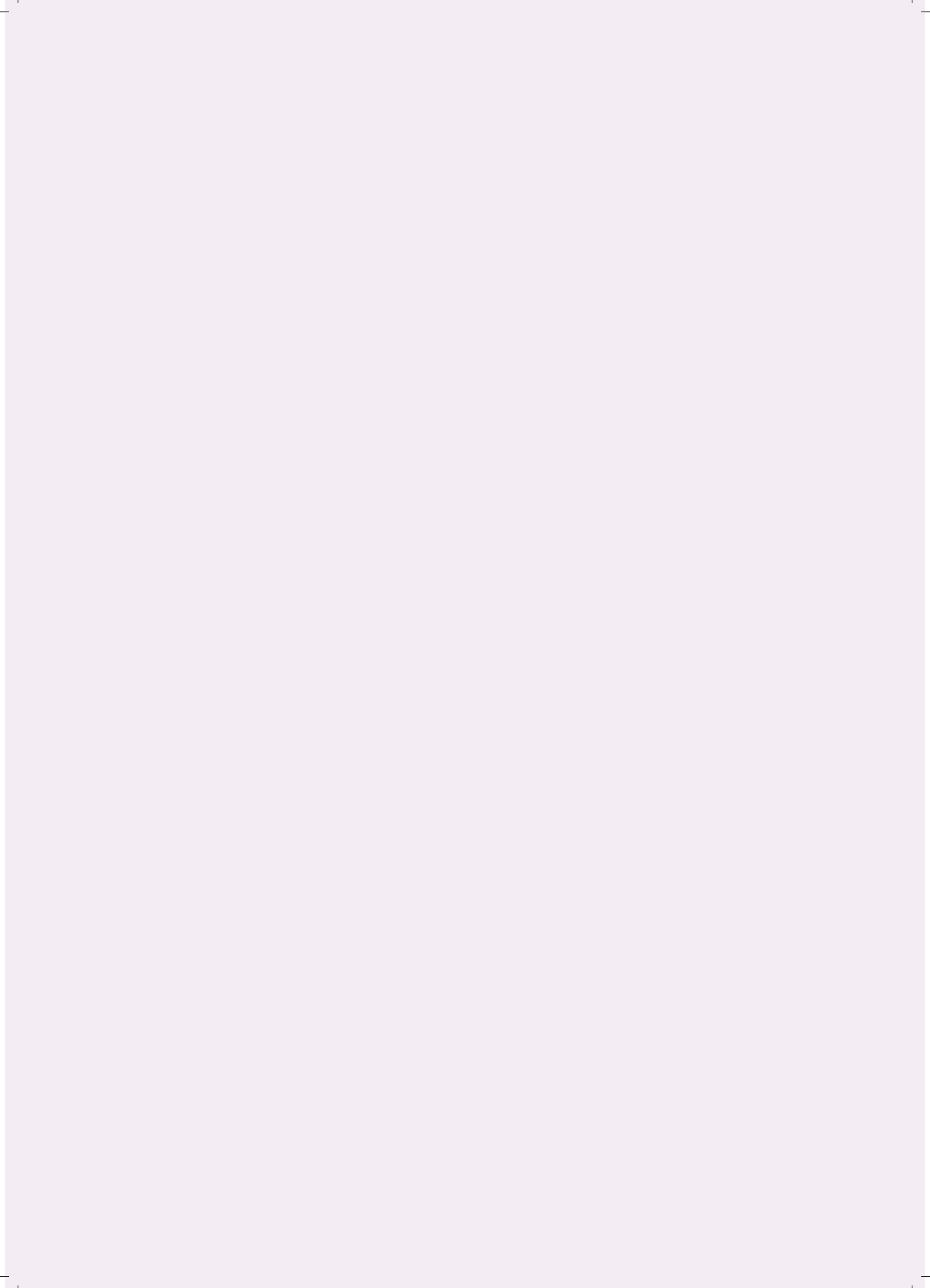




# CPSMA Guide for Chairpersons of Boards of Management in Catholic Schools

CPSMA 2023





# Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	Introduction to Your Role as Chairperson	2
<b>Chapter 2</b>	The Roles of Patron and Chairperson	4
<b>Chapter 3</b>	Support for you as Chairperson	6
<b>Chapter 4</b>	Relationships in the School	9
<b>Chapter 5</b>	An Introduction to Ethos	13
<b>Chapter 6</b>	The Board as an Employer	16
<b>Chapter 7</b>	Chairing the Board Meeting	23



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction to your role as Chairperson



Welcome to the CPSMA Guide for Chairpersons of Boards of Management of Catholic Schools. We are delighted to present this comprehensive guide to support and empower individuals who have generously taken on the voluntary role of chairperson in our Catholic primary schools.

As a chairperson, you play a vital role in the governance and leadership of our schools, ensuring that our Catholic ethos is upheld, and that the highest standards of education and pastoral care are provided to our students. Your commitment and dedication to this role are greatly appreciated, as you contribute to the spiritual, academic, and personal development of our young learners.

This Guide has been specifically designed to provide you with the necessary tools, resources, and guidance to effectively fulfil your responsibilities as a chairperson. Whether you are new to this role or have previous experience, this Guide will serve as a valuable reference, offering insights, best practices, and practical advice to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities that come with leading a Catholic primary school.

Within these pages, you will find information on various aspects of your role, including governance structures, legal obligations, financial management, communication strategies, and fostering strong relationships with stakeholders. Additionally, we have included sections on promoting the Catholic ethos, supporting staff and students, and ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment for all.

It is important to note that this Guide is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather a flexible resource that can be adapted to suit the specific needs and circumstances of your school. We encourage you to use it as a starting point, tailoring the information and strategies to align with the unique characteristics and challenges of your school community.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all chairpersons who have embraced this voluntary role, selflessly dedicating their time, skills, and passion to the betterment of our Catholic primary schools. Your commitment to fostering a nurturing and faith-filled environment is invaluable and we hope that this Guide will serve as a valuable companion on your journey.

May this Guide empower you, inspire you, and provide you with the knowledge and confidence to lead your school community with wisdom, compassion, and a steadfast commitment to our Catholic values.

Thank you for your service, and may God bless you abundantly in your role as a Chairperson of a Catholic primary school.

**Anne Fay**  
**Chairperson**  
**CPSMA**  
**Chair@cpsma.ie**

## Some Testimonials from Chairpersons

*"I was delighted when asked to act as chairperson of our local school. Having spent so many years benefitting from the local community, I decided it was time to give something back. I have really enjoyed my time. Our board has learned on the job, but the support from parents, staff, the diocesan education office and CPSMA has been amazing."*

*"I was a parent nominee on our board, offering a parent's perspective on issues that came before the board. Following a change in our diocese, I was asked to chair the board. My children are no longer attending the primary school, but I love being involved."*

*"Táim i mo chathaoirleach ar scoil sa ghaeltacht. Táim ann chun tacaíocht a thabhairt don phríomhoide agus do fhoireann na scoile. Is ról lárnach é. Bíonn timpeall cúig cruinniú againn sa bhliain.  
Bainim an-taitneamh as an bpost. Is obair dheonach é."*

*"I am so proud of my community and our school. As chairperson, I have an opportunity to help, in a very practical way, to make our school a vibrant and happy heart of our community".*



# Chapter 2

## The Roles of Patron and Chairperson

### Who is the patron of your school?

The Bishop is the patron of each school in the diocese and has ultimate responsibility for that school. The Bishop directly appoints the chairperson and approves the appointment of members of the board of management in the school.

### What is your role in relation to the patron?

Section 15(1) of The Education Act 1998 states that:

*“It shall be the duty of the board to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.”*



**This means that when you are appointed chairperson of a school, you represent the patron in overseeing the management of that school.**

Section 15 (2)(b) of the Education Act 1998 states that the board of management:

*“Shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school...”*



**This means that the board is responsible to the patron for upholding the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school. In your school, this is a Catholic ethos.**

### When are you required to liaise with your patron?

Liaising between the patron and the school will be part of your role as correspondent of the board of management. In addition to having overall responsibility, the patron has specific roles in school governance, including the following:

- The patron has ultimate responsibility for the composition of your board and the approval or sanction of the appointment of its members.
- The patron is responsible for the nomination of independent assessors to sit on interview boards, (which include you and your school principal), for the recruitment of teachers and special needs assistants in your school, for promotional posts and for the prior approval of any such appointments.
- The annual certified school accounts are required by circular to be sent to the patron.

