



Circular 0031/2026

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and
Comprehensive Schools
and
the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards**

**Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing in the DEIS Plus scheme:
Assignment of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinators
within schools in the DEIS Plus scheme**

1. Executive summary

This circular sets out the arrangements for the assignment of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing (PMHW) coordinators in each school participating in the DEIS Plus scheme. PMHW coordinator posts are allocated to DEIS Plus schools to support the development, coordination and implementation of a whole-school and targeted approach to positive mental health and wellbeing for children and young people experiencing educational disadvantage.

The circular outlines the eligibility requirements, assignment and interview procedures, conditions of service, and management and reporting arrangements associated with the PMHW coordinator post. It also provides guidance on the use of DEIS grant funding to support PMHW activities and includes standard documentation to support consistent implementation of the post across schools.

The assignment of PMHW coordinators is intended to support schools in responding to the wellbeing needs of their school communities through planned, collaborative and reviewed approaches aligned with the school improvement plan and relevant department policies.

2. Dissemination of this circular

Please ensure that a copy of this circular is provided to all members of the board of management/education and training board (BOM/ETB). The circular should also be brought to the attention of all teachers in your employment including those on leave of absence.

This circular, “Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing in the DEIS Plus scheme: Assignment of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinators within schools in the DEIS Plus scheme”, and other guidance on the DEIS Plus scheme (including Irish versions) can be accessed on the department’s website gov.ie/education

3. Compliance

The allocation of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinator posts to schools in the DEIS Plus scheme and the retention of these posts is contingent on schools complying with the contents of this circular.

In this regard, schools are reminded that in order to participate in the DEIS Plus scheme, schools should take all necessary steps to use resources that may be allocated under the scheme in accordance with the key provisions, requirements and aims of the school improvement plan.

Schools participating in the DEIS Plus scheme should also undertake to abide by any further conditions that the Department of Education and Youth may put in place from time to time with regard to the scheme or any other measure under the school's action plan for improvement.

**Gráinne Cullen
Principal Officer
Social Inclusion Unit
07 May 2026**

Definitions

For the purposes of this circular the following terms shall have the meanings assigned to them here unless the context indicates otherwise:

BOM – Board of management

The department – the Department of Education and Youth

DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

Employer – an education and training board in the case of vocational schools/community colleges, community national schools and a board of management /manager in the case of primary schools (excluding community national schools), voluntary secondary, community and comprehensive schools. The education and training board or board of management/manager may delegate as appropriate, responsibility for matters set out in this circular

ETB – Education and training board

HSCL – Home school community liaison

Parent – in this document the term ‘parent’ also denotes ‘guardian’

PMHW – Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

School improvement plan – an evidence-based plan in which a participating school identifies pupil needs, sets specific targets and actions, and monitors progress across the DEIS themes in order to improve pupil outcomes and reduce educational disadvantage

School year – the school year as defined by the Minister for Education and Youth from time to time currently beginning on 1 September and ending on 31 August in each year

SCP – School Completion Programme

Student support team – a school-based team of staff established to coordinate, plan and review supports for students with additional learning, wellbeing, attendance or behavioural needs, in line with the whole-school approach to wellbeing and school improvement plan.

TPL – teacher professional learning

Introduction

The purpose of this circular is:

- to inform the management and staff in all primary and post-primary schools in the DEIS Plus scheme of the process for assigning teachers as PMHW coordinators;
- to inform the management and staff in schools in the DEIS Plus scheme of the management and reporting arrangements in relation to the PMHW coordinator role;
- to outline the job description/role of the PMHW coordinator.

Contents of circular

This circular is structured as follows and contains the following information:

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Appendix B:	Sample letter of assignment for the PMHW coordinator post
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Appendix D:	Role and responsibilities of the PMHW coordinator

Section One

PMHW coordinator posts in schools in the DEIS Plus scheme

1. PMHW allocation to schools

The DEIS Strategy to 2035 sets out the Department of Education and Youth's long-term vision for addressing educational disadvantage, and includes a range of targeted actions, including the introduction of the DEIS Plus scheme. The DEIS Plus scheme aims to empower children and young people affected by intergenerational poverty and disadvantage to succeed in school and progress to fulfilling adult lives, creating positive impacts for future generations. It seeks to improve the learning experiences and outcomes of all children and young people in participating schools, and particularly those that the school prioritises for additional support.

