

ASTIR

ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY TEACHERS, IRELAND

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SENIOR CYCLE CONCERNS

Authentication of AACs

Inequalities in IT
infrastructure

Widening of the social divide

Availability of specialist
classrooms and equipment

Teacher workload



- | More ways to save money with the ASTI
- | One-year CIDs explained
- | Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault


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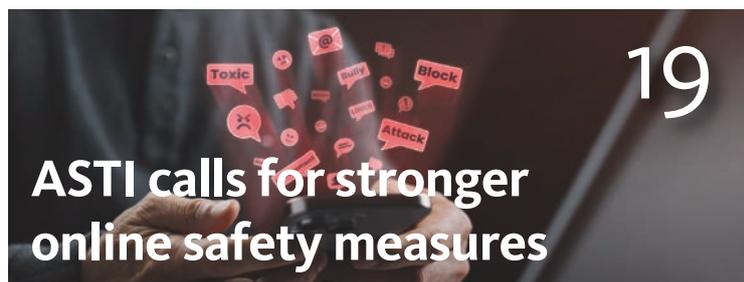
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Members can email astirfeedback@asti.ie or text 087 934 9956.

Support for teachers = support for students

This Easter, 500 ASTI members will gather for Annual Convention in Wexford. ASTI branches all over the country have discussed and prioritised motions for Convention, based on members' most pressing concerns. One message is clear: serious questions remain about the implementation of Senior Cycle Redevelopment. Since September 2025, nine new and revised Tranche 1 subjects are being taught. Students sitting the Leaving Cert in 2027 will complete Additional Assessment Components (AACs) in Tranche 1 subjects worth 40% of their overall grade. Tranche 2 subjects come in this September. The Senior Cycle Redevelopment programme represents one of the most significant shifts in teaching, learning and assessment at Leaving Cert level. All of this is happening in the context of the ongoing failure by Irish Governments to bring Ireland's investment in education in line with EU average levels. Some of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment concerns that will be debated by Convention delegates are:

- ASTI research shows that the majority of second-level teachers are deeply concerned about the authentication of AACs, particularly in the context of rapidly advancing artificial intelligence,
- science teachers are being asked to oversee laboratory-based research investigations despite some schools having inadequate lab facilities, and
- as more AACs are rolled out across subject areas, students face an expanding assessment load while teachers are expected to absorb additional workload without being allocated professional time.

Teacher burnout

Teacher workload and stress will also dominate Convention proceedings. Motions this year reflect a profession under sustained strain. Teachers are continuously grappling with new initiatives, programmes and policies, while at the same time striving to maintain education standards, and provide all students with an inclusive and positive learning experience.

Achievement of one-year CIDs

The ASTI welcomes the publication of the Department of Education and Youth Circular 0021/2026 setting out the eligibility criteria and arrangements for the awarding of CIDs after one year of teaching (see page 18 of this *ASTIR*). This is a significant step, and one sought by the ASTI, in terms of reducing the job insecurity experienced by recently qualified teachers. However, one-year CIDs alone will not solve the systemic teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Teachers' pay and the length of the teachers' pay scale must be addressed. Other obstacles such as the cost of living, housing issues, the length of the PME, and the lack of promotional opportunities for teachers must also be tackled.



Padraig Curley
ASTI President

Industrial relations landscape

We are in for an interesting time in the coming months. With the current Public Service Agreement due to expire soon, and significant issues still unresolved around Senior Cycle Redevelopment and local bargaining, the period ahead will be pivotal for our members. A key priority is resolving our ongoing difficulties with the Department of Education and Youth in relation to the implementation support measures for Senior Cycle Redevelopment. While engagement has taken place, it is clear that further strengthening and formalisation of commitments are required. Our objective is to secure an enhanced addendum to the *Senior Cycle Redevelopment – Implementation Support Measures* document, building on the commitments previously provided. The addendum must address several core issues, including the provision of funding for science laboratory capital works. Schools cannot deliver reformed curricula without appropriate infrastructure. This is not optional; it is foundational.

The Coursework Rules and Procedures must be updated to incorporate clear safeguards against the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence in student work. At the same time, there must be defined legal protection for teachers engaged in authentication work. As assessment models evolve, teachers must not be left professionally exposed. Clarity around indemnity provisions is essential. We are also seeking strengthened teacher professional learning supports, including enhanced feedback mechanisms that are meaningful and responsive to classroom realities. Reform must be properly resourced if it is to succeed. In language subjects, we require firm assurances regarding the continued and appropriate inclusion of oral and aural assessments. We are also pressing for rapid reviews of subjects within each Tranche at the earliest opportunity, so that unintended consequences or operational difficulties can be addressed promptly.

At the time of going to press, the ASTI, under paragraph 5.4 of the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026, has referred matters to the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) set up under the Agreement. The JIC's role is to address matters of implementation, interpretation, or anomalies arising under the Agreement. This step reflects both the seriousness of the issues and our determination to secure appropriate resolution within the agreed industrial relations framework. In the broader context, the local bargaining element of the current Agreement is progressing very slowly, and this pattern is evident right across the public sector. With the Agreement expiring in June, there is enormous urgency to inject real momentum into the process. Members must see tangible progress on pay and conditions before negotiations commence on a successor deal.

The months ahead will demand focus, unity and resolve. Securing meaningful implementation supports, advancing local bargaining, and preparing for the next phase of pay talks will define the industrial relations landscape. Our priority remains clear: protecting members' professional integrity, strengthening working conditions, and ensuring that educational reform is delivered with the resources and safeguards our members deserve.



Kieran Christie
ASTI General Secretary

Best wishes to Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary



Diarmaid de Paor, Deputy General Secretary, has retired from the ASTI after 20 years' service. Diarmaid first joined the ASTI in 2006. He has always been a passionate and active trade unionist, and has spent much of his life working on equality issues. Diarmaid holds a first-class honours degree in industrial relations from the National College of Ireland (NCI).

During his time as ASTI Deputy General Secretary, Diarmaid has shown great commitment to teachers and to the teaching profession.

As part of his work on equality issues, Diarmaid re-established the ASTI LGBTQI+ group, expanded ASTI Pride celebrations, and organised an ASTI Equality Conference, which took place in 2024.

As part of his work in Head Office Diarmaid provided professional support to the Equality Committee and the Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee, and oversaw the Development Aid Fund. He also regularly presented board of management training to ASTI board of management

representatives. Diarmaid has represented the ASTI with a range of external bodies, including the State Examinations Commission (SEC), the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Strategic Implementation Committee, the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) Board of Directors, the Executive Council of the ICTU, the Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) Education Advisory Group, and the Post-Primary Education Forum. He also served on the Teachers Conciliation Council (TCC) and many of its sub-committees, and as an advisor to the Directors of Redeployment.

Diarmaid contributed to *ASTIR* on many occasions, and took part in numerous media interviews as part of his role. In his retirement, Diarmaid plans to pursue his many interests and to spend more time with his family, especially his granddaughter, who is due to be born in April.



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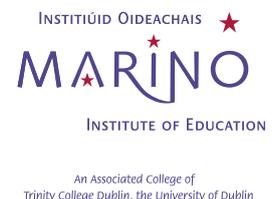
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Breda Lynch appointed new Deputy General Secretary

Breda Lynch has been appointed ASTI Deputy General Secretary. Before her appointment as Deputy General Secretary, Breda served as ASTI Executive Officer: Industrial Relations, acting as a link between members and Head Office. Breda's long-standing service to members and the union includes serving as: ASTI Vice President between 2017 and 2018, ASTI President between 2018 and 2019, a representative on ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) for many years, the ASTI

Standing Committee Regional Representative for Region 18 (Dublin South 1 and Dublin South Central), and a member of the ASTI Finance Committee and Benevolent Committees, as well as ASTI school steward. She also served as an ASTI representative on the Dublin Council of Trade Unions. As a teacher, Breda spent most of her teaching career in Muckcross Park College in Dublin. Breda holds a B.Th. (Maths and Theology) and a H. Dip in Education from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.



Stripe Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition



Sligo Grammar School

Pictured are (from left): Padraig Curley (ASTI President), Jimmy Staunton (ASTI Standing Committee Representative Region 1), Sligo Grammar School students Sean McGettrick and Jack Glenister, and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary). The students' project was titled 'Breaking point: the hidden danger of training load and insufficient recovery'.