- The patron must approve the school’s admission policy and any alterations to it.
- The patron/trustee is the owner of most school buildings and lands and patron/trustee approval is required in advance of contractual arrangements or work commencing in respect of any alterations to school buildings or premises.
- The use of your school premises by any third-party group requires a licence to be in place and this must be approved by the patron/trustees. Boards need to be vigilant about the renewal of such arrangements. An important document to consult is the Department of Education’s [‘Guidelines on the use of School Buildings outside of School Hours’](#).
- Your school’s child safeguarding statement requires the approval of the patron. The annual review of this statement and the school’s anti-bullying policy must be notified to the patron. There are templates for the review of safeguarding statement and anti-bullying review, which are available on [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie)



**In summary, there are a number of specific occasions when the board will formally liaise with the patron, generally through the Diocesan Office.**

## What is your role as chairperson of the board?

[The Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023-2027](#) outlines your role as chairperson, which includes chairing the board of management and ensuring that the board carries out its duties in managing the school on behalf of the patron. These duties include the following:

- Upholding and promoting the Catholic ethos of the school; Chapter 5 contains further information in relation to the Catholic ethos.
- Acting as chairperson on interview boards for the recruitment of staff and entering contracts with new employees; Chapter 6 contains further information on recruitment.
- Chairing board of management meetings; Chapter 7 contains further information on board meetings.
- Acting as correspondent for the board of management. The principal is the correspondent for day-to-day school matters and as chairperson, you are the correspondent for board matters.
- Ensuring that appropriate and effective governance procedures and protocols, as specified in circulars and legislation, are operating within the school.
- Certifying school returns, such as the on-line claims system (OLCS) to the Department of Education and other statutory organisations as required.
- Liaising with fellow board members and representing the patron at school and community level.



# Chapter 3

## Support for you as Chairperson

The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) provides support to you as chairperson of your board of management and to your school principal. CPSMA is an association of boards of management for Catholic primary and special schools in Ireland, which actively promotes primary and special schools at national, provincial, diocesan and local levels and makes representation to the Department of Education on their behalf.



### CPSMA Support

- CPSMA education advisors are available to you and your school principal to discuss matters arising in the school. Call 01-6292462 or email [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie).
- The CPSMA App and website [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie) contain guidance, webinars and podcasts for boards of management. Template contracts, letters of offer and supports on a range of topics are available there also for members.
- The CPSMA Newsletter will be emailed to you and your school on a regular basis. Please forward it to your board of management members. If you do not receive the newsletter, please contact CPSMA on **01-6292462** or email [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie).
- CPSMA also provides training workshops for chairpersons and board members.





Please call or email CPSMA to check that you are set up to access the CPSMA Website, App, Newsletter and other CPSMA communications.

## Diocesan Support

Your patron provides support to the primary schools in your diocese. This is normally provided via the Diocesan Secretary for primary education, who may organise meetings and training events. Contact details for your Diocesan Secretary are contained in Appendix 1 to this Guide.

You should contact your Diocesan Secretary in the following cases:

- When there is a vacancy for a teacher in the school, including principal or deputy.
- When an independent assessor is required to form part of an interview board for the recruitment of staff in the school.
- When the prior written approval of the patron is required for an appointment following the recruitment of a principal, deputy principal, teacher or SNA for the school.
- In many cases, the Diocesan Secretary is also the panel operator for the Teacher Redeployment Scheme for primary schools. This is explained further in Chapter 6.
- Vetting of non-teaching school personnel is facilitated through your diocese and your Diocesan Secretary will advise you of this process, when required. Teachers are vetted through the Teaching Council.
- The Diocesan Secretary and the Patron should be informed of any school matter that may attract public interest e.g., a court case or a workplace relations commission case.
- The Diocesan Secretary should be your first point of contact in relation to matters that require the Patron's consideration or consent, e.g., use of school buildings.

**“When a local group requested the hire of our school hall, I contacted our Diocesan Secretary and received the information my board needed to guide us through the process. In the end, the Patron, the school and the local group were all happy with the licence agreement that was put in place. We are now discussing an extension of the licence and I will contact the Diocesan Secretary again.”**

## Parish Support

It can be useful to be aware of any neighbouring schools and the names of their chairpersons and principals.

The local clergy will be of support to you and your school, particularly in relation to the Catholic ethos of your school.

## Department of Education Support

The Department of Education publishes circulars, information notes and general guidance documents for schools on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

The Inspectorate is the division of the Department of Education responsible for the evaluation of primary and post-primary schools. Inspectors also provide advice on a range of educational issues to school communities.

Some useful documents are listed below and can be accessed on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

[Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023-2027](#)

[Department of Education Circulars \(www.education.ie\)](http://www.education.ie)

[Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Primary and Special Schools](#)

[The Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools](#)

[Guidelines on the Use of School Buildings outside of School Hours](#)



# Chapter 4

## Relationships in the School

### The chairperson and the school principal

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.”  
(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

At the core of your role is the relationship you build with the school principal. An open, supportive, collegial relationship will allow you and your school principal to guide the school towards achieving its vision.

It is important from the outset that you and the principal have a conversation around your respective roles, to help establish a professional relationship based on trust and mutual respect. An effective working relationship with the principal allows you to act as a critical friend, offering support, advice and encouragement as required. Investing time and effort in this relationship will result in effective school governance and culture.



**The relationships within any school community are key indicators of success. The rapport you have with your principal is one of the most important relationships in the school.**

CPSMA education advisors are available to both chairperson and principals jointly or individually. When carrying out your role as chairperson, you are encouraged to avail of CPSMA services, including telephone support. This can be obtained by calling CPSMA on [01-6292462](tel:01-6292462) or by emailing [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie)

### The chairperson and pupils in the school

As chairperson, you do not have a specific role in engaging with the pupils of the school. However, you may have occasion to visit the school during the school year and for this reason, it is advisable that you are vetted in accordance with the Children First Guidelines and the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement.



## The chairperson and staff members

The board of management is the employer of all staff within the school.

A positive relationship with staff members benefits the school, staff members and ultimately, the pupils in your school.

When visiting the school, it is beneficial for you to meet with staff members, to offer your affirmation and support. During these visits, you can familiarise yourself with the work of the school in general terms. Your attendance at school events, such as the celebration of the sacraments, school concerts or fundraising events, presents an opportunity to meet with staff members socially.

As chairperson, you may also become involved in the resolution of grievances and complaints from staff members. Chapter 6 refers to the relevant procedures and it is important to adhere to them when dealing with complaints or grievances.

Remember that CPSMA is available to both you and your principal to advise and guide you and you can call **01-6292462** or email [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie) for assistance in this regard.



**Dealing with a grievance or complaint can be challenging at times, so don't hesitate to get help. CPSMA is here to support you.**

## The chairperson and board members

Although board members may have come to the board by different “routes” (e.g., nominated by either parents, teachers, the patron or the wider community), they do not sit on the board representing any single group. Instead, their role and function is to bring their various perspectives and viewpoints to the decision-making process within the board of management. The following example highlights this aspect of board membership:

**“As a teacher nominee on the board of management, I was approached by a teacher to raise a matter at the next board meeting. I contacted our Chairperson and asked for the item to be included in our agenda. This worked well, as we had time to consider the points raised as a board and the Chairperson then responded to the teacher on behalf of the board.”**

[The Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023-2027](#) describes the roles of chairperson, secretary and treasurer on the board of management. Other roles that may be considered for board members could include:

- liaising with the parish pastoral council
- liaising with the parents association
- health and safety

Regardless of roles assumed, it is important that the board of management members understand that the board operates as a unit (or a corporate entity) and that decisions are made by all members of the board, who together share responsibility for the school.



As chairperson, it is an important part of your role to ensure that, in so far as possible, your board members feel valued and that each of their opinions is sought at board meetings.

It is advisable that a separate email account be set up for you in your role as chairperson, to ensure that data relating to school matters is kept separately and securely. You might consider [chairperson@stpaulsschool.ie](mailto:chairperson@stpaulsschool.ie) or a similar type of email address.

## The chairperson and parents in the school

The board delegates the day-to-day management of the school to the principal. This means that, when parents contact you as chairperson, for the most part, you refer them back to the school or the school principal, to deal with their concerns.



Day to day school management is carried out by the principal on behalf of the board. If you are unsure as to whether a matter is for you or for the principal to deal with, give CPSMA a call to discuss. Sometimes, a concern may best be dealt with by the principal as part of the day-to-day school management.

A complaint from a parent may take the form of a phone call or letter to you or to a member of your board. It is important where possible, that regardless of the means of communication, the parent is referred back to the school, to have their complaint dealt with by the class teacher or school principal as appropriate.

