

Payment of 2.5% Increase from September 1st.

The 2.5% pay increase due to all first and second level teachers on 1st September under Towards 2016 was dependent on agreement being reached on the matter of proposed changes to promotional procedures in schools. Such agreement was not reached and thus the payment of the increase is delayed pending such agreement. It is the ASTI's view that the 2.5% should be paid.

The 2.5% has not been forfeited because the process of negotiation is ongoing and will be paid retrospectively (including to those who retired but were in service on September 1st) if there is agreement on the matter in accordance with Towards 2016. Currently the ASTI, TUI and INTO are engaged in discussions under the Facilitator in accordance with the Teachers' Conciliation Scheme. If there is no agreement at facilitation and the ASTI rejects the decision of the Arbitration Board on the matter, the 2.5% increase will not be paid.

The ASTI has sent a consultation document on the proposed changes in promotion procedures to each member. ♦

National Pay Talks

In the National Pay Talks which terminated on August 1st, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) turned down proposals for the public service of a 21 month agreement with 2.5% payable after 11 months and 2.5% payable after a further 6 months. The talks took place against a background of a global banking crisis, a collapse in housing construction and increased oil and food prices. Most of the talks were centred on discussions to do with union recognition, anti-inflation measures, agency workers and pensions in the private sector.

ICTU has been stressing the difficulties experienced by working families because of the inflation increases particularly as price increases on essential items such as food and heating impact most severely on the living standards of those on lower and middle incomes. Employers have stated that wage increases which chase inflation will make Ireland less competitive, thus generating unemployment.

If there is no national agreement, it is likely that there will be an attempt to negotiate a public service agreement. The Public Services Committee of Congress will be meeting to review the current impasse.

The Taoiseach has stated that he wishes for a resumption of the talks. ♦

Choosing ASTI

Last year, 1,137 new members joined ASTI bringing total membership to 17,031

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New Occupational Health Service for Teachers

New Circular

In the coming weeks, the Department of Education and Science (DES) will be issuing circular letters outlining the regulations and procedures that will govern the sick leave scheme for post-primary teachers. A Department circular has been in operation at primary level for some years. There has until now been no definitive document setting out sick leave provisions for post primary teachers. The 1958 Rules for the Payment of Incremental Salary did specify some such provisions in a very limited fashion, for example, setting out limits for uncertified leave, the 365 day limit on paid sick leave, etc.

Employee Assistance Service

In future, sick leave provisions for all teachers will be presented in the context of an Occupational Health Service (O.H.S.). The first stage in the development of this service was the provision of the Teacher Employee Assistance Service (EAS). Such a service is in place in most progressive places of employment and ASTI had been seeking an EAS service for teachers for many years. The Department-funded EAS is provided by VHI Corporate, which has been operating the service successfully for the past two years. Approximately 1,000 contacts are made annually with the EAS by teachers who are seeking advice and counselling to help them to cope with personal, family and work-related issues. The service provides one-to-one counselling. It can be used by teachers and members of their families on a 24-hour 365-day basis.

Medmark

In July '07 the DES invited tenders from suitable providers for the provision of an Occupational Health Service for the 55,000 teachers in the Republic of Ireland. Medmark Ltd., a company specialising in occupational medicine since 1991, was awarded the contract to provide the service. This company

has a team of 12 physicians in centres in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway and has provided such a service for a range of public and private occupations including The Department of Education and Science, universities, banks and other private industries. Medmark states that its operating philosophy is as set out for occupational health by the World Health Organisation:

- *the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers.*
- *the prevention of ill-health caused by working conditions*
- *the protection of workers from occupational risks*

The Medmark office administering the Occupational Health Service for Teachers is located at 28 Penrose Wharf, Cork City. More information on the company and its services can be found at www.medmark4teachers.ie.

Pre-employment

In the past, all newly appointed departmental-paid teachers were required to attend for a medical examination by a physician nominated by their school. With effect from September 2008, this is changing. Successful candidates for teaching positions will be required to complete a medical questionnaire which is sent by the teacher to Medmark. This questionnaire is standard and asks a range of questions about a teacher's medical history. Based on this, only a small percentage of teachers will be required to present for a comprehensive examination at a venue agreed with Medmark. The O.H.S. report, which will be issued to the employer, will state that the teacher either is or is not medically fit for the position. If, in the view of Medmark, physical adjustments or other reasonable accommodations can be made to the workplace in order to facilitate the teacher, such recommendations will be made.

