



Circular letter 02/02

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

### **To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and all Teaching Staff in Ordinary Primary Schools and Special Schools**

- A. Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as Principal Teacher in Primary and Special Schools:**
  - B. Change to the Procedure for the Assessment of Eligibility of Applicants for Principal Teachers:**
  - C. Change to the Procedure for the Notification of Teachers**
- 1. Introduction.**
- 1.1 The Minister for Education & Science has revised the criteria for eligibility for appointment as Principal teacher to Primary Schools and Special Schools and is introducing changes to the procedures for the appointment of principals and other teachers.
  - 1.2 The terms of Rule 76 of the Rules for National Schools and Appendix D, Section 3 A (iii) and (iv) and Section 5 (xi) and 6(i) and (ii) of the Boards of Management of National Schools – Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedures (2000 edition) are hereby amended. Boards should note that the requirement to seek the prior approval of the Patron still remains.
  - 1.3 The criteria for the eligibility for appointment to Principal teacher will apply to all appointments advertised on or after 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2002.
- 2. Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as Principal to ordinary Primary Schools.**
- 2.1 To be deemed eligible to apply for the post of Principal teacher in ordinary primary schools with less than 80 pupils, applicants must certify in their application to the Board of Management that they:
    - (a) Are qualified primary teachers (The applicant should include a copy of qualifications)

And

(b) Have satisfactorily completed probation

- 2.2 To be deemed eligible to apply for the post of Principal teacher in ordinary primary schools with 80 pupils or greater, applicants must comply with the conditions as stated in 2.1 above and in addition have given not less than five years qualified wholetime teaching service two of which must be in a recognised primary school in the Republic of Ireland.

Service in recognised post-primary schools within the Republic or in a primary school or post-primary school outside Ireland may be reckoned towards service provided this service was reckonable for incremental credit.

- 2.3 A Board of Management may request an applicant for a post to submit his/her latest inspection report and proof of the award of incremental credit where applicable.

### **3. Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as Principal to Special Schools.**

- 3.1 To be deemed eligible to apply for the post of Principal teacher in Special Schools, applicants must certify in their application to the Board of Management that they:

(a) Are fully qualified primary teachers or have been awarded Restricted Recognition under the terms of Circular 25/00 (The applicant should include a copy of qualifications).

(b) Have satisfactorily completed probation  
and

(c) Have a minimum of 5 years qualified whole time teaching service two of which must be in a recognised primary school within the Republic of Ireland.

Service in a primary school or a post-primary school outside the Republic of Ireland may be reckoned towards service provided this service was reckonable for incremental credit.

- 3.2 Post primary teachers are also eligible to apply for appointment to Special Schools in which children are enrolled up to the age of 18 years of age including High Support Units, Young Offender Units and Youth Encounter Projects if they comply with the requirements as outlined in 3.1 (a) and (b) above and in such schools a proportion of the pupils attending the special school are of post-primary age and where second level programmes, such as "Junior Cert Elementary Programme" or Leaving Cert Applied programme are being provided. The applicant must have a minimum of 5 years qualified wholetime teaching service two of which must be in a recognised primary or post-primary school within the Republic of Ireland.

- 3.3 A Board of Management may request an applicant for a post to submit his/her latest inspection report and proof of the award of incremental credit where applicable.

#### **4. Change in the Procedures for the Assessment of Eligibility of Applicants for Principal.**

- 4.1 The procedure for the appointment of Principal teacher as outlined in Section 3 A (iii) and (iv) of the Boards of Management of National Schools – Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedures (2000 edition) has been amended as outlined in 4.2 below.
- 4.2 There is no longer a requirement for the Chairperson to forward details of applicants to the Department to assess their eligibility under Rule 76 of the Rules for National Schools. Instead applicants for the post of Principal teacher are requested to provide the information as outlined at Sections 2 and 3 above. The Selection Board shall ensure that the candidate nominated for appointment is fully qualified and meets the eligibility criteria.
- 4.3 A Board of Management may, if it considers necessary, request a candidate nominated for the post of Principal to provide a certificate of fitness (from a qualified medical practitioner) prior to being formally offered the post.

