



Information Note

School Transport Escorts

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1. Introduction

There is a facility within the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs for the appointment of a School Transport Escort (“Escort”) where a child’s care and safety needs while on school transport are such as to require the support of an Escort.

Under the provisions of [the Education Act, 1998](#)¹ the Board of Management is the authority charged with the direct governance of a recognised school. The Board manages the school on behalf of the patron.

The employment of a School Transport Escort is sanctioned by the School Transport Section of the Department. The Escort is then employed by the School Board of Management or the relevant Education and Training Board (“ETB”) whichever is applicable. As the Escort is employed by the Board of Management/ETB, they are therefore responsible for all employment related matters relating to the Escort. Once the employment is sanctioned, the Department issues grant funding to schools by way of advance payment for the next school year.

This document is to be considered as an information note, it is not expected to replace current employer/employee practices. It is the employer’s role to establish a job description and put in place a contract of employment for their employee.

The Board of Management/ETB, as the employer has responsibility for keeping up to date and complying with policies and legislation relating to terms and conditions of employment. As a result, the Department cannot advise on employment legislation. Schools should engage with the relevant Management Body/ETB. The Management Body/ETB can advise or refer on for further expertise as appropriate.

Other valuable services such as [Citizen's Information Services](#)² and the [Workplace Relations Commission](#)³ provide information on terms and conditions of employment.

¹ [Education Act, 1998 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

² [\(citizensinformation.ie\)](#)

³ [Workplace Relations Commission](#)

2. Sanction for a School Transport Escort

Where a School Transport Escort is required on a service, sanction must be issued by the Department before the recruitment process.

The Department will consider the requirement for an escort as follows.

1. When approved by the SENO on the Special Educational Needs Transport Application

or

2. Where a need has been identified by the school for any of the following reasons;
 - (i) Employment of an escort on a new service
 - (ii) Employment of an escort on an existing service
 - (iii) Employment of an additional escort on an existing service
 - (iv) Employment of an Individual Escort where a child requires one to one assistance.
 - (v) Request for additional funding for an existing escort due to increased journey time on the service.
 - (vi) Should a need be identified by Bus Éireann for an escort, a request for sanction must be sent to the Department by the School.

Such requests must be sent by the school via the School Transport Customer Service Portal at [Customer Service Portal](https://cs.education.gov.ie/) -⁴
The school must provide a detailed explanation for the request.

As part of the approval process, the Department will then consult with Bus Éireann on the provision of the Escort.

Once approved, the Department will issue sanction to the school in writing.
(See Appendix 2, Sample Sanction Letter)

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management/ETB to employ the Escort.

⁴ <https://cs.education.gov.ie/>

3. Funding for School Transport Escorts

The School Transport Section of the Department will issue grant funding to the Board of Management/ETB by way of advance payment for the current and/or following school year. The Board of Management/ETB as the employer are responsible for paying the Escort's salary.

The Process for applying for Funding for a School Transport Escort

1. Once approval has been sanctioned for an escort as outlined in Section 2, ***Sanction for a School Transport Escort***, it is then the responsibility of the Board of Management/ETB to employ the Escort.
2. The school advises the Department of the Escort's details as requested in the sanction letter i.e., the name of the escort, their commencement date or the date their additional hours commenced, and the hours they will work per day. These details are required for calculating advancement of funding.

Reconciliation Process

1. An Escort Reconciliation Form will be issued to each school by the Department towards the end of the school year. (See Appendix 3, Sample Escort *Reconciliation Form*)
2. The reconciliation form must be completed by the school and returned to the Department before the beginning of the next school year. Schools participating in the Summer Programme should only return reconciliation forms after completion of this programme.
3. Any increase or decrease in Escort hours that occurred during the school year should be reflected in the reconciliation form. An increase or decrease in hours can occur for example; where there is a change on the route, additional child added, or if a child ceases to use the service. Schools must seek sanction from School Transport Section before increasing Escort hours.
4. Any funding owing to the School Management Authorities, or any surpluses carried over by schools are taken into consideration when calculating the amount of funding provided to cover the employment of Escorts for the following school year.

School Management Authorities are reminded of their obligations to record attendances in order to furnish reconciliation forms. Payments for School Transport Escort funding commences in early July and priority is given to those schools that have submitted their reconciliations on time. It is endeavoured to have funding

payments to schools completed by the end of October each year once reconciliations forms have been submitted.

