSE

RSE education begins in junior/senior infants. The anatomically correct

Give the doll a bath!

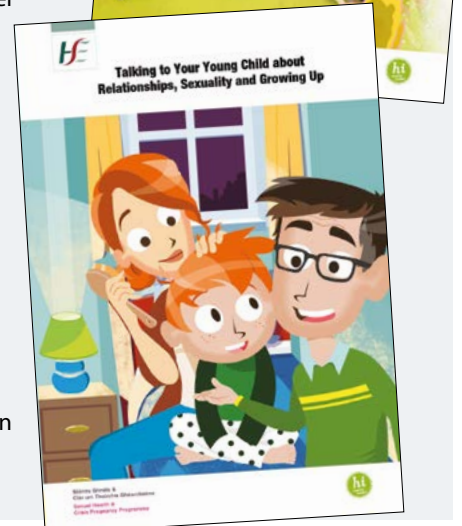


You will need to use anatomically correct dolls, (available online and in toy shops) a toy bath and bath time accoutrements. Name all the body parts as

you wash them. Encourage children in your class to do the same.

Follow up this activity by reading [Tom's Flower](#) with your class. This story highlights the anatomically correct terminology as the teacher washes the baby in the story. The book comes with an information booklet designed specifically for parents called [Talking to Your Young Child about Relationships, Sexuality and Growing Up](#) and it is available to download or order for free.

Schools can order up to 100 copies, once they register as a professional on the [site](#).



language is covered in the junior/senior infant SPHE and science curricula. Many infant teachers teach this language through the activity on the previous page.

RSE for 3rd – 6th class

RSE in the senior classes of primary school builds on what has been covered in the earlier years. It focuses on the following themes; changes that happen during puberty, pregnancy and sexual intercourse.

Tips for teachers

1. Consult your school's RSE policy

Your school's RSE policy will be your 'guiding star' when teaching RSE. The policy will cover what to teach, when to teach, how you will teach, including mechanisms for answering questions and specified language to use. If your school is currently redeveloping its RSE policy, supporting documentation can be found here on the [PDST website](#).

2. Establish boundaries

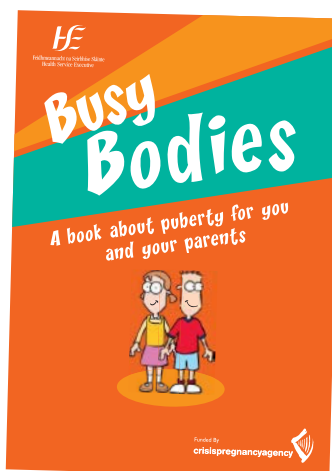
It is good practice to establish boundaries from the offset. Before engaging in any of the formal lessons, consider creating a way of working (WOW) chart with your class. You could consider including expected behaviours and agreed approaches for answering questions to your chart.

3. Talking about puberty and sexual intercourse

[Busy Bodies](#) is a free online HSE resource to help you when talking to children about puberty and sexual intercourse. It consists of a series of videos with an accompanying booklet and it can be accessed and ordered via the [health promotion website](#).

4. Dealing with 'tricky' questions

How you answer questions will depend on your RSE policy. Many teachers like to use a question box. Children are given a post-it at the beginning of the lesson. They write questions they may have during the lesson and post it in the question box at the end of the lesson. At the beginning of the following lesson, the teacher answers the questions that are in line with their school's RSE policy.



Your school's RSE policy will be your 'guiding star' when teaching RSE

By using the question box approach, teachers are given time to consult their policy, ask colleagues for support and formulate their answers. Never answer a question on the spot! If you are not sure how to answer straight away, tell them you will get back to them later with the answer. Your answer could be a signpost home to ask a trusted adult. You can find developmentally appropriate responses to some of the questions you could be asked [here](#). However, always consult your school policy first.

Children with SEN or additional needs

Consider including specific RSE targets on the IEPs of children with SEN or additional needs. To help differentiate the curriculum, check out the following useful

planning documents by the NCCA:

- [NCSE – Mild GLD](#)
- [NCSE – Moderate GLD](#)
- [NCSE – Severe and Profound GLD](#)

Other free, useful resources for children with ASD

- [The healthy bodies toolkit – boys:](#) Contains puberty storyboards, visuals

and PECS for boys with autism

- [The healthy bodies toolkit – girls:](#) Contains puberty storyboards, visuals and PECS for girls with autism
- [NSPCC: Pants \(the underpants rule\)](#) is a simple, inclusive resource for teaching young children about personal safety. This website contains adapted resources for children with additional needs including videos for children who are deaf.

Additional resources

- www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE: primary teaching RSE manuals, teaching resources and policy documents.
- www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/distancelearning: over 100 wellbeing resources.
- www.sexualwellbeing.ie/: this is the HSE's sexual health website and has a section to help parents talk with their children about relationships, sexuality and growing up.
- www.mychild.ie/: this HSE site provides information on all aspects of pregnancy, baby and toddler health including healthy sexuality development.

AMY KEAVENEY, primary health and wellbeing advisor, PDST.

Explore the early Christian period in your local area

Heritage in Schools expert Nora White shares some online tools that can help.

In these days of social distancing and travel restrictions, we need online resources more than ever to discover and explore our heritage. Although there is a wealth of information available online, the difficulty is to find engaging, yet reliable and accurate resources. Virtual visits to better-known Irish heritage sites can be undertaken by visiting 3D Icons Ireland or Abarta Heritage Audio Guides. To discover lesser known heritage, 'knowyour5k' is a fantastic new initiative by the Heritage Council and National Museum of Ireland, which gives advice to the public on how to find out about the story of their locality using reliable online resources and encourages sharing of discoveries about our hidden heritage.

Early Christian archaeology

The particular time in Ireland's past that I focus on is the early Christian period (400-1100AD). One of the first steps in discovering your area's early Christian past is to visit the Historic Environment Viewer with data from the National Monuments Service's Archaeological Survey of Ireland (also accessible through the multi-layered Heritage Maps). You can simply zoom in to your own area and see what sites and monuments are recorded (click on the red dots for descriptions). Alternatively, you can search by county and class to see what early Christian sites might be in the area. As churches frequently date to later periods, other class types can be better indicators of an early church site.

These include: 'ecclesiastical enclosure', 'children's burial ground', 'holy well', 'bullaun stone', 'ogham stone', 'cross' (various types) and 'cross-inscribed stone/pillar/slab' (note that classes are described in the records under 'scope note').

Another online resource for checking early church sites in your area is Monasticon Hibernicum (a database of early Christian ecclesiastical settlement in Ireland). Other early Christian sites are dwellings listed on the Historic Environment Viewer as 'ringfort' of various types, 'house - early medieval' and 'souterrain'.

Excavations.ie will allow you to access details of any archaeological excavations in your area (also accessible through Heritage Maps) and don't forget to visit the National Museum of Ireland (Archaeology) website where you can learn more about objects from the early Christian period, even when you can't visit the museum.

Irish placenames

A further rich source of information on the past is our Irish language. Placenames associated with the early Christian period include those with the element 'Cill' (church) – note anglicised 'Kill-' can also derive from coill 'wood', Domnach (anglicised 'Donagh-'), literally meaning 'of the lord' (as in the Irish word for 'Sunday') indicates a particularly early church site. There are various words in Irish used for ringforts that are very common in placenames: rath (literally meaning rampart, enclosure of earth), cashel

(enclosure of stone) li(o)s (area inside the enclosure) and dún (fort/stronghold, often royal). Check the meaning of your local placenames with the placenames database of Ireland available online at logainm.ie.

Earliest writing in Ireland

The earliest writing in Ireland appeared around the beginning of the early Christian period. This took the form of ogham inscriptions on stone. The ogham (or ogam) script was designed specifically for an early form of the Irish language. These intriguing inscriptions contain the names of individuals (almost all male) and sometimes kin groups who lived primarily between the 5th and 7th centuries. You can find out all about ogham, as well as any ogham stones in your area already digitised, on the Ogham in 3D website.

By the 8th century, writing in manuscripts was well established in both Latin and Irish. Many of our earliest surviving manuscripts in Irish have been digitised by the Irish Script on Screen project and are available online at isos.ie. Finally, on our national saint, Patrick, I highly recommend Confessio.ie.

NORA WHITE is a lecturer in the Department of Medieval Irish at Maynooth University, researcher on the ChronHib and Ogham in 3D projects, and a Heritage in Schools specialist. The Heritage in Schools Scheme is coordinated by the Heritage Council. To find out more and to book a visit from a heritage expert visit www.heritageinschools.ie.

Ogham stone at Kilmalkedar church. Photo by Nora White.

Subject

History

Strand

Early People/Ancient Societies, Local Studies (History)

Strand Unit

Early Christian Ireland, Buildings, Sites or ruins in my locality



Planning a no-dig school garden?

Patrick Hunt shares how to set up your own vegetable, herb, fruit and sensory flower garden.

Having worked with many schools in their gardens over the past five years I have put together this plan of work to help teachers and children have success in managing their school gardens. It is intended as a guide or starting point to teachers perhaps unfamiliar with school gardening.

The school year

The school year runs from September to June the following year. This plan starts in September and includes several overwintering hardy vegetables that crop before the summer holidays. The plan can be started at any time in the school year with suggested activities for each year group. In this plan, each year group is given some planting and gardening tasks for the autumn and spring. As the child moves through the school they will have the opportunity to connect with the natural world, discover wildlife and grow a range of vegetables. They will plant wildflowers and bulbs, tend fruit and learn about sensory plants such as herbs, flowers, grasses and perennials. The tasks are designed to be age-appropriate based on my experience working with children.

No-dig gardening method

Traditionally the soil is dug adding manure in the autumn. This is unnecessary work which only brings weed seeds to the surface where they germinate and creates more work. Instead, each autumn spread organic compost or well rotten manure to a depth of 5cm on the soil surface. This will be incorporated by the worms and will reduce weeding. It will feed the soil life which in turn feeds the plants. Allow one bag of manure/compost per square metre of growing area. To make a new raised bed [watch this video](#) by Charles Dowding.