Ill-health absence

The new Departmental circular on sick leave will set out all the conditions that will apply to post-primary teachers. As there are minor variations involved, separate circulars are being issued to voluntary secondary, community and VEC schools. A teacher who is absent from duty because of personal illness may retain eligibility for incremental salary in respect of a maximum of 365 days absence in any period of four successive years of teaching service. The sick leave period is calculated retrospectively and includes weekends and school closures occurring within the period of absence. The calculation of sick leave for job-sharing teachers depends on whether they are timetabled for 5 days in each week. A teacher who, having exhausted this maximum period of sick leave, is unfit to resume duty and wishes to keep his/her post open must apply to his/her employer for a further period of unpaid sick leave not exceeding two years. Where a teacher is absent on sick leave for more than 4 consecutive school days, a medical certificate is required for the total period of absence (Class A PRSI contributors must submit the MC1 social welfare cert after 3 days absence). A medical certificate must cover a period of no more than one month. A teacher who is absent should notify his/her employer immediately and should, where possible, state the likely duration of the absence. The employer submits notice of all sick leave absences, both certified and uncertified, to the Department via its Online Claims System. A teacher may request a detailed breakdown of absences; this is available on the Online Claims System.

Medical referral

Where a teacher has been absent through illness for 12 or more weeks cumulatively or continuously in a 12 month period, the matter must be referred to the O.H.S. provider, Medmark. Also, where an employer has concerns regarding a teacher's medical fitness for work, they may refer the teacher to Medmark. In the past, schools or the Department had

the authority to refer a teacher to a physician chosen by the school or the Department. They must now use Medmark who, as practitioners in occupational health, will decide whether or not a medical examination is required, e.g. in situations where the reasons for a particular teacher's ill health or absence are clearly evident, a medical examination would not be required. The outcome of any medical examination will be treated as totally confidential with the employer being advised only on whether a teacher is medically fit or unfit for work.

Ill-health retirement

A teacher who believes that he or she is permanently medically unfit for work has the option to apply for early retirement on grounds of ill-health. Medical evidence supporting the teacher's case must be sent to Medmark. It is in the teacher's interest that this evidence is comprehensive, addressing diagnosis, treatment and prognosis. Medmark will arrange for a medical assessment and a recommendation will be issued to the Department. In exceptional cases, a decision may be made without the need for the teacher to attend for assessment.

A panel of agreed medical referees is being established comprising of registered medical practitioners who are suitably qualified to assess medical fitness for work. Where a teacher is refused retirement on the grounds of ill health he or she can appeal the decision by choosing a member of this panel of referees and attending for further assessment.

Monitoring the service

A group representing the teachers' unions, school managers, and the Department is being set up to monitor the operation of the occupational health service for teachers. In the past there was no formal procedure for monitoring the concerns of teachers who believed that they had been unfairly treated under the teachers' sick leave scheme. Teachers experiencing any difficulties in this regard should contact their Industrial Relations Official in ASTI Head Office. ♦

Teachers Support and Value Diversity

ASTI General Secretary, John White, clarifies the ASTI view on newcomer pupils.

The ASTI represents 17,000 teachers in second-level schools - voluntary secondary schools, community and comprehensive schools and certain community colleges. Our second level schools have been wonderfully successful in welcoming and integrating students from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore our schools, unlike those in other countries, have not been sites of conflict. Our teachers, as a core professional principle, respect, value and accommodate diversity; we acknowledge the human dignity of each pupil we teach.

With regard to addressing the issue of pupils in second level schools who have no competence in the English language, teachers adopt a variety of valid educational procedures tailored to individual circumstances, including individual tuition, in-class tuition, and language support classrooms; for pupils of fifteen or sixteen years of age an immersion course in English may be beneficial before they participate in, for example, a higher level physics class.

It is unfortunate that the recent controversy did not take account of the real differences in the connotations of such words as "segregation" and "separation". It is a normal feature of school life that pupils receive separate instruction for a variety of reasons including language support. To suggest that this, or a short immersion course in English, involves support for "segregation" of pupils, with all the historical baggage that such a word contains, does a great disservice to the dedicated teachers who, in an under-funded system, welcome and respect pupils from all cultures.

The union believes the acquisition of English language skills plays a key role in the integration and education of international pupils. We believe these pupils should have the same opportunities to reach their potential as Irish students and schools should be provided with the resources to ensure this.

