



## Information Note TC0009/2022

**To: Boards of Management and School Secretaries  
in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools**

### **Revision of Salaries and Annual Leave arrangements for School Secretaries employed in recognised primary and post primary schools**

Following the acceptance by Forasa of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) agreement in respect of salaries and various leave entitlements for grant funded school secretaries, Circular 36/2022 outlined the process required to begin phase 1 of implementation of the agreement.

The Circular also assists school secretaries to make a considered decision as to whether they wish to remain on their current terms and conditions as provided by the school or whether they wish to move to the new terms and conditions encompassed in the WRC agreement.

**The purpose of this Information Note is:**

- **to remind Boards of Management and secretaries of the process to be completed by 30 September 2022;**
- **to clarify some common queries which have arisen, and;**
- **to relay an instruction which should be noted in relation to the use of annual leave for secretaries who are normally laid off at midterm and Christmas periods of closure in this school year.**

**The Minister for Education directs you to ensure that copies of this Circular are provided to all members of the Board of Management/Education and Training Boards and that its contents are brought to the attention of all secretaries in your employment including those on leave of absence.**

Any queries on this circular should be directed to [secretary\\_circular@education.gov.ie](mailto:secretary_circular@education.gov.ie)

This Information Note can be accessed on the Department's website at [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)

Mark Bohan  
Principal Officer  
External Staff Relations

Tom Deegan  
Principal Officer  
Schools Financial

Sinead Keenaghan  
Principal Officer  
Payroll

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## Overview

### **Phase 1: Optional Transition Phase – To be completed by 30 September 2022**

**All** grant funded school secretaries may choose one of the following options:

- a) **to remain on their existing terms and conditions provided by the school, or;**
- b) **to accept the full package of revised salary, terms and conditions.**

This represents the first phase of implementation of the agreement.

### **Phase 2 and Beyond**

The verification of this first phase, the calculation of back pay and the option to have the value of Jobseekers Benefit included in pay will be addressed in the second phase of the assimilation process. The Department will continue to consider the approach to these further aspects and communicate to the schools as needed over the coming months.

Decisions on the approach to current grant aid funding will also be considered by the Department.

The Department is also considering other matters raised around management of staff terms and conditions into the future both for existing and new staff. Further information will issue in due course on such matters.



### **Steps to be carried out by BoM before 30 September 2022**

**Step 1:** Give a copy of Circular 0036/2022 to each grant funded secretary.

**Step 2:** identify the pay rate and annual leave that would apply should a secretary choose to move to b) outlined above.

**Step 3:** If the secretary indicates they wish to choose b) above, indicate the new terms and conditions to the secretary.

**Step 4:** Complete the forms to record the changes in Appendices 4 and 5 of the Circular. For the moment, the school and the secretary should retain both of these forms. **They do not need to be sent to the Department at this time.**

### **Interim Period**

A project to develop a centralised payroll for secretaries is underway. The timeline for the implementation of this system will be advised in the coming months.

Until this date, secretaries will continue to be paid directly by their employer including the new pay rate identified. Should the secretary choose to move to the new terms then the new pay rate should be applied by the school from 1 September 2022.

### **Forthcoming Survey**

To assist with further phases of implementation, a survey will be sent to all schools (in early October) requesting information about the secretaries under contract and also details of the offer made. It is essential that all schools respond to this survey in the time frame given, even if no secretaries have accepted the terms. This information will allow the department to effectively onboard those secretaries who have accepted the offer to payroll.



### **Approach to Annual Leave**

There have been numerous queries from school management in relation to secretaries moving to the pay scale in the Circular but remaining on their existing holiday arrangements which are in excess of the 22 days prescribed in the Circular.

There are differing interpretations of what constitutes annual leave and different arrangements in place across the sector.

#### **The following clarification should be considered:**

It is not intended that the implementation of the agreement would reduce weeks of paid employment, therefore where a school secretary is contracted for a set period (e.g. 36 weeks) on pay including for some periods of closure their working pattern will not be reduced. However, they will not receive any leave on top of their contracted weeks.

However, where a secretary has an allowance of leave that they can use throughout the year, this will be capped at 22 days (pro-rata) and any leave above that will be surrendered if moving to the new terms.

For example –

- a) A Secretary is employed for all 52 weeks and is paid for all weeks of school closure, their working pattern remains the same and they continue to be employed for 52 weeks, there is no change to their leave arrangements as they are already in receipt of more than 22 days paid leave pro rata.
- b) A Secretary is employed for 44 weeks a year (including 6 weeks of school closure) and signs on for 6 weeks. As they are employed during 6 weeks of school closure they do not benefit from the new paid annual leave as they are already in receipt of more than 22 days leave pro rata, their working pattern remains the same.
- c) A Secretary is employed for 38 weeks and is laid off for 14 weeks of the year. They will now receive the 22 days paid leave (pro rata) which extends their period of employment by an additional 4.4 of their usual working weeks to 42.4 weeks and reduces the period of lay-off accordingly.



### **Sick Leave**

For clarification, the sick leave provisions introduced are a minimum and in line with the statutory scheme but secretaries may retain the current sick leave provided by schools if superior. Please note that contractual evidence of any superior entitlement will be required for verification at a future point.

### **Annual Leave and Periods of Closures in 2022**

Further to the points made above, any secretary who would normally be laid off at the October Mid Term Break and/or the Christmas period should instead be paid their allocated annual leave entitlement ensuring that they are paid for these periods and do not then have to apply to the Department of Social Protection for benefits.

This will deal with the issue of the need to be laid off/sign on during the interim period of implementation of the agreement. Therefore this instruction relates only to the forthcoming midterm and Christmas periods.

As set out above, the Department will, in a further phase, implement a new annualised pay rate for those secretaries wishing to have it which will spread their income over the year and negate the need to be laid off/sign on into the future.