

Appointment of Administrative Principal Teacher

St. Senan's Education Office, November 2010

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Step 1: Advertising

1. A recruitment advertisement for the position of principal teacher should contain the following information;
 - School Name
 - School Address (applications should be addressed to the Chairperson c/o of the school).
 - School Roll No.
 - Fax. No. (if applications are being accepted via fax. - not recommended)
 - Email address - (Applications for the position of principal may not be accepted via email. If a school provides an email address it should be clearly stated that this is for communication purposes only and that applications will not be accepted electronically).
 - Website Address
 - Current enrolment
 - Total no. of staff
 - Type of school - co-educational, all boys, all girls.
 - School Structure - junior school, senior school, vertical.
 - If the school is a Gaelscoil this should be stated.
 - School Category - special school, DEIS school, mainstream, mainstream with special classes.
 - School's Patronage - Catholic under the patronage of Bishop's Name.
 - Title of Vacancy - principal teacher, principal teacher (administrative), acting principal.
 - Status of post - permanent, temporary (temporary appointment will apply only to an acting principal. The position of acting principal should only be advertised if the post cannot be filled internally).
 - Closing date for applications - **must be a minimum of 14 days from the last date of publication of the ad.**
 - Commencement date.
 - Application Requirements - we recommend that the following information is requested, letter of application, standard application form for principalship, copies of educational qualifications, inspector's reports, Teaching Council Registration, Garda Vetting (if applicable).

2. **All advertisements must receive prior approval from St Senan's Education Office.** You can email the proposed advertisement to gwen@ldo.ie or fax a copy to 061 310186.

2. Upon approval you may place the full advertisement in a national newspaper or place the advertisement on www.educationposts.ie; www.staffroom.ie, www.eteach.ie
3. All of the teaching Staff of the school must be notified of the vacancy, including those on **any** form of approved absence through leave or secondment.
4. Vacancies for Principals should not be advertised in July or August without the existence of particular circumstances and only upon receipt of the Patron's approval.



Applications should be date stamped as they are received and kept intact for the selection board to open after the closing date.

Step 2: The Selection Board

1. The Selection Board for the position of principal teacher must be composed as follows;
 - The Chairperson of the BoM
 - Two (2) Independent Assessors appointed by the Patron (schools should contact St. Senan's Education Office tel. 061 317742 in order to have Independent Assessors appointed).
 - Gender balance must be maintained (i.e. either one female or one male must be on the selection board).
2. In the case of an appointment of a principal in a convent or monastery school the authorities of the religious order concerned may if they so wish apply to appoint a member of the order to the selection board. Such an appointment is subject to the prior approval of the Patron.
3. The Patron's written approval of the composition of the selection board must be received prior to the holding of the interviews. This approval may be applied for by contacting St. Senan's Education Office.
4. If any member of the selection board discovers that they '**stand in relationship**' to a person who is a candidate for the position they must disclose this information to the BoM and withdraw from the process immediately. The term 'stand in relationship' may apply to blood, marriage or business relationships. If there is any uncertainty regarding this matter please contact St. Senan's Education Office for further advice.
5. On approval the entire selection board should be involved in all activities pertaining to the appointment - opening and short listing of applications, marking matrix, etc.



Once appointed and approved the selection board acts independently of the BoM. Minutes of all selection board meetings should be kept on record.

Step 3: Preparation for Interview

1. Eligibility Criteria for the Appointment of Principal

i. Ordinary Primary Schools with an Enrolment of less than 80 Pupils:

To be deemed eligible to apply for the post of Principal teacher in ordinary primary schools with less than 80 pupils, applicants must certify in their application to the Board of Management that they:

- (a) Are qualified primary teachers (The applicant should include a copy of qualifications)
- (b) Have satisfactorily completed probation

ii. Ordinary Primary Schools with an Enrolment of 80 Pupils or more:

To be deemed eligible to apply for the post of Principal teacher in ordinary primary schools with 80 pupils or more, applicants must certify in their application to the Board of Management that they:

- (a) Are qualified primary teachers (The applicant should include a copy of qualifications)
- (b) Have satisfactorily completed probation
- (c) Have not less than 5 years qualified wholetime teaching service two of which must be in a recognised primary school in the Republic of Ireland. Service in recognised post-primary schools within the Republic or in a primary school or post-primary school outside Ireland may be reckoned towards service provided this service was reckonable for incremental credit.

iii. Special Schools

To be deemed eligible to apply for the post of Principal teacher in Special Schools, applicants must certify in their application to the Board of Management that they:

- (a) Are fully qualified primary teachers who have satisfactorily completed probation. (The applicant should include a copy of qualifications).

- (b) Have been awarded Restricted Recognition under the terms of Circular 25/00. (The applicant should include a copy of qualifications).