There is a [Parental Complaints Procedure](#) agreed between CPSMA and INTO, which consists of a staged approach to the resolution of complaints from parents. CPSMA will advise you on the steps to take to comply with these procedures.

Sometimes, it can be helpful for you, as chairperson, to explain the stages of the [Parental Complaints Procedure](#) to parents who contact you with a concern. While this initial explanation is not a stage in the procedures, the time and attention that you give to a concerned parent, explaining the process, can often be really helpful in resolving a problem.

Remember, CPSMA is here to support you and welcomes contact from you as chairperson, when you are trying to resolve a problem or deal with a concern. You can call CPSMA on 01- 6292462 or email at [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie)



# Chapter 5

## An Introduction to Ethos

### What does 'ethos' mean in terms of a school?

There are many differing definitions of 'ethos' but perhaps the simplest way to think of 'ethos' is as the 'way things are done in a school' and the experiences that pupils, staff, board members and parents have, as they partake in the daily life of the school.

### What is your role in upholding the ethos of a school?

As chairperson, you have been appointed by the Bishop of the diocese, who is depending on you and the other board members to work with the principal, the staff and the parents, to ensure that the school remains faithful to its Catholic ethos or characteristic spirit.

### What makes a school a Catholic school?

- Jesus Christ is at the heart of a Catholic school.
- The mission and objectives of a Catholic school will be based on Gospel values, respect for each individual and the common good.
- A Catholic school is rooted in the parish community. It tries every day to be a community of faith, hope and love for everyone who walks through its door.
- A Catholic school is inclusive and welcomes children of every faith and those who have a different way of living in the world.
- In a Catholic school, the dignity of every person is respected, as it is understood that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. This understanding influences every action and interaction.

### Why is a Catholic school important to its community?

- For generations, Catholic primary schools have been central to the religious, cultural, sporting, and artistic life of their local communities.
- They have done this while also adopting developments in educational philosophies and ways of teaching, in ways of managing schools and technological advances.
- They are living educational communities of faith, serving children, their families, and their communities every school day in every parish in the country.
- They inspire and reflect the local communities they serve and they constantly respond to the challenges and changes in their communities.
- The core values of a Catholic educational ethos, the holistic development of the whole person, remains a constant commitment in this ever-evolving world.

## What is the ethos of a Catholic school?

- A Catholic school promotes the holistic development of each child (intellectual, physical, cultural, moral, and spiritual), including not only a healthy relationship with themselves, other people, and the rest of creation, but centres these relationships in a living relationship with God. The view of education is not secular but values a religious and faith dimension. It promotes not only the good of the individual, but the good of local, national, and global society.
- A Catholic school is inspired by the teachings, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Getting to know Him means getting to know what it means to be human and what God is like. The school does not only talk about this – the pupils, staff and parents experience this philosophy every day, especially in the quality of their relationships in the school environment.
- A Catholic school uses the Patron’s Grow in Love programme to provide religious education as part of the normal day. This helps the children to understand their family faith tradition and the religious tradition and beliefs of others. This programme is developed from [‘The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland’](#) which forms the core tenets of religious education in Ireland. However, the ethos of the school is not confined to the use of the Patron’s programme. Instead, the ethos of the school is the lens through which the whole education experience and the entire primary curriculum is taught.
- A Catholic school proposes a life of faith to all pupils within its care, but never imposes the school’s faith or ethos on any pupil or family. Catholic schools are sensitive to those of differing faiths and as part of the Universal Church, are welcoming and open to all.
- A Catholic school sees faith formation as part of its core mission. Prayer is a fundamental part of the school day. It allows pupils to begin to develop a relationship with the personal God, so that they can come to further their relationship with God.
- A Catholic school assists in the preparation for the sacraments in collaboration with the home and parish. In the case of each sacrament, this is a faith nurturing process, designed to bring the children into relationship with God and deepen their understanding of a life of faith and their role within the Church.
- A Catholic school will often be named after a saint whose feast day is celebrated. Religious symbols are evident in the school and there is a ‘sacred space’ in each classroom. Key religious feasts such as Christmas and Easter are celebrated in a Christian manner. Catholic schools are involved in work for social justice and caring for the environment.
- In a Catholic school, masses and prayer services are held throughout each year.

## How can you support your school’s Catholic ethos?

The Catholic ethos of your school is best regarded as a living thing to be nurtured. Supporting and strengthening the ethos of the school is an important part of your role.

Three useful resource documents for the board are:

- [‘Understanding and Living the Ethos of the Catholic Primary School’](#)
- [CPSMA Checklist: ‘Living Our Ethos - How are we doing?’ \(Appendix 2\)](#)
- [CPSMA Video: ‘Living our Ethos – How are we doing?’](#)

These resources contain practical suggestions to ensure that ethos is kept on the agenda and central to the work of the board. The following suggestions may also help:

- Prayer is the way that a relationship with God is deepened. It is an integral part of the day in a Catholic school. Board of management meetings should begin and/or end with a prayer. (A sample of prayers for board meetings are contained in Appendix 3). You might like to include a copy of the prayer on the agenda.
- When setting the agenda for board meetings, ensure that ethos is listed as an item on the agenda. The principal or teacher nominee could be invited to update the board on how ethos is being lived in the school. This update might include:
  - The themes of school assemblies
  - The activities for Catholic Schools Week Recent
  - liturgical celebrations
  - Ongoing sacramental preparation and celebration
  - Plans for how the school will be celebrating the liturgical year
  - School activities to help those who are in need
- The board may consider how to resource prayer spaces in the school and how the school could make its ethos more visible in symbols and art.
- The board should ensure that all discussions about school policies give due consideration as to how they reflect the school's ethos or characteristic spirit.
- Board members should be given a copy of the school's mission statement, which would normally be displayed prominently within the school. This could be reviewed by board members at a board meeting and by staff at a staff meeting.
- The board could review the religious education policy of the school. If such a policy is not yet in place, the board could begin the process of developing one.





# Chapter 6

## The Board as an Employer



As chairperson of the board, you are not expected to have an in-depth knowledge of employment matters. You will of course bring your own knowledge and experience to the role, but the key message here is to avail of the support of CPSMA when required.

### Employment

The board has a responsibility to ensure that it complies with employment law and that school employees are afforded their legal entitlements. Legislation and circulars govern many aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment, contracts, leave entitlements and health, safety and welfare at work.

CPSMA offers management support to you and to your board of management as an employer. From time to time, legal advice may be required by your school and when this is necessary, you should contact CPSMA and your school insurer, always ensuring that you have spoken to your insurers prior to obtaining legal advice.

‘Gioraíonn beirt bóthar’ or ‘Two shorten the road’. So, when dealing with employment matters, you should avail of the resources on the CPSMA website [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie) and contact CPSMA on 01-6292462 or [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie)

### Recruitment

Recruitment procedures are set out in Departmental circulars and they promote fairness and transparency in staff appointments. It is important to check the up-to-date circulars when embarking on a recruitment process.

As stated earlier, it is advisable to have a specific email address such as [chair@stpauls.ie](mailto:chair@stpauls.ie) for your work as chairperson. In addition, it is necessary for the school to establish a separate email address in respect of applications for a vacant position in the school.

As chairperson, you will generally chair the interview and selection processes for the recruitment of staff in the school.

CPSMA is available to guide you through the relevant recruitment processes, but there are a few pointers below which may be helpful to you:

- **Establishing whether there is a vacancy in the school**

It is important to check firstly that your school has a vacancy to advertise. You will need to check with your Diocesan Secretary whether your board is required to engage with either (a) the Main Redeployment Panel for teachers (b) the Supplementary Redeployment panel for teachers or (c) the Supplementary Assignment Panel for the recruitment of Special Needs Assistants.

Sometimes a teacher on the staff may have an entitlement to a post in the school because of a contract of indefinite duration (CID). If so, they may be offered the position without interview.

When inviting applicants to interview, a copy of the [Schedule for Catholic Schools](#) (contained at Appendix 4) should be included, together with the criteria for assessment at interview.

You can contact CPSMA at the start of a recruitment process, if you are unsure about any of these matters.

- **Chairing the interview board**

As chairperson, you will be the chair of the interview boards when recruiting. In circumstances where this is not feasible (as determined by your Patron), the Patron will appoint a replacement chairperson for the recruitment process.

- **Appointment of independent assessor(s)**

Having established that a vacancy exists and that a recruitment process is required, you, as chairperson, should advise your Diocesan Secretary of the vacancy and ask that an independent assessor be appointed, to join you and your school principal on the interview board for the recruitment process.