St Columba's College

Pictured are (from left): Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary) with students from St Columba's College, Emer Quinn and Orla Ward, their teacher, ASTI member Mairéad Deeney, and ASTI President Padraig Curley. The students' project was titled 'Snaps and Sparks: Analysing Teen Dating Habits in the Modern Age of Snapchat'.



Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

Pictured are (from left): Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary) with Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine students Neasa Davies and Aisling McCarthy and their teacher, ASTI member Katie Buckley, and Padraig Curley (ASTI President). The students' project was titled 'Satisfaction through transaction'.



Loreto CC

Pictured are (from left): Padraig Curley (ASTI President), ASTI member Róisín Coyle from Loreto CC with students Isaac Murphy and Nyko Hasselar, and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary). The students' project was titled 'Breathe Easy: Investigating School Air Pollution'.

ASTI members...

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New ASTI Teaching Council nominees

ASTI President Padraig Curley and ASTI Honorary Life Member Anne Loughnane were recently nominated by Standing Committee to represent the ASTI on the Teaching Council for a four-year term beginning in April 2026.

The Teaching Council is made up of 37 members, the majority of whom are serving teachers. Of 22 places reserved on the Council for registered teachers, six are nominated by the teacher unions (the ASTI, TUI and INTO nominate two teachers each) and the remaining 16 are elected by teachers.

A teacher of Graphics, DCG, Wood Technology and Construction Studies at Loreto Community School in Milford, Co. Donegal, Padraig is currently serving as ASTI President.

A former teacher of Gaeilge and English in Kenmare Community School in Kenmare, Co. Kerry, Anne served on ASTI Standing Committee from 2020 to 2023.

She currently serves on the Rules Committee, and is a member of the ASTIR Editorial Board.

Padraig and Anne are joined on the Teaching Council by ASTI members Adrienne Healy, Pat Knightly, and Adrian Guinan, who are amongst the elected members of the Teaching Council.

The Teaching Council is the regulatory body of the teaching profession in Ireland, which promotes and regulates professional standards in teaching.

The ASTI Teaching Council Advisory Committee keeps the ASTI informed of any developments at the Teaching Council that affect members.



Padraig Curley
ASTI President



Anne Loughnane
Honorary Life Member



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ASTI Global Solidarity Seminar

The inaugural Global Solidarity Seminar was hosted by the ASTI Global Solidarity Committee at the end of February. This seminar focused on humanitarian issues across the world, and educational

and other challenges being experienced in war-torn countries. A full report on the Global Solidarity Seminar will be published in the May edition of *ASTIR*.



Pictured at the ASTI's inaugural Global Solidarity Seminar, which took place at the end of February, were: Back row (from left): Vicky Donnelly (guest speaker, Financial Justice Ireland), Conall Ó Dufaigh (ASTI Global Solidarity Committee Chairperson), Dearbhla Cussen (member of the ASTI Global Solidarity Committee), John Conneely (ASTI Assistant General Secretary: Education & Research), and Pdraig Curley (ASTI President). Front row (from left): Ann Piggot (member of the ASTI Global Solidarity Committee), Dr Diana Nazzal (guest speaker, Palestinian eye surgeon living in Berlin), and Noelle Moran (ASTI Honorary Treasurer and member of the ASTI Global Solidarity Committee).

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SENIOR CYCLE UPDATE

Last May, ASTI members voted to reject the document *Senior Cycle Redevelopment – Implementation Support Measures*. Following this, the ASTI referred the matter to the dispute resolution mechanisms of the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026.

After an initial dispute resolution process, the dispute was referred to the Teachers' Conciliation Council (TCC) and talks were convened, chaired by a facilitator from the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). As these talks did not result in adequate progression on the ASTI's key concerns, the dispute has now been referred to the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC), in line with the arrangements set out in the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026. The role of the JIC is to consider how best it can assist the parties, including the need for further discussions. (For further information on this process, see the General Secretary's update on page 4 of this *ASTIR*.)

In parallel, the ASTI continues to seek to negotiate substantially improved supports for schools and teachers for the implementation of Senior Cycle Redevelopment. The ASTI also continues to highlight issues as a member of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Partners' Forum.

The ASTI continues to seek to negotiate substantially improved supports for schools and teachers for the implementation of Senior Cycle Redevelopment.

ASTI key concerns

The ASTI has consistently raised the key concerns of its members, including:

- equity and fairness for students,
- the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in Leaving Certificate Additional Assessment Components (AACs), including authentication issues,
- the reported lack of adequate laboratory storage space/facilities for AAC projects, and
- the lack of adequate training for teachers implementing new and revised subject specifications.

For the latest updates on Senior Cycle Redevelopment, visit <https://www.asti.ie/news-campaigns/campaigns/seniorcycleredevelopment/>

Senior Cycle Redevelopment – ASTI achievements

The ASTI's opposition to aspects of the announcement of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment programme in 2020 has led to a number of achievements, including:

- reversal by the Minister for Education in 2023 of the decision regarding assessment of AACs,
- ensuring that AACs are externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission,
- reversal of plans for students to sit Leaving Certificate paper 1 in English and Irish at the end of fifth year, and
- access to all submissions made during public consultations for members of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) subject development groups.

Public consultations are currently open for Agricultural Science, Home Economics, History and Physical Science (formerly Physics and Chemistry).

Reminder: engage with public consultations for your subjects!

Public consultations are currently open on draft specifications for the following subjects:

Agricultural Science

Consultation period: February 9-April 17
<https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/agricultural-science/>

Home Economics

Consultation period: February 9-April 17
<https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/home-economics/>

History

Consultation period: March 2-May 1
<https://tinyurl.com/historyNCCA>

Physical Science (formerly Physics and Chemistry)

Consultation period: February 9-April 17
<https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/physics-and-chemistry/>



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LIVE AAC BRIEFS ISSUED FOR SENIOR CYCLE

The live briefs for eight Tranche 1 Senior Cycle subjects have been released.

The release by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) of the live briefs for the Additional Assessment Components (AACs) of eight of the nine Tranche 1 Leaving Cert subjects in January 2026 marks a significant if not controversial milestone in the roll-out of Senior Cycle Redevelopment. Arabic is assessed through oral and aural components, and therefore does not require a live AAC brief. This release follows on from materials previously published by the SEC:

- sample AAC briefs published in September 2025,
- sample examination papers published in April 2025, and
- AAC guidance documents for all Tranche 1 subjects published in 2024.

Tranche 1 subjects and AAC weighting

Tranche 1 consists of seven revised subjects and two new subjects – Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and Climate Action and Sustainable Development. For students who entered fifth year in September 2025, the following revised subjects are available:

- Biology,
- Business,
- Chemistry,
- Physics,
- Arabic (oral and aural assessment – no live AAC brief),
- Latin,
- Ancient Greek,
- Drama, Film and Theatre Studies (new subject – phased roll-out), and
- Climate Action and Sustainable Development (new subject – phased roll-out).

In eight of these subjects, the AAC accounts for 40% of the total marks. Drama, Film and Theatre Studies is the exception, with a 50:50 split between:

- the Creativity in Practice Project, and
- the final 2.5-hour written examination.

Authentication and academic integrity

Key features

- For all Tranche 1 subjects with a live brief, each candidate is required to maintain a record of research, planning, and development work throughout the project,
- AACs must be completed in compliance with the SEC Coursework Rules and Procedures,
- AACs must be authenticated by the candidate, teacher, and school principal,
- AACs must be stored securely as a hard copy pdf by the school, for appeal purposes, and
- use of sources, including AI tools, must be acknowledged.

Teacher concerns include:

- the authentication of AACs when in the form of a written report,
- the inappropriateness of the allocation of 40% of overall marks to AACs that could be completed with third-party input,
- inequalities that exist in terms of availability of specialist classrooms and equipment,
- inequalities that arise due to the lack of laboratory technicians,
- inequalities in IT infrastructure, including student access to devices, and
- the widening of the social divide.