- (c) Have a minimum of 5 years qualified whole time teaching service two of which must be in a recognised primary school within the Republic of Ireland. (Service in a primary school or a post-primary school outside the Republic of Ireland may be reckoned towards service provided this service was reckonable for incremental credit.)

- (d) Post primary teachers are also eligible to apply for appointment to Special Schools in which children are enrolled up to the age of 18 years of age including High Support Units, Young Offender Units and Youth Encounter Projects if they comply with the requirements as outlined in 3.1 (a) and (b) above and in such schools a proportion of the pupils attending the special school are of post-primary age and where second level programmes, such as "Junior Cert Elementary Programme" or Leaving Cert Applied programme are being provided. The applicant must have a minimum of 5 years qualified wholetime teaching service two of which must be in a recognised primary or post-primary school within the Republic of Ireland.

2. First Meeting of the Selection Board

The first meeting of the approved selection board should be scheduled to take place after the closing date for the receipt of applications. The following business must be conducted at this meeting:

i. Establish an Applicant Assessment Criteria

- Prior to opening/reviewing the applications the Selection Board should familiarise themselves with the job description and the person specification of the ideal candidate to fill the post.
- The Selection Board should establish criteria for assessment of the applicants and the Chairperson should retain records of the criteria for assessment.
- The criteria for assessment should be arrived at following discussion of applicant eligibility, essential skills and abilities required to do the job and the additional desirable and advantageous skills and abilities which would be an added bonus.
- A list of interview questions based on the assessment criteria should be prepared and noted.
- A marking sheet based on the established criteria and an assigned weighting for each criteria should be agreed on.
- A cut off point below which a candidate is deemed to be unsuitable should be set.

ii. Establish a Short Listing Process

- Prior to opening/reviewing the applications the Selection Board should agree on a short listing criteria and marking scheme.
- The selection Board should agree and note the maximum number of candidates to be called for interview. (A minimum no. of 3 candidates is recommended as best practice however if there is just one eligible candidate the interview must proceed although the decision to appoint is based solely on merit). Candidates should be selected for interview based on their short listing ranking/score.

iii. Review of Applications

- Applications must only be opened after the closing date for receipt of same and in the presence of all selection board members.
- Only applications that meet the eligibility criteria for the appointment of principal should be considered.
- All eligible applicants should be ranked in accordance with the agreed short listing criteria.
- The reasons for the non-selection of a candidate for interview should be noted and retained.

iv. Scheduling Interviews

- Once the selection board has completed the short listing process agreement on the interview schedule should be reached within the following parameters:
 - ◇ Candidates must be given a **minimum of 7 days notice** of the interview date
 - ◇ Interviews must be scheduled outside of school hours and if held on a school day must afford the candidate ample time to reach the venue.
 - ◇ The venue must provide an appropriate environment for holding the interviews and should also have a suitable private waiting area.

v. Invitation to Interview / Unsuccessful Application Letters

- Once the selection board has satisfied itself that the shortlist process has been adhered to it may prepare and post letters of regret to unsuccessful applicants (see Appendix 4 for a sample regret letter).
- The letter of invitation (see Appendix 5 for a sample letter) to interview should provide the following information:
 - ◇ The date and time of interview.
 - ◇ The approximate duration of the interview.
 - ◇ Directions to the interview venue.
 - ◇ Who to report to on arrival at the venue.
 - ◇ Information on the school.
 - ◇ A copy of the established criteria for the post.
 - ◇ A copy of the Schedule for Catholic Schools (please see appendix 6).
 - ◇ Contact name and details for any queries that may arise prior to the interview.



Applications received after the closing date and time **may not be considered** for interview.

3. Documentation for Interview:

All members of the selection board should be provided with copies of the following documents prior to the interviews:

- Advertisement.
- Application forms (and any other documentation requested).
- Criteria for post.
- Agreed interview questions and marking scheme.
- Interview timetable.

4. Interviewing Techniques:

i. Asking Questions

- Use **Open Questions** when you want to...
 - start the interview
 - discover the interviewee's knowledge and experience
 - ascertain the depth of interviewee's knowledge
 - assess how articulate the interviewee is e.g.
 - Tell me about ...*
 - How did it seem to you when ...*
 - I'd like to hear about ...*
 - Tell me about the problem from your point of view ...*

- **Probing Questions** are useful when an incomplete answer is given to an initial question. Use probing questions ...
 - to zone in on areas of particular interest to the interviewer asking the question e.g.
 - What happened to the plan?*
 - How did she/he react to your suggestions?*
 - How does that affect you?*
 - Why do you think that will work?*
 - If you feel an answer is inadequate use an elaboration probe e.g.
 - Tell me more about that issue*
 - If you need to clarify information given by the interviewee, use a clarification probe e.g.
 - What do you mean by lack of leadership?*
 - If an interviewee fails to respond fully, use a repetition probe. Simply paraphrase the question or repeat it verbatim.

- Effective probing depends on the interviewer's ability to...
 - listen well
 - analyse the content of the information given.