- **Certificate to teach Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools**

When recruiting teachers, you should ensure that the requirement to have a recognised 'Certificate to Teach Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools' is stipulated clearly in your advertisement and that the successful candidate has the required certificate. For further details in this regard, you should refer to the latest edition of the document [entitled 'Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools on the island of Ireland'](#). The current edition is contained in Appendix 5 to this Guide.

- **Patron approval of appointments**

The prior written approval of the patron is required for the appointment of the successful candidate and you should contact your Diocesan Secretary before appointing the successful candidate to your school.

- **Vetting**

In order to comply with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Acts 2012 to 2016) and associated circulars, all successful candidates must be vetted, prior to taking up a position in the school.

Teachers are vetted through the Teaching Council and their vetting status will need to be checked prior to their appointment to your school. Non-teaching staff are vetted through the diocese and the Diocesan Secretary will advise on this.

A Statutory Declaration and Form of Undertaking must also be completed and provided to the board, prior to making a teaching or non-teaching appointment.

- **Medical**

Newly appointed candidates need to complete a pre-employment medical questionnaire and to have their fitness confirmed before they take up a post in the school. For further details, you should refer to the ['Occupational Health Service for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants, Standard Operating Procedures Manual'](#).

Staff returning from a leave of absence of over two years are also required to have their fitness confirmed, before they resume their post in the school. You can contact Medmark for advice on this or any related area, informally or otherwise.

- **Contracts**

The CPSMA website contains a series of short webinars on the different stages of the recruitment process and also contains checklists to assist at each stage. Template contracts and letters of offer and checklists for these documents are available (as Béarla agus as Gaeilge) in the Appointment Section on

All contracts of employment or letters of offer should include the following clause:

*“This school has a Catholic ethos. You will be required to uphold and be accountable to the board of management for upholding the ethos, which is determined by the patron.”*

- **Disclosure of interest**

All board members and interview board members, (including you, as chairperson) are required to make a disclosure to the board, (or the interview board, as appropriate), if they have a potential conflict of interest. This arises not only in the case of a family relationship with a candidate in a recruitment process, but also in respect of any relationship with a candidate, which could potentially affect that member’s impartiality in relation to the appointment process in any way.

[The Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023-2027](#) and the relevant recruitment circulars gives guidance on conflict of interest. CPSMA education advisors can advise you on how to navigate this potentially difficult area.

- **Discrimination**

Care must be taken to ensure that no element of the recruitment process, from advertisement to interview, could lead to discrimination on the grounds set out in [Section 6\(2\) of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015](#) i.e. gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling Community. If a concern arises in this area, please contact CPSMA.

- **Request for feedback from unsuccessful candidates**

Candidates are entitled to request the marks from their interview and a copy of any notes taken by members of the interview board in relation to their interview. Guidance can be sought from CPSMA when responding to such requests.

- **Sanction of appointment by board**

References must be checked by the interview board before you recommend a candidate to your board of management. A formal report from the interview board is required by your board of management in order to sanction an appointment. The board is required to approve the candidate proposed by the interview board, unless it has good and sufficient reason not to do so and such reason was not known to the interview board. In the rare situation where this arises, the matter will be referred to the patron, who will make the final decision.

- **Appointment Forms**

You should ensure that an appropriate contract is put in place with the successful candidate and that the chairperson’s declaration on the official Appointment Form is completed, confirming that the board has fulfilled its statutory and non-statutory obligations in relation to the appointment. Appointment Forms for the current school year are available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

- **Recruitment of ancillary staff**

There are no specific procedures set down for the recruitment of caretakers, secretaries, bus escorts or cleaners. However, CPSMA recommends that boards of management use the recruitment procedure for SNAs (as currently set out in [Circular 0051/2019](#)), as a model of good practice, when recruiting ancillary staff.



A mini checklist of the stages involved in teacher recruitment is included in Appendix 6. More detailed guidance is available on [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie). CPSMA advisors are available to guide you through the recruitment procedures.

- **Circulars**

The current circular governing the recruitment and promotion of teachers is:

[Circular 0044/2019 Recruitment/Promotion and Leadership for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary Schools.](#)

The current circulars governing the recruitment of special needs assistants are:

[Circular 0051/2019 Recruitment and Appointment Procedures for Special Needs Assistants.](#)

and

[Circular 0026/2023 Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants Supplemental Assignment Arrangements for the 2023/2024 school year.](#)

## Grievance and disciplinary procedures



Where a matter relating to staff requires to be dealt with, by either you or your board, it is advisable to contact CPSMA for advice.

On the rare occasion when legal advice is required, you should contact your school insurers before obtaining legal advice.

The board delegates the day-to-day management of the school to the principal. This means that if staff members contact you with a complaint, it is important that, for the most part, you refer them to the school principal, to deal with their concern.

[The Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations](#) documents are a set of documents governing disputes with teachers, which have been agreed between CPSMA and INTO. They consist of a staged approach to the resolution of disputes. CPSMA can advise you on the appropriate steps to take to ensure that such disputes are dealt with in a fair and transparent manner and in accordance with the procedures.

Sometimes, it can be helpful for you, as Chairperson, to explain the processes involved in the [Working Together Procedures](#) to staff members who contact you with a concern or complaint. While this initial explanation is not regarded as a stage in the procedures, the time and attention given by you to a concerned member of staff, where you explain the procedures to them, can often assist in resolving matters.

[Circulars 0049/2018](#) and [0071/2011](#) concern staff discipline. They also contain a staged approach, which is usually resolved at an early stage between the principal and staff member.

## Data Protection

Schools collect personal data in relation to pupils, parents, staff members, board members and others who engage with the school from time to time (e.g., substitute staff, prospective pupils, parents, and contractors) These people have certain rights under Irish and European data protection law.

The board of management is responsible for communicating, implementing, monitoring, auditing and reviewing the school's data protection policy and procedures. It is also part of the role of the board as an employer.

Schools, as data controllers, should ensure that data is collected fairly and is kept accurately, up to date and for lawful purposes only. The data should not be used or disclosed in any manner incompatible with those purposes. All board minutes and other school records and data must be maintained in compliance with data protection legislation.

Sometimes, a data access request is made to the school and CPSMA can assist the school with its obligations in this regard.

## Health, Safety and Welfare

Your board of management, as an employer, is responsible for ensuring as far as reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare at work of its employees and of those who are in any way affected by the work activities of the school (including pupils, teachers, parents, contractors, substitute teachers etc.).

Everybody in the school has a role to play in ensuring good safety, health and welfare within the school. However, preparing a health, safety and welfare policy, carrying out written risk assessments and reporting certain types of accidents are all functions of your board and you need to be sure that these matters are being attended to.

Advice and guidance on health and safety, including webinars and resources are available on the CPSMA website [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie). In addition, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and your school insurers also provide advice and support to school boards on these matters. Please see [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) and [www.allianz.ie](http://www.allianz.ie)



A good starting point here is to have a look at the HSA online course “Managing Health, Safety and Welfare in Schools”. It takes just 30 minutes. Check out [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie) for additional supports, webinars and resource materials.



# Chapter 7

## Chairing the Board Meeting

### General information about board meetings

The board meeting is where the main business of the board is carried out.

At least five meetings should be held each year, with at least one meeting per term. Generally, an hour to an hour and a half should suffice for a meeting. If something is going to be particularly time-consuming, you, as chairperson, may call a further meeting, to discuss that item in more detail. The dates of meetings should ideally be planned in advance with board members.

Online meetings can be useful on occasion. The chairperson should ensure that appropriate measures are in place to satisfy data protection and confidentiality requirements. Guidance is available on [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie) in this regard. Please note that the Child Protection Oversight Report (discussed on page 23) may not be given at on-line meetings. For this reason, boards should meet in person at least once per term in order to comply with their obligations under child protection procedures.

Members require at least seven days' notice of a meeting (except in the case of an emergency board meeting). The notice should be sent together with the proposed agenda. These documents do not generally contain anything confidential and are suitable to be sent to members by email.

The rule is that at least 50% of the number of board members plus one is required to attend each board meeting as a quorum. For boards with eight members, this means that five people are required to be in attendance for the duration of each meeting.

If having received the agenda, a board member realises that they have a conflict of interest in relation to any item on the agenda, they should alert you to this fact and you will then arrange with them to leave the board meeting, when the relevant item is being discussed. It would be usual therefore to deal with this item at the end of a board meeting. If it is the only item on the agenda, the member should not attend.

A conflict of interest arises where a board member has a relationship with an item on the agenda, which might affect their unbiased judgment in relation to that item. It is not limited to recruitment but may arise in relation to services or works being provided to the school. Any conflict of interest should be declared to the board. If you, as chairperson, have such a conflict of interest, this also needs to be declared to the board members, who may elect an acting chairperson from among themselves for that item or meeting.

