



Circular 0107/2007

To the Managerial Authorities of Primary and Post Primary schools

Implementation of Modernisation under Sustaining Progress

Standardisation of the School Year in respect of Primary & Post-Primary Schools for the years 2008/9, 2009/10 and 2010/11

In line with the requirements of Sustaining Progress agreement has been reached between the parties to the Teachers' Conciliation Council in relation to the standardisation of the breaks at Christmas, Easter and mid-term in the first and second terms for the school years 2008/9, 2009/10 and 2010/11.

In reaching agreement the parties took cognizance of a number of relevant factors:

the objective of avoiding problems for families which can be caused by variation in closure arrangements where children are attending different schools

the requirement for a school to be open for a minimum of 167 days at post-primary level and 183 days at primary level

the date of the bank holiday in June and in consequence the effective end of the school year and commencement date of the Certificate Examinations

the proximity of St. Patrick's Day to Easter

the difference in the length of the school year at primary and post-primary level and the potential for a lengthy final term in the primary sector depending on when Easter falls

the timing of the bank holiday in October

how proximate Christmas Day is in relation to a week-end

the desirability of having a reasonable interval between the end of term and Christmas

The agreement reached covers the arrangements that will apply in all schools from the start of the 2008/2009 school year and covers three school years. The parties will review the operation of the arrangements not later than spring of 2010 for the purpose of agreeing the arrangements that will apply subsequently and have agreed that in the event that any unforeseen difficulty arises in relation to the operation of the arrangements now agreed the matter can be raised at the Teachers Conciliation Council.

Schools are required to be open to receive all pupils on the weekday immediately preceding and immediately following each break period covered by this agreement.

School Year 2008/09

October 2008 mid-term break

All schools will close from 27th to 31st October 2008 inclusive

Christmas 2008

All schools will close on 23rd December 2008 which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on 7th January 2009.

February 2009 mid-term break

Post-Primary schools will close from 16th to 20th February 2009 inclusive. Primary schools will close from 16th to 17th February 2009 inclusive **or** 19th to 20th inclusive. (Primary schools may use 3 discretionary days to extend this break to an alternative option of a 5 day break).

Easter 2009

All schools will close on 3rd April 2009 which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on 20th April 2009.

School Year 2009/10

October 2009 mid-term break

All schools will close from 26th to 30th October 2009 inclusive

Christmas 2009

All schools will close on 22nd December 2009 which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on 7th January 2010

February 2010 mid-term break

Post-Primary schools will close from 15th to 19th February 2010 inclusive. Primary schools will close from 15th to 16th February 2010 inclusive **or** 18th to 19th inclusive. (Primary schools may use 3 discretionary days to extend this break to an alternative option of a 5 day break).

Easter 2010

All schools will close on 26th March 2010 which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on 12th April 2010.

School Year 2010/11

October 2010 mid-term break

All schools will close from 25th to 29th October 2010 inclusive

Christmas 2010

All schools will close on 23rd December 2010 which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on 10th January 2011

February 2011 mid-term break

Post-Primary schools will close from 21st to 25th February 2011 inclusive. Primary schools will

close from 21st to 22nd February 2011 inclusive **or** 24th to 25th inclusive. (Primary schools may use 3 discretionary days to extend this break to an alternative option of a 5 day break).

Easter 2011

All schools will close on 15th April 2011 which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on 3rd May 2011.

Religious Observance and standardisation

The above arrangements are agreed without prejudice to closure on specific days, within the overall requirement of 167 days at post primary level and 183 days at primary level, dictated by religious observance that is required in schools under the patronage of different denominations or faiths.

In the absence of an adequate number of discretionary days a school authority may choose to utilize a religious observance day for non-tuition purposes when planning the school year.

Extent of flexibility

It was not a requirement of this agreement that the commencement or end of the school year either at primary or post primary level should be standardised. However while schools may use their discretionary days, where available, to determine the precise start and end of the school year, it is recognised the commencement of Certificate examinations will mean that post primary schools will not be open for tuition beyond the Friday preceding the June bank holiday in any year.

The expectation is that in order to meet the overall requirement of a minimum of 167 at post primary level or 183 days at primary level the school year will normally commence in the week that 1st September falls.

The arrangements may provide some limited flexibility to schools on certain other days outside of the defined periods. The scheduling of such days must not be used to extend or modify the periods set out above in respect of mid-term and Christmas and Easter breaks save where religious observance requirements of a school under a particular patronage make this necessary.

You are requested to provide a copy of this Circular to the parents' and teachers' representatives on Boards of Management.

Matthew Ryan,
Principal Officer.
11th December, 2007