Preparing the planting area

For all outdoor planting ensure that the area is first weeded by hand removing the roots of any weeds. Try to disturb the soil as little as possible. If planting in autumn add the compost or well rotten manure



on top and spread evenly over the surface first before planting. This can be walked on or threaded down and then raked level.

Sourcing seeds and plants

For seed, I recommend the following Irish companies; [Irish Seedsavers](#), [Brown Envelope Seeds](#) and [Fruithill Farm](#) (onions, garlic, potato and spring bulbs). For fruit [Irish Seedsavers](#), [English's Fruit Nursery](#) and local garden centres. For herbs and bulbs, try a local garden centre.

Crop rotation

Each year the crops rotate so they are grown in a new area. This helps reduce the buildup of pests and diseases and gives the soil a break from growing the same crop.

Sowing seeds indoors

Many of the crops are started indoors in the classroom. I recommend using a mix of two parts organic peat-free general purpose compost mixed with one part sand and one part horticultural grit. The grit and sand create good drainage. Fill the trays and pots with compost and place the seeds their own depth beneath the surface. Position the seed trays in a sunny south-facing windowsill and do not

allow them to dry out. Sometimes for a variety of reasons seeds fail to germinate or the seedlings become too tall and leggy. Where this happens it is possible to directly sow many crops outdoors a month later than the indoor sowing dates suggested. There is also the possibility of buying some plants in modular trays from the garden centre as a backup.

Junior and senior infants - wildlife, play explorations and wildflowers

Define an area separate to the vegetable growing beds allowing for exploring the soil and finding minibeasts and play. Very young children are fascinated by worms and insects and relish the chance to explore using a hand trowel. Exploring the area each season will reveal different creatures. Allow the weeds and grasses to grow in this space. Try pouring water on the bed to bring up worms. Place objects such as a wooden board on the soil to create hiding places for slugs and snails and return regularly to see what has moved in.

- Set up a mud kitchen using plywood and pallets.
- In April, sprinkle wildflower seeds on a bare patch of ground rake and water in.
- In April, make wildflower seed balls for

throwing by mixing some soil, compost and seeds in a bucket with a little water and shaping into little balls. These can be dried on a tray and flung on bare patches in the garden. Use native seed available from Wildflowers.ie. Avoid using bee bombs as the seed is non-native.

- Set up up a little garden centre in the classroom with tools and pots etc. (Aistear).

1st class – half bed of overwintering broad beans in October and half early peas in March

In October, sow broad bean seeds into deep modules in the classroom. Plant these out in the garden in November. If some fail to germinate, directly sow some seed into the ground 15cm apart in a zig-zag row with rows at 60cm apart. Lay the seeds on the bed and push under

the surface mulch using the thumb to the depth of the second knuckle. Look after the crop with regular watering and weeding. Place 1-metre high bamboo canes along each row in April and weave some string around the plants to give support in the wind. This is only necessary for a windy garden. Pinch out the growing tips of broad beans in May to stop the growth and direct energy into the beans. Bean pods can be harvested in June by twisting of the pods. The beans are delicious boiled. Learn more about broad beans [here](#).

In March, sow three pea seeds into deep modules or small pots. In April, plant these around a wigwam made from bamboo canes. Tie twine to the canes and work this horizontally up the wigwam to the top. This is a very strong structure which will resist wind well. Help the young plants by guiding the tendrils to the lower strings. Water regularly and the peas can be harvested in June. Learn more about growing peas [here](#).

2nd class – overwintering onions and garlic in October and scallions in March

In September, plant some winter onions sets. These are small onions which are simply pushed halfway down into the soil with the hairy root pointing down. Five rows of onions 20cm apart will fit in 1 m2 with an onion every 10cm in the row. Place a temporary net over the bed to deter birds from pulling out the onions. Keep well weeded and watered to swell the bulbs. These 50 onions will be ready for harvest from mid-June. Onions can be dried under cover or eaten fresh. After harvest, cover the bed with strong tarpaulin to prevent weed growth. More information about growing onions is available [here](#).

In October, plant garlic by making a hole with a wooden handle and planting cloves twice their depth under the soil and 20cm apart. One bulb gives approx eight good cloves. The garlic will be ready by mid-June. Get more advice on growing your garlic [here](#).





In March sow scallions in modular trays or small pots. Place ten seeds in each module and grow as a bunch. Plant out in April 20cm apart. These will be ready in June. Learn how to grow spring onions, aka scallions, with this [video tutorial](#).

Before the holidays clear and cover the bed for the summer with tarpaulin.

3rd class – perpetual spinach in October followed by squash in April

Sow perpetual spinach into modular trays in September, two seeds each and plant out in October 30cm apart. This will grow through the winter and provide a crop until May. Watch this [tutorial](#) to learn more about harvesting spinach.

In April, plant winter squash seeds, one per pot in the classroom. Plant these out in May, one metre apart. Grow a few in case of damage by slugs etc. Ensure the area has plenty of good compost or manure. These will grow through the summer suppressing weeds and provide a harvest in October. Cut the squash including the stalk. Dry in a sunny place and store inside through the winter. This makes a great soup. Try growing uchi kuri or crown prince squash. Learn more with this [tutorial](#) on 'winter squash and beans: food to store for months, from autumn harvests'.

4th class - tend sensory area of perennial herbs, kales, cabbages, flowers and grasses in September and in March grow pakchoi and beetroot in a vegetable bed

Tend and plant new herbs, flowers and perennial edibles in a separate sensory area to the annual vegetable beds. Avoid planting mint, lemon balm and fennel as they spread easily. Plant some perennial kales and cabbages which will grow for many years and plant new perennial flowers and grasses which come back year after year.

Start pakchoi and beetroot in seed trays indoors in March. Plant out in April under fleece. Harvest in June. Clear and cover the bed with a tarpaulin before the holidays. Learn about beetroot growing [here](#).

Pakchoi is grown in the same way as lettuce. Learn how to grow and protect lettuce with this [video tutorial](#).

5th class - plant bulbs in October in the meadow, sow lettuce in March and carrots in early June

In October cut the grass short and sprinkle yellow rattle seeds into a grassy area. Plant a selection of spring and summer bulbs in this area. Dig a 20cm hole putting in groups of bulbs

such as daffodil, tulips and alliums. The yellow rattle will suppress the growth of the grass and the bulbs will come through. Allow the grass to grow until the following October when it can be cut and raked for removal once a year in subsequent years.

In March, sow lettuce into modular seed trays a few seeds per module. In April plant this out under fleece for protection. This will crop from May to June by removing the larger outside leaves. Learn more about sowing, protecting and picking lettuce [here](#).

In early June, clear the lettuce and plant carrot seeds directly. Rake the bed level and sprinkle the seeds in a 20cm wide strips about 30cm apart. Use a piece of string as a guide. Gently rake over the rows to plant them. Water regularly until germination and cover with an environment to protect against carrot root fly. The carrots will grow over the summer

These elements can be put together or spread through the school grounds ... The work could be phased over many years.

providing good weed suppression and be ready for harvest from October. Carefully remove carrots with a fork. Carrots can remain in the ground through the winter and removed as needed. The best follow on crops to carrots is pak choi and beetroot so space is not needed until April the following year. Watch a step by step guide to growing carrots [here](#).

6th class – autumn fruit tending, potatoes in March and managing composting

In September and October, harvest fruit and weed/mulch fruit area.

In November prune fruit trees.

Plant new fruit trees and shrubs in February if needed.

Throughout the school year take on the management of the compost system. Add a 50/50 mix of brown and green materials in thin layers. Turn the compost heap in the autumn and harvest for use in the garden. For more information see my [blog post](#) on hot composting.

In February, chit early potatoes in egg cartons in the classroom somewhere out

of direct light. From mid-March plant chitted potatoes into their bed at 25cm spacing in the row with three rows in the bed. 12 seed potatoes per 1 m². Plant 15cm deep and as they grow, add more compost around the plants to earth them up. This will increase the yield. Water well especially when flowering as this indicates the tubers are swelling. Harvest 12 weeks after planting in mid-June. Search for potatoes using hands near the surface. Take care to remove all potatoes even small ones and do not put these into the compost. After harvest cover bed with compost and a tarpaulin to prevent weed growth. Try Homeguard or Charlotte varieties of potato. Watch this [tutorial](#) to learn more about no dig potatoes.

How big to make the school garden and what to include?

I suggest having six raised beds or areas, one for each year group from 1st class up. A good size would be 1 x 2 metres giving a total annual veg area of 12 m². This is a manageable size. 12 bags of compost/manure annually is enough to feed the soil and will cost approximately 80 euro to maintain.

- A bed for herbs and sensory plants including some perennial flowers, perennial grasses and perennial vegetables. Perennial flowers return year after year and can be divided in spring.
- Mud kitchen and exploration area
- Fruit area
- Wildflowers and bulbs area
- Composting area
- Leaf pile
- Seating area for outdoor lessons
- Rainwater harvesting from school roof (near vegetable patch)
- Log pile for insects
- Bug hotel with small sunken pond (a sunken Belfast sink or tub under for safety)
- Storage area for tools.
- A wooden bird hide for bird watching
- A weather station
- Native woodland

These elements can be put together or spread through the school grounds. The sketch (previous page) shows one example of how this can be put together in an overall design. Each school garden would require its own design. The work could be phased over many years.

PATRICK HUNT runs monthly gardening courses and provides training and consultancy to schools. You can find out more at www.patrickhuntgardening.com.

International Workers' Memorial Day

International Workers' Memorial Day (IWMD) took on extra significance this year because of the grave risks involved for workers doing their jobs amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Michael D. Higgins and five uniformed key workers participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at Áras an Uachtaráin.

General secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Patricia King also made an on-line address. The event was all the more unusual this year as there could be no public gathering for reasons of safety.

In the lead up to IWMD, the ICTU worked closely with the office of the president and it was agreed that the event would be held outdoors, symbolically, beside the Plough and the Stars installation at Áras an Uachtaráin.

President Higgins was joined by his wife Sabina and the five key workers during the wreath-laying. To ensure the event was seen by workers, the proceedings were recorded the day before and broadcast on social media at 11 am on Workers' Memorial Day. Later that day, a candle lighting event was held, when workers across Ireland were invited to take photographs of their candles and post an image on-line.

