



Circular 0001/2019

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary,
Community and Comprehensive Schools
and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards**

**Special Leave for teachers who are members of Voluntary Search and Rescue Organisations
and are called-out on a Search and Rescue Operation**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Minister for Education and Skills, pursuant to the power contained in Section 24 of the Education Act (as amended), directs employers to implement the regulations and procedures as stated for eligible registered teachers employed in approved teaching posts funded by monies provided by the Oireachtas.
- 1.2 These procedures apply to teachers who are in receipt of incremental salary under a permanent contract, contract of indefinite duration, or fixed-term contract (including non-casual substitute teachers) as defined in the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003. All teachers must adhere to the agreed terms and conditions as stated.

2. School/ETB Policy on Teacher Absences

- 2.1 Employers are reminded that, in accordance with the [“Terms and Condition of Employment for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools”](#) web book (available on the Department’s website), each employer shall develop and maintain a policy on teacher absences, including leave under this Circular, specific to the needs of the school authority.

3. Purpose of Circular

- 3.1 The purpose of this Circular is to inform managerial authorities and teachers of leave arrangements which may be approved by employers with effect from 1 January 2019 for teachers who are members of a voluntary search and rescue organisation listed at paragraph 4.3 below and are called-out on a search and rescue operation. The leave entitlement under this Circular will be subject to review over the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years.

4. Leave Arrangements

- 4.1 Special Leave with pay may be granted to a teacher who is a member of a voluntary search and rescue organisation listed at paragraph 4.3 below who is called out on a search and rescue operation, subject to the approval of the employer and satisfactory documentary evidence of their call-out being provided as soon as possible after the rescue operation, but no later than one week after the teacher's return to work{Note: this is to ensure that the OLCS claim can be processed in a timely manner} . Special Leave with pay is not provided for teachers who wish to attend training courses with voluntary search and rescue organisations.
- 4.2 No more than 5 days special leave with pay for this purpose will be allowed in any school year. An absence for part of a school day is counted as 1 day of absence for the purpose of this leave.
- 4.3 In order to avail of leave under this Circular, the teacher must be a member of one of the following voluntary search and rescue organisations:
- Irish Coast Guard
 - Royal National Lifeboat Institution
 - Community Inshore Rescue Service
 - Irish Water Safety
 - Mountain Rescue Ireland

Evidence of membership should be furnished to the School/Education and Training Board (ETB), when requested.

- 4.4 The absence should be entered on the Department's Online Claim System (OLCS)/relevant ETB system in the normal way.
- 4.5 Substitution costs will be paid by the Department for the full absence (subject to a maximum of 5 days leave per teacher in any one school year).

5. Retention of Documentation/Data Protection

- 5.1 All documentation relating to leave under this Circular must be retained by the employer with the relevant personnel records and in line with the employer's Data Protection policy and with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). All records should correspond with the data input on the OLCS/relevant ETB System. These records may be selected for inspection by nominated Department officials.

6. Circulation and Queries

- 6.1 Please ensure that the contents of this Circular are brought to the attention of all members of the Board of Management/ETB and all teachers in your employment, including those on leave of absence.
- 6.2 This Circular can be accessed on the Department's website under www.education.ie.

6.3 All enquiries regarding this Circular should be addressed to the employer (school/ETB) or the relevant management body in the first instance. Further enquiries may be addressed to teachersna@education.gov.ie

Alfie Barrett
Principal Officer
Teacher/SNA Terms and Conditions

Padraig Maloney
Principal Officer
Payroll Division

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