As part of the DEIS Plus scheme, PMHW coordinator posts are allocated to participating schools to support the promotion of positive mental health, wellbeing and inclusive school environments for children and young people in schools in the DEIS Plus scheme.

Schools participating in the DEIS Plus scheme will be allocated one full-time PMHW coordinator post.

The purpose of the PMHW coordinator post is to support schools in developing and implementing a whole-school and targeted approach to positive mental health and wellbeing, with particular regard to the needs of children and young people experiencing educational disadvantage. The PMHW coordinator will engage both school and community supports and services to carry out their role.

Children and young people in communities experiencing disadvantage may encounter a range of challenges that impact on wellbeing, including the effects of poverty, social exclusion, adversity and intergenerational trauma. The PMHW post is intended to support schools in the DEIS Plus scheme in responding to these challenges through preventative and targeted approaches that promote resilience, belonging and positive engagement with education.

The person assigned to the role must be an existing member of the teaching staff of the school.

The role and responsibility of the PMHW coordinator must be undertaken on a full-time basis and cannot be combined with teaching responsibilities or other roles that would restrict the flexibility required to carry out the responsibilities of the post.

The role requires flexibility to undertake the range of activities associated with promoting positive mental health and wellbeing within the school community and supporting the development of trauma-informed and wellbeing-focused practices across the school.

2. Duration of assignment to the PMHW coordinator post

A teacher shall be assigned to the post of PMHW coordinator for a **maximum of five years, to be completed on 31 August of the fifth year. All assignments are subject to the PMHW allocation to the school(s), by the department.** The DEIS Plus scheme will be subject to ongoing review and evaluation by the Department of Education and Youth and continuation of the PMHW coordinator post beyond the first three-year implementation plan is subject to sanction by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitisation (DPER).

It is a requirement that the PMHW coordinator post be opened to application to eligible staff in the school(s) every five years, subject to DPER sanction.

PMHW posts are opened to application in order to provide eligible staff members with the opportunity to gain greater insight into positive mental health and wellbeing and educational disadvantage within educational settings. Working as a PMHW coordinator provides teaching staff with a deeper understanding of the family and community experiences and contexts of the children and young people they teach. Teachers returning to classroom teaching following a period in the PMHW role will bring valuable experience in, and understanding of, student wellbeing, trauma-informed practice and whole-school approaches to wellbeing.

During the period of assignment, PMHW coordinators will have opportunities to engage in appropriate professional learning and development relevant to the role.

Having served the maximum period of five years allowed in the post, the existing PMHW coordinator may not re-apply immediately for the PMHW coordinator position. A PMHW coordinator must vacate the PMHW position for a minimum period of three years before they are eligible to re-apply for the PMHW post.

3. Appointment of a replacement teacher

Where a teacher is assigned to the post of PMHW coordinator, the resulting teaching vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the relevant recruitment and appointment procedures for teachers.

The recruitment and appointment of a replacement teacher shall be carried out by the BOM/ETB in accordance with the provisions of the relevant department circulars governing the recruitment of teachers.

For information relating to Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID) entitlements see circular 0020/2026 and other relevant circulars, as amended from time to time.

Section Two

Assignment process for the PMHW coordinator

1. Eligibility requirements

Applicants for the position of PMHW coordinator must:

- a. be a member of the teaching staff of the school;
- b. have a minimum of **two years'** teaching service recognised by the department/ETB for incremental credit purposes;
- c. be registered with the Teaching Council in accordance with the Teaching Council Acts 2001-2015 and the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, as amended from time to time; and
- d. have satisfied all conditions of that registration as per Section 31 of the Teaching Council Act 2001¹.

A substitute teacher is not eligible to apply.

All permanent, fixed-term, full-time, part-time and job-sharing fully registered teachers in the school(s) are eligible to apply for the post of PMHW coordinator regardless of employment status. The Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003 and the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001 refers. **Please note that the PMHW position is a full-time position only.**

Cognisant of the critical role of the principal and deputy principal in the overall management of a school:

- i. a principal shall not undertake the role and responsibilities of a PMHW coordinator and is not eligible to apply for the PMHW post;
- ii. a deputy principal may undertake the role and responsibilities of a PMHW coordinator provided they temporarily relinquish their post of responsibility allowance and an acting post-holder may be appointed.

