

GUIDELINES FOR CHAIRING STAFF MEETINGS

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- At the beginning of the school year, in consultation with the Deputy Principal and ISM team, set dates for staff meetings. One staff meeting each term is to be held on a half-in/half-out basis. Liaison with neighbouring Principals is recommended where a school is linked to a Junior/Senior Boys/Girls school
- With Board of Management (BoM) approval, the first day back in September may be taken as a staff planning/staff meeting day and six of the thirty six 'Croke Park' hours used to facilitate this
- Distribute the school calendar (including the 3 staff meetings) to all parents in September
- Where staff meetings entail children going home early, parents should be reminded 2 weeks in advance and a text reminder should be sent the day before - Parents appreciate this. Inform bus companies of the earlier collection time for children
- Decide how many meetings SNAs will attend and the length of time of their attendance
- A good working model is to have SNAs attend for an hour at the beginning of the first and final staff meeting of the year and thereafter where necessary
- A decision about the attendance of substitute teachers at staff meetings needs to be made. Generally, it is accepted that attendance at staff meetings is part of their formation as teachers
- In large schools, it is normal practise that many staff meetings take place in sub-sets e.g. class groupings/support teachers. This should be indicated in the agenda for the meetings
- It may be decided to rotate the chair and the recording secretary among staff members who are willing and able (They may need a little encouragement!) They will also need some training in what the role involves
- Consider putting together a Code of Behaviour for staff meetings
- Keep a Staff Meeting file to archive all agendas and minutes.

BEFORE STAFF MEETINGS

- Prepare the agenda in consultation with staff
- Divide the agenda into sections using the following guide:
 - Minutes of last staff meeting and matters arising
 - Principal's report
 - Teaching and Learning (Longest allocated time)
 - Administration
 - Pastoral
 - House-keeping
 - ISM Reports
- When circulating the agenda, any contributions for the agenda should be clearly explained and signed
- Staff may be invited to explain or expand on any item included on the agenda at the meeting
- Allocate a time for each item on the agenda
- Circulate any documents which may be needed for decisions at least a week prior to the staff meeting
- Ensure that the agenda is not overloaded. Prioritise and group items together.

GUIDELINES FOR MEMBER OF STAFF CHAIRING STAFF MEETINGS

- Discuss the final agenda with the Principal
- Examine the minutes of the last meeting
- Look at follow-up actions
- Examine the Agreed Report from last BoM meeting
- Become familiar with any documentation circulated before the meeting
- Discuss the structure of the meeting and any sub groups/group work taking place
- Examine timing in detail.

AT STAFF MEETINGS, THE CHAIRPERSON SHOULD

- Distribute the agenda
- Have all documentation in correct order to match the agenda
- Begin and end meeting on time
- Be aware of the importance of fairness and opportunity for all to speak
- Do not allow a second contribution from a person until all have been given the chance to input
- Decide on what is recorded, addressed, reported and what needs further work and discussion
- Remain in charge of the meeting
- Enable decision-making by consensus
- Voting is to be avoided at all costs as it has a tendency to divide staffs.

AFTER STAFF MEETINGS

- Minutes of the meeting should be distributed to staff within a week
- Inform others of the decisions taken when necessary e.g. BoM/Parents/Parent Association
- Monitor the follow-up actions on targets set and decisions taken
- Monitor the work of sub-groups set up during meeting.

SAMPLE STAFF MEETING AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising
2. Agreed report from last BoM meeting (if timely) and issues arising
3. Teaching and Learning
 - Priority Issue 1
 - Priority Issue 2 etc
4. Administration
 - Issue 1
 - Issue 2
 - Issue 3 etc
5. Pastoral
 - Issue 1
 - Issue 2 etc
6. Posts of Responsibility - Short report from individuals (It is unnecessary to get a report from every post holder at every meeting)
8. General operational issues
9. Summary of decisions taken and targets to be met before the next meeting
10. Reminder of the date of the next meeting and any proposed change in format and Chairperson/Recording Secretary

SAMPLE STAFF MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE

Venue (Which room in the building?)
Date of Meeting
Chairperson
Recording Secretary
Meeting attended by non-teaching staff
Absent from the meeting
Starting time
Finishing time