#### **5. Notification of Successful Candidate.**

- 5.1 The procedure for the appointment of teachers including principals as outlined in Section 5 (xi) and of the Boards of Management of National Schools – Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedures (2000 edition) has also been amended as set out in 5.2 and 5.3 below.
- 5.2 There is no longer a requirement for the Chairperson of the Board of Management to receive the prior sanction of the Minister for Education & Science for the appointment of the successful candidate before he/she is notified. **The requirement to seek the prior approval of the Patron still remains.** After receiving the approval of the Patron the Chairperson of the Board of Management should notify the successful candidate. The successful candidate should be advised that the offer is subject to the sanction of the Minister. As soon as the Board has received notification of the teacher's acceptance of the post, all unsuccessful candidates should be notified.
- 5.3 Both the successful candidate and the Chairperson should complete the relevant application form and forward same to the Primary Payments Section of the Department of Education & Science. If the post is warranted and the Chairperson of the Board certifies that the teacher has met the criteria as outlined in this Circular and the appointment has been made in accordance with the procedures outlined in "Boards of Management of National Schools – Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedures" – the revised version of which is outlined in the Appendix to this Circular, the Minister for Education & Science will sanction the appointment.

This Circular is also available on the Department of Education & Science website at [www.irlgov.ie/educ](http://www.irlgov.ie/educ)

The booklet "Appointment of Principals, Permanent and Temporary teachers should also be consulted.

The Chairperson and Principal should retain all circulars for future reference.

Queries regarding the Circular may be E Mailed to  
[ppc@education.gov.ie](mailto:ppc@education.gov.ie)

D Ó Ríain,  
Primary Branch.

February 2002.

## APPENDIX D – Revised Version

### 1. Appointment procedures for teachers

- (i) All appointments of teachers in the school shall be made by the Board of Management in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and subject to the prior approval of the Patron and the sanction of the Minister for Education and Science.
- (ii) Boards are reminded of:
  - (a) the requirements set out in the Rules for National Schools and Department circulars concerning the Diocesan and other approved panels and
  - (b) requirements in regard to qualifications of teachers.
- (iii) The following procedures are to be followed in all cases of the appointment of teachers unless, in special circumstances, the Minister decides otherwise.

### 2. Advertisements

- (i) Vacancies shall be notified to all teaching staff of the school and shall be advertised in at least one national daily newspaper. The advertisement shall invite applications with curriculum vitae from eligible male and female teachers to be submitted by a specified date to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- (ii) The advertisement **shall** state
  - the name and address of the school.
  - In the case of Catholic schools, add: “*under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of X Diocese*”
  - the number of teaching posts (including Principal)
  - the status of the teaching post (*i.e. whether Principal or permanent, temporary or substitute teacher*)
  - the latest date for receipt of completed applications, *which shall not be earlier than two weeks after the last date of publication of the advertisement*
  - date of commencement of teaching post
  - that a curriculum vitae must be submitted with the application
  - whether additional references, reports or other documentary information are required.
  - The advertisement **may** also state:

- Nature of the duties that, initially, may be allocated to the post (e.g. *remedial, resource etc.*)
  - Whether or not a list of suitable applicants may be set up from which future vacancies may be filled (valid for the four month period from the date of the advertisement. This particular list may only be compiled if it has been referred to in the advertisement).
  - Whether a stamped addressed envelope is required for the return of documentation
- (iii) Special care shall be taken in drafting the advertisement, especially in indicating the sex category of the school, so as to ensure that it will be understood by all that both men and women are eligible to apply and will be given equal consideration.
- (iv) Advertisements must not indicate or be reasonably understood as indicating an intention to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marital status.
- (v) Vacancies for Principal Teachers should not be advertised in July or August, except in special circumstances and with the prior approval of the Patron.
- (vi) There shall be no unreasonable delay between the insertion of the advertisement and the filling of the post.