The ASTI believes that inclusive schools which provide a quality education for all are in the best interest of all students and are vital to Ireland's future economic and social well-being. ♦

NEWB Guidelines

In May of this year the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) issued schools with copies of *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*. This publication is now also available for download on www.newb.ie.

The Guidelines were developed in consultation with the teaching unions, and professionals from a variety of backgrounds including child psychology, educational welfare, the law, as well as parents and young people. The Guidelines are issued under Section 23 (3) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and are intended to provide assistance to all members of the school community including Principals, Boards of Management, teachers and other staff members, parents and students.

Any queries about the Guidelines, or their use, can be sent by e-mail to guidelines@newb.ie.

Teaching Council National Elections

The term of office of the current Teaching Council ends on the 27 March 2009. National elections to elect teachers to the new Council will be held in February 2009. The Council is made up of 37 members acting in a voluntary capacity, and includes 16 elected teachers and 6 nominated by registered trade unions representing teachers, two each by ASTI, TUI and INTO. This is a significant opportunity for teachers to participate, through the Council structure, in the development of a range of policies affecting teaching in Ireland. All registered teachers are eligible to run for election, but must be nominated. All registered teachers are eligible to vote in elections also. For more information on the elections or the Teaching Council visit www.teachingcouncil.ie. ♦

2008 Education Conference

The 2008 Education Conference will take place in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin on Saturday 8th November. In contrast to recent years, in which the focus of the Conference has been on external factors impacting on school life, this year the Conference will focus on the teaching and learning process and the practices in the classroom that enable students to reach their potential. The focus of all teachers' work is on the individual student and the Conference will examine strengths and areas for improvement in our schools.

Students in Finland have consistently out-performed their peers internationally in terms of achievement levels - as measured in the biennial reports from PISA, the OCED Programme for International Student Assessment. What is happening in Finnish schools to achieve such high levels of achievement? Can Irish teachers learn from the Finnish experience and what should we be wary of? To answer these questions, the guest speaker at the Conference will be a senior representative from the Trade Union of Education in Finland, OAJ. His presentation will focus on core issues such as quality and equity in schools.

Attendance at the Conference is open to ASTI members who can apply to attend through their branch or may apply directly to ASTI Head Office. Contact Eileen O'Rourke at asti.library@asti.ie or phone 01- 6040170. ◆

ASTI Research on Teachers' Workload

Teacher workload is one of the most pressing issues facing second-level teachers' today. Legislative and policy changes plus the demands of the curriculum have led to an unprecedented "intensification" of the work of teachers. In our complex society, teachers are under increasing pressure to deliver a wide range of educational and social outcomes - in schools which are under-staffed and under-resourced.

The ASTI has commissioned a major survey on teachers' working hours, both inside and outside the classroom. This survey will include a six-day diary which will issue to a random sample of 1,500 ASTI members in the second week in October. The results of this survey will be invaluable in providing strong factual data on teachers' workload and will enable the ASTI to protect teachers' working conditions from unsustainable demands. The ASTI is strongly urging all teachers who have been randomly selected to receive a copy of the questionnaire to take part in this unique and ground-breaking research. ◆

ASTI's 100th Birthday

In 2009, the ASTI celebrates the 100th Anniversary of its foundation. The theme for the ASTI's centenary year is "Promoting Education, Celebrating Teachers". During the course of the year the ASTI will be undertaking a number of events and activities involving ASTI members aimed at highlighting the importance of second-level education and the contribution teachers have made to Irish society and the lives of young people over the past 100 years. In addition, branches are invited to hold a celebratory event to mark the ASTI 100th Anniversary in 2009. Branches can avail of a contribution from the ASTI's Central Fund to go towards the cost of branch-based centenary activities. **A brochure will issue to members outlining the events of the centenary year.** ◆

Salary Protection Review Service

Commarket has committed to sponsoring a complimentary Salary Protection Review Service for ASTI members meeting with a financial consultant.

As part of this service you will receive:

- A free health screening worth €120
- An opportunity to join the Salary Protection Scheme for ASTI members on a preferential basis. To avail of this, members must be capable of being actively at work and must not have been out of work for more than 10 consecutive working days over the past 12 months.
- An opportunity to increase the life insurance element to 3 times your salary

The offer is open until the end of September.