No person having a conflict of interest in relation to an item on the agenda should be present for the board's discussion of that item.

[The Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023-2027](#) contains the rules of operation for boards of management, which include the rules on confidentiality and conflict of interest and you should ensure that each board member has a copy of this manual.



5 meetings per year  
7 days' notice  
5 members for a quorum

## Agenda

Generally, you and your school principal will meet in advance to draw up the agenda for the board meeting. A board member may also request that an item be listed on the agenda. This request would have to be submitted in a timely manner and be deemed by you to be an appropriate matter for the board to discuss. A sample agenda for a board of management meeting is included in Appendix 7.

## Opening Prayer and Ethos

Board of management meetings should begin with a prayer. This presents a good opportunity to focus on why you are all meeting, and on the way you hope to deal with agenda items in relation to the children, staff and the school community.

Ethos will often be a topic on its own at a board meeting or may form part of the principal's report. This would be when sacramental preparation or ways of keeping the spirit and ethos of the school alive are discussed.

## Minutes

The draft minutes of the previous meeting should be generally read out at the beginning of the meeting and any agreed changes can be made to them. The minutes should then be signed by you as Chairperson. Draft minutes should not be circulated.

The minutes should record the attendance at the meeting and note the apologies from those not attending. Details of discussions held at board meetings should not be recorded. Instead, the decisions made and actions to be taken should be noted, without the specific details of who was in favour of or against any particular course of action. Where a conflict of interest is declared, this should be minuted, as should the absence of any member from any part of the meeting.

The minutes are the property of the board. They should be kept in the school and stored in a secure manner. Minutes should be made available to the patron/ trustees and the Department of Education on request. Sample board minutes are contained in Appendix 8.



**Minutes are a confidential record of the decisions made at a meeting and should not contain surplus information about individual members opinions on any topic.**

## Correspondence

Not all correspondence is required to be read out at a board meeting. The following are some examples of types of correspondence you should consider in advance:

If a letter is received from a solicitor regarding an accident at school, this can be read out to the board, but should not be replied to without advice. If a solicitor's letter is received by the board, you should contact the school's insurers, who will advise on the appropriate response, which may require legal advice. It is important that the school's insurers are contacted prior to legal advice being obtained.

If the board receives an anonymous letter, it should not be read out at the board meeting. If it relates to a child protection or a bullying issue, it should be dealt with by you or the principal, in accordance with the relevant child protection or bullying procedures. CPSMA will advise on the appropriate procedures if required.

If the board receives a letter of complaint from a parent or staff member, it should be dealt with in accordance with the correct procedure for this complaint. No details of the complaint should be shared with the board at this stage, although board members may be informed that a letter of complaint has been received and that it will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate complaints procedure.

Sometimes a letter of complaint is given by a parent to individual board members to bring to the attention of the board. Board members should hand any such letters to you, to be dealt with in accordance with the correct complaints procedure. These letters should not be read out or discussed in any way by the board.

**“As a parent nominee, on the board of management, I was handed a letter by a parent, who was concerned that their child was being bullied. When I raised the matter at the board meeting, the chairperson explained that there is a staged procedure for dealing with complaints from parents which include the parent talking to the class teacher, then the principal and eventually the chairperson.**

**The chairperson explained that because of these procedures, the letter would not be read out to the board and that he would contact the parent to explain the next steps. The parent was happy when they were contacted by the chairperson.”**

## Financial Report

The Governance Manual 2023-2027 sets out the role and responsibilities of the treasurer. The treasurer’s report should be presented at each board meeting. This is where the board members might discuss upcoming significant expenditure or proposed spending on a particular item. Balances of accounts are given here, together with grant updates and any relevant guidance from the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU).

Boards of management are required to submit their annual accounts to the FSSU via their school accountant, who must first certify the accounts and then submit them in February of each year to the FSSU. The accounts are also required to be submitted to patron.

Boards are required to register as charities and the Charities Regulator must be updated, whenever a change in board membership arises.



Ring CPSMA on **01-6292462** or email **info@cpsma.ie** with your financial queries.

FSSU can also be contacted directly at **primary@fssu.ie** or on **01-9104020**.



## Principal's Report

This is where the principal reports on the day-to-day life and functioning of the school. It is generally the substantive part of a board meeting. The principal reports to the board on a wide range of issues that vary according to the time of year, including enrolments, school events, curricular emphasis, innovations, communications with parents, school self-evaluation, school calendar, policies, upcoming CPD for staff, leave applications, training and anything arising of which the board should be aware.

A sample Principal's Report is contained in Appendix 9.

## Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR)

[The Department of Education Child Protection Procedures \(Revised 2023\)](#) provide that the Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) must be presented by the principal at every face-to-face meeting of the board of management. This report updates the board on the number of reports made and advices sought from the Child and Family Agency (Tusla), since the last board meeting. The principal also reports on bullying in the school. There may be documentation submitted with the CPOR for the board to review, solely for the purpose of its oversight of the reporting requirements set out in the above procedures.

There will be specific child protection training for boards. Currently, the CPSMA website has four webinars relating to child protection procedures, which may be of assistance to your board. These can be accessed at [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie)



**There should never be discussion of child protection allegations or concerns at a board meeting. Where there are allegations of a child protection nature against members of staff, please contact CPSMA.**

## School Plan/Policies

The board should refer to the [Looking at our Schools 2022](#) document when setting the priorities for the school each year. These form part of the School Plan. The board then decides on the policies necessary to implement the School Plan. Each policy could be regarded as a chapter of the book which is School Plan.

Ideally, the work of the board in this regard should be spaced evenly throughout the year. A Department of Education School Self-Evaluation Report: Legislative and Regulatory Checklist (Primary), is contained in Appendix 10. This will assist the board of management in carrying out its leadership and management responsibilities and functions, as set out in the Education Act 1998, within the context of own school.

## Staffing Issues

Staff appointments must be ratified at a board of management meeting. Ratification involves the board confirming the work of the interview board in the recruitment process. It is important to remember that appointments to teaching and SNA positions require the prior written approval of the patron.

## Health and Safety

Health, Safety and Welfare should be kept on the agenda for each meeting.

## Agreed Report

The Governance Manual 2023-2027 stipulates that the board should decide at the end of each board meeting on the information to be disclosed to the school community and on the manner in which this information is to be communicated. This information will form the Agreed Report on the board meeting.

No information of a sensitive or confidential nature should form part of this report. Everything, other than what is contained in the Agreed Report, should remain strictly confidential to the board and any breach of this confidentiality obligation may require notification to the Patron.



Many schools prepare a newsletter for parents, based on the principal's report, which gives details of the day-to-day life in the school and any upcoming events. This may be sent to parents and/or published on the school website. This supports good communication between the school, parents and the wider school community.



# Tips for chairing board meetings

- **Begin and end each meeting on time.**
- **At the start of each meeting, remind members about confidentiality and any conflict of interest arising in relation to items on the agenda.**
- **Read the minutes of the last meeting. Have them proposed and seconded and if adopted, sign them as chairperson.**
- **Follow the agenda.**
- **Ensure that each board member is asked for their opinion during the meeting.**
- **Ensure that discussions are conducted respectfully through you, as chairperson.**
- **Focus the discussion on the decision that needs to be made. If further information is required, postpone the decision till this is available.**
- **Try to reach decisions by consensus. Use your casting vote as chairperson only when needed.**
- **Remind board members that once a decision is made, it is a decision of the board and should be supported, despite the views of individual members.**
- **Remind board members that there should not be further discussion between any of them about an item on the agenda, except at a board meeting.**
- **Aim to create a relaxed atmosphere at board meetings, enabling members to partake fully in discussions and make good decisions, in the best interests of the school.**



# Appendices

- Appendix 1:** Diocesan Contact Details
- Appendix 2:** Living Our Ethos - How Are We Doing?
- Appendix 3:** Sample Prayers for Board Meeting
- Appendix 4:** Schedule of a Catholic School
- Appendix 5:** Recognition to Teach Catholic Religious Education in a Catholic Primary School
- Appendix 6:** Recruitment Stages Checklist
- Appendix 7:** Sample Agenda for Board Meeting
- Appendix 8:** Sample Minutes of Board Meeting
- Appendix 9:** Sample Principal's Report for Board Meeting
- Appendix 10:** School Self-Evaluation Report: Legislative and Regulatory Checklist (Primary)