Mandatory live briefs January 2026 – overview by subject

Subject/AAC	Live brief Jan 2026 Title/topic	Project work stages
Biology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, design and conducting of an experiment, • collection and evaluation of primary data, and • written report. 	Biology in Practice Investigation. Report based on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • membranes, • osmosis, and • food preservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial response to the investigation brief, • background research, • designing and planning the experiment, • conducting the experiment, • data analysis and conclusions, and • finalising the Biology in Practice Investigation report.
Business Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigative study/report. 	Business Alive Investigative Study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “... investigate how a work practice that uses digital technology is impacting either employers or employees”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started, • developing a question to research, • developing a project plan, • identifying sources and gathering information and data, • analysis and evaluation, and • applying learning and drawing conclusions in the compilation of the final report.
Chemistry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, design and conducting of an experiment, • collection and evaluation of primary data, and • written report. 	Chemistry in Practice Investigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “... the rate of a chemical reaction ... factors”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial response to the investigation brief, • background research, • designing and planning the experiment, • conducting the experiment, • data analysis and conclusions, and • finalising the Chemistry in Practice Investigation report.
Physics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, design and conducting of an experiment, • collection and evaluation of primary data, and • written report. 	Physics in Practice Investigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “... sustainable practices in a domestic setting have led to ways of reducing domestic energy losses ... Investigate one or more aspects of domestic sustainability ... ” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial response to the investigation brief, • background research, • designing and planning the experiment, • conducting the experiment, • data analysis and conclusions, and • finalising the Physics in Practice Investigation report.
Latin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research study report. 	Research study – text in context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “For this examination year, candidates should research a language-centred topic that relates to ‘the divine’ ... ” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with the brief and identifying an area for your individual topic, • delving deeper into your individual topic by deciding on a focused aspect, • planning and researching your individual topic, • selecting relevant and reliable sources, • writing and reviewing your research study report, and • reflection.
Ancient Greek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research study report. 	Research study – text in context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “For this examination year, candidates should research a language-centred topic that relates to ξενία” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with the brief and identifying an area for your individual topic, • delving deeper into your individual topic by deciding on a focused aspect, • planning and researching your individual topic, • selecting relevant and reliable sources, • writing and reviewing your research study report, and • reflection.
Drama, Film and Theatre Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines a project journal and recorded performance or film. 	Creativity in Practice Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The use of Colour in Theatre and Film”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the brief by imagining and conceptualising, • develop the work, • define the work, • perform your piece of theatre/screen your film to a live audience, • evaluate the work, and • review and finalise your project journal.
Climate Action and Sustainable Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Project Journal requiring research, planning, action and reflection. 	Action Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Reducing Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the brief, • researching the topic in the brief, • researching an action taken by others, • deciding the specific issue to address, • creating an action plan, • taking action, • reflecting and evaluating, and • finalising the Action Project Journal.

MORE WAYS TO SAVE MONEY WITH THE ASTI

Teachers who become members of the ASTI can access a wide range of financial benefits upon joining. This second article on the financial benefits of ASTI membership explores additional benefits of ASTI membership for teachers.

ASTI SALARY PROTECTION SCHEME

The ASTI has partnered with Cornmarket to offer its members access to the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme. The Scheme includes a continuance benefit, which is designed to help protect your income if you are unable to work due to illness or injury. Continuance provides members with a replacement salary of up to 75% of their usual salary, less any other income they may be entitled to, for example, Ill Health Early Retirement Pension, Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration, Illness Benefit, or Invalidity Pension. Members of the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme can also benefit from:

- Death Benefit,
- Specified Illness Benefit,
- Life Cover Benefit, and
- income tax relief.

For more information on the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme, please call 01-470 8078 or scan the QR code.

The ASTI Salary Protection Scheme and the Cornmarket Retired Members Life Cover Plan are underwritten by Irish Life Assurance plc.

Irish Life Assurance plc, trading as Irish Life, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

This is not an ASTI scheme. The ASTI advises all members to seek full details on any financial scheme they may be considering.



 Learn more

CAR INSURANCE

The ASTI has partnered with Cornmarket to offer car insurance for teachers. Cornmarket compares a range of insurers to save teachers time and money so that you can just enjoy the journey.

ASTI members can benefit from:

- a top-class quote tool – online or by phone,
- competitive pricing to save money, and
- superior benefits and service.

Some of the great benefits ASTI members can expect include:*

- bonus protection,
- windows and windscreen cover,
- driving of other cars, and
- replacement locks and car keys.

*Standard acceptance criteria, terms and conditions apply.

For more information on Cornmarket's car insurance scheme, please call 0818 601 601 or scan the QR code.

Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

This is not an ASTI scheme.

The ASTI advises all members to seek full details on any financial scheme they may be considering.



 Learn more

HEALTH INSURANCE COMPARISON

Cornmarket is the exclusive broker for Level Health, offering ASTI members a review of all health insurance plans from all four health insurance providers in the Irish market.

Teachers who join the ASTI can avail of the health insurance comparison service to find the right health insurance cover for their needs. The award-winning health insurance comparison service includes:

- full market comparison,
- expert, unbiased advice,
- quick and easy process, and
- exclusive deals.

To get a quote or more information about this service, please call 0818 601 601 or scan the QR code.

Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

This is not an ASTI scheme. The ASTI advises all members to seek full details on any financial scheme they may be considering.



Learn more

HEALTH INITIATIVES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ASTI SALARY PROTECTION SCHEME

MyHealthCheck

MyHealthCheck was a free health screening programme designed to help members get ahead of their health. For more information, please scan the QR code.

Pink and Blue Power

Pink and Blue Power was a free, pioneering, lifesaving breast and prostate health assessment programme for members of the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme. For more information, please scan the QR code.

Members are encouraged to keep an eye on Cornmarket's website for updates on any future health programmes. The ASTI Salary Protection Scheme is underwritten by Irish Life Assurance plc. Irish Life Assurance plc, trading as Irish Life, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. This is not an ASTI scheme. The ASTI advises all members to seek full details on any financial scheme they may be considering.



MyHealthCheck



Pink and Blue Power

Vhi SCHEME

Teachers who join the ASTI can sign up to the Vhi Healthcare Group Scheme, which the ASTI has set up on behalf of its members. The Scheme offers members:

- hassle-free payment with salary deduction,
- access to Vhi Assist, an emergency service available in cases of unexpected illness or accident while overseas, and
- Vhi 360 Health Centres provide Vhi members with rapid access to urgent care services for minor injury and illness.

For more information, contact Vhi at 056-444 4444 or scan the QR code. Please quote ASTI Group Scheme Number 514.

This is not an ASTI scheme. The ASTI advises all members to seek full details on any financial scheme they may be considering.



Learn more

ASTI SICKNESS BENEFIT SCHEME AND FUND

Teachers who join the ASTI are automatically members of the ASTI Sickness Benefit Scheme, and may claim benefit under this Scheme in respect of:

(a) Illness

In the event that a member's illness results in death, an application for Sickness Benefit relating to that illness may be made for the member's next of kin. Such applications are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Sickness Benefit Committee. The ASTI Sickness Benefit Scheme does not cover:

- illness occurring within 24 calendar months of first entry in the Scheme or subsequent re-entry,
- accidents or illness resulting from accidents, or
- maternity or pregnancy, or illness arising directly from maternity or pregnancy.

Sickness Benefit will not be paid in respect of:

- the same type of illness recurring within a period of three years, or
- expenses recoverable via private insurance agencies.

(b) Optical and dental treatment, and hearing aids prescribed by a qualified medical practitioner

This benefit is capped at a maximum of €200 in any five-year period (as of April 13, 2023). To receive the full €200, receipts must total at least €215. Claims for under €215 will not be considered.

How to claim:

To download an application form, please scan the QR code. Alternatively, teachers can request a hard copy of the form from their school steward or from ASTI Head Office.

All applications for the ASTI Sickness Benefit Fund must be accompanied by photocopies of receipts (please do not send originals) from the relevant medical authority or medical practitioner. Claims for the Sickness Benefit Fund must be submitted to ASTI Head Office within six calendar months of termination of illness or treatment.

This is an internal ASTI scheme.



 Learn more

FREE CORNMARKE T FINANCIAL PLANNING SERVICE

Teachers who join the ASTI have the opportunity to benefit from Cornmarket's free financial planning service. The service, which includes a 360-degree view of your finances by a Cornmarket consultant, is designed to prepare you for the future, and to help optimise your potential savings.