- **Closed Questions** are used to...
 - establish facts
 - obtain specific information from the interview
 - maintain control over interview
 - reduce the answering options e.g.
 - At what time?*
 - Which task did you do most frequently?*
 - How much/many?*
 - Were you asked to complete that task?*

- Use **Precision Questions** to focus a candidate's answers e.g.
 - In one sentence, what did you achieve?*
 - How did you know you had succeeded?*
 - What feedback did you get?*
 - What was your expectation in this situation?*
 - What did you learn from the experience?*

- **Competency Based Questions** can be used to
 - Explore Experience
 - Can you tell me about a time when ...*
 - Probe for Proofs
 - What did you do about it?*
 - Focus on Outcomes
 - Did it work?*
 - Look for Learning
 - What did you learn from that experience?*
 - Ask about Applications
 - If you were to face a similar situation in the job we are interviewing for, how would you deal with it?*

- **Summarising Questions** can be used bring a topic to a close or to clarify e.g.
 - What I heard you say was ...*
 - Are you saying ...?*

- **Lead the interview towards a conclusion by ...**
 - asking a challenging question at this stage – (with approx. 5 minutes remaining)
 - as rapport is unlikely to be broken*
 - and a tough question answered may enable the panel to differentiate between outstanding candidates*
 - giving an opportunity for the candidate
 - to ask questions*
 - fill in any remaining gaps in the information they have provided about themselves*

- Avoid **Counter Productive** questions
 - Leading Questions that prompt the interviewee to give the desired answer
 - I take it you believe that...*
 - Multiple Questions confuse the interviewee
 - Do you prefer your current job to your last one, or would you be interested in*
 - Marathon Questions
 - When you were talking there it struck me to ask you what you thought ...*
 - Ambiguous questions
 - What about value for money?*
 - Rhetorical questions
 - Do you ... of course you do, sure that's obvious. I always say....*

- **Effective interviewing requires interviewers to ...**
 - Listen
 - Look interested
 - Inquire through questioning
 - Stay focused
 - Test for understanding
 - Evaluate the messages given by the interviewee
 - Neutralise their feelings – remain detached

ii. Barriers to Effective Interviewing

- Obvious barriers to listening include noise and other physical and mental distractions. More subtle barriers include
 - Anticipation – feeling that you don't need to listen as you know what the candidate is going to say – you may even find yourself finishing the sentence for him/her
 - Telling and selling – the interviewer takes over the interview and the candidate is not given an opportunity to talk
 - Stereotyping – predicting what candidate is going to say as you have assigned him/her to a certain category
 - Lack of interest or experience
 - Premature decision making – the candidate did or said something at the beginning which has put you off.
- Guard against allowing first impressions to last
 - judging the candidate on how he or she looks; rating the candidate highly because he/she reminds the interviewer of themselves
 - halo affect – allowing one good answer outweigh the rest of the evidence obtained
 - negative effect – allowing one poor answer to outweigh the remainder of the evidence obtained

Most people have under developed listening skills. Only 25% of listening is effective. *i.e.* we listen to, and understand only ¼ of what is being communicated to us. Being a good listener is neither easy nor automatic – it requires ability and discipline to hear and understand the message sent by another person while at the same time strengthening the relationship. Improvement can occur in relation to listening at an interview through careful preparation – if you know what you are looking for you are more alert to cues to help you find it. Try to maintain natural eye contact, nod and encourage, summarise at regular intervals. Don't waste time asking a question which has already been answered in response to a previous question but indicate that the particular question has been answered.

Step 4: Conducting the Interview

1. Interview Structure:

An effective interview structure will have 5 distinct areas:

- a) **Introduction/Opening** - welcome, introduction of selection board members, relax the candidate, provide information about the school and the post, explain the structure of the interview.
- b) **Candidate Assessment**
- c) **Candidate questions** - give the candidate the initiative and opportunity to add anything they think relevant.
- d) **Close the interview** - indicate when they will hear your decision, thank them for attending.
- e) **Evaluation** - each member of the selection board should evaluate the candidates performance immediately after the interview. The evaluation should be completed without reference to the other selection board members and in-line with the pre-agreed marking scheme.

2. Role of the Chairperson:

- a) Welcome the candidate, introduce the members of the selection board to the candidate and explain who they are.
- b) Monitor the interview re time and consistency and fairness of questioning. Add supplementary questions for any point requiring clarification after the Selection Board members have finished.
- c) At the end of the interview ask the candidate if there are any points which he/she would like to add in support of their application, any additional information to add in respect of any of the questions asked and if he/she has any question for the selection board.
- d) Seek and note the candidates consent to contact their listed referees.
- e) Thank the candidate for attending and conclude the interview.
- f) Ensure that notes are kept. In particular that there is a written record of the questions asked.

