



THE VERY USEFUL GUIDE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

**A Vision for
School Leadership**

**Written by the
NAPD Welfare Committee**

The Very Useful Guide



Introduction

High quality leadership is crucial in establishing a shared purpose and vision for a school and to the achievement of high quality educational outcomes for students. The primary purpose of school leadership and management is to create and sustain an environment that underpins high quality in student care, learning and teaching.” (DES Circular Letter 0003/2018)

The Quality Framework for Leadership and Management in Irish schools, set out in *Looking at Our School 2016 - A Quality Framework*, provides a common understanding and language around the organisation and practice of leadership and management roles in Irish second-level schools.

In accordance with Section 22 of the Education Act, 1998, and Section 23 of the Education (Amendment) Act 2012, the Principal provides leadership to teachers, other staff, to the students and the wider school community. The Principal has overall authority, under the direction of the Board of Management/ETB, as appropriate, for the day-to-day management of the school. The Principal has overall responsibility for the internal organisation of the school, including the assignment of roles and responsibilities to members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Principal submits to the Board of Management/ETB, as appropriate, all such statements and reports affecting the conduct of the school as the Board of Management/ETB requires.

While the Principal is ultimately responsible to the Board of Management/ETB, as appropriate, for the management and leadership of the school, the Deputy Principal occupies a position of vital importance within the senior leadership team in a school. Shared leadership requires openness and willingness on the part of Principals and Deputy Principals to share and to distribute leadership and management responsibilities amongst them in a manner that encourages and supports partnership. The Deputy Principal acts or deputises as the Principal in the Principal’s absence.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to review existing DES circular letters (particularly Circular Letter 04/98) to examine if any additional system level improvements might be necessary to ensure that a culture of shared and distributed leadership exists in schools and that management responsibilities are shared in a manner that encourages and supports partnership.

School leadership in Ireland is extremely demanding requiring Principals and Deputy Principals to demonstrate numerous skills and differing leadership capabilities. What follows here are the roles and the demands currently facing Principals and Deputy Principals in second-level schools, divided into the management areas of a school (domains).

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Quality Framework for Leadership and Management

DOMAIN ONE: PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ARE EXPECTED TO DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP IN TEACHING AND LEARNING BY:

- Fostering a school culture that encourages continual improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning teaching and assessment
- Fostering a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of every student
- Managing the planning and implementation of the curriculum
- Promoting school-wide efforts to establish, implement and refine appropriate expectations for curriculum, instructional practices and assessment that result in student academic achievement
- Creating processes and schedules which maximise instructional and collaborative time
- Demonstrating a knowledge of effective instructional practices in order to support and guide teachers in decision making regarding effective practices to maximise student success
- Fostering and supporting staff through regular feedback and needs-based professional development to ensure that relevant instruction and authentic learning experiences meet the needs of all students and enriches both teachers' and students' learning
- Holding all staff accountable for setting and achieving suitable and realistic goals for all students
- Promoting the cognitive, physical, social, emotional and skill development of every student.

DOMAIN TWO: PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ARE EXPECTED TO DEMONSTRATE MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP BY:

- Ensuring that the school provides an orderly and supportive environment that fosters a climate of safety, respect, and well-being
- Establishing an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment, and maintain it through effective communication
- Managing the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation
- Managing challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice
- Developing and implementing a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability
- Establishing and effectively manage processes, systems and structures that ensure a knowledgeable, high-quality, high-performing staff
- Mediating and resolving conflicts
- Establishing systems for controlling all available school resources to facilitate the work that needs to be done to improve student learning and academic achievement for all students
- Proactively and efficiently managing the complexity of human interactions and relationships within a school community
- Applying and implementing agreed grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Ensuring that clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures are put in place for students and staff
- Facilitating the design and utilisation of various forms of formal and informal communication with all the stakeholders within the school community

- Regularly updating their knowledge of legislation and regulation and ensuring that all policies, laws and agreements are consistently implemented at school level
- Collaborating with trustees, relevant state agencies and other relevant stakeholders to drive the development and successful implementation of initiatives that better serve the school
- Developing systems and relationships both within and outside of the school in order to maximise the school's ability to serve the best interest of the local community
- Designing and creating structures and processes which result in greater community engagement and ownership of the school
- Ensuring that the school is a pleasant and happy environment for teaching and learning.

**DOMAIN THREE:
PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ARE
EXPECTED TO DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP IN
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT BY:**

- Collaboratively developing and communicating the guiding vision, mission, values, expectations and goals of the school and lead its realisation in the context of the school's characteristic spirit
- Leading the school's participation and engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation
- Ensuring that a plan is in place that supports improved academic achievement and developmental outcomes for all students
- Building and maintaining relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community
- Collaborating with staff and the wider school community to implement strategies for change and improvements that result in improved achievement and developmental outcomes for all student
- Creating and utilising processes to distribute leadership and support collaborative efforts throughout the school among teachers and other staff
- Managing, leading and mediating change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and changes in education.

