

# ACCS Continuous Professional Programme 2023/2024

ACCS Briefing for Boards of Management &  
School Leaders – December 2023

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Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools  
Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheacha

# Action Required: Zoom Software Lifecycle Policy

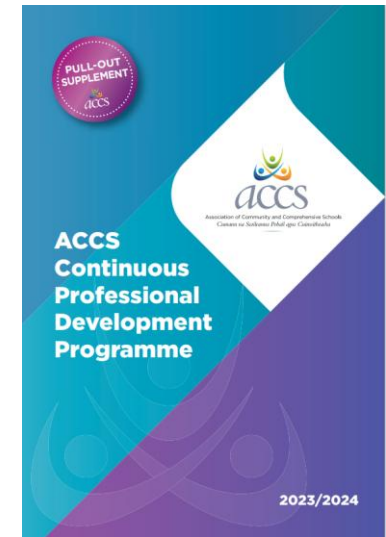
- Zoom will be enforcing a new minimum version requirement from **the 24th of February 2024**
- This means is that Zoom will not allow users running older versions of Zoom to connect to their servers and that all users should ensure that they have the latest, or at least a later, version of Zoom installed before 24/2
- You need to be running **version 5.14.5 or higher**. ACCS recommends always keeping Zoom up-to-date to take advantage of security updates and application enhancements. The current version of Zoom is 5.16.10
- If you think you might be running an older version of Zoom, or you're not sure how to check which version you are using, or you're not sure how to update contact [dcahill@accs.ie](mailto:dcahill@accs.ie) – I have step by step guides for version checking and updating for Windows, macOS, Android and iOS

# ACCS: CPD Schedule promoting a consistency of approach in governance matters across its member schools...

**Governance in Schools:** Individual BOM Training available – *contact Elaine in ACCS Head Office*

**ACCS Education Sub Committee Webinar** - Tuesday 16th January from 4.00pm to 5.00pm - *Success Criteria and Formative Assessment in the Junior Cycle Classroom.*

**Training for Finance Sub-Committees** – Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January from 7.00pm to 8.00pm (FSSU)



# Take One Programme

- **Proposed dates for 2024:**
  - **7<sup>th</sup> , 8<sup>th</sup> , 20<sup>th</sup> /22<sup>nd</sup> February**
  - **5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> March**
    - Applicants will be offered an alternative, if preferred dates are fully subscribed.
    - Additional dates subject to demand in late March/April
- Separate one-off initial training induction
- Online at 4pm for approximately 80 minutes.
- The session must be attended by Principal/ Deputy Principal
- There is some capacity for whole-school engagement where appropriate.
- All resources and supports available in Irish and English.

Ref: This is a Department of Education funded and endorsed programme, aligned to Priority Area 2 in the Department of Education Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030.

( Priority Area 2 : Transforming Learning Environments. - Objective 2.1: Develop and Support Leadership for ESD.)



The poster for the Take 1 Programme features a large number '1' on the left side, with the Sustainable Development Goals icons integrated into its shape. To the right of the '1', the text reads: 'Take 1 Programme' in a bold font, followed by the tagline 'Every Student - Every Subject - Every Class'. Below this, it states: 'The Take 1 Programme aims to support schools to communicate, raise awareness of, and embed Education for Sustainable Development in learning and teaching across the curriculum'. Further down, it explains that the programme focuses on embedding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in learning and teaching, supporting senior, middle, and teacher leaders. A section titled 'The Take 1 Programme' lists three bullet points: 'Provides professional learning opportunities to engage with and understand Education for Sustainable Development', 'Explores opportunities to link formal, non-formal and extra-curricular activities to the achievement of the Global Goals', and 'Supports the inclusion of ESD as part of school policy and wellbeing'. A 'Training includes' section lists: 'Background and introduction to Education for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals', 'Mapping ESD to subject learning outcomes', 'Aligning ESD engagement with Looking at Our School 2022 and School Self Evaluation', 'School Sustainability Policy Statement', and 'Learning in action - opportunities to share and showcase learning'. At the bottom, it provides contact information for Valérie at take1programmeoutlook.com and notes that the programme is funded by the Department of Education. Social media handles for Twitter, Facebook, and the website are also listed.

# Free schoolbooks & classroom resources for junior cycle pupils

Many post primary schools now have Book Rental Schemes in place – Guidelines for developing textbook rental schemes - January 2013.