An assistant principal I and assistant principal II may apply for the post of PMHW coordinator. However, before making such assignments, the employer must be satisfied that, in addition to fully undertaking the PMHW post, the PMHW coordinator can competently and efficiently discharge the post of responsibility roles and responsibilities. The employer must also be satisfied that the nature of the post of responsibility will not impinge on the ability of the teacher to carry out the role of the PMHW coordinator in addition to the roles and responsibilities already required on the assistant principal I and assistant principal II role. The teacher must be required to confirm their agreement to

¹ The registration of teachers is governed by Section 31 of the Teaching Council Acts 2001-2015. The Council registers teachers under the **Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations 2016** and **The Teaching Council [Registration] (Amendment) Regulations 2016**.

this in the manner set out in the letter of assignment (see sample letter of assignment at appendix B).

2. Advertisement of the PMHW post

The post of PMHW coordinator must be advertised to the teaching staff of the school.

Notice of any vacant post shall be posted in a prominent position on the staff notice board(s) within the school(s) participating in the DEIS Plus scheme. The notice shall specify the closing date for receipt of applications which should not be earlier than ten school days after the initial date of posting of the notice in the school. The notice should remain on the notice board until the closing date for applications has passed.

Members of staff on approved paid or unpaid leave of absence or on secondment, are eligible to apply and, therefore, a copy of the advertisement for the vacant post shall be sent directly to the designated contact addresses or email addresses of such teachers.

The notice shall state:

- i. the latest date for receipt of letter of application; this date shall not be earlier than ten school days from the last date of the posting of the notice; the period of ten school days includes the last day of the posting of the notice;
- ii. the roles and responsibilities attaching to the post (as contained in appendix D of this circular);
- iii. a curriculum vitae should be submitted;
- iv. whether reports or other documentary information are required.

No details should be requested that might be construed as being discriminatory on any of the grounds prohibited by the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, race, disability or membership of the Traveller community).

Where no teacher in the school applied for the post, or where there is difficulty in attracting a staff member to the position, the BOM/ETB should review the advertisement and bring the opportunity to the attention of the teaching staff again. The BOM/ETB may also seek advice from the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Education and Youth by email to deisplus@education.gov.ie.

3. The interview process

An interview for the post must be held even in the case of there being only one applicant. An interview board must be constituted for this purpose. As with any teaching assignment, relevant department circulars in terms of recruitment/redeployment should be observed in the assignment of a PMHW coordinator.

The eligibility of the applicant to apply for the post must be confirmed by their school in advance of the interview process.

Under no circumstances should a teacher be assigned to the PMHW role on a temporary basis pending the completion of the interview process for the filling of the PMHW coordinator post.

4. Interview board

The BOM/ETB shall establish an interview board to conduct the selection process for the PMHW post.

The interview board should reflect gender representation in so far as possible.

The interview board shall conduct the selection process in a fair and transparent manner and in accordance with agreed procedures for the recruitment and selection of teachers.

The interview board shall consist of:

- the chairperson/s of boards of management/ETB representative as appropriate;
- principal of the school; and
- one independent assessor.

The interview board shall conduct the selection process in a fair and transparent manner and in accordance with agreed procedures for the recruitment and selection of teachers.

In advance of the interview process, criteria for assessment, having regard to the appropriate legislation and the requirements of the post of PMHW coordinator, must be established by the interview board and recorded in writing. Applicants should be notified of the criteria in advance of the interview by someone who is not a member of the interview board.

General functions of the interview board

The interview board:

- conducts the interviews;
- must ensure that all questions shall relate to the requirements of the post; no questions shall be asked nor information sought in any form from a candidate which might be construed as being discriminatory;
- must adhere to the provisions of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014;
- must not give consideration or weighting to the sector or school in which the candidate is teaching.

5. Outcome of the interview process and notification to candidates

As soon as possible, once the recruitment process is complete, the successful candidate should be notified of their assignment and unsuccessful candidates notified accordingly. A sample letter of assignment for the successful candidate is included at appendix B.

