

intouch

Welcome back to school



Wash hands



Don't Touch



Cover your mouth
and nose when coughing



Clean workspaces
regularly



**INTO puts key questions
to Minister Foley**



A school year like no other

When I became general secretary, I never imagined a year like this. The closure of our schools from March to June. A devastating pandemic that has turned society on its head. As your union, we have sought to adapt to the ever-changing landscape; to support and protect you as we attempt to move forward; to secure the necessary staffing, resources and funding to support the reopening of our schools and a return to classroom learning.

At every step of the way we have demanded that all decisions taken be informed by expert Irish public health advice. This advice must be kept under constant review. As we learn more about this virus, we need government to act

Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile

I know too that many of you will be anxious about the new working environment you find yourself in. We must all take time to look after ourselves and look out for each other.

Over the summer, Spectrum.Life was appointed as the new employee assistance service for teachers and other school staff. I encourage members to use the service and resources on their website. Ask for help if you need it.

Face coverings

All members are advised to wear a face covering if they have any concerns whatsoever that they won't be able to maintain effective social distancing in their school. If in doubt, wear a mask. In some circumstances visors will also be appropriate.

Supply panels

Ensuring adequate substitution cover in schools is vital as we seek to ensure our school doors remain open. To this end, the INTO has secured a number of important concessions. Substitute cover is available for every teacher from the first day of absence. Ninety-four base schools servicing some 2,000 schools will host a national supply panel, ensuring ready access to a qualified substitute teacher. In addition, we have negotiated more flexibility for those job sharing, on career break or returning from abroad to provide substitution in their local schools.

Release days

In recognition of the increased responsibilities facing our teaching principals, the INTO has negotiated one leadership and management day (release day) per week for every teaching principal. We have also delivered release days for deputy principals in schools with nine or more mainstream classes, so that administrative principals receive additional support.

Thank you, once again, for all your great work and, as you start into a school year like no other, please continue to share your views with us, so we can continue to advocate on your behalf.

... an enormous amount of work was undertaken in schools across the country. Your work has enabled our schools to reopen....

quickly, adapt, rethink if necessary and ensure we return to normal as quickly as possible.

Over the summer, an enormous amount of work was undertaken in schools across the country. Your work has enabled our schools to reopen and welcome back our pupils following a prolonged absence. I want to thank each and every member for your efforts in this regard. We owe our tremendous school leaders a debt of gratitude for their perseverance and determination over the summer months in particular. They certainly heeded Ireland's call and communities really appreciate their mammoth efforts.

As I write this editorial, advice has changed again. It's far from clear what the country will look like when you are reading this. What I can assure you though is that your union will be here with you each and every step of the way.

We will continue to meet with the department each and every week. If shortfalls or gaps are identified, we will move quickly to secure solutions and support to ensure our schools can remain open safely and, if classes or schools have to close, that staff and pupils are properly supported. I encourage you to share your views with your branch and district officers as we proceed. We will continue to bring any further concerns to stakeholder consultation meetings.

John Boyle

intouch



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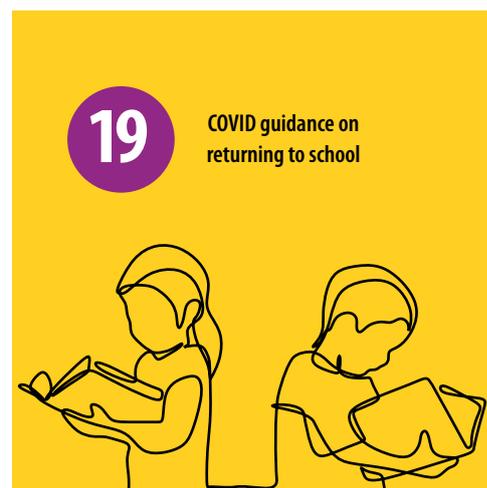
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Contents

- 7 **News**
- 16 SCG/OCG
- 17 Teaching Council news
- 23 **Your INTO**
Meetings online
- 24 Rainbows
- 33 **Advice**
- 34 Maternity Leave and PRSL

- 39 **Teaching matters**
- 40 Picture books
on homelessness
- 44 Heritage in schools
- 47 Grow it yourself
- 49 Science
- 51 Gaeilge
- 53 **Reviews**
- 55 **Finishing Touches**

26



23



13



49



28

10

things you should know

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Interview with new minister. Page 30 2 Guidance on returning to school. Page 19 3 What to focus on – curriculum guidance. Page 25 4 INTO priorities for Budget 2021. Page 10 5 Pay restoration in October. Page 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Subsearch is now TeacherConnect. Page 7 7 Over €55K raised for Crumlin through members' draw. Page 9 8 What you need to know about contracts. Page 33 9 Getting a mortgage. Page 37 10 Looking after your mental health. Page 26 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



Union secures almost 100 supply panels and 'release' days for principals and deputy principals

Some 94 base schools have been identified to support the rollout of a national supply panel scheme this year. The base schools will service more than 2000 schools across Ireland, providing much needed certainty as schools reopen this term.

For a number of years, the INTO has called for the establishment of supply panels nationwide. In 2019, the union secured a pilot scheme in six localities from the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The pilot scheme served approximately 100 schools and ran successfully over the course of the last school year.

Adequate and reliable substitute cover is essential as we anticipate higher numbers of absences owing to the pandemic and public health advice for teachers to remain at home when they present with symptoms.

In seeking to support our teaching principals, the union secured a leadership and management release day per week for the forthcoming year. The delivery of this key INTO objective means that all teaching principals, regardless of school size will be able to take one day per week to undertake leadership roles within their school. We have also secured release days for deputy principals in schools with nine or more mainstream classes.

Many groups of five small schools with teaching principals have decided to appoint fixed-term teachers to cover their leadership and management days for the next school year. The base schools have sent application forms to the DES seeking approval for the advertisement of these posts.



New TeacherConnect service launches to support staff cover in schools

The INTO has released an enhanced version of our popular Subsearch service which is now available to INTO members. TeacherConnect is a brand new member service which offers an enhanced service to members available for substitute work and to schools seeking to fill a substitute position.

To access the new service visit teacherconnect.into.ie.

Key features of the new service include:

- The ability for members seeking substitute work to post their availability;

- Targeted information for schools on substitutes in your area, including their availability;
- A temporary reassignment register designed to help INTO members organise a temporary exchange from one school to another in accordance with the relevant Department of Education (DE) circular; and
- A job share register for members designed to facilitate inter-school job sharing between teachers who are employed in one school, but who wish to job share with a teacher in another school in accordance with the relevant DES circular.

Existing Subsearch users

You will have already received an email from the TeacherConnect team with instructions on how to commence using the new service.

New to Subsearch service

Substitutes: Please click on the following link <https://teacherconnect.into.ie/signin>, click the 'Register' function, followed by the 'Register as Teacher' function and use your INTO website login, user name and password.

Schools: Please click the 'Register' function at teacherconnect.into.ie/signin followed by the 'Register as School' function.

Members' draw raises €55K for Crumlin

A massive €55,000 has been raised by the INTO for CMRF Crumlin, which is part of the Children's Health Foundation family. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing guidelines, tickets were available online with the chance to win prizes up to a value of €10,000. All proceeds from the 2020 draw will provide continued support for the Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) research project in the National Children's Research Centre (NCRC).

"The INTO is delighted and very proud to once again support CMRF through their annual members' raffle," says Mary Magner, president of the INTO. "Thank you to our members for their generosity in raising €55,000 in the 2020 raffle. This year, despite restrictions with COVID-19, our members got behind the online raffle. It will benefit thousands of children all over Ireland in their most vulnerable sick moments, and their parents through periods of strain and worry."

The Children's Medical and Research Foundation (CMRF) Crumlin, the fundraising body for CHI at Crumlin and the National Children's Research Centre, has praised the INTO for their continued fundraising. "Every year, we meet fundraising groups like the INTO



and we're just overwhelmed by their generosity and their ability to create such a fantastic fundraiser," said chief executive of Children's Health Foundation, Denise Fitzgerald. "On behalf of all the children

that these funds will ultimately benefit through the research funded we thank the INTO for their amazing ongoing support."

The hospital treats upwards of 150,000 children each year from all over Ireland.

This year's winners

€10,000	Lorna Deegan, Meath	€1,000	Aine Gillespie, Clare
€3,000	Aoife Maguire, Dublin	€500	Monica Hegarty, Clare
€1,500	Melissa Campbell, Monaghan	€500	Sarah Whelan, Carlow
€1,500	Gerard Ruane, Clare	€500	Hazel Magee, Donegal
€1,000	Sinead Molloy, Dublin	€500	Ruth Daly, Meath

Election of deputy general secretary/general treasurer – schedule

After nearly 20 years of great service as a member of the INTO Head Office team, Noel Ward has informed the CEC of his intention to retire next summer. The CEC have decided to initiate procedures for the election of a deputy general secretary/general treasurer as follows:

- Application forms, which are available from the general secretary, must be completed and returned to the general secretary not later than 5:00pm on Friday, 11 September 2020.
- Each branch shall be invited to nominate a candidate from the list of qualified candidates which will be forwarded to branches on Monday, 14 September 2020.
- Branch nominations shall reach the general secretary not later than 5:00pm on Tuesday 3 November.
- Friday, 13 November will be the last date for withdrawal from the election.
- The nominations will be published in *InTouch* or another election publication.
- Voting papers shall be sent to eligible voters on Wednesday, 25 November 2020 based on the organisation's membership list as at 20 November 2020.
- Close of poll will be 5pm on Friday, 11 December 2020.
- The count and declaration of result will be held on Saturday, 12 December 2020.

Irish National Teachers' Organisation Election of deputy general secretary/ general treasurer

The central executive committee of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation invites applications for the post of deputy general secretary/general treasurer.

The deputy general secretary shall be elected by the members of the INTO. Prospective candidates must be nominated by a branch or branches of the INTO representing at least 500 members.

Balloting, if required, will take place during December 2020.

Application forms and conditions of service are available from the General Secretary, INTO, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Tel: (01) 804 7700. Email: gen.sec@into.ie.

Completed application forms must reach the general secretary by 5:00pm on Friday, 11 September 2020.

The INTO is an equal opportunities employer.

INTO's budget campaign to focus on keeping schools open

Budget 2021 will be announced by Government this October. The spending announced then will determine the standard of service across education in 2021.

Our key budget demands are:

- A reduction in class size;
- Support for school leadership; and
- Adequate school funding.

Pay demands

The INTO has key pay demands which will be raised in lobbying but which will be negotiated separately.

We require a process under national pay talks to finalise restoration of pay equality and to pursue our demand for the implementation of the principal teachers' pay award. Such a process is provided for under the PSSA and the government programme.

Class size – bottom of the EU list

Class size is the first priority in the education budget for 2021. The OECD Report *Education at a Glance 2019* shows again that Ireland is at the bottom of the European league when it comes to class sizes. The average class size in the 21 EU States shown in that report is 20 pupils per teacher. The average is 15 in Luxembourg, 17 in Greece, 19 in Italy and 21 in Portugal. Ireland is an outlier, with an average class size of 25 at primary level.

It is critical that we make progress on class size in this budget. Our budget lobbying works. We have twice in the past eight years secured progress on the class size schedule. These changes have yet to be applied to DEIS schools which is a key

part of our demand in Budget 2021. The Education Research Centre in its report *Addressing Education Disadvantage* (2017) states that "Research evidence indicates that children perform better in smaller classes, especially in the earlier grades".

We know that our demand for a reduction of 1 pupil in the schedule for 2021 costs €4.8million in 2021. This is a tiny amount of money in the context of the overall education budget being €10 billion.

Leadership and funding

On school leadership, we are demanding that the one management day per week provided to teaching principals recently will be retained after the current pandemic, and that we have a resumption of the restoration of posts of responsibility.

On school funding, we are demanding the retention of current levels of funding

to ensure that capitation will be above the level where it stood before the cuts from 2008.

COVID-19 highlights the needs

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the utterly inadequate funding of Irish primary schools. It has shown that our classes are too big, that our school leaders are not adequately supported, and that additional funding is required for even basic requirements such as proper handwashing facilities.

Please watch for details of how you can support INTO's lobbying campaign in advance of Budget 2021, to demand fair play for primary schools.

Further details of how members can assist, by contacting their local TDs, will be set out on our media channels this month.

Country	Average Class Size (Primary)	Country	Average Class Size (Primary)
Luxembourg	15	Finland	20
Greece	17	Sweden	20
Latvia	17	Czech Republic	21
Lithuania	17	Germany	21
Austria	18	Portugal	21
Slovakia	18	Spain	21
Slovenia	18	Denmark	22
Estonia	19	Hungary	22
Italy	19	Netherlands	23
Poland	19	France	23
Finland	20	Ireland	25

Get together for GOAL Jersey Day 2020

This year, GOAL Jersey Day returns and Irish humanitarian agency GOAL is appealing to teachers and students alike to wear their favourite jerseys and support GOAL on 9 October.

Every year, Jersey Day captures the hearts and imaginations of all those in the classroom when team colours are worn with pride. It is a great way to raise awareness of global issues and to engage students in collective action for a better world.



This year the world has been locked in a collective struggle as COVID-19 spreads rapidly across the globe. GOAL has been there to respond in countries where communities are already vulnerable with weak and limited healthcare systems, poor

resources and scarcity of clean, safe water. GOAL is fighting COVID-19 in 13 countries reaching more than 14 million people.

Each year, GOAL receives incredible support from schools in every corner of the country for Jersey Day and is hoping for even greater participation again this year.

Register for GOAL Jersey Day at jerseyday.org or see ad on page 42.

GOAL Global, www.goalglobal.org

Helping families in need

An update from INTO members working with One Family

Earlier this year, we were working with the charity One Family with a view to making back-to-school hampers for families in need. At the beginning of lockdown, we made the decision to deviate from our original plan as, during these unprecedented times, we could not justify putting the €5,000 that we had raised aside until lockdown had passed and we could begin putting hampers together. We were very conscious that the families in need, who were going to receive the back-to-school hampers, needed financial support as soon as possible. Thankfully, we received a lot of support when we made this decision and used every channel we possibly could to be as open and transparent about our deviation. On that note, we wanted to give INTO members a quick update on what we have been doing since this change of plan.

As there was so much support for this move and the funds we had raised from the table quiz/raffle in February was going quite quickly on vouchers, we decided to set up a GoFundMe page called 'Feeding Children During Covid'. By the time the country began to emerge from lockdown, we had purchased €4,000 worth of Lidl vouchers for needy families. Then, One Family asked if we could go back to our original plan and make back-to-school hampers. They were anxious for us to make these hampers by July, as they were concerned that families would be worrying over the summer about how they could afford the back-to-school costs.



We had hoped to get the assistance of other teachers in putting the hampers together but this wasn't logistically possible with current restrictions.

Despite a shortage of stock, the store managers in Smiggle went to great lengths to source the bundles, which include a bag, lunch box and bottle, from their stores around the country. These were sold to us with a VIP discount and we were given a generous donation of scented pencils. As we purchased most of the vouchers through Lidl, Lidl donated €140 towards the washing detergent we bought for each hamper. Evans Educational

donated pencils, jigsaws, erasers and zip folders, and ReCreate Ireland donated beautiful pencil cases to every hamper.

Each back-to-school hamper contains a Smiggle bundle of a bag, lunch box, bottle and box of scented pencils, a €20 Evans Educational voucher, a jigsaw, a box of crayons, a pencil, an eraser, zip folders, washing detergent and hand sanitiser.

Now, after both fundraisers, we have just over €2,000 left. We will take direction from One Family as to how best to spend this money. We are doing our best to stretch the funds raised and, thanks to the the charity of all of the companies we have worked with to make the hampers, this has been possible.

TARA O'SULLIVAN, KYNA RUSHE (INTO District 15) and JANA LYONS (INTO District 14).

Comhar Linn Moves for Life chess challenge results

The Moves for Life chess challenge, sponsored by Comhar Linn, took place online this year. The overall winners were:

FIRST PLACE

St Mary's BNS, Rathfarnham, Dublin

SECOND PLACE

St Laurence's NS, Greystones, Co Wicklow

THIRD PLACE

St Patrick's NS, Galway

There were six sections and prizes were awarded to the first three teams in each section.

You can find a full list of winners at <http://movesforlife.ie/comharlinn-challenge/>. The best player on every school team that participated won a star player award.

Prizes are being posted to winning schools this month to allow each school to make presentations to their chess stars.



World Teachers' Day

5 October 2020

This year, to mark World Teachers' Day (WTD) on 5 October, Education International is organising an ambitious 24-hour celebration of teachers' accomplishments.

The slogan for this year's WTD is 'Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future' and Education International (EI) will celebrate how, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers around the world have taken the lead in continuing to deliver quality education while adapting to a most challenging new environment.

This year's World Teachers' Day celebration will consist of a stream of virtual events happening across the world over a 24-hour period and will be broadcast on EI's communication channels. The idea is to incorporate a combination of live and pre-recorded events into a virtual media marathon, with live online hosts guiding a global audience across the time zones. You can follow Education International on Twitter @eduint, Facebook /educationinternational, YouTube /eduinternational or through their website www.ei-ie.org.



Pay and Allowance Changes from 1 October 2020

Final Phase of Restoration under the PSSA

1 October 2020 sees the final phase of salary restoration under the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) with scale salary being restored by 2%. There will also be a reversal of the 5% allowance cut of 2010 on this date.

The stages in restoration have included the following on annualised pay scales:

- 1 September 2016 +€796
- 1 April 2017 +€1,000
- 1 September 2017 +€796

- 1 January 2018 +1%
- 1 October 2018 +1%
- 1 September 2019 +1.75%
- 1 October 2020 +2% restoration to scale salary and a reversal of the 5% allowance cut of 2010.