The Department is currently in the process of establishing an online solution for submitting reconciliation forms. Schools will be informed in due course when this becomes available.

4. Hours of work

School Transport Escort hours are determined locally by the Board of Management/ETB and may vary from school to school depending on the length of the journey for the child/children on the service, the number of children on the service and the opening/closing times of the school.

The School Transport Escort will generally be considered as starting their working day when the first child who requires escort assistance boards the service. The Escort will generally be considered as finishing their working day when the last child who requires escort assistance is dropped at their destination. These times, morning and afternoon, determine the working hours of the Escort.

The Escort can meet the service at the pick-up point of the first child requiring assistance on the service. Local arrangements between driver and Escort as to pick up points can be accommodated upon mutual agreement however any deviation of the route is not funded by the Department.

Home pickups for School Transport Escorts are not a feature of the School Transport Scheme.

The Escort is obliged to be on the service from when the first child, furthest from school, requiring assistance is picked up and dropped off both in the morning and afternoon.

School Transport Escorts are paid an agreed hourly rate for each hour worked. At the start of the contract of employment and/or beginning of the school year, the Escort should be informed of their normal working hours expected on a daily/weekly basis. This is required under the [Organisation of Working Time Act 1997](#).⁵

⁵ [Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

Funding is provided for the following hours.

In the morning, from the time the first child who requires escort assistance is picked up, completion of the route to school and for the Escort's return journey back to that pickup point (child's home).

In the afternoon, from when the Escort is picked up (at child's home) brought to the school, pick up child/children, completion of the route and back to that pickup point (last child's home).

If the Escort is a staff member meeting the service at the school, funding is provided as follows.

In the morning from the school to the home of the first child requiring assistance, completion of the route and all pick-ups and back to the school.

In the afternoon, from the school, completion of the route and all drop off's and back to the school.

Examples of Escorts hours of work are set out below.

Example 1

Morning – the Escort travels to the home of the first child requiring assistance (child furthest away from the school), the service picks up the child/children, completes the route and drops the child/children to the school, the Escort is then dropped back to first child's home. In the afternoon the Escort is driven back to the school for the afternoon pick up, all children requiring assistance are dropped home, the route is completed, and the escort is returned to the home of child where they were first picked up.

Calculation

Morning – First child's home to school takes 1 hour, dropping escort back to pick up point takes 40mins. Escorts hours for morning is 1hr 40mins.

Afternoon – Escort from pick up point to school 40 mins. Dropping child/children home from school 1 hour.

Total hours worked per day: 3hrs 20mins.

Example 2

Escort meets service at an agreed collection point with the driver – this is considered a local arrangement, and the Escort is not paid for this time until the service collects the first child requiring assistance.

Calculation

Morning - From home of first child requiring assistance, completion of route to school takes 1 hour. Dropping Escort back to home of the first child requiring assistance - 40minutes (any additional journey to the Escorts pick up point is not included).

Escort hours for morning is 1hr 40mins.

Afternoon – Escort from home of the first child requiring assistance to school – 40mins. Dropping child/children home from school is 1 hour.

Total hours worked per day: 3hrs 20mins.

Example 3

Escort meets the service at the school, travels on the service to collect child/children and both the escort and the child/children are dropped to the school.

Calculation

Morning – Distance from school to home of first child requiring assistance – 30minutes. Dropping child/children and escort to school, completion of route – 1 hour
Escorts hours for morning is 1hr 30mins.

Afternoon – Dropping child/children from school to home, completion of route – 1 hour. Dropping Escort back to school – 30mins.

Total hours worked per day: 3 hours.

Please note when completing reconciliation forms.

Escort reconciliation forms are based on 60mins = 100%

Therefore, for example, if working for 1hr 30mins, school claims for 1.5hrs (30 minutes is 50% of one hour)

1hr 15mins is 1.25hrs (15 mins is 25% of one hour).

In the event where an Escort is not required for a specific period of time, i.e. where a child in their care is absent for illness or for other reasons, where the school is closed for in-service days or polling days, funding from the Department is available where the Escort may be entitled to pay as set out in Section 18 of [the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997⁶](#) for the period which they have made themselves available for work, but for whatever reason they are not in fact required.