**DOMAIN FOUR:
PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ARE
EXPECTED TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP
CAPACITY BY:**

- Critiquing their practice as leaders and develop their understanding of effective and sustainable leadership
- Ensuring that the school is a professional learning community that provides opportunities for collaboration, fosters teacher learning and develops future school leaders
- Empowering staff to take on leadership roles
- Empowering staff to take on and carry out leadership roles
- Promoting and facilitating the development of student voice, student participation, and student leadership
- Building professional networks with other school leaders
- Sustaining relationships.

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School Governance

Identifying the complex components of high-quality school leadership is a fundamental step in supporting the professional growth of school leaders as well as in developing a fair and reliable evaluation process. As a result there are now many areas of compliance where the Principal and the Deputy Principal are open to public scrutiny. These include:

- Whole School Evaluations, Management Leadership and Learning Evaluations, subject and program and incidental inspections, Additional Educational Needs (AEN) audits
- Appeals against enrolment, suspension or expulsion
- Child protection/audits
- Health, safety and welfare
- Financial audits
- Teaching Council
- Túsla
- Ombudsman for Children
- Data Protection audits
- Employment Legislation and maintenance of employment records

In addition, there is a considerable amount of emerging, evolving and revised legislation and regulation relating to the governance of schools that impacts significantly on the workload of Principals and Deputy Principals. This includes:

- DES Circulars
- The Education Act 1998; Education (Amendment) Act (2012)
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004
- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- Child Protection Guidelines – this includes the provisions of the Children First Act, 2015 and the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children which became operational on 11th December 2017.
- Guidelines for dealing with teacher underperformance
- Data protection 1988 and amended 2003. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force in May 2018.

- The Disability Act 2005
- The Equal Status Act 2000-2015
- The Teaching Council Act 2001 and the Teaching Council Amendment Act (2006)
- The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 to 2016
- The Vocational Education Act 1930 and as amended in 2001
- The Ombudsman for Children's Act 2002
- The Employment Equality Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2004
- The Protected Disclosures Act 2014
- The Construction Regulations 2013
- REACH Regulations 2007
- Chemicals Act 2008 – 2010
- The Organisation of Work Act 1997
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- Education and Training Boards Act (2013)
- Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2015

Shared and distributed leadership is a significant determinant of a positive work environment. By sharing control over decisions and tasks, by managing high demands and expectations jointly, by supporting each other as professionals Principals and Deputy Principals have the potential to reduce individual workload, to make the role of leadership more manageable as well as creating a school culture that supports an integrated approach to respectful practices. The challenge is to ensure that such a model of leadership is promoted and normalised by all of the stakeholders in the education community.



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Proposed amendments to DES Circulars in relation to the appointment of Deputy Principals in 2nd level schools

INTRODUCTION

The Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals together form the in school management team for the school. The Principal has overall authority under the authority of the Board of Management/Manager/ETB for the day to day management of the school.

The Principal controls the internal organisation, management and discipline of the school, including the assignment of duties to members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Principal submits to the Board all such statements and reports affecting the conduct of the school as the Board requires.

The Principal, together with the Deputy Principal form the senior management team of the school. Their roles as leaders of learning and teaching and as managers confer on them certain entitlements, rights and responsibilities. Both leadership and management roles are considered at all times as serving the school's core work; learning and teaching.

While the Principal is ultimately responsible to the Board of Management/Manager/ETB, as appropriate, for the management and leadership of the school, the Deputy Principal occupies a position of vital importance within the senior leadership team in a school.

Shared leadership requires openness and willingness on the part of Principals, Deputy Principals and Assistant Principals to share and distribute leadership and management responsibilities amongst themselves and the in-school management team in a manner that encourages and supports partnership.

The Deputy Principal acts or deputises as the Principal in the Principal's absence. To this end, the Deputy Principal should attend Board of Management meetings so as to be fully informed on all issues relating to managing the school. (Acting or deputising as Principal does not confer automatic right of succession to the Principalship or to any 'Acting' Principalship arising.)

The Principal and Deputy Principal should model and develop a strong culture of mutual trust, respect and shared accountability so as to foster a very positive school climate and encourage respectful interactions at all levels within the school.

1. The appointment of Principals will be on the basis outlined in Articles 20 and 21 of the Articles of Management for Catholic Secondary Schools. In the case of schools not governed by the Articles of Management, the existing

practices in relation to such appointments will continue to apply. The selection process must be in accord with the principles enshrined in Articles 20 and 21 of the Articles of Management. Article 11 of the Articles of Management needs to be amended to facilitate the attendance of Deputy Principals at Board of Management meetings. A similar change is required in the Articles of Management of an ETBI school /college and community and comprehensive schools / colleges.