3. Assessing the Candidates

- The candidates must be asked the same set of questions.
- The marking sheet should be supported by notes. The notes normally include references to responses to questions, evidence given in terms of each criterion, overall assessment of candidate's suitability for appointment.

- After each interview each member should have a well constructed summary.

4. Final Deliberations

On the conclusion of the interviews the chairperson of the selection board may initiate a discussion on the candidates.

- The chairperson must then record the aggregate score achieved by each candidate.
- Candidates should be listed in order of merit.
- A list of candidates **deemed suitable** in order of merit should be compiled by the selection board in the event of the post not being filled by the no. 1 listed candidate.
- In the event that no candidate is deemed suitable to fill the post the reasons for this decision should be noted.

5. Checking References

It is obligatory to reference check (see Appendix 7 - Reference Checking Template) the successful candidate. It is advisable to conduct the reference check (with the exception of the candidates current employer) prior to submitting the written report to the BoM, allowing the board to make a fully informed decision when ratifying an appointment. The reference check :

- Should pose a set of questions based on the job specification.
- Seek clarification of level, dept, and range of experience and skills demonstrated.
- May be conducted over the telephone—a reference checking form should be used in this instance.
- The selection board should compile a written report to the Board of Management nominating the most suitable candidate.



Interview Do Not's

- Do not ask discriminatory questions (Discrimination is forbidden on 9 grounds—age, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability, membership of the traveller community, family status, marital status, gender). Examples of discriminatory questions are as follows:
 - *Have you any plans to get married?*
 - *Do you intend having children soon?*
 - *How do you balance your family and work responsibilities?*
 - *Does your weight limit you in carrying out certain tasks?*
 - *How do you keep up your enthusiasm for teaching at this time of your life?*
- Do not deviate from the pre-agreed interview structure, format or questions.

Step 5: Making an Appointment

1. The Role of the Board of Management

- a) Upon receipt of the selection boards report the Board of Management will review the report and make an appointment (if appropriate).
- b) Prior to notifying the successful candidate the BoM will, in writing, seek the Patrons' approval of the appointment.
- c) On receipt of the Patrons approval the BoM will notify the successful candidate in writing. It should be noted that the offer of employment is subject to satisfactory, Garda Vetting and Pre-employment Health Assessment.
- d) The unsuccessful candidates will only be notified once written acceptance has been received from the successful candidate.

2. Documentation to be Completed

The chairperson and successful candidate should complete the following documentation:

- Form PTAF(1), available for download at www.stsenansed.ie, to be returned to Primary Payments, Dept. of Education & Science, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
- Form of Agreement No. 2 (both school & teacher copies), available for download at www.stsenansed.ie.
- Garda vetting form (available for download at www.teachingcouncil.ie), to be returned to the Teaching Council.
- Health Screening: Pre-employment questionnaire for teachers (www.medmark4teachers.ie)



On completion of the interview process the following documentation in respect of the recruitment and selection process should be retained by the BoM for a minimum of one calendar year: All documentation in respect of the successful appointee should be retained for the duration of his/her employment)

- Advertisement
- Patrons Approval of Selection Board
- Established criteria for post
- Short listing criteria
- Assessment questions
- Individual and aggregate marking sheets for each candidate
- Reports, notes and decision of the selection board
- Copy of letter to and from Patron re. appointment approval
- Letter of offer to the candidate
- Letter of acceptance from the candidate
- Copy of form PTAF(1)
- Schools copy of Form of Agreement No. 2 (to be retained for the duration of the employment).
- Garda Vetting Report.
- Pre-employment Health Screening Report

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Administrative Principal Teacher Sample Job Description & Person Specification
- Appendix 2: Sample Interview Questions: Administrative Principal
- Appendix 3: Principal Teacher Short Listing Criteria
- Appendix 4: Sample Regret Letter
- Appendix 5: Sample Invitation to Interview Letter
- Appendix 6: Schedule for Catholic Schools
- Appendix 7: Reference Checking Template

(All of the above are available for download at www.stsenansed.ie)

SCHOOL NAME

Job Description & Person Specification

Job Title:	Administrative Principal
Responsible To:	The Board of Management
Job Purpose:	To provide professional leadership and management of the school, its pupils, its staff and its premises, which will provide a secure foundation from which to achieve high standards in all areas of the school's work.