School Transport Escorts should be given adequate notice of any planned school closures for which they will not be required to work.

If you require any further information in relation to employment law matters, you should seek information initially from the relevant Management Body associated with the school and/or legal advisors.

⁶ [Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

5. Employment Contracts

In accordance with the provisions of [the Education Act, 1998](#)⁷ the Board of Management is the body charged with the direct governance of a school, which includes the employment of staff within the school. Amongst its obligations, the Employer (Board of Management/ETB) must provide the employee with a contract of employment which must include minimum information as prescribed by the Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994. The Department cannot provide advice regarding terms and conditions of employment.

Management Bodies/ETBs are available to assist member schools on a wide range of issues. If a school wishes to seek information on behalf of the Board of Management, please contact the Management Body associated with your school.

The Workplace Relations Act 2015 (Fixed Payment Notice) Regulations 2023 (the “Regulations”) which were published in January, detail employment law offences and their related ‘on the spot’ fines, which range from €500 to €2,000 per offence. These ‘on the spot’ fines cover a variety of offences, including failure to provide employees, without reasonable cause, with their terms of employment, within one month of the employee’s commencement date, as referenced below.

Five Day Employee Information Requirement under Section 3(1A) of [the Terms of Employment \(Information\) Act 1994](#)⁸

An employer shall, not later than 5 days after the commencement of an employee's employment with the employer, give or cause to be given to the employee a statement in writing, which is dated and signed by or on behalf of the employer, containing the following core of the terms of the employee's employment, at a minimum:

1. the full names of the employer and the employee.
2. the address of the employer or of the principal place of business in the State.
3. the place of work, or where there is no fixed or main place of work, a statement specifying that the employee is employed at various places or is free to determine his or her place of work or to work at various places.
4. the title, grade, nature, or category of work for which the employee is employed or a brief description of the work.
5. the date of commencement of the contract of employment.
6. the duration and conditions relating to a probationary period, if applicable.
7. the expected duration of the contract, in the case of a temporary contract, or the end date if the contract is a fixed term contract.

⁷ [Education Act, 1998 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

⁸ [Terms of Employment \(Information\) Act, 1994 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

8. the remuneration, including the initial basic amount, any other component elements, if applicable, indicated separately, the frequency and method of payment of the remuneration to which the employee is entitled and the pay reference period for the purposes of the National Minimum Wage Act, 2000.
9. the number of hours the employer reasonably expects the employee to work per normal working day and per normal working week.
10. any terms and conditions relating to hours of work (including overtime).
11. If applicable, the employer's policy on the manner in which tips or gratuities and mandatory charges are treated.

Existing employees may make a written request to an employer for a "Day 5" statement. Upon receipt of a written request, an employer must issue a "Day 5" statement within 2 months of the date of the request.

One Month Employee Information Requirement under Section 3(1) of [the Terms of Employment \(Information\) Act 1994](#).⁹

An employer shall also, not later than one month after the commencement of an employee's employment with the employer, give or cause to be given to the employee a statement in writing, which is dated and signed by or on behalf of the employer, containing the following terms of the employee's employment, at a minimum:

1. The employee may request a written statement of the average hourly rate of pay.
2. The length of intervals between the times remuneration is paid e.g., weekly, fortnightly, monthly.
3. Terms or conditions relating to paid leave (other than paid sick leave).
4. Any terms or conditions relating to incapacity for work due to sickness or injury.
5. Any terms or conditions relating to pensions and pension schemes.
6. Periods of Notice or method for determining periods of notice.
7. A reference to any collective agreements which affect the terms of employment.
8. A reference to any applicable registered employment agreement or employment regulation order and where the employee may obtain a copy of same.
9. The training entitlement, if any, provided by the employer.
10. If the employee is a temporary agency worker, the identity of the user undertakings.
11. If the work pattern is entirely or mostly unpredictable, the statement must state:
 - (i) that that work schedule is variable, the number of guaranteed paid hours and the remuneration for work performed in addition to those guaranteed hours.
 - (ii) the reference hours and days within which the employee may be required to work and

⁹ [Terms of Employment \(Information\) Act, 1994 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

- (iii) the minimum notice period to which the employee is entitled to before the start of a work assignment and, where applicable, the deadline for notification in accordance with Section 17 of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 and
- (iv) Where it is the responsibility of the employer, the identity of the social security institutions receiving the social insurance contributions attached to the contract of employment and any protection relating to social security provided by the employer.