Table 1: A pre-2011 entrant teacher with an ordinary degree allowance

	Point 10	Point 20	Top of scale
01.09.2008	€50,138	€59,717	€67,162
01.01.2016	€45,454	€54,314	€61,201
01.09.2019	€49,800	€58,996	€66,144
01.10.2020	€50,856	€60,236	€67,527

Table 2: A pre-2011 entrant principal of a seven-teacher school with an honours degree allowance

	Point 10	Point 20	Top of scale
01.09.2008	€64,357	€73,936	€81,381
01.01.2016	€58,962	€67,822	€74,709
01.09.2019	€63,308	€72,504	€79,652
01.10.2020	€65,075	€74,455	€81,746

Table 3: A post-2010 teacher

	Point 5	Point 10	Top of scale
01.01.2018	€40,957	€48,632	€67,538
01.09.2019	€42,090	€49,978	€69,407
01.10.2020	€42,932	€50,978	€70,795

A pre-2011 entrant on point 10 of the scale with an honours degree will see an annual uplift of €1,218 from 1 October 2020

A pre-2011 entrant principal of a 12 teacher school on point 20 of the scale with an honours degree will see an annual uplift of €2,158 from 1 October 2020.

A pre-2011 entrant at the top of the scale with a pass degree and AP1 post will see an annual uplift of €1,831 from 1 October 2020.

A post-2010 entrant on point 5 of the scale will see an annual uplift of €842 from 1 October 2020.

A post-2010 entrant principal of a 12 teacher school on point 10 of the scale will see an annual uplift of €1,756 from 1 October 2020.

ACADEMIC ALLOWANCES

Where merited, only one allowance at (a) or (b) may be held together with one of the allowances (c) to (g).

	1 Sep 20	1 Oct 20
(a) (i) H Dip in Ed (Pass)	€591	€622
(a) (ii) Higher Froebel Cert	€591	€622
(b) (i) H Dip in Ed (1st/ 2nd Hons)	€1,236	€1,301
(b) (ii) Ard Teastas Gaeilge	€1,236	€1,301
(c) Primary Degree (Pass)	€1,842	€1,939
(d) Primary Degree (1st/ 2nd Class Hons)	€4,918	€5,177
(e) Master's Degree by Thesis or Exam (Pass)	€4,918	€5,177
(f) Master's Degree (1st/ 2nd Hons)	€5,496	€5,785
(g) Doctors Degree	€6,140	€6,463

Note: Qualification allowances were abolished for all new beneficiaries from 1 February 2012, in line with *Circular 0008/2013*. Teachers who entered service between 01.01.2011 and 31.01.2012 may be in receipt of an additional academic allowance if they held the appropriate qualification prior to this date.

OTHER ALLOWANCES

	1 Sep 20	1 Oct 20
Teaching Through Irish Allowance*	€1,583	€1,666
Gaeltacht Allowance*	€3,063	€3,224
Island Allowance*	€1,842	€1,939
Long Service Allowance	€2,324	€2,446
Secure Unit Allowance/Disturbed Adolescent Allowance	€2,195	€2,310
Visit Teaching Allowance	€8,520	€8,968
Special Education Diploma*	€2,437	€2,565

*Abolished for new beneficiaries from 1 February 2012 and for those moving school voluntarily on or after this date.

Teachers appointed prior to 01.01.2011			Teachers appointed on or after 01.01.2011	
	01/09/2019	01/10/2020	01/09/2019	1/10/2020
1	€35,088	€35,790	€36,953	€37,692
2	€35,876	€36,593	€38,466	€39,235
3	€36,985	€37,725	€40,192	€40,996
4	€38,098	€38,860	€40,981*	€41,801*
5	€39,823	€40,620	€42,090	€42,932
6	€40,942	€41,761	€43,431	€44,300
7	€42,059	€42,900	€44,935	€45,834
8	€44,873	€45,770	€46,451*	€47,380*
9	€46,278	€47,204	€47,717	€48,671
10	€47,958	€48,917	€49,978	€50,978
11	€49,629	€50,621	€51,383	€52,411
12	€51,312	€52,338	€53,062	€54,123
13	€52,720	€53,774	€54,733	€55,828
14	€54,584	€55,675	€56,417	€57,545
15	€54,584	€55,675	€57,824	€58,980
16	€54,584	€55,675	€59,688	€60,882
17	€57,154	€58,297	€59,688	€60,882
18	€57,154	€58,297	€59,688	€60,882
19	€57,154	€58,297	€62,259	€63,504
20	€57,154	€58,297	€62,259	€63,504
21	€60,550	€61,761	€62,259	€63,504
22	€60,550	€61,761	€62,259	€63,504
23	€60,550	€61,761	€65,655	€66,968
24	€60,550	€61,761	€65,655	€66,968
25	€64,302	€65,588	€65,655	€66,968
26			€65,655	€66,968
27			€69,407	€70,795

Notes: Teachers appointed prior to 1 January 2011

- i. BEds started at point 2; Post grads at point 3
- ii. Qualification allowances continue to be paid separately to teachers appointed prior to 1 January 2011 as appropriate

Notes: Teachers appointed on or after 1 January 2011

- i. *Points 4 and 8 are skipped on this scale for post 1 January 2011 entrants under the terms of the PSSA.
- ii. All entrants start at point 1.
- iii. The value of an honours degree allowance is incorporated into each point of this scale.

PRINCIPAL AND DEPUTY PRINCIPAL ALLOWANCES

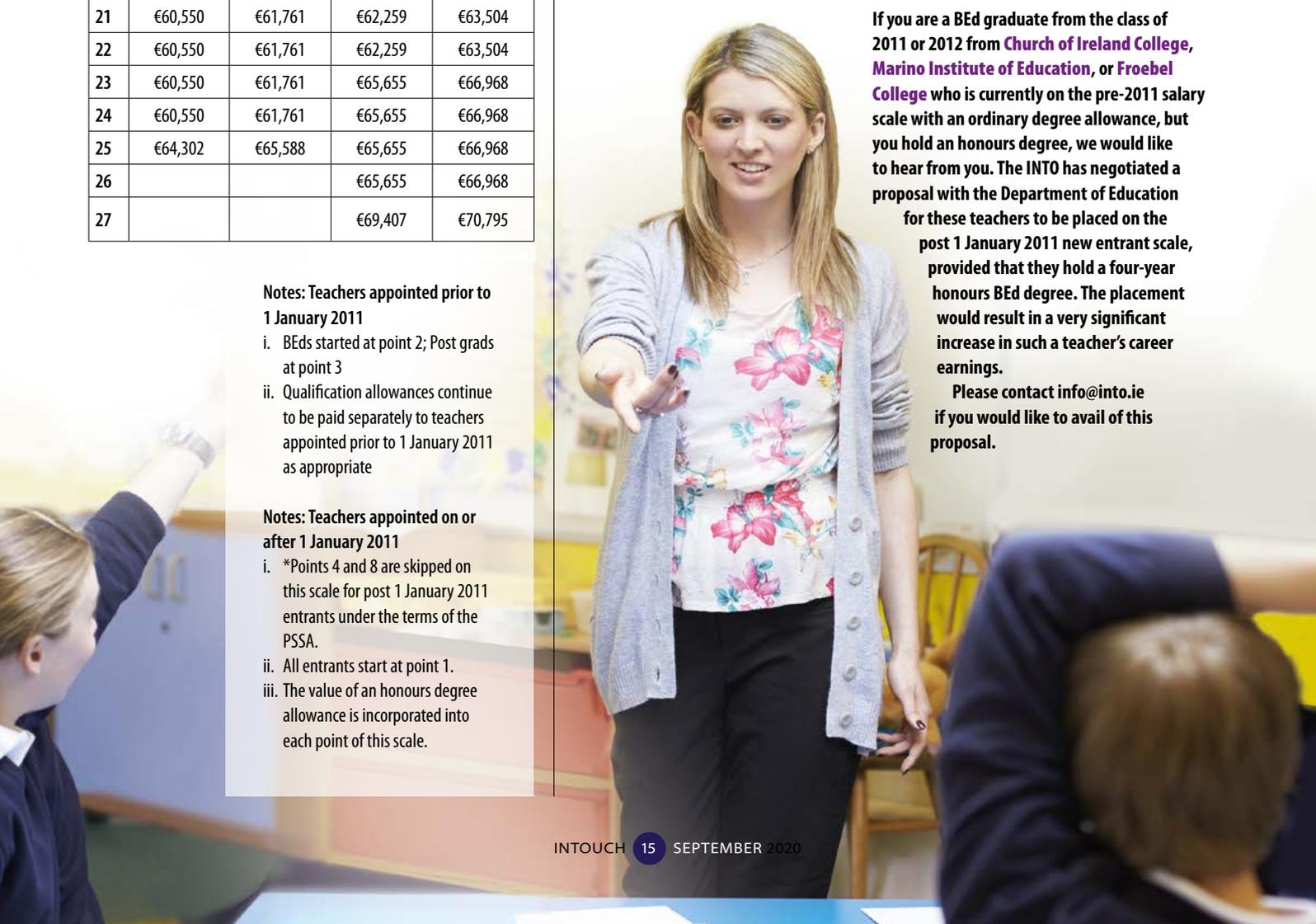
Principal				Deputy	
		01-Sep-20	01-Oct-20	01-Sep-20	01-Oct-20
I	(1-5)	€9,310	€9,800	€3,769	€3,967
II	(6-7)	€10,432	€10,981	€4,932	€5,192
III	(8-11)	€12,238	€12,882	€6,520	€6,863
IV	(12-13)	€14,360	€15,116	€8,173	€8,603
V	(14-16)	€16,705	€17,584	€9,773	€10,287
VI	(17-19)	€19,084	€20,088	€11,444	€12,046
VII	(20-23)	€21,386	€22,512	€13,051	€13,738
VIII	(24-26)	€23,714	€24,962	€14,630	€15,400
IX	(27-30)	€25,427	€26,765	€15,875	€16,711
X	(31-35)	€27,197	€28,628	€17,088	€17,987
XI	(36+)	€29,776	€31,343	€18,966	€19,964

GRADED POSTS

Assistant Principal 1	1 Sept 20	1 Oct 20
	€8,520	€8,968
Assistant Principal 2	1 Sept 20	1 Oct 20
	€3,769	€3,967

If you are a BEd graduate from the class of 2011 or 2012 from **Church of Ireland College, Marino Institute of Education, or Froebel College** who is currently on the pre-2011 salary scale with an ordinary degree allowance, but you hold an honours degree, we would like to hear from you. The INTO has negotiated a proposal with the Department of Education for these teachers to be placed on the post 1 January 2011 new entrant scale, provided that they hold a four-year honours BEd degree. The placement would result in a very significant increase in such a teacher's career earnings.

Please contact info@into.ie if you would like to avail of this proposal.





Want to get your Irish qualification this year?

Marino Institute of Education explains your options

Who needs the 'Cáilíocht sa Ghaeilge'?

The Cáilíocht sa Ghaeilge (Irish language requirement) provides an opportunity for teachers who obtained their primary teaching qualification outside of the State and who have an identified curriculum shortfall in Irish, to make good that shortfall.

Bíonn ar bhunmhúinteoirí a fhaigheann a gcuid oiliúna lasmuigh den Stát an Cháilíocht sa Ghaeilge a bhaint amach le lán-aitheantas a fháil mar bhunmhúinteoirí sa tír seo.

What are the choices?

There are two routes to completing the Irish Language Requirement. Applicants can choose the Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG – competency exams) or Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (OCG – adaptation period and assessment).

What are the differences between the SCG and OCG?

There are important differences between the SCG and OCG. The SCG will suit candidates who are not teaching in a mainstream class, or indeed not teaching at present, whereas the OCG is suitable for candidates who are working in a mainstream class teacher capacity, as OCG candidates must spend a minimum of 120 school days teaching as a mainstream class teacher in one or more schools. That requirement does not apply to the SCG.



An Associated College of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

Barr feabhais a chur ar mo chuid Gaeilge?

- Bain úsáid as na leabhair agus as an ábhar foghlama oifigiúil a chuireann Institiúid Oideachais Marino ar fáil d'iarthóirí.
- Bí dearfach i gcónaí i leith na Gaeilge. Bí oscailte don Ghaeilge. Cuir fáilte roimpi agus labhair í mar theanga i do scoil agus le do chairde.
- Faigh cabhair ó theagascóir Gaeilge.
- Roghnaigh féachaint ar TG4 anois agus arís. Faigh Raidió na Gaeltachta agus



éist leis ag am nuachta.

- Téigh go dtí siopa leabhar agus ceannaigh leabhar Gaeilge a thaitneadh leat.
- Bí ag cur le do stór focal i gcónaí. Ná bíodh eagla ort ceist a chur ar chara leat.
- Faigh Gaeilge ar an idirlíon. Léigh an nuacht ar <http://www.tuairisc.ie>. Úsáid <http://www.tearma.ie> agus <http://www.foclóir.ie> chun an Ghaeilge ar fhocail a fháil.
- Cuir téacs nó ríomhphost chuig do chara i nGaeilge.
- Roghnaigh cártaí beannachta Gaeilge, uaireanta.
- Bí fiosrach faoin nGaeilge i do thimpeallacht. An bhfuil a fhios agat céard as a dtagann an logainm sin?
- Sa Ghaeltacht, labhair Gaeilge le do chairde, le do theagascóir, le bean is fear an tí.
- Ní stopann tú riamh den fhoghlaim. Bí i gcónaí ag iarraidh barr feabhais a chur ar do Ghaeilge. Bíodh an Ghaeilge mar chompánach agat i do shaol i gcónaí.

Tuilleadh eolais – Further information

Tuilleadh eolais faoin SCG agus OCG:
Ríomhphost: scginfo@mie.ie agus ocginfo@mie.ie
Gréasán: www.ilrweb.ie

PEADAR MAC GIOLLA BHRÍGHDE, AODÁN MAC SUIBHNE, agus MARIE WHELTON, Institiúid Oideachais Marino.

Calendar: An Cháilíocht sa Ghaeilge 2020/2021

September – October	Registration for the Irish language requirement with An Cháilíocht sa Ghaeilge Office, Marino Institute of Education. Forms available at www.ilrweb.ie .
31 October	An Cháilíocht sa Ghaeilge registration deadline
October, November, December	Term 1 of SCG-OCG courses (approx. 10 weeks, courses are optional and subject to sufficient demand)
13 January – 26 February	Practical element(s) – classroom assessment
January, February, March	Term 2 of SCG/OCG courses (approx. 10 weeks, courses are optional and subject to sufficient demand)
6, 7 & 8 April	SCG Examinations and OCG assessments take place at Marino Institute of Education

Key updates from the Teaching Council

Contacting the Teaching Council

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the Teaching Council moved to working remotely with a limited staff onsite in the office. Between 12 March and 23 June 2020, the registration section replied to in excess of 19,300 emails and were receiving 1,700-2,200 emails per week. Due to the restricted numbers of staff available on site, the phone lines were being answered between 10am-12pm and 3pm-5pm each day.

NQT summer registration process

Following the 12 March lockdown, the Teaching Council decided to move the newly qualified teacher (NQT) summer registration process online and reduce manual processes. This is the fast-track process where the higher education institutions (HEIs) transfer the graduate results to the Teaching Council once the exam boards/courts have occurred and results are finalised. The registration process can only commence after this transfer. The results are then queued and processed in sequence. All NQTs were asked to complete vetting in advance and registrations were completed for over 3,000 NQTs.

Renewal of registration

In March, the Teaching Council gave an undertaking not to remove any teacher from the register for non-payment of fees. During the past few months, a number of teachers have not renewed their registration despite additional reminders being sent by email and SMS. As the country is moving forward in its COVID response plan, the Teaching Council has begun to issue the 28-day notification letter. This means that teachers will be given 28 days' final notice to pay their renewal fee before lapsing from the register.

Should a teacher's registration lapse, they are then not eligible to receive a State-funded salary and must re-apply for registration. This may include vetting and provision of qualification documentation if the Teaching Council does not already hold valid documentation for the teacher. Furthermore, it is not possible to back-date re-registrations to cover periods of non-registration.



Expiring conditions and extension requests

The Teaching Council extended the time frame for all teachers with conditions expiring between March and September, given the exceptional nature of the past few months. All teachers involved were communicated with and their records updated. In line with re-opening the country, teachers with conditions expiring in October and November 2020 have been asked to either forward evidence that they have completed their conditions or to request an extension to that time. Extension request forms (EXT-01 Forms) with supporting documentation can be submitted by email as soon as possible to conditions@teachingcouncil.ie.

Droichead

As in all school years, the months of July and August saw the greatest number of Form Ds being submitted to the Teaching Council by NQTs who have engaged the Droichead process. The forms were processed in rotation and teacher registrations updated accordingly. Guidance in relation to the operation of Droichead in 2020/21, including frequently asked questions and updated transitional arrangements to provide additional flexibility to teachers who partially completed Droichead this year, will be published on the Teaching Council's website at the start of the new school year.

Re-vetting

Currently the mainstream re-vetting of teachers will remain on hold. This process will re-commence in the new school year and notifications will be issued to the relevant teachers six months in advance of their renewal dates. Teachers who are currently registered or previously registered with the Teaching Council may submit the required documentation including a scanned signed consent form by email. Standard vetting and vetting for employment purposes are progressing as normal.