Once the assignment has been accepted by the successful candidate, the assignment form for the PMHW coordinator post at appendix C must be completed by the school principal and submitted to the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Education and Youth.

Section Three

Conditions of service for the PMHW coordinator post

1. Full-time teachers taking up the PMHW coordinator post

Notwithstanding the requirement for flexibility within the PMHW initiative, the teacher (with the exception of a deputy principal) assigned to the PMHW post will retain their conditions of service in the school, that is, the conditions of their substantive post in the case of a permanent teacher and the fixed-term contract in the case of a temporary teacher.

The teacher remains employed under their original contract of employment with an individual BOM/ETB for the duration of their role as a PMHW coordinator.

The only term or condition of the teacher's employment that changes on assignment to the PMHW coordinator role is the nature of their responsibilities which are now those of the PMHW coordinator as set out at appendix D of this circular.

2. Teachers, not currently working in a full-time capacity, taking up the PMHW coordinator post

In the case of teachers who are not currently working in a full-time capacity, the following changes occur for the duration of the assignment to the PMHW coordinator post:

- Full-time PMHW responsibilities must be undertaken.
- The nature of the teacher's responsibilities changes to those of the PMHW coordinator post, as set out in appendix D of this circular.

3. Eligibility to apply for a post of responsibility while working as a PMHW coordinator

A PMHW coordinator is eligible to be appointed to, or continue to, hold an assistant principal I or an assistant principal II post in their school, subject to written confirmation from the employer and the teacher that they are satisfied that the role and responsibilities of the post can be fully discharged.

A PMHW coordinator is eligible to be appointed to the post of deputy principal, but they will be required to temporarily relinquish the deputy principal post (and associated allowance) while in the post of PMHW coordinator, or resign from the role and responsibilities of the PMHW coordinator and take up the deputy principal post. Where a deputy principal relinquishes their post temporarily, an acting deputy principal may be appointed in accordance with the relevant recruitment circulars (see www.gov.ie).

Section Four

Assignment to the PMHW coordinator post

1. Letter of assignment

Before taking up the role of PMHW coordinator, a letter of assignment should be issued to the PMHW coordinator by the employer (BOM/ETB).

The letter of assignment, which should be signed by the chairperson of the BOM/chief executive of the ETB, should include an acceptance slip, which must be signed and dated by the PMHW coordinator. It is a requirement that the signed acceptance slip is returned to the BOM/ETB before assignment to the PMHW coordinator post.

A copy of the letter of assignment and signed acceptance slip should be retained with school records and a copy issued to the PMHW coordinator. A sample letter of assignment is included at appendix B.

The letter of assignment should include the following:

- a. confirmation that the assignment to PMHW coordinator is for a period of a maximum of 5 years only (subject to DPER sanction);
- b. confirmation that on the expiration of the PMHW coordinator assignment, the assigned teacher may, where warranted, return to a teaching role within the school/ETB in which the teacher was employed, or may have entitlements under re-deployment panels;
- c. confirmation that the PMHW coordinator post is subject to the PMHW allocation to schools by the department;
- d. role of the PMHW coordinator (appendix D).

Section Five

PMHW – Management and reporting arrangements for schools participating in the DEIS Plus scheme

The arrangements described below should be clearly understood by the parties concerned.

The BOM/ETB shall have responsibility for the management and oversight of the PMHW coordinator post within the school.

Day-to-day responsibility: The school principal shall have day-to-day responsibility for the work of the PMHW coordinator and shall support and guide the development and implementation of a whole-school approach to the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing.

The PMHW coordinator should be a member of the school's DEIS team or equivalent and, where relevant, the student support team.

The actions, both universal and targeted, that the PMHW coordinator undertakes should be informed by a range of school-based data, clearly recorded in the school improvement plan and monitored regularly.

The PMHW coordinator should ensure that they have a clear data-informed rationale for the students they prioritise for targeted support and that the targeted measures are informed by the students' interests, strengths and needs. Prioritisation of students and activities should be done in collaboration with other appropriate people and structures including, where relevant, the student support team, the home school community liaison (HSCL) coordinator, the School Completion Programme (SCP) coordinator, the inspectorate and the school principal. Key to the delivery of the PMHW coordinator role will be a collaborative approach with the NEPS psychologist and education wellbeing practitioner assigned to the school.

