

Revised usage of “33 hours” for post-primary schools

Agreement has been reached at the Teachers’ Conciliation Council on revised arrangements in respect of usage of the 33 “Croke Park” hours, to take effect from the commencement of the 2014/15 school year. The revised arrangements, which are agreed with the Department of Education and Skills and school management representative bodies, are set out in DES Circular 43/14.

It is agreed that “up to, but not in excess of 5 (of the 33) hours will be available for planning and development work on other than a whole-school basis and as approved by management.” In practice, this means that the hours do not require simultaneous involvement of the whole staff and may be undertaken by individual teachers/groups of teachers, as approved by management. Necessarily, therefore, local consultation is required.

The 5 hours “must be delivered outside of teacher timetabled hours for class contact and supervision/substitution”. This means that delivery must be outside the 22 hours (or fewer, as applicable) of a teacher’s timetabled class contact and outside her/his timetabled supervision/substitution. Therefore, delivery may be at other times during the school day including, for example, during the mid-day break, and/or at times outside the school day.

The 5 hours must be delivered “in tranches of no less than 30 minutes duration.” In this context, they may be delivered within a timeframe (of days, weeks or months) as approved by management.

The “planning and development work” undertaken during the 5 hours, as approved by management, can encompass a broad range of activities such as subject department and other planning meetings, co-curricular activities, individual or small-group professional development, other activities of benefit to the school.

Clearly, as the activities must be approved by management, there must be a process of consultation and discussion (with individual teachers/groups of teachers, as appropriate).

Usage of the 5 hours “will be subject to appropriate verification and accountability.” Therefore, a Meeting Record template form is attached to the circular.

Please note that use of the 33 hours, inclusive of these 5 hours, cannot in any instance encroach or impinge on tuition time.

Usage of the remaining 28 (of the 33) hours

When account is taken of the 5 hours referred to in Circular 43/2014, 28 hours remain. Existing practice in relation to planning usage of these hours continues to apply. The usage should be planned prior to the end of the current school year and put into a school’s 2014/15 calendar.

Usage requiring consensus

Utilisation of some of the 28 hours outside the 167-day school year and/or in tranches of more than 2 hours within the 167-day school year requires consensus. The existing definition of and the process for development of consensus continues to apply.

In line with current practice and where there is consensus, members may agree to the scheduling, outside the 167-day school year, of a day/s for activities listed in paragraph 5 of DES CL25/2011, such as school planning and policy development.

Usage requiring consultation

Please note that consensus is not required for usage of the hours in blocks of up to 2 hours, within the 167-day school year. However, there has to be consultation with teachers in relation to optimal usage and scheduling of the 28 hours.

Being presented with decisions as a fait accompli or being told what is going to happen is not consultation. Consultation must be a genuine engagement that seeks to reach agreement regarding matters raised (either by management or staff). Management should provide all the information necessary for fully-informed decision-making. The appropriate forum

for consultation and decision in respect of arrangements for use of the 28 hours is a properly convened staff meeting for which usage of the hours is a notified agenda item.

TUI school meeting – part of a process

Prior to a staff meeting, a TUI meeting should be held to discuss and, if possible, agree members’ suggestions in respect of usage of the hours. The aim must be to formulate and present to management a coherent, consolidated view in respect of management proposals for usage of the hours and, also, as appropriate, to present coherent agreed proposals on behalf of the members.

This is especially important in regard to proposals for usage that require consensus.

Where – using this process - members’ position is established in respect of the utilisation of some or all of the 28 hours, that position should be supported by all members at a subsequent staff meeting.

Sustaining Progress and Croke Park Agreement requirements

Please note that prior to and in addition to the 33 Croke Park hours, the *Sustaining Progress* national agreement involved a commitment by teachers to attendance at

- 3 parent/teacher meetings per year and
- one staff meeting per term (three in all) on a “half-in, half-out” basis.

This commitment came to a total of 12 hours per annum and is set out in DES CL M58/04.

Under the Croke Park Agreement, provision is made for 33 additional hours to cover, inter alia, further parent/teacher and staff meetings (see the activities listed in paragraph 5 of CL25/2011).

The following table describes a normal arrangement for the usage of the 33 hours, encompassing the further parent/teacher and staff meetings and other activities (listed in paragraph 5) as well as usage of the 5 hours under Circular 43/2014 :

Activity		Aggregate time per year	Whole-staff activity - Yes/No
Further/Additional parent/teacher meetings	3 mtgs x 3 hours per meeting	9 hours	Yes
Additional staff meetings	3 mtgs x 2 hours per meeting	6 hours	Yes
School planning, development, in-service on a whole-school basis	1 day (outside 167)	# 7 hours	Yes
Subject planning meetings on a whole-school basis	Minimum of one hour per meeting	3 hours	Yes
Open evening or equivalent	1 event x 3 hours	3 hours	Yes*
Circular 43/2014 hours	Minimum of 30 minutes per usage	5 hours	No
		33 hours	

Please note that time assigned to parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings is counted for all teachers.

Defined by national management.

*A proportion of the 28 hours may be used for Open Evenings or other equivalent activities (such as graduations,

award evenings, enrolment meetings, exhibitions or other after-school/evening activities, as approved by management). Local circumstances will determine whether or not any one of these activities/events requires attendance by all the teaching staff i.e. whether or not it is a whole-staff activity. Where such

activities/events are not designated by management as whole-staff activities and where, over the course of the year, there is a number of such activities/events, they may be treated as a menu of activities/events to be shared amongst staff - with all teachers having the same attendance obligation in terms of a specified number of hours. Obviously, in such a case, each teacher would have to attend at least one, but not all, of the activities/events in order to discharge her/his obligation.

For noting

Teachers job-sharing and those in pro-rata contracts of less than full hours will have a reduced, pro-rata liability in respect of the 33 hours.

Teachers employed on an hourly-paid basis have no liability to undertake any of the 28 hours.

Further information and/or advice will issue as necessary.