



BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT NEWS

October 2011

Hello again,

I hope you all haven't been washed away by the rain this week and that this busy term is going well for you.

This month has been a busy one here in the office. Many schools are seeking advice on panels, recruitment, suppression of posts, contracts, posts of Responsibilities and HR issues. I have been working extensively on the Online Training module and this is almost complete. We will advise schools once this is available.

Many boards will now only have one meeting left before the changeover on 1 December 2011. At this final meeting aim to try to close as many actions as

you can rather than begin new projects. It would be a nice idea to have an informal meeting (tea and biscuits and general chat) with the incoming board so that they gain an understanding of what has been achieved over the last four years and what you have been unable to get finished.

It would also be a good idea for corresponding officers on the old and new boards to meet to discuss handover of work/files etc. The new board may not know who will be taking on particular roles yet so it may be necessary to arrange for handovers later than 1 December, Until next time, Louise.

Information Booklet for Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs

The NCSE (National Council for Special Education) have published a new information booklet for parents of children with Special Educational Needs. The booklet gives parents information on the full range of educational supports available in schools for children with special educational needs.

To download a copy please visit: http://www.ncse.ie/publications/Parental_Booklet.asp

Spread the Word: Board of Management Newsletter

We are aiming to send this newsletter to all members of Educate Together Boards of Management. However, as the four year term of office for BOMs draws to a close our list has become very out of date. If you are no longer a member of a board and wish to be removed from the list please let us know at info@educatetogether.ie. Likewise if any members of your board have not received this newsletter let us know and we will send them a copy.

Publication of the Child Protection Procedures

(Circular 0065/2011)

In the last newsletter boards were advised of the publication of 'Children First- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011'. The DES has now recently published **Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools**, which seeks to implement the 'Children First' guidelines in a school setting.

The main elements (as detailed in [Circular 0065/2011](#)) of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools are as follows:

- All schools must have a child protection policy that adheres to certain key principles of best practice in child protection and welfare and all schools are required to formally adopt and implement without modification, the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as part of their overall child protection policy. A child protection policy template for use by schools for this purpose is set out at **Appendix 1** (of [Circular 65/2011](#))
- All primary schools must fully implement the Stay Safe programme.
- There are improved oversight arrangements which are designed to ensure uniform and consistent implementation of Children First within the schools sector. These have been introduced to strengthen and clarify the existing oversight arrangements in schools.

For ease of reference, the key improved oversight requirements introduced are summarised below. These requirements should, however, be read within the context of the overall *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. It should also be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of the oversight arrangements for schools, which are outlined in detail within the relevant sections of the procedures.

- A copy of the school's child protection policy which includes the names of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP shall be made available to all school personnel and the Parents' Association and must be readily accessible to parents on request.
- The name of the DLP must be displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school.
- In addition to informing the school authority of those cases where a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to the HSE, the

DLP shall also inform the school authority of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made. At each Board of Management meeting the principal's report shall include the number of all such cases and this shall be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.

- Each school must undertake an annual review of its child protection policy and its implementation by the school. A checklist to be used in undertaking the review is included at **Appendix 2** ([Circular 0065/2011](#)). The school must put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review. The Board of Management shall make arrangements to inform school personnel that the review has been undertaken. Written notification, that the review has been undertaken shall be provided to the Parents' Association (or where none exists directly to parents). A record of the review and its outcome shall be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.



Parents, pupils and staff in Educate Together schools around the country are gearing up for the Educate Together National Fundraising Day. Get involved! Visit www.educatetogether.ie today to sign up to support Educate Together on October 28th!!

Appointment of new Boards of Management

The run up to 1st December 2011

‘If you think you’re too small to make a difference, you haven’t been in bed with a mosquito!’ Anita Roddick

We are fast approaching the expiration date for the current term of office for school Boards of Management, 30th November 2011. Each new Board of Management will take up office from 1st December 2011 for the next 4 year cycle.

Throughout the recruitment and nomination process for Patron Nominees, we have been amazed by the wealth of skill, experience and passion of the nominated candidates. Some have been involved with their schools for a number of years while some are new to the network, but we are confident that the next term of office will be well executed by our incoming Patron Nominees and all the newly Board Members. Formal appointments for Patron Nominees will be made in the coming fortnight.

Our Volunteer Officer is still waiting to receive nominations from a handful of schools. Please don’t hesitate to call Sarah Williams on 01 429 2500 if you have any queries about this process.