DE proposes to increase the per capita book grant to schools for students in junior cycle years.

Payment of grant will be based on September 2023 validated enrolments.

Developing schools can provide projected September 2024 enrolment data, and if shows an increase from September 2023, a “top up” book grant payment will issue.

Schools will continue to have autonomy to choose books and resources that meet curricular requirements.

While it is envisaged the funding can be used to purchase eBooks it cannot be used to purchase digital devices for students.



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# Redeployment Stats

## REDEPLOYMENT STATISTICS 2023

	Requested	Refused	Allowed	Withdrawn
Reviews	3	3	0	0
Appeals	1	1	0	0
Ward - Invalid applications	1	0	0	1

### APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

	Compulsory	Voluntary Accepted	Total Redeployed	Voluntary Refused	Total Processed
Surplus	1	0	1	0	1
Ward	1	0	1	0	1
Amalgamations	0	9	9	3	12
Pilot	0	19	19	4	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>37</b>

Amalgamations - no offer	25
Pilots - no offer	76

From	To	Secondary	C&C	ETB	Total
Secondary		16	3	4	23
C & C		2	1	0	3
ETB		1	0	3	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>

Schools that had not previously received a redeployed teacher	
Secondary	7
C&C	0
ETB	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

# Inspectorate Briefing

- Inspection updates to schools include child friendly versions and are accompanied by video. School Leaders are asked to share this with students in schools. New 1 page feedback graphic to be introduced in **Subject Inspections** at post primary level from next year.
- **Gathering data on Experiences of Transitions:** (Incidental Inspections) – January to June 2023 – **Sample 20 PP schools**. AIM: to provide a report and guidance for schools in relation to transitions. (P-PP, JC- TY, TY-SC) Good practices, supports and school experiences. *Martin Whyte*
- **Evaluation of HSCL in 2024:** **Sample 15 PP schools** , 2 day in-school evaluation of work of school level support. AIM: Findings will be used to inform ongoing development of DEIS.
- **L2LP evaluations Sample 40 PP schools:** AIM: Composite Report with focus on appropriate placement of students, quality of T&L and student experience, programming and planning of courses for students
- **Summer Programme 2023** Report due soon.

# Anti Bullying Procedures – Bí Cinealta

- January 2024
- Focus on key areas for preventing and addressing bullying in schools – prevention, support, oversight and community/environment of schools.
- Revised definition of Bullying – targeted behaviour in person/online – reference of an imbalance of power in relationships. A once off incident shared multiple times may now qualify as bullying.
- When bullying becomes a CP concern – a number of considerations are outlined in the new procedures.
- Cyber, Gender and minority group type bullying now included -suggestions on how a school can prevent same.
- Training will be rolled out by OIDE in early 2024.
- In the first half of next year inspections will focus on development of new policy rather than oversight and reporting.





Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission

# Orals and Examination Schedules

- **S84/23** sets out initial details of the arrangements for 2024 including timing. 2024 Leaving Certificate Oral examinations will be delivered during the first week of the Easter Holidays pending the completion of the review of the timing of the Oral examinations by the State Examinations Commission. (Schedule of dates – Appendix 1)
- The 2024 Leaving Certificate Music Practical Performance Tests will again be held in school term after the Easter holidays. A separate circular will issue in relation to Music examinations for 2024 giving operational details of the examinations and recruitment details for examiners.
- Written examinations – timetables issued to schools
- JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT 2023 - 18<sup>th</sup> December - **23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024**

# Teacher Supply

ACCS Meeting scheduled in January (ACCS Head Office)

- DE Officials
- Turas Abhaile
- Selection of C & C Schools invited to attend.



