



**Circular 0025/2026**

**To: Managerial Authorities and Principal Teachers in Primary Schools**

## **Staffing arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2026/27 school year**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this circular is to inform all primary school management and staff of the staffing arrangements for primary schools for the 2026/27 school year.

The allocation of teaching posts to schools is contingent on schools complying with the redeployment arrangements in place for the 2026/27 school year.

The redeployment of surplus permanent/CID holding teachers is the mechanism used to fill teaching posts and is key to the ability of the Department to manage within its payroll budget. Boards of Management/ETBs will not be permitted to commence a recruitment process to fill a teaching vacancy until the Department is satisfied that vacant positions are not required for the redeployment of any remaining surplus permanent/CID holding teachers.

The key points to note are:

- Permanent/CID holding teachers will be retained in their own school as long as there is a post, either permanent or fixed-term available for them. Where a teacher is being retained in a suitable fixed-term position, the teacher will not have to complete a Main Panel application form or defer his/her panel rights for such a position.



- There is no longer a CID application form included as part of this circular. Please see Circular 0020/2026 for arrangements for CIDs for the 2026/27 school year.
- The Special Education allocation has been reviewed for 2026/27. All existing Special Education cluster posts will cease at the end of the 2025/26 school year. Schools should recluster their SET hours into fulltime posts.
- Applications for Projected Enrolment Posts should only be submitted after 28 April 2026
- Applications for EAL support will be made via an online form this year. Details on this, including deadlines for application, will be advised to schools after the Easter break.
- Tuesday 28 April is the key date for schools to:
  - Notify relevant Panel Operator of any permanent or fixed term vacancy
  - Return Main Redeployment Panel Application Form (Appendix E) for surplus permanent/CID holding teachers to the Department's Primary Teacher Allocations Section
  - Return Form SET.Cluster2026/27 (Appendix D) to the Department's Primary Teacher Allocations Section to notify of new Special Education Teacher cluster arrangements
  - Submit completed Staffing Appeals Form (Appendix F) for the May meeting of the Primary Staffing Appeals Board to the Department's Primary Teacher Allocations Section
- The Main Redeployment Panels will be published in late May for schools to appoint teachers from the panels to vacancies



## Contents of Circular

This circular is structured as follows and contains the following information:

- Section 1: Staffing arrangements for the 2026/27 school year
- Section 2: Background detail on the staffing arrangements for the 2026/27 school year
- Section 3: Redeployment arrangements for the 2026/27 school year
- Section 4: Primary Staffing Appeals process for the 2026/27 school year
- Appendix A: Primary Staffing schedule tables for the 2026/27 school year
- Appendix B: Enrolment thresholds for Administrative Principal and Administrative Deputy Principal post for the 2026/27 school year
- Appendix C: Updated list of all schools showing the following allocations data for the 2026/27 school year
  - NCSE hours allocated to each school
  - Fulltime posts, shared posts and hours available for clustering in each school under Special Education Teacher allocation
- Appendix D: Form SET.Cluster2026/27 - Notification of newly clustered Special Education Teacher posts for the 2026/27 school year
- Appendix E: Application Form for Permanent/CID Holding Teachers' Access to the Main Redeployment Panel for the 2026/27 school year - Main Redeployment Panel Application Form
- Appendix F(a-g): Application to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board 2026/27 School Year



## **Further information/FAQs**

Any additional information on the teacher allocation process and also regular updates on progress on clearing redeployment panels will be published on the Department's website.

The Department has also published an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document on Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level for Surplus Permanent and CID Holding Teachers through the Main Panel and an FAQ document on Circular 0025/2026 Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2026/27 School Year.

## **Queries**

If, after reading this circular and the related FAQ documents, you have queries in relation to the staffing allocation for your school, you may e-mail the queries to [primaryallocations@education.gov.ie](mailto:primaryallocations@education.gov.ie). Please include the school roll number and school name in the subject line with any email enquiry.

Paraic Joyce  
Principal Officer  
Teacher Allocations Section

March 2026



## Key Dates & Forms for Completion by Schools in relation to the teacher allocation and redeployment Process 2026/27

Key action	Form To Be Completed and Returned to Primary Allocations	Date for action to be completed
<p>The staffing schedule enrolment tables at Appendix A enables schools to check their mainstream staffing levels for the 2026/27 school year. The enrolment thresholds in Appendix B enables schools to check if they are entitled to Administrative Principal and/or Administrative Deputy Principal status.</p>		Immediate
<p>Schools must notify their relevant Panel Operator of any impending permanent and fixed term vacancy as a consequence of the staffing schedule, or any other reason known at this stage.</p>		28 April 2026
<p>Subsequent permanent and fixed term vacancies must be notified by schools to their relevant Panel Operator and Primary Allocations Section within 5 working days of the vacancy becoming known to the Board of Management/ETB or Principal.</p>		Within 5 working days of vacancy becoming known to the Board of Management/ETB or Principal
<p>Appendix C sets out the allocation of NCSE hours, the fulltime permanent posts and the part-time hours available for clustering</p> <p>All Special Education cluster posts cease at the end of the current school year</p> <p>Schools should now (for the 2026/27 school year) cluster part-time SET hours into new fulltime permanent (25 hour) shared SET posts with neighbouring schools</p>	Appendix D: Form SET. Cluster 2026/27	28 April 2026
<p>Schools that have surplus permanent/CID holding teachers should arrange for the completed Main Redeployment Panel Application Form(s) (MPF) to be returned to the Department's Primary Teacher Allocations Section.</p>	Appendix E: Form MPF	28 April 2026



