

**December 2018**  
**Management Circular No. 32**

To **Heads of all educational establishments**

## **Alteration of School Hours**

Heads of Establishment may wish to change the hours of attendance of children/young people and staff; either by altering the time of commencement and/or conclusion of the school day and/or by altering the timing of breaks. Such changes may have consequences for arrangements made by parents/carers or for other services and should, therefore, be the subject of careful consideration and consultation. Changes should normally be implemented at the beginning of a school session.

When a Head of Establishment wishes to make any change/s to school hours, they must first consult their Head of Service who should:

- a) be satisfied that there is good reason for a change to be considered
- b) confirm that any effects on school staff can be accommodated within the existing arrangements
- c) Be satisfied that any consequent alteration in contractual arrangements for school transport can be affected and can be contained within existing budgetary provision
- d) be satisfied that there will be no impact on the ability of the catering service to provide meals within contractual limits
- e) be satisfied that there will be no adverse effect on the ability of the cleaning service to provide cleaning and related services within contractual limits;
- f) be satisfied that the educational provision will not be diminished; and
- g) check that there will be no adverse effect on other schools in the area.

When the Executive Director of Education is satisfied that all of the factors listed above have been taken properly into account, authorisation will be given to begin formal consultation. The form that the consultation will take is for the Head of Establishment to determine. In most cases it will be appropriate to ensure proper discussion by holding a meeting or meetings. It is, in any event, necessary that each of the following interested parties should have the opportunity to become fully aware of all the issues involved and to express opinions:

- a) The parents/carers of children and young people in attendance at the school;
- b) Young people (e.g. those over school age but under 18 years of age) in attendance at school;
- c) All staff employed in the school;
- d) The Parent Forum; and
- e) Schools (denominational and non-denominational) in the local area.

The local Councillor(s) should be informed of the proposal and invited to any meetings arranged for parents/carers to discuss the matter. Copies of the minutes of meetings held and of correspondence exchanged with other council services and outside service providers should then be forwarded to the Executive Director of Education together with a recommendation for action.

Where the consultation process reveals important differences of opinion, the Executive Director of Education will seek the views of the local member(s) before reaching a final decision. In any event, you will be informed by the Executive Director of Education of her final decision and you should inform all interested parties before proceeding towards implementation.

Maureen McKenna  
Executive Director of Education