What the free planning service covers:

- checking you're on the right point of the salary scale,
- retirement planning and pensions,
- life insurance review,
- how to maximise your savings,
- tax credits and payslips review,
- salary protection advice, and
- health, home and car insurance deals best suited for you.



 Learn more

For more information or to request an appointment, please call 01-420 6763 or scan the QR code.

Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

This is not an ASTI scheme. The ASTI advises all members to seek full details on any financial scheme they may be considering.

TO JOIN THE ASTI, PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE:



 Join the ASTI

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS NOW CHRONIC

ASTI members have described how the teacher recruitment and retention crisis is creating enormous problems for school communities.

"[On commuting times into Dublin] It's just stressful having to get up that early to get to work, when realistically it's an hour and a half to the school. In the lead-up to Christmas I didn't use the M50 at all. It was quicker to go up the old Military Road around Glendalough. The other thing is, traffic is getting worse at that time of the morning ... There are even more people on the road now than there were a year ago. The roads used to be effectively empty and now I'm hitting traffic again."

Emmet Byrne, ASTI member

The Irish Times, January 26, 2026

The other thing is, traffic is getting worse at that time of the morning ... There are even more people on the road now than there were a year ago.

"[On the teacher recruitment and retention crisis] The recruitment and retention crisis across both primary and second-level schools has severe implications for the quality and the sustainability of education. This has been ongoing for some years now. In practical terms, vacancies have not been filled and, in our case, surveys showed that 75% of school principals have advertised a post with no applicant. In recent years they have had to shrink the subject provision that's been available and remove some subjects from the timetable ... There is a third factor that there is a large number of Irish teachers who have moved abroad and the pinch points are around subjects like Maths, Irish, the science technology subjects, Art, and languages."

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary

Newstalk Breakfast, Newstalk, February 5, 2026

The recruitment and retention crisis across both primary and second-level schools has severe implications for the quality and the sustainability of education.

"[On the teacher recruitment and retention crisis] It is severe ... It doesn't matter where you are. Across the whole country, we are experiencing a deep teacher recruitment and retention crisis and it has really severe implications for the quality of our education. And the situation now is chronic. The ASTI did a survey last year and they asked principals about vacancies. Two-thirds of principals said they had unfilled vacancies even though they advertised multiple times, and 75% of principals who advertised posts had no applicant whatsoever and that just tells us that we have a chronic shortage and retention crisis."

Geraldine O'Loughlin, ASTI member and Standing Committee Representative Region 2

The Tommy Marren Show, Midwest Radio, February 6, 2026

Across the whole country, we are experiencing a deep teacher recruitment and retention crisis and it has really severe implications for the quality of our education.

"[On the use of social media and cyberbullying and harassment] The subtlety that is facilitated by the different social platforms in terms of bullying and exclusion is a 24/7 phenomenon now, you can no longer escape the bullies at the end of the day, at four o'clock when you go home ... Such abuse undermines professional authority and damages mental health. Teachers' public-facing roles make them particularly vulnerable to anonymous harassment, defamation and, in rare but deeply distressing cases, image manipulation or threats."

Kieran Christie, ASTI General Secretary

Irish Independent, March 5, 2026

"[On the use of social media and cyberbullying and harassment] If we're going to be serious about cyberbullying it's going to take investment ... You can't defend yourself from missiles with a bow and arrow, and that's largely my fear of what's going to happen. I think there's a need to have specialised people available to schools that are constantly going around and dealing with new trends."

Richard Bell, ASTI Vice President

Irish Independent, March 5, 2026

ONE-YEAR CIDS EXPLAINED

The Department of Education and Youth has issued a Circular Letter clarifying the arrangements for one-year contracts of indefinite duration.

The Department of Education and Youth has issued Circular Letter (CL) 0021/2026, which provides for the award of contracts of indefinite duration (CIDs) to teachers for service in excess of one year. This is a welcome improvement on the previous arrangements, and its provisions apply to all eligible ASTI members.

Key differences between CL 0021/2026 and previous arrangements

Qualification period for a CID

This circular:

- reduces the qualification period to more than one year's continuous employment (i.e., after reappointment following the first year),
- applies from the 2026/2027 school year for teachers employed from September 2025 onward, and
- teachers qualify one year earlier.

Mandatory termination and re-advertisement of first-year contracts

Circular 0021/2026 requires:

- all first-year fixed-term contracts must terminate,
- the post must be re-advertised,
- a new recruitment process and interview must take place,
- a CID or second fixed-term contract cannot be issued without advertisement and interview.

Definition and emphasis on viable post

While 'viable post' existed previously, the 2026 Circular:

- provides clearer definition:
 - must come from allocation for the forthcoming year,
 - must be for at least a full school year,
 - cannot relate solely to temporary cover (e.g., maternity leave), and
 - must not have objective grounds preventing a CID, and
- clarifies that:
 - cover for career break or secondment IS eligible, and
 - other leave cover is not (if written as objective ground).

Transition arrangements

The 2026 Circular introduces detailed transition provisions:

- teachers already in year two during 2025/26 retain eligibility,
- some teachers are deemed to have completed year two early for transition purposes, and
- no second interview is required for teachers already interviewed under 2015 Circular terms.

Additional CIDs for teachers with part-time CIDs

The previous Circular Letters provided mechanisms for additional hours, but the qualification period remained two years. The new circular provides:

Additional hours now qualify for a further CID after one year of continuous service in those additional hours (if viable and no objective ground).

additional hours now qualify for a further CID after one year of continuous service in those additional hours (if viable and no objective ground).

Redeployment clarifications

The 2026 Circular explicitly reaffirms liability of CID holders to redeployment, including liability for those covering career break/secondment where the teacher they are covering for returns.

Adjudication

Circular Letter 0021/2026 keeps the voluntary adjudication system (originally referenced under Circular 30/2018).

The Circular and detailed Guidance Notes are available on the ASTI website.

Criteria for a contract of indefinite duration

Teachers must meet the following requirements to qualify for a CID:

1. Be currently registered with the Teaching Council.
2. Be appropriately qualified for the sector in which they are teaching.
3. Have in excess of one year of teaching service with the same employer (school or education and training board (ETB)) that was Department/ETB paid.
4. Be employed in a post for which there is an ongoing need.

For more information on CIDs, please see the ASTI website or scan the QR code.



SCAN ME

ASTI CALLS FOR STRONGER ONLINE SAFETY MEASURES

The ASTI has called for stronger regulation of social media platforms and enhanced protections for school communities in a recent submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children and Equality.

In his address to the Committee, ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie highlighted the dual nature of technology in schools: while digital tools offer significant educational benefits, algorithm-driven social media platforms pose serious risks to students and teachers alike.

Recent RedC/ASTI research shows that approximately one in five second-level teachers has experienced work-related cyber-bullying. Such incidents can have a profound impact on teachers' professional authority and mental health. Teachers' public-facing roles leave them particularly vulnerable to anonymous harassment, defamation and, in rare cases, image manipulation or threats. To support members, the ASTI has established a Digital Rights Hub, providing advice, reporting pathways and guidance on legal protections. The ASTI stressed that responsibility for harmful online content cannot rest solely with schools and parents.

It called for meaningful accountability for social media companies, including statutory "Trusted Flagger" status for educational bodies and mandatory 24-hour removal of abusive content involving minors or educators. Robust enforcement by Coimisiún na Meán under Ireland's Online Safety Framework and the EU Digital Services Act is, the ASTI argues, essential.

The ASTI also reiterated its support for national guidance restricting mobile phone use during school hours, citing benefits for concentration, well-being and the prevention of cyber-bullying. The union emphasised the importance of digital citizenship education, clear referral protocols to An Garda Síochána where criminal behaviour arises, and sustained professional development to address emerging challenges such as generative artificial intelligence (AI) and deepfakes. The ASTI has called for a balanced approach combining whole-school supports, effective regulation and investment in digital literacy to ensure that technology enhances the safety and well-being of school communities.



ASTI General Secretary Kieran Christie addressed the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children and Equality.

To support members, the ASTI has established a Digital Rights Hub, providing advice, reporting pathways and guidance on legal protections.

The ASTI regularly makes submissions to the Oireachtas. For more information and to see the full list of submissions, please scan the QR code.



Scan for more information

ASTI PRINCIPALS' AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The ASTI Principals' and Deputy Principals' Advisory Committee advises and provides updates to Standing Committee on a range of issues directly affecting school leaders.