‘In anticipation of the appointment of new Boards of Management from 1 December 2011, the Department, following consultations with organisations representing school management, parents and teachers, has updated the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure Booklet.’ These were issued to all schools in circular 0064/2011 and can be downloaded here

1. [Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011](#)

2. [Circular 64/2011- Election of new Boards of Management of Primary Schools](#)

‘Where practicable’, the Department is suggesting that there be no more than two parents on a Board, to ensure the widest possible representation. Across the Educate Together network, it is the experience of our schools that it is not always practicable to have no more than two parents. As Patron Body, we have been working hard to identify and get to know potential Patron Nominees from outside the Educate Together community, and we can confirm that we will be appointing a combination of both parents and wider community individuals as Patron Nominees.

Membership of NABMSE

NABMSE is the representative and networking association, which gives support to Boards of Management of schools providing education for children with special needs in Ireland. NABMSE has over 100 members from Special and Mainstream schools. A number of Educate Together schools (who provide additional special classes for children with Special Educational Needs) are already members. Educate Together would like to encourage all schools who are currently providing (or will be providing) additional classes for children with Special Education Needs to apply for membership.

Reasons to join NABMSE

- Members gain access to a variety of members only resources, available through the website.
- Provision of regular information on issues affecting education and special education in Ireland.
- Advice and guidance on issues affecting Boards of Management in Special Education in Ireland.
- Opportunity to be consulted and have views represented at committees and forums that affect special education in Ireland.
- Representation on fora, Boards and Working groups related to education and special education in Ireland.
- Opportunity to network with other Boards of Management at conferences, seminars and training.
- Provision of training and training related information for Boards of Management in Special Education in Ireland.
- Provision of Resources for Boards of Management through the website, emails and email newsletters.

Membership of NABMSE follows the academic year and is usually due in mid October. The fee for the year is €76.

Please visit <http://www.nabmse.org/members/who-should-join/> for more details and to download the application form.

Recruitment and Redeployment Panel Update

As per the [latest DES update on the redeployment panels \(13th September\)](#) all permanent appointments must be in place by November 7th. The notice states:

“Permanent vacancies that occur

- Prior to 7th November 2011 but the appointment process is not completed by the 7 November
- Or after 7th November

can only be filled on a fixed term basis unless the appointee is a permanent or CID holding teacher from a redeployment panel.”

This means that the last date for advertising permanent posts for this year was 14th October (for schools that had cleared the Main and Supplementary panels). After November 7th schools will only be able to fill a permanent post if they take teachers from the Main redeployment panel. Two teachers have been added to the Educate Together Main panel, as their permanent posts have been suppressed. There may be one or two more teachers added in the coming days according to the DES. The Panel list was circulated to all schools on Friday 21st October.

After November 1st (7th November is the first working day for schools in November) schools will be allowed to fill new permanent posts in a fixed term capacity until the end of the school year. Boards should be advised that when filling a fixed term post after November 1st that the contract should only last until the end of June rather than August. [Circular 61/2010](#) states:

“A whole-time fixed term teacher who commences employment after the first working day in November and who continues in a fixed term capacity until 30th June will not get paid for the summer vacation unless s/he secures a further fixed term or permanent teaching post from the first working day of the following school year.”

Teachers who take up a position after November 1st are not entitled to be paid for the summer unless they gain full-time employment the following September and boards should take care not to give a contract which includes the summer months!



An all day all day Danceathon at Limerick School
Project in aid of Educate Together

Board of Management Training 2011/2012

Module I- Introduction to the Board of Management

The first module of the Board of Management training will be online very soon!

This module will cover the statutory framework in which boards operate, the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure and its impact on the role of the board. It will also look at issues/work that boards encounter e.g. ethos issues, policies, confidentiality, fund-raising, principals role, the board as an employer and more.

It is envisaged that all Board members will do this module online before coming together for a face-to-face session to discuss questions/ queries that emerged from the module. We had originally planned to run these face-to-face modules in November but because many boards might not be fully constituted until after the 1 December changeover, we have decided to postpone this session until 14th January to ensure that all board members will have the opportunity to attend. Details of a venue will be announced closer to the time.

Educate Together Online!

Updated daily, the [Educate Together Facebook Page](#) allows you to connect with fellow teachers, parents and board members, and find out what's going on in the wider school network - and it's fully interactive!