The PMHW coordinator should consult with the children and young people and their parents to ensure appropriate participation in planning and design of activities and initiatives.

Accountability: The BOM/ETB in the school participating in the DEIS Plus scheme is accountable for the PMHW work carried out in their school.

The formal reporting relationship for the PMHW coordinator is with the teacher's principal and BOM/ETB.

The Social Inclusion Unit of the department has responsibility for the national allocation of PMHW coordinator posts and for the allocation of DEIS Plus funding to schools participating in the DEIS Plus scheme. The contact email address is deisplus@education.gov.ie.

Section Six

Use of the DEIS grant to support positive mental health and wellbeing activities

The DEIS grant allocated to schools is intended to provide targeted supports to address educational disadvantage and to support initiatives outlined in the school's action plan for improvement.

Schools participating in the DEIS Plus scheme and assigned a PMHW coordinator post should use an appropriate portion of their annual DEIS grant to support the work of the PMHW coordinator to promote positive mental health and wellbeing initiatives within the school community.

Schools should use their discretion as to the appropriate amount of funding from the DEIS grant that should be allocated to support these activities. From time to time, the department may provide additional guidance in this regard.

Schools must be conscious of securing value for money in relation to significant purchases of equipment. Any portion of the DEIS grant used to support PMHW coordinator activities may only be spent on activities/resources which are directly linked to the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing, as outlined in the school's action plan for improvement.

Expenditure should be monitored and directed appropriately and proportionately and used to obtain the outcomes as identified in the school improvement plan, which should be reviewed on a regular basis.

In the context of PMHW the DEIS grant may be used:

- to support positive mental health and wellbeing initiatives and activities for students, staff and parents/guardians;
- to purchase appropriate resources to support positive mental health and wellbeing activities, in line with the school's action plan for improvement and approved by the school principal;
- to support training, workshops and programmes that promote resilience, wellbeing and positive engagement with the school;
- to pay travel expenses to the PMHW coordinator incurred in the discharge of their role and responsibilities, including attendance at relevant meetings and teacher professional learning (TPL).

National TPL for coordinators may be centrally funded by the department. Schools may contribute to TPL by covering travel expenses from the school's DEIS grant (see relevant DPER and Department of Education and Youth circulars for appropriate rates).

Claims in respect of subsistence are not allowed.

Schools (other than ETB schools) in receipt of HSCL grant funding are required to maintain appropriate records of how the grant is used, including records of activities undertaken and

accounts of income and expenditure related to the grant. Such records must be retained at school level and made available, on request, to officers of the Department of Education and Youth or to agents acting on behalf of the department.

Records and accounts in relation to income and expenditure in respect of ETB schools must be maintained by the ETB concerned in accordance with the requirements of section 51 of the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013.

Appendix A

Sample advertisement for the post of PMHW coordinator

Date of notice: _____

The Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinator has a key role in leading, coordinating and reviewing the school's whole-school approach to positive mental health and wellbeing under the DEIS Plus scheme. Through close collaboration with school leadership, staff and relevant supports, the PMHW coordinator will directly contribute to improving the wellbeing and experiences of children and young people in the school.

Applications are sought for assignment to the post of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinator in:

(Name of school in the DEIS Plus scheme)

With effect from: _____

Letter of application including curriculum vitae shall be forwarded to:

Email: _____

NB: The BOM/ETB accepts applications by e-mail or hard copy (applications should be submitted by hard copy or email, not both).

Closing date for applications is: _____

The following relevant documentation is available on gov.ie:

- Department of Education and Youth circular 0031/2026 "Assignment of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinators in schools in the DEIS Plus scheme".
- Role and responsibilities of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinator (included in circular 0031/2026).
- Guidance documentation relating to wellbeing and DEIS planning.

Appendix B

Sample letter of assignment for the PMHW coordinator post (can be adapted to school's requirements)

Teacher Name: _____

School Name: _____ Roll No. _____

Dear _____,

The BOM/ETB agrees to assign you as a PMHW coordinator for a period of a maximum of five years, to undertake full-time responsibilities in the role of PMHW coordinator based in the above named school from the _____ day of _____ (month) 20XX to the _____ day of _____ (month) 20XX.