# Appendix 1

## Diocesan Contact Details

	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Contact Email</b>
1	<b>Achonry</b>	mhenry@achonrydiocese.org
2	<b>Ardagh &amp; Clonmacnois</b>	educationsec@ardaghdiocese.org
3	<b>Armagh</b>	armaghedu@gmail.com
4	<b>Cashel &amp; Emlly</b>	frjohnokeefe@hotmail.com
5	<b>Clonfert</b>	clonfertedsec@gmail.com
6	<b>Clogher</b>	cpsma@clogherparishes.ie
7	<b>Cloyne</b>	educloyne@gmail.com
8	<b>Cork &amp; Ross</b>	education@corkandross.org secretary@corkandross.org
9	<b>Derry</b>	pnd7889@gmail.com
10	<b>Dublin</b>	declanlawlor@dublindiocese.ie
11	<b>Elphin</b>	christymchugh2@gmail.com
12	<b>Ferns</b>	fernsted@gmail.com
13	<b>Galway</b>	education@galwaydiocese.ie
14	<b>Kerry</b>	nicholaflynn@dioceseofkerry.org
15	<b>Kildare &amp; Leighlin</b>	Maeve.mahon@kandle.ie
16	<b>Killala</b>	killalacpsma@gmail.com
17	<b>Killaloe</b>	gerkenny3@gmail.com
18	<b>Kilmore</b>	edsec@kilmorediocese.ie
19	<b>Limerick</b>	aoife.foley@limerickdiocese.org
20	<b>Meath</b>	education@dioceseofmeath.ie
21	<b>Ossory</b>	dermotryan@ossory.ie
22	<b>Raphoe</b>	aodhocean@gmail.com
23	<b>Tuam</b>	education@tuamarchdiocese.org
24	<b>Waterford &amp; Lismore</b>	education@waterfordlismore.ie

# Appendix 2

## Living Our Ethos – How are we doing?

The Catholic school promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person, made in God’s image and uniquely loved by God.

It welcomes, is respectful of and engages with people of all beliefs & stances for living.

Some areas for consideration & reflection by the Board of Management supporting the Catholic Ethos of the school	In place? • YES • SOMETIMES • NO	Next Steps
As a board, we are confident in our understanding of Catholic ethos		
Issues relating to the Catholic ethos of our school appear frequently on the agenda for our BOM meetings		
The mission statement of our school informs the work of the board		
There is a Religious Education Coordinator in place, and s/he has attended a board meeting		
The Board has approved/reviewed the Religious Education Policy for the school and it has been returned to the Diocesan Education Office		
The schedule of a Catholic school is displayed in the entrance area of the school		
There is a Prayer Space visible in the public area and there is a Prayer Space in each classroom		
Board Meetings/Staff Meetings/Parent Council Meetings/school day/classes and assemblies begin and end with prayer		
At least one Croke Park hour session explores ethos/religious education programme and/or curriculum/faith development of staff on an annual basis		
Meditation practices explicitly grounded in faith		
The <b>Grow in Love</b> programme is taught regularly each week		

Some areas for consideration & reflection by the Board of Management supporting the Catholic Ethos of the school	In place? • YES • SOMETIMES • NO	Next Steps
There is an engagement with the local parish and the local identity/history of your school		
The liturgical seasons are marked		
The school actively participates in liturgical celebrations e.g., Masses, prayer services, penitential services		
The school supports those in need through the help of such agencies as Trócaire, Children Helping Children, St. Vincent de Paul		
The school makes an active connection between <b>Green Flags</b> and <b>Laudato Si</b> and the challenge to Christians to take care of God's creation		
Confirmation children are offered the opportunity of a retreat as part of their preparation		
Catholic Schools Week is celebrated in the school		
Teachers have availed of diocesan and Religious Education in-service sessions, where they are offered		
All teachers have a recognised qualification in Religious Education (such as a Certificate in Religious Education or one in Religious Studies)		

# Appendix 3

## Sample Prayers for Board of Management Meetings

*Holy Spirit, inspire us and renew us as we embark upon a new school year. Spark our imaginations, fill us with desire to enhance the lives of our students, and help us to be grateful for the privilege of being involved in leadership roles in education.*

**Amen.**

*Lord, in the quiet of Advent, we prepare our hearts. May we be inspired and moved by your spirit in all our decisions and discussions together. As we await the coming of your son, we pray that we be Christ-like, that our thoughts, words, and deeds may glorify your name.*

**Amen.**

*Let us pray,  
God of wisdom and understanding,  
Guide us in our work this year.  
Send the Holy Spirit to sustain us,  
Strengthen us and nourish us as we seek to  
serve our school.  
Through Christ our Lord.*

**Amen.**

### **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth.*

*Let us pray.*

*O God, who have taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation.  
Through Christ our Lord.*

**Amen.**

### **Lord make me a channel of your peace**

*Lord, make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring love. Where there is offence, let me bring pardon. Where there is discord, let me bring union. Where there is error, let me bring truth. Where there is doubt, let me bring faith. Where there is despair, let me bring hope. Where there is darkness, let me bring your light. Where there is sadness, let me bring joy. O Master, let me not seek as much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that one receives, it is in self-forgetting that one finds, it is in pardoning that one is pardoned, it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.*

### **St Patrick's Breastplate**

*Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ  
beneath me, Christ  
above me, Christ on  
my right, Christ on  
my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ  
in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in  
every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

*Lord Jesus, guide us to help our students to develop the capacity to shape their lives in line with the highest of human values, to belong to you and make our world and universe a better place through their lives. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.*

**Amen.**

Please see [Catholic Education Partnership \(CEP\) Prayer Resource for Boards of Management](#) for further prayers, readings and reflections that can be used at a board meeting



# Appendix 4

## Schedule of a Catholic School

A Roman Catholic school (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people.

The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

# Appendix 5

## Recognition to teach Catholic Religious Education in a Catholic Primary School

### Introduction

The various programmes in Catholic Religious Education and Religious Studies provided by a number of colleges and universities and recognised by the Irish Episcopal Conference offer pre-service and qualified teachers foundational knowledge and skills for communicating the Catholic faith to children in primary schools. These programmes enable teachers and schools to address the many spiritual, social, moral, personal and religious opportunities and challenges facing pupils in contemporary Ireland. (See Recognition to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools on the island of Ireland, Irish Bishops' Conference, 2011).

Catholic primary schools should only employ teachers with an approved qualification to teach Religious Education in a Catholic primary school. The requirements set out below are effective from September 2011 forward, without prejudice to those who qualified as primary teachers prior to this date in any of the approved centres. Principals, Boards of Management, selection boards and independent assessors should seek the assistance of their local Diocesan Education Secretary, working with the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), in implementing this important IEC policy document.

### Criteria and Guidelines Concerning the Provision of Awards Required to teach Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools

#### A: Undergraduate Qualification

For a teacher with an initial teacher education degree to be recognised to teach in a Catholic school they should have one hundred and twenty contact hours in the area of Religious Education, to include an exploration of Catholic Religious Education and of Religious or Theological Studies. The specific areas for study in RE and Theology are outlined in detail in the Bishops' Conference document.

#### B: Postgraduate Qualification

For postgraduate students to be recognised to teach in a Catholic school in Ireland they should have fifty contact hours at postgraduate level in the area of Religious Education, to include exploration of Catholic Religious Education and Religious or Theological Studies. Again, the specific areas to be studied are outlined in the Bishops' Conference document.

### Approved Qualifications

The Catechetics Council currently recognises the following providers of this programme in Religious Education/Religious Studies, or its equivalent, as outlined above:

#### DCU Institute of Education (St Patrick's Campus)

- Certificate in Religious Studies (CRS) in conjunction with Catholic Religious Education in the B.Ed.  
Certificate in Religious Studies in conjunction with Catholic Religious Education in the PMEPP
- Certificate in Religious Studies (part-time)
-

### **Froebel College/St Patrick's College, Maynooth**

- Certificate in Catholic Religious Education and Theological Studies as part of B.Ed.
- Post-Graduate Certificate in Catholic Religious Education and Theological Studies as part of P.M.Ed.