Ethos Conference 2011

We are organising an Ethos Conference on November 12th. This conference will be open to teachers in Educate Together schools as well as existing Board of Management members and confirmed Board of Management members for the new term. We appreciate that very little school time has passed since our last conference in April but it was felt within the organisation that Educate Together events tended to cluster around the last term - a very busy term for schools - and so a calendar was developed with the intention of effectively spreading events throughout the school year.

In response to requests from schools outside of Dublin, we're organising the event for 2011 / 2012 in Galway. It has been decided to make the Ethos Conference an annual event and if venues outside of Dublin attract sufficient numbers we plan to move the conference to various locations every second year. Unfortunately, due to costs incurred in hosting such events an attendance fee of €20 will be charged to each participant from individual schools.

This year's event will be held in the Carlton Hotel, Galway. Tea/ Coffee will be available from 10.00 and we plan to begin at 1.30 with lunch at 1.30pm. To register for this conference, please see <http://www.educatetogether.ie/school-support/2011/10/ethos-conference-2011/>.



**Celebrating 'Friendship'
in Wexford Educate
Together NS**



Employee Assistance Service

The new provider of the Employee Assistance Service is [Carecall](#). Carecall will continue with the same phone number that was used by VHI to prevent confusion: 1800 411 057.

The Employee Assistance Service is a free confidential counselling service which can provide teachers, special needs assistants and their families with support, counselling, advice and information. Each person will have access to a 24 hour telephone support line and up to 4 x 1 hour confidential counselling sessions based on the brief solution focused model of counselling. Everyone can self refer and the counselling can be delivered either over the telephone or face to face at locations throughout Ireland. Carecall will be able to offer an appointment within 3 working day of referral. All Carecall counsellors are accredited and are under the supervision of our Clinical Services Manager.

The service guarantees the privacy and confidentiality of all those who use it. As aspects of work with the counsellor are confidential within strict, professional counselling guidelines clarified with employees at the beginning of the counselling.

Confidentiality and Communication of Board Matters

When the new boards take up their position on 1 December 2011 it is very important that all new members (and old!) understand the importance of keeping board business confidential. It would be a good idea to discuss in detail what confidentiality means at the very first meeting of the full board.

Point to consider:

It may be easy for BOM members to understand why confidentiality is important when dealing with a sensitive issue concerning a child or staff member, however, there are times when the subject may be greyer. A breach of confidentiality by a board member is considered extremely serious, and should be brought to the patron of the school for investigation. Where it is shown that there has been a breach, the member is removed from the board, subject to the consent of the Minister, and is precluded from being on boards of management in the future.

What does confidentiality mean?

Board members should not discuss Board matters (that is matters you would not know about if you were not on the board!!) with anyone other than fellow board members- not your partner, friend or child's teacher.

Be Prepared

It is natural that board members are often the focus of questions or queries from members of the school community (and sometimes from outside the school community)- the key is to be able to handle them! For example:

- The Teacher nominee's might be asked by another teacher what enrolments are like for the following September as the teacher may be worried about going on the redeployment panel;
- A Parent nominee might be asked by another parent what teacher their child will have the following September.

You should prepare a response to use if inquisitive questions are directed in your direction- "I'm sorry I'm unable to discuss anything outside of what's in the Agreed Report"- as it can be awkward to be caught unprepared.

Agreed Report

It is important that the work of Boards of

"It is important to note that Board members are not delegates of their electorates. They have no obligation to either report back to their electors or to take instruction from them on how to vote at Board meetings. Such reporting may well be a breach of confidentiality requirements. It is a matter for each board to decide what may be reported and by whom and, in this respect, it is advisable that personnel, financial and personal matters should be treated strictly confidential."

Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure, 2011, Section 8.

Management is communicated to members of the school community. It is strongly recommended that the Board draw up an Agreed Report at the end of each meeting in order to convey progress on issues, decisions made and general news to the school community. Even if the board has made no progress on certain issues it is important that this is communicated- otherwise it may be difficult for members of the school community to notice what is actually going on. Boards do a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes and this should be shared.

The board should identify what information should be disclosed, to whom and how. Typical media for communication will include the website, newsletters, notice boards and announcements at assemblies.

Word of Warning From One of Our Schools!

If your school has a security system make sure that it is a 'dual system' i.e. landline **and** wireless! This allows the security company to be notified of a break in, even when the landline is cut.

Make sure that back ups are kept of all records on a computer and that such back ups are kept off site. Otherwise the theft of your server will mean the loss of all records and backups. One Educate Together school has recently learned the above the hard way!