2. The appointment of Deputy Principals will be on the basis of open competition except that in schools of less than 17 teachers the competition for appointment will be confined to the teachers in the school. The appointment procedures for Deputy Principals will be the same as those provided for Principals in the particular category of school identified in 1 above.
3. Candidates for appointment to the post of Principal or Deputy Principal will be required to have a minimum of five years whole-time teaching service.
4. On appointment, all Principals and Deputy Principals will be required to enter into appropriate contracts. Contracts will be agreed following consultation with the Board of Management/Manager/ETB and will reflect the appropriate leadership roles and rights and responsibilities of the parties.
5. Principals' and Deputy Principals' contracts are governed by the principles set out in the introduction above where both parties are accountable to their Boards of Management/Manager/ETB for the execution of their duties.
6. In recognition of the important position which the Deputy Principal occupies as leader of learning and in the administration and development of the school, the maximum teaching hours assigned to a Deputy Principal may be regulated to meet the needs of a school taking account of school size and staffing up to a maximum of 8 hours.
7. The work of individual Principals and Deputy Principals will be reviewed by the Board of Management/Manager/ETB annually in accordance with the provisions of their contracts and subject to accepted appeal procedures.
8. These revised arrangements will be reviewed regularly by the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant parties.

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Appendix

SPECIMEN CONTRACT FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

1. CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Contract of Employment made this day [Date] between [name of employer and address] (hereinafter referred to as the School) and [name of Deputy Principal and address] (hereinafter referred to as the Deputy Principal). The Board of Management / Manager/ETB of [school name] agrees to employ [name] as Deputy Principal of the above named school with effect from [date]

2. NATURE OF CONTRACT

The contract is a contract of continuous employment whereby the school employs the teacher to undertake the teaching duties and the duties of Deputy Principal as described hereunder.

3. SALARY AND PENSION

In consideration of the Teacher undertaking the duties assigned, the School shall authorise the Department of Education and Science to pay the appropriate salary and allowance for the appropriate grade of Deputy Principal post from the schedule of salaries and allowances for teachers at the rates agreed from time to time in the Teachers' Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme or such other Scheme as may replace same or be otherwise agreed from time to time. The appropriate rate of Deputy Principal's allowance which will be paid to the Deputy Principal in addition to scale salary will be determined by reference to the criteria agreed nationally from time to time and published in Department of Education and Skills Circulars.

Pension arrangements will be in accordance with the standard arrangements provided under the Secondary Teachers' Superannuation Scheme.

4. EXPENSES

Expenses necessarily incurred by the Deputy Principal in fulfilling the duties of Deputy Principal will be reimbursed at the rates applying to Principals.

5. ENTITLEMENT TO LEAVE

Entitlement to personal leave, sick leave and other general terms and conditions of employment will be in accordance with agreements negotiated from time to time and published in circulars by the Department of Education and Skills.

6. HOURS OF WORK

The Deputy Principal will be required to be in attendance for days during the school year when the Board of Management/Manager of the school determines that the school should be open for pupils and in accordance with Department of Education and Science regulations. The Deputy Principal may also be required by the Board of Management/Manager/ETB to be present in the school for periods during the State Examinations and for other reasonable periods outside of the normal opening hours and days of the school such as may be necessary from time to time. The Deputy Principal shall enter into an agreement with the Principal in respect of arrangements for such attendances. This agreement shall be subject to endorsement by the Board of Management/Manager/ETB. The maximum teaching hours undertaken by a Deputy Principal should be regulated to meet the needs of a school taking account of school size and staffing up to a maximum of 8 hours.

7. TEACHING DUTIES

Subject to the provisions of Section 5 above, the Deputy Principal will teach the following subjects, as assigned in the school timetable.

(Insert subjects)

8. OTHER DUTIES

- (i) Shared leadership requires openness and willingness on the part of Principals and Deputy Principals to share and to distribute leadership and management responsibilities amongst them in a manner that encourages and supports partnership. To this end, they shall enter into an agreement on the carrying out of specific professional duties appropriate to the effective management of the school.
- (ii) The Deputy Principal shall enter into an agreement with the Principal on the discharge of duties which arise outside of normal school hours or during school vacation periods.

(iii) The Deputy Principal shall act as Principal when the Principal is absent, assuming the responsibilities and authority of the Principal's role in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Management. To this end, the Deputy Principal should attend Board of Management meetings in an ex-officio capacity so as to be fully informed on all issues relating to managing the school. Such practices must be in accord with the principles enshrined in the Articles of Management. (Acting or deputising as Principal does not confer automatic right of succession to the Principalship or to any 'Acting' Principalship arising.)

Article 11 of the Articles of Management needs to be amended to provide for the inclusion of Deputy Principals at Board of Management meetings. A similar change is required in the Articles of Management of an ETB school /college and community and comprehensive schools /colleges.

9. REVIEW

(i) The work of individual Deputy Principals will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually in accordance with the provisions of their contracts and subject to accepted appeal procedures.

(ii) In the event of a dispute arising between the Principal and Deputy Principal about any aspect of the duties of the post of Deputy Principal and, if the matter cannot be resolved through discussions between the parties, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management/Manager/ETB for resolution. As an alternative, the Deputy Principal may process any grievance concerning the level of duties or the implementation of the duties and responsibilities attached to the post of Deputy Principal through the agreed Grievance Procedures.

10. NOTICE

(i) Three months' notice in writing shall be given by either side to determine the contract.

(ii) The procedure for dismissal and appeal shall be in line with agreed national procedures.

11. EU LAWS

Nothing in this contract shall operate to prejudice the rights of the Deputy Principal under Statute, Common Law or EU Laws pertaining to employment, whereby such rights are hereby confirmed.

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