Launch of CROÍ eBook

This summer, the Teaching Council launched the *CROÍ* eBook, which contains short videos with information on the resources the Teaching Council makes available to registered teachers under its CROÍ initiative (Collaboration and Research for Ongoing Innovation). These resources include the John Coolahan Research Support Framework, through which the Teaching Council makes €100,000 available each year for registered teachers engaging in and with research; the online library which includes thousands of articles and journals and a collection of eBooks which are made freely available to registered teachers; access to all previously broadcast Teaching Council research webinars and ezines; information about T-REX, a new online space for teachers and other educational researchers. Just click on 'CROÍ eBook' under the 'Research' tab on the Teaching Council's website to find out more.

FEILTE 2020 moves online

This year, the Teaching Council's annual Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence (FÉILTE) will take place online. It will be held on Saturday, 3 October from 10.30am to 4.30pm.

FÉILTE 2020 will feature a packed programme full of live and interactive content as well as live connectivity with speakers, participants and fellow attendees.

This year's theme is 'Connecting to Collaborate – Empathy with our Communities'. Mary Robinson will be live in studio from 10.30am for her keynote interview. Attendance is free! Register for FÉILTE at www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/FEILTE/FEILTE-2020/

Draft Primary Curriculum Framework

Consultation update

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) published the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* last February. The framework presents proposals for the redevelopment of the primary curriculum. You may recall reading about the draft framework in the March and April editions of *InTouch*. Since February, teachers and school leaders have been sharing their views by completing the online questionnaire and/or by participating in one of the online information events in June. Thank you to all those who contributed to the consultation in recent months and for your suggestions on how the online events and school-based workshops might be enhanced.

Given the exceptional circumstances that schools now face in returning after an extended closure and the significant efforts being made by teachers and school leaders in re-opening schools



safely for children and staff, the NCCA has extended the consultation period to at least the end of the year. The council remains committed to ensuring that the voice of teachers and school leaders is central to the consultation on the draft framework and as part of this, we will continue to keep the consultation date under review.

We are planning further online focus groups for November. In the meantime, there are other ways to share your thoughts, if you are able to do so. You'll find consultation details at www.ncca.ie/primary along with the draft framework, Frequently Asked Questions and information videos. You will also find a link to register for monthly e-bulletins with a view to contributing at a later point.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), www.ncca.ie.

TAPping into Virtual Creativity

... during a school year like no other!

Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP) CPD summer course initiative has been running in the 21 full-time education centres nationwide since 2016. It is free to participants and is funded by both the Department of Education (DES) and the Creative Ireland Programme. It has become a popular course for teachers hoping to engage or re-engage with their own creativity and integrate it into their classroom practices.

TAP trains teachers and artists to work together in partnership, enabling them to deliver effective residencies in school settings, armed with the necessary insights and tools so that children receive high-quality creative experiences that are firmly embedded in curriculum. To date, more than 1,000 TAP-trained teacher-artist pairs have trained and delivered partnerships in schools.

However, 2020 was a year like no other. Like many providers, the TAP design team scrambled to modify a face-to-face course for online delivery. The



Design team and tutors

focus was on keeping it simple, user-friendly and ensuring that teachers were supported in whatever way possible. Daily Zoom sessions were incorporated to allow participants the opportunity for live discussion and to meet the tutors. Both participant teachers and TAP design team tutors, led by Jennifer Buggie, gave positive feedback on the e-delivery experience.

Dr Katie Sweeney, DES National

Coordinator for the Integration of Arts in Education, was delighted that 328 teachers engaged this year and many have now applied for residencies with TAP-trained artists. Residencies will, in all likelihood, be remote/virtual, adding a new dimension to the possibilities of teachers harnessing the expertise of creative practitioners in our communities to enhance and enrich curriculum.

Returning to school

The INTO answers some of the common questions our queryline received ahead of schools reopening. The guidance provided was correct at the time of going to print but please check the dedicated COVID-19 Support Hub on our website www.into.ie for the most up-to-date information.



COVID-19 Guidance

What must schools do to ensure a safe return for teachers?

Each school will be required to put in place a school COVID-19 response plan. A template plan has been published by the Department of Education (DE) following consultation with stakeholders. The COVID-19 response plan outlines the measures which schools must put in place including:

- the appointment of a lead worker representative;
- a return to work process, including return to work form;
- carrying out a risk assessment and updating the safety statement, in the context of COVID-19;
- ensuring that people are aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 so that they do not attend if they suspect they have the disease;
- managing the risk of the spread of the virus through hand hygiene, physical distancing and respiratory hygiene;
- control measures, including induction training, cleaning, and contact logs; and
- procedures for dealing with a suspected case on the premises.

Schools, as workplaces, are subject to inspection by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) to ensure that they are compliant with measures to contain the spread of COVID -19.

What am I required to do as a school employee to ensure a safe return and safe working?

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other people in the school community. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety

as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.

In this regard, and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- adhere to the School COVID-19 response plan and the control measures outlined;
- complete the Return to Work (RTW) form before return to work;
- inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate safe return to the workplace;
- complete COVID-19 induction training and any other training required prior to returning to school;
- be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices;
- coordinate and work with colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained;
- make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own well-being;
- self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19;
- not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances;
- if they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined in the school COVID-19 response plan;
- keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

What happens if a colleague or pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day?

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area should be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- if the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately;
- isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times;
- the isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2 metres away from others in the room;
- if it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres, a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He or she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;

- the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- if the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their doctor by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
- if they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is suspected to have COVID-19;
- carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

What happens if a child in my class or a colleague is diagnosed with COVID-19?

If a child in your class/a colleague is diagnosed with COVID-19, the HSE contract tracing process will be activated. Contact tracing identifies people who were in close contact with someone who has coronavirus. The HSE states that 'A close contact can mean someone who has spent more than fifteen minutes of face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person in any setting.'

Schools are required to keep a list of visitors to schools for the purposes of contact tracing. Staff should be encouraged to download the COVID Tracker app to assist in the identification of close contacts.

If you have had such contact with a confirmed case, the HSE contract tracing team will contact you through a call from a contact tracer, or an alert through the COVID Tracker App. They will arrange a test for you and advise you to restrict your movements for 14 days. If you are advised by the HSE that you should restrict your movements, you should not attend

work, and will be on COVID-19 restricted movement leave, as per *Circular 0049/20*.

In a letter to all schools on 10 March, the chief medical officer advised school principals that, 'Public health authorities will contact schools if there is any action to be taken in relation to your school and students. You should not take unilateral action.'

Schools should remain open unless there is clear public health advice that they should close.

Will physical distancing be in place in schools?

Yes, schools will be required to put physical distancing measures in place. The *Roadmap for the Full Return to School* notes the public health advice, which recognises that physical distancing in a school context has some specific elements acknowledging that:

'The principle of distancing can be usefully applied in the school setting, allowing for some flexibility when needed. ... However, it must be applied in a practical way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.'

Schools are being advised that physical distancing has two elements (i) increasing separation; and (ii) decreasing interaction.

Increasing separation means that all available space in the school should be availed of in order to safely maximise physical distancing and that classroom space should be reconfigured to maximise physical distancing. This may involve the removal of non-essential furniture from classrooms, and the utilisation of all available space in the school. It may also involve reorganisation of class groups to maximise the use of rooms of different sizes.

It is recommended that where possible, a distance of 1m should be maintained between desks or individual pupils. However, it is recognised that younger children and some children with special education needs are unlikely to maintain this distancing. The DE has provided a number of illustrative classroom layouts to demonstrate how physical distancing can be applied. It is recommended that staff and children use the same workspace rather than moving around, and do not share equipment or books.

A common-sense approach is required in recognising the limits to which decreasing interaction between pupils can be achieved depending on the school setting. The objective is that each teacher and class grouping mix only with their

own class to the greatest extent possible. Classes may also be divided into pods (groups) with less interaction between those groups. Class groupings should have separate play areas/times as far as possible. Arrangements should be made to ensure that children do not congregate when entering or leaving their classrooms.

The public health advice also states that a distance of 2m should be maintained between staff when they are not engaged in teaching, for example on breaks, when arriving for/leaving school and in and around the school building. Staff meetings may be held remotely, or in small groups in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Staff should also be mindful of maintaining 2m physical distancing in interacting with parents, for example when they are leaving or collecting children from school.

Am I required to adhere to the physical distancing, respiratory etiquette and other control measures that my school has put in place?

Yes. The *School COVID Response Plan* states that staff have a statutory obligation (under the *Health Safety and Welfare at Work Act*) to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues, and sets out the duties which are included in this, including adhering to physical distancing, good respiratory etiquette and completing the return to work form.

It should be borne in mind that any failure to adhere to a school policy may be dealt with by management through the normal disciplinary process for schools, beginning with the informal stage.

What should I do if my school has not put the recommended control measures in place?

Any concerns which a member of staff has in relation to COVID-19 related issues should be discussed with the lead worker representative, who can make representations on behalf of their colleagues and work collaboratively with the board of management to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the measures are in place.

The role of the HSA is to ensure compliance with the *Return to Work Safely Protocol*. If an employee feels the workplace is not in compliance with this protocol which includes social distancing guidelines, they can raise their concerns with the HSA and they will address the concerns with their employer. You can make a complaint using the HSA's online complaint form. You should raise your

concern with your principal/board first to give them the opportunity to address the issue.

LEAVE

Who can avail of COVID-19 leave?

Circular 0049/20 sets out that an employer may grant special leave with pay where an employee has:

- an appropriate HSE or medical confirmation of COVID-19 diagnosis, or
- a HSE recommendation to self-isolate, including while awaiting a test, or test results; or
- is restricting their movements in accordance with the HSE guidelines because they have been advised that they are a close contact or live with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- is in the very high risk group as defined by the HSE

Substitution for such days will be paid by the DE. Any special leave with pay granted for the purpose of diagnosis of COVID-19, self-isolation or restricted movements or because a teacher is in the very high risk category will not be counted as part of the employee's sick leave record.

You must contact your school if any of the above circumstances apply.

I have been diagnosed with COVID-19. What should I do in relation to work?

You must inform your school that you have tested positive for COVID-19. You will need to complete the application form at appendix A of *Circular 0049/20* and submit it to your board/ETB with medical/HSE certification, including estimated date of fitness to return to work. Special leave with pay will be granted by the employer and the appropriate leave (COVID-19; Diagnosis) entered on the online claims system (OLCS).

The occupational health service (OHS) advises that, in a confirmed COVID-19 infection, an employee needs to be 14 days post onset of symptoms and also five days fever free (which may run concurrently) before returning to the workplace. It should be noted that the 14 days is from the onset of symptoms and not the date of receiving a positive COVID-19 test result.

The HSE will activate contact tracing and advise your close contacts that they need to restrict their movements for 14 days.

I have been advised medically/by the HSE to self isolate. What should I do in relation to work?

You will be medically/HSE advised to self-

isolate while you wait for a COVID-19 test appointment and test results, generally because you have symptoms of COVID-19. You must arrange a COVID-19 test as soon as possible and must immediately inform the employer of the COVID-19 test result.

You must inform your school that you are self isolating. You should complete the application form at appendix A and special leave in *Circular 0049/20* (COVID-19 leave: Self-Isolation) with pay will be granted by the employer and applies up until the COVID-19 test result is obtained. Where the COVID-19 test result is positive, you will remain on special leave with pay and must be recorded by the school as 'COVID-19: Diagnosis' on the OLCS/ relevant ETB system.

I have been advised medically/by the HSE to restrict my movements as I am a close contact or live with a person with a diagnosis of COVID-19. What should I do in relation to work?

You will be medically/HSE advised to restrict your movements if you have no symptoms but you are a close contact of a confirmed case, or live with someone with symptoms. You must arrange a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. You must complete the declaration form at appendix B of *Circular 0049/20* and return it immediately to the employer, accompanied by medical certification (GP/HSE) including date of fitness to return to the workplace. You remain available for work, and should contact your principal in relation to working remotely for the 14 day period. A sub will be appointed for you, and your leave will be recorded on the OLCS/relevant ETB system as COVID-19: Restricted Movements.

If I travel abroad and have to restrict my movements on return what should I do in relation to work?

The current government advice is not to travel overseas. Any person coming into Ireland, (apart from Northern Ireland and individuals arriving in Ireland from locations with a security rating of normal precautions – 'green list'), is required to restrict their movements for 14 days.

If you intend to undertake non-essential travel overseas to a country which is not on the green list, you should make provision for the 14 day period of restricted movement, by way of an unpaid leave application, in line with the normal terms and conditions as set out in chapter 11, *Circular 0054/19*. A sub will be paid in this case.

You must advise your school in writing in advance of such travel

abroad and to include the travel details. This requirement is necessary for the protection of public health.

If you return from a 'green list' country, there will be no requirement to restrict your movements. However, you should still notify your employer in advance in writing of your intention to travel, as the 'green list' will be regularly reviewed and may change, and you should be aware that whatever restricted movement requirements are in place on their date of return will apply.

I am in the very high risk category. Will I be entitled to leave and what should I do?

The list of people in very high risk groups includes those who:

- are over 70 years of age – even if they are fit and well;
- have had an organ transplant;
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer;
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer;
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment;
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer;
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors;
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs;
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD;
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell);
- are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies);
- have a serious heart condition and are also pregnant.

Current HSE advice for people in this category is that you need to cocoon. If you are unsure if you need to cocoon or not, talk to your doctor.

If you fall into this very high risk category, you should consult your GP/consultant in advance of return to work and seek their advice. You should complete the online occupational health service (OHS) COVID-19 risk assessment



immediately and submit it to the OHS, with a report from your treating consultant. You should inform your principal that you believe you are in the very high risk category and are required to cocoon.

You will also be required to advise your school in the return to work form that you are in this category.

Medmark will provide you with a risk assessment report. Where that report advises that you are in the very high risk category, and cannot attend the workplace, you must fill out the declaration form at appendix C of *Circular 0049/20* and submit to your school.

Where you are medically fit for work, you should work from home as to the maximum extent possible.

I am a teacher in the high risk category. Will I be entitled to leave and what should I do?

The list of people in high risk groups as defined by the HSE includes those who:

- are over 60 years of age;
- have a learning disability;
- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis);
- have heart disease (such as heart failure);
- have high blood pressure (hypertension);
- have diabetes;
- have chronic kidney disease;
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis);
- have a medical condition that can affect your breathing;
- have cancer;
- have a weak immune system (immunosuppressed);
- have cerebrovascular disease;
- have a condition affecting your brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, or cerebral palsy);
- have a problem with their spleen or have had their spleen removed;
- have a condition that means you have a high risk of getting infections (such as HIV, lupus or scleroderma);
- are taking medicine that can affect their immune system (such as low doses of steroids);
- have obesity.

A teacher in this category who is not ill must attend the workplace, unless advised otherwise by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). You should take extra care to:

- practice social distancing where possible; and
 - wash your hands regularly and properly.
- You are not obliged to disclose your

condition on the return to work form.

However, if you are concerned about your health and your fitness to return to work, you should consult your doctor and get their advice. If your doctor states that you are unfit for work, you will be on sick leave in accordance with the normal provisions (see chapter 1 of *Circular 0054/19*).

In accordance with *Circular 0049/20*, if you are fit for work but where you have concerns about close contact with pupils for prolonged periods, you can seek advice from the OHS by completing the OHS COVID -19 risk assessment and submitting with a report from your treating consultant to the OHS.

The OHS will provide you with a risk assessment report. Where that report advises that you cannot attend the workplace, you must fill out the declaration form at appendix C of *Circular 0049/20* and submit to your school. Where you are medically fit for work, you should work from home as to the maximum extent possible.

In what circumstances can I/must I work from home?

A teacher's normal place of employment is their school, and there is no contractual or legal entitlement to work from home. However, if you are on certain types of leave where you may not attend the workplace and are medically fit for work, you are regarded as being available to work remotely. This includes people who are on

- COVID -19 Leave – Very High Risk Group
 - COVID -19 Leave – Restricted Movement
- A teacher who is on COVID-19 Leave-Diagnosis is not precluded from working remotely if it is feasible i.e. the teacher has recovered sufficiently.

Teachers on sick leave or unpaid leave are not available to work remotely.

The DE has set out duties that support the work of the school in developing and delivering its programmes of teaching and learning for pupils for teachers who are working remotely which may include:

- liaising closely with and supporting the work of the substitute teacher(s) who becomes responsible for the teaching duties of the teacher on special leave with pay;
- supporting and engaging, using online technology, the work and progress of very high risk or extremely vulnerable pupils who are unable to attend school;
- participating in staff meetings, team/subject planning meetings and all other normal meetings using online technology;

- participating in relevant professional development through online media;
 - developing aspects of the school's teaching resources or teaching plans;
 - undertaking administrative or other tasks associated with a post of responsibility (provided they hold the post in line with relevant DE publications) to the greatest extent possible using online technology.
- You should discuss arrangements for working remotely with your principal or, if you are a principal, discuss this with your board of management.

I am currently on sick leave. What should I do?

If your treating doctor/consultant deems that you are unfit for work, you should provide certification to your school and apply for illness benefit (if you pay class A PRSI). Paid sick leave will continue in line with the provisions set out in chapter 1 of *Circular 0054/19*.

If you need to apply for the critical illness protocol, you should do so in the normal manner.

If you recover, you should indicate to your school/principal that you are now fit for work, and they should update the OLCS accordingly. If you have been absent for a short-term illness the school/principal will follow the dates of the certificate and can end the sick leave accordingly. The principal can accept the teacher's own doctor's confirmation of their fitness. You will need to complete a return to work form.

If a teacher has been absent for a longer period – more than 28 days consecutively or cumulatively in the past 12 months – they must be referred to the OHS, Medmark, and be certified as fit to work in order for the school/principal to end the period of sick leave on the OLCS.

Medmark has confirmed to INTO that it is continuing to operate and will provide telephone consultations during this time and will be in contact with members who are referred to them.