<p>The Staffing Appeals Board will be holding its meetings in May, June and October.</p> <p>Applications for the May meeting must be submitted to Primary Allocations section.</p>	<p>Appendix F: Application to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board 2026/27 School Year</p>	<p>28 April 2026</p>
<p>Period for schools to submit their application for EAL (English as an Additional Language) support on Form Prim-EAL 2026/27</p>	<p>Form Prim-EAL 2026/27 (online form)</p>	<p>Notification will be issued to schools after Easter</p>
<p>Date after which schools may submit their application for Projected Enrolment Posts on the basis of their projected enrolments for September 2026.</p>	<p>Form ProjEnrPost26/27</p>	<p>28 April 2026</p>
<p>The Department expects to publish the redeployment panels in late May. Schools with vacancies will fill their vacancies from the Main Redeployment Panels. Thereafter, Panel Officers will be appointed to facilitate the redeployment of surplus permanent/CID holding teachers.</p>		<p>In late May</p>



## Section 1

### Staffing arrangements for the 2026/27 school year

The following are the main elements of the staffing arrangements that will operate in primary schools for the 2026/27 school year:

#### 1.1 Mainstream Classroom Teaching Posts

The primary staffing schedule will operate on the basis of a general average of 1 classroom teacher for every 23 pupils for the 2026/27 school year. Lower thresholds apply for DEIS Band 1 (including DEIS Plus) schools.

The enrolment tables for the operation of the staffing schedule for the 2026/27 school year are listed at Appendix A of this Circular. This enables schools to now check their mainstream staffing levels for the 2026/27 school year.

The enrolment tables at Appendix A include the staffing schedules for DEIS Urban Band 1 (including DEIS Plus) schools.

The staffing schedule determines the number of mainstream posts in the school. School authorities are requested to ensure that the number of pupils in any class is kept as low as possible, taking all relevant contextual factors into account (e.g. classroom accommodation, fluctuating enrolment etc.). However, school authorities should, where possible, use their autonomy under the staffing schedule to implement smaller class sizes for junior classes. DEIS Urban Band 1 (including DEIS Plus) Vertical schools should implement the recommended 17:1 pupil to teacher ratio at junior level and 21:1 pupil to teacher ratio at senior level.

In the context of the projected downward trajectory for enrolments at primary level:

- It is important from a school accommodation perspective that admission processes operated by individual primary schools are focused on meeting local needs and do not result in a requirement for additional classroom accommodation unless the Department's Planning & Building Unit considers that it is necessary to meet demographic or special class requirements in that local area.
- Where primary schools are due to gain a classroom teaching post for the 2026/27 school year, it is possible that some of these schools may not



retain such a post over the short to medium term. In instances where the mainstream teaching post is not subject to redeployment, it is reasonable for such an additional classroom teaching post to be deployed to meet the priority needs of the children and young people in the school; as identified through the Continuum of Support process.

In these cases, the mainstream teaching post may complement the school's special education team in supporting children and young people through a combination of team-teaching, group and one-to-one support. The decision as to what form of support the teacher provides should be informed by the identified needs of children and young people and based on the principle that children and young people with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support. Where the decision is made to deploy the teacher in a team-teaching role for some or all of the week, both teachers involved should plan the teaching collaboratively and thoughtfully and regularly evaluate the extent to which the team teaching is leading to improved experiences and outcomes for the prioritised children and young people.

## **1.2 Administrative Principal and Administrative Deputy Principal**

The criteria for the appointment of Administrative Principal and Administrative Deputy Principal posts is set out in Appendix B of this circular.

## **1.3 Projected Enrolment Post Criteria for the 2026/27 School Year**

Schools may apply for an additional mainstream post where the enrolment on 30 September 2026 is projected to exceed the enrolment on 30 September 2025:

- a) by a minimum increase in enrolment (as specified below)

and

- b) by having an excess of 5 pupils above the required appointment figure



### **Schools with a 2026/27 staffing of Principal and 6 Mainstream Class Teachers or fewer**

#### **Minimum Increase in Enrolment:**

For primary schools with a staffing of Principal plus 6 Mainstream Class Teachers or fewer for the 2026/27 school year, the minimum increase in enrolment over the 30 September 2025 enrolment referred to at (a) above is 15 pupils.

#### **Average Class Size:**

An average class size in excess of 23 pupils must also apply to such schools seeking a post under this criterion (see exceptions below). This is calculated by applying the number of mainstream posts anticipated for the 2026/27 school year (excluding projected enrolment post) to the number of pupils projected to be enrolled in September 2026.