Key Priorities

The role of the Principal Teacher is to provide professional leadership and management of the school in order to promote a secure foundation from which to achieve the highest possible standards in all areas of the school's work. The Principal Teacher will be responsible for:

- the day to day management, organization and administration of the school
- leadership, good management and strategic direction of all school staff
- curriculum development
- contributing to the development of school policies e.g. code of behaviour, enrolment policy, etc.
- implementation of whole school policies
- management and guidance of colleagues
- efficient deployment of resources
- working effectively with the school's board of management
- promoting excellence, equality and high expectations for all pupils
- assisting in the recruitment of staff of the highest quality
- communicating with all key stakeholders
- promoting the school within the local community

Key Responsibilities

1. Leadership, management and strategic direction of colleagues:

It is expected that the principal teacher will:

- Have direct line management responsibility for allocating teaching and support staff

- Ensure effective planning, allocation, support and evaluation of work undertaken by individuals, ensuring clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities.
- Review and identify CPD needs and provide opportunities for growth
- Put in place effective team communication mechanisms to ensure that all staff are involved in the school development plan and kept informed of key priorities and developments
- Manage delegated budgets
- Assume appropriate responsibility for health and safety
- Assist the BoM with the recruitment and selection of staff
- Assist with discipline and grievance procedures for staff

2. Curriculum development and quality assurance

It is expected that the principal teacher will:

- Manage the development of the curriculum
- Monitor and evaluate learning and teaching in the school
- Ensure a culture and ethos of challenge and support where all pupils can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning
- Demonstrate and articulate high expectations and set challenging and appropriate targets for the whole school community.

3. Working with partners/the community

It is expected that the principal teacher will:

- Actively promote the school as a centre of excellence for education to families in the local community.
- Work in partnership with other agencies in providing for academic, spiritual, social, emotional and cultural well being of pupils.
- Co-operate and work with relevant agencies in the protection of children.
- Ensure that the school promotes effective links with the local community and develops relationships with other local primary and secondary schools.
- Work closely with parents and carers

4. Managing systems and resources

It is expected that the principal teacher will:

- Implement the BoMs identified priorities for expenditure, allocate funds and ensure systems are in place for the effective administration and control of school budgets.

- Manage and oversee accurate and efficient budgeting procedures and the keeping of detailed records, accounts and statements within agreed financial regulations.
- Manage and organize the accommodation effectively and efficiently to ensure that all school buildings meet the needs of the curriculum and health and safety regulations.
- Complete all Department of Education & Science Returns.

5. Whole school policy development and implementation

It is expected that the principal teacher will:

- In consultation with the BoM assist in the development of policies necessitated by legislation, national agreements or DES directive.
- Manage the implementation of all school policies.
- Review the effectiveness of school policies.

6. Accountability

It is expected that the principal teacher will:

- Provide information, objective advice and support to the BoM to enable it to meet its responsibilities for securing effective teaching and learning and improved standards of achievement and for achieving efficiency and value for money.
- Report to the BoM on the discharge of the Principal Teachers functions and the affairs of the school.
- Create and develop an organisation in which all staff recognises that they are accountable for the success of the school.
- Ensure that all parents and pupils are well informed about the school's direction, priorities, curriculum and pupils' attainment and progress.
- Actively maintain a thorough understanding of the statutory framework for education and the legal framework that underpins school management.
- Regularly review own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for his/her own professional development. Exercise responsibility for ensuring that all new employees are properly inducted in the school's policies and procedures, specifically those relating to safeguarding children.

Administrative Principal Teacher Person Specification			
Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Advantageous
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.T./B. Ed. Or Grad. Dip in Education or PGCE (or equivalent) • Cert in R.E. • Successfully Probated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other relevant Post-Grad qualification (e.g. Grad. Dip. In school planning) • Evidence of continuing and relevant professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masters in Education • MBA • Other relevant MA qualification • Doctorate
Knowledge and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive and successful teaching experience • Experience in similar school setting • Basic understanding of the role of the BoM • Basic ICT skills (knowledge of email & internet) • Demonstrable understanding of the statutory framework for education • Understanding of the role of parents/guardians in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of curriculum development strategies to improve access, participation, retention & achievement. • Successful experience of mentoring and coaching teachers • Experience as a post-holder • Good ICT skills (knowledge of email, internet, word processing and spreadsheets) • Demonstrable understanding of budget management • Previous experience/involvement in policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive and successful experience of teaching classes across the age and ability range • Evidential experience in devising strategies to improve access, participation and achievement. • Advanced ICT skills (knowledge of email, internet, word processing, spreadsheets, presentation software, web design) • Evidential experience in budget management in any setting
Leadership, Management & Interpersonal Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to lead and manage people to work towards a common goal. • Basic knowledge of grievance procedure • Demonstrable ability to develop positive working relationships • Demonstrable ability to prioritise, plan and organize • Evidential experience of working as part of a team • Demonstrable ability to seek advice and support where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidential experience in managing people (in any setting) • Evidential experience in prioritising, planning and organizing • Evidential experience of working under pressure and to deadlines 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to work under pressure and to deadlines • Demonstrable ability to promote good order and discipline within the parameters of school policy. • Demonstrable ability to motivate young people. • Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours 		
Curriculum Development & Quality Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive knowledge of the curriculum • Demonstrable understanding of motivating under achievers • Demonstrable ability in articulating high expectations and setting challenges in an ability appropriate manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidential experience of motivating under achievers • Evidential experience in implementing new curricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidential experience in curriculum development
Working with Partners & the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to define and communicate a clear vision for the school • Demonstrable ability to establish positive relations with parents and the community • Knowledge of the parental complaints procedure • Knowledge of the role of a parents association • Demonstrable ability to promote the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidential experience in establishing positive relations with parents and the community 	
Managing Systems & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good administrative and planning skills • Demonstrable ability to investigate, solve problems and make decisions. • Demonstrable ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing to a range of audiences. • Demonstrable ability to think creatively and imaginatively to anticipate and solve problems and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidential experience in making difficult decisions 	