Salary Scales

Under the terms of Towards 2016 a salary increase is due on September 1st 2008
Please note: these scales are calculated by the ASTI and are not official Department of Education and Science salary scales

Part-time Salary Rates

1. Qualified casual hourly rate
(incl. 22% holiday pay) : €49.60
2. Unqualified hourly rate
(incl. 22% holiday pay) : €42.99
3. Qualified non-casual teachers are paid at their personal point on the Common Basic Scale plus qualifications divided by 735.

Point on Salary Scale	Current	01/09/2008 <small>(2.5% due under Towards 2016)</small>
1	€31,804	€32,599
2	€32,930	€33,754
3	€34,058	€34,910
4	€35,188	€36,068
5	€36,941	€37,864
6	€38,078	€39,030
7	€39,213	€40,193
8	€42,072	€43,124
9	€43,500	€44,588
10	€45,207	€46,338
11	€46,905	€48,078
12	€48,616	€49,832
13	€50,046	€51,297
14	€51,940	€53,239
15	€51,940	€53,239
16	€51,940	€53,239
17	€54,552	€55,915
18	€54,552	€55,915
19	€54,552	€55,915
20	€54,552	€55,915
21	€58,003	€59,453
22	€58,003	€59,453
23	€58,003	€59,453
24	€58,003	€59,453
25	€61,816	€63,361
Including allowance paid after 10 years on maximum of scale		
	€64,202	€65,807

Principal's Allowance

Band 1 (1 to 3)	€9,561	€9,800
Band 2 (4 to 5)	€10,713	€10,981
Band 3 (6)	€12,568	€12,882
Band 4 (7 to 8)	€14,747	€15,116
Band 5 (9 to 10)	€17,155	€17,583
Band 6 (11 to 12)	€19,598	€20,088
Band 7 (13 to 15)	€21,963	€22,512
Band 8 (16)	€24,353	€24,962
Band 9 (17 to 19)	€26,112	€26,765
Band 10 (20 to 22)	€27,930	€28,628
Band 11 (23 to 26)	€30,579	€31,343
Band 12 (27 to 30)	€32,370	€33,179
Band 13 (31 to 35)	€35,833	€36,729
Band 14 (36 to 40)	€37,001	€37,926
Band 15 (41 to 50)	€40,133	€41,136
Band 16 (51 to 60)	€41,875	€42,922
Band 17 (61+)	€43,614	€44,704

Deputy Principal's Allowance

	Current	01/09/08
	(2.5% due under Towards 2016)	
Band 1 (1 to 3)	€3,870	€3,967
Band 2 (4 to 5)	€5,065	€5,192
Band 3 (6)	€6,696	€6,684
Band 4 (7 to 8)	€8,393	€8,603
Band 5 (9 to 10)	€10,036	€10,287
Band 6 (11 to 12)	€11,752	€12,046
Band 7 (13 to 15)	€13,403	€13,738
Band 8 (16)	€15,024	€15,400
Band 9 (17 to 19)	€16,302	€16,710
Band 10 (20 to 22)	€17,548	€17,987
Band 11 (23 to 26)	€19,477	€19,964
Band 12 (27 to 30)	€20,671	€21,188
Band 13 (31 to 35)	€23,256	€23,837
Band 14 (36 to 40)	€23,761	€24,355
Band 15 (41 to 50)	€25,961	€26,610
Band 16 (51 to 60)	€26,961	€27,635
Band 17 (61+)	€27,950	€28,649

Director of Adult Education

A	€3,967
B	€5,192
C	€6,863
D	€8,603
E	€10,287
F	€12,046
G	€13,738
H	€15,399
I	€16,709
J	€17,987
K	€19,964
L	€21,187
M	€23,837

Other In-school Management (Post of Responsibility) Allowances

Assistant Principal	€8,749	€8,968
Special Duties Teacher	€3,870	€3,966
Special Functions Allowances 1	€3,317	€3,400
Special Functions Allowances 2	€5,065	€5,192
Special Functions Allowances 3	€6,696	€6,864
Special Functions Allowances 4	€8,393	€8,603
Special Functions Allowances 5	€8,749	€8,968

