



Primary Circular 14/01

## **Department of Education and Science Primary Branch**

### **To Boards of Management and Principals Of Primary Schools**

**(This Circular Supersedes Sections 3 and 4 of [Circular 13/00](#))**

### **Release Time for Principal Teachers in Primary Schools**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Minister for Education and Science wishes to advise Boards of Management and Principals of Primary Schools of an increase in the number of days release time for teaching principals.

#### **2. INCREASE IN RELEASE TIME FOR EACH SCHOOL YEAR**

- 2.1 The amended number of days that Teaching Principals may take as release time in each school year is outlined in Table A below

**Table A**

Size of School *	Number of Days Release Time
Principal + 5/6	20 Days per Year
Principal + 3/4	16 Days per Year
Principal + 0/1/2	12 Days per Year

\* Size of school refers to Principal and mainstream class teachers only and excludes ex-quota posts e.g. resource, disadvantaged concessionary posts etc.

- 2.2 The Board of Management shall determine, in consultation with the Principal, when the release time may be taken during the school year. In the event of unforeseen circumstances where the Principal cannot take release time on a specified day, it may be changed in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

- 2.3 The number of days specified in Table A is a school's entitlement for a school year. In the event of a change of Principal (including Acting Principal) during the school year, the total number of days release time granted to a school, as set out in Table A, cannot be exceeded. In such cases the Board of Management should ensure that the release days are allocated between the Principals. **Example:** A Principal in a school with four mainstream class teachers has taken 4 release days. This Principal retires on 10 November. The new Principal is entitled to the balance of release days due to the school i.e. 12 days.

### **3. PROVISION OF SUBSTITUTE COVER**

- 3.1 A substitute teacher may be employed by the Board of Management for each day that the Principal is on release time (please see 3.2 below regarding schools within the Supply Scheme).
- 3.2 In accordance with Section 12.2 of Circular 50/97 for schools within the Supply Scheme, a supply teacher may substitute for release time for a Teaching Principal, on the basis of two days per term with a further two days being allocated at any stage throughout the school year. Such schools must employ a substitute teacher outside the Supply Scheme for release time in excess of these eight days.

The release time of eight days for schools within the Supply Scheme is in addition to the release time outlined in Table A of this Circular.

### **4. ATTENDANCE ON RELEASE DAYS**

- 4.1 The Principal should be present in the school during the periods of release time unless absent on official school business approved by the Board of Management.
- 4.2 The release time should not be taken immediately after other types of leave such as long term sick leave.

### **5. DUTIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN DURING RELEASE TIME**

- 5.1 The purpose of release time is to enable Principals be released for the number of days as specified in Table A to undertake administrative, leadership and management functions within the school.
- 5.2 Principals are required, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to draft a programme of duties, to be undertaken during release time. A brief report on the use of the release time must be presented at one Board of Management meeting annually. A copy of the report should be retained in the school and be available for inspection by a Department Inspector.
- 5.3 The programme of duties to be carried out during release time shall include relevant duties as outlined in Section B of Circular Letter 16/73 (which is to be

reviewed) and other appropriate duties such as those outlined in the examples.

**Examples:**

- Ongoing development of school plan in consultation with staff of the school, and the Board of Management.
- Drafting policies and procedures such as discipline procedures, homework policy, school calendar, admissions/enrolment policy, school environmental policy, information and communication technology plan, gender equality plan in consultation with staff and the Board of Management and parents.
- Consultation with individual members of the teaching staff in the school regarding curriculum matters, administrative policies and procedures, discipline and the provision of support and advice on such matters and promoting staff development.
- Administrative duties such as the completion of data and returns to the Department of Education and Science.
- Liaising with members of the management team in the school.
- Liaising with parents.
- Liaising with the Chairperson of the Board of Management and other Board members regarding school policy and development.
- Dealing with employment matters such as the employment of part-time and administrative staff.
- Liaising with agencies such as Health Boards, Psychologists etc.
- Organising of extra curricular activities for the school.
- Attendance at induction training courses and other in service courses approved by the Department of Education and Science.

Copies of this Circular should be given to all members of the Board of Management of the school and it should be retained for future reference.

It may also be accessed on the Department of Education & Science website at [www.irlgov.ie/educ](http://www.irlgov.ie/educ). Queries regarding the Circular may be E Mailed to [ppc@education.gov.ie](mailto:ppc@education.gov.ie).

D. Ó Riain,  
Principal Officer  
October, 2001