The ASTI Principals' and Deputy Principals' Advisory Committee. Back row (from left): Shane Hallahan, Jimmy Staunton, Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary), Karol Mortimer, Liam Hassett, and Aaron Wolfe. Front row (from left): Mary Kelly, Padraig Curley (ASTI President), John O'Donovan (Chairperson), Breda Lynch (ASTI Deputy General Secretary), and Peter Hyde.

The members of the ASTI Principals' and Deputy Principals' Advisory Committee are Jimmy Staunton, Karol Mortimer, Mary Kelly, Liam Hassett, John O'Donovan (Chairperson), Peter Hyde, Aaron Wolfe, Fiona Bolger, Shane Hallahan, Jean Marie Ward, Robert Browne, Patricia Mac Manus, Sarah Green, and Padraig Curley (ASTI President). The committee is supported by Breda Lynch, ASTI Deputy General Secretary. The Committee's responsibilities include:

- advising Standing Committee regarding educational and trade union matters, and the implementation of policies that impact principals and deputy principals,
- preparing reports and documentation to assist Standing Committee in processing claims on behalf of principals and deputy principals,
- keeping Standing Committee informed about bulletins sent to principals and deputy principals related to ASTI policy, and
- participating in ASTI delegations on relevant local or national issues, at the request of Standing Committee.

The ASTI recommends that the principal and deputy principal should not be from the same school and that there is a gender balance on this committee.

Also on the committee:



Jean Marie Ward



Fiona Bolger



Robert Browne



Patricia Mac Manus



Sarah Green

Another focus of the Committee's work has been the promotion of LGBTQTI+ rights and inclusivity in schools. The Committee also examined the growing problems arising from the improper use of social media and artificial intelligence (AI).

Membership

The Committee is elected to represent principals and deputy principals on a regional basis. One principal and one deputy principal are elected from each of the nine regions.

The ASTI recommends that the principal and deputy principal should not be from the same school and that there is a gender balance on this committee.

Elections take place every two years, and the most recent Committee commenced in January 2026.

Key issues for 2026

Senior Cycle Redevelopment

The subject of Senior Cycle Redevelopment is a continual topic of discussion. The Committee holds the view that schools are inadequately resourced, and that the perspectives of teachers and school leaders are not being listened to.

Schoolbooks Scheme

The Committee continues to raise serious concerns about difficulties with the implementation of the Schoolbooks Scheme.

State examinations

Several issues have been raised in relation to the pressures placed on school leaders regarding the operation of State examinations. The Deputy General Secretary subsequently raised these issues with the State Examinations Commission (SEC), and discussions are ongoing.

Workload

The health, safety and welfare of principals and deputy principals remains a serious issue for the Committee, as new initiatives and demands on schools continue to add to workload.

Special education needs

Changes in the provision of special education needs supports to schools, and the increasing responsibilities of school leaders and teachers were considered by the Committee in recent months.

Remuneration issues

Current issues around remuneration include:

- examination of the basis of the allowances paid to principals and deputy principals,
- the restoration of the allowance for principals who serve as secretary to their board of management for newly appointed principals, and
- a step-down scheme for principals and deputy principals.

Inclusion

Another focus of the Committee's work has been the promotion of LGBTQTI+ rights and inclusivity in schools. The Committee also examined the growing problems arising from the improper use of social media and artificial intelligence (AI).

During 2025, the Committee discussed section 29 appeals, examination aids, and the role of the designated liaison person (DLP). The Committee was also kept fully briefed on developments relating to the current Public Service Agreement.

The Committee holds the view that schools are inadequately resourced, and that the perspectives of teachers and school leaders are not being listened to.

85% of teachers experience work-related burnout

A Dublin City University study has found that Irish teachers' occupational well-being represents a major issue.

The 'Teacher Occupational Wellbeing Research 2025' report reveals that 85% of teachers are experiencing moderate to high levels of work-related burnout, while 86% report moderate to high personal burnout. Further, a worrying 42% of teachers stated that they don't anticipate remaining in the profession long term. The study, from DCU's Centre for Collaborative Research Across Teacher Education (CREATE), explored well-being and burnout among over 1,000 Irish primary and secondary school teachers. Findings indicate that teachers suffer alarming levels of stress and poor mental health across several areas of work and personal life.

Main findings

In its executive summary, the report's authors begin by remarking that the teaching profession is "highly relational and emotionally demanding" and, as such, "places teachers at increased risk of stress and burnout". What follow are the researchers' sometimes startling key findings. The report finds that a staggering 86% of teachers experience a moderate to high level of personal burnout, while 85% experience a moderate to high level of work-related burnout. Student-related burnout was felt to a lesser degree, with 41% of respondents reporting this.

Almost half of participants reported that unrealistic parental expectation contributes to burnout; a similar proportion (48%) cited the structure of work or organisational issues.

The challenges of working with pupils with special education needs (SEN) were also evoked as a contributor to burnout, with 46% of teachers citing this factor.

Other elements reported as contributing to burnout were unrealistic expectations from the school (40%), broader school culture (36%), issues related to classroom management (26%), physical work conditions or environment (25%), and a lack of collegiality with colleagues (23%).

Cause for concern

As the education sector in Ireland grapples with teacher recruitment and retention, curricular overhaul, and regulatory change, a high level of burnout among our educators should be cause for concern.

The World Health Organization (WHO) includes burnout in the most recent (11th) Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), and describes it as an occupational phenomenon. According to the ICD-11:

"Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- reduced professional efficacy".

The DCU study draws on data from over 1,000 participating teachers, and uses the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), alongside a researcher-designed questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The CBI, a framework for measuring self-reported burnout, delineates three sub-scales: personal burnout; work-related burnout; and, client (in this case, student)-related burnout. It defines personal burnout as "a state of prolonged physical and psychological exhaustion". According to the CBI, work-related burnout is "a state of prolonged physical and psychological exhaustion, which is perceived as related to the person's work", and student-related burnout is that state of prolonged exhaustion, perceived as related to the person's work with students.

Mental health of teaching staff

Participants were given a five-point scale for measuring their mental health over the preceding year. The largest proportion (38%) of teachers rated their mental health as 'average'. Just under a quarter responded that their mental health was 'poor'. Those indicating 'good' mental health made up 29% of respondents. The smallest proportions, at 5% each, rated their mental health as 'very poor' and 'excellent'. One in five (21%) participants indicated a low sense of personal accomplishment.

It is probably no surprise that the mental health of teaching staff is felt to have an impact on teaching and learning. Of the 28% of teachers who reported poor or very poor mental health, 17% also felt that their mental health has negatively influenced their ability to engage in teaching and learning with pupils.

Over a third (36%) of participants reported "unsupportive school climates", including poor collegiality, poor leadership, and lack of access to HR supports. The report's authors state plainly: "Teachers report that there are few formal teacher occupational wellbeing supports at school level".

Perhaps the most startling metric to emerge from this area of the study is the 42% of teachers indicating that they don't anticipate remaining in the profession long term. This means that over two-fifths of participants feel it is unlikely that they will continue teaching.