	<p>identify opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to analyse, interpret and understand relevant data and information. 		
Whole School Policy Development and Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of policies required in a primary school setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience of policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience in policy implementation
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable understanding of the concept of accountability • Demonstrable organization skills and the ability to plan own time effectively • Evidential commitment to continuous personal and professional development 		
Ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to maintaining the school's ethos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to further develop the school's ethos. 	

Notes to Job Description & Person Specification:

- This is a sample
- 'Demonstrable' the candidate can articulate the relevant knowledge, skill, expertise or aptitude to deal with a situation or answer the question posed. The candidate does not necessarily have direct experience of the area on which the question is based.
- 'Evidential' the candidate has prior experience in a given area. This experience can be detailed at interview or in the candidates application form.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Administrative Principal

These questions are based on the sample job description and person specification for the position of principal. All documents are available to download at www.stsenansed.ie

A minimum of one hour should be allowed when interviewing for the position of Principal Teacher. It is recommended that 5 criterion are selected and that 2 to 3 questions from each criterion be asked. All candidates must be asked the same questions.

Prior to commencing the assessment of the candidate the chairperson of the selection board should;

- welcome the candidate,
- introduce the members of the selection board,
- relax the candidate,
- provide brief information about the school and the post,
- explain the structure of the interview.

Opening Questions: Background and Introduction

1. Briefly tell us about yourself and your teaching experience to-date.
2. How does your experience relate to the position of Principal?
3. Why do you want to be Principal of this school?
4. How would you express your understanding of what our school stands for and how does this fit with your personal educational philosophy?
5. In order of importance what do you consider the 5 most important character traits of a Principal are? Why are these characteristics important?
6. What is your greatest strength?
7. What is your greatest weakness?
8. What 3 words would your current colleagues use to describe you?
9. Why do you feel you are the best candidate for the job?
10. What qualities/characteristics make a good school?

Questions on Knowledge and Experience:

1. What is your understanding of the role of the Board of Management?
2. How would you define the role of Principal in relation to that of the Board of Management?

3. What is your understanding of the legal and regulatory environment that governs primary school management in this country?
4. Describe your knowledge of finance or budgeting?
5. What level of ICT skills do you have and how do you keep these skills current?
6. As a result of statutory provision or national agreements a school is obliged to have certain policies in place. Are you familiar with any of these policies?
7. What is your understanding of the role of parents/guardians in the education of their children and what aspects of this role are covered by statute?
8. What are the greatest challenges to pupil retention in the primary school setting?
9. If there was an issue around the attendance of a pupil how would you deal with this?
10. What are the challenges faced by an 'school type' school (i.e. urban, urban DEIS, multi-grade, rural DEIS)?
11. If you were concerned for the welfare of one of the pupils in your school what do you do?
12. If a student comes into school with a bruise on their face that you did not notice the day before and that student approaches you and says, "I need to tell you something but you have to promise not to tell anyone," what would you do?
13. If a teacher comes to you with a Child Protection concern regarding one of his/her pupils, how would you handle it?
14. In terms of behaviour management please compare negative and positive reinforcement and describe the effects of each.

Questions on Leadership, Management & Interpersonal Skills:

1. Tell us about your leadership style, how do you see yourself leading? If we were present what would we observe when watching you work with school staff?
2. What three expectations would you have of your staff?
3. How would you approach staff morale?
4. How would you deal with conflict between members of staff?
5. Explain your experience (if any) in running meetings and leading groups.
6. What steps would you take if a teacher did not comply with your request/recommendations regarding a specific issue?
7. How do you envision the principal relating to the pupils?
8. What is your expectation of student conduct, demeanor, or deportment in school and at school related functions?
9. When dealing with a discipline problem with a student, what is your major concern?
10. Tell us about a difficult discipline situation you have been involved in/dealt with.
11. When a teacher sends a student to you for discipline what process would you follow?
12. Explain your experience of working to deadlines.
13. How would you manage your day as school principal?
14. How do you motivate the unmotivated?
15. What do you do to combat stress?

