



CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

The Department of Education and Skills wishes to inform school management bodies, vocational education committees, institutes of technology, universities, any agencies under its aegis and any members of staff in any of these bodies of changes to employment terms and conditions as a result of the commencement of the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010.

The Act, which was commenced on 1 January 2011, provides for a statutory civil partnership registration scheme for same sex couples. The Act sets out the rights and obligations that civil partners have towards each other. These are broadly the same as the rights and obligations of married couples towards each other. As a result, the Department of Education and Skills will be revising certain Circular Letters and other documentation in order to ensure that civil partners are treated in the same way as spouses as appropriate. Bodies are requested to review their internal documentation for the same reason.

As an interim measure to ensure compliance with statutory obligations employers are asked, in applying Department circulars, memoranda, rules, regulations or schemes,

- (a) wherever the word “spouse” appears this should be read as “spouse or civil partner”, and
- (b) wherever the word “marriage” appears this should be read as “marriage or civil partnership”.

This will mean, for example, that a benefit under a pension scheme that is provided for the spouse of a person is deemed to provide equally for the civil partner of a person. A member of staff is also entitled to “civil partnership leave” if he or she would have an entitlement to “marriage leave”.

Further information on registering civil partnerships is available from the General Register Office, LoCall: 1890 252076 or www.groireland.ie.

Any enquiries relating to teachers or SNA’s regarding this matter should be e-mailed to teachersna@education.gov.ie. Queries concerning members of staff in other bodies should be directed initially to the relevant employer and then, where necessary, to the relevant lead section within the Department of Education and Skills.

Department of Education and Skills
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