



**AN CHOMHAIRLE MHÚINTEOIREACHTA**  
*The Teaching Council*

# **Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers**

## Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers

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*which include :*

**Standards of Teaching, Knowledge, Skill and Competence**

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## Acknowledgements

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The Codes are published following much debate, consultation and drafting.

Thanks are due to the Teaching Council members, the Council's Education Committee and its Chairperson, Gerry Malone, for their careful, painstaking and exemplary work in preparing the Codes. Thanks are also extended to Carmel Kearns, Communications and Education Officer and the staff of the Council, under the leadership of its Director, Áine Lawlor, for the executive support provided at all stages in the process.

Thanks to all those individuals and groups who became involved in the consultation process and provided the Council with valuable feedback to aid its deliberations.

A special word of thanks to the Directors and staff of the nine Education Centres which hosted regional meetings.

Thank you to all of those who participated in the communications/discussion process in relation to the Codes, whether by reflecting on the document, facilitating staffroom discussions, attending one of the regional meetings or corresponding directly with the Council.

## Foreword

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We are delighted to present the Codes of Professional Conduct. Their publication marks an important milestone, not just for the Teaching Council, nor indeed for the teaching profession, but for all in the education community. They are the result of the combined and united work of all members of the Teaching Council, a statutory body which is based on a partnership model of self-regulation.

The Council began drafting the Codes in September 2005. As with all new documents, the format, the titles, the paragraphs, the sentences and the words were the subject of much deliberation and consultation. The consultation was conducted through the Council members themselves who represent, not only the profession, but also the Minister, management bodies, teacher unions, teacher educators, parents and the social partners. Following this, a number of submissions were received and all were considered very carefully.

Having drafted the Codes, the Council initiated a communications/discussion process. The draft Codes and accompanying discussion documents were published on the Council's web-site and this was followed by a series of regional meetings for teachers.

The Codes make explicit the essential values which underpin the profession of teaching in Ireland. Core values are outlined which span many aspects of teaching from the quality of education, to teachers' commitment, to holistic development, and to caring for students. The listing of values suggests the importance of a reflective, learning teacher within a dynamic, vibrant teaching profession. They suggest also the importance of teachers pausing to ask about the value of education and of their work and about the role of professional educators in preparing young people for life. They underline the centrality and moral basis of teachers' work.

The Codes illustrate the complexity of the task of teaching as undertaken in collaboration with colleagues, students, parents, families, education partners, related bodies and agencies and the wider community. They outline the key responsibilities

## Foreword

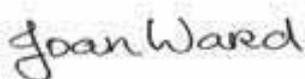
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which are central to the practice of teaching and they do this in a context which respects and values teachers' professional rights.

The Codes are expressed positively in terms of core principles and commitments and seek to avoid duplicating provisions which are covered elsewhere. The Council is aware that there are many external factors which impact on the practice of teaching such as school ethos, availability of resources and opportunities for professional development. Regardless of these factors, however, teachers are at all times guided by an ethical focus and the Codes make this explicit.

In drawing up the Codes, the Council was conscious that, while they apply to all teachers registered with the Teaching Council, they are not just for teachers. Rather, they may be read by all partners in the education community with a view to gaining a deeper understanding of the teaching profession in Ireland today, and of professionalism in a more general sense. We hope that other groups in the education community might use them as a basis for reflection on teaching so that we may all work together, in the interest of our students, in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation.

The Teaching Council is committed to seeing that these Codes are promoted and observed and, as we seek to steer an ethical and respectful course through the career of teaching, we believe that they will serve us well as a guiding compass.



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Joan Ward  
Chairperson



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Áine Lawlor  
Director

28 March 2007

## Glossary of Terms

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### **Student**

The term “Student” is used in the Codes to denote both pupils and students at primary, post-primary and further education levels.

### **Parent**

The term “Parent” is used in the Codes to denote both natural parents and legal guardians.

### **Teacher**

The term “Teacher” is used in the Codes to denote a teacher registered with the Teaching Council.

## Introduction

The Teaching Council is obliged under the Teaching Council Act, 2001 “to establish, publish, review and maintain codes of professional conduct for teachers which shall include standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence”.

The purpose of the Codes is to assist the Council in achieving its objects as set out in the Teaching Council Act, 2001 and in particular the objects referred to at:

- *Section 6(b)(ii) i.e. to establish and promote the maintenance and improvement of standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence of teachers*
- *Section 6(b)(iii) i.e. to establish and promote the maintenance and improvement of standards of professional conduct of teachers.*

To fulfil its requirements under the Act, the Council has drawn up the Codes of Professional Conduct in two parts. The first part relates to professional practice and includes “standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence”. The second part deals specifically with professional conduct.