I care for and live with a person who is in the very high risk category. Should I return to work?

Current advice from the HSE is that if you are caring for someone at a higher risk from coronavirus, it is very important you follow the advice on how to protect yourself from coronavirus. There is no provision for specific leave in the context of COVID-19, but the provisions of parental leave (if the vulnerable person is a child) or carer's leave may apply.



Moving meetings online

As we start a new school year, many branches may be wondering how to facilitate meetings in the midst of a pandemic. It is important that we follow public health advice which, currently, prohibits indoor gatherings of more than six people or outdoor gatherings of more than 15. As guidelines evolved, socially-distanced, in-person meetings may become possible but, in the interim, branch and district officers may consider hosting meetings online.

In planning for a virtual meeting, many of the key factors to consider remain the same as they would be for in-person meetings.

- Have a clear agenda, circulated in a timely manner and stick to it.
- Appoint a strong chair who can moderate who speaks when, and what topic(s) they will cover.
- Keep meetings short and succinct. (listeners will become disengaged if a session is too lengthy).

When organising a remote meeting, some important elements to that will help maximise effectiveness include:

Using video – much more engaging than just audio, being able to see other participants enhances engagement and even being able to see facial expressions adds impact to discussion and debate.

Test the technology ahead of time – prior to a virtual meeting, all participants should trial their online

platform, ensure they are comfortable and confident as this will allow for smooth running of the session and minimise disruption. Remember – fail to prepare, prepare to fail!

Assign a facilitator – managing a virtual discussion can be challenging and it is helpful to assign one person to monitor the conversation, keep track of messages/comments in the chat facility and ensure all voices are heard.

Time and structure – time is of the essence, so use it wisely. It can be difficult to sustain interest and engagement online so try to avoid lengthy meetings. Be mindful that many people will find themselves spending a great deal of their time working on a screen and may become disengaged if a presentation is too detailed.

Encourage participation – affording attendees an opportunity to contribute to the discussion will promote engagement. Many software packages (such as Zoom) allow participants to indicate that they would like to speak.

There is a range of options available for hosting a meeting online. Key functions you should consider looking for a platform that is secure and encrypted with the ability to password protect the meeting and control who can attend, video function and the ability to share your screen, if you will be sharing presentations.



photos / Shutterstock.com

USING ZOOM FOR MEETINGS

Zoom is one platform that has proven to be a popular option as it is straightforward and user friendly on both mobile and desktop devices.

When scheduling the meeting you should:

Turn on password – Zoom uses short passwords, similar to a PIN, but this is important to prevent unauthorised people from disturbing your online session.

Turn on video – both for host and for participants. In our current climate where we miss the face-to-face interaction, this allows participants to see each other and make the meeting more personal and engaging.

Adjust the **'Enable waiting room'** function – the 'waiting room' option is designed to control who joins the meeting. If you wish, to minimise delay you can choose to turn off "enable waiting room" to avoid the need to admit each person individually into the meeting which can cause delay and confusion for participants when they connect (particularly those who are new to the virtual meeting space).

More information on setting up a Zoom meeting can be accessed using the link below: <http://bit.ly/SchedulingZoomMeetings>.



Rainbows Ireland has developed a resource framework to support children on their return to school

Conversations with Children

The Rainbows Ireland resource aims to contribute to the psychological and emotional wellbeing of children following their COVID-19 experiences. It recognises that the demands on teachers and key supportive adults are greater than ever in this pandemic world.

Teachers/key supportive adults – have an incredible capacity to influence how children feel as they transition out of lockdown back into their school environment and local communities. Now more than ever they need to feel that they belong, that they are valued, that they matter, that their teachers are genuinely delighted to see them again and most especially that their teachers care how they have been.

Children have been living in a world of uncertainty, possibly feeling unsafe and under threat by something they hardly understand. They need a warm, calm, caring and reassuring presence, now more than ever, together with their teacher's ability to actively listen and respond to them with compassion and empathy.

The resource framework is underpinned by the key principles of the Rainbows bereavement and parental separation programmes. It believes that:

- while children and young people are active, resilient participants in their own lives this can be enhanced and nurtured by key supportive adults in a child's life;
- the positive impact of peer support provides a process of normalisation and social identification with each other's experiences during COVID-19;
- the psychological and emotional health and wellbeing of children is fundamental to their mental health and well-being;

- It also supports children to recognise and verbalise feelings, concerns, and questions in a safe and nurturing environment fostering a process of acknowledgment and validation of feelings and experiences.

Some key points

- This resource framework tool is developed for a whole class approach or a whole group approach, it is not intended or targeted at any one child or situation but aimed at the whole group experience.
- It provides a general universal support for all.
- Teachers and key supportive adults bring skills and professional experience to the delivery of this resource framework and no additional training is needed.
- The resource framework is a time limited resource – it is suitable for use in the initial days and weeks of returning to school and activities in the wider community.
- It is not intended to be used in the longer term as the impact of staying at home during COVID-19 diminishes and becomes less intense.

This resource framework can be downloaded for free and printed for use.

How it works

The process takes place over four sessions.

- Session 1: All about me - staying at home
 - Session 2: Me and my feelings while staying at home
 - Session 3: Difficult feelings while staying at home
 - Session 4: Me and the wider world - while staying at home
- The same format is used in each session:

Opening stage: The start of every session creates the opening of the safe space.

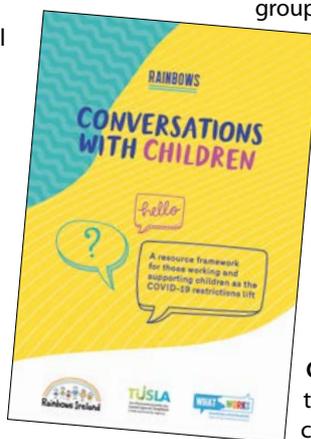
The 'check-in' cards activity creates a safe emotional distance for a whole class/group experience and does not focus on any individual child or situation.

Connecting stage: Activities are suggested to engage and trigger reflective conversations in a class or group and to build a community of shared experiences. Guidance notes and prompts are given for each activity to help open conversations.

Closing stage: This is the process to close the session and to safely contain feelings and emotions.

Sessions can last up to 45 minutes depending on the age and stage of development of the class or children in a class/group. The resource can also be subdivided into sub-sections over a shorter time frame e.g. half hour time slots that may be more suitable for younger children. The opening and closing stages are required to be used with every sub-section to ensure a level of emotional safety and containment.

Conversations with Children can be downloaded for free and printed for use by clicking this link rainbowsireland.ie/download-pdf/.



Curriculum – What to focus on in new school year

As doors reopen for pupils in our primary schools nationwide, teachers are planning for a school year different to any other. Curriculum considerations for the 2020/21 academic year must take account of the variable learning experiences of children during the lengthy period of school closure and the practical contexts in which teaching, and learning will be taking place over the coming months. To guide teachers as they navigate this testing time, and offer reassurance, The Department of Education (DES) have published a curriculum guidance document offering support on curricular planning.

Within our schools we have talented, compassionate teachers, natural leaders, good decision-makers, multi-taskers, and a wealth of expertise that can be tapped into. In this crisis, schools must plan and prepare collaboratively to ensure that teaching and learning is conducted in such a way that all pupils progress and flourish in the 2020/21 school year. Mar a deirtear, “ní neart go cur le chéile”.

Some key elements addressed in this publication are:

Teaching and learning priorities

As pupils settle back, teachers will devote greater time and attention to certain curricular areas. SPHE and wellbeing will be a core element of teaching and learning for the opening weeks to meet the needs of pupils, mindful of the wider physical, mental, emotional and relationship implications of social distancing, lockdown and possibly bereavement which may be significant for some children.

Learning approaches

Teachers will, as always strive to cultivate a positive environment where children feel safe and secure. Continuing to provide a broad range of active learning experiences for all pupils is essential, including play-based learning, inquiry-based learning, use of digital technologies, and use of the environment rather than reverting to a ‘chalk and talk’ method in an effort to catch up on content not covered due to the school closure. Teachers should focus on the children’s needs currently and use their contributions to inform planning for the year ahead.

Pupil voice

Language underpins everything a child does, and as such talk and discussion, will



be key element in supporting learning across all curricular areas. Pupils should be afforded opportunities to share their thoughts and articulate their experiences of recent months (positive and negative) for example, in SPHE lessons, through visual arts, drama, creative writing, through imaginative play in infant classes, and/or through conversations.

Supporting pupils with special educational needs

Pupils with special educational needs, those children at risk of educational disadvantage, pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and children experiencing homelessness or living in direct provision have been the most adversely affected by the interruption of formal schooling. This cohort of children will require additional support with the transition back to school and the quality of social and emotional aspects of the curriculum will be critical to their successful re-engagement. Particular attention will need to be given to supporting their wellbeing and reducing potential anxiety and planning learning experiences.

Curriculum developments

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* is currently subject to public consultation. The consultation period which involves engagement with teachers, school leaders, parents and stakeholders was due to end in October 2020 but due to the impact of COVID-related measures it has been extended to December 2020. Following consultation, the Framework will be refined, finalised, and approved for publication in summer 2021. Public consultation on the *Primary Maths Curriculum* will be deferred to the autumn of 2021 with a draft curriculum published by mid-2022 and

professional development to support its implementation may begin thereafter.

The Inspectorate

The Inspectorate will support schools and the education system as the return to school takes place and specific activities included in their work will be under continuous review and will evolve in line with public health advice and the prevailing health circumstances. The focus of the Inspectorate’s work in the first term of the 2020/21 school year will be on its advisory and support work in schools.

Digital technology

Building on the experience of using digital technology during the school closure period to support contingency arrangements in the event that some pupils need to continue their learning in a distance learning environment for a period during the 2020/21 school year. School should update relevant policies to support effective digital and blended learning; these should include the school’s Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), Child Protection procedures, and Data Protection and Critical Incident policies.

Inevitably, some pupils and parents, as well as teachers, will be anxious at this time, however, schools will offer reassurance that all public health advice is being adhered to ensuring that the school environment is safe. The physical return to school offers a welcome opportunity for children to revive social connections and return to some sort of normality at this extraordinary time. ‘Slow down to catch up’ will be a key message from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to schools in the initial weeks of the new school year and this is a motto that we should remind ourselves of in the weeks and months ahead.

Reflecting and adapting



As we head back to school this September, some of us might already be feeling the healthy habits and simple pleasures we fostered during lockdown, such as baking bread, slowing down, connecting more with loved ones, slipping away. We might see the things we had no choice but to abandon – such as hectic schedules and overspending, slowly creep back in.

At Mental Health Ireland, we are asking people to reflect before we forge ahead with life again. We want people to reflect on those positive outcomes of lockdown, the things that happened that we might not want to forget or leave behind.

We asked our social media followers to do the same recently and their feedback has sparked some truly touching stories of this challenging time, how we coped

with the changes and what helped us overcome it.

Connecting

Overall, most people said that friends and family were the ones that helped them through. Friends offered us support, a shoulder to cry on and some great laughs through our Zoom quizzes and WhatsApp groups.

While connecting with people during lockdown was particularly difficult, we became innovative in our communication methods. We learned how to think outside the box, and go back to basics for the first time in a very long time.

We have seen an upsurge in people writing letters, sending care packages and getting our not so tech savvy family members to a point that they are now

professional 'Zoomers'. While very little can replace physical contact and getting to see our loved ones in the flesh, the online world certainly offered us some great ways to stay in touch.

Being active

Exercise, nature and being active were heavily featured in the feedback of what helped us through the last few months. Walking, running, online workouts with friends, YouTube videos with personal trainers have all helped people stay fit and healthy from their home. We saw an upsurge in demand for home workout videos and equipment in a bid to keep ourselves active, as gyms around the country closed their doors.

As a nation, we have become much more health conscious than ever before

... reflect on those positive outcomes of lockdown, the things that happened that we might not want to forget or leave behind

and, even throughout 2km restrictions, people tried to maintain some form of activity to stay mentally and physically healthy. Getting outdoors walking and running and being active in general is intrinsically linked to maintaining and improving our mental health and wellbeing.

Our #Naturemoves campaign with Sport Ireland and University of Limerick lit up social media as people shared snaps of nature in their gardens, parks and green spaces. Our woodlands and forest sites have seen an increase in visitor numbers since we entered phase two and three of the uplifting of restrictions. In some cases, our partners at Coillte have noted a double in the number of visitors to their sites between June 2019 and June 2020.

Reflection

Offering ourselves some time to reflect on these changes, adaptations and positives from the past few months can assist us in maintaining these healthy habits as society continues to reopen.

Other people noted the good weather we experienced over the past few months really helped them cope with the restrictions.

Another notable trend from our survey was our newfound appreciation for the

small things in life. Some of us do not feel the need to spend as much now on materialistic things. We enjoyed being able to slow down a little, spend more time with our children, grandchildren, housemates, and family, even it was virtually.

Follow our #ReflectionsonLockdown on our social media channels to follow the conversations and the positives others will be taking with them from this experience.

For some of us, reflecting on the past might be too much right now. For some of us, we will have said goodbye to family members or friends during the past few months and that loss can be a challenge to cope with alone. For others the pandemic brought very little or no positives and some were merely functioning in survival mode. In any case, we would encourage you to reach out to someone close to you if you are still finding dealing with the loss or the pandemic a challenge. You can also book an appointment with your local GP to discuss your concerns.

Further Support

- The Samaritans telephone service is available 24 hours a day for confidential, non-judgmental support

on 116 123.

- Spectrum.Life 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 jigsawonline.ie
- To find mental health supports and services near you, free phone anytime the information line on 1800 111 888 or visit 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.mentalhealthireland.ie.



Covid-19 rules for pupils in schools



As you one million pupils return to your schools,
you'll have to follow some important new rules.



Wash your hands thoroughly
and keep them clean,
germs may still lurk
though they cannot be seen.

Please cover your mouth
when you cough or sneeze,
and don't allow germs spread
through the air with ease.

Don't shake hands or give friends a hug,
You might spread Covid-19, that nasty bug.





**Always be wise – sanitise!
And avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes.**



**The classroom looks different,
to give everyone more space,
desks and chairs re-arranged,
some things in a new place.**

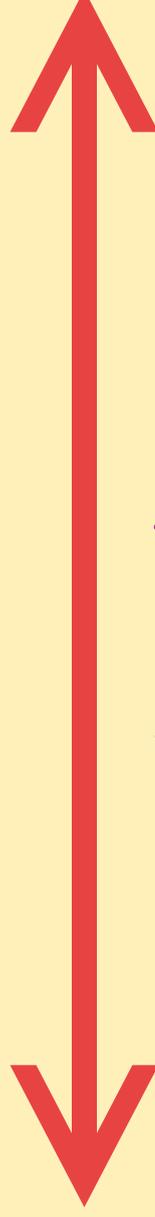


**Keeping your distance is important to do
to prevent germs from spreading from others to you.
There may be some games that for now you can't play,
but you'll still have fun, in a different way.**

**Stay in your pod – and classroom bubble.
It helps stop the virus from causing great trouble.**

**Covid-19 has brought change everywhere,
Please be aware, and take extra care.
Teachers work hard to keep you safe in your schools.
Protect yourselves and your friends – follow these rules.**

**Make sure Covid-19 cases are zero.
Wash your hands. Keep your distance. Be a Covid-19 hero!**





Minister Norma Foley

InTouch asks Minister for Education Norma Foley about her priorities for primary education.

What would you say are your main priorities as Minister for Education?

It is a huge privilege to serve as Minister for Education. Coming from a background in education, I have seen first-hand the value of each and every member of the school community at a local level. I want to ensure that those voices are heard because they are critical to the day-to-day education of our children. Equally, I want to continue to ensure that the children we serve are at the heart of all that we do in the Department of Education.

We are currently facing one of the biggest challenges this department has faced in reopening our schools in the midst of a global pandemic. This has been my number one priority as soon as I became Minister for Education, and it will remain my priority for the duration of this public health crisis. Students and teachers have suffered significantly as a result of school closures, and it is my intention to support schools in safely reopening and remaining open, and I wish to acknowledge the phenomenal co-operation and good will of school communities across the country. I am very conscious of the huge volume of work that is being undertaken by schools to prepare for reopening.

Furthermore, while I am currently focused on ensuring that we can reopen schools and welcome our staff and students back into a safe environment later in the month, there are also a number of other key issues that I would like to see addressed such as tackling educational disadvantage, progressing curricular review and reform, and supporting schools to deliver for their pupils.

Ireland's primary class sizes are currently the largest in the Eurozone, five pupils above the EU average of 20 pupils per class. You have committed to lowering class sizes. With the rapid fall in primary school enrolments projected by your department over the coming years, do you recognise that class size can be reduced without additional cost by retaining teachers and without an increase to overall teacher numbers? Will you commit to this and when will we see the first

reductions take place?

I am very conscious of the staffing schedule and the need to prioritise teacher allocations in primary schools given their vital role in communities around the country. The Programme for Government has committed to reducing pupil-teacher ratios in primary schools, and I will be working with my colleagues in both the Department of Education (DE) and wider government to deliver on this commitment.

Last year at our Congress, the government pledged to end pay inequality for our 2011 to 2014 entrants. Will you pledge to work with your colleagues in government to honour this commitment and deliver a pathway to pay inequality in the forthcoming public sector pay deal?

I am fully aware of the outstanding issues regarding new entrant pay that teachers face. I have myself taught along new entrant teachers and see the challenges that they face. This will be looked at in the context of the next round of pay talks, which are due to commence later this year. It is through this forum that we have our best opportunity for collective engagement and collective bargaining across the sector.

We have campaigned for one release day per week for our overworked teaching principals. While we welcome the commitment to provide additional release days in the context of reopening of our schools in the wake of the current pandemic, will you commit to securing this minimum level of support for teaching principals on a permanent basis?