## **SAMPLE ADVERTISEMENTS**

**In the samples used in this section, the latest date on which the advertisement could appear in the newspaper would be 17 May 2000 i.e. the closing date of 1 June 2000 for receipt of applications is 14 days after the last date of publication.**

### **Sample 1**

PRIMARY TEACHER  
(Permanent) required for 1  
September next at **ST. PAUL'S  
NS** Dublin, *under the Patronage  
of the Catholic Archbishop of the  
Dublin Diocese (16 Teacher  
School)*. Applications with  
curriculum vitae and references  
to Chairperson, Board of  
Management **no later than 1  
June 2000**. *A list of suitable  
applicants may be set up from  
which future vacancies may be  
filled within a four-month period  
from the date of this  
advertisement.* Enclose SAE for  
return of documents.

## Sample 2

PRIMARY TEACHER  
(Permanent with initial duties as  
remedial teacher) required for 1  
September next at **EARL  
STREET NS, (7 Teacher  
School)**. Applications with  
curriculum vitae and references  
to Chairperson, Board of  
Management **no later than 1  
June 2000**. *A list of suitable  
applicants may be set up from  
which future vacancies may be  
filled within a four month period  
from the date of this  
advertisement.* Enclose SAE for  
return of documents

### 3. Selection Board

#### A. Principal Teachers

- (i) A Selection Board shall be constituted and shall comprise the Chairperson of the Board of Management and at least two assessors independent of the Board of Management, to be appointed by the Patron after consultation with the Chairperson. At least one of the members shall be a woman and at least one a man.
- (ii) The Selection Board shall meet within a reasonable period after the closing date for the receipt of applications. It shall establish criteria for the assessment of the applications, having regard to the Rules for National Schools and the requirements of the particular post, and shall

decide upon the applicants to be called for interview. The Selection Board shall ensure that the candidates are fully qualified and meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Circular 2/02. Records of the criteria for assessment of applications and of the interviews shall be kept by the Chairperson of the Selection Board.

- (iii) The advice of the Department in regard to the professional competence of the eligible applicants will be available to the Selection Board on request.
- (iv) The terms of Section 15 (b) of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure of Boards of Management shall apply to all members of the Selection Board.
- (v) If the Chairperson or other member of the Selection Board stands in a relationship to a person who is a candidate for employment in the school, s/he shall withdraw from the Selection Board and the Patron shall nominate another Chairperson or member in his/her place.
- (vi) Failure to disclose any relationship material to the selection may i invalidate the process.

## **B. Teachers**

- (i) A Selection Board shall be constituted and shall comprise the Chairperson of the Board of Management, the Principal Teacher and an assessor independent of the Board of Management, to be appointed by the Patron after consultation with the Chairperson. At least one of the members shall be a woman and at least one a man.
- (ii) In the case of the selection of a teacher in a period after a Principal Teacher has been appointed but before that Principal has taken up duty, the Principal designate shall fill the position of Principal on the Selection Board.
- (iii) The Selection Board shall meet within a reasonable period after the closing date for the receipt of applications. It shall establish criteria for the assessment of the applications, having regard to the Rules for National Schools and the requirements of the particular post, and shall decide upon the applicants to be called for interview. Records of the criteria for assessment of applications and of the interviews shall be kept by the Chairperson of the Selection Board (see section 4 of this Appendix).
- (iv) The terms of Section 15 (b) of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure shall apply to all members of the Selection Board.
- (v) If any member of the Selection Board, including the Chairperson, stands in a relationship to a person who is a candidate for employment in the school, s/he shall withdraw from the Selection Board and the Patron shall nominate another Chairperson or member in his/her place.
- (vi) Failure to disclose any relationship material to the selection may i nvalidate the process.