These Codes apply to all teachers registered with the Teaching Council.

- *No part of these Codes should be interpreted in isolation from the whole document as all parts of the Codes are interrelated in line with the holistic approach taken in drafting them.*

## Core Values

Teachers' core work is to educate and the following values underpin the work of the teaching profession in Ireland. These values are reflected throughout the Codes and may be considered under the headings of:

- **The Educational Experience**
- **Educational Outcomes**
- **Relationships**

## *Core Values of the Teaching Profession*

### **Commitment**

Teachers are committed to the highest standards of professional service in their teaching and understand that their primary professional obligation is to their students.

### **Quality of Education**

Teachers promote and maintain the highest quality of educational experiences for their students. Teachers facilitate student progression in their learning and development and their effective engagement with the curriculum.

### **Student-Centred Learning**

Teachers seek to create an environment where students are active agents in the learning process.

### **Responding to Change**

Teachers acknowledge the changing nature of society and recognise their role in providing appropriate educational responses to cater for the identified needs of students. It is recognised that this is enhanced through mutual support from all partners in education.

### **Professional Development**

Teachers reflect on and continue to improve their own professional practice and are provided with opportunities to engage in professional development and the process of curriculum development.

## *The Educational Experience*

## *Core Values of the Teaching Profession*

### **Holistic Development**

Teachers are committed to a holistic vision of education which includes the aesthetic, cognitive, intellectual, critical, cultural, emotional, imaginative, creative, moral, social, political, spiritual, physical and healthy development of their students.

### **Cultural Values**

Teachers see themselves as providing opportunities for the development of awareness and appreciation of cultural values being mindful of Irish, European and more global contexts.

### **Social Justice, Equality and Inclusion**

Teachers in their professional role show commitment to democracy, social justice, equality and inclusion. They encourage active citizenship and support students in thinking critically about significant social issues, in valuing and accommodating diversity and in responding appropriately.

## *Educational Outcomes*

# Core Values of the Teaching Profession

## **Collegiality**

Teachers work in collegiality with colleagues in the interests of sharing, promoting, developing and supporting best professional practice.

## **Collaboration**

Teachers work collaboratively with students, parents, school management, teacher educators and other professionals in developing shared goals towards the achievement of high quality education for all.

## **Respect**

Teachers respect students, parents, colleagues, school management, co-professionals and all in the school community and work to establish and maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect in their schools.

## **Care**

As well as the legal duty of care which teachers exercise, their role as carer is central to their professional value system. Their practice is motivated by the best interests of the students entrusted to their care.