I am very conscious of the fact that principals in smaller schools face considerable challenges. While management and administration duties are smaller in scale than those of larger schools, they must be undertaken in addition to a principal's full-time teaching duties.

Particularly in a COVID-19 context, where principals have been asked to take on more duties, I felt it was a priority to give additional administrative release time to these principal release days and this has been delivered for the next year,

with principals now able to access at least one release day per week.

Taking a more long-term view, I know that principals and schools are keen to retain this minimum. A symposium on small schools, hosted in 2019, opened a dialogue with all the key stakeholders with a view to developing policy proposals to help support small primary schools throughout the country. The role of the teaching principal was a key feature of this.

Budget 2020 was the third successive budget to provide for an increase in the number of principal release days, and that is a trend I hope to continue and of course arrangements this year will be considered as part of that.

Are you aware of the underfunding of primary schools and what are your plans to tackle this?

I am keenly aware of the funding challenges faced by primary schools. Primary schools are at the heart of the Irish education system and communities, and it is vital that they are supported in doing their important work.

This is an area where there has been improvement in recent years, with Budget 2020 providing a further 2.5% increase in standard capitation funding for primary schools that will apply from the start of this upcoming school year. This builds on the 5% increase in capitation announced in Budget 2019. These mean that almost 40% restoration has been achieved, but more must be done to support primary schools.

It is my clear intention to seek funding for further capitation increases in future budgets.

In 2007, the Report of the Public Service Benchmarking Body recommended a pay award for primary principals and deputy principals to align their allowances more closely with those paid at post-primary level. The award was never paid though the workload continues to increase. Will you ensure that the work done by primary principals and deputy principals is recognised with a long-promised increase in allowances?

This is an area where significant progress



I wish to acknowledge the phenomenal co-operation and good will of school communities across the country. I am very conscious of the huge volume of work that is being undertaken by schools to prepare for reopening.

has been made. A decision has been taken by government to restore principal allowances, which were reduced under the FEMPI legislation to their previous levels from 1 October 2020.

In line with current government policy, there are no immediate plans to implement the recommendations set out in the second report of the *Public Service Benchmarking Body* as they apply to any public servant, but I will be looking at the broader issue of supporting primary principals and deputy principals and how best to achieve that.

Our primary schools nurture children with a broad range of needs. What steps will you take to support inclusion and ensure that our schools have the supports they need to cater to the needs of our most vulnerable pupils?

I am working very closely with my

colleague in the department, Minister Josepha Madigan, who has responsibility for the areas of supporting students with special educational needs and we have had a lot of engagement around the issue of ensuring that no student is left behind because of their needs or background.

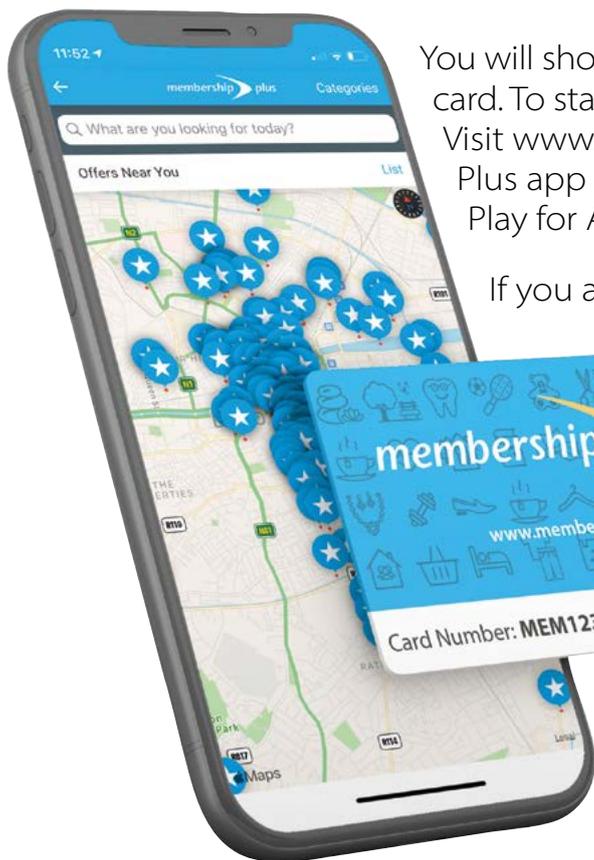
We saw first hand that some students were suffering as a result of the school closures a couple of months ago which is why we announced the early payment of DEIS grant to help these students.

I do want to acknowledge that we have made strides in the past number of years with the DEIS plan and focusing on helping these particular students but more needs to be done. This is an area that I want to prioritise and I will be working very closely with officials on the supports that we are providing in this area.

In the last year, we have seen the success of the pilot substitute supply panel. We welcome the enhanced substitution cover that will be available to facilitate the reopening of our schools this year but recognise that schools need reliable access to substitute teachers on an ongoing basis. Will you extend substitute supply panels nationwide to ensure consistency of cover for teacher absences in every primary and special school?

Funding for the allocation of over 250 additional posts was made available in order to expand the pilot substitute supply panel scheme to more than 90 locations for the coming school year. Staff in my department have been working very closely in recent weeks with the INTO and the school management bodies in order to locate the supply panel bases in as many locations as possible throughout the country.

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Sports and fitness

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Fashion

Treat yourself to a new party outfit. "10% off at Carraig Donn saved me €8.99."

Groceries

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Starting a new job or making an appointment?

INTO Head Office regularly advises members who are taking up a position for the first time, or who are changing schools, about employment contracts. Here's what you need to know.



A teacher can be employed on a full-time, part-time or casual basis. Any offer of employment can be made and/or accepted either orally or in writing. Appointments to teaching positions are subject to contract. The contract for a teaching position is usually subject to certain conditions being fulfilled such as having garda vetting, being registered with the Teaching Council and medical fitness. Confirmation and verification of these conditions is usually required by a school before your employment starts, particularly when the position is permanent or fixed term and in order to meet statutory obligations.

For teachers who are appointed to positions funded by the Oireachtas, schools may just refer to applicable circulars from the Department of Education (DE) and/or the *Rules for National Schools* for the fourth and fifth core terms.

The teacher must receive the remaining terms of their contract within two months of starting the employment. As the terms and conditions of employment for teachers, including leave arrangements and pension schemes, are set in DE circulars, the employment contract may simply make reference to the provisions contained in applicable circulars and/or the *Rules for National Schools*. There is often a variance in the type of written contracts used by schools, they contain other terms and conditions applicable to that particular school, for example, confidentiality, intellectual property and policies about the use of school internet or email. It is important to be familiar with

and understand any other conditions in your contract.

A teacher may be employed on a fixed-term (temporary) contract which begins and ends on a particular date. The objective ground for these contracts is typically to cover absences such as career break, secondment, job-sharing etc. Where the end date of the contract is unknown, a teacher may be given a specified purpose contract. The objective ground for these contracts typically includes maternity leave, carer's leave, parental leave etc. The objective ground determining the contract should be written on the contract.

For permanent and fixed-term teachers, a notice period of three months is usually included in the contract. However, if both parties agree (school and teacher), a teacher can serve a shorter notice period. Where there is no notice period stated in the contract, the provisions contained in the *Minimum Terms of Notice Act* apply.



Five core terms within five days

There are five core employment terms that, since March 2019, an employer (school/ETB)

must provide to each new teacher in writing, within five days of commencement of employment:

- ✓ the full names of the employer and the employee;
- ✓ the address of the employer;
- ✓ the expected duration of the contract, in the case of a temporary contract, or the end date if the contract is a fixed-term contract;
- ✓ the rate or method of calculation of the employee's pay;
- ✓ the number of hours the employer reasonably expects the employee to work per normal working day and per normal working week.



Employment contract checklist

- ✓ Have you fulfilled the required conditions of the contract prior to its commencement e.g. vetting?
- ✓ Have you received the five key terms within five days of the commencement of your contract?
- ✓ In the case of a fixed-term contract:
 - ✓ has the objective ground (e.g. career break, maternity leave cover) been included in the contract?
- ✓ Have the relevant dates, (if applicable) been included?
- ✓ Has a duplicate copy been prepared and signed by you and the school?
- ✓ Have you been given a copy of the written terms of your contract (within two months of commencement)?
- ✓ Does the contract contain a notice period?

Baby on the way?

The INTO answers some of the most common questions our members ask when they're expecting.

How much maternity leave am I entitled to and when does it start?

Paid maternity leave lasts for up to 26 weeks. After this, you have an option of taking up to 16 weeks (112 days) of unpaid maternity leave. You can use as much or as little of this as you like. Both paid and unpaid maternity leave are statutory entitlements and you are entitled to take maternity leave whether you are a

permanent, CID-holding, fixed-term or non-casual substitute teacher. If you are in a fixed-term or non-casual substitute contract, your leave entitlement will end at the end of your contract.

You can start your maternity leave any time after the twenty-fourth week of pregnancy. To figure out the latest date you can start your paid maternity leave:

- Go to the Saturday at the end of the week in which you're due. (If you're due on a Saturday, you'll be counting back from your actual due date.)
- Count back to the Saturday two weeks earlier.
- Your paid maternity can begin on the next Monday.

The INTO has a handy maternity leave calculator on our website. <https://bit.ly/INTOMatLeaveCalculator>.

What happens if I have to take sick leave due to my pregnancy?

For ordinary (non-critical) illness, you can take up to 183 days of paid sick leave in a rolling four-year period. The first 92 days of sick leave in any single 12-month period are at full pay. After 92 days of full pay sick leave in a twelve-month period, you move onto half pay.

Pregnancy-related sick leave (PRSL) forms part of your overall sick leave record and is relevant for your four-year count back. However, if your sick leave is later exhausted (i.e. you reach the 183-day limit),



your sick leave will be extended by the number of PRSL days recorded. This extended sick leave entitlement will be at half pay.

For example, if a teacher had 50 days of PRSL, these days will appear on her sick leave record and will be part of the 92 days on full pay in twelve months to which she is entitled. But, if she subsequently falls ill with an unrelated condition, within the same four-year period, and reaches the 183-day limit, rather than moving onto temporary rehabilitation remuneration (TRR), she will have access to an additional 50 days at half pay, in light of the earlier absence for a pregnancy related condition.

There is also a protection in place where you will not drop below half pay if a condition is pregnancy related, regardless of the number of days taken. As such, it is important that schools correctly record pregnancy-related sick leave on the online claims system (OLCS). After twenty-eight days absence on PRSL, employers must refer teachers to the Occupational Health Service, in line with the terms of the sick leave scheme.

You can find more details in chapter one of *DES Circular 0054/2019* or on the INTO website.

Additional parental leave from 1 September 2020

With effect from 1 September 2020, the statutory entitlement to parental leave will increase by four weeks, to 26 weeks per parent for each eligible child. The extension will be available to all parents of children under the age of thirteen, or under the age of sixteen in the case of a child with a long-term illness or special needs, regardless of whether they have already used some or all of their existing parental leave entitlement.

Parental leave is unpaid and must be taken in minimum blocks of seven consecutive days. If you wish to avail of parental leave, you should apply to your board of management (BOM) with at least six weeks' notice.

Further details and the application form for parental leave can be found in chapter five of *DES Circular 0054/2019* or on the INTO website.

COVID-19 and pregnant teachers

The HSE currently advises that healthy pregnant women are not at an increased risk in relation to COVID-19 so the Department of Education (DES) have not made any additional provision for leave. If you have any concerns about your fitness for work, you should consult your doctor. If your doctor believes you are unfit for work, the sick leave provisions contained in chapter 1 of *Circular 0054/2019*, including the pregnancy-related sick leave provisions will apply.

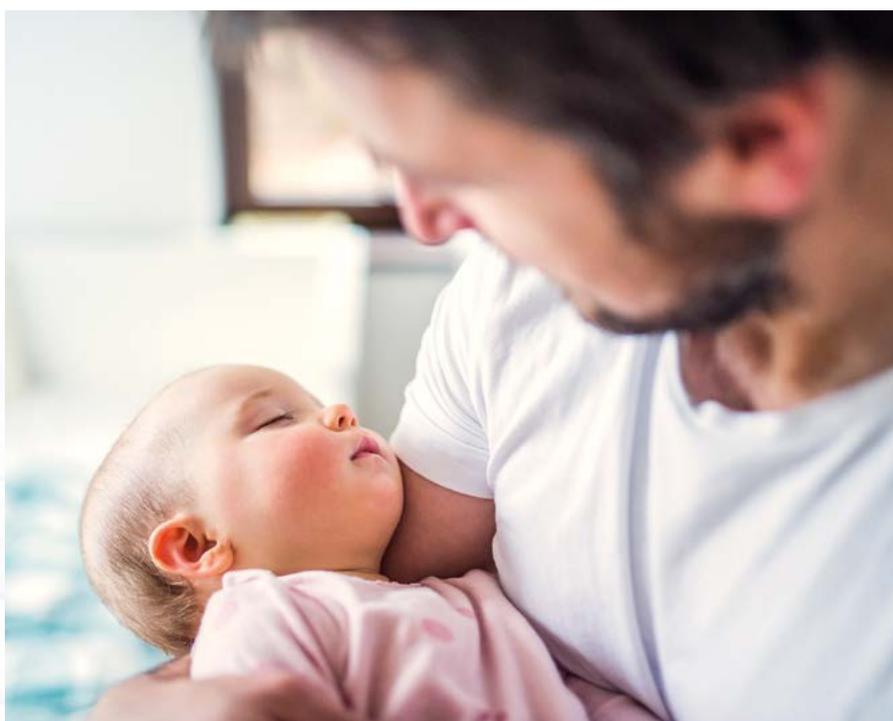
Announcement of additional parents' leave

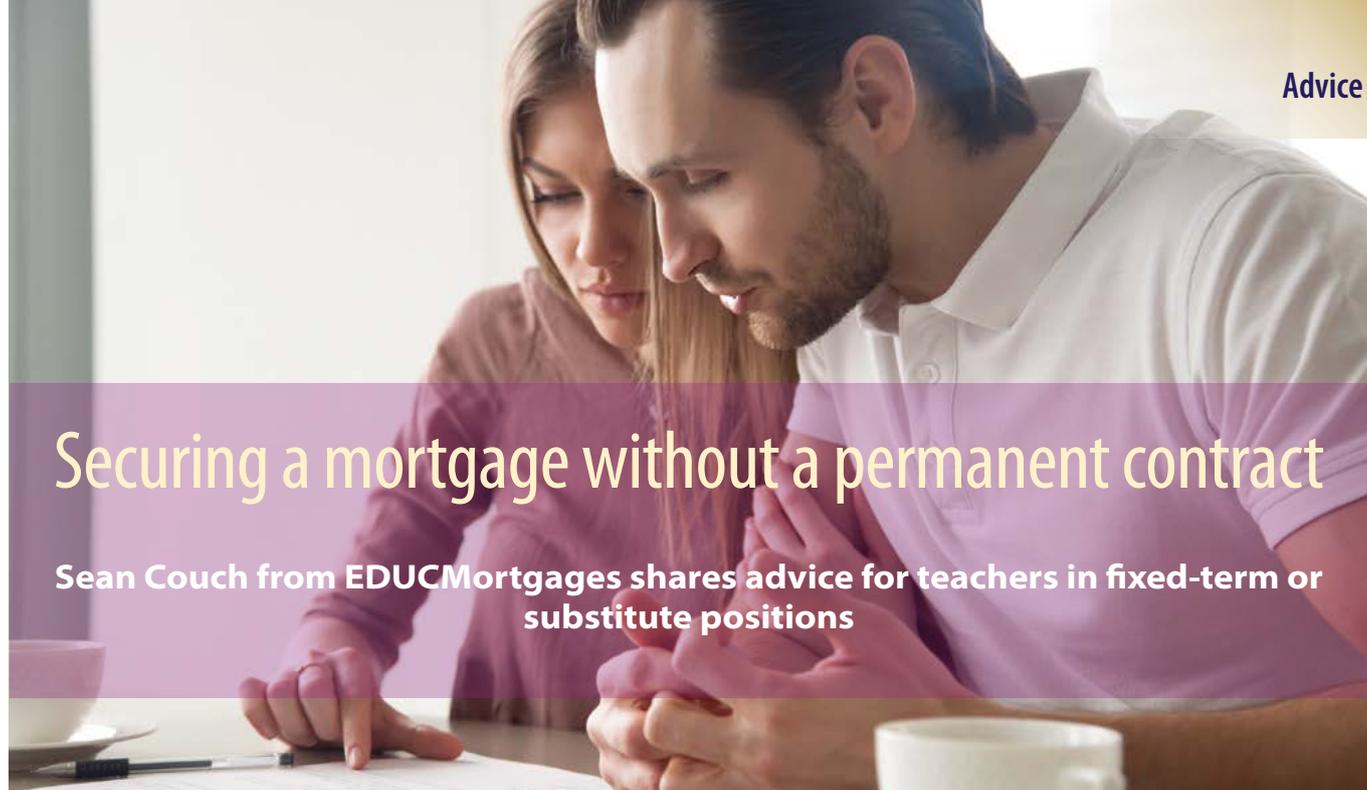
Two weeks' parents' leave is available to both parents of children under the age of twelve months born on or after 1 November 2019. Parents' benefit will be paid to eligible employees by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (the current rate is €245 per week). The leave must be taken in minimum blocks of seven days, which may be taken as two consecutive, or non-consecutive weeks.

On 14 July 2020, the government announced three additional weeks of parents' leave, however this leave will not come into effect until November 2020 and the conditions for eligibility have not been confirmed yet.

