



Circular Letter 0015/2024

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary and Voluntary
Secondary Schools and Community and Comprehensive schools**

**Domestic Violence Leave for School Secretaries covered by the
terms of the 2022 Workplace Relation Commission (WRC)
Agreement, employed in Recognised Primary and Voluntary
Secondary Schools and Community and Comprehensive Schools**

The Minister for Education, pursuant to the power contained in Section 24 of the Education Act (as amended), directs employers to implement the regulations and procedures, as stated in this Circular, for eligible school secretaries employed in approved posts