### **Hibernia College**

- Certificate as part of PME

### **Marino Institute of Education**

- The Certificate Course as part of the B.Ed.
- The Certificate Course as part of the PME

### **Mary Immaculate College**

- Certificate in Religious Education in conjunction with the B.Ed.
- Qualification to teach Catholic Religious Education as part of the Professional Masters in Education (PME)
- Certificate in Religious Education (Graduate Programme)

### **St Angela's College, Sligo**

- Certificate in Primary School Religious Education (part-time)

### **St. Mary's University, Belfast**

- Certificate as part of B.Ed. Primary
- Certificate as part of PGCE (Postgraduate qualification)

### **University of Coleraine**

- Certificate in Religious Education

## **Appendix**

### **Supplementary qualification to enable teachers qualified in England and Wales, who hold a Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS), to teach in Catholic primary schools on the island of Ireland.**

This appendix is intended to outline how teachers qualified in England and Wales, who have undertaken a Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) in England or Wales, can be enabled to obtain the supplementary qualification necessary to teach in Catholic primary schools on the island of Ireland. For a list of recognised providers of the CCRS, please see <http://www.brs-ccrs.org.uk/index.php>

The Council for Catechetics accepts that the CCRS covers what is required in terms of the theology requirements for those wishing to teach Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools. However, those qualifying to teach Religious Education in Catholic schools on the island of Ireland also need to have the familiarity with the Irish context, methodology, and curriculum. The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (Supplementary) offered through Dublin City University, St Patrick's Campus fulfils this element of the qualification requirement.

# Appendix 6

## Recruitment Stages Checklist

### CPSMA checklist of the stages in the recruitment process for teachers

1. Ensure that there is a vacancy in the school by answering the following:
  - Is there a teacher entitled to a contract of indefinite duration (CID) in my school? **Yes/No**
  - Is there a redeployment panel that may be relevant to this vacancy? **Yes/No**
  - Have I contacted the Diocesan Education Secretary about this vacancy? **Yes/No**

If you obtain three **blue** answers to the questions above, you can proceed with this checklist. Otherwise, please contact CPSMA or your Diocesan Secretary to discuss.

2. Make sure that you have contacted your Diocesan Office to advise them of the vacancy, regardless of how the vacancy arises.
3. Place the correct advertisement as per S.7 of Chapter 2 of **Circular 0044/2019**.
4. Contact the patron to appoint an independent assessor for the interview board.
5. Arrange a meeting of the interview board to set the criteria, decide on interview questions and shortlist the applications.
6. Issue candidates with invitations to interview, giving 7 days' notice and enclosing copies of the interview criteria and the **Schedule of a Catholic School**.
7. Interview, mark and rank suitable candidates and record the results.
8. Conduct reference checks for the highest ranked candidate and submit the report of the interview board to the board of management.
9. Hold a board of management meeting to ratify the interview board selection.
10. Seek the prior written approval of the patron for the appointment of the candidate.

11. Issue a letter of offer to the successful candidate once the board and patron have approved the appointment. Letters of offer are available on [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie)
12. Check the vetting status of the teacher via the Teaching Council and the medical fitness of the teacher via Medmark. Verify the qualifications of the successful candidate.
13. Once
  - a. the letter of offer has been accepted in writing
  - b. the vetting and medical fitness status have been confirmed as suitable and
  - c. the candidate's qualifications have been verifiedcontracts should be issued to fixed term teachers. These are available on [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie). Please note that there is no agreed contract for a permanent teacher, but the [CPSMA Letter of Offer for a Permanent Teacher](#) referred to in point 11 above, will suffice in this regard. Letters of offer and contracts should be issued by the chairperson and signed by the successful teacher in advance of their taking up a position in the school.
14. Advise the Department of Education of the appointment, using either the appropriate Primary Teacher Appointment Form (PTAF) for permanent and fixed term appointments or via the online Claims System (OLCS) for substitute appointments.
15. Unsuccessful candidates may then be informed that the position has been filled.

**Detailed advice and guidance in relation to teacher recruitment is available in the appointments section of the CPSMA website [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie). Please contact CPSMA on 01-6292462 or email [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie) and their education advisors will guide you through the relevant recruitment process.**

# Appendix 7

## Sample Agenda for a Board Meeting

### Opening - prayer/reflection

- Bereavements etc. noted here.

### Attendance and apologies

### Minutes

- Drawn up by secretary.
- Confidential to those entitled to be at the particular meeting/s.
- Patron & DE can have access.
- Decisions recorded and read to board members.
- Agreed and signed by chairperson.

### Matters arising from Minutes

- Opportunity for questions and clarifications re minutes

### Correspondence

- Relevant correspondence should be brought to the board's attention.
- Circulars, newsletters etc.

### Living Our Ethos

(As a separate agenda item or included in Principal's Report)

- Religious events/Liturgical Calendar/ Assemblies
- Sacramental preparation and celebration Religious
- Education Policy
- "Grow In Love programme "
- CPSMA Checklist and Video 'Living Our Ethos- How are we doing?'
- Engagement with Diocesan events (e.g., Catholic Schools Week)

## Finance

- Treasurer's report at every meeting  
(See Governance Manual and [www.fssu.ie](http://www.fssu.ie) for guidance)

## Principal's Reports

- Principal's Report (See sample, Appendix 9)
- Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report

## Reports from Board of Management Sub-Committees/Officers

- Safety, maintenance, finance, buildings, parent association etc.

## Health and Safety

- This should be an item at every board meeting.

## AOB

- This item is to allow for items that may have arisen earlier in the meeting and is not used to introduce new items at the meeting. New items that arise at a meeting can, if appropriate, be considered for the agenda of the next board of management meeting.

## Agreed report to be noted

- The agreed report for parents, staff and the wider community should be finalised before the meeting is concluded. Board members should agree on the manner in which this report will be communicated.
- This report should record the relevant decisions or policies ratified. Contributions from individual members or their vote for/against a subject should not be recorded.
- Members should be reminded of the confidentiality of matters other than those contained in the Agreed Report.

## Next meeting

- Date/time

# Appendix 8

## Sample Minutes of a Board Meeting

*Minutes from (Name of School) Board of Management Meeting on DD/MM/YYYY*

<b>Venue</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<i>Names in full</i>
<b>Apologies</b>	<i>Names in full</i>

Agenda Item	DECISION / ACTION	Taken By
<b>Opening Prayer/ Reflection</b>		Chairperson
<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>	Minutes proposed by: (Initials) Minutes seconded by: (Initials) Minutes adopted and signed	Chairperson
<b>Matters arising</b>	Brief description to be included. If there are no matters arising, record "none".	
<b>Correspondence</b>	List of Correspondence attached. <i>Note: Any item of correspondence that requires discussion will be listed separately as an Agenda item</i>	Chairperson
<b>Finance</b>	Treasurer's Report presented and adopted Copy attached. Confirmation that the Annual Accounts have been submitted to FSSU. <i>Note any Financial Guidelines that have been issued by the FSSU.</i>	Treasurer
<b>Principal's Report</b>	Principal's Report presented and adopted. Copy attached.	Principal
<b>Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report</b>	<i>This report may be appended separately. (DE Template E recommended). Similarly, a list of the required documents may be appended separately (DE Template F recommended). If the templates are appended, the minutes should state that fact. NB: Minutes shall not name any employee, any children or other parties referred to in the documentation but shall record the matter by reference to the unique code or serial number assigned by the DLP to the case/parties concerned.</i>	Principal
<b>Ethos</b>	Board decided that a framed copy of the 'Schedule of the Catholic School' would be prominently hung in the school entrance hall (by the reception office) and would also be added to the school website under the section 'About Our School'.	
<b>School Self-Evaluation</b>	Board adopted SSE Plan for the current school year	All Staff Members
<b>Sanction of successful SNA candidate</b>	Interview Board report submitted. (Name of candidate)'s appointment approved. Patron approval to be sought by CP prior to offer.	Chairperson
<b>*Application for T/Y work experience</b>	Two applications received. Decision postponed pending clarification of vetting requirements.	Principal to follow up
<b>* Request to rent school for Summer Camp</b>	Decision not taken at meeting. Awaiting outcome of application for Summer Works Scheme.	Principal to relay update on request on behalf of Chairperson



<b>*Application for Job Sharing - two permanent teachers</b>	Provision of Job-Sharing Scheme outlined. Requests granted. Decision to be relayed in writing to both teachers.	Principal to respond on behalf of Chairperson
<b>Review of Admissions Policy</b>	Policy amended to reflect the Sections of the Admissions to School Act 2018 that have been commenced. Updated policy ratified by Board.	Chairperson
<b>Parents' Association Activities</b>	Schedule of Parents' Association activities discussed, welcomed and approved by Board.	Parent Nominee to relay to PA
<b>Agreed Report</b>	Items for inclusion agreed. To be drafted by Principal and Chairperson & posted on website.	Teacher nominee to upload
<b>Date of next meeting</b>	DD / MM / YYYY - Venue - Time	

# Blank Template for Minutes of a Board Meeting

*Minutes from (Name of School) Board of Management Meeting on DD/MM/YYYY*

<b>Venue</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Apologies</b>	

Agenda Item	DECISION / ACTION	Taken By
<b>Opening Prayer/ Reflection</b>		
<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>		Chairperson
<b>Matters arising</b>		
<b>Correspondence</b>		Chairperson
<b>Finance</b>		Treasurer
<b>Principal's Report</b>		Principal
<b>Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report</b>		Principal
<b>Ethos</b>		
<b>Agreed Report</b>		
<b>Date of next meeting</b>	DD / MM / YYYY – Venue – Time	