The INTO has called on the DES to support working families by topping up teachers' wages to full salary during parents' leave but, currently, only parents' benefit is payable. As yet the DES has failed to publish either a circular or application form for teachers availing of the two week entitlement to parents' leave.

In the absence of an application form, teachers wishing to apply for parents' leave should notify their BOM in writing with at least six weeks' notice and apply for their parents' benefit through the MyWelfare website. The BOM should notify the Terms and Conditions and Payroll sections of the DES of the teachers' proposed parents' leave dates. The DES will pay a substitute to cover this absence.





Securing a mortgage without a permanent contract

Sean Couch from EDUCMortgages shares advice for teachers in fixed-term or substitute positions

As a general rule, most banks will require you to be on a second fixed-term contract (i.e. second year) before they will consider an application for a mortgage. But, some mortgage providers will consider an application from a teacher on their first fixed-term contract based on their previous work record. So, if you have been doing a large amount of substitute teaching over the last number of years it may still be worth applying.

If you are on your first contract with no previous employment as a teacher but your partner is in secure full-time employment, the banks may take part of your salary into account. Mortgage applications from newly qualified teachers who are on a probationary period will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If you are a substitute teacher and purchasing with a partner and you have worked as a substitute teacher for a number of years, the bank will consider an application from you depending on the strength of the application, your partner's employment, your savings record, deposit and the loan-to-value ratio (i.e. whether or not you have large deposit).

COVID challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new challenge for purchasers. At present, most banks will not release funds if one of the applicants is receiving a covid payment, or if your employer is claiming a covid subsidy from the government. The bank will give you an initial approval but this approval will have a condition that funds will not be released until all Covid subsidies are removed from pay roll. With this in mind, it is very important that you do not enter into a contract to purchase

a property without a condition allowing you to get your contract deposit returned in the event of the banks not releasing funds. (If both applicants are public/civil servants you do not need to worry about this.) If you don't have this condition in your contract, you risk losing your 10% deposit and you could be sued by the sellers for any loss they suffer if they sell the property for less than the price you had agreed.

Extra income

This year, one mortgage provider will increase all public servants salaries by two points of the salary scale.

We can also get salary from July provisions or after school clubs taken into account as earnings.

In addition, if you or your partner is a public servant and has a variable income, some providers will take this into account.

- **Overtime:** Up to 100% of regular overtime earned may be factored into our assessment if your employer confirms it is regular.
- **Allowances:** 100% of contractual allowances will be factored in if your employer confirms it is guaranteed.

Example

Teacher on point 4 of salary scale (€40,981) and their partner, a garda on point 4 of scale (€40,297) plus garda has €20,000 in overtime shift pay etc in last 12 months.

Teacher salary increased to €43,431. Garda increased to €46,335 plus €20,000 overtime and allowances, so total allowable income €109,776 X 3.5. Total mortgage available €384,181.

Remember the top tips for getting mortgage approval

Do

- ✓ Save equal amounts each month
- ✓ Try clear your credit card each month
- ✓ Pay rent directly from your bank account to the landlord (do not pay cash)

Do not

- ✗ Miss any direct debit payments
- ✗ Engage in online gambling
- ✗ Go overdrawn on your bank accounts

After you get mortgage approval

- ✓ Continue saving as, if you do not find a property, you may have to reapply for a new mortgage
- ✓ Do not borrow any money, as banks may do another credit check prior to issuing mortgage funds

SEAN COUCH, EDUC Mortgages, educmortgages.ie.



Cumann na mBunscol news



National Cumann na mBunscol directive

Following a recent national committee meeting, Cumann na mBunscol instruct all counties not to organise or participate in any inter-school games/competitions until 31 October 2020, at the earliest.

Cumann na mBunscol will continue to monitor the situation during this period and provide further instruction as appropriate.

GAA learning portal

For excellent cross curricular lesson plans and GAA themed lessons please visit <https://learning.gaa.ie/primary-school>.

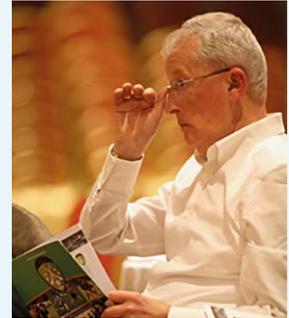
Jerry Walsh RIP – Scaith na Scol Chorcaí

It was with a heavy heart that we recently learned of the passing of our esteemed Sciath na Scol leas uachtarán, colleague and friend, Jerry Walsh, who passed away peacefully in the company of his family, on 13 June. Fágann a imeacht scamall dubh an bhróin orainn go léir go raibh aithne ar an laoch misniúil seo.

Jerry had a private family funeral, in accordance with current guidelines, but his passing will be sorely felt in Sciath na Scol, as well as Cumann na mBunscol nationally, for the long and loyal service he has given us since he began teaching in Scoil Réalt na Maidne, Ballypéhane, in the late 1960s.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Connie, his children Maurice, James and Anne Marie and all his extended family.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal dílis.



School spotlight – GAA in St Colmcille's

St Colmcille's PS is a senior boys primary school in the town of Templemore, Co Tipperary. St Colmcille's has 114 pupils and has a very proud tradition in GAA. The school has been the nursery for some fantastic GAA stars, such as Eamon Corcoran, Colin O'Riordan, Paddy Cadell, Lyndon Fairbrother and Andrew Ormond. These past pupils, along with many more, have helped the school rise from a Roinn D school in

The pupils from fourth, fifth and sixth classes enjoy training each Tuesday and Thursday with teacher Denis Kelly and principal Conor Doyle.

A school league is contested in both codes for the right to be crowned winners of the Brendan Maher cup, which is a miniature Liam MacCarthy cup gifted to the school by Tipperary hurler Brendan Maher, who was presented with the real Liam MacCarthy Cup as captain of the victorious Tipperary All Ireland winning team in 2016.

John Manley, PRO, Cumann Na mBunscol



2010 to a successful Roinn A school in 2020.

The approach in St Colmcille's is all about participation and enjoyment. From the time the children join the school in first class they are exposed to Gaelic football, hurling and rounders. First, second and third class pupils participate in GAA training every Friday with a coach from local club JK Brackens.





Picture books on the theme of homelessness

Because homelessness is such an important and contentious issue at the moment, both politically and socially, children of primary school age cannot be immune from the discussion. Creating awareness amongst children about the issue of homelessness fulfils both the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 for Education as well as the aims of the social, personal and health education (SPHE) curriculum of the Irish primary school.

Picture books are often thought of as the domain of infants and younger pupils. They are sometimes associated with the bedtime story or a parent reading to a young child on their lap. However, picture books are an excellent way of introducing pupils of all ages to big ideas, social issues, critical engagement and the notion of making meaning together through thinking and discussion about the content of the book.

Critical thinking and book talk are two teaching strategies proposed in Mary Roche's *Developing Children's Critical Thinking Through Picturebooks*, that schools can use to encourage pupils to become critical thinkers through engagement and discussion about the picture book. It was through using this

methodology that pupils in my class last year began to engage more with the theme of homelessness.

Together, as a class, we read the picture book *Way Home* by Libby Hathorn and Gregory Rogers as a stimulus for talk and discussion. Whilst initially pupils were reluctant to discuss the central issue in the book, they gradually began to engage more and talked about the protagonist in the story, comparing his life to their own comfortable home situations. Through this talk and discussion, the pupils were better able to recognise the issue of homelessness facing the boy in the book and make judgements on the central issues portrayed in the book.

Pupils also began individually reading a selection of picture books on the theme of homelessness and posted book reports on them on our class blog. The following is an example of how the theme of one of the books affected one of the pupils:

"This picture book (*The Cardboard Shack – Beneath the Bridge* by Tim Huff) has been a very eye-opening experience. It really had so many meanings behind every word. I loved every second of reading this book. Even though it was very short, I feel

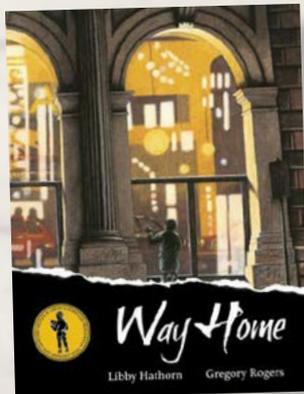
like this has been the best book I have read. The truth is, it isn't a story. It is real life. Homelessness is happening everywhere in the world. Quite frankly, we take most things for granted. See, I am sitting in my desk chair right now, typing this on my computer, in my cosy home with the fire lit, with my PJs on and eating cereal. That's normal right? But for an unfortunate amount of people, that sounds like heaven. When I'm lying in my bed at night, a girl my age could be out on the streets, hoping to survive another day. Some of us worry about which new shoes or phones we have, while some can't even afford a slice of bread".

(Leah)

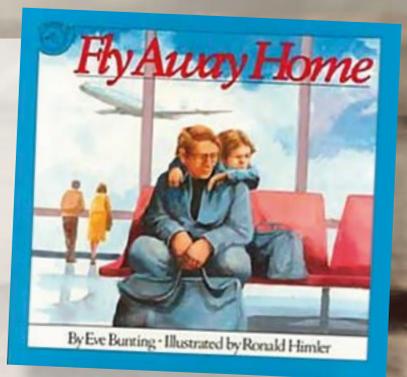
Beginning a discussion in the classroom on the issue of homelessness through the use of picture books gives pupils the opportunity to engage in a meaningful and tangible way with such a current and topical issue and, as demonstrated, gives them a voice in the discussion and debate.

Presented here is a list of picture books on the theme of homelessness that my pupils have been reading and responding to.

Way Home by Libby Hathorn and Gregory Rogers tells the story of a young boy called Shane who fends for himself, living on the dark night streets. He strikes up an unlikely friendship with a cat whom he decides to take care of and bring him 'home'. But where is this 'home'?

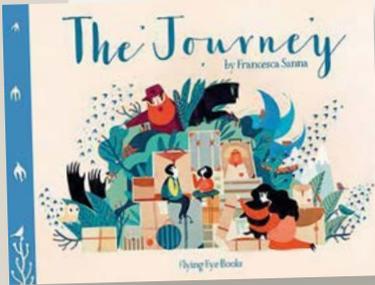


Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting tells the story of a young boy and his father who are homeless and living in an airport terminal building. They try to blend in and not get noticed so that they are not ejected from the building. "Sometimes I just want to cry", says the boy. There's a lovely metaphor in the book about a bird who gets trapped in the terminal building. The boy sees the bird escape and thinks, "It took a while, but a door opened".



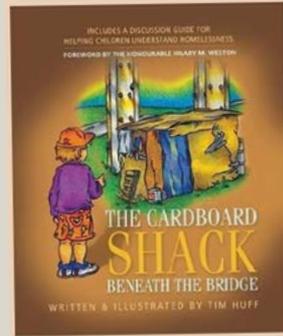
The Journey by Francesca Sanna tells the story of a young family forced to flee their home country because of war which has also taken the life of the father. They face dangers all along as they attempt to cross a border to reach

a 'safe place'. After a perilous journey on an overcrowded ferry, they travel by train to their destination. One of the children sees birds and remarks, "They are migrating just like us. And their journey is very long too, but they don't have to cross any borders".

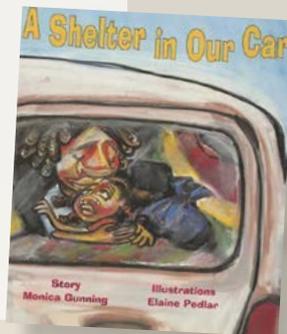


The Cardboard Shack Beneath the Bridge by Tim Huff tells the story of why someone may be living in a 'home' underneath a bridge. Told in

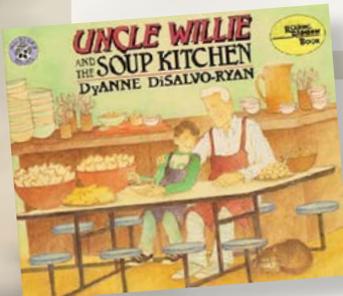
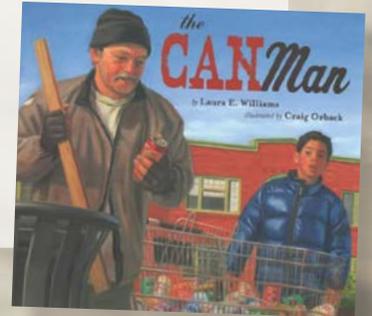
verse form, the story urges empathy and compassion for those who might be living in such circumstances. What's different about this book is that it includes a discussion guide for each page in the book for parents/teachers to help children understand the issue of homelessness.



A Shelter in Our Car by Monica Gunning tells the story of a young girl and her mother who live in temporary accommodation – in their run-down car. They eat and sleep in the car and the mother even reads a bedtime story to her daughter in the car. They constantly have to find a safe space to park the car at night. In the morning they find a public restroom to wash and change to get ready for school. Will they ever be able to afford an apartment again?



The Can Man by Laura E. Williams is about a young boy called Tim whose birthday is coming soon and he has his eye on a new skateboard which his family cannot afford. When he sees Mr Peters, the homeless man, collecting tin cans to exchange for cash at the redemption centre, he gets an idea. He starts to collect cans too to save for his skateboard. But Mr. Peters suddenly notices that there aren't many cans around for him to collect to buy his winter coat. What will Tim do?



Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan tells the story of a young boy who discovers that his Uncle Willie works at the local soup kitchen. On a day off from school, the boy accompanies his uncle to the soup kitchen to help out for the day. He discovers that you only have to be hungry to attend the soup kitchen and that they fed 121 people that day.

How Will Santa Find Us by Shane O'Brien and Stephen Rodgers tells the story of a little girl and her younger brother who lose their home in the week before Christmas. The story follows their family as they are moved from place to place in an effort to find somewhere to stay. The children's parents try to distract them from their predicament by trying to make each move to a different type of temporary accommodation into an exciting and imaginative adventure. However, like all children at Christmas time, the children's main concern is how will Santa find them.



DAMIEN M. QUINN, 6th class teacher, Ransboro National School, Sligo.



European School Sports Day 2020

The Irish Primary PE Association (IPPEA) are delighted to promote European School Sports Day (ESSD) 2020 which takes place on 25 September as part of the overarching European Week of Sport. ESSD is a pan-European initiative with the main goal of promoting physical activity at an international level and involving as many children, young people, schools and organisations as possible. Last year over 3,000,000 pupils took part in 9000 schools across 20 countries.

This year we are returning to school after a lengthy closure where most children missed out on their traditional sports day in June. ESSD would be a lovely opportunity to launch the school year with a fun, healthy event to empower a sense of belonging for every member of the school community. Physical activity has been shown time and time again to promote positive mental and physical health in children, and this would be a fantastic way of boosting both simultaneously.

Participate with your class or school by signing up online and completing 120 minutes of any type of physical activity on the day. Your involvement can simply be with one class rather than a whole school event to enable clustering of pupils to be maintained, and the 120 minutes could be split up throughout the day into small chunks of time. See the IPPEA Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts for further details, videos of activities and competitions for schools.

To register, visit the official ESSD

website, www.essd.eu. Also, visit www.irishprimarype.com to download our Co-Operative Sports Day Resource which includes a host of activities and was used by many schools last year for a successful ESSD.

Here are three suggested activities that could be incorporated into an upcoming ESSD and adapted for your school setting.

Balloon battle relay Children divided into pairs and split into three or four teams. Each pair has one balloon and one hula hoop between them. They both place one foot in the hoop on the ground. The pair must keep the balloon in the air whilst having one foot in the hoop to drag it along, and the other foot out of the hoop. Relay distance can be set up as a ten-metre race forward and returning back around a cone. Then the next pair takes over. The first team with all its pairs finished is the winner.

Rubbish chuck Children divided into teams of five. Each team needs a large bed-sheet/PE parachute and various 'rubbish' items to be chucked per team i.e. balls, cones, bean-bags. Four team

members stand at the designated cone, holding the corners of the sheet ready to catch the thrown items. On a signal the fifth team member is the rubbish chucker – they must run 10m dashes to grab a piece of rubbish, return to chuck it, and the rest of the team tries to collect it in their sheet. When all the rubbish is collected, a new rubbish chucker is swapped into place. As more rubbish is collected do not let the other rubbish fall out of the collection bag/sheet. The players that collect all their rubbish first are the kings and queens of rubbish.

Vertigo voyage Children divided into three or four equal teams standing behind a starting line. Each team has a hula hoop/old tire. One member from each team spins around four times and then rolls their tire to the designated end line, spins around four times and then returns to the start line rolling their hula hoop/tire. Continue until all members on the team have had a turn. The first team to finish are the vertigo victors.

JASON BYRNE and PETER LAVIN, IPPEA committee members and ESSD national coordinators.

#BEACTIVE

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Irish Primary PE Association
Cumann Corpoideachais Bunscoile na hÉireann

SPORT IRELAND



Connecting to wildlife corridors

Heritage Expert Patrick Hunt tells how schools can link in to nature's natural highways

The key to a beautiful low maintenance school garden full of wildlife is to loosen up the maintenance on site and start allowing for less frequently managed areas. If you have taken the children to look for insects you will know they are more plentiful along the margins of hedgerows and long grassy area than the weekly mown football field. Here too in these less frequently managed areas you will see a greater range of plants everything from stinging nettles to trees that have grown from seed dropped by birds.