6. Garda Vetting of School Transport Escorts

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management/ETB to check the legislation and ensure that all vetting procedures have been adhered to.

The national vetting bureau website offers answers to frequently asked questions here: <https://vetting.garda.ie/Help/FAQ>

Any queries relating to vetting should be addressed to the National Vetting Bureau.

7. School Transport Escort Pay

The hourly rate of pay for School Transport Escorts is set by the Department and is kept under review. School Management Authorities are notified of any revised salary rates as they occur by way of circular issued from the Department. When rates are amended, the Department will issue a Circular advising of the new rate.

Any adjustments in the hourly rate will be factored into the Annual Reconciliation of Expenditure form in calculating the funding amount paid to schools on an annual basis.

The most up-to-date information in relation to Revised Payment Mechanism for Hourly-Paid Bus Escorts with effect from the commencement of the 2021/2022 Academic Year Cessation of “Rolled-up Holiday Pay” is contained in the [Department of Education Circular 0024/2021](https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/revised-payment-mechanism-for-hourly-paid-bus-escorts-with-effect-from-the-commencement-of-the-20212022-academic-year-cessation-of-rolled-up-holiday-pay/).¹⁰ And is available on the Department’s website at <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/revised-payment-mechanism-for-hourly-paid-bus-escorts-with-effect-from-the-commencement-of-the-20212022-academic-year-cessation-of-rolled-up-holiday-pay/>

¹⁰ [gov - Revised Payment Mechanism for Hourly-Paid Bus Escorts with effect from the commencement of the 2021/2022 Academic Year Cessation of “Rolled-up Holiday Pay” \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/revised-payment-mechanism-for-hourly-paid-bus-escorts-with-effect-from-the-commencement-of-the-20212022-academic-year-cessation-of-rolled-up-holiday-pay/)

How much is the grant and how can it be utilised.

Funding issues yearly in advance to the schools concerned.

The annual School Transport Escort grant is based on the daily hours worked by the Escort.

The method of calculating funding for schools is as follows:

- A.** Total annual hours worked by all Escorts employed in the school @ the rate per hour.
- B.** Holiday Pay @ 8% of **A**.
- C.** Employers' P.R.S.I. @ prsi rate **A+B**
- D.** Administration Allowance @ 5% of **A**

The administration allowance included in the Escort grant payment is paid to the Board of Management/ETB solely for the administration of the escort employment. This charge is intended to assist schools in defraying the cost of administering the employment of Escorts in their school. It is a matter for the Board of Management/ETB to decide how this is utilised.

An example on how to calculate the admin allowance is illustrated below:

A School Transport Escort works a total of 205 hours in the school year.

In order to calculate the admin allowance of 5% the following calculation is applied.
 $205 \text{ (total hours)} \times \text{rate per hour} \times 5\%$

Calculating the PRSI rate for the employer

This should include both hours worked by the School Transport Escort and holiday hours paid to the Escort. Escorts will take and be paid their accumulated statutory annual leave entitlement during the closure periods at Christmas, Easter and summer.

8. Leave Entitlements

As the Board of Management/ETB is the employer of the School Transport Escort, it is the responsibility of the employer to keep up to date and comply with legislation relating to leave entitlements, terms and conditions of employment, etc. This includes ensuring the employee is issued an employment contract which generally includes for matters related to leave, e.g., Annual leave, Maternity Leave, Force Majeure and other leave entitlements.

The Department can, where appropriate, issue additional grant funding for the employment of a substitute escort while the escort is on leave.

Information relating to maternity leave legislation is set out in [the Maternity Protection Acts 1994 and 2004](#).¹¹

Information relating to the protection of employees is set out in [the Protection of Employees \(Fixed-Term Work\) Act 2003](#).¹²

The most recent arrangements for COVID-19 are set out in the Department of Education [Circular 0040/2022](#).¹³

9. Holiday Pay

The most up-to-date information in relation to “rolled up holiday pay” is contained in the Department of Education [Circular 0024/2021](#).¹⁴

Prior to the issue of Circular 0024/2021, the hourly rates paid to School Transport Escorts included an element in respect of annual leave. This practice is known as “rolled-up holiday pay.” The effect of this Circular is to cease the practice of paying “rolled-up holiday pay” to such staff and to introduce a separate payment in respect of holiday pay. This change was made to bring the method of remunerating such staff into line with the European Union Working Time Directive, following a decision of the European Commission.