### **Schools with staffing of Principal and 7 Mainstream Class Teachers or greater**

#### **Minimum Increase in Enrolment:**

For primary schools with a staffing of Principal plus 7 Mainstream Class Teachers or greater for the 2026/27 school year, the minimum increase in enrolment over the 30 September 2025 enrolment referred to at (a) above is 23 pupils.

### **Exceptions**

#### **1. Schools seeking the appointment of the second mainstream class teacher (P+2)**

Schools projecting an increase of at least 15 pupils in excess of 30 September 2025 enrolment are not required to meet either the excess number of 5 pupils on the appointment figure or the average class size of 23:1. However, the minimum projected enrolment of 48 pupils must be achieved to secure a second mainstream class teacher on projected enrolment grounds for the 2026/27 school year.



## **2. Schools seeking the appointment of more than one projected enrolment post**

Schools must meet the requirement of the minimum increase in enrolment and the excess number of 5 pupils on the appointment figure for the first projected enrolment post. In the case of each subsequent post, just the excess number of 5 pupils on the appointment figure must be met.

### **New Stream of Intake Classes**

Where a school is expanding the number of intake classes which would generate a new stream, the school must have received prior approval for such expansion from both the school patron and from the Planning and Building Unit of the Department.

### **Application for Projected Enrolment Post**

Schools should submit a completed application form (ProjEnr2627) to the Department's Primary Teacher Allocations Section, [primaryallocations@education.gov.ie](mailto:primaryallocations@education.gov.ie) after 28 April 2026.

Where a school meets the criteria above, an additional permanent post(s) may be sanctioned provisionally, pending the confirmation of the valid enrolment on 30 September 2026.

### **Confirmation of 30 September Enrolments**

Confirmation of enrolments for staffing purposes should be done via the submission of the National School Annual Census through the Primary Online Database (POD). Schools with a provisionally approved post should ensure that their returns are completed as soon as possible after the census becomes available on 1 October 2026. Schools that have any difficulties completing the census return should contact the POD Helpdesk at 01 889 2311 or [pod@education.gov.ie](mailto:pod@education.gov.ie).

Schools are reminded that in the context of seeking additional resources from the Department on projected enrolment grounds it is very important that the projected enrolment is realistic. A good guide for schools is the number of offers of a school place that have been accepted, rather than a reliance on expressions of interest.

In instances where the projected enrolment does not materialise on 30 September 2026, the additional teacher who was allocated on a temporary



basis pending confirmation of enrolments will be withdrawn. **There are no exceptions to this requirement.** Ensuring that teaching posts are allocated consistently and fairly amongst schools is an important part of the annual allocations process.

## 1.4 Island Schools

### **One Teacher Island Schools (i.e. Principal only)**

Where a primary school is the only school on the island, a second mainstream teacher is allocated to the school.

### **Three Teacher Island Schools (i.e. P+2)**

In the event that a reduction in the pupil numbers of an island school will result in the loss of the third classroom post, the third post may be retained, subject to the total number of pupils in the school being 40 or above and the school being the only primary school on the island.

## 1.5 Special Education Teacher Posts (SET Posts)

The Special Education Teaching allocation for each school has been reviewed for the 2026/27 school year, as per Circular 11/2026.

Appendix C of this circular sets out the allocation of special education teaching hours as notified to each school by the NCSE.

These hours are shown as full-time posts (on the basis of 25 hours being equivalent to 1 teaching post), and the balance of hours and minutes available for clustering into full-time posts with other schools.

### **School-led SET Clusters**

All existing SET clusters will cease at the end of the 2025/26 school year.

Schools should consult Appendix C to check the number of full-time SET posts and the balance of part time hours in their own school. Schools should use this information to cluster their part-time Special Education Teaching hours into full-time permanent SET posts with neighbouring schools.

Schools with part-time hours have until 28 April 2026 to enter into a cluster arrangement to achieve a full-time permanent post (25 hours) through sharing arrangements with other neighbouring school(s). The base school in the cluster



should submit the Form SET Cluster 2026/27 (Appendix D) to the Primary Allocations Section.

A school may only be the base school for one SET cluster post.

### **Combining SET and Principal Release**

Principal Release hours may be included in a shared SET post. A maximum of 10 Principal Release hours (allocation from two schools) may be combined with SET hours from other schools to form a shared SET post. This arrangement should be reflected in the Appendix D form.

A single school that is not creating a cluster with any other school may also combine their principal release day (5 hours) with their SET hours to create a 25 hour post. Such schools should also complete and submit an Appendix D form.

### **Department-led Clustering of SET**

Following the school led process for clustering of SET hours, a Department-led clustering process will be initiated after 28 April 2026 for any remaining hours in schools that have not been clustered.

Schools are reminded that once a SET cluster has been established it will remain in place until the next update of the Special Education Teaching allocation model.

### **Status of SET Posts**

All full-time SET posts (including those created through a combination of SET and Principal Release) are permanent posts and should be filled in accordance with the redeployment arrangements.