#### **4. Assessment of applications/shortlisting**

- (i) The Chairperson of the Board of Management shall submit all completed application forms to the Selection Board.
- (ii) Established criteria of the Board shall take account of the provisions of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Code of Practice of the Equality Authority.
- (iii) Care must be taken to ensure that the criteria do not lead to discrimination against any applicant on the grounds of gender or marital status.
- (iv) The Chairperson of the Selection Board shall keep a record of the criteria used.
- (v) The following factors should be taken into account, having regard to the requirements of the particular post and the Rules for National Schools, though not exclusively nor necessarily in this order:
  - professional qualifications
  - teaching experience and reports on competence
  - other relevant experience
  - references; in this regard applicants should be advised in good time whether or not additional documentary information is required.

#### **5. Interviews**

- (i) If there are three eligible applicants or fewer all eligible applicants shall be called for interview by the Selection Board. Otherwise, at least three eligible applicants shall be called for interview.
- (ii) Each applicant called for interview shall be given at least seven days' notice and a specific interview time outside school hours.
- (iii) Calls to interview should normally be issued within three weeks of the latest date for receipt of applications
- (iv) The venue for the interviews should be comfortable and appropriately furnished for a meeting between a group of adults, and should include a comfortable waiting area.
- (v) All questions at interviews shall relate to the requirements of the particular post and of the Rules for National Schools.
- (vi) No question shall be asked nor information sought in any form from a candidate which might be construed as being discriminatory on grounds of sex or marital status, e.g. questions in regard to sporting

interests and skills which would favour men rather than women applicants or vice versa.

- (vii) In the selection of staff for boys only and girls only schools special care should be taken to ensure that both male and female applicants are given equal opportunity to present themselves as suitable and that questions put should not give the impression that the Board has a preconceived view of the suitability of either a man or a woman for a particular post.
- (viii) Having interviewed such applicants as present themselves, the Selection Board shall submit a written report to the Board of Management, nominating the applicant whom it considers most suitable for appointment.
- (ix) A list in order of merit of other candidates who are also deemed suitable shall be retained by the Selection Board for use in the event of the post not being filled by that nominee.
- (x) The Board of Management shall appoint the teacher so nominated unless it has good and sufficient reason not to do so, in which instance the matter shall be referred to the Patron, whose decision in this matter shall be accepted by the Board.
- (xi) The Chairperson shall seek the approval of the Patron for the appointment.

## **6. Notification of applicants**

- (i) Having received approval in accordance with 5 (xi), the Board shall notify the teacher of his/her appointment. The successful candidate should be advised that the offer is subject to the sanction of the Minister.
- (ii) As soon as the Board has received notification of the teacher's acceptance of the post, all unsuccessful candidates should be notified. Both the successful candidate and the Chairperson should complete the relevant form and forward same to the Primary Payments Section of the Department of Education & Science. If the post is warranted and the Chairperson of the Board certifies that the teacher has met the criteria as outlined in this Circular and the appointment has been made in accordance with the procedures outlined in this appendix, the Minister for Education & Science will sanction the appointment.
- (iii) On receipt of Department sanction the Board should then enter into the appropriate agreement with the teacher.
- (iv) Records of the criteria for assessment of applicants and of the interviews shall be kept by the Chairperson of the Selection Board.

## **7. Appointments as Principal Teacher or as Teacher in convent and monastery schools**

- (i) If the authorities of the religious order concerned wish to appoint a member of the order the Board of Management shall, subject to the prior approval of the Patron and of the Minister, appoint the person proposed by these authorities provided that the person is qualified for the post in question.
- (ii) If the authorities of the order consider that a layperson should be appointed the procedure set out at 2 - 6 of this Appendix should be followed.
- (iii) Where a religious order has been guaranteed a certain number of posts in a re-organised school which is not a convent or monastery school, the Board of Management shall, subject to the prior approval of the Minister, appoint to such posts members of the order nominated by the authorities of the religious order concerned provided that the persons nominated are qualified for the posts in question.

## **8. Appointment of temporary teachers**

The appointment of temporary teachers shall be a matter for the Board of Management subject to the approval of the Minister. However, where the appointment is for a period of eight months or longer, the procedures set out in this Appendix shall be followed.