# Share of pp special classes as of today

Special classes v share of schools				
School type	Total Number of Special Classes per Management Body	% Share of special classes	Number of Schools Nationwide	% of Total Number of Schools Nationwide
C&C	156	18%	96	13%
ETB	362	42%	247	33%
Voluntary Secondary	352	40%	403	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Share of new special classes for 23/24

Share of new special classes in 23/24			
School type	Total Number of Special Classes for 23/24	% Share of special classes	% of Total Number of Schools Nationwide
C&C	26	20%	13%
ETB	46	35%	33%
Voluntary Secondary	61	46%	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

# NCSE/DE target lists – recap on 23/24

Year	No. of schools targeted to establish new special class	No. of new special classes targeted	Actual no. of targeted schools that delivered new special class	Actual no. of new special classes delivered by targeted schools	Total no. of new special classes established	% contribution of target list to total actual new special classes established
2023	161	180	87	97	133	72%

- Dept. and NCSE regional meetings in late 2022/ early 2023 agreed a list of 161 post-primary schools to target to open special classes for Sept '23.
- 97 new classes being established in 87 of these schools. 97 out of 134 new post-primary classes – 72% of all new classes from the target list. A good start. Connections made for '24 and beyond also.
- School management body support from January '23 meetings onwards was key to this progress as well

# Target post-primary list for 24/25

- Dept. and NCSE meetings over recent months - agreed a list of 247 post-primary schools to target to open special classes for Sept '24.
- A large number, but looking to begin groundwork for Sept '25 and beyond also
- Estimate an approx. 150 special classes needed at post-primary for Sept '24.
- Focusing on larger towns in SPAs. Attempt to share the load in these towns.
- Tight timelines for delivery of modular and need to focus on maximising existing capacity in schools as much as is possible.

# Getting to an avg 4 classes per school

Journey to get to avg 4 classes per school			
School type	Target based on 4 classes per school	Number of classes today	Balance
C&C	384	156	228
ETB	988	362	626
Voluntary Secondary	1612	352	1260
<b>Total</b>	<b>2984</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>2114</b>

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# Health and Safety Updates

- Additional FAQ questions :
  - *What insurance is required for Erasmus+ teaching assistants?*
  - *A group from our school is travelling aboard to a school in Europe on a foreign exchange programme. What indemnity and risk management considerations should be considered?*
  - *Our school is seeking to introduce Community Dog Therapy. Is this covered if the dog is fully trained and supervised by a qualified handler at all times?*
- NIMS
- Work Positive Pilot
- Health and Safety Visits – Kilrush CS and Pobalscoil Neasain



# Key dates: Job-Sharing, Career Break & Secondment

## Teachers:

- Applications for job-sharing & career breaks (including an extension) by **1<sup>st</sup> February** for the 2024/25 school year
- BOM required to issue a written notice of approval or refusal by **1<sup>st</sup> March**
- Applications for secondment (initial or extension) must be returned to the Department by **1<sup>st</sup> May for Department approval**

## Special Needs Assistants:

- Applications for job-sharing & career breaks (including an extension) by **1<sup>st</sup> March** for the 2024/25 school year
- BOM required to issue a written notice of approval or refusal by **31<sup>st</sup> March or in the case of a career break 1<sup>st</sup> April**

Teachers/SNAs not permitted to withdraw their application after 14<sup>th</sup> April or from when the replacement teacher's contact has been signed whichever happens first.

## Note:

Guidance on drafting a Job-Sharing, Career Break and Secondment Policy available in HR section on ACCS website.

A detailed Info Bulletin will issue in early January.

# Covid Leave and HSE portal

Information Note TC/IN 0004/2023 states that:

- In the event that the HSE portal is no longer available, a screenshot of the positive test result is acceptable, as evidence of the positive test result.

See below the full relevant paragraph:

- *Application and Recording Procedure for COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay 4.1 In line with paragraph 2.5 of Circular 0038/2022, an employee who begins to display COVID-19 symptoms or who has received a positive COVID-19 antigen/PCR test result must **complete the Application Form at Appendix A of the Circular**, to apply for COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay. 4.2 The employee who receives a positive COVID-19 antigen test result must currently report this result on the HSE portal. The employee must provide their employer with confirmation of this HSE record, as supporting evidence (screenshot of relevant HSE text message is acceptable as evidence), including the test date. **In the event that the HSE portal is no longer available, a screenshot of the positive test result is acceptable, as evidence of the positive test result.***

Reminder re: Statutory Sick Leave:

Effective from 1 January 2024, employers are obliged to pay the **first 5 days of certified sick leave per calendar year**

The daily sick pay payment amount is 70% of the employees normal daily pay up to a maximum of €110 per day.