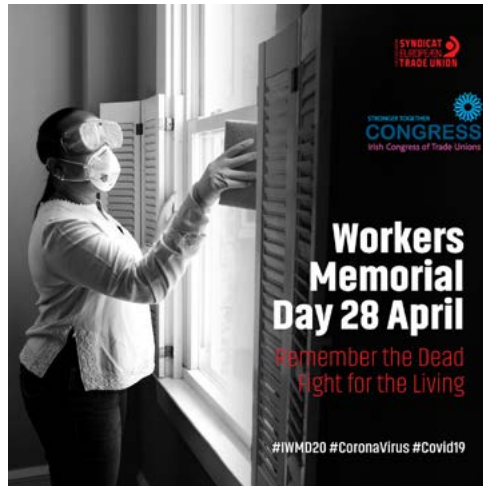
The Health and Safety Committee of the ICTU has a long tradition of marking IWMD and have organised significant and memorable national commemorations over the years. However, the arrival of COVID-19 meant that the sort of events we organised in the past were not possible. Hence our decision to go for an online event.

With tremendous assistance from the staff in Áras an Uachtaráin, we crafted an event with three elements. The wreath-laying ceremony at the Áras, followed by addresses from President Higgins and the ICTU General Secretary Patricia King.

A key element of the wreath-laying was the participation of five workers, representing all of those directly on the front-line fighting the virus and those working to sustain us. The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) nominated an advanced nurse practitioner from the emergency department in Beaumont Hospital. We also had a fire brigade ambulance worker nominated by Fórsa, a postal worker nominated by the Communications Workers' Union (CWU), a cleaner

nominated by the Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) and a retail worker from Mandate.

Frank Vaughan, health and safety consultant for the ICTU said, "as the organiser, I was very happy that we were able to create a ceremony that was solemn and poignant and that seemed to strike



a chord with people. Ironically, being forced to re-think the way we did our commemoration this year actually gave us a much bigger audience who viewed the ceremony when being broadcast live or subsequently watched the video of the event. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. This has included many messages from abroad, several of which have commented on the participation of the president and contrasted the attitudes of other heads of state. While there was a lot of work against tight deadlines, I am more than satisfied that we put something together that was both a suitable memorial for those who have died and also a gesture of appreciation for those who courageously worked to protect us all".

In 2019, 46 workers died in the workplace in Ireland and so far this year seven deaths of health care workers have been recorded.

In her address, the ICTU General Secretary Patricia King said workers are the backbone of our economy, but they are very often taken for granted, undervalued, underpaid and ignored when they seek their fair share.

The general secretary also paid tribute to "those on the front line including, nurses, doctors, health support staff, cleaners, carers, scientists, technicians, support staff in our laboratories,

emergency services, ambulance workers and shop workers, who daily risk their lives to ensure that we can go on living in the new circumstances in which we find ourselves. Our country also continues to function because of our public servants and all other essential workers – ordinary people making extraordinary sacrifices, who turn up at their desks or places of work each day and get on with their jobs", she said, "This year, sadly, we gather with our fellow workers across the globe at a time of unprecedented risk for those who work tirelessly and selflessly in our health services, and those who ensure the continued delivery of essential services and utilities on which our citizens depend."

In his televised address President Michael D. Higgins said "to all those workers, who have responded to the coronavirus crisis with such a generous spirit of solidarity, we owe, and future generations will owe, an enormous debt of gratitude. Gratitude, whose expression is so important, however, cannot be, and must not ever be, perceived as an adequate substitute for the dignity, well-being, and security of employment that is the right of all workers in any fair and inclusive society".

President Higgins said "we have, in recent weeks, witnessed outstanding work carried out by those in jobs and professions that have been so often undervalued. The statistics tell us that over a quarter of confirmed cases of COVID-19 relate to healthcare workers, and our heart goes out to their loved ones. We have seen, and continue to benefit from, a dedication to public service and public safety, and a selfless response to the needs of others by those who have been, and are prepared to put their own health at risk for the health and safety of all".

"We must welcome the praise, private and public, for those selfless and much-appreciated workers. Yet praise alone, however, will not adequately protect the lives of vulnerable workers or safeguard them from subordination to economic efficiency.

It is only by closing the gap between words and action in relation to conditions, safety and provision that we can sufficiently and ethically commemorate those workers we honour here today."

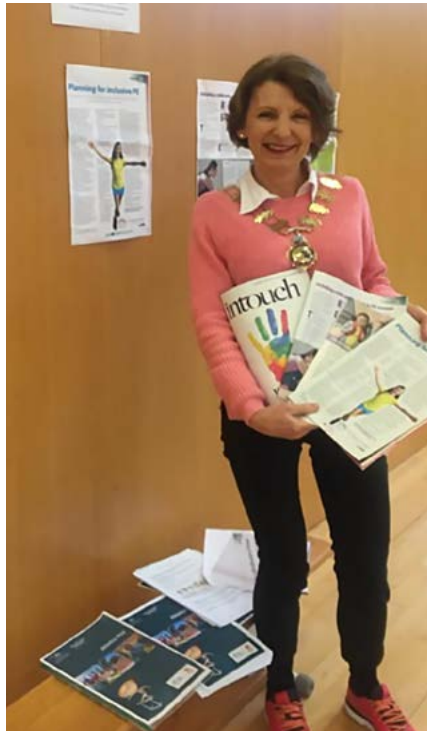
CONOR KAVANAGH, media consultant, Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Inclusion in PE

Where to from here?

The Irish Primary PE Association (IPPEA), in collaboration with teachers, has written seven articles for *InTouch* (September 2019 - May 2020) on the theme of inclusion of children with additional needs (AN) in physical education (PE) lessons. We hope the articles will help teachers to plan and teach PE, with a particular focus on how to adapt teaching styles, rules, equipment and environment (TREE). There are two more important developments that can support the inclusion of all children in PE lessons.

1. In February 2020, the IPPEA Learning Community on Inclusion led by Claire Heffernan and Susan Marron was launched at the 17th IPPEA Annual Conference at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. The IPPEA was delighted to have then INTO Vice-President Mary Magner in attendance, as well as a strong cohort of primary teachers. A panel of primary teachers with experience of inclusion in PE are happy to share their learning on teaching PE to children with AN. See www.irishprimarype.com/advocacy/learning-community-on-inclusion/.
2. The IPPEA is an associate partner in an Erasmus+ project called 'Disentangling Inclusion in Primary PE' (DIPPE). The project aims to create a free online toolkit for generalist primary school teachers to access information about children's capabilities, teaching strategies and resources to support the inclusion of all children in PE lessons. The first output of the project was an online questionnaire circulated widely across Europe in 2019, which aimed to identify what supports teachers need related to inclusion in PE. Over 1,200 teachers responded, with a high response rate from Irish primary teachers.



Irish teachers identified the following ANs as the most in need of guidance: 67% motor, 58% physical and 45% emotional. In line with the European results, Irish teachers identified the top five supports they would welcome for planning:

1. video case scenarios of teachers who are supporting children with AN in PE lessons;
2. video clips of children with AN in PE classes;
3. templates of visual resources;
4. video and audio recordings of support personnel e.g. physiotherapists/ occupational therapists; and
5. guidance on adapting activities.

These supports could form the basis for important work to be undertaken in an Irish context to ensure that more than 30% of Irish children (37% Europe result)

are always included in the PE lesson.

Some general principles underpin the resource:

- a. accessible experiences for all underpinned by Universal Design for Learning
- b. maximum physical activity levels in lessons
- c. child-centred focus meeting individual needs
- d. a commitment to learning across three domains (physical, cognitive, affective) including skill development.

In winter 2020/21, DCU PE Primary and the IT Tralee (DIPPE partners), in conjunction with the IPPEA, will host an event in the Institute of Education, DCU. Primary teachers will be invited to attend. The pilot toolkit will be explained and shared in a practical seminar and teacher feedback will be sought. Building on this, the final toolkit will be ready for dissemination at the closing meeting in DCU St Patrick's Campus (May 2021).

The IPPEA is delighted to support teachers in teaching PE. Contact: irishprimarype@gmail.com. The IPPEA is a board member of the European Physical Education Association eupea.com who believes there is no education without physical education.

Resources

Marron, S., Murphy, F., Carty, C., Gallagher, J., Vecchione, H., Steel, E., and Scheuer, C. (2019). DIPPE Intellectual Output 1 – Recommendation document on Disentangling Inclusive Primary Physical Education. Dublin: Dublin City University. www.facebook.com/DIPPEproject/ <https://twitter.com/DIPPE12>

SUSAN MARRON, IPPEA co-chair and Institute of Education, DCU, and FRANCES MURPHY, Institute of Education, DCU.



Irish Primary PE Association
Cumann Corpoideachais Bunscoile na hÉireann

Staying connected while forced to stay apart

Cork school shares its story

In response to the new reality of being forced to stay apart, one teacher in my school came up with an idea to bring us all back together. When the lockdown had been announced, Rory Ward was teaching his junior infant class all about Andy Warhol. They had just completed their first part of a pop art activity and the pages had been moved to the drying rack so that they would be ready for the second part of the lesson the following week. As time went by, it became increasingly clear to Rory, as it did to the rest of the school community, that we were not going to be back and Rory would not get to finish the lesson with his class. Inspired by the [Getty Museum challenge on Instagram](#), Rory thought that it would be a great activity to do and so the idea was formed. We would begin the CETNS Art Project.

As a school, we made the decision early on to use [Seesaw](#) as our online learning platform for distance learning. The initial set up was made simple and straight forward by our teacher, Owen Hennessy, who was incredibly helpful and patient and sorted out all the issues which inevitably arose. The project seemed to fit seamlessly with Seesaw. We asked the children to create their own versions of famous masterpieces and share them with their teacher via Seesaw. They were encouraged to include family members, pets and objects that could be found easily within their homes. They chose the artwork to use as inspiration and created their own version. The response was overwhelmingly positive and the whole school community was enthusiastic about the project.