Anatomy of teacher burnout

The DCU CREATE researchers present an image of what they call the

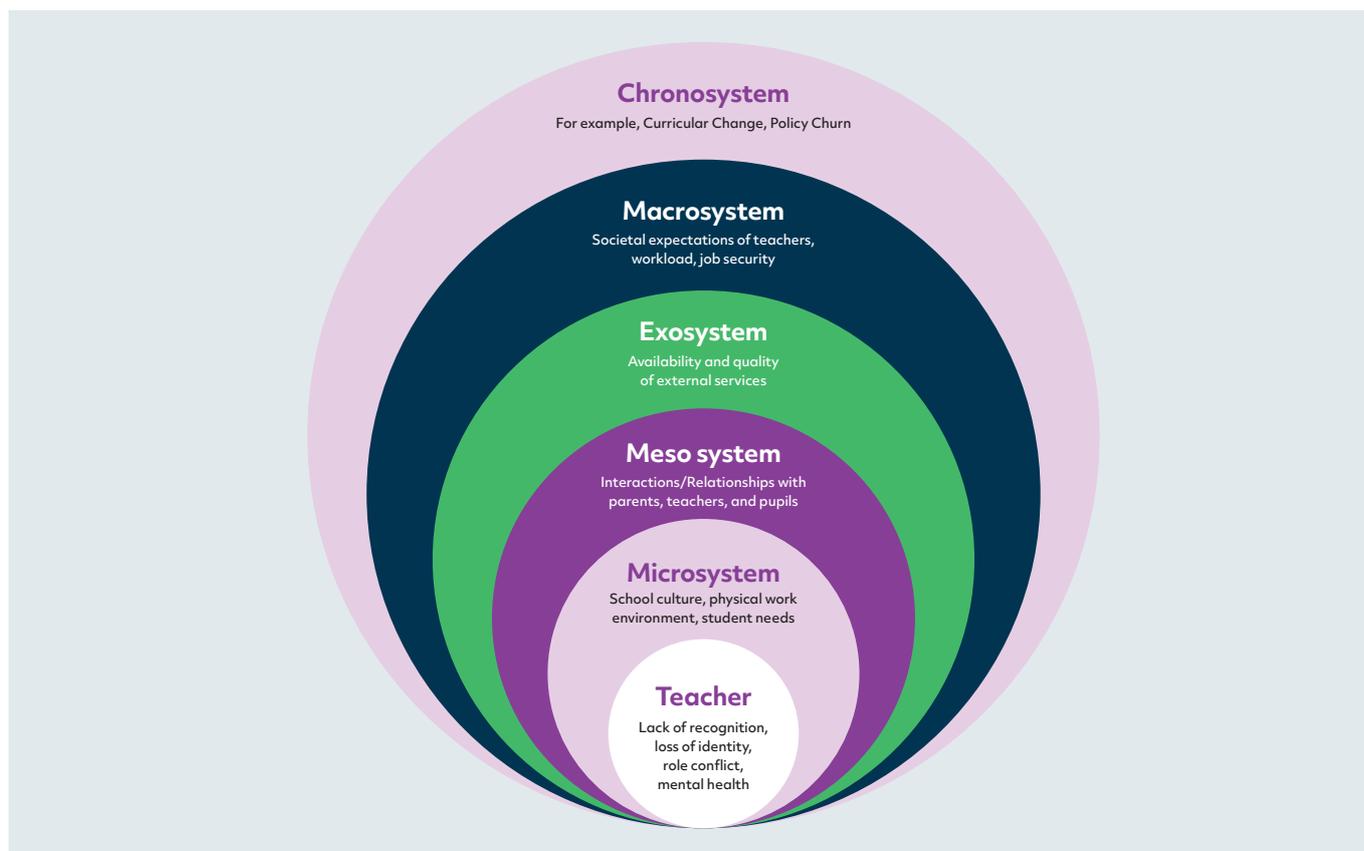


FIGURE 1: The anatomy of teacher burnout 2025.

anatomy of teacher burnout in Ireland in 2025 (Figure 1). In their depiction, teacher burnout consists of a teacher at the centre, and a series of five systems radiating out from that teacher. The systems, in order of proximity to the teacher, are: microsystem; meso system; exosystem; macrosystem; and, chronosystem. Within the immediate sphere of the teacher experiencing burnout are: lack of recognition; loss of identity; role conflict; and, mental health. Factors in the teacher's microsystem are school culture, physical work environment, and student needs. Outside of this is the meso system, and within it interactions and relationships with parents, teachers, and pupils. Next is the exosystem, with the availability and quality of external services constituting this area. The macrosystem comprises societal expectations of teachers, teacher workload, and their job security. Finally, the constituents of the chronosystem, the most remote system influencing the burned-out teacher, are factors such as curricular change and policy.

Protective factors for teachers

With all of these facets of teacher stress and burnout outlined, the report proceeds to lay out what can protect teachers' well-being. Most of the protective factors listed are things that one might associate with general well-being in any profession. The list sheds light on areas that supports for teachers could target. The protective factors elaborated in the report are:

- maintaining good physical and mental health,
- maintaining work–life boundaries,
- good relationships with leaders and colleagues,
- good relationships with parents and pupils,
- sense of teacher self-efficacy, and
- contributing to the public good.

Conclusion

The findings from the team at DCU CREATE indicate that significant levels of stress and burnout pervade the teaching profession in Ireland. When 86% of teachers report feeling a moderate to high level of personal burnout, it is clear that intervention and support are urgently needed.

With a high level of burnout, according to the CBI's scale, the risk of a person's mental and physical health deteriorating increases drastically. Identifying teacher burnout is an important step towards understanding the phenomenon, how it impacts teacher well-being, and the effects on teaching and learning environments.

One can only hope that these results inform policy direction, address systemic factors that contribute to burnout in the teaching profession, and ultimately improve the mental and physical health of our educators.

'Teacher Occupational Wellbeing Research 2025', published in September 2025, presents the key findings of a collaborative study undertaken in DCU from 2024-2025. CREATE is a multidisciplinary research centre in the DCU Institute of Education that studies teacher education – from initial teacher education, to induction, to continuing professional development. The report was prepared by the DCU CREATE Educator Occupational Wellbeing Research Team: Dr Sabrina Fitzsimons (DCU CREATE Co-Director); Dr Pia O'Farrell (School of Policy and Practice); and, Prof. Catherine Furlong (DCU CREATE Co-Director).



Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault

The Scheme for Leave of Absence following Assault is available to teachers who are assaulted while in the course of their duties.

What is the Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault?

Leave of absence under this Scheme may be granted to a registered teacher who is unable to perform their duties due to physical injury following an assault in the course of the teacher's duties and during approved school activities.

The incident giving rise to an application for leave under this Scheme must not have been due to any negligence, or any act or omission on the part of the teacher, and all due procedures and protocols in regard to personal safety must have been adhered to.

Does my school have a policy for assault leave?

Boards of management should have in place a clearly defined policy, code of behaviour or safety statement, which includes procedures to be implemented in the event of an assault on an employee. These procedures should include:

- seeking medical assistance where necessary,
- immediate reporting of incidents to school management,
- recording of incidents in an incident report book,
- reporting of the incident to the Health and Safety Authority,
- reporting to the gardaí, where appropriate, and
- ensuring that all appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect persons at risk and to prevent, insofar as is practicable, the occurrence of assault.

The incident giving rise to an application for leave under this Scheme must not have been due to any negligence, or any act or omission on the part of the teacher, and all due procedures and protocols in regard to personal safety must have been adhered to.

What is the entitlement under the Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault?

Only absences medically certified as due to a physical injury qualify for leave under this Scheme. The maximum leave available under the Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault is three months (92 days) at full pay in a rolling four-year period.

In order for an absence to be recorded as Leave of Absence Following Assault, the application form must be completed by the teacher concerned and the employer (or, in the case of Education and Training Board (ETB) schools, the principal) and forwarded by the employer to the Department of Education and Youth or ETB within a week of the incident occurring.



In exceptional cases, such as where a significant period of hospitalisation is required or in situations of a second or subsequent incident of assault, the leave may be extended for a further period, not exceeding three months (92 days) at full pay, subject to an overall limit of six months (183 days) at full pay in a rolling four-year period.

Any subsequent absence will be dealt with under the Sick Leave Scheme. Leave of absence following assault ends on:

- the ceasing of the certification by a duly qualified medical practitioner of the physical injury, or
- the maximum leave limits available under this Scheme being exhausted, or
- certification of fitness to return to duties.

How do I apply for assault leave?

In order for an absence to be recorded as Leave of Absence Following Assault, the application form (see panel) must be completed by the teacher concerned and the employer (or, in the case of Education and Training Board (ETB) schools, the principal) and forwarded by the employer to the Department of Education and Youth or ETB within a week of the incident occurring.

Where, in exceptional cases, a teacher is unable to complete their part of the application within a week of the incident due to physical incapacity, this period may be extended by the employer. Applications must be forwarded to the Department of Education and Youth or ETB within a reasonable period in this event.

The application form must set out details of the incident and be accompanied by copies of the required reporting documentation.

Will I be referred to Medmark (the teachers’ occupational health service)?

Absences recorded under this Scheme will be combined with previous sick leave absences for the purposes of non-discretionary referral to the occupational health service for teachers, Medmark, under the 28-day rule as provided for under the teachers’ Sick Leave Scheme.