Issue	Decision/Action – Who & By When	Responsible
Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising		
Teaching /Learning Priority Issue 1		
Teaching/Learning Priority Issue 2		
School Procedures/ Policies Issue 1		
School Procedures/ Policies Issue 2		
School Procedures/ Policies Issue 3		
Pastoral Care Issue 1		
Pastoral Care Issue 2		
In-School Management Report		
Planned Out-of-School Events		
Planned In-School Events		
New DES Circulars – If Relevant		
BoM Decisions/Actions – If Relevant		
Parent Association Decision/Actions – If Relevant		

TEACHING PRINCIPALS - A POSSIBLE APPROACH TO TIMETABLING

1. This is not a blueprint but merely an example to encourage creative thinking on Successful Time Management. This timetable is downloadable from www.ippn.ie/resources/pims It can be customised to suit your own professional needs and practice.
2. Proactive communication, collective prioritising and delegation of tasks to others are all essential for effective leadership.
3. Blocking time for specific functions eliminates much of the continuous flow of low order questions. Ensure everyone knows where and when you are available.
4. The simultaneous demands of Teaching Principalship make it an extremely challenging role. Invite all your colleagues to assist in designing and reviewing your timetable (see below). This may help them to appreciate the demands on your time and a greater understanding of the need to share the workload.
5. Send routine information and updates to all colleagues by memo. This will leave formal staff meeting time free for meaningful discussion of more important issues.
6. Develop a policy of meetings by appointment. Communicate this policy clearly to Parents, Salespersons etc.
7. Delegate function of answering telephone, opening e-mail/post and receiving visitors to the school secretary. Where secretary is unavailable delegate the function to other staff members and/or senior pupils, provide training as required.
8. Install an answering machine where the caller's voice is audible while he/she is leaving the message.
9. Use a digital dictaphone system to record memo's, letters, reports etc. which can be word processed by the secretary at a later stage.
10. Book a substitute teacher early in the year and pre-plan your administration days for tasks requiring you undivided attention. Pre-advise colleagues of these days and make yourself scarce!

AM	Luan	Máirt	Céadaoin	Déardaoin	Aoine
Before School	Meet Deputy Principal & Secretary <i>Prioritise & Delegate</i>	Meet Deputy Principal & Secretary <i>Prioritise & Delegate</i>	Meet Deputy Principal & Secretary <i>Prioritise & Delegate</i>	Meet Deputy Principal & Secretary <i>Prioritise & Delegate</i>	Meet Deputy Principal & Secretary <i>Prioritise & Delegate</i>
Block 1	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching
Morning Break	Delegate Yard Supervision Available for meeting individual teachers	Delegate Yard Supervision Available for meeting individual SEN teacher(s)	Delegate Yard Supervision Available for meeting individual SNAs	Delegate Yard Supervision Available for meeting individual teachers	Delegate Yard Supervision Available for meeting individual teachers
Block 2	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching
Lunch	Lunch Break <i>No Interruptions No Meetings</i>	Lunch Break <i>No Interruptions No Meetings</i>	Lunch Break <i>No Interruptions No Meetings</i>	Lunch Break <i>No Interruptions No Meetings</i>	Lunch Break Yard Supervision
Block 3	Teaching	Allocate children to other teacher(s) <i>eg: Music, PE, etc.</i> Allocate time to visit other classrooms	Teaching	Allocate children to other teacher(s) <i>eg: Music, PE, etc.</i> Allocate time to visit other classrooms	Teaching
After School	Meet Deputy Principal & ISM Team <i>Discuss, Prioritise & Delegate</i>	Parent Appointments <i>Delegate as appropriate</i>	Meet Chairperson & BoM Treasurer every other week	Parent Appointments <i>Delegate as appropriate</i>	Meet Deputy Principal & ISM Team <i>Discuss, Prioritise & Delegate</i>

CHECKLIST OF BEHAVIOURS & RESOURCES THAT SAVE TIME & REDUCE STRESS FOR TEACHING PRINCIPALS

'If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got'

Prioritise

- Does it need to be done now?
- Does it need to be done at all?
- Does it need to be done by me?
- Is it a priority for me/the school or is it just something someone else wants off their desk?
- Priorities for the year ahead - agree, delegate and set time for review.