The use of Instagram and Facebook have been key to the project being a success, and ultimately how we managed to build stronger school community connections in a time of disconnectedness. From the beginning, GDPR was a big issue for us. We are fortunate to have the full use of the Aladdin platform in our school so each teacher was able to send out permissions for each child so that we could share their pictures to both platforms. This required additional work by the class teachers, who were already working hard to ensure their classes were receiving work each day. The children and their families were so excited and responded so quickly that



it most certainly made the extra work worth it.

We then shared the creations on both our school's Instagram account @ [carrigalineetns](#) and one of our parents, Laura Stapleton, shared pieces to the school's [PA Facebook page](#). During a time when all our school community has been forced to remain apart, sharing the pieces to social media has given us a chance to get a glimpse of what we have all been doing and the added bonus of exposing children and families to art that they may not have seen before is fantastic too.

The project was left very much as a blank canvas for the children, so they could recreate any piece they liked. We have seen amazing examples of recreations; from album artwork to Renaissance masters, to sculptures to Banksy. The lesson has given the children a chance to look at artworks in a completely different and thought-provoking way. It is a cross-curricular activity that encompasses art, history, drama, and digital literacy. It has also given our children and their families an opportunity to engage with learning in a

way that would not have been possible without the lockdown. I know that our children will take this experience away from this time of uncertainty and they will cherish the memories of creating these pieces with their families at home.

You can check out the project on our school Instagram @ [carrigalineetns](#) or on our [PA Facebook page Parent Association of Carrigaline Educate Together NS](#).

BRID STACK,
Carrigaline ETNS,
Co Cork.





Thinking of teaching in an ASD class? *Go for it!*

Katrina Guiney shares her experiences of teaching in an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) class

Three years ago, I was asked if I would teach the new autism spectrum disorder (ASD) class that was being set up in our school. While we already had an ASD class in the school, I knew very little about it. I knew the pupils who came to my class every day and the other pupils from meeting them in the yard and passing them in the corridor. But I couldn't have given you a definite answer on what the children did day to day.

When I was asked by my principal, I was quite surprised. I had only ever seen myself as a mainstream teacher. I spent a long time thinking it through. I rang a special needs assistant (SNA) in our

school's existing ASD class and went so far as to track down a teacher I had gone to primary school with who I knew was

... once I got to know the children I was teaching, I signed up to courses that I knew would be beneficial to them

working in a special school. One piece of advice they both gave me was to file away all I knew as a mainstream teacher and to begin with a clean slate. My expectations for the pupils, their progress and my expectations for myself were going to have to change. I also remembered something a previous principal had said to me when I finished college with a qualification in education – while we may have preferences for teaching certain age ranges, we should be able to teach children the whole way through the primary education system.

I have 13 years' experience teaching in mainstream classes and had learned



skills that transferred between classes, but I needed to upskill. I signed up for a number of summer CPD courses and courses with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). However, the courses run by the NCSE didn't start until the new academic year. When I spoke again to the two people I had contacted previously, both put me completely at ease. While it would be ideal to have some of these courses done, it was more important to start in September with an open mind.

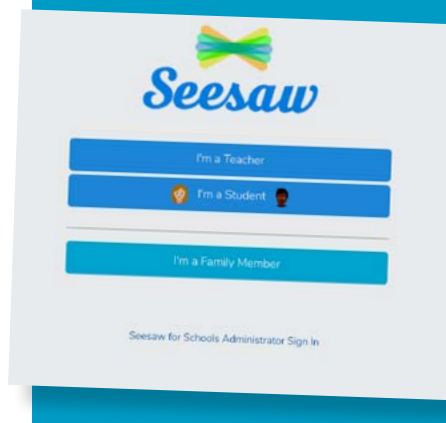
This was sound advice, as once I got to know the children I was teaching, I signed up to courses that I knew would be beneficial to them. It also allowed me to focus on aspects of the courses that I knew would benefit the children I had in the class. A lot of the methodologies in ASD settings have a certain structure such as picture exchange communications system (PECS) and TEACCH. Practicing the steps in real life is vital so that they can be successful in your classroom.

I visited a number of other ASD classes in mainstream schools and would highly recommend this to anyone planning to teach in an ASD class. Many teachers were great for opening their doors and sharing tips and ideas that could work for my children and my situation. They were also a great sounding board throughout my first year in the class.

Starting in September was very daunting. We had five children enrolled and I was supported by two SNAs. A few years of teaching infants hadn't prepared me for how tired I would be each evening in the beginning. Numerous times, I questioned my decision to go into the ASD class. We tried things, they worked or they didn't. We abandoned things, we parked things, but we never stopped reflecting on what was working and what we needed to change, keep or go back to.

I always thought that I had a good relationship with the parents of the children in my classes, but communicating with parents and parental involvement took on a whole new importance as the children, their parents, their SNAs and I figured out what we were doing and where we were going. This is particularly important, as some of the children weren't able to share what they had done or how their day had gone with their parents. Using the Seesaw resource to communicate with parents was fantastic and was much easier than using a physical diary. I didn't fully realise

Using the Seesaw resource to communicate with parents was fantastic and was much easier than using a physical diary.



how important these messages and pictures were each day to the parents, until I received a message from one

If you are considering teaching in an ASD class, I would say "go for it!" you will be much better at accommodating the needs of the children in your own class if and when you go back teaching in mainstream.

parent saying that, while they had got a message every evening, they hadn't received a picture of their child working in a few days and were wondering if their child had been okay. I had forgotten, but it was a reminder of the importance of this communication.

Communication is also key when working so closely with two colleagues in the classroom. We got to know each other so well over the two years that we worked together, possibly better than I have ever gotten to know anyone that I have worked with. We needed to know if one of us wasn't feeling right and the rest of us would watch out for them. Some of this communication happened naturally, but it was also important to have time to talk about what we were doing well or what we needed to change.

The importance of taking the time to reflect became apparent to me in the middle of the second year. Nothing seemed to be going right, I felt that things weren't being done properly. While walking into school one morning with my principal, she asked was everything alright, that myself and my SNA colleagues didn't seem as happy as we usually were. When I explained to her what was happening, her first response was "did you talk to them about this?" and I realised I hadn't. I had presumed, a bit like my five-year-old self, that my thoughts magically flashed across my forehead. Working so closely with others is just like any relationship – you have to work together at it. When we sat down and talked we realised we had all been thinking the exact same things and very quickly it went back to the usual happy atmosphere.

If you are considering teaching in an ASD class, I would say go for it. It will be the best fun you ever have. You will never take life quite so seriously again. You will become so much more resourceful and you will have a much better understanding of accommodating the needs of the children in your own class if and when you go back teaching in mainstream. At times I struggled with the initial lack of structure and visible progress, but gradually we were able to put structures in place based on the children's needs. While I chose to go back into mainstream after two years, I would most definitely go back to the ASD classes.

KATRINA GUINEY, St John's NS, Killiney.



Mapping the children's local environment

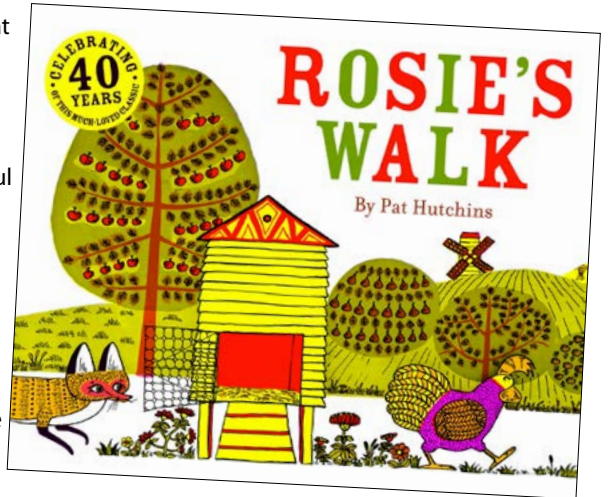
Picture books used to teach literacy are set in various locations. Such books are excellent resources for exploring geographic themes and providing creative opportunities for geographic learning and language development. Spatial awareness, including the language of position and prepositions, is a key element of primary geography in general and geo-literacy in particular. The language of spatial information includes on, over, under, beside, in front of, and behind. Other important geographical prepositions include across, past, and through.

Geo-literacy is the ability to use geographic understanding and reasoning to make decisions. The ultimate goal of geo-literacy is to facilitate children's participation in decision making through the use of geographic understanding and reasoning. Children need spatial language to enable them to make geographic decisions such as finding the best location for a picnic on a local map.

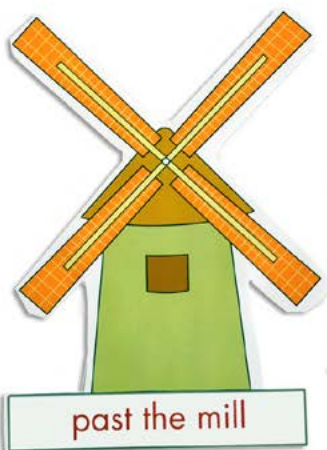
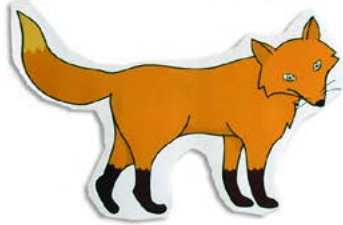
Books such as *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins help children use and appreciate the importance of spatial language.

Rosie's Walk, originally published in 1968, is a wonderful picture book which has never lost its appeal. Navigating the farm's obstacles, Rosie the hen enjoys a leisurely walk around the farm, completely oblivious to her stalker, the fox. In the story, Rosie walks across the yard, around the pond, over the haystack, past the mill, through the fence, under the beehives and arrives back in time for dinner.

Told with minimal text (32 words in total) the journey of the hen is tracked using a simple verbal description. This is a circular story as it ends where it begins. Through the text, readers follow Rosie as she goes over, under, through and around the various obstacles encountered on her trip. There's lots of space on each double



spread which allows adults and children an opportunity to discuss the story and anticipate what will happen next. The images, on the other hand, are where the real narrative of the book occurs. The images allow children to anticipate potential dangers. Told from Rosie's point of view, the adventures of the fox are presented through the illustrations.