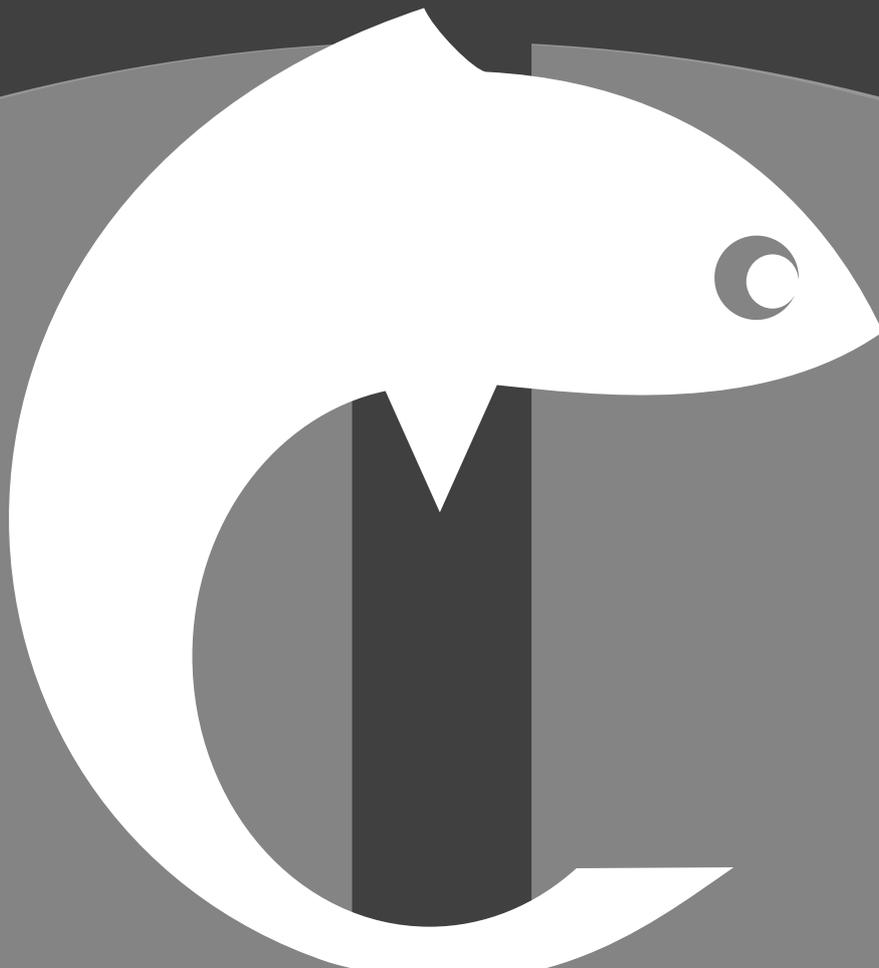
## **Co-operation**

Teachers engage in a professional manner with the wider community including the partners in education, co-professionals and related educational bodies and agencies, as appropriate, for the benefit of students.

# Relationships

# Code of Professional Practice

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# Code of Professional Practice

## Purpose

This Code has been developed with three key objectives in mind:

- **To promote quality teaching and learning**
- **To encourage and support teachers in their professional role**
- **To promote the teaching profession**

Promote quality teaching and learning	Encourage and support teachers in their professional role	Promote the teaching profession
This Code seeks to do this by:	This Code seeks to do this by:	This Code seeks to do this by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clarifying the ethics and setting out the core values underpinning teachers' practice</li> <li>■ Setting out clear standards of professional practice to which teachers are committed</li> <li>■ Assisting in achieving and maintaining high standards of professional practice in the profession</li> <li>■ Encouraging teachers to reflect on professional practice</li> <li>■ Promoting cooperation with the education partners, co-professionals, related bodies and agencies and allied professions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Affirming the role of teachers in the social, cultural and economic development of the country</li> <li>■ Being supportive of teachers in their professional lives</li> <li>■ Promoting collegiality within the teaching profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Confirming the status and integrity of the profession</li> <li>■ Informing and enhancing the public perception of the teaching profession</li> </ul>

## The Code

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Professional knowledge is the foundation of the practice of teaching and learning. This professional knowledge includes a range of roles, responsibilities and relationships:

- **The Teacher and Student**
- **The Teacher and Parents**
- **The Teacher and Curriculum**
- **The Teacher as Learner**
- **The Teacher, the State, the Community and the School**

### The Teacher and Student

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Good teacher-student relationships are fundamental to engagement in the teaching/ learning process. These are developed through communication which is built on mutual respect and trust.

#### Student Background

Teachers recognise that differences in students' backgrounds and identities can shape experience and impact on learning. They respect, value and accommodate diversity including those differences arising from gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Travelling Community and socio-economic status. They apply their knowledge of students' backgrounds, identities, experiences and learning modes to their teaching.

#### Student Development

Teaching is shaped by knowledge of human development and learning. Teachers apply their knowledge of students' holistic development to their teaching and to the promotion of social responsibilities.

#### Student Potential

Teachers recognise the individual potential of students. They know that those with special/exceptional needs and potential require access to appropriate expertise and resources in the context of a whole school approach.

## The Code

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### Student Learning

Teachers plan and communicate clear, challenging and achievable expectations for students. They motivate and assist them to become agents in their learning, e.g. to access and critically assess information. Teachers seek to engage with students in order to develop teaching strategies that are appropriate to the needs of their students and that promote learning. They establish classroom management strategies that support differentiated learning in a way that respects the dignity of all students.

## The Teacher and Parents

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### Partnership with Parents

Teachers appreciate that parents are the primary educators of their children. They build trust with parents and actively communicate and collaborate with them in the education of their children. They exercise their professional integrity and judgement in communicating with students and parents.

## The Teacher and Curriculum

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### Curriculum Process

Teachers engage in the dynamic processes by which curriculum is designed and implemented and students' learning is facilitated and evaluated. "The term curriculum encompasses the content, structure and process of teaching and learning which the school provides in accordance with its educational objectives and values... It is concerned not only with the subjects taught, but also with how and why they are taught and with the outcomes of this activity for the learner." (Charting our Education Future, 1995, p. 18)

### Curriculum Content

Teachers know and understand the subject matter of the relevant curriculum/syllabus, how it is linked to other subjects and related to life experiences.

## The Code

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### Teaching Approaches

Teachers use appropriate pedagogical approaches that assist students to learn in a variety of ways. They adopt an integrated approach to planning which includes teaching strategies, learning modes, activities, and resources. They facilitate interaction among students to enable shared learning as well as individual learning outcomes.