10. Sick Leave

While the Department issues grant funding for the payment of sick leave, the granting of sick leave is a matter for each employer and is subject to the conditions set out by the employer while adhering to appropriate employment legislation.

This information note sets out the maximum grant funding that is allowed, for the duration of the Escort’s sick pay.

The Department can, where appropriate, issue additional grant funding for the employment of a substitute escort while the Escort is on sick leave. The Department wishes to advise that the appropriate funding will be made available subject to the

¹¹ [Maternity Protection Act, 1994 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

¹² [Protection of Employees \(Fixed-Term Work\) Act 2003 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

¹³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/ae217-covid-19-working-arrangements-for-certain-higher-risk-employees-of-recognised-primary-and-post-primary-schools-in-the-free-education-scheme-and-of-etbs-employed-using-grant-funding-for-the-202223-school-year/>

¹⁴ [gov - Revised Payment Mechanism for Hourly-Paid Bus Escorts with effect from the commencement of the 2021/2022 Academic Year Cessation of “Rolled-up Holiday Pay” \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

following Sick Leave arrangements for approved School Transport Escorts employed by Boards of Management/ETBs.

The Department may provide grant funding for full pay (less appropriate deduction in respect of P.R.S.I. benefits) during sick leave absences up to the following limits in any period of twelve months service: -

- After 3 months continuous service – up to 6 weeks
- After 6 months continuous service – up to 9 weeks
- After 12 months continuous service – up to 13 weeks

No grant funding will be provided for sick pay during the first three months service. Previous service, so far as it has been continuous, may be allowed to reckon towards the qualifying period for the grant of paid sick leave. Qualifying service is exclusive of any period of leave without pay.

Self-certified (Uncertified) Sick Leave:

The Department may issue grant funding for a single or two-day self-certified sick leave absence, subject to a maximum of 7 days self-certified paid sick leave over a rolling two-year period.

11.Redundancy

Generally, a redundancy situation arises if the School Transport Escort's job ceases to exist, and they are not replaced. In such cases the Escort may be entitled to a statutory redundancy payment. Legislation covering statutory redundancy can be found under [the Redundancy Payments Act 1967](#).¹⁵

The amount of statutory redundancy is subject to a maximum earnings limit. Please refer to Redundancy payment legislation.

Where an Escort, for whatever reason, is no longer required to work on a service to the school, the School/Principal should notify the Department when submitting their annual reconciliation return. No further funding for a salary will issue in respect of that Escort from the Department unless a new sanction is issued to the School/Principal for employment on a new service.

If a redundancy occurs the Department can issue a payment to the school to cover the cost of the redundancy which should be line with Redundancy payment legislation. Schools should consult with their relevant Management Body/ETB in

¹⁵ [Redundancy Payments Act, 1967 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

relation to the engagement required by other areas of the Department regarding funding for redundancy.

School Transport Section require a copy of the redundancy calculator which can be accessed at: [My Welfare, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection - Online Services](#)¹⁶ and a cover note from the Board of Management/ETB/Principal to state that the School Transport Escort qualifies for redundancy under [the Redundancy Payment Act 1967](#).¹⁷

The documentation, as outlined above, is sent to School Transport Section, and once it is in order, payment is issued to the school for the redundancy amount calculated. The Board of Management/ETB, as the employer, issue the redundancy payment to the School Transport Escort.

12. Investigations

In a small number of cases, there may be occasions where disputes or issues arise that may require the Board of Management/ETB as the employer to investigate the circumstances reported.

As the Department has sanctioned a grant payment for the employment of a School Transport Escort for the school, it may be in order for the Escort to receive salary payment from the school for the duration of time an investigation may be taking place, providing the Escort is not travelling on the service.

It may also be in order for the school to employ a substitute escort to undertake these duties for the duration of the investigation. Please contact School Transport Section if a case that requires investigation arises.

13. Escorts on services serving more than one school.

Where a School Transport Escort is employed on a service accommodating pupils from different schools, the Escort is generally employed by the school who received sanction from the Department to employ the Escort.

