

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1



Department of Education and Skills
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT
OIDEACHAIS | OF EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

Circular Number 0008/2011

To the Management Authorities, Principal Teachers and Teachers of Primary Schools

Following discussions involving the Department, the INTO and School Management in relation to particular aspects of the Croke Park agreement, the attached document is now forwarded to schools for implementation.

As is set out in the document, a central purpose of the additional time requirement is to provide for a range of essential activities to take place without reducing class contact/tuition time. In keeping with this, schools are asked to ensure that they utilise this time so as to significantly eliminate the requirement for early closure or closure for half days or a day.

Schools should arrange for the necessary consultation to take place so as to be in a position to begin the usage of the additional hours before the end of February. In this context it has been agreed that the quantum of additional hours for the remainder of the current school year is 18 (as opposed to the full annual requirement of 36 hours for future school years).

Philip Crosby
External Staff Relations
25 January 2011

Croke Park Agreement

Introduction

School management, the INTO and the Department have had discussions relating to the implementation of those aspects of the Croke Park Agreement which relate to additional time and the contract review. This document reflects the outcome of these discussions with a view to implementation in schools.

Additional Time

1. Additional time of one hour per week is provided for in the Agreement.
2. At present, schools close early or for a day or half days to facilitate activities such as school planning, staff meetings, national inservice provision etc.. A central purpose underlying the provision of additional time is to provide for these essential activities to take place without reducing class contact/tuition time.
3. In addition, there are situations where schools require supervision immediately before or after school opening/closing and this additional time may also be used to provide this where needed and for lesser daily periods than those at paragraph 5.
4. Over the course of the primary school year, the additional time provision amounts to 36 hours. Without prejudice to the provisions of paragraphs 5 and 6 below it is expected that there will be consultation at school level as to the optimum usage of this block of hours in order to meet the requirements of the school and to significantly eliminate the erosion of class contact time.
5. The hours in question may be utilised by schools in the manner set out at (a) or (b) below or by a combination of the provisions in (a) and (b).
 - (a) Having regard to paragraphs 3 and 4 above, school management may designate the usage of the 36 hours in blocks of 1, 2 or 3 hours. These may be scheduled over the course of the 183 day school year and the time period should be scheduled outside the normal school hours.
 - (b) Where there is a consensus among the school staff to so do, school management may utilise part of the hours in question aggregated as full days, subject to a maximum aggregation of the equivalent of two days, outside of the 183 days during which the school is open for tuition. The maximum applicable here will be subject to review for the school year 2012/2013 in light of the experience of its operation.
6. Having regard to paragraph 4 above, school management may designate the use of the 36 hours to provide additional time to deal with some or all of the following items.

- school planning
 - continuous professional development
 - induction
 - pre and post school supervision
 - policy development
 - staff meetings
 - nationally planned inservice
 - school arranged inservice
7. The 36 additional hours are separate from the existing arrangements in relation to parent/teacher and staff meetings. In the case of staff meetings, school management may utilise some of the additional hours to remove the 'half in' element of these meetings.
 8. Schools should record the full usage of the additional hours and publicise this in the normal school communication to parents.

Contract Review

1. It is a central objective of the Agreement that Public Service reform provide for better arrangements for those who avail of such services. In this regard, the additional contracted hours provision serves to protect against erosion of class contact/tuition time.
2. In addition, it is essential to have flexibility in re-organising post of responsibility duties within a school. For this purpose, the school management may reassign post holders to alternative responsibilities appropriate to the level of the post (special duties or assistant principal) as required by the priorities and needs of the school. In such reassignment management will have regard to the genuine needs of the school as discussed and identified in consultation with staff, will act reasonably and will consult with the relevant post holders(s). It is accepted that where difficulties arise in this matter, recourse may be had to stages 3 and 4 of the grievance procedure. The reassignment will take effect pending the outcome of this procedure.
3. The Croke Park Agreement has as a core objective the need to ensure that the Irish public service continues its contribution to the return of economic growth and prosperity to Ireland, while delivering excellence in service to the Irish people. In keeping with this core objective and given the vital importance of education to our society, teachers will continue to cooperate with the implementation of change and will contribute to the realisation of national educational policies and objectives. The terms of the Teachers' Conciliation & Arbitration scheme apply in the case of significant changes in the terms and conditions of teachers.