



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

PRIMARY BRANCH

TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL TEACHERS AND ALL TEACHING STAFF IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Seniority of Primary Teachers

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Minister for Education and Science has revised the criteria for seniority of **permanent** teachers in Primary Schools.
- 1.2 The terms of Rules 96 and 98 (1) of the Rules for National Schools are hereby revised.

2. Importance of Seniority

- 2.1 The sequence in which mainstream class teachers are appointed to a school determines the seniority of teachers. Seniority is important in determining teachers' eligibility for an acting post of responsibility and in deciding the order in which teachers are eligible to be placed on the panel when the enrolment figures drop sufficiently to warrant the suppression of a post.

3. Responsibility of Board of Management

- 3.1 The Board of Management, based on the teachers' date of commencement of duty in a school in a permanent capacity, determines the seniority of teachers. An exception to this is where a teacher is on a statutory absence when appointed to the post eg. maternity leave, adoptive leave etc., in such instances the teacher's seniority commences from the date of appointment to the post.
- 3.2 Once a teacher's order of seniority has been established by the Board it cannot be changed without the prior sanction of the Patron.
- 3.3 Each Board of Management should ensure that the seniority listing of teachers is posted on the staff notice board each September. If teachers have not had their

seniority established prior to appointment they should request a statement of order of seniority from the Board on commencement of duty in the school.

4. Rules for Determining Seniority

- 4.1 A Principal teacher is always the most senior teacher in a school, irrespective of length of service given in a school.
- 4.2 Please see Section 6 below in relation to the seniority of a Principal teacher who relinquishes his/her post of Principal.
- 4.3 Service given previously in the same school as a substitute or temporary (qualified or unqualified) teacher does not count towards seniority.
- 4.4 A permanent teacher's ranking for seniority purposes will only commence from the date that a teacher is fully qualified.
- 4.5 If two or more permanent teachers commence duty on the same day, the Board of Management should establish the order of seniority based on the order the teachers were listed as a result of an interview process i.e. the teacher who was ranked highest following the interview process should be given the higher seniority rating.
- 4.6 If a permanent teacher leaves a school either voluntarily or is redeployed and is reappointed to the school in a permanent capacity at a later date then the teacher's seniority will only commence from the date of reappointment.
- 4.7 Job sharing service is reckoned as full service for the purpose of seniority. Authorised absences eg. career break, maternity leave, adoptive leave, parental leave, paternity leave, sick leave do not affect a teacher's seniority.

5. Seniority in an Amalgamated School

- 5.1 In the case of an amalgamated school, where a teacher has given unbroken permanent service continuously in one or more of the schools being amalgamated, the aggregate of that service will be reckoned in determining seniority.
- 5.2 A principal(s) who becomes a privileged assistant(s) in the amalgamated school will retain a seniority ranking next to the Principal, irrespective of the length of actual service in their former school(s). Where there is more than one privileged assistant it is the length of service as Principal of the former school which determines the order of seniority. (The seniority of a privileged assistant who is redeployed via the panel or who voluntarily moves into a school will commence from the date of taking up duty in the new school).

6. Seniority of Principal Teacher who relinquishes post of Principal

- 6.1 A Principal teacher can only relinquish a post of Principal teacher provided there is a permanent vacancy in the school. Where a Principal teacher relinquishes the post of Principal s/he becomes the most junior teacher in the school. Previous service given as a Principal in the school does not count for seniority purposes.

7. Supply Panel

- 7.1 As outlined in [Circular 50/97](#) a supply teacher shall not be compulsorily redeployed to the redeployment panel (even if they are the most junior teacher in the school) other

than in the context of the withdrawal of the supply service from the host school or applying, following the completion of two years supply work for inclusion on the redeployment panel appropriate to the host school.

- 7.2 As outlined in [Primary Circular 12/02](#) all supply teachers appointed on or after 1 April 2002 should be assigned a seniority ranking at the time of their appointment to the base school in the normal manner. Supply teachers appointed before 1 April 2002 should be assigned a seniority ranking as if they were appointed to the school as of 1 April 2002. This is necessary to ensure that no member of the current mainstream staff have their seniority ranking disimproved at the time of integration of the supply teacher to school staff for seniority purposes. Such a ranking will have little practical effect as long as the teacher remains on supply duties, however, in the event that a supply teacher transfers, with the consent of the Board, to mainstream duties in the base school his/her seniority ranking will have full effect and will reflect his/her total service in the school.
- 7.3 When making appointments to the mainstream staff of the school, the Board should appraise appointees that there is a supply panel scheme attached to the school and that the supply teachers have a seniority ranking which may be activated in the event that a supply teacher transfers from supply duties to mainstream duties.

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