If a situation arises where additional escort(s) are required on a service serving more than one school, due to the specific needs of the child/children on board, schools can contact School Transport Section directly to make a request. As children's needs

¹⁶ [MyWelfare, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection - Online Services](#)

¹⁷ [Redundancy Payments Act, 1967 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

are individual to each case, these requests will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Where the Escort has children in their care travelling to more than one school on the bus, each pupil must be received by a responsible person at set down. The Escort should not leave the bus while children remain in the vehicle, unless under exceptional circumstances.

A handover process is agreed between the employer and the Escort.

Any queries related to services can be directed to School Transport Section in the Department via the Customer Service Portal;

[Customer Service Portal](#) -¹⁸

14. Legislation

While the Department provides some general information it cannot be prescriptive in relation to employment legislation. It is the responsibility of the employer to keep up to date and comply with legislation relating to terms and conditions of employment. Below is some general information and details of where to source the necessary legislation. This list is not exhaustive.

1. **Employee Protection:** Information relating to the protection of employees is set out in the [Protection of Employees \(Fixed-Term Work\) Act 2003](#).¹⁹
 - **Public Holiday entitlements:** Information relating to public holiday entitlements are set out in the [Organisation of Working Time Act 1997](#).²⁰ To qualify for public holiday pay a School Transport Escort must have worked a total of 40 hours over a five-week period ending immediately before the public holiday.
 - **Terms of Employment:** Information in relation to changes to the Employment (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 2018 can be found in the following link: [The Employment \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 2018](#).²¹ which came into effect on 4 March 2019 and makes a small number of significant changes to

¹⁸ <https://cs.education.gov.ie/>

¹⁹ [Protection of Employees \(Fixed-Term Work\) Act 2003 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

²⁰ [Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

²¹ [Employment \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 2018 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

employment rights legislation. These changes will affect some areas of the following Acts:

- Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994
 - Organisation of Working Time Act 1997
 - Workplace Relations Act 2015²²
- **Employment Contracts:** Information relating to contracts of employment are laid out under the [Terms of Employment \(Information\) Act 1994](#).²³ It is the responsibility of the Employer to provide the employee with a contract of employment and certain minimum information must, be provided to the employee within two periods of time – five days and one month of commencement of employment.
- **Working Hours:** Information relating to the legislation on working time and breaks is set out in the [Organisation of Working Time Act 1997](#).²⁴ The employer must keep a record of hours worked. This is set out in S.I. No. 473/2001 - Organisation of Working Time (Records) (Prescribed Form and Exemptions) Regulations 2001.²⁵

15. Further Resources

The Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU)

In accordance with DES Circulars 60/2017 and 02/2018, the FSSU supports Boards of Management in the Community & Comprehensive, Primary and Voluntary Secondary School sectors. The FSSU supports boards of management in complying with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 in terms of transparency, accountability, and financial responsibility for State and other funding. The FSSU also supports boards of management in meeting their compliance requirements to other regulatory and statutory bodies.

The FSSU is fully funded by the Department of Education and is hosted by the Secretariat of Secondary Schools Ltd. Information can be found on their website; <https://www.fssu.ie>²⁶ or you can email: primary@fssu.ie

²² [Workplace Relations Act 2015 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

²³ [Terms of Employment \(Information\) Act, 1994 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

²⁴ [Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

²⁵ [S.I. No. 473/2001 - Organisation of Working Time \(Records\) \(Prescribed Form and Exemptions\) Regulations, 2001 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

²⁶ [Financial Support Services Unit - Home Page - FSSU](#)

Management Bodies are available to assist member schools on a wide range of issues. If you wish to seek information on behalf of the Board of Management, please contact the Management Body associated with your school.

16. Appendices

- 1. Frequently Asked Questions**
- 2. SAMPLE Sanction Letter issued to schools**
- 3. SAMPLE Escort Reconciliation Form issued to schools.**

Appendix 1 – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the process for applying for Sanction and Funding?

The Department will consider;

- a) the requirement for an escort as outlined in the Special Educational Needs Transport Application form. School Transport Section will then consult with Bus Éireann as to the requirement of the Escort on a service.
- b) the requirement for an escort following a written request by the School/Principal for an additional or individual escort.
- c) where the school receive a recommendation from Bus Eireann for an escort a request for sanction must be sent from the school to the Department before employing.