Qualification Allowances

1.(a) (i) H. Dip in Ed. (Pass)	€607	€622
(ii) Higher Froebel Cert.	€607	€622
(b) (i) H. Dip. in Ed (1st or 2nd Hons)	€1,269	€1,301
(ii) Ard Teastas Gaeilge	€1,269	€1,301
(c) Primary Degree (Pass)	€1,892	€1,940
(d) Masters Degree (Pass)	€5,051	€5,177
(e) Primary Degree (Hons)	€5,051	€5,177
(f) Masters Degree (1st or 2nd Hons)	€5,644	€5,785
(g) Doctors Degree	€6,305	€6,463

Either of the allowances (a) or (b) may be held together with any one of the allowances (c) to (g)

2. Allowance payable to teachers with a Primary Degree (Pass) and the Higher Diploma in Education (1st or 2nd hons) who, prior to 1st July, 1968 were in receipt of an allowance of £110

	€4,393	€4,503
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Other Allowances

(i) Teaching through Irish	€1,625	€1,666
(ii) Gaeltacht Grant	€3,145	€3,223
(iii) Island Allowance	€1,892	€1,940
(iv) Allowance for Diploma for Teachers of Deaf Children Allowance for Diploma for Teachers of Blind Children Allowance for Diploma for Teachers of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Children	€2,502	€2,564
(v) Special Allowance payable to teachers appointed before 1/1/1987 in Comprehensive Schools	€2,538	€2,601
(vi) Allowance for teachers with 35 years service (long Service allowance - payable after 10 years completed on the maximum point of the salary scale)	€2,386	€2,446

Advice on Whole School Evaluations and Subject Inspections

• Members should read *A Guide to Subject Inspection at Second Level* and *A Guide to Whole School Evaluation in Post-Primary Schools*, copies of which are available in all schools and are on the Department of Education and Science website (www.education.ie).

The relationship between teachers and inspectors should be that of co-professionals grounded in mutual respect and courtesy.

• The Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate states that the aims of evaluation are:

- To identify, acknowledge and affirm good practice in schools;
- To promote continuing improvement in the quality of education offered by schools;
- To promote self-evaluation and continuous development by schools and staffs;
- To provide an assurance of quality in the education system as a whole based on the collection of objective, dependable, high quality data.

• Quality cannot be inspected in schools. School self-evaluation and reflection is the best way to foster school improvement when all the school community - teachers, parents, pupils, boards of management - share the same agreed goals.

• Whole school Evaluation and subject inspections should not place unnecessary additional administrative burdens on schools and should not be such as to disrupt the ongoing work of the school.

The quality of the education service is dependent on the knowledge, commitment and professionalism of teachers.

• A teachers or the Chairperson of the Board of Management or a C.E.O. of a V.E.C. may request a review of any aspect of an inspection visit. Such a request should be received within 14 days (excluding school holidays) of the date of the visit or the date of the issue of the report. The current procedure is set out in the Procedure

for the Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act 1998. The ASTI, TUI and INTO are in discussions with the Department of Education and Science in relation to modifying this procedure in order to broaden its scope and clarify its process in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

• At preliminary meetings with staff, inspectors should be fully apprised of the contextual features which are relevant to the school, i.e. inter alia, the school enrolment policy, the catchment area, the number of special needs students, the socio-economic background of the pupils.

It is not necessary for teachers to prepare individual lesson plans for the purpose of subject inspections.

It is expected that teachers will be able to indicate to inspectors a broad written plan of their work on a termly and yearly basis.

• Any evaluations which do not fully take these factors into account are inappropriate and invalid.

• The inspectors should be fully apprised of any deficits in buildings, equipment, facilities and resources and should be requested to note these in the report.

• Inspectors should be apprised of any particular challenging pupils in classes which are to be inspected.

• Appropriate evaluations are not prescriptive as to teaching methodologies and acknowledge the need for diverse teaching approaches in accordance with the needs of the students.

• Teachers are not required to attend meetings with inspectors before or after school.

• Substitution is provided, if necessary, where meetings are being held between subject teachers and inspectors. ♦

Notice to teachers of Religious Education

The ASTI has received complaints that in a communication from the Religious Education Support Service it was stated that teachers must provide an individual class plan for the class in which they are being inspected. The ASTI wishes to make it clear that this is not required. Page 11 of *A Guide to Subject Inspection at Second Level*, which is also a guide for subject inspections being carried out as part of a Whole School Inspection, states "It is expected that teachers will be able to indicate to inspectors a broad written plan of their work on a termly and yearly basis. However, it is not necessary that teachers prepare individual written lesson plans for the purpose of inspection".