Mapping

To support local wildlife first get a map of your school and it's surrounds. Look

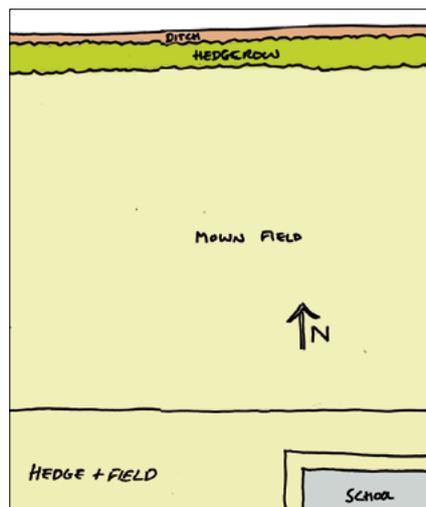
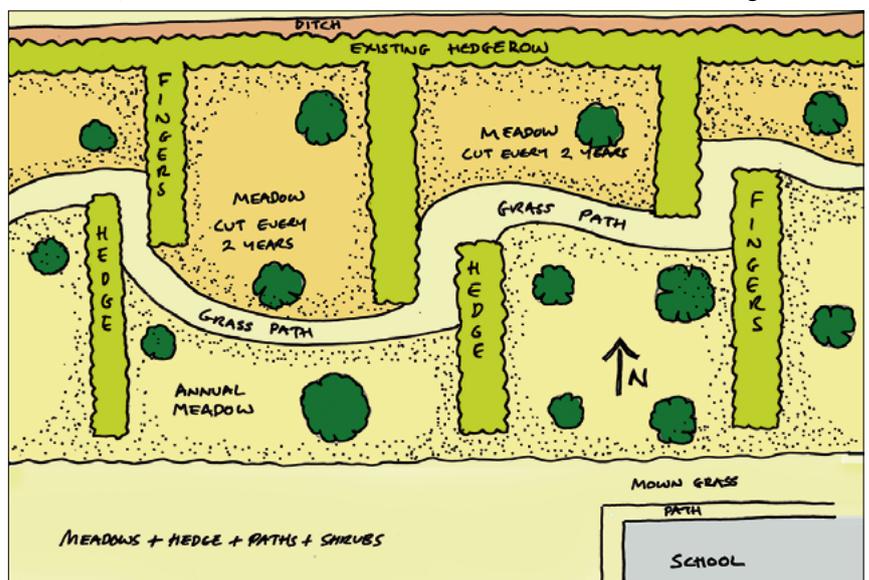
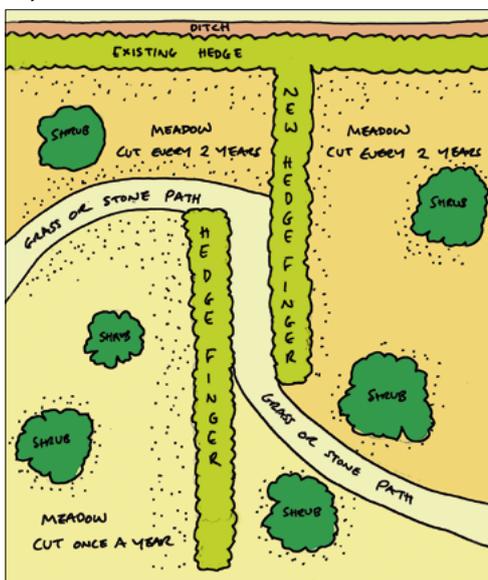


Figure 1: Typical field with hedge

for wildlife corridors such as streams, rivers, hedgerows, train lines, woodland. A wildlife corridor is anything that animals use to get about and spread. The school may already be connected to these corridors but if not it may be possible to connect into these corridors of nature and help animals as they move through our villages, towns and cities.

Example

In the image on the left (Figure 1) we see a mown grass field bounded by a native hedgerow and ditch on one side. This would be typical of what you might find on a rural school grounds. The hedgerow is the existing wildlife corridor. To bring more of the wildlife found along the



Figures 2 & 3: Hedge fingers connecting with existing hedge corridor, and using the idea to make a pattern

The meadow maker – yellow rattle



Yellow rattle in flower



Yellow rattle seed heads

The easiest way to make a meadow is to cut the grass as short as possible just once a year in September or October. Sprinkle the seeds of yellow rattle, a native Irish wildflower. Yellow rattle is able to weaken grasses by stealing water and nutrients from grasses through their special root. This provides an opportunity for wildflower seeds which lay dormant under the soil to germinate. Once sown, the maintenance of the meadow is to cut it once a year in September or October and remove all this material. Removal is important as wildflowers grow best in a poor soil and if left on to rot down fertility would increase over time. Each year, as the meadow develops, new species of wildflowers will appear and there is the

opportunity each autumn after cutting to introduce new wildflowers from the local area. These can be grown in pots by the children and planted into the meadow.

Activity – sowing the yellow rattle using dance or sport

Once the grass has been cut short, line the children at two metres apart with some yellow rattle seeds. Place a rope on the ground about five metres in front. Ask the children to slowly walk forward sprinkling the yellow rattle as evenly as possible. To ensure good contact with the soil play some sports with studded boots or arrange a welly boot dance when the soil is wet. This will get the seed in good contact with the soil.

hedgerow (such as frogs, hedgehogs bees and butterflies) into the school grounds, we can connect a new hedgerow using native trees and shrubs (Figures 2 and 3). To further increase wildlife we can allow a meadow to develop around this hedgerow and create a simple mown grass or gravelled path through this meadow and hedgerow to be able to fully enjoy and explore it.

Increase the variety of plants and animals by cutting some areas every two years!

Make it beautiful

Making a wildlife-friendly garden is not about just letting go and doing nothing. The space would, within a few years, become a mess and draw criticism. This is the fear one may have before embarking on such a project. It must be designed to be beautiful with access and education in mind and with a management plan to make it easy for all involved. Before embarking on such a project everyone from the school principal to the person

who maintains the grounds must understand what the benefits to both wildlife and the children are and be onboard.

PATRICK HUNT provides biodiversity and gardening workshops to schools and is a member of the Heritage in Schools panel of specialists. 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.

Subject

SESE (Geography)

SESE (Science)

Strand

Natural environment
Environmental care and awareness
Living things

Strand Unit

The local natural environment
Caring for my locality
Plants and animals

Growing at school



Starting this month, we at GIY will be providing step-by-step articles throughout the year to help *InTouch* readers create a school vegetable garden and teach students how to grow their own food. Today's article is all about how to set up your school garden.

Where to put your school garden

Put simply: if your school vegetable garden is to be successful you need to consider the three S's; sun, shelter and soil.

Sun: A shady vegetable patch is usually quite a sad and unproductive area. If you have a garden which is seasonally shaded (only in the shade for a month or two in mid-winter) then it would be possible to plant summer crops, avoiding any over-wintering crops. If, however, the garden is shaded for more than a month or two then it would not be a good place to grow vegetables.

Shelter: On our windy island plants also benefit from shelter, both from the gales that usually come from the south west and the cold easterly winds that so often hinder the growth of young plants in the early spring. It is easiest to choose a naturally sheltered spot, though it is important that any windbreak doesn't also cast shade. If this is not possible then a hedge can be planted or a fence erected.

Soil: Your vegetable plants shouldn't be competing with other plant's roots so you need to site it a good distance from trees and shrubs. This can be difficult if you need trees or a hedge for shelter, so try to strike a balance between the two. Depending on your location and garden conditions you can choose to grow directly into soil or in containers.

Raised Beds

Autumn is a great time to put in raised beds. If you get them built in the autumn and filled with soil and compost, you can cover them down for the rest of the winter so that they will be bursting with nutrients and ready for planting next spring.

A typical argument against raised beds is their cost. In reality you can spend as much or as little as you want. You can get your local garden centre to deliver the materials and topsoil needed, or you can make them yourself from old scaffolding planks or salvaged timber. You can also dig right into the soil and improve its quality over the winter months. Whatever approach you take can also make for a great project among the wider school community.

When it comes to the shape and look of your raised beds you can let your imagination run riot, but don't sacrifice functionality for aesthetics. The important

thing to remember is that you are not supposed to be walking on the soil at any point, so you must be able to reach in to the centre of the bed from the sides. A 1m wide bed is usually ideal. The beds should be a minimum of 25cm deep. Choose an area of an appropriately sized patch – not too small, with an inadequate area to grow what you want, but equally not too large for easy management in the time available. We recommend starting with four 1sqm beds if the space allows, and our following articles will give recommendations according to this plan.



Get started

Before you get to work, you should also check that the garden is easily accessible for pupils and staff. Ideally, it should be visible from the classroom or playground so that pupils and staff can keep an eye on progress and not forget about the jobs that will need doing. Whatever space, time or knowledge you have, make the most of the good weather now to get set up for the year ahead and let us support you each step of the way.

For step-by-step instructions on how to build raised beds, news of GIY's other school activities and access to great growing resources, visit <https://bit.ly/GrowAtSchool>.



Digital resources for the new school year



In the calendar year to date, we have had over 7,000 teachers access our online courses on digital technologies in teaching and learning. Many teachers, looking for support on how to teach remotely, accessed our 'Online Teaching' course (which is still available), while many others explored our other term-time courses looking to develop new skills and find tools to help them support pupils' learning during this challenging time.

One of the key skills involved in using digital technologies is knowing how and where to find high quality content. With that in mind, here is a reminder of three key resources for teaching, learning and assessment which are suitable for use in any classroom:

1. Scoilnet (www.scoilnet.ie)

Scoilnet contains thousands of resources, selected by Irish teachers and mapped to the primary curriculum.

Where to start:

- Select a topic you will be teaching this year, 3D shapes perhaps. Using the resource finder, select suitable resources for your class level and add each one to a 'Scoilnet Learning Path'. A Scoilnet Learning Path allows you to create a list of resources as one unique URL, which you can share with your pupils.
- Explore Scoilnet's themepages. These are very popular and contain suggested links in a collection around specific topics.

2. World Book Online (accessed via www.scoilnet.ie)

World Book Online is an authoritative and safe source of information for classroom work, homework and learning remotely.

Where to start?

- Access World Book Online, enter the Kids section and use the search bar to

select information on a topic. Try World War II. Explore the resources and assign articles to pupils and groups to explore independently. (The 'read aloud' setting is particularly useful for students with special educational needs).

- Select the 'For Educators' section on the Kids home page. Under Educator Tools explore Webquests. Webquests are a fun way of developing pupils' independent research skills.
- Did you know that World Book Online is now available as Gaeilge? Select any article and under Tools, translate the article to Irish (or another language!).

3. Webwise (www.webwise.ie)

Developing safe and responsible internet use skills among pupils has never been more important. Webwise is the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre and contains information, advice and free resources for teachers and parents on the topic of internet safety.

Where to start?

- Explore HTML Heroes and select a topic for your class. Try 'What Can I Trust Online' or 'Respectful Online

Communication'. Read the lessons and teacher instructions. Consider flipping the classroom by asking pupils to watch the videos at home before teaching the topic in class.

- Sign up for Safer Internet Day 2020 (www.saferinternetday.ie). Teaching HTML Heroes is a great first step for this.

Whatever resources you choose to support pupil learning this year, make sure you use trusted sources and content that is easily accessible by pupils.

For more resources and information check out www.pdst.ie and www.pdst.ie and the interactive digital learning framework at www.dlplanning.ie.

New online course!

During school closures we asked teachers on our online courses what areas they most needed support with. How to use digital technologies to provide formative assessment feedback to pupils came up frequently. We have now designed a short online course on this topic. The 'Digital Technologies for Assessment Feedback' online course will show you how to use digital technologies to provide formative feedback to pupils, including annotating images as well as providing text and audio feedback to pupils. The course is suitable for beginners and, together with several other online courses, is available for enrolment and access from 5 October via TeacherCPD.ie.

MADELEINE MURRAY, PDST Technology in Education

Let's all go on a bug hunt!



Science learning in the local environment

A lockdown legacy?

There has never been a better time to consider the benefits of spending time in the outdoors. An increase in time spent outdoors has been one of the silver linings of the otherwise black cloud that has been a global pandemic and nationwide lockdown. Preliminary findings from a study looking at play and learning in early childhood (Mary Immaculate College's PLEY study, May-June 2020, <https://tinyurl.com/y2mnqyzk>) showed that 74% of children surveyed are spending more time in outdoor play since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, with more than half

of these spending over two hours per day outside. Schools and teachers can capitalize on this trend.

We've been bitten by the learning outdoors bug

Our young children also report the many benefits of learning outside. For example, children who took part in the ParkLife Education Programme (<https://bit.ly/ParkLifeBelfast>) said they spent more time engaging with nature in their local parks, scored higher on knowledge questions about their local park and wildlife, were more connected to nature and rated their health and well-being as higher.

They also had more positive attitudes towards and awareness of environmental sustainability and had more positive attitudes to learning outdoors, compared with learning indoors.

It seems that when children start learning outdoors and adults spend more time outdoors, they are 'hooked' and want to do more of it! So how can we, as teachers, continue to support and nurture this love of learning and being outdoors and the many benefits it brings?

One way is to maximise the opportunities to use our science inquiry skills outside. Through close and detailed observation, we begin to notice, connect with and care about the world around us. Often, applying the scientific skills of detailed observation, accurate recording and rigorous analysis forms the basis for a deep connection and understanding. Drawing is a great way to record findings, because it demands time spent in close attention to detail.

Looking for more? *Wild Teaching*, by Paul O'Donnell (available from heritage@meathcoco.ie) is another great resource. This guide to cross-curricular outdoor lessons for every week of the year encourages us all to get outside and explore the science all around us.

Our young scientists have a valuable contribution to make to our knowledge and understanding of the environment. Spending time outdoors working as citizen scientists supports their learning and nurtures their holistic development and school grounds are an excellent place to start.

We're all going on a bug hunt – science skills in action

Bug hunts are now a staple part of many outdoor classroom activities and prove to be one of the most popular activities for children and teachers alike. Many schools have taken the awesome approach of surveying their schools grounds to see how 'pollinator friendly' they are. OPAL Bugs Count Survey is a great way to do this (<https://bit.ly/BugCount>). Children and teachers can then work together to improve the biodiversity of their school grounds and then retake the survey. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (<https://pollinators.ie/>) will give guidelines for how to make the space around your school more pollinator friendly.

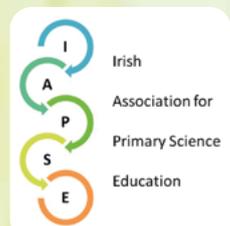
Start by going out and exploring the school grounds. What plants and animals are there already? What can be done to make them more pollinator friendly? There's no need for extensive grounds, even some pots will do. And leave a quiet corner to get a bit weedy. Not blessed with outside space at school? Maybe there's a pocket park within walking distance. Not sure what you're looking at? There are lots of resources available to help with identification (e.g. from www.opalexplornature.org, www.fieldstudies-council.org).

If you can't find the answer in your guide book or key, www.ispotnature.org is a global online scientific community that will help to identify plants and animals, and where you can upload and share your nature observations.

It's also really important for children to record and communicate their findings. It is through sharing our data that we become part of the wider scientific community. Why not upload your results to an online database, such as www.biodiversityireland.ie/? Even better, repeat your survey and observations at different times of the year, with different classes and in different corners of the school grounds to develop a whole school longitudinal inquiry!



DR SANDRA AUSTIN and DR KAREN KERR, Irish Association for Primary Science Education (IAPSE). IAPSE is an island-wide network committed to ensuring that children in primary school classrooms throughout the island of Ireland experience a rich learning environment that promotes a deep understanding of scientific concepts and the development of scientific skills. For more information on IAPSE, please visit Facebook: @IrishPriSci and follow on Twitter: @Irish_PriSci.



Cad í COGG?

Bunaíodh an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) in 2002 le tacaíocht a chur ar fáil do scoileanna Gaeltachta agus lán-Ghaeilge agus do theagasc na Gaeilge i scoileanna uile na tíre. Seo na tacaíochtaí a chuireann sí ar fáil:

- Comhairle a chur ar an Aire Oideachais agus ar an CNCM
- Soláthar acmhainní teagaisc
- Seirbhísí taca
- Taighde

Beidh plé san alt seo ar sholáthar acmhainní teagaisc.

Naonúr atá ag obair ar fhoireann COGG. Déanann COGG measúnú ar riachtanais an chórais ó thaobh áiseanna foghlama agus teagaisc, agus ansin comhoibríonn sí le foilsitheoirí oideachasúla le leaganacha Gaeilge de théacsleabhair agus d'áiseanna eile a chur ar fáil agus cuireann sí maoiniú ar fáil dóibh. Bíonn comhthionscadail idir lámha go leanúnach le CCEA agus leis an Áis na nGúm.

Ar an mbunachar sonraí, ar an suíomh idirlín www.cogg.ie tá cur síos ar bhreis agus 4,000 áis teagaisc atá ar fáil do theagasc trí Ghaeilge agus do theagasc na Gaeilge.

Tá cur síos freisin ar na háiseanna sa leabhrán áiseanna – *Oscail agus Léigh* – a ndéantar uasdátú air gach bliain.

Is liosta le háireamh iad na háiseanna atá ar fáil saor in aisce ar shuíomh COGG.

Spreag an Ghaeilge le Spraí – tá an pacáiste teagaisc seo ann chun an Ghaeilge a fhorbairt, a spreagadh agus a shaibhriú agus tá sé ar an bhfoilseachán is mó éilimh ag COGG. Tá leagan nua uasdátaithe den phacáiste ar fáil agus é ag teacht le Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile. Tá teanga ar leith a bhaineann le cumarsáid i dtimpeallacht na scoile agus tá sin leagtha amach sa lámhleabhar gur féidir a íoslódáil le ceachtanna chun an teanga sin a mhúineadh trí mheán cluichí. Tá nasc ar www.cogg.ie chuig an leabhrán agus chuig gearrthóga físe na gCluichí Clóis a bhaineann leis an bpacáiste.