Glue cut out characters to wooden lolly sticks and ask the children to re-tell the story.

In Scoil Íde, Limerick, *Rosie's Walk* is read to the children a few times before the book is used as a basis for mapping activities. The children (four to six years old) discuss relative locations of landmarks on the map, using positional vocabulary words such as next to, up, down, right, left, across, between, toward, away, near and far. The teacher focuses on the words used to show the hen's movement from place to place on the farm: across, around, over, past, through and under. Children use a map and cut-outs of the story's characters to follow their actions through space and time. This provides many opportunities for oral language development, drama and role-play. Using a fox cut-out, the children describe and act out the fox's movement: he fell on the rake, in the pool, in the haystack, into the cart, and under the flour, and crashed into the beehives. They also demonstrate positional vocabulary words using real obstacles in the classroom. The story is re-told in the children's own words, using a map and positional vocabulary. Finally, the children make their own maps based on the story.

Geo-literacy activities based on *Rosie's Walk*

Geographical extension activities based on *Rosie's Walk*

Introduce the book by talking about the cover picture. Inside there is a picture of the farmyard suitable for photocopying. This can be used to review all the places that Rosie went during her walk. Introduce vocabulary such as journey, story map, trip, destination, and travel, as the children talk about the story.

Using cut out characters on wooden lolly sticks ask the children to re-tell the story.

Explore the spatial language in the book (around, through, over, etc.)

and ask children to demonstrate their understanding through illustrations, map work, role play or explanations.

The story can be re-told using gestures:

- across: fingers walking across the palm
- around: finger going around in a circle
- over bring one hand over the other hand
- past: holding one finger in front, make another finger from your other hand sweep past it
- through: make one-hand open like a V. The other hand slides through the V.
- under: bring one hand under the other hand

Using the same gestures, the story can be sung (to the tune of 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush') as follows:

Rosie went across the yard,
across the yard, across the yard.
She walked across the yard.

Create a story map based on the locations mentioned in the story (i.e. haystack, fence, etc.) The story can also be re-told with a different setting e.g. in a forest.

Make a model of the farm using construction materials and act out Rosie's walk using toy animals. Use this model to teach the concept of a bird's eye view for map work. Take a picture of your model and use this as a basis for drawing a bird's eye view.

Read the story and put the events in order on a timeline. Using sequencing cards present the story in the correct order.

Recreate a walk around the school grounds based on the story. As children are walking, keep in mind the objects they walk across, around, over, past, through, or even under. Help the children to use specific locational language as

they walk around a corner, through a doorway, and near the playground. Back in the classroom discuss the different landmarks encountered on their journey. Then, help the children re-phrase what they've said so they are using the prepositions from *Rosie's Walk*.

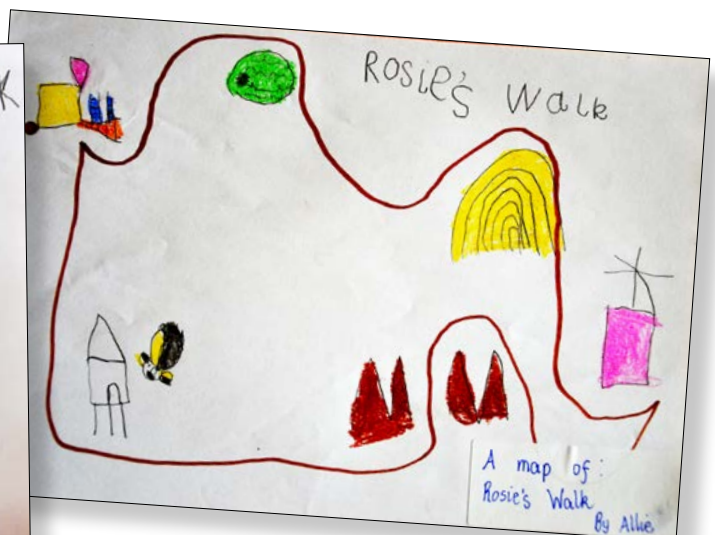
Literacy extension activities based on *Rosie's Walk*

The teacher can invite the children to create their own stories using the structure of the book. Drawing a picture of someone going over a wall or under a gate requires an understanding of spatial words.

- Write some speech/thought bubbles for the characters in the story.
- As you read the story for the first time, try and predict what might happen to the fox each time?
- Create your own story about a chicken and a fox.
- Create a new page for *Rosie's Walk*. Where could she go? How might the fox try to catch her? How will Rosie be saved?
- Choose a page from the story and write a description of what is happening. How are the characters feeling? What are they doing? What might happen next?
- Write a description of Rosie. What does she look like? How does she behave?
- Write another description of the fox.
- Write a review of the story. What do you like about it? Are there any parts that you don't like?

More geo-literacy ideas are available on <https://geoalliance.asu.edu/lessons/geoliteracy>.

DR ANNE DOLAN, lecturer, primary geography, Mary Immaculate College.
IAIN BURNS, teacher, Scoil Íde, Corbally, Limerick.



Children's maps based on *Rosie's Walk*

End of year events

Making memories with your pupils this summer

Teachers spend the school year building strong relationships with the children in their classes. The normal school year often culminates in a celebration of the events and a reflection of all that has been achieved. Both children and teachers have been robbed of precious time in the classroom with their friends and teachers. However, important events do not need to go unacknowledged.

Here are some of our favourite virtual events to create memories with your class as the end of the school year approaches:

Take a virtual school tour in Ireland

- The education team at EPIC (The Irish Emigration Museum) have brought their museum experience to you, through a free museum [virtual reality tour](#) and complimentary accompanying worksheets. Available upon request, the class level appropriate worksheets offer a host of guidance and tips. To take the virtual visit, go to www.epicchq.com to request your worksheets, contact: groups@epicchq.com.
- Take a virtual tour with Dublinia, a new learning platform helping to unlock the city's medieval and Viking past for primary-school students. It can be found at dublinia.ie/online-learning/.
- Or perhaps you studied the Easter Rising this year and want Irish actor Colin Farrell to take you on a virtual tour of parts of Dublin synonymous with the Easter Rising. Join the tour here dublinrising.withgoogle.com/welcome/.
- You could also explore [archaeology in the classroom](#) a website where teachers can download a 12-module resource pack and pupils can find interesting facts, games and activities. More information is available at itsabouttime.ie.

Class graduations

Using a video platform such as Google Classrooms or Zoom you can still go ahead with your class graduation. Here are some ideas for how you can make your class

graduation unique:

- Have a theme your class graduation – perhaps get everyone to wear a certain colour or to be in fancy dress. You could also have a particular virtual background.
- Best background: Ask pupils to decorate their backgrounds at home with homemade banners or pictures. You could have a competition for the best effort.
- Create a 'hall of fame': Ask students to send in their biggest achievement from the year and share this in a PowerPoint or video.
- Create a memory slideshow: Create a slideshow including images from the pupils during the school year, examples of their work, quotes from them, and pictures of each student. Get students to send in a 30-second video of their favourite memory from school, one positive about the lockdown and what they are looking forward to when they come back to school. You could then create a 'feel-good' video.
- Invite a speaker: Invite someone to be a guest speaker at your event to create an atmosphere of importance.
- Give out awards: These awards could then be emailed or posted to the pupil. If you wanted to have a voting system for some awards, you could open a poll to allow pupils in your class to vote. Create a poll at www.mentimeter.com.
- Invite important people in your pupil's lives: In the past, space might have been a restriction for how many attendees could come to these events. Thankfully, the virtual world has no limit on numbers so all are welcome.
- Support small businesses: Small businesses have been affected, is there a bakery in your locality that could perhaps deliver baked goods?
 - Include everyone: Every pupil loves their moment to shine, to

ensure everyone gets this, include a 'Class of 2020' graduation picture and a biography or quote from each pupil in a video.

- Create a community: Allow parents and well-wishers to comment via [Padlet](#) before the event and then share the comments with the class on the day.
- Create a quiz: Have a fun quiz using [Kahoot!](#)

Virtual sports and family day

- Create a virtual sports and family day by getting everyone involved. To take part, pupils will have to record their event and submit it as part of an entry to get points. The videos could then be compiled and shared with the school community.
- Family relay: Get all of the family out and running 100m with a baton – in your garden or local park.
- Set a push-up task: See who can get the most number of push-ups.
- Have a slow-bike race between two people: Get two family members to have a slow bike race of 100 metres. The slowest person wins!
- Keepy-uppies: See who can get the longest number of keepy-uppies using a football.
- Nominate a sports star of the year award: Get the winner to record a video accepting their award and giving words of thanks.
- Create an obstacle course: set up an obstacle course with six obstacles and time the family to see who can do it the fastest.

Further information on the above and additional resources for teachers are available on a new website called TeacherSupport.ie which has been developed by Hibernia College to offer a range of free supports for teachers. We host a range of drop-in clinics on Wednesdays at 3 pm where topics picked by teachers are discussed, from academic to technical elements, all teacher queries are answered. New content is continuously being added, please check it out and share your needs and requirements with us.

AOIFE LYNAM, director of research and MARY KELLY, head of School of Education, Hibernia College.





Making movement fun

Michelle and Sarah from Ninja Fitness share PE ideas that children can do at home.

Michelle and Sarah from Ninja Fitness share PE ideas that children can do at home.

Ninja Fitness is a small company run by two primary school teachers that, usually, provide gymnastics and fitness classes for primary school children in North Kildare. Due to the situation we find ourselves in, we have uploaded our lessons free for all on [YouTube](#).

Our lessons, suitable for pupils 5-12 years of age, cover the gymnastics strand in the primary school curriculum while keeping fit and getting strong.

These lessons are presented using clear, explicit instruction and the progressive development of skills assists the students in the development of balance, core strength and coordination. Lessons are suitable for all. Emphasis is placed on developing fundamental movement skills (FMS) which are hugely beneficial for all students. Mastery of FMS skills will ensure success in other sports as well as improved general strength and fitness. We focus on body weighted exercise to provide an equal challenge to children of all ages.