Roles and Responsibilities

- In-school Management Team - is everyone clear on their roles and responsibilities?
- Does everyone understand my role and what I need to be kept informed of?
- Do I have a structure to my day/week such that I have clear work time/family time/recreation time? Have I communicated this to staff and others in the school community?
- Has each teacher prepared an 'emergency pack' for their class in case they are out of class at short notice? Does everyone know where they are kept? These packs should have a minimum of three days work
- How do parents find out what is going on in school – newsletters, emails, text alerts and website? Who is responsible for this?
- How do I pass on information to staff – memos/notes/pigeon holes/staffroom whiteboard?
- How do I record memos/notes etc so that I have copies of what has been agreed?
- Is the secretary clear on his/her duties? Are there any duties that I am doing that could be performed by the secretary e.g. phoning for oil prices/responding to parents queries for basic information/booking buses/ handling swimming money/photocopying... ?
- How do I meet and get to know each child in the school?
- How do I promote good behaviour – assemblies/birthdays/student of the week/Principal's award etc.

Work Smart

- What are the core values that drive what I do and how I respond to issues?
- Are all important dates in the diary?
- Office systems - does everyone know where to find basic information?
- Constantly ask yourself if what you are doing is the best use of your time and if it is a worthwhile task. It is amazing how much time this can save!
- How do I keep up to date with latest circulars/issues/resources? – daily check www.ippn.ie, weekly check OLCS, regular checks on other websites and IPPN Networking mailing list
- Board of Management - make use of BoM minutes template and Principal's Report template from PIMS
- How do I manage my Admin Days? Does everyone know when you are available or if you are available? E.g. 9.00-11.00 Admin work (Do not disturb); 11.00-12.30 Classroom visits; 1.00-1.30 Lunch; 1.30-2.30 staff/parent issues/phone calls/appointments; 2.30-? Admin work (Do not disturb)
- How do I prioritise and source material for school policy and professional development needs for year ahead? Staff meeting at start of year/refer to DES booklet *Looking at Our School*, use www.ippn.ie website resources, www.ppds.ie and contact the IPPN Support Office.

Resources

- *Giorraíonn Beirt Bóthar*: This IPPN publication from 2007 provides a strong case for working closely with your Deputy Principal. In particular, refer to the action plan section page 35 points 1-4 and pages 36 and 37 points 9-12. 'The goal is to provide a cohesive management unit...for quality leadership, thereby ensuring quality learning'

- *Ciall Ceannaithe*: While this is aimed at Newly Appointed Principals, there is plenty for more experienced Principals to reflect on. This is available on www.ippn.ie
- *Breacadh Ré Nua do Scoileanna Bheaga: New Horizons for Smaller Schools & Teaching Principalship in Ireland* (IPPN 2005). This publication looks at clustering in an Irish and international setting and discusses the challenges of Teaching Principalships. There is much that is within our own control to help refine and manage our workload
- *Quality Leadership Quality Learning* (Michael Fullan 2006): The title says it all! There are only 22 pages and it is very useful for reflecting on what you do and how you do it
- *Looking at our School* (DES). Not only will this help you prepare for your WSE but it is a useful place to start a review of how effectively your school is running
- IPPN website www.ippn.ie - to find templates, exemplars, good practice hints and tips, electronic copies of all IPPN publications, DES Circulars, e-scéals etc
- Networking and other Mailing Lists – to get support from your fellow Principals. To subscribe to these mailing lists, go to www.ippn.ie and you will find the link under Resources/Services.

CHECKLIST OF BEHAVIOURS & RESOURCES THAT SAVE TIME & REDUCE STRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PRINCIPALS

Self Awareness

Where are you now in relation to how you manage your time?

Appraise yourself in the following areas of your life:

- Family
- Partner
- Friends
- Spiritual needs
- Health/leisure
- Home life
- Work/school.

Your View of Your Time

The amount of time is not the problem – we all have the same 168 hours in the week. However, there is a profound link between the way we view time and the way we use it. In this regard, are you a ‘clock’ or a ‘compass’ person? Which one directs your view of time:

- The clock represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, goals and activities – what we do with and how we manage our time
- The compass represents our vision, values, principles, mission, conscience, direction – what we feel is important and how we lead our lives

The struggle comes when we sense a gap between the clock and the compass – when what we do doesn’t contribute to what is most important in our lives.

Habits

A barrier to effective time management can be bad habits – we are all guilty of them! What action can you take to resolve these poor habits?