# Domestic Violence Leave

## New statutory entitlement to Domestic Violence Leave:

- Introduced by the Work Life Balance & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 and a statutory entitlement to 5 school days domestic violence leave in any period of 12 consecutive months commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023.
- Circular Letter 59/2023 (teachers) & 60/2023 (SNAs) published and provides guidance on who can avail of this leave. Note: this leave is available for all employees.
- A policy and procedure needs to be put in place to manage disclosures of domestic violence and abuse.
- The entitlement to this leave extends to an employee where the employee or relevant person has experienced in the past or is currently experiencing domestic violence.

# Purpose: Domestic Violence Leave

A teacher/SNA, who is a victim of domestic violence, or a teacher/SNA, who is assisting a relevant person (as defined in paragraph 2.1), is entitled to apply for Domestic Violence Leave for the following reasons:

- Seek medical attention
- Obtain services from a victim service organisation
- Obtain psychological or other professional counselling
- Relocate
- Seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner or the Gardai
- Obtain a protection order
- Seek or obtain any relevant services

# Domestic Violence Leave

## Notice:

The approval of the employer must be sought for Domestic Violence Leave.

A teacher/SNA who avails of Domestic Violence Leave is required to complete the Application Form attached to the Circular letter. The Application Form should be completed and submitted to the employer, as soon as is reasonably practicable prior to or after availing of such leave.

The employee is not required to provide evidence in support of their application.

The employer must maintain a record of the domestic violence leave.

The need for confidentiality must be maintained.

A substitute may be appointed.

## Guidance documents/supports available:

- Circular Letters 59/2023 & 60/2023
- **Women's Aid** has published guidance and various support materials on a new website which is run in conjunction with the Department of Children:
  - [www: dvatwork.ie](http://www.dvatwork.ie)
- Employee Assistance Service available through *Spectrum.Life*
- The DE intends developing a template policy for the education sector to support and guide schools in responding to a disclosure of domestic violence leave and abuse.

# SNA Workforce: Focus Groups for Principals & Deputy Principals



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

## Focus group | principals and deputy principals

Your voice is important to help develop the first  
SNA Workforce Development Plan.

"We want  
to hear  
from you"

Please register to attend one of these  
focus groups\*:

Education Centre	Dates	Times
Dublin West	Wednesday, 17 January 2024	10am or 1.30pm
Carrick on Shannon	Thursday, 18 January 2024	10am or 1.30pm
Navan	Monday, 22 January 2024	10am or 1.30pm
Waterford	Friday, 26 January 2024	10am or 1.30pm
Limerick	Monday, 29 January 2024	10am or 1.30pm
Athlone	Friday, 2 February 2024	10am or 1.30pm

\*Please note only one representative per school permitted.

To register, see

[Gov.ie/SNAWDU](https://www.gov.ie/snawdu)

Or scan here



Places are limited and  
will be allocated on a first  
come first served basis.

### About the SNA Workforce Development Plan

The department recently announced the development of the SNA Workforce Development Plan, which will provide a strategic approach to policy development and will bring clarity and direction to the SNA service.

### Purpose of the focus group

Principals and deputy principals are invited to attend a series of in-person focus groups that will be held at six Education Centres nationwide. There will be two focus groups per location, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

The information from these groups will help inform policy in the SNA Workforce Development Plan.

# Arrangements for the payment of Ancillary Services Grants (including SSSF) to schools that are due to have grants revised

## Grant reduction arrangements for the remainder of 2023.

Schools provided the Department with details of the salaries they paid to grant funded secretaries that transferred to the Department's payroll from September. This information is now being used to reduce the balance of the 2023 ancillary related grant funding that will be paid this month. Below is a summary of the arrangement.

Calculation of balancing grants	Primary Schools	Voluntary Secondary Schools	Community & Comprehensive Schools
<b>Grant remaining to be paid</b>	Balance of Ancillary grant 8/12ths paid in April 2023 i.e. 4/12ths of the annual grant is now being paid	September instalment of the SSSF, Basic Secretary and SSSF Secretary Grants	November instalment of the SSSF Grant
<b>Less</b>	(Annual grant funded salary + Employers PRSI provided by schools to the Department for those Secretaries that transferred to a Department Payroll in September 2023) <sup>1</sup> ÷ 12 months x 4 months		

**Note 1:** Details of these salaries were included in a recent communication issued by the Department's Payroll Division regarding the salary arrears payable to schools for the 2022/23 school year. Any queries in relation to these salaries should be addressed to the Department as advised in that communication.