16. If you had an underperforming employee reporting to you how would you address the situation in the first instance? If the employee's performance did not improve what would you do next?
17. Observing your colleagues, in your current or last job, describe what motivated their performance.
18. Tell us about a time when you had to work closely with a co-worker whom you disliked or with whom you had trouble working. What did you do to make the relationship work?
19. In which management/leadership areas do you consider yourself to have strong skills, and how do you envisage being able to utilise your capabilities within our school?
20. If you wished to implement change to a practice/procedure in the school, but some of the staff were opposed to it, how would you deal with this?
21. When you have entered a new workplace in the past, describe how you have gone about meeting and developing relationships with your new colleagues.
22. How would you respond if one of your colleagues, whom is also a personal friend, came to you and asked you something which you could not reveal to him/her, because you were bound by confidentiality?
23. How would you provide for the Pastoral Care of Pupils and Staff?
24. In your Leadership role, how would you promote/support/oversee Religious Education in the School?

Questions on Curriculum Development & Quality Assessment:

1. What should the balance between curricular and extra-curricular activities be?
2. What are the benefits of running extra-curricular activities? Are there any extra-curricular activities that you are especially interested in?
3. Are there areas of the curriculum that you are especially interested in?
4. What are the components of a quality lesson plan?
5. How would you describe your approach to teaching?
6. How should different teaching strategies/methodologies be used to provide for the learning needs of all students?
7. How would you ensure that new curricular activities were implemented effectively?
8. Detail your experience in curriculum development.
9. Explain the role of technology in the delivery of the curriculum.
10. Describe your experience of working with special education programmes/students.
11. What do you consider to be the characteristics of an excellent teacher?
12. If you noticed that the level of attainment in Maths in a school class was below par what would you do?
13. How would you monitor the progress of all classes in curricular areas?

Questions on Working with Partners & the Community:

1. What has been your experience with parental involvement in schools?
2. In what ways can the school help fulfill the parents' role as primary educators?
3. How would you work with a parent who is upset or angry with a teacher?
4. How would you react if a parent calls and is upset with something one of your teachers has done?
5. How would you react if a parent calls and is upset with something you have done?
6. How would you establish positive relations with parents and the community?
7. Who are a schools education partners?
8. How would you promote the school?
9. How would you create agreement and shared purpose from a situation in which all parties originally differed in opinion, approach and objectives?
10. Describe five characteristics of communication that must be present in order to make it effective.
11. How would you handle a situation where a parent/guardian is asking for something, that is not in the interest of the school or which would violate a school policy?
12. If an external organisation contacted you requesting to use the school premises outside of school hours what would you do? What would be the main considerations impacting upon the decision?
13. How would you develop the links between home, school and parish?

Questions on Managing Systems & Resources:

1. Describe your knowledge of finance and experience in budgeting.
2. How would you utilise technology in the management of the school?
3. Describe your knowledge and experience in using data to inform decisions.
4. Tell us about a time when you had to make a difficult decision, how did you go about making the decision?
5. What administrative experience do you have?
6. What methods would you use to prioritise your work load?
7. How should confidential information be handled?
8. What are the key elements of a school plan?
9. What would be your primary concern in the management of the school's physical environment?

Questions on Whole School Policy Development and Implementation:

1. As a result of statutory provision or national agreements a school is obliged to have certain policies in place. Are you familiar with any of these policies?
2. What experience do you have in the development of policy documents?

3. On what key underpinning principles should a school's code of behaviour be based?
4. How would you go about developing a policy in a school where no such policy exists?
5. How would you go about evaluating an existing policy?
6. How would you secure support for a new policy?
7. What are the 5 most important steps in policy development?
8. What are the key elements of a school plan?
9. In which school policies will the Catholic School Ethos be reflected?

Questions on Accountability:

1. Define the term 'accountability' in a school setting.
2. To whom is the principal of a school accountable to?
3. How would you solicit and process evaluations of your own performance?
4. Are there any recent professional articles, books, or conferences that you have encountered that have affected your practice?
5. How do you keep your skills and knowledge current?
6. Can you give us at least three examples of things that you have done in the past year to improve your knowledge or skills?
7. Can you give us an example of a time when you volunteered to take on a project simply because it allowed you to expand your personal knowledge or facilitated your professional/personal development?
8. In which specific areas of your work are you really interested in expanding your knowledge? How do you intend to achieve this?
9. Describe a work related or personal goal that you previously set for yourself. Did you achieve it? If so, how? If not, why not?

Questions on Ethos:

1. What is the role of the Catholic school in the new millennium?
2. How would you foster and strengthen the spiritual growth of the school and its Catholic identity?
3. What is the principal's role in developing and maintaining the ethos of the school?
4. What role should the local Church play in the life of the school?
5. If you were visiting a school, how would you know that it is a Catholic School?
6. What do you see as the most important qualities of the leader in a Catholic School?
7. In your Leadership role, how would you promote/support/oversee Religious Education in the School?
8. How would you provide for the Pastoral Care of Pupils and Staff?
9. How would you develop the Catholic Ethos of this school?
10. How would you develop the links between home, school and parish?