We provide one new PE lesson each Wednesday and will continue to do so until the end of June. Our [Wednesday workout](#) starts with a warm-up, full-body stretching, strength and balance exercises. For the body of the lessons, we teach new skills such as tumbles, rolls and hand balancing. These lessons are all in order in a playlist on [YouTube](#). All the content is progressive and if the lessons are done in order students will have all the prerequisites needed to complete the skills successfully.

Lesson idea one – movement challenges

We share two challenges per week that are proving extremely popular and have provided entertainment for the whole family. So far these challenges have included;

- How many toilet rolls can you stack while doing a handstand against the wall?
- Standing up, place a beanbag on your



The exercise board game

head. Can you go from standing to lying on the ground and back again without letting it fall off?

- Lie on your tummy and hold your hands together behind your back. Can you get up?
- Can you put a t-shirt on while doing a handstand against the wall?
- Lie on your back. Balance a shoe on the sole of your foot. Can you turn on to your tummy then back on to your back without it falling off?

Lesson idea two – exercise board game

In these times, it is difficult to ensure that students are getting the recommended 60 minutes daily activity per day. A simple activity that everyone can do at home is an exercise board game. Students can easily make one at home.

1. Students will need a dice, a sheet of paper, a pencil and colours.
2. Draw three lines down the page, then three lines across the page to create a four by four grid.
3. Write a different exercise in each box; star jump, burpees, press-ups, sit-ups etc.

4. Decorate your board game.

5. To play the game throw the dice onto the page. Wherever the dice lands show which exercise to complete and the number on the dice shows how many repetitions to do.

6. This activity can be completed independently at home or as a game with multiple players.

This activity is versatile, it lends itself well to differentiation as you can prescribe different exercises depending on what particular students need to work on. Alternatively allowing students to pick their own exercises gives them ownership of their exercise programme. This will make it more enjoyable for them and encourage them to play it regularly.

A variation of this for senior pupils; They must complete 12 repetitions of each exercise while counting in multiples of the number shown on the dice to practice their times tables.

All of these ideas, plus many more, are available with full tutorials on [Ninja Fitness TV](#). Alternatively, you can visit our website www.ninjafitness.ie for more information.

MICHELLE NÍ RIADA and SARAH GILL, Ninja Fitness you can follow them on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Tik Tok](#).



Fun and games online



Schools have been closed since mid-March, but children have never had a better opportunity to improve their hurling and football skills. The GAA, supported by the Cumann na mBunscol and the GPA, unveiled a series of weekly #GAAPrimary challenges on learning.gaa.ie/primary-school – a series of learning and physical activities for children in primary school.

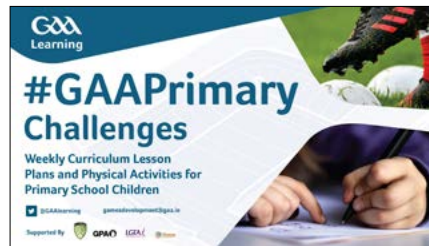
According to Pat Culhane, national games development officer with the GAA: "These challenges are designed to help teachers and parents to work on the cross-curricular lesson plans with children to meet their learning needs. Gaelic games-themed lessons are spread out across all curriculum subjects and for children at every class level, based on the GAA Céim ar Aghaidh/Step Ahead resource."

There is no shortage of tips from top players online. Dublin

footballer and primary teacher, Ciarán Kilkenny, features on the skills videos on Twitter @CKKilkenny93. Ciarán enlists the help of other Dublin stars such as Brian



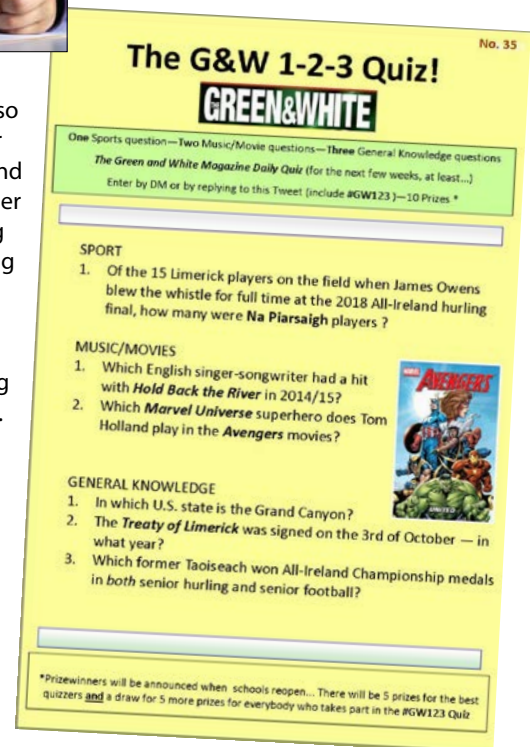
Ciarán Kilkenny



Fenton, Alan Brogan and Diarmuid Connolly. TJ Reid of Kilkenny has also proven popular through his Twitter page @_tjreid with his weekly PE and GAA skills classes. Limerick footballer Peter Nash has posted daily hurling and football coaching tips for young players on @LKCoachingGames, featuring a different skill every day. Cork hurler, Patrick Horgan, has many followers of his online hurling challenges on Twitter @Hoggie088.

Off the field, *The Green and White* magazine is well known to everybody involved in Cumann na mBunscol. Ciarán Crowe has been uploading a quiz each day on @LimerickGAAzine and has been getting a great reaction from followers throughout the country. "When Cumann na mBunscol activities resume, we expect to see

a huge rise in levels of skill and virtuosity", says Liam Magee, cathaoirleach of Coiste Náisiúnta, "as children have been honing their skills with the cream of GAA talent as their tutors!"



New PRO on Coiste Náisiúnta

The AGM of Allianz Cumann na mBunscol took place on 7 March in Thurles, before the COVID-19 restrictions were imposed.

Jim Fennelly of Cill Chainnigh stepped down from his role as leas cathaoirleach, after a decade of service on the Coiste Náisiúnta. Joe Lyons, outgoing public relations officer (PRO), replaced Jim, while John Manley was elected as PRO.

John Manley has been teaching principal of Dualla NS, Cashel, Co Tipperary since 2009. He is the current PRO of Tipperary Cumann na mBunscol, Munster Cumann na mBunscol and, now, National Cumann na mBunscol. John has been involved in Allianz Cumann na mBunscol since his time teaching in Rathfarnham in the early noughties. He has a keen interest in coaching and, from 2009 to 2017, coached juvenile and minor players in his home club, Nenagh Éire Óg, with whom he won two County Minor A hurling medals as a player. He has also coached the adult team, Boherlahan Dualla, in the parish



Newly elected National PRO, John Manley, with outgoing PRO, Joe Lyons.

where he teaches and was one of the club's coaches in 2018 when they won the County Junior A hurling championship to return to intermediate ranks.

Among John's duties will be contributing the Cumann na mBunscol article to *InTouch* and maintaining the Cumann na mBunscol website

www.cnmbnaisiunta.com and Twitter page @cnmbnaisiunta. Having devised and delivered inservice courses for teachers in IT for many years, John is ideally equipped for this aspect of his role. "It was a huge honour to be elected as National Cumann na mBunscol PRO", John said.

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Myprotein	35% Discount
Myvegan	25% Discount
Rakuten TV	40% Discount
Reuben's Meal Plans	20% Discount
Runners Need	10% Discount
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Plugged and unplugged – problem-solving and coding at home and in school

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think” – Margaret Mead. Computational thinking is learning to solve problems, with or without a computer. It is a way of breaking a complex problem down into simple tasks which allow the problem to be solved. Coding and computational thinking help children to develop critical thinking skills and take a logical approach to solving problems. Computational thinking can be thought of as the 4 Cs: creativity, communication, critical thinking and collaboration.

In this article, we will explore activities to introduce children to computational thinking which can be easily undertaken in the home or school environment. These activities are fun, engaging and will help support and develop all curricular areas, particularly STEM, PE and Art.

Unplugged activities

When introducing computational thinking to children, it's best to start with activities that don't involve computers, known as unplugged activities. This allows the child to awaken interest in problem-solving. Unplugged activities can be based upon everyday occurrences and games such as planning the next move in a game of Xs and Os, following a recipe or spotting patterns in Connect Four. In the home environment, parents

can ask their child to explain why they made a certain decision or move, which gives them the chance to justify their reason and communicate with you.

There's a wealth of unplugged activities on the internet; the following sites are some good ones to get started with:

- [Bebras](#) provides challenge cards with scenarios suitable for a range of ages and abilities that will help develop children's problem-solving skills.
- The [Hello Ruby](#) website introduces coding through offline activities in a whimsical and appealing way.
- [Barefoot](#) has easily accessible fun and creative activities for use in the classroom or by parents and children at home. These are supplemented by mini-missions and interactive learning games for children to enjoy.

Plugged activities

Plugged activities are challenges that involve using technology. This added dimension allows children to deepen their learning by creating more complex patterns, sets of instructions (known as algorithms) and making greater judgments. This allows children to experiment and play with code and debug errors while persevering with the challenge posed to them.

- [Lightbot](#) is a self-paced educational game that introduces several principles

of computational thinking. One of the major advantages of [Lightbot](#) is that it doesn't involve typing code but rather using icon-based coding. The levels begin at a very basic level but get more difficult with the addition of loops and repeating patterns. It is available as an app for smartphones, tablets and online.

- [Scratch](#) is an online coding programme with tutorials included that children are sure to get endless enjoyment from. The [Scratch](#) programme allows children to create interactive stories, animations, games, music and art. [Scratch/LERO](#) provide free step by step lessons allowing children to create their own project at the end of a lesson. These are available [here](#). For younger children, there is the [Scratch Junior app](#), a fun, free and easy way to learn the basics of coding.
- [Hour of Code](#) is a website which allows children to take a one-hour self-guided fun tutorial, designed to demystify 'code' and to show that anybody can learn the basics of coding.

Further Websites

- [Code.org](#)
- [Google CS First](#)
- [CoderDojo](#)

ROISIN LINEEN and EOIN STAKELUM, PDST digital technologies advisors.