Tá sraith de 50 póstaer ildaite, tairraingteach a dearadh i gcomhar le

Foinse ar fáil saor in aisce ar <https://bit.ly/SraithPóstaer>. Tá rogha leathan téamaí sna póstaer a bheadh an-úsáideach chun an Ghaeilge a theagasc tríd an gCur Chuige Cumarsáideach mar atá molta sa Churaclam; éascaíonn siad deiseanna chun ionchur, cleachtadh agus daingniú teanga a dhéanamh sna tréimhsí ceachta ar leith. Tá eiseamláirí teanga agus foclóra, chomh maith le seanfhocal léirithe ar gach póstaer – rud a chabhróidh go mór le teagasc, cleachtadh agus forbairt na Gaeilge.

Tá sraith eile póstaer a dhíríonn ar chruinneas Gaeilge agus ar na botúin is coitianta a dhéanann daltaí. Íoslódáil iad ón suíomh ag <https://bit.ly/BotúinCoitianta>. Tá siad maisithe le cartúin a léiríonn brí na teanga atá faoi chaibidil. Cabhraíonn na scafláil i bhfoirm leideanna pictiúrtha leis an tuisant. Tá nótaí don mhúinteoir ag bun gach póstaer le leideanna maidir le rialacha gramadaí ar choir aird a tharraingt orthu.

Is áis léamhthuisceana é *Taisce Tuisceana* a d'fhorbair CCEA i gcomhar le COGG agus is féidir é a íoslódáil ón suíomh ag www.cogg.ie/taisce-tuisceana/. Tá 5 phacáiste ar fad ann agus tá 25 tasc-chárta i ngach pacáiste. Tá réimse d'ábhair spreagúla sna pacáistí,

idir fhicsean agus neamhfhicsean, chomh maith le cineálacha éagsúla téacsanna ar nós dánta, scéalta, finscéalta, r-phoist, dialanna agus tuairiscí. Forbraíonn *Taisce Tuisceana* scileanna léamhthuisceana na bpáistí agus cuireann sé lena stór focal, agus tá sé oiriúnach don chianfhoghlaim freisin.

Treoir nua maidir le múineadh na Gramadaí is ea *Bain Súp As*. Tá moltaí ann don mhúinteoir, sraith ceachtanna, gníomhaíochtaí agus cluichí a fhorbroidh feasacht na bpáistí ar fhoirm na teanga le cruinneas teanga a shealbhú. www.cogg.ie/bain-sup-as/.

Is fiú, chomh maith, cuairt a thabhairt ar www.aisaonad.org www.leighleat.ie www.seideansi.ie agus www.ccea.org.uk/curriculum/gaeloideachas chun raon leathan áiseanna tacaíochta don Ghaeilge a fháil saor in aisce.

Níl anseo ach léargas beag ar an raon leathan áiseanna atá maoinithe ag COGG. Déan teagmháil le maire@cogg.ie le breis eolais nó comhairle a fháil maidir le háiseanna ar bith.

Lean COGG ar Twitter: [@AisTeagaiscCogg](https://twitter.com/AisTeagaiscCogg) agus [@CoggOid](https://twitter.com/CoggOid) nó ar Instagram: COGG Oideachas (@coggoid)

MÁIRE NIC AN RÍ, oifigeach bunscoile, COGG.



Reviews

A classic tale with a universal message

First published in 1985, Elizabeth Shaw's tale of a shepherd and his sheep appears like a modern-tale fable. There is one black sheep among a flock of white and this fact doesn't sit well with the sheep dog, who wishes for all the flock to be the same. Particularly relevant now more than ever, this book could work well in Irish classrooms at delivering a positive message concerning racism.

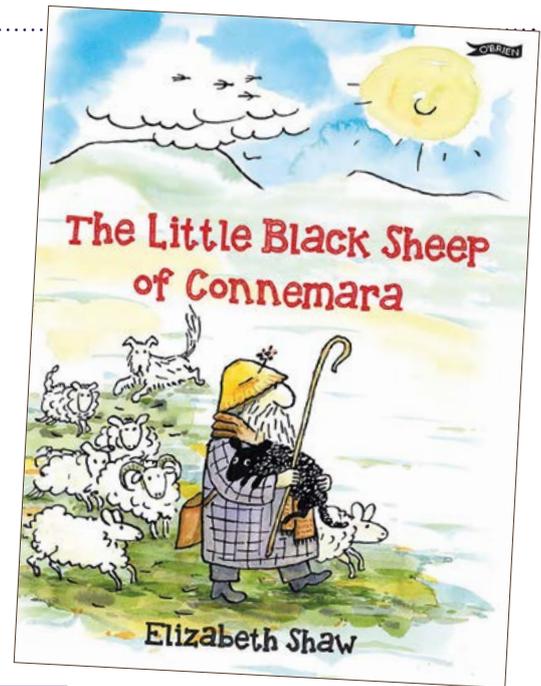
I would recommend this book as part of lessons on celebrating diversity and highlighting the negative effects of racism for any age group. The story and the illustrations will appeal to younger classes, while the veiled allegory will lead

to interesting discussion in older classes about the challenges of being different in society today.

The book also works well as a stimulus for oral language where the teacher wants to explore the story of wool and the job of a shepherd.

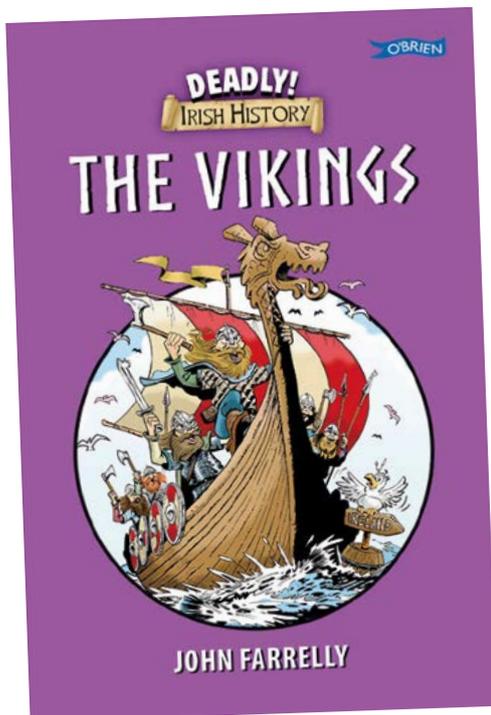
At a price of €9.99 it would be a great investment for any teacher, working as a resource for both English and ethics.

Publisher: O'Brien Press. ISBN: 9781788491792.



Reviewed by **STUART PURCELL**, Co Dublin.

Quirky lesson on Vikings



The Vikings is the first book in a new series of 'Deadly! Irish History' by the O'Brien Press. It is written and illustrated by the very talented John Farrelly. The author brings us on an exciting, entertaining and highly informative journey back in time to when the Vikings arrived in Ireland. We get an indepth insight into the adventures these fearsome warriors

embarked on. The book is packed full of fun quizzes, intriguing facts and clever illustrations about Viking life, which all keep the reader fully engaged. As well as this, the comic strip entries make a change from the typical style of book, as do the creative make and do ideas.

This book would be most suitable for use with third to sixth class pupils. It fits perfectly into the 'Early Peoples and Ancient Societies' strand in the history curriculum. Pupils will be learning about a significant part of history in a fun way – the best way to bring history alive!

This book would inspire the reader to explore the first Viking settlements in Ireland and to delve into the world of the Vikings even more. The book is well written in a humourous, quirky way, full of action and excitement! I thoroughly enjoyed this read and would highly recommend it.

Additional teaching resources can be accessed on www.obrien.ie. ISBN: 978-1-78849-103-7. Publisher: 2020 by O'Brien Press. Category: History. Cost: €8.99

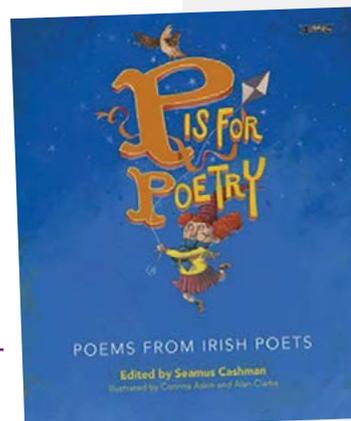
Reviewed by **ALICE HOLLAND**, Co Clare.

Eclectic collection of poetry

This is an exquisite collection of poetry edited by Seamus Cashman and illustrated beautifully by Corinna Askin and Alan Clarke. Poems range in topic from nursing homes and parental rows to bee-chasing, head lice and herons. Original, eclectic, engaging, and energetic; these poems will be read, reread, and loved by children, teachers, parents, and grandparents alike. There are contributions here from Seamus Heaney and Denis O Driscoll, Paula Meehan and Máire Mhac an tSaoi, Paul Muldoon and Frank McGuinness. As a lover of poetry and a teacher who loves to

teach poetry, this is a much anticipated and welcomed collection. Published by O'Brien Press. ISBN 978-1-78849-178-5. Cost: €12.99

Reviewed by **PAULA GALVIN**, Our Lady Queen of the Apostles NS, Dublin.



Where Teachers Borrow



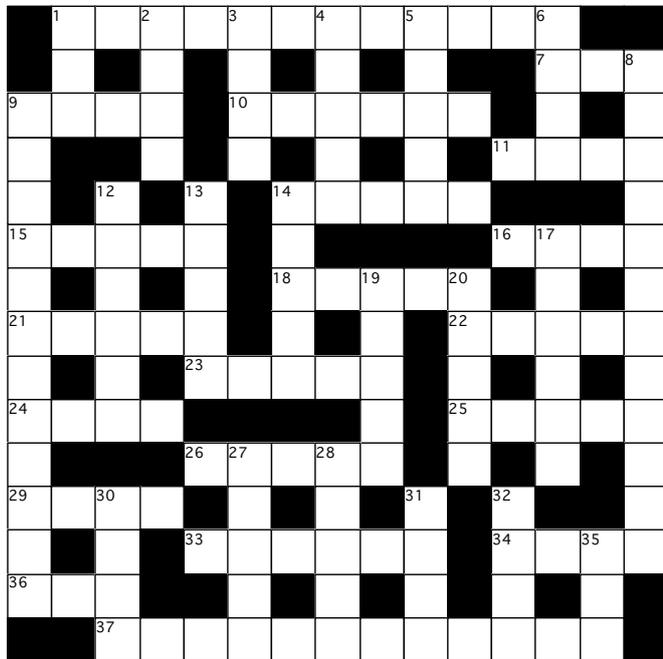
Comhar Linn
INTO Credit Union

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

Comhar Linn Draw winners will be announced in the October InTouch issue

Comhar Linn Crossword No. 208

A draw for 2 x €100 will be made from all correct entries. Simply complete the crossword and post to INTO, InTouch Crossword, 35 Parnell Square Dublin 2 or email it to : competitions@into.ie before Friday 2 Oct 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

1. He is found literally in the classroom. (12)
7. When sailing, a cat was his fancy! (3)
9. Securely close the marine mammal. (4)
10. Quietly, Mr Presley can identify a joint. (6)
11. Breaking stories from all directions. (4)
14. It's involved in the Highland Fling. (5)
15. The nook is pleasant (hot inside). (5)
16. To firm up like this is quite an achievement! (4)
18. Country that comes back to help Northern Ireland. (5)
21. Head under this, traditionally, in France! (5)
22. SO that's where the car was registered! (5)
23. Yes, I expect lorry drivers initially to give way. (5)
24. A jewel for Mr. Walsh. (4)
25. She sang the 'Skyfall' theme with some mad elegance. (5)
26. Stone found at the entrance to a field. (5)
29. Greek hero found in a soccer club in Amsterdam. (4)
33. See 8 down.
34. Being neat, it returns to the outskirts of Derry. (4)
36. Didn't you even start creating a colorant? (3)
37. Inattentive and forgetful, being inclined to play truant? (6-6)

Down

1. Bring Susan to court. (3)
2. Sounds like the entire perforation. (4)
3. Nothing works? Oh, sorry! (4)
4. Here in the Mediterranean, Mother embraces a lieutenant. (5)
5. Piece of bread a golfer tries to avoid. (5)
6. Empire of rare old military Etruscan origins. (4)
- 8 & 33a. Mislaidd items awaiting recovery here? Try pro pilots' coffee for a change. (4,8,6)
9. Bairns ranted about a big dog. (5,7)
12. This beetle may mark a sailor. (6)
- 13 & 14. Legal misdemeanours upset pretty mice. (5,5)
- 17 & 28d. If you can't identify him from this much of a clue, should you ask for more? (6,5)
19. City in Kansas to avoid? (5)
20. Give the fool a character to evaluate. (5)
27. It's a bad mistake to place the fishing-tackle to the East. (5)
28. See 17 down.
30. District that is part of peninsular East Africa. (4)
31. This fairy is ripe for confusion. (4)
32. Here, horses are bred to kick up dust. (4)
35. It's how one performed, whichever way you look at it. (3)

Gordius – In Touch No. 207 June 2020 solutions

Across

1. Barbed wire
6. Meal
10. Shift
11. Screaming
12. Escapes
15. Water polo
17. Asti
18. Coal
19. Cello
21. Cassock
23. Opera
24. Knot
25. Poem
26. Laser
28. Affable
33. Olfactory nerve
35. Toad
36. Compressed

Down

1. Bass clef
2. Reinstate
3. Extra
4. Waste
5. Rory
7. Evict
8. Lager louts
9. Gatwick
13. Puma
14. Satsuma
16. School's out
20. Landlords
21. Caprice
27. Sofia
29. Fry-up
30. Annie
32. Feud

Winners of Comhar Linn InTouch Crossword No. 207:

will be announced in the October InTouch issue due to publication deadlines preceding crossword deadlines

Winners of Comhar Linn InTouch Crossword No. 206:

Carmel Tansey, Dublin 3 and Maire Weitzman, Co. Westmeath

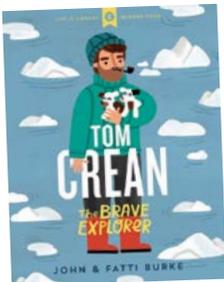
Each month, Children's Books Ireland recommend a book of the month for primary pupils



Children's Books Ireland recommended read – September

Tom Crean: The Brave Explorer

Written by John Burke. Illustrated by Fatti Burke. Gill Books, February 2020. Hardback, 32 pages, €9.99. ISBN 9780717186563.



This book tells the story of the life of Tom Crean who, as a teenager, ran away from his home farm in Kerry for a life of world travel and adventure. Tom led a fascinating life and managed to join the famous polar adventures of Robert Scott and Ernest Shackleton.

Author John and illustrator Fatti Burke are the talented team behind award-winning smash hits like *Irelandopedia* and *Historopedia*. This is their fourth book in the Little Library Series. John does a great job of delivering the facts about Tom's journeys and keeps the balance with insights into the man's life and character. The book clearly shows Tom's spirit of adventure, his curiosity and companionship. He comes across as a nice guy who is often lauded by his shipmates for keeping their spirits up during the long, arduous and often tragic adventures.

If you have seen Fatti's illustrations in previous books you know what to expect here. Big, bold, flat shapes showing dynamic moments from the exploration of the South Pole. Her style makes the adventure very accessible for ages 5–8. This book succeeds in bringing this man's adventures to life and would be a great starting point for a class project. (Non-fiction, Age 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.



portal for irish education
lárshuíomh oideachais na héireann



Star site



CREHANA NS, CARRICK-ON-SUIR, CO WATERFORD
<https://crehanans.com/>
This is a typical school website with all the usual expected pieces of content. During the school closure period, the school community maintained a very active page for home activities for their pupils. Check out the Masterpiece Challenge.

ONES TO WATCH



POETRY ARCHIVE
<https://poetryarchive.org/>
A database-centered website with over 500 poets and 2,000 poems to explore.

STEP UP TO SECONDARY SCHOOL
<https://stepup.ie/>
Resources to help parents and pupils with the transition to secondary education.

THE IRISH FLAG
www.scoilnet.ie/irishflag/
Website created during the 1916 centenary celebrations to tell the story of the Irish tricolor.



Top 10

The most viewed resources on Scoilnet over the summer.

- 1

PROFESSOR SMARTT'S GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSE
<https://tinyurl.com/y3v2369q>
Slides, worksheets and activities around our solar system.
- 2

BBC – VIKINGS
<https://tinyurl.com/y2j28uc7>
From the BBC Bitesize websites – explores many aspects of Viking life.
- 3

THE STORY OF ENERGY
<https://tinyurl.com/y5ffrfu5>
Short Irish-made video explaining where energy comes from and how it is turned into electricity..
- 4

BBC – EGYPTIANS
<https://tinyurl.com/3wrlc>
BBC's resources on Ancient Egypt – pyramids, pharaohs and much more.
- 5

SEA AND SEASIDE
<https://preview.tinyurl.com/yxvttsj8>
Scoilnet collection of resources around summer seaside.
- 6

VICTORIANS – KEY FIGURES
<https://tinyurl.com/yxtrcxwc>
Short biographical notes on the major personalities of the period.
- 7

MONEY – SHOPPING WORKSHEET
<https://tinyurl.com/t4f6gpf>
Worksheet encourages pupils to look at and use a sample price list from a fruit shop to solve problems.
- 8

THE NEW SEVEN WONDERS
<http://www.panoramas.dk/7-wonders/>
A panoramic adventure of the new Wonders of the World.
- 9

BIA – BOSCA LÓIN
<https://tinyurl.com/y5qwqqfe>
Seo cur i láthair PDF le focail don téama bosca lóin.
- 10

DK – THE SOLAR SYSTEM
<https://tinyurl.com/y6b7kgqk>
The solar system is displayed in a lovely visual whereby pupils can click on any planet in the solar system to gain a deeper insight into the planet.