The occupational health service standard operating procedure will apply, including in relation to referral and fitness to return to work.

How is assault leave recorded?

Department of Education and Youth-paid teachers

A teacher’s initial Leave of Absence Following Assault under the Scheme will be entered on the online claims system by the Department of Education and Youth, upon receipt of a fully completed application form for such leave from the employer.

Any continued absence under this Scheme must be entered on the online claims system by the employer upon receipt of an acceptable medical certificate and subject to a maximum period of three months (92 days).

ETB-paid teachers

Leave of Absence Following Assault will be initially entered on the ETB system by the school/HR Department on receipt of the fully completed application form.

Any continued absence under this Scheme must be entered on the ETB system by the employer on receipt of acceptable medical certification and subject to a maximum period of three months (92 days).

Will assault leave affect my sick leave record?

A teacher’s sick leave record will not be affected by any absences recorded as Leave of Absence Following Assault.

For full details on the Scheme for Leave of Absence Following Assault, please refer to Circular Letter 0061/2017 (see panel).

The ASTI has made several representations, with the TUI and INTO, to the Department of Education and Youth in order to expand the definition of assault leave to include teachers’ mental health. For more information and to access the Assault Leave Circular Letter 0061/2017 please scan the QR code.

Scan to download

PRESSING ISSUES ON THE AGENDA AT CONVENTION 2026

Key issues on the agenda for ASTI Annual Convention 2026 include teachers' working conditions and well-being, school resources, and the implementation of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment programme in schools.

This year's ASTI Annual Convention will be held in the Whites of Wexford hotel, Co. Wexford, from April 7-9, 2026. Convention is where ASTI members from across the country gather to decide ASTI policy for the coming year. Delegates will listen to key speeches, including from ASTI President Padraig Curley and the Minister for Education and Youth Hildegard Naughton TD.

Topics for debate

Some of the motions for debate at Annual Convention 2026 will focus on key issues affecting teachers' working conditions and well-being, school resources, and the implementation of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment programme in schools.

Teachers' working conditions and well-being feature prominently on this year's Convention agenda, with motion 18 advocating that teachers returning from sick leave be assessed as fit for work by their own medical practitioner rather than by Medmark alone. Motion 23 proposes a biennial independent audit of psychosocial hazards in schools. Motion 25 calls for a reduction in both the number of inspections and in models of inspections to alleviate teachers' workload and stress. Motion 10 seeks adjustments to inspection models to avoid the weeks immediately before or after school holidays. Motion 47 insists on two hours of timetable remission for Senior Cycle teachers as part of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment implementation support measures. Motion 26 opposes the introduction of common level classes in second year core subjects, and motion 15 proposes the abolition of Croke Park hours as part of the next Public Service Agreement. Motion 8 pushes for parental leave to match the flexibility offered to other public sector workers.

On the issue of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment programme, motion 37 seeks full indemnity for teachers undertaking work in relation to Leaving Certificate Additional Assessment Components, while motion 39 proposes that students alone should be responsible for authenticating and submitting completed AACs to the State Examinations Commission. Motion 42 advocates that all aspects of the Senior Cycle assessment remain the responsibility of the State Examinations Commission and instructs teachers not to engage in any scheduling, supervising, authenticating, storing or correcting of AACs. Motion 41 addresses the health and safety concerns of science teachers, and directs members not to proceed with lab-based AAC research investigations if the investigations could pose a risk to the teacher or students. Motion 38 calls for the Junior Cycle curriculum to require only one Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) per subject.

Motion 48 calls for the return of Irish and Modern Foreign Language (MFL) orals to term time, reversing the current practice of holding the examinations

during the Easter break. Motion 44 seeks differentiated examination papers at Higher, Ordinary and Foundation level to ensure that all students can achieve their full potential.

On school resources and supports, motion 33 demands that each Leaving Certificate student is provided with a laptop, access to functional charging stations, and cloud storage. An additional Assistant Principal post to support ICT needs is also being considered. Motion 30 calls for sufficient funding for schools to upgrade ICT systems and devices to support the completion of AACs. Motion 3 seeks the re-instatement of the AEN/SEN allowance for qualified teachers, and motion 58 asks for Garda vetting processes to be streamlined so that clearance is transferable across different organisations, reducing the administrative burden.

On pay and allowances, motion 1 demands wage increases to match the cost of living rises and motion 4 proposes escalating industrial action to address a 6% real pay decrease suffered since 2015.

Finally, motion 27 urges the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to publish peer-reviewed research before introducing initiatives and allowing sufficient time for the ASTI to respond to them.

Other motions focus on union administration and members' engagement with their union.

For a full list of motions at Convention 2026 please visit: www.asti.ie/member-benefits/events/convention-2026/

Tune in to Convention 2026

How to follow what's happening at Convention 2026:

Watch key speeches live and read them back
Key speeches from the ASTI President, ASTI General Secretary and from the Minister for Education and Youth will be streamed live on the ASTI website. Links will also be available on the website as soon as possible.

Social media
Don't forget to use the hashtag #ASTI26 to see all the latest posts from Convention and to join in the discussion.

Updates will also be posted to the ASTI Facebook and Bluesky accounts www.facebook.com/astiteachers/ and [@astionion.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/astionion.bsky.social), and to the ASTI website – www.asti.ie – in due course.

COSAIN

TÚ FÉIN AGUS TÚ AR LÍNE

BÍODH DO CHEARTA AGUS DO FHREAGRACHTAÍ DIGITEACHA AR EOLAS AGAT

- Cosain tú féin
- Bí cliste agus tú ar na meáin shóisialta
- Déan mí-úsáid a thuairisciú
- Faigh tacaíocht ón ASTI

Le haghaidh tuilleadh eolais, déan an cód QR a scanadh


ASTI





RSTA members go dancing!

Catherine Murray of the Dublin Branch writes of the joy, and challenge, found in a new hobby.



Let's play the music and dance.



Dancing with the RSTA.

Some three years ago, a good 12 years into my retirement, I finally had the good sense to join a dance class. What a difference it made to my enjoyment of life. I started off modestly, not having danced since Irish dancing in my teens – just one hour a week in a class for the over 55s (we were all well over 55). When I realised I was hooked, I signed up for a more ambitious project: the Vintage Youth Ensemble.

There was a lot of rehearsing (an awful lot), over a 12-week period, culminating in a show in the little theatre in the library in Dun Laoghaire. The fun was just indescribable. Along the way we also did several sessions of dancing in the open air, inviting passers-by to join in, which many did. When I mentioned my dancing madness to my friends, they usually asked 'What kind of dancing do you do?' – a hard one to answer. The teachers/choreographers called it theatre dancing. Basically, we moved to music: anything from Pachelbel's *Canon* to *Jailhouse Rock*. We warmed up, we cooled down, we learned a lot of tricky dance steps and sequences. We had fun with other like-minded people.

We moved to music: anything from Pachelbel's *Canon* to *Jailhouse Rock*. We warmed up, we cooled down, we learned a lot of tricky dance steps and sequences.

My biggest challenge was remembering the sequence of movements in the routines. What surprised me most was the lack of self-consciousness of the dancers.

The benefits for mobility, balance, memory, and confidence were felt almost immediately. My biggest challenge was remembering the sequence of movements in the routines. What surprised me most was the lack of self-consciousness of the dancers. No looking over your shoulder to see what everybody else was doing. We all just went for it; it was very liberating. I have been to many talks on ageing in recent years. Dance is exactly the kind of activity being promoted to help cope with a lot of the problems we face in our later years.

Vintage Youth Ensemble is part of the Dance Theatre of Ireland – check out their website. I also attend a weekly class in the Carmelite Community Centre on Aungier Street, organised by CoisCéim Dance Theatre. Turn up any Wednesday with a fiver, no enrolment or partner is needed. Dance from 2.30 till 4.00pm and go home feeling great.

There are lots of opportunities to dance. Many of my friends do set dancing or zumba. Check online – there's bound to be a dance class near you.