Part-time hours remaining in a school that are not clustered into full-time posts can only be filled in a temporary capacity.

### **Amalgamated and newly established schools which open for the 2026/27 school year**

Schools that are newly established or newly amalgamated in the 2026/27 school year will have their Special Education allocation calculated by the N.C.S.E./Special Education Section of the Department.



## **1.6 Additional Allocations for Schools with High Concentrations of Pupils that require Language Support (EAL)**

The Special Education Teaching (SET) allocation provides a unified allocation for special education support teaching needs to each school based on each school's educational profile and also encompasses an element of Language (EAL) support allocation. Under this SET model, schools are frontloaded with resources to provide support immediately to those pupils who need it without delay. Therefore, schools should draw from their SET allocation to support pupils who have been identified as being in need of language support through the school's assessment processes.

Mainstream class teachers and any additional language support teachers in the school have a role in progressing the language learning needs of children for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). These language needs involve two distinct language skills:

### **a. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills**

Children and young people learning EAL best acquire language for everyday social interactions through immersion in the language of the school and of the wider environment. This language type is otherwise referred to as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS. It is important that all pupils receive well-planned opportunities to develop these English language skills in mainstream classrooms with peers in a scaffolded, immersive environment.

### **b. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency**

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP refers to those language skills and abilities needed in order to understand and express curriculum concepts and ideas. These skills require appropriately tailored and responsive teaching and learning strategies.

### **Role of the class teacher:**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, they should ensure that they prepare their lessons carefully to address the diverse language needs within the classroom. Consideration should be given to pupils' language needs in support of their overall classroom participation (or BICS needs) as well as the need to appropriately structure learning experiences to support pupils' understanding of curriculum concepts (CALP).



#### Role of the EAL support teacher:

EAL language support teachers provide support and reinforcement to the pupil's language learning both in mainstream settings, through team teaching approaches or through support lessons, if required. They may find themselves supporting the pupil's BICS/CALP to varying degrees depending on overall language progression and need. This may include shorter periods of focus primarily BICS and/or CALP needs as well as more sustained periods on CALP development in particular given its necessity for widespread curriculum access and understanding.

#### Tumoideachas:

Irish-medium primary schools outside of the Gaeltacht have the option of implementing a period of total early immersion up to the end of senior infants. For Gaeltacht schools a period of total early immersion up to the end of senior infants is required. Instruction in total immersion settings is exclusively through the medium of Irish. Instruction by language-support teachers should align with this practice.

#### **Application Process:**

Schools with pupils with EAL needs should complete the Form Prim-EAL 2026/27 to apply for EAL Support.

This form will be available via an online link which schools will be notified about through the OLCS application after the Easter break.

Schools will be notified of dates for completion at this time. For any queries in relation to this, schools can contact [primarystaffingappeals@education.gov.ie](mailto:primarystaffingappeals@education.gov.ie)

#### **Appeal Process:**

Where a school authority is not satisfied with the Department's decision on its application for EAL support, an appeal may be submitted to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board on Appendix F(D).

As this criterion relates to an initial application process, the Appeals Board can only consider appeals under this criterion at the June and October Appeals Board meetings.

See Section 4 for the appeal criterion for additional temporary language support post(s) provided on the basis of appeals to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board.



## **1.7 Teacher Supply Panels**

Teacher Supply Panels will continue for the 2026/27 school year. The current level of posts will be reviewed at the end of the school year based on the current level of utilisation. Schools will be notified in this regard later in the year.

## **1.8 Principal Release Time Posts**

Each school with a teaching principal will have 37 release days in the 2026/27 school year. Schools with one special class will have 4 additional release days in the 2026/27 school year.

All Principal Release Day Clusters in place will cease at the end of the 2025/26 school year. Schools may cluster their Principal Release Days into full-time Principal Release Time Posts for the 2026/27 school year. The application form for Principal Release Time posts is available on the Department's website. Schools are reminded that Principal Release Time Posts are fixed-term posts and must be filled in accordance with the redeployment arrangements.

Please note that schools may combine their SET and Principal Release to create a full-time SET post. Please see Section 1.5 for details.

Base schools for Principal Release cluster posts must have a teaching principal. A school may only be the base school for one Principal Release cluster post.



## **Section 2**

### **Background detail in relation to Staffing Arrangements for the 2026/27 school year**

#### **2.1 Teaching Vacancies**

Schools are obliged to notify, by email, the relevant Panel Operator, of any impending vacancies arising from the application of the staffing schedule for the forthcoming school year. This notification should be completed by 28 April 2026.

All permanent vacancies, specified purpose vacancies and suitable fixed term vacancies that are for the duration of the full school year or which are sanctioned on or before the first working day of November and are for the duration of the remainder of the school year must be notified to the Panel Operator.

The school is also obliged to notify the relevant Panel Operator and Primary Allocations Section of such vacancies arising after the date of notification. This must be done within 5 working days of the vacancy becoming known to the school.

