

As the professional network for primary school leaders, IPPN recognises the vital role that school secretaries and caretakers play in our school communities. Their commitment and professionalism help to ensure the smooth and effective running of the school and a safe environment for children, staff, parents and others who visit the school. Their contribution to school life is hugely valued by school leaders.

IPPN continues to engage with the Department of Education and Youth regarding the significant impact of the ongoing strike on school leaders. It is IPPN's hope that a positive and swift resolution to this matter can be achieved, so that all school personnel are back in role, working together to create an environment where quality teaching and learning can take place.

In the interim, it is important to ascertain which, if any, members of the school staff will not be at work so that the Board, as employer, can ensure appropriate arrangements are put in place to manage the situation in the school, particularly matters relating to health and safety, and child protection. It is a matter for the Board of Management to determine if it is safe for a school to continue to operate.

School leaders should

- keep the Board informed of the circumstances presenting in the school, particularly in relation to staff absence
- not make decisions that should be made by the Board
- keep parents informed that there is likely to be disruption to normal operations, particularly in relation to the answering of phones, responding to emails, etc.
- arrange for OLCS payments to be made.

It is also IPPN's view that

- in the absence of a secretary and/or caretaker, such duties of theirs that are necessary for the safe running of the school should be prioritised by the Board
- any additional burden that arises for school leaders in terms of such duties can be offset, in part, by the one additional leadership & management day made available for each full week of the strike (this can be availed of by a teaching principal, teaching deputy principal or other postholder).

The IPPN Leadership Support Team is available to assist school leaders with the challenges that they are dealing with in schools. Contact the team by phone to 1800 21 22 23 or by email to [advice@ippn.ie](mailto:advice@ippn.ie).