### Resources

Teachers employ a variety of available curriculum resources to enhance and enrich the learning environment.

### Assessment

Teachers use a range of strategies to support, monitor and assess students' learning, their approach to learning and their progress. They assess the achievement of curriculum objectives and adapt their teaching accordingly.

### Curriculum change

As agents of change, teachers are involved in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum at classroom, school and national levels.

In implementing the curriculum, teachers develop appropriate and motivational teaching strategies in response to the diverse needs of students in a changing society. They critically evaluate the learning outcomes so as to inform national and school policies and review their own professional beliefs, values and practice.

## The Teacher as Learner

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### The Teacher as Reflective Practitioner

Teachers acknowledge the interdependence of teacher learning and student learning. Drawing on practitioner-based research, they plan for teaching and learning through continuous reflection on their own current practice.

## **The Code**

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### **The Teacher as Lifelong Learner**

Teachers believe that professional development is a lifelong process which is influenced by personal, social and educational contexts. It is most effective when it is embedded in practice. Continuous professional development is both a right and a responsibility and should be supported by policy and resources at local, regional and national level.

### **Professional Collegiality**

Teachers act in a spirit of collegiality with professional colleagues, both as team members and as team leaders. They motivate and inspire by sharing their vision, expertise and reflections and they acknowledge and celebrate effort and success.

## **The Teacher, the State, the Community and the School**

### **Statutory and Regulatory Requirements**

Teachers in their professional role work within the framework of relevant legislation and regulations. They work in partnership with the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science and other statutory educational services.

### **Parents, School Management and Co-professionals**

Teachers work to develop positive relationships with parents, school management and co-professionals. Teachers are active partners with school management and parents in the development of a school ethos and culture conducive to a positive environment for teaching and learning. Teachers work with management, students and parents in establishing and maintaining policies which are necessary for a safe and supportive teaching and learning environment.

## The Code

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### The Local Community

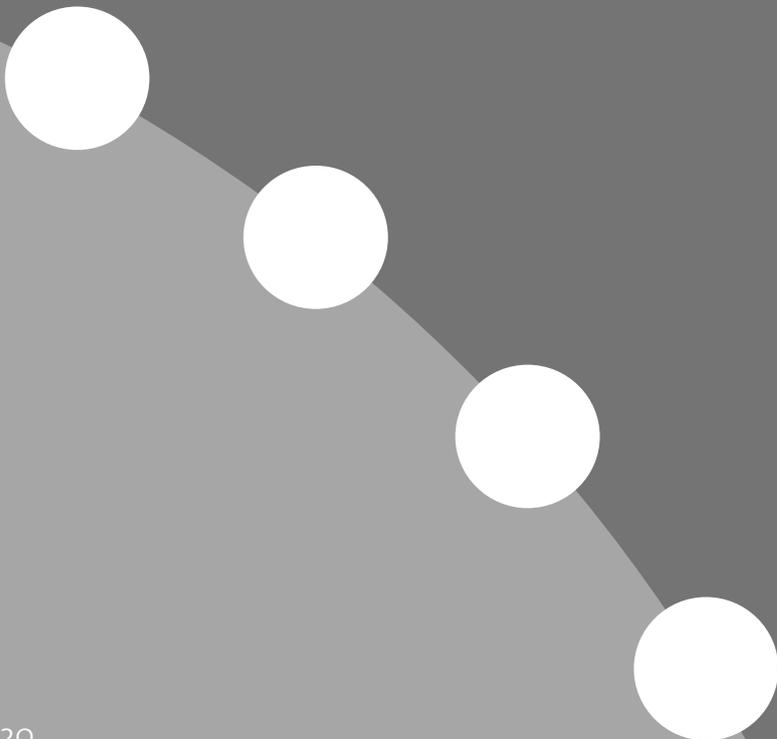
Effective teaching requires the support and positive collaboration of the wider community. Teachers, through their schools, utilise the community as a learning resource. The community, in turn, is enriched by its interaction with teachers who have a tradition of contributing to a range of community activities.

### Learning in the School Community

Teachers are educational leaders who contribute to creating and sustaining learning communities in their classrooms, in their schools and through their professional networks.

# Code of Professional Conduct

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# Code of Professional Conduct

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## Purpose

High standards of professional conduct are central to the role of teaching and in this Code of Professional Conduct, the Teaching Council is making explicit the commitment of the teaching profession to these standards.

The purpose of the Code is to assist the Council in achieving its objects as set out in Section 6(b) of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, in particular the objects referred to at section 6(b)(iii) i.e. to establish and promote the maintenance and improvement of standards of professional conduct of teachers.