#### **2.2 Notification of Vacancies**

All schools must notify their vacancies to their Panel Operator and Primary Teacher Allocations section, as set out above. Where a school notifies a post(s) to the Panel Operator and Primary Allocations Section outside the required timeframes set out above, the school will be required to offer the post(s) immediately to teachers on the panel. Otherwise, the school will be precluded from filling that post(s) until the school's obligation to the redeployment panels is fulfilled.

Where a Panel Officer is appointed, he/she will, in the first instance, contact any school that failed to notify a vacancy within the required timeframe, in order to arrange the filling of the vacancy through the redeployment of a teacher.

#### **2.3 Redeployment Arrangements**

It is important for schools to note that while the main panel is in operation, permanent and suitable fixed term teaching vacancies can only be filled from the relevant main redeployment panel.



Boards of Management/ETBs are not permitted to commence a recruitment process to fill a permanent or suitable fixed term teaching vacancy in any other manner until the Department is satisfied that vacant positions are not required for the redeployment of any remaining surplus permanent/CID holding teachers on a main panel.

The timing of when teaching vacancies can be filled in any other manner will depend on how quickly surplus permanent/CID holding teachers are redeployed into vacancies. The Department will publish regular panel updates on its website which will inform schools and teachers of progress being made on the redeployment of surplus permanent/CID holding teachers.

## **2.4 Filling a vacancy through the Main Redeployment Panel**

Schools have the option of using a website, i.e., [www.educationposts.ie](http://www.educationposts.ie) or [www.staffroom.ie](http://www.staffroom.ie) as a means of engaging with the Main Redeployment Panel. This can be done by the school using the website as a means to invite teachers on the relevant Main Redeployment Panel to express an interest in a permanent post. See FAQ document on Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level for Surplus Permanent & CID Holding Teachers – Q 6.3.2.

It remains the case however that all teachers on the main panel must be redeployed before permission is given to fill remaining permanent posts in any other manner or to fill any suitable fixed term teaching vacancies.

For the 2026/27 school year, a teacher that takes up a fixed-term position from the Main Panel will be considered permanently redeployed to that school and will remain in the school as long as there is a position, either permanent or suitable fixed-term, available for him/her.

## **2.5 Deputy Principal Appointments**

Circular 0044/2019 “Recruitment/Promotion and Leadership for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary Schools” provides for the appointment of Deputy Principal Posts by open competition for all schools in the 2026/27 school year, where a teaching vacancy exists in the school.

Such schools with Deputy Principal vacancies for the 2026/27 school year should advertise the post as soon as the vacancy becomes known to the school.

If the Deputy Principal is appointed from within the existing school staff, the resultant vacancy must be filled through the published redeployment



arrangements. If the Deputy Principal vacancy is filled through external appointment, no vacancy arises for the Panel.

## 2.6 Filling a Provisionally Approved Post

Certain posts will be allocated to schools on a provisional basis and will not be confirmed for the 2026/27 school year until the school confirms that it has achieved projected enrolment for 30 September 2026. These posts are:

- a permanent mainstream projected enrolment post
- a permanent mainstream post approved on a provisional basis under the staffing appeals process

The only circumstance in which the permanent posts listed above can be filled on a permanent basis from 1 September 2026 is if the post is being filled by a permanent/CID holding teacher in the school who is due to be redeployed through the Main Panel but is being retained in one of the posts above. If the required enrolment is not achieved (and no other vacancy, either a permanent or a suitable fixed-term exists for the teacher), the teacher will be placed back on the Main Panel.

Otherwise, schools that are given provisional approval for one of the teaching posts above may only fill these post(s) on a temporary basis up to Friday 23 October 2026.

As early as possible in October, the Department will inform the relevant schools whether this vacancy is required to facilitate the redeployment of a surplus permanent/CID holding teacher on the Main Panel. If the post is required for the redeployment of a teacher, the fixed-term contract must cease on Friday 23 October 2026. It is important that this arrangement is reflected in the terms of the fixed-term contract.

If the post is not required for the redeployment of a surplus permanent teacher, it can be filled at that stage in the following manner:

- Where teachers remain on the Supplementary Panel in the school's panel area, the teacher must be appointed from the Supplementary Panel by the first working day of November.
- Where the Supplementary Panel is clear in the school's panel area, the school will be given permission to proceed to open advertising.
- The latest date for filling a permanent post on a permanent basis is Monday 2 November 2026. Thereafter, a permanent post may be filled only on a



fixed term basis unless the appointee is a permanent/CID holding teacher from the Main Panel.

It is important to note that schools cannot commence the advertising and recruitment process for these vacancies until the Department has given permission to do so.

These arrangements do not apply to Principal/Deputy Principal posts which will continue to be filled in the normal manner on a permanent basis.

## **2.7 Valid Enrolments**

The number of mainstream class teachers appropriate to a school for the 2026/27 school year is determined by reference to the school's valid enrolment on 30 September 2025. The schedule of enrolment of pupils required for the appointment and retention of mainstream class teachers for the 2026/27 school year is attached at Appendix A.