- Start by becoming aware of them
- Make a list e.g. regularly going to bed too late, when this affects how you function
- Focus on one habit at a time and replace it with a positive habit e.g. ensure you go to bed by x time each evening at least 4 nights per week
- Repeat the positive habit daily for at least 3 to 4 weeks
- Commit to your decision – avoid the ‘Gym in January’ syndrome
- Changing bad habits into better ones is the key to spending more time on important work and less time being busy with lower priority tasks
- Examine Covey’s Time Management Matrix to learn more - www.brefigroup.co.uk/acrobat/quadrnts.pdf

The ‘Pareto Principle’ (80/20 Rule)

- 20% of your efforts produce 80% of your results. The value of the Pareto Principle is that it reminds you to focus on the 20% that really matters
- Of the things you do during your day, only 20% really matter. Identify and focus on those things
- When the fire drills of the day begin to sap your time, remind yourself of the 20% you need to focus on
- If something in the schedule has to slip, make sure it's not part of that 20%.

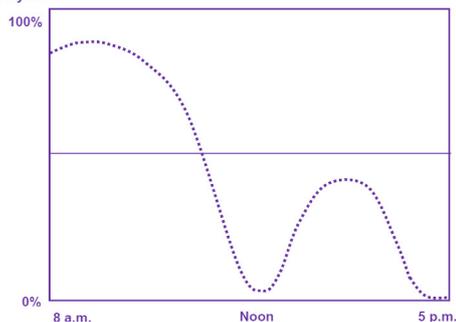
Time Management Strategies

- Be self aware
- Prioritise important tasks – make sure they get done
- Plan effectively – in your calendar, plan 50%-60% of your time for scheduled tasks. You will also need time to deal with the unexpected meeting or issue that will arise in school, so plan for that also by building in time in your diary for it
- Delegate – Concentrate on your and your ISM team's strengths & weaknesses. Delegate tasks that another team member might do better or might have more time for
- Build relationships – encourage, challenge, praise and acknowledge your staff
- Achieve balance in your personal and professional life – remember, if you have given 100% of yourself during your working day, what percentage of you is left for family, friends, recreation?

Limit & Build Boundaries

- Setting limits is hard in any area of life
- Pick one boundary at a time – e.g. go home at a set time each day (without work!) Build on this with others over time
- Plan time in your diary for what you love doing – e.g. exercise, time with partner, children, friends, hobby, study
- Cumulative effect – over time you will start to feel more balanced
- Plan activities according to your energy levels.

Typical Energy Cycle



Plot your cycle. Are you arranging your working day to take advantage of your energy?

Managing Emails

- Turn email notification off
- Check email at set times of the day – either between tasks or at a set time
- When you do check email, follow the '3 Ds Rule' – Deal with important items, Delegate/Defer less important items, Delete unimportant items
- Set up folders in your email inbox to cater for interesting emails that may benefit you at some future point, or for emails that you need to respond to later.

Managing Meetings

- Always use an agenda
- Start on time
- Set the tone
- Tie up loose ends
- Keep to the agenda
- Aim for 100% involvement
- Agree outcomes/actions
- Clarify anything complex to ensure all are in agreement
- Ensure minutes are taken – by someone else if you are running the meeting
- Expect the unexpected
- Always finish on time

Effective Time Management Tools

- Tools should help you with:
 - Appointments
 - Deadlines
 - Dates
 - Reminders
 - Thoughts & ideas
 - Goals, projects & actions
 - Reference
 - They should also be simple, accessible & reliable.
- What are they?
 - PIMS
 - Laptop/PDA/Blackberry
 - Synch with your work computer
 - MS Outlook, Google Desktop, other email system which has calendar functions.

In-School Suggestions

- Monday morning planning meeting with the school secretary
- Weekly meeting with senior management team
- Monthly meeting with ISM team
- Effective staff communication system
- Regular meetings with Chairperson of BoM
- Monthly meeting with the officers of the Parent Association
- Set a going home time for yourself – stick to it & leave work in school – home time is you/family time
- Limit your availability to staff & parents e.g. between 10.00-12.00 each day you are not available unless there is an emergency
- When you establish limits, others will respect them.

Ciall Ceannaithe

Sound Advice & Borrowed Wisdom

For Newly Appointed Principals

Ciall Ceannaithe has been developed to provide a greater understanding of the innovative solutions to challenges facing Principals in their role. A highly practical step-by-step guide, based on the collective wisdom and experience of seasoned Principals, Ciall Ceannaithe is designed to professionally support Newly Appointed Principals through the first day, first week, first month and first year of their Principalship. It is also designed as a very suitable refresher course for experienced Principals who wish to reflect on their current practice.

Ciall Ceannaithe can be downloaded from www.ippn.ie. Ciall Ceannaithe is also available as an online summer course. The course is approved by the Department of Education & Skills and carries 3 EPV days.