You shall perform your role and responsibilities in accordance with, the contents of the department's circular 0031/2026 "**Assignment of PMHW coordinators within schools in the DEIS Plus scheme**", the policies of the BOM/ETB and the rules for national schools.

The terms and conditions of your employment remain as they are except in relation to the nature of the responsibilities to be performed by you as PMHW coordinator (See appendix D).

The BOM/ETB of the school in the DEIS Plus scheme has the primary responsibility for this assignment, including its day-to-day management.

The BOM/ETB reserves the right to terminate your assignment as PMHW coordinator, for misconduct or any other sufficient reasons, in accordance with the agreed procedures, if applicable. In the event of termination and subject to relevant statutory provisions, you shall not be entitled to return to any remuneration or compensation except in respect of remuneration due for work performed prior to termination.

Your assignment as PMHW coordinator may be terminated:

- if the PMHW allocation to schools is changed by the department;
- if a post is suppressed in the school and you are the most junior teacher in the school.

In such a case, (unless terminated or disciplined, pursuant to such details mentioned above) you may choose to revert to your substantive teaching post or be subject to redeployment arrangements in place, where applicable.

If you are serving in an assistant principal I or assistant principal II post, these roles and responsibilities must be discharged competently and efficiently while in the PMHW post.

SIGNED on behalf of the employer/BOM/ETB of the School:

_____ Date: _____

ACCEPTANCE SLIP

Having read and noted the contents of the Letter of Assignment dated _____ and the contents of circular 0031/2026 "Assignment of PMHW coordinators within schools in the DEIS Plus scheme", I _____ (name of PMHW coordinator) agree to the terms of the PMHW assignment.

SIGNED BY THE PMHW COORDINATOR

DATE:

Name of school in the DEIS Plus scheme:

Roll No. of school in the DEIS Plus scheme:

Data Protection Privacy Statement

The main purpose for which the personal data provided by you is for the assignment of the PMHW coordinator post.
School needs to insert Privacy Statement here

Appendix C

ASSIGNMENT FORM FOR THE PMHW COORDINATOR POST

Name and Address of base school participating in the pilot	Roll No. of Base School

Name of newly assigned PMHW coordinator (please state surname linked to Revenue records).	Please tick and initial box below confirming that "candidate has All eligibility requirements" as per page 7 of circular 0031/2026	Duration of assignment, that is, date assigned to the PMHW post until end of assignment date	Name of PMHW coordinator that is being replaced if applicable	Where the new PMHW appointment is to cover sick/maternity leave, etc., please provide details here
		Date assigned: <div data-bbox="943 1062 1319 1208" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Date/Month/Year</p> <p>From: / /</p> <p>To: / /</p> </div>		

Note: A teacher may be assigned to the post of PMHW coordinator for a maximum period of 5 years only, subject to DPER sanction.

I, the undersigned, confirm that the above named assignee meets the requirements of the PMHW coordinator post:

Signature of school principal: _____ **Date:** _____

Data Protection Privacy Statement

The main purpose for which the department requires the personal data provided by you is to allocate and manage the DEIS Plus scheme.

Full details of the department's data protection policy setting out how we will use your personal data as well as information regarding your rights as a data subject are available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/department-of-education-privacy-notice/>. Details of this policy and privacy notice are also available in hard copy from the address below upon request.

Original completed form (by school in the DEIS Plus scheme) should be forwarded, prior to the PMHW coordinator assignment date to: Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Education and Youth, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co Westmeath N37 X659 or email a scanned copy to: social_inclusion@education.gov.ie

Appendix D

Role and responsibilities of the Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinator

The Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing (PMHW) coordinator is a key role in the coordination, implementation and ongoing monitoring of a whole-school approach to positive mental health and wellbeing in schools participating in the DEIS Plus scheme. This role focuses on leading and aligning wellbeing initiatives in the school community, fostering a supportive culture and ensuring that students, school staff and parents/guardians experience a supportive, inclusive and relationship-focused educational environment.