Only pupils who were validly enrolled on 30 September 2025 are taken into account for the purpose of determining staff numbers. In this regard the terms of Department Circulars 24/02 - Determination of Valid Enrolment in Primary Schools - and 32/03 – Retention of Pupils in Primary Schools - must be adhered to. Schools are reminded that a child must not be allowed to attend or be enrolled in a primary school before the fourth anniversary of his/her birth.

Pupils retained on the school register on 30 September for the purpose of compliance with the Education and Welfare Act, 2000 should not be counted towards valid enrolment for the purpose of determining staff numbers.

It is important to note that valid enrolments are only those pupils that are enrolled on 30 September and who are expected at that stage to continue to be enrolled in the school for the duration of the school year. If there are any short-term enrolments in the school (including pupils from another country that are temporarily enrolled to help improve their standard of English or where it is known that pupils will transfer to another school shortly after 30 September) these pupils cannot be included in the enrolment return from the school.

For those schools with special classes, it is the overall enrolment of a school (students in special classes and students in mainstream classes) that determines the number of mainstream teachers in the school. This is intended to support the inclusion of students from special classes in mainstream classes, as appropriate. Separately, special classes are allocated teaching resources by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).



Boards of Management/ETBs and Principal Teachers are reminded about the importance of ensuring the accuracy of enrolment returns to the Department. They have a responsibility to immediately notify the Department of any error or irregularity in their enrolment returns.

The Department's standard policy for cases that involve any deliberate overstatement of enrolments is to refer them to An Garda Síochána.



## Section 3

### Redeployment Arrangements for the 2026/27 school year

The detailed redeployment arrangements are set out in FAQ format on the Department website.

The redeployment arrangements involve the following:

#### 3.1 Redeployment process for permanent/CID holding teachers

- (i) Each main panel is created for surplus permanent/CID holding teachers in order to ensure that vacancies are offered in the first instance to these teachers.

In a change to previous years, a permanent/CID holding teacher will only be considered surplus in their school if there is neither a permanent nor a suitable fixed-term position available for the teacher. If there is a suitable fixed-term position available for a permanent/CID holding teacher, the teacher remains in that position without any impact to their terms and conditions as a permanent/CID holding teacher.

It is envisaged that the main panels will be published in late May. The latest date by which schools must have filled their vacancies from the main panel will be advised at that stage. Thereafter, Panel Officers will be appointed to facilitate the redeployment of any remaining surplus permanent/CID holding teachers.

- (ii) Teaching vacancies must be filled within this timeframe by permanent/CID holding teachers on a main panel in the following order of priority:
  - a. Permanent vacancies within the panel area (e.g. diocese)
  - b. Specified-purpose vacancies and suitable fixed-term vacancies within the panel area (e.g. diocese) that are for the duration of the full school year or are sanctioned on or before the first working day of November and are for the duration of the remainder of the school year.

For the 2026/27 school year, a teacher that takes up a fixed-term position from the Main Panel will be considered permanently redeployed to that school and will remain in the



school as long as there is a position, either a permanent or a suitable fixed-term, available for him/her.

- (iii) Surplus permanent/CID holding teachers may opt to accept a post outside the 45km radius and this can help reduce the requirement for the operation of the contingency arrangements set out at No. 2 and No. 3 below.

### **3.2 Inter-diocesan redeployment**

Where the arrangements outlined at 3.1 above do not bring about the redeployment of all surplus permanent/CID holding teachers on a diocesan panel, all posts remaining vacant in schools in adjoining dioceses must be available to those teachers, with the filling of those post(s) to be achieved through inter-diocesan co-operation on a fixed-term basis.

### **3.3 Redeployment arrangements for any residual surplus permanent/CID holding teachers**

If, following the processes outlined at 3.1 and 3.2, there are any residual surplus permanent/CID holding teachers, additional arrangements will be required to facilitate their redeployment into vacancies in schools.

These additional arrangements will be used only in those cases where no viable alternative options are available for the redeployment of the remaining surplus permanent/CID holding teachers. The precise arrangements to be used will be determined on a case by case basis in discussions with the relevant education partners and the relevant Patron. The following principles will be used for the operation of these arrangements:

- (i) In the first instance the position will be examined on whether any flexibility in relation to the 45km radius for redeployment can be appropriately applied as a means of redeploying the surplus permanent/CID holding teacher to a school of the same patronage.
- (ii) In the second instance the scope for the redeployment of the surplus permanent/CID holding teacher to be achieved on an elective basis will be examined through the teacher applying to be placed on a panel of a different patronage. It will be a matter for the relevant Patron to consent to this application.



- (iii) If no other viable option is available then a temporary assignment to a vacancy in a school of a different type of patronage will be made. This temporary assignment will be for the duration of the relevant school year. Any teacher on a temporary assignment in this manner will retain their existing panel rights for the relevant redeployment panel for their original school. Such teachers will not acquire panel rights in respect of the redeployment panel associated with the school of temporary assignment. These teachers will be required to adhere to the requirements of the Board of Management/ETB in relation to its obligation to uphold the ethos of the school, consistent with law.