Where an Escort is required School Transport Section will issue sanction to the School/Principal advising them of the requirement to employ a School Transport Escort.

The Board of Management/ETB employ the Escort and advise School Transport Section of the Escort details required for advancement of funding for the current school year.

School Transport Section issue reconciliation forms to the School/Principal for completion at the end of each school year. The School/Principal returns the completed form for advancement of funding for the next school year. Any funding owing or surpluses paid to school will be taken into consideration for calculation of advanced funding. Any increase or decrease in Escort hours that occurred during the school year should be reflected in the reconciliation form. Schools must seek sanction from School Transport Section before increasing Escort hours.

Where an Escort has worked for the Summer Programme period these hours can be claimed by including them in the reconciliation form return after Summer Programme has ended.

All queries in this regard can be directed to School Transport via the Customer Service Portal at [Customer Service Portal](#) -²⁷

2. Who employs the School Transport Escort?

The Board of Management/ETB is the employer of the School Transport Escort and has responsibility of employing the Escort.

²⁷ <https://cs.education.gov.ie/>

The Department of Education issue grant funding to the Board of Management/ETB to assist in defraying the cost involved in engaging a suitable person to act as an Escort on transport. The Board of Management/ETB as the employer are responsible for paying the Escort's salary.

3. What is the communication role of an Escort?

As the employer, it is a matter for each Board of Management/ETB to agree communication requirements between the Escort and the staff member collecting the child(ren), for example, to inform the Special Needs Assistant/Teacher of how the child is that morning and relay any information from the parent/guardian regarding the child's requirements.

The Escort is obliged to report any concerns on transport in line with the schools Child Safeguarding Policy to the Board of Management/ETB/Principal of the school in which he/she is employed.

4. Is it the responsibility of the Escort to inform parents/guardians if transport is not running and/or to inform the driver/contractor if the child is absent?

It is the responsibility of the driver/contractor to inform families, the Escort and the school if transport is not running, for example due to adverse weather conditions.

It is the parents/guardian's responsibility to inform the driver/contractor if their child will be absent from school, for example due to illness.

5. Can you advise on Social Welfare payment Queries?

Under the provision of the Education Acts, the Board of Management is responsible for the operation of the school. As the employer, the Board of Management/ETB is responsible for most employment related requirements of School Transport Escorts.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management/ETB as the employer to keep up to date and comply with all employment law obligations and to calculate and confirm the correct number of holidays due to be paid to Escorts. As a result, the Department cannot advise on these matters.

You can seek advice from your local Social Protection INTREO/Branch Office <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e95f88-operational-guidelines-jobseekers-benefit/> or from the Financial Support Services Unit: <https://www.fssu.ie>
Email address: primary@fssu.ie

6. Is there training available for a School Transport Escort?

It is understood that many schools provide training to Escorts as part of the overall school staffing development. Schools can check with their local Education Support Centres on training that may be available for Escorts. Certain Education Support Centres provide online training which will be listed on the website below.

ESCI website on www.esci.ie

Training is also being rolled out by External Staffing with regard to Child Protection Procedures from the commencement of the 2025/26 school year, and schools will be notified by ESR in this regard.

7. Will School Transport Escort be paid for attending mandatory training

Yes, Where a bus escort is required to attend mandatory training for part or full day, they should be paid for the hours that they attended, this would include those who only work for morning only. This can be claimed back by the school through the reconciliation form that they return to School Transport Section each year.

8. Is the School Transport Escort paid if they are available for work but not required?

In certain circumstances, an Escort is available for work; however, they may not be required due to the absence of the driver/pupil.

The current advice as mentioned in the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997, indicates that;

In the event where an Escort is not required for a specific period of time, i.e. where a child in their care is absent for illness or for other reasons, where the school is closed for in-service days or polling days, funding from the Department is available where the Escort may be entitled to pay as set out in Section 18 of the [Organisation of Working Time Act 1997](#)²⁸ for the period which they have made themselves available for work, but for whatever reason they are not in fact required.

School Transport Escorts should be given adequate notice of any planned school closures for which they will not be required to work.

If you require any further information in relation to employment law matters, you should seek information initially from the relevant Management Body associated with the school and/or legal advisors.