Educational Studies Association of Ireland Conference 2026

The Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) will hold its annual conference at the University of Galway from May 28-30, 2026. The conference theme, 'From Legacy to Futures: Celebrating ESAI's First Meeting of Scholars and 50 Years of Irish Educational Research', commemorates the 50th anniversary of the inaugural gathering of education scholars, first held in Galway in 1976. Drawing on scholarship from a wide range of educational disciplines, the conference will highlight leading and innovative research in Irish education, while fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and methodological diversity. The 2026 conference invites participants to critically engage with the field's historical foundations to inform, inspire, and shape the future direction and integrity of educational research, both nationally and internationally, within rapidly evolving social, cultural, and policy contexts. Serving as a dynamic forum for the dissemination of high-quality research, the conference makes a

significant contribution to educational policy and practice in Ireland and beyond. Featuring keynote addresses from leading experts, interactive roundtable discussions, and performance- and arts-based sessions, as well as a diverse programme of paper and poster presentations, the conference offers valuable opportunities for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to engage in scholarly exchange and professional networking. The event represents a fitting commemoration of the enduring legacy established by the founding members of the ESAI over five decades ago.

The conference particularly welcomes teachers and educators from all sectors of education to the dialogue.

For more information and to register for the conference, please see: www.esai.ie

Irish Schools Sustainability Network for teachers

The Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) is a community of teachers and students interested in supporting climate and ecological literacy in schools across Ireland. The ISSN works to build dynamic resources that build confidence and inspire climate action learning and activities in schools and communities.

The ISSN offers practical resources and support for both primary and post-primary teachers. For second-level teachers, the ISSN's Climate and Nature Summit series offers free online workshops covering climate science, biodiversity, misinformation, psychology, and action-oriented

activities to support Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle. Resources available for teachers include teacher notes, student activities, and multimedia resources ready to use in class.

In addition, the ISSN regularly facilitates teacher Bitesize Biodiversity workshops and monthly informal online meet-ups for teachers (Comhrá Cuppas) to share ideas.

To join the ISSN and receive updates on workshops and resources, please visit www.issn.ie or email info@issn.ie

The Teachers' Professional Journeys longitudinal study

Post-primary teachers who graduated in 2019, 2022, or 2026 are invited to share their stories, challenges, and successes in the Teachers' Professional Journeys (TPJ) longitudinal research survey.

This longitudinal study aims to investigate teachers' professional journeys during the first decade after graduation from initial teacher education, and the key personal, educational, professional, and systemic influences that define and shape their early careers and practice.

The aim of the research is to understand who teachers in Ireland are today, by exploring the diversity of their backgrounds and experiences to help shape a more inclusive education system.

The study will include teachers from the primary, post-primary, and further education sectors.

The research is being undertaken by a team from the University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), and is jointly funded by the Department of Education and Youth and the Teaching Council. The survey will be open between mid-February and the end of March, 2026.

For more information on the TPJ study and to sign up to participate, please see: <https://tpjstudy.ie/>

We only want the earth

A feature-length documentary directed by Alan Silverman, entitled *We only want the earth – the life & ideas of James Connolly*, draws on the writings of socialist and trade unionist James Connolly. The film aims to inspire and engage a contemporary audience by exploring the life, work and ideas of James Connolly. The film was funded by the James Connolly Foundation for Educational Equality and includes a donation made by the ASTI.

Teachers who would like further information about the film, or who are interested in showing the film to their students, can request the Vimeo link and password by emailing jamesconnollyfilm@gmail.com.

Classified advert

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Blog:

<https://dublincityuniversitychildrensandyaliterature.wordpress.com>

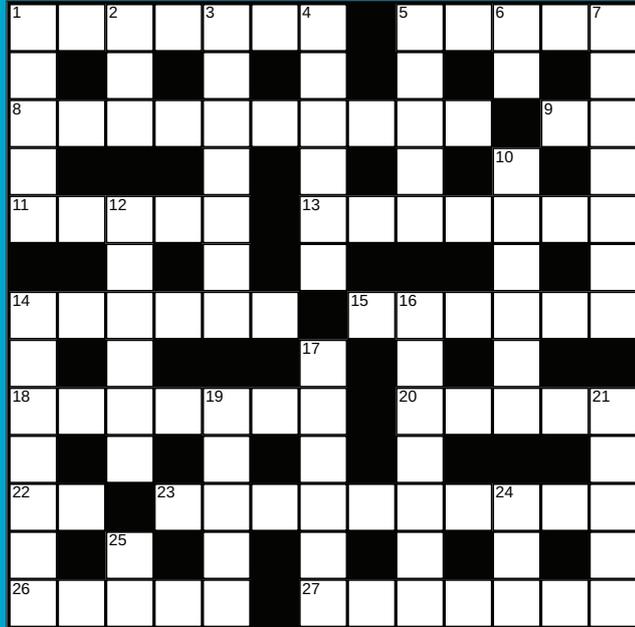


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The winner will receive €250 in One4All vouchers.

If you wish to keep your copy of *ASTIR* intact you may send a photocopy of the crossword. One entry only per member.



Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: ASTIR Crossword No. 2602,
Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.

To arrive by: Friday, April 10, 2026.

LEIDEANNA TRASNA

1. Áit naofa a mbíonn eagla istigh ann (7)
5. Dún, cuir faoi ghlas, greamaigh (5)
8. Bean ar cailleadh a fear céile (10)
9. Litreacha a fheictear i ndiaidh ainm stáisiún raidió. (1,1)
11. Gúna traidisiúnta na mban Muslamach (5)
13. Tástáil a chasann páipéar dearg nó gorm (7)
14. Sloinne steiréiticipiúil na nÉireannach (7)
15. Slite, cosáin, raonta (7)
18. Is í Phoenix príomhchathair an Stáit seo (7)
20. Neart lochtach (5)
22. ... hé sin amuigh a bhfuil faobhar ar a ghuth? (2)
23. An tslí ina gcuirtear deireadh le gach easaontas nó cogadh (10)
26. Bíonn sé seo ann nuair a bhíonn grá in éagmais (5)
27. Diamant, ach é neamhchinnte nó bearnach (7)

LEIDEANNA SFÓS

1. Céile Ádhaimh (5)
2. Aghuisín le mian ina lár (3)
3. Bád, long, soitheach (7)
4. ... Mhichíl, oileán stairiúil (6)
5. Daingean, teann, cruaidh (5)
6. Friseáilte, nua, glas (2)
7. Válsaí, nó polcaí, mar shampla (7)
10. Ócáidí móra pobail, nó scannán, nó drámaíochta (6)
12. An cineál aimsire a bhíonn in áit (6)
14. Botún, dearmad, tuaiplis (7)
16. Geit leanúnach le haghaidh laethanta saoire in Alicante (7)
17. Gunna "Dirty" Harry Callaghan ó 1973 (6)
19. Chadáis, chruach nó chaorach (5)
21. Kavanagh, Cusack nó Cinn Óir, b'fhéidir (5)
24. Sraith Chispheile na Stát Aontaithe (1,1,1)
25. Seacht ... – clár fáisnéise de chuid TG4 (2)

Solutions to Crossword No. 2601

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1. Fencing master | 2. Excrement |
| 10. Ionic | 3. Cos |
| 11. Sanctimony | 4. Non-union |
| 13. Iceberg | 5. Motif |
| 15. Nefertiti | 6. Samaria |
| 16. Yodle | 7. Ennui |
| 17. Anosmia | 8. Jiminy Cricket |
| 19. BMI | 9. Incendiary |
| 20. Reaction | 12. Miniature golf |
| 21. Straw hat | 14. Glamour |
| 24. Cry | 18. Matting |
| 25. Porcini | 19. Behind bars |
| 26. Goner | 22. Angel hair |
| 27. Embellish | 23. Lighting |
| 30. Golf bag | 25. Palermo |
| 31. Journalism | 28. Booth |
| 33. April | 29. Iraqi |
| 34. Shooting stars | 32. MIT |

Did you miss?

ASTI Salary Protection Scheme	14
Annual Convention 2026	26

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 2601:
Moira Hunter,
St Mary's Secondary School,
Mallow, Co. Cork.
Desmond Branch member.

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SCAN ME



To be eligible to claim from the ASTI Salary Protection Scheme, you must meet the definition of disablement as defined in the policy document. Other terms, conditions and exclusions apply. For more information on the Scheme, please see cornmarket.ie/asti. *Up to 75% less any other income to which you may be entitled e.g. half pay, Ill Health Early Retirement Pension, Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration, State Illness Benefit or State Invalidity Pension, after you have exhausted the deferred period of the Scheme.

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