The Department's approach in relation to the operation of the residual arrangements outlined will be to seek agreement through consensus. In this regard there will be on-going consultation with all the relevant stakeholders in relation to the operation of the redeployment process.



## Section 4

### Primary Staffing Appeals Board

#### 4.1 Arrangements for 2026/27 School Year

The Primary Staffing Appeals Board, which operates independently of the Minister and the Department, will review appeals for the 2026/27 school year. The appeals criteria are set out at 4 below.

The first meeting of the Primary Staffing Appeals Board to deal with appeals for the 2026/27 school year will be held in May 2026. Further meetings will be held in June and October 2026.

The closing dates for submission of staffing appeals for the first meeting of the Primary Staffing Appeals Board is 28 April 2026.

The closing dates for submission of staffing appeals and dates of the later meetings will be notified to schools through the OLCS in due course.

Please note that closing dates will be strictly adhered to and accordingly, appeals received after a particular closing date will not be considered by the Board at that meeting.

Appeals must be submitted to Primary Teacher Allocations Section, Department of Education and Youth, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, on the standard application form, clearly stating the criterion under which the appeal is being made. Please mark the envelope “Staffing Appeals”.

The standard application form is available at Appendix F(a) – F(g).

The DEIS status of a school will be taken into account in any appeal application.

#### 4.2. Ombudsman

In light of amendments to the Ombudsman Act 2012, any school taking the view that the Primary Staffing Appeals Board has not applied the appeals criteria fairly to its appeal may submit a complaint to the Ombudsman.



The role of the Ombudsman in relation to any appeal is to review that the Appeal Board dealt with it fairly and in accordance with the appeals criteria. It is not therefore an avenue for schools to seek additional resources.

The Office of the Ombudsman can be contacted at [www.ombudsman.gov.ie](http://www.ombudsman.gov.ie)

### **4.3 A school may appeal only once in a particular case**

The Appeals Board's adjudication will be regarded as a final determination in relation to the post(s) and no further applications to the Appeals Board in respect of the 2026/27 school year shall be considered unless there is change in the circumstances of the school e.g. additional enrolments.

### **4.4 Appeals Criteria**

The Appeals Board may determine that a departure from the staffing schedule is necessary in the circumstances outlined at (a) to (g) below:

#### **A. Exceptional accommodation difficulty**

Where the Appeals Board is satisfied that the required pupil numbers will be achieved in September 2026 and that, without the allocation of an additional classroom post, the school would find itself in an exceptional accommodation difficulty.

#### **B. October 2025 enrolment**

Where the Appeals Board is satisfied, on the basis of verifiable evidence, that the required pupil numbers were enrolled in September\* or October 2025, but due to circumstances outside the control of the school were not enrolled on the 30 September 2025.

The school must also confirm that the enrolment on 30 September 2026 will be sufficient to retain the post for the subsequent school year (i.e. the 2027/28 school year)

For staffing purposes, a pupil can be included in the enrolment of only one school in any school year\*\*.



\*A pupil who leaves the school before 30 September and does not return to the school in the school year will not be eligible for consideration under this criterion.

\*\* In the event that the school in which the pupil was enrolled on 30 September can verify that the pupil did not need to be counted for the appointment or retention of a teacher in that school, the Appeals Board will consider allowing the pupil to be counted as part of the enrolment for staffing purposes in the school to which s/he has transferred.

### **C. Projected Enrolment Post based on additional enrolments after 30 September 2026**

This criterion applies only to those schools provisionally sanctioned for a projected enrolment post(s) which did not reach sufficient enrolments on 30 September 2026 to retain the post. As this criterion relates to verification of actual enrolment on 30 September 2026, the Appeals Board can only consider appeals under this criterion at the October Appeals Board meeting.

Where the Board considers that, in relation to the granting of a post under the projected enrolments criterion, the projected pupil numbers required to retain the post were enrolled or are likely to be enrolled by the last day of term in December 2026, but due to circumstances outside the control of the school were not enrolled as expected on 30 September 2026. Enrolment forms/letters from parents confirming the expected date of enrolment of the pupils must be provided with the appeal.

A post allocated by the Appeals Board under this criterion will be sanctioned on a provisional basis subject to confirmation of the required enrolment being achieved by the last day of term in December 2026. As with Criterion B, a pupil can be included in the enrolment of just one school in any school year.

In the event that the school in which the pupil was enrolled on 30 September 2026 can verify that the pupil did not need to be counted for the appointment or retention of a teacher in that school, the Appeals Board will consider allowing the pupil to be counted as part of the enrolment for staffing purposes in the school to which s/he has transferred. Where the pupil(s) was not enrolled in a school in Ireland on 30 September 2026, a letter from the parents confirming this must be provided with the appeal.



## **D. EAL support**

Schools are reminded that the Form Prim-EAL 2026/27 is an online form and will be available on the Department website from mid-April 2026. Schools are to complete this online form in respect of EAL resources for eligible pupils as outlined in the form.

An allocation in respect of language support may be provided to schools based on the information supplied in Form Prim-EAL 2026/27.

If a school authority is not satisfied with the Department's decision on its application for language support, an appeal may be submitted to the Primary Staffing Appeals Boards on Appendix F (D).