11. It has been asked: “Does the Catholic School lead in this ever changing world or is it being led by it?” What is your opinion?
12. How would children of other faiths be accommodated and included in your Catholic School?
13. What, in your opinion, is the future role of the Church in Irish Education?
14. What makes a Catholic School distinctive?
15. What would you consider when appointing a member of your staff to a sacramental class?
16. In which policies will the Catholic School Ethos be reflected?

On completion of the assessment of the candidate the selection board must give the candidate the initiative and opportunity to add anything they think relevant.

1. Is there any question that you would like to ask of the selection board?
2. Is there any other information that you would like to add in support of your application?
3. Is there anything you were expecting to be asked that has not been asked?

The chairperson should then close the interview by indicating when the candidate will be informed of the board's decision and by thanking them for attending.

Principal Teacher – Short Listing Criteria

1.) Minimum Requirements <i>(Applicants that fail to meet the minimum requirements may not be selected for interview)</i>	Marks
Q 2. Principal Application Form (1 Mark) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.T., or • B.Ed., or • Grad. Dip. Education, or • Equivalent approved qualification in primary teaching 	
Q 4. Principal Application Form (1 Mark) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ordinary Primary School with an enrolment of 80 pupils or more:</i> Minimum of 5 years <u>qualified</u> <u>wholetime</u> teaching experience (2 of which are in a recognised primary school in the Republic of Ireland) (No minimum service requirement for schools with an enrolment of less than 80 pupils.)	
(1 Mark) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully Probated 	
Q 2. Principal Application Form (1 Mark) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in Religious Education 	
2.) Essential Skills/Knowledge/Aptitude/Experience	
Q 3. & Q 5. (b) Principal Application Form (1 Mark) Experience in a similar school setting <i>(e.g. multi-grade, Urban, Urban DEIS, Rural DEIS, etc.)</i>	
Q 6. Principal Application Form (1 Mark) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to continuous personal and professional development 	
Q 8. Principal Application Form (Max. 10 Marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to define and communicate a clear vision for the school <i>(to a maximum of 10 points, reasons for score awarded should be noted)</i> 	
3.) Desirable Skills/Knowledge/Aptitude/Experience	
Q 2. Principal Application Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other relevant Post-Grad Qualification <i>(1 point for each relevant qualification to Certificate level, 2 points for each relevant qualification to Diploma level)</i> 	
4.) Advantageous Skills/Knowledge/Aptitude/Experience	
Q 2. Principal Application Form Masters in Education, MBA, other relevant Masters, Doctorate <i>(1 point for a Masters qualification, 2 points for a Doctorate)</i>	

Chairperson Name,
School Name,
Address,
Address.

Candidate Name,
Address,
Address.

DD/MM/YR

Dear Candidate Name,

I write to thank you for your application for the post of principal of School Name. The selection board has completed the short listing of applications and I regret that on this occasion you have not been successful.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you well in your future career.

Yours sincerely,

Chairperson Name
Chairperson
Board of Management

Chairperson Name,
School Name,
Address,
Address.

Candidate Name,
Address,
Address.

DD/MM/YR

Dear Candidate Name,

I write to thank you for your application for the post of principal of (name of school). The selection board has completed the short listing of applications and I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected for interview.

Your interview is scheduled for *Time on Day*, the *Date of Month* at *Venue*.

The Criteria which will guide the interview is as follows:

- Criteria 1
- Criteria 2
- Criteria 3
- Criteria 4

I enclose a copy of the Schedule for Catholic Schools and information on the school for your information.

Please confirm by return of post your intention to accept or decline this invitation to interview. Should you have any queries prior to interview please contact Name on tel.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

Chairperson,
Board of Management

Roman Catholic School SCHEDULE

*A Roman Catholic school
(which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at
promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of
the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and
spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with
other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life
inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection
of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides religious
education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines,
practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and
promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.*

Reference Checking Template

Candidate Name:		Position Applied For:	
Reference Check Conducted By:		Date:	
Referee Name		School/Organisation:	
School/Organisation Address			
Telephone:		Email:	

Can you please confirm the dates from which the candidate was employed by your school/organisation
Please describe your reporting relationship with the candidate? If none, in what capacity did you observe the candidate's work?
Why did the candidate leave?
Please describe the key responsibilities of the candidate in his/her most recent position with the school/organisation.
How many reporting staff did the candidate manage (if applicable)?
Did the candidate hold a post of responsibility, or did the candidate perform any function outside of his/her normal duties on a voluntary basis?

What would you describe as the candidate's most important contribution to the school/organisation?

Please describe the candidate's relationships with his/her co-workers.

What are the candidate's most significant strengths?

What are the candidate's most significant weaknesses?

What is your overall assessment of the candidate?

We have selected this candidate for the position of _____. Would you recommend him/her for this position?

Would you rehire this individual?

Are there any additional comments you would like to make?