²⁸ [Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](http://irishstatutebook.ie)

9. Can a school request additional escort(s) on board a service?

If a school wishes to seek sanction for the employment of any additional Escorts on board a service, they can send the request directly to School Transport Section. As each case is different, these requests will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Please make contact with the officer assigned to your school area in School Transport Section via the Customer Service Portal; [Customer Service Portal](#) ²⁹

10. Is there a set ratio of escort to pupils on a service?

There is no set ratio, as each pupil will have different levels of requirements, some have very complex needs that may require the assistance of more than one Escort. It would be a matter for the school in consultation with the NCSE and the family to make the decision in relation to the care needs of the pupil(s). The school can make contact directly with School Transport Section via the Customer Service Portal at [Customer Service Portal](#) ³⁰ to seek sanction for an additional escort where required.

11. What is the retirement age for a School Transport Escort?

What is the retirement age for a bus School Transport Escort and is it mandatory that they retire at that age?

Per <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/retirement/> :- As an employee, your retirement age is set out in your contract of employment. There is no single fixed retirement age for employees.

12. Is there any lump sum payment or pension available to a School Transport Escort on retirement?

If the Escort wishes to retire, and the employee has contributed to a private pension scheme they should contact their pension provider directly.

If they made sufficient PRSI contributions during their working life, they may be entitled to the State Pension (Contributory).

If they have not made sufficient PRSI contributions, they can apply for a State Pension (Non-Contributory), which is means-tested.

²⁹ <https://cs.education.gov.ie/>

³⁰ <https://cs.education.gov.ie/>

Your employee should contact the Department of Social Protection for any information regarding state pensions or other supports available to them.

13. Where can I contact School Transport Section?

Queries related to applying for sanction for an Escort or the status of an application can be sent via the Customer Service Portal at [Customer Service Portal -](#)

Queries related to grant funding or policy can be sent to escorttransport@education.gov.ie

The full postal address for School Transport Section is:

An Roinn Oideachais, Bóthar Phort Laoise, An Tulach Mhór, Co Uibh Fhailí,
R35Y2N5

Department of Education, Portlaoise Rd, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, R35 Y2N5.

Tel: 05793 25466

Appendix 2 – SAMPLE Sanction Letter

[Name of Principal]

[Name and Address of School]

[Date of Letter]

Letter of Sanction for School Transport Escort

Roll Number: *[Insert Roll Number]*

Dear Principal,

I refer to recent application for school transport escort **or** application for funding for additional hours to assist with the below named child/children's care and safety needs while on a school transport service.

(Insert child/children's names)

I wish to advise that the Department sanctions the employment of a school transport escort **or** additional escort hours.

As the employer, it is the responsibility of the Board of Management/ETB to employ the School Transport Escort. This includes advertising for the role, conducting the employment process and ensuring that Garda Vetting Clearance for the School Transport Escort has been completed prior to the commencement of employment.

Once the service commences, and you have found a suitable candidate, please advise me via email of the following details.

1. The Name of the Escort:
2. The Commencement date:
3. The Number of hours per day the Escort will be on duty:

Please note that advance funding cannot be paid until the details outlined above are returned to School Transport Section.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Executive Officer]

[School Transport Section]

[Section email]

[Tel Number]

Appendix 3 – SAMPLE Escort Reconciliation Form

Please enter school name:							
Please enter school Roll Number:							
Please enter school address:							
Please enter school county:							
Number of full time Escorts employed by school:							
Please note: By returning this completed form, the School Principal is confirming that the details submitted are correct and in order for payment.							
Name of Escort or Sub Escort		advise if Escort or Sub Escort (dropdown)	Original start date of Escort	Route assigned to Escort (or child name)	Total hours per day	No. of days worked for 2022/23 school year (including Bank Holidays)	Total hours for 2022/23 school year
		Escort					0
							0
							0
							0
							0
							0
							0
							0
							0
							0
							0
					TOTAL HOURS CALCULATION		0
The Department of Education, as far as practicable and having regard to the resources available, provides for education and training for people resident in the State at a level appropriate to meet the needs and abilities of those people. The Department requires the above personal data in order to allocate funding to schools for the employment of escorts to accompany pupils with special educational needs. The privacy notice outlining further information in relation to this form can be found at www.gov.ie .							