As this criterion relates to an initial application process, the Appeals Board can only consider appeals under this criterion at the June and October Appeals Board meeting.

Having considered the circumstances outlined by the school and having regard to the high number of pupils requiring language support, an additional allocation may be approved to meet the educational needs of such pupils. In considering the level of EAL support in the school, the Appeals Board will consider those pupils in the school with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency that have received less than 3 years EAL support.

Schools should note that decisions by the Board, based on projected enrolments of EAL pupils, are subject to review after confirmation of 30 September 2026 enrolment. The decision may be revised if projected enrolments do not materialise.

## **E. Small schools**

This appeals criterion is applicable to schools with four classroom teachers or less, and they may submit an appeal in either of two instances:

1. Where a school with four classroom teachers or less which is losing a classroom post for the 2026/27 school year provides supported evidence that the enrolment will increase sufficiently by 30 September 2026 to retain the post for the subsequent school year (i.e. the 2027/28 school year) the Appeals Board can allow the school to retain the mainstream classroom post (MCT).
  - A threshold of 11 pupils applies for the retention of the existing 2nd MCT (i.e. P + 1).



- A threshold of 45 pupils will apply for the retention of the existing 3rd MCT (i.e. P+ 2).
- A threshold of 75 pupils will apply for the retention of the existing 4th MCT (i.e. P + 3).

Or

2. Where a school with three classroom teachers or less is not gaining a mainstream classroom post for the 2026/27 school year but can provide evidence that the enrolment will increase sufficiently by 30 September 2026 to gain the additional classroom post for the subsequent school year (i.e. the 2027/28 school year), assuming no change in the staffing schedule the Appeals Board can allow the school to gain a post for the 2026/27 school year.

- A threshold of 14 pupils applies for the appointment of the 2nd MCT (i.e. P+1).
- A threshold of 48 pupils will apply for the appointment of the 3rd MCT (i.e. P +2).
- A threshold of 78 pupils will apply for the appointment of the 4th MCT (i.e. P + 3).
- A threshold of 11 pupils applies for the appointment of the 2nd MCT (i.e. P + 1) for those schools situated 8km or more from the nearest school of the same type of patronage/language of instruction.
- A threshold of 11 pupils applies for the appointment of the 2nd MCT (i.e. P + 1) where there will be at least 6 class groupings taught in the school in the 2026/27 school year.

#### **F. School losing 3 or more posts**

If a school is losing 3 or more permanent mainstream posts, an application can be made to the Staffing Appeals Board with a view to seeking to have a portion of the loss in posts deferred to the 2027/28 school year on the basis that it is impacting in a particularly adverse manner on a school's overall allocation.



**G. Alleviating some of the pressure on class sizes at infants level for schools that make a significant contribution by absorbing demographic growth**

This appeals criteria is targeted at schools that are not gaining an additional teaching post under the projected enrolments process but nevertheless make a significant contribution to the provision of school places which assists the response to demographic growth within their area and as a result are under significant pressure on their class sizes at infants' level. A key indicator in relation to these schools is a significant increase in junior infants' enrolments.

It is envisaged that these schools will typically be in areas of significant population growth. Each school should note that if it is expanding the number of intake classes which would generate a new stream, the school must have received prior approval for such expansion from both the School Patron and from the Planning and Building Unit of the Department.

Schools that meet the four criteria listed below may submit an appeal to the Appeals Board for an additional teaching post for the 2026/27 school year.

The four criteria to enable an appeal to be submitted are as follows:

1. The school is projecting, on a realistic basis, an increase in its overall enrolments for 30 September 2026 and the level of the projected increase:
  - a) is sufficient for the school to gain an additional teaching post for the 2027/28 school year (assuming no change in the staffing schedule)
  - b) is insufficient for the school to gain an additional teaching post for the 2026/27 school year under the projected enrolments application process
2. The school had an increase in its overall enrolments in each of the last 2 school years (2025/26 and 2024/25)
3. The school enrolled a minimum of 30 junior infants on 30 September 2024 and the number of junior infants enrolled has increased each year since.
4. That as a result of the increasing enrolment of junior infants, the school is under significant pressure on its class sizes at infants level (junior and/or senior infants).



Each application to the Appeals Board will be considered on its merits. The Appeals Board will assess whether, in its opinion, the school is deploying all of its mainstream classroom teachers in an appropriate manner. The Appeals Board will prioritise those schools that, in its opinion, are under greatest pressure on their class sizes at infants' level as a result of their increasing enrolments of junior infants. Any posts granted by the Appeals Board will be allocated on a provisional basis pending confirmation of actual enrolments on 30 September 2026.

#### **4.5 Accuracy of Enrolment Information Submitted as Part of Appeals to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board**

Boards of Management and Principal Teachers are reminded about the importance of ensuring the accuracy of enrolment information submitted to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board. The Department's standard policy for cases that involve any deliberate overstatement of enrolments for the purposes of obtaining any additional resources from the Department is to refer these cases to An Garda Síochána.