Ábhar léitheoireachta ar líne

Tá an-éileamh ar ábhar léitheoireachta ar líne na laethanta seo



Cleite - Léigh Anois – léitheoireacht do na bunranganna

Is ábhar léitheoireachta a bhaineann leis an gclár luathléitheoireachta é *Cleite* agus tá sé ar an suíomh sealadach [anseo](#). Tá an suíomh seo á chur ar fáil ag an Áisaonad le hábhar léitheoireachta do léitheoirí óga le linn na géarchéime. Tá siad ag cur leis an suíomh go rialta.

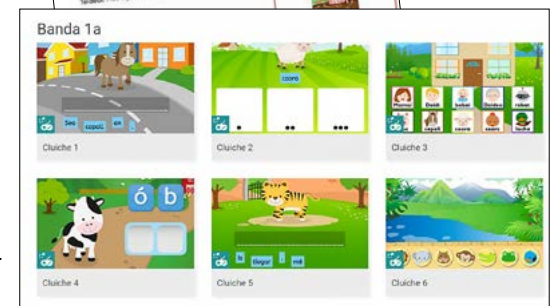
Clár struchtúrtha atá in *Cleite*. Forbraíonn sé scileanna agus straitéisí a thacaíonn le léitheoireacht na Gaeilge. Tá breis is 200 leabhar sa chlár *Cleite* féin

agus iad bandaithe ó céim 1 go céim 4.

Tá roinnt leabhar ó gach banda á gcur ar fáil go leictreonach ar an suíomh. Tá idir fhicsean agus neamhfhicsean sna leabhair, rud a thugann taithí agus cleachtadh don léitheoir tosaigh ar éagsúlacht téacs agus seánraí. Tá béim ar spriocfhocail agus spriocfhrásaí sna leabhair, chomh maith le focail fuaime agus focail suime á láimhseáil go comhthreomhar.

Tá nasc chuig cluichí idirghníomhacha a ghabhann leis na leabhair ar an suíomh agus tá comhad ar leith ar fáil go leictreonach do gach banda le háiseanna tacaíochta agus gníomhachtaí in éineacht le nótaí breise múinteora ar shuíomh an Áisaonaid [anseo](#).

Cé go bhfuil *Cleite* dírithe ar thús na léitheoireachta sa chóras tumoideachais, tá go leor féidearthachtaí ann na leabhair a úsáid le páistí atá sna a úsáid le páistí atá sna bunranganna i scoil ar bith.



Eipic! - léitheoireacht do na hardranganna

Irisleabhar míosúil Gaeilge do pháistí sna hardranganna is ea *Eipic!*. Tá éagsúlacht leathan téacsanna agus ábhar dílis ann agus tá sé curtha i láthair i slí shiamsúil tharraingteach.

Bionn scéalta nuachta, siamsaíocht, stair, eolaíocht, spórt, scéalta faoi scannáin agus réaltaí cáiliúla in *Eipic!* Agus tá siad scríofa ar bealach deas a thuigfidh páistí. Go hiondúil, is i bhfoirm pháipéir a fhoilsítear an t-irisleabhar *Eipic!* ach tá seaneagráin den irisleabhar ar fáil ag an [nasc seo](#).

Úsáid sa bhaile/don chianfhoghlaim

- Lig do na páistí sult a bhaint as an irisleabhar ar dtús!
- Roghnaigh scéal nuachta a bhfuil réamheolas ag páistí ina thaobh cheana agus spreag iad le tuilleadh plé agus taighde a dhéanamh ar an ábhar.
- Iarr ar pháistí ailt éagsúla a léamh agus ansin athchoimriú den alt a thabhairt ina bhfocail féin.
- Roghnaigh agallamh nó alt le heolas ar dhuine cáiliúil. Iarr ar na páistí smaoinemh ar na ceisteanna a cuireadh chun teacht ar an eolas a bhí san alt. Scríobh síos na ceisteanna sin chomh maith le ceisteanna eile a chumadh chun breis eolais a fháil.
- Spreag na páistí le halt irise a scríobh faoi ábhar nuachta iad féin, pléigh an tábacht a bhaineann le ceannlíne tharraingteach chun léitheoirí a mhealladh. Spreag iad le grianghraif, grafaic agus obair ealaíne chuí a úsáid. Is féidir teacht ar theimpléid éagsúla chun nuachtáin a chruthú ar líne.



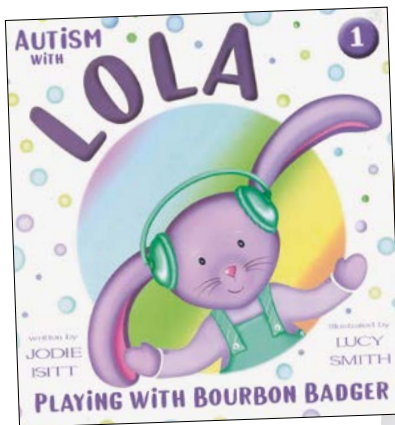
Úsáid sa bhaile/don chianfhoghlaim

- Pléigh teideal agus clúdach an leabhair. Pléigh aon réamheolas atá ag páistí ar ábhar an leabhair.
- Tríd an bplé, déan iarracht ionchur teanga shoiléir agus shonrach a dhéanamh chun a chinntiú go bhfuil an teanga atá de dhith chun na leabhair a léamh sealbhaithe ag na páistí – d'fhéadfá an taifeadadh a ghabhann le gach leabhar a úsáid chuige seo.
- Tabhair comhairle maidir le conas tabhairt faoi fhocail nua a léamh – m.sh. leidphictiúr, an comhthéacs, díchódú, siollaí a léamh, cuid den fhocal a léamh, nasc a dhéanamh le focail a bhfuil eolas acu orthu cheana.
- Mol do pháistí an leabhar a léamh go ciúin nó os ard agus iad ag leanúint an téacs leis an tsúil.
- Tá béim ar athrá agus athúsáid frásaí sna leabhair, rud a chuidíonn le hathchleachtadh, sealbhú agus daingniú teanga. Bain leas as na gníomhaíochtaí ar líne a ghabhann leis na leabhair ar leith chun tuilleadh cleachtadh a thabhairt do pháistí ar na frásaí a dhaingniú.
- Iarr ar pháistí ábhar na leabhar a athinsint ina bhfocail féin.

MÁIRE NIC AN RÍ, oifigeach bunscoile, COGG

Reviews

Gentle story, giant impact



The real hero in this gentle tale of Lola, a young rabbit with autism, is kind-hearted Bourbon Badger who has empathy in abundance, and a deep understanding of Lola's challenges. This story is set in a classroom where we are introduced to a happy, messy Lola during her art lesson. However, this quickly changes when teacher announces, "IT'S PLAYTIME!" Noisy classmates are oblivious to Lola's sensory issues and are intent on quickly tidying up to go outside. Bourbon, seeing her distress, tries to shush the class to no avail. Outside is no different. Left alone and overwhelmed, Lola is

sad and tearful until Bourbon comes to the rescue with her comfy ear defenders and joins her in play.

This is the first book in a series for author Jodie Isitt, whose aim is to teach children what it is like to be autistic and how

they can help those living with this disorder. This pastel coloured book, illustrated by Lucy Smith, comes with an activity book, soft toy, balloons and a lollipop. The book includes advice from experts that maximises the books potential as a teaching tool for the junior classes.

ISBN 978-1-913073-00-8.
www.autismwithlovepublishing.com.
Cost of book, activity book and toy: €28 plus shipping.

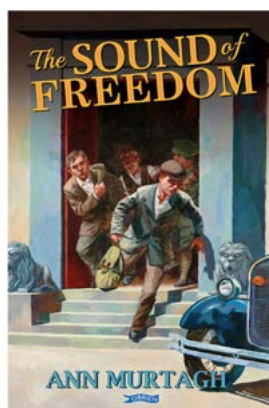
Reviewed by MARGO O'DOWD, Milltown, Killarney, Co Kerry.

Keeping Irish history alive

The Sound of Freedom by Ann Murtagh is another fine piece of children's fiction from O'Brien Press, a publishing company determined to keep Irish history alive for younger readers.

Set against the backdrop of the War of Independence in Ireland, the book effectively captures the dilemmas of a 13-year-old boy, Colm Conneely, as he comes to terms with life as a teenager and the struggles of finding his place in the world with family, friends and the lively Alice McCluskey.

Centre stage in this story is given to Irish culture, particularly music and poetry; Colm is an exceptional fiddle player and music is at the heart of



the lives of the main characters. Our native language is also prioritised.

Essentially, as readers, we are transported back to 1919 and given the opportunity to get a sense of what it must have been like as an Irish citizen during this period.

The book strikes the right balance of humour, suspense, intrigue and poignancy, while also providing us with important historical insights, making it a highly entertaining read for

children in the middle to senior classes of primary school.

Reviewed by DUNCAN MCCARTHY, St Anthony's BNS, Cork.

Tackling body image issues

Body Image in the Primary School is a book of suggested lesson plans written to promote positive body image for primary school children. Nicky Hutchinson and Chris Calland are both teachers and educational consultants, with many years specialist experience in children's wellbeing. According to research, negative attitude towards body image and concern with appearance is something that is affecting primary school children as young as six. This book aims to tackle some of those issues concerning primary school children. The book contains lesson plans linked to the SPHE curriculum in the UK, but is extremely relevant and can be closely linked with the Irish SPHE curriculum.

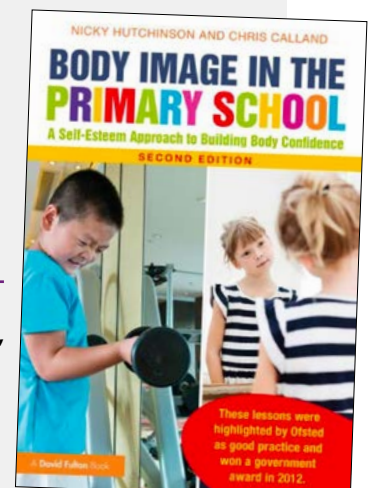
The lesson plans are split into categories according to age. Within these sections are themes aimed at promoting lively discussion and activities to encourage positive body image in children.

This is the second edition of this book. The first edition, published over ten years ago, has been updated to reflect the increasing challenges that children encounter with regard to mental health.