This is a lead role in schools in the DEIS Plus scheme focused on the promotion of a whole-school approach to supporting the inclusion and wellbeing needs of students experiencing educational disadvantage, including those affected by poverty, social exclusion, adversity and intergenerational trauma. These factors can have a significant impact on a student's engagement with school, attendance, emotional regulation and overall educational outcomes.

The work of the PMHW coordinator should support relationship-based approaches and early intervention that promote wellbeing, resilience, belonging and positive engagement in the schools. In addition, the work of the coordinator should support the delivery of interventions for those most in need of targeted supports.

The PMHW coordinator will work in partnership with community supports and services to support a whole-of-community approach to positive mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. This will include engaging with family resource centres, children and young people services committees, Health Service Executive and Tusla services, youth services and other community-based services and supports that will support the improved mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

The role should be aligned with the school improvement plan, its implementation and review cycle, and relevant department policies relating to wellbeing and educational inclusion.

Key areas of responsibility:

1. Whole-school Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing initiative

The PMHW coordinator will provide strategic leadership in coordinating the development, implementation and ongoing review of the school's whole-school wellbeing approach under the DEIS Plus scheme.

The PMHW coordinator will be the link person in the school for collaboration with the counsellors provided under the department's Counselling pilot and the Education Wellbeing Practitioners pilot, along with other mental health and wellbeing initiatives delivered under the DEIS Plus scheme.

Key responsibilities include:

- leading the development, implementation and review of the school's whole-school positive mental health and wellbeing initiative;
- working with school leadership, student support teams and staff to promote a positive and inclusive school environment along the continuum of support in school;
- leading the integration of trauma-informed and relationship-based practices in the school;
- working with the NEPS psychologists and other services and agencies to support the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing within the school;
- being the main point of contact and engagement for counsellors and the education wellbeing practitioner assigned to the school (where relevant);
- working in collaboration with other roles in the school such as the HSCL coordinator, SCP coordinator, special needs assistants, special education teachers, English as an additional language teachers and other roles relevant to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people;
- coordinating with community services to provide positive mental health and wellbeing supports for children and young people;
- promoting approaches that foster belonging, safety, positive relationships and emotional regulation for students and staff;
- ensuring wellbeing initiatives are fully embedded in the school improvement plan;
- overseeing coordinated delivery of existing wellbeing supports within the school;
- leading collaboration with community supports and in-school supports to ensure cohesive, aligned and timely support for students;
- promoting culturally responsive and inclusive practices across the school, recognising the diverse backgrounds, identities and lived experiences of students and their families, and supporting a sense of belonging for all;
- building and sustaining positive, respectful and trusting relationships with parents and families, with particular emphasis on those who may be marginalised or less engaged with school, in order to support student wellbeing.

2. Supporting students experiencing educational disadvantage

Students in communities experiencing disadvantage may be affected by a range of challenges, including poverty and economic disadvantage, adverse childhood experiences and intergenerational trauma. The PMHW coordinator will take a lead role within the school in responding to these challenges through supporting, coordinating and developing initiatives that promote:

- supporting the HSCL coordinator in developing and strengthening positive relationships between students, staff and families;
- supporting initiatives that promote engagement with learning and participation in school life, including engagement with community-based activities and youth services;
- prioritising early intervention and preventative approaches in partnership with staff and external services;
- developing and strengthening positive relationships with community groups and services.

3. Promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing initiatives

The PMHW coordinator will lead on the planning, organisation and delivery of initiatives that promote positive mental health and wellbeing in the school community. The PMHW will be an important link with HSE services, community services, youth services and extra-curricular clubs and service providers to support a whole-of-community approach to positive mental health and wellbeing for children and young people.

These may include:

- evidence-based and informed student wellbeing programmes and activities;
- initiatives that build resilience, emotional wellbeing and positive coping strategies;
- awareness raising events relating to mental health and wellbeing;
- activities that promote attendance, engagement and positive relationships;
- community-based extra-curricular activities that can improve the wellbeing of children and young people outside of school hours.

4. Professional learning

The PMHW coordinator will engage in relevant professional learning to support the effective delivery of the role and to ensure that practice is informed by current research and best practice in the area of student wellbeing, mental health promotion and trauma-informed practice.