# Appendix 9

## Sample Principal's Report

### Significant issues of concern related to life & function of the school

- Child Protection (separate oversight report) (See [Child Protection Procedures \(Revised 2023\)](#) and [Circular 0036/2023](#))
- School Self Evaluation Process (See [School Self-evaluation: Next Steps September 2022 - June 2026 & Circular 0056/2022 & Policies for ratification](#)). Online
- Claims System Report
- Report on incidents of bullying (See [DE Anti- Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools \(Updated December 2022\)](#) & [Cinéaltas: Action Plan on Bullying \(December 2022\)](#))
- Enrolment/Admissions
- Leadership and Management – roles, responsibilities, appointments etc. Pupil
- absences – Education Welfare Act – Tusla
- Holidays and closures (See [Circular 0072/2022 covering school](#) year 23/24, 24/25 & 25/26)
- Ethos: Religious Events/Liturgical Celebrations/Assemblies etc. Special
- needs requirements
- Resource requirements.
- Repairs / Minor Works
- Health and Safety School
- Tours
- Transition to post-primary
- Visitors/ Guest Speakers
- Issues in relation to staffing allocation Supervision
- Parent teacher meetings (See [Circular 14/04](#)) Policy
- issues
- Legislation and/or recent circulars
- Training/professional development / in service
- Public relations
- Future planning
- Other matters
-

# Appendix 10

## School Self-Evaluation Report: Legislative and Regulatory Checklist (Primary)

*This Checklist for the Board of Management is published by the Department of Education.*

**Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist (Primary)** This is not an exhaustive checklist. It is intended to assist the board of management in carrying out its leadership and management responsibilities and functions, as set out in the Education Act (1998), and within the context of its own school. The completed checklist will contain sensitive information and should be treated as confidential.

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Time in school - Length of school year - minimum of 183 days - Length of school day -4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1st-6th classes)	Circular 0011/1995	School year Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>  School day Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 0005/2020	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular 0024/2002	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Updating and simplifying the manner in which schools can maintain pupil enrolment and attendance records following the introduction of the Primary Online Database (POD)	Primary Online Database - Circular 0025/2015, Update - Circular 0033/2015	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Pupils repeating a school year	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 0011/2001 Circular 0032/2003	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Annual returns on Attendance to Tusla: The Child and Family Agency	Education and Welfare Act 2000	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Engagement with SSE process	Circular 0039/2016	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Time for literacy and numeracy	Circular 0056/11, Circular 0066/2011, Circular 0018/2012,	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Administration of Standardised Tests and Return of Data	Circulars 0056/2011, 0018/2012, 0045/2014, 0027/2015, 0034/2016 and 0038/2017	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Primary Language Curriculum	Circular 0061/2015 Circular 0045/2019	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Exemption from Irish	Circular 0052/2019	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Deployment of Teachers	Staffing arrangements for the school year Circular 0019/2019 Special Education Teaching Allocation Model Circular 0013/2017	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Posts of Responsibilities	Circular 0044 / 2019 – Recruitment / Promotion and Leadership for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary Schools	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Seniority of primary teachers	Circular 0044/2019	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Release Time for Principal Teachers in Primary Schools	Circular 0020/2019	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Implementation of national agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011 Circular 0052/14	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Digital Strategy and Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure	Circular 0001/2017 and 0011/2018 Digital Learning Plan Use of the Digital Learning Framework	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Implementation of Child Protection Procedures 2017	Circular 0081/2017 Please record the following information in relation to child protection as reported to the board	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Child Protection Oversight Report presented at each board meeting	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Number of reports submitted by the DLP to Tusla and reported to the board		
	Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from Tusla and as a result of this advice, no report was made		
	Number of cases where a mandated person other than the DLP made a report to Tusla and notified the DLP		

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed										
Implementation of vetting requirements	National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 Circular 0026/2015 Circular 0016/2017 (Statutory requirements for retrospective vetting) Child Protection Procedures 2017	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>											
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act Please record the following in relation to complaints <table border="1" data-bbox="449 602 975 743"> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 602 975 637">Number of formal parental complaints received</td> <td data-bbox="975 602 1055 637"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 637 975 672">Number of formal complaints processed</td> <td data-bbox="975 637 1055 672"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 672 975 743">Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year</td> <td data-bbox="975 672 1055 743"></td> </tr> </table>	Number of formal parental complaints received		Number of formal complaints processed		Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>					
Number of formal parental complaints received													
Number of formal complaints processed													
Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year													
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please record information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year <table border="1" data-bbox="449 860 975 1060"> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 860 975 896">Number of section 29 cases taken against the school</td> <td data-bbox="975 860 1055 896"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 896 975 931">Number of cases processed at informal stage</td> <td data-bbox="975 896 1055 931"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 931 975 966">Number of cases heard</td> <td data-bbox="975 931 1055 966"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 966 975 1001">Number of appeals upheld</td> <td data-bbox="975 966 1055 1001"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1001 975 1060">Number of appeals dismissed</td> <td data-bbox="975 1001 1055 1060"></td> </tr> </table>	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school		Number of cases processed at informal stage		Number of cases heard		Number of appeals upheld		Number of appeals dismissed		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Number of section 29 cases taken against the school													
Number of cases processed at informal stage													
Number of cases heard													
Number of appeals upheld													
Number of appeals dismissed													
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please record information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year <table border="1" data-bbox="449 1178 975 1378"> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1178 975 1213">Number of section 29 cases taken against the school</td> <td data-bbox="975 1178 1055 1213"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1213 975 1248">Number of cases processed at informal stage</td> <td data-bbox="975 1213 1055 1248"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1248 975 1284">Number of cases heard</td> <td data-bbox="975 1248 1055 1284"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1284 975 1319">Number of appeals upheld</td> <td data-bbox="975 1284 1055 1319"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1319 975 1378">Number of appeals dismissed</td> <td data-bbox="975 1319 1055 1378"></td> </tr> </table>	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school		Number of cases processed at informal stage		Number of cases heard		Number of appeals upheld		Number of appeals dismissed		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Number of section 29 cases taken against the school													
Number of cases processed at informal stage													
Number of cases heard													
Number of appeals upheld													
Number of appeals dismissed													
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please record information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year <table border="1" data-bbox="449 1495 975 1695"> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1495 975 1531">Number of section 29 cases taken against the school</td> <td data-bbox="975 1495 1055 1531"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1531 975 1566">Number of cases processed at informal stage</td> <td data-bbox="975 1531 1055 1566"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1566 975 1601">Number of cases heard</td> <td data-bbox="975 1566 1055 1601"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1601 975 1636">Number of appeals upheld</td> <td data-bbox="975 1601 1055 1636"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="449 1636 975 1695">Number of appeals dismissed</td> <td data-bbox="975 1636 1055 1695"></td> </tr> </table>	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school		Number of cases processed at informal stage		Number of cases heard		Number of appeals upheld		Number of appeals dismissed		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
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**Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist (Primary)** This is not an exhaustive checklist. It is intended to assist the board of management in carrying out its leadership and management responsibilities and functions, as set out in the Education Act (1998), and within the context of its own school. The completed checklist will contain sensitive information and should be treated as confidential.

Policy	Source	Has policy been approved by the board of management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998 Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Attendance and participation strategy	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Child Safeguarding Statement	Child Protection Procedures 2017 Circular 0081/2017	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Code of behaviour including anti-bullying policy Dignity in the Workplace Charter	Circular 20/90 NEWB <i>Guidelines</i> Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000 <i>Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Postprimary schools</i> 2013, and Circular 45/13 Section 8(2)(b), Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Critical incident management plan	Responding to Critical Incidents: NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools 2016	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Data protection	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) May 2018: see <a href="http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie">www.dataprotectionschools.ie</a> and <a href="http://www.gdpr4schools.ie">www.gdpr4schools.ie</a>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Internet acceptable use policy	National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE) Guidelines, 2012 at <a href="http://www.webwise.ie">www.webwise.ie</a>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Public service agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Substance use policy	National Drugs Strategy and Department of Education and Skills Guidelines	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Special educational needs policy	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN)4 2004 Disability Act 2005 Circular RAM –SEN (2017)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
For DEIS schools only: DEIS Action Plan	DEIS Plan 2017 Department of Education and Skills Guidelines on the appropriate use of the DEIS Grant (updated annually)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	