The book is extremely user friendly, and would be an excellent resource for the primary classroom.

ISBN:
9780-367-18942-9.
Publisher:
Routledge,
Taylor and
Francis
Group,
Oxon, UK.

Reviewed by LORNA ROCHE, Blackrock, Co Dublin.



Where Teachers Borrow



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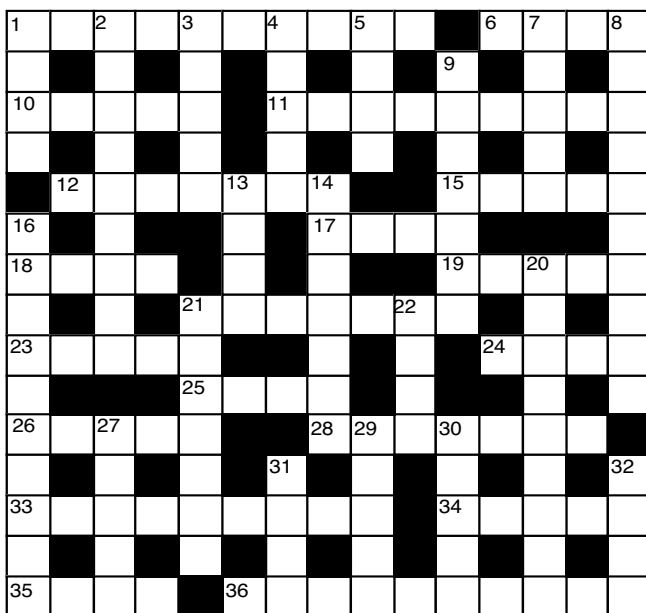
[comharlinnintocu.ie](https://www.comharlinnintocu.ie)

Comhar Linn Draw winners March 2020

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1 Mary Duane.
Car – Toyota Yaris | 3 Winner from District 21
– Waterford. Cash €1,000 | 5 Winner from District 01
– Dublin. Cash €1,000 |
| 2 Caitlin Bn Ui Castro.
Cash €2,000 | 4 Winner from District 09
– Cork. Cash €1,000 | Draw held March, 2020 |

Comhar Linn Crossword No. 207

A draw for 2 x €100 will be made from all correct entries. Simply complete the crossword and email it to : competitions@into.ie before Friday 29th May 2020.



NAME:
ADDRESS:

Open to INTO Members only

To read the Crossword Competition Terms & Conditions and INTO's Data Privacy Notice, please visit <https://www.into.ie/about/compliance/data-privacy-notice/>

Across

- Pointed out some fencing material. (6,4)
- Get me aluminium for a repast. (4)
- Time allocated workers to produce a garment. (5)
- Give voice about the elite (wailing as you do so). (9)
- Gets away to see caps explode. (7)
- 15 & 31d. Does one ride a sea-horse to play this sport? (5-4)
- Drink it to celebrate a union of teachers. (4)
- You'll find some fuel in Mexico, always. (4)
- With this instrument, one could give the monk's room a ring. (5)
- It's an accountant's garment for a priest to wear. (7)
- A rope in this form may be seen at La Scala. (5)
- The speed at which you can tie up at sea? (4)
- Verse by Edgar Allan? Grand. (4)
- Beam when Lear's upset. (5)
- A loud story? Charming. (7)
- 33 & 34. Some leftover crayon? That tells you something smells! (9,5)
- Amphibian tasting octopus and dill starters. (4)
- Crushed, getting the crop messed up. (10)

Down

- 1 & 22d. Some musical notation scatters elf scabs. (4,4)
- Restore harness country. (9)
- Get more from the minor actor. (5)
- A stew, recooked? Rubbish! (5)
- Mr McLroy is involved in a horror yarn. (4)
- Throw out even very interested, committed tenants to begin with. (5)
- Unruly types disrupt legal tours. (5,5)
- It's for flighty Londoners who want to move! (7)
- The cat is prowling under my arboretum, to begin with. (4)
- May USA mats be orange? (7)
- College is not possible, according to Alice Cooper. (7,3)
- Do they not collect rent at sea? (9)
- Make headgear with cereal on a whim. (7)
- See 1 down.
- I get stuck into a couch here in Bulgaria. (5)
- Hot breakfast made with fish aloft. (3-2)
- Inane, confused, orphaned, musical heroine. (5)
- See 15 across.
- Sounds like not many'd get involved in a vendetta. (4)

Gordius – In Touch No. 206 May 2020 solutions

Across

- Log 3. Parishioner 8. All out 9. Recurred 10. Drive 11. Toast 13. Midas 15. Harvard 16. Hangman 20. Hated 21. Drill 23. Curio 24. Fraction 25. Bottom 26. Whole number 27. Err

Down

- Lo and behold 2. Gulliver 3. Pause 4. Inroads 5. Inuit 6. Normal 7. Rod 12. Transformer 13. Mirth 14. Scald 17. Magritte 18. Sternum 19. Figaro 22. Lithe 23. Choir 24. Few

Winners of Comhar Linn InTouch Crossword No. 205

Sandra Corrigan, Carlow and Marie Dineen, Waterford

Winners of May InTouch no 206 online competition will be announced in the next InTouch issue.

Each month, Children's Books Ireland recommend a book of the month for primary pupils



Children's Books Ireland recommended read – June

Only A Tree Knows How To Be A Tree

Written and illustrated by Mary Murphy. Otter-Barry Books, 2020. ISBN 9781910959251. 32pp. Cost: €14.

The latest picturebook from creator Mary Murphy is an exploration of the world and our place in it and how everyone and everything a child can imagine belongs and is valued, both as itself and as a part of various communities, societies and systems.

Bold images and striking colours offer a seemingly simple visual narrative to the reader, but one that supports deeper reading and more complex ideas than might first appear. The child's perspective is prioritised here with a surprising amount of detail available to be perceived. One particular spread depicts a young girl dancing under a sky full of birds; the figure of the little girl seems utterly free and liberated in her environment while her movements mirror those of the birds above her. Only birds know how to be birds and only little girls know how to be little girls; but our imaginations allow us to conceive and dream of what it might be like to be someone or something else.

Murphy is attempting to engage with a fundamentally essential emotional idea here: that our differences are what make us who we are and those differences are beautiful. This is a celebration of uniqueness and of commonality, of individuals and animals belonging together in a world that holds endless potential for wonder and kindness.

This is the kind of picturebook that will lead to important conversations about identity, what it means to belong and our capacity for empathy and imagination. A delicate and simple message delivered effectively and with an accessible visual flair. 2–4, 5–8.

Children's Books Ireland is the national children's books organisation of Ireland. For further information and more reviews, visit www.childrensbooksireland.ie.




InTouch competitions and draws


From time to time, the INTO runs competitions and draws for our members via InTouch, our e-newsletter, website or social media. Only essential data required for the running of the competition is requested from members. The data collected is deleted once the winners have been selected.

The full name and county of prize winners are published by the INTO. By entering the competition, it is assumed consent is given by members for publication of these details.


For more information on T&Cs for competitions visit the benefits section of the INTO website.




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Star site



SCOIL NAOMH BRÍD, MUFF, CO DONEGAL
<https://www.snbmuff.com>
Very modern looking site. Good use of pull out quotes to highlight content and a fantastic section on the history of the school.




THE WONDER OF WEEDS
<https://bit.ly/TheWonderOfWeeds>
Field investigation activity from the National Gallery of Ireland with notes and pictures identifying common weeds.

ONES TO WATCH

THE DICTIONARY OF IRISH BIOGRAPHY
<https://dib.cambridge.org>
Niche content that might interest teachers. Free access available for the first time outside of schools.

ARTS IN EDUCATION
<http://artsineducation.ie>
Portal site bringing together artists and teachers in a number of different collaborative ways. Great site to seek inspiration for longer-term arts projects.



Top 10

The most viewed resources on Scoilnet in May.

- 1 **PHYSICAL LITERACY**
<https://www.scoilnet.ie/pdst/physlit>
A whole sub section of Scoilnet dedicated to developing the physically literate child.
- 2 **CAPACITY KITCHEN HUNT**
<https://bit.ly/KitchenHunt>
Simple worksheet for pupils to complete on the area of capacity.
- 3 **TRIP TO THE RIVER DODDER**
<https://bit.ly/RiverDodder>
Simple worksheet pupils complete when visiting the river.
- 4 **EASTER RISING POWERPOINT**
<https://bit.ly/EasterRisingEOFarrell>
PowerPoint on the rising with a subsequent worksheet on Elizabeth O'Farrell.
- 5 **CÚPLA FOCAL**
<https://bit.ly/CuplaFocal>
Booklet from Gaeloideachas full of simple, practical vocabulary that can be used at home together on a daily basis.
- 6 **SOUNDS FROM NATURE**
<https://www.naturesoundmap.com>
Nature soundscapes and wildlife sounds from all over the planet.
- 7 **MONEY – SHOPPING WORKSHEET**
<https://bit.ly/MoneyShoppingWorksheet>
Worksheet encourages pupils to look at and use a sample price list from a fruit shop to solve problems.
- 8 **BIA – BOSCA LÓIN**
<https://bit.ly/BiaBoscaLoin>
Seo cur i láthair PDF le focail don téama bosca lóin.
- 9 **WHO INVENTED THE SUBMARINE?**
bit.ly/zTuKTRF
Presentation on John Philip Holland, the Co Clare inventor of the submarine.
- 10 **HOW IS A RAINBOW FORMED?**
<https://bit.ly/HowRainbowFormed>
YouTube video explaining all.

HERE TO HELP

We would like to reassure our members that we remain here to help you during these challenging times. You will still have access to your account and our dedicated staff will be available to answer your queries and provide guidance where possible. We would also encourage our members to use our online services to manage accounts and general banking services.



To register for our online services

1. Visit www.comharlinnintocu.ie
2. Select register for access
3. Complete and submit form



If you are registered for online banking, you will already have access to your account 24/7. Please visit www.comharlinnintocu.ie/login



Current account now available with a globally accepted Mastercard Debit Card with contactless payments.

We wish you and your families well.
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