Section 41 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, states that the following shall constitute professional misconduct by a registered teacher:

- *(a) engaging in conduct which is contrary to a code of professional conduct established by the Council under section 7(2)(b);*
- *(b) engaging in any improper conduct in his or her professional capacity or otherwise by reason of which he or she is unfit to teach.*

## The Code

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1. Teachers should take care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare insofar as is reasonably practicable.
2. Teachers should respect confidential information relating to colleagues, students and families gained in the course of professional practice, unless the wellbeing of an individual or a legal imperative requires disclosure.
3. Teachers should uphold the reputation and standing of the profession. They should act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work. They should avoid direct conflict between their private interests and their professional work.
4. Teachers should respect students, parents, colleagues, school management, co-professionals and all in the school community. They should interact with them in a way that does not discriminate and that promotes equality in relation to gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Travelling Community and socio-economic status.
5. Recognising the unique and privileged relationships that exist between teachers and the students entrusted to their care, teachers should conduct these relationships in a way that is professional, respectful and appropriate.
6. Teachers should not practise the profession while under the influence of any substance which impairs their ability or medical fitness.
7. Teachers should provide complete and accurate information and authentic documents with respect to their professional status, qualifications and experience. They should use only their own names, as set out in the register, in the course of their professional duties. They should provide complete and accurate information on any professional matter as requested by the Council. They should not counsel or assist any person who is not a registered teacher to represent himself or herself as being so registered.

## Appendix 1

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### List of Relevant Statutes

Teaching Council Acts, 2001 and 2006

Education Act, 1998

Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004

Children Act, 2001 (as amended by the Criminal Justice Act, 2006)

Ombudsman for Children Act, 2002

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003

Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003

The Equal Status Act, 2000 and 2004

Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004

Vocational Education Acts, 1930 to 2006

Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999

## Appendix 2

### Council Members 2005 to 2009

Asterisk indicates membership of the Council's Education Committee

Member		Sector
Mr. Christy Carroll	Elected	Primary (appointed September 2006)
Dr. Peadar Cremin	Nominee	Colleges of Education
Ms. Lily Cronin*	Elected	Voluntary Secondary
Mr. Oliver Donohoe*	Nominee	Minister (ICTU)
Professor Sheelagh Drudy	Nominee	Universities & Named 3rd Level Colleges
Mr. Derek Dunne	Nominee	TUI
Ms. Emer Egan	Nominee	Minister
Dr. Jim Gleeson*	Nominee	Universities & Named 3rd Level Colleges
Mr. Tommy Glynn*	Elected	Vocational
Ms. Susie Hall	Elected	Community & Comprehensive
Sr. Darina Hosey*	Nominee	Colleges of Education
Mr. Jack Keane	Elected	Voluntary Secondary
Mr. Justin MacCarthy	Elected	Primary
Mr. Christopher Maginn	Nominee	ASTI
Mr. Gerry Malone*	Nominee	INTO
Dr. Kevin Marshall*	Nominee	Minister (IBEC) (appointed January 2007)
Ms. Anita McCann	Nominee	National Parents' Council (Primary)
Ms. Anne McElduff	Nominee	INTO
Mr. Patrick McQuaile*	Elected	Vocational
Ms. Dympna Mulkerrins*	Elected	Primary
Ms. Máire Ní Laoire	Nominee	ASTI
Mr. Tomás Ó Cruadhlaioich	Nominee	Minister
Mr. Micheál Ó Gríofa	Elected	Primary
Mr. George O'Callaghan	Nominee	School Management (Post-Primary)
Ms. Maree O'Connell	Elected	Primary
Msgr. Dan O'Connor	Nominee	School Management (Primary)
Ms. Deirdre O'Donoghue*	Nominee	School Management (Primary)
Mr. Kieran O'Driscoll	Nominee	Minister
Ms. Bernadine O'Sullivan	Elected	Voluntary Secondary
Ms. Eleanor Petrie	Nominee	National Parents' Council (Post-Primary)
Mr. Dermot Quish*	Elected	Voluntary Secondary
Mr. Seán Rowley	Elected	Primary
Ms. Jacqueline Sheil	Nominee	TUI
Ms. Jacinta Stewart*	Nominee	School Management (Post-Primary)
Mr. Milo Walsh	Elected	Primary
Ms. Eileen Ward*	Elected	Primary
Ms. Joan Ward	Elected	Primary
Ms. Mary Culhane*	Elected	Primary (resigned February 2006)
Mr. Frank Turpin*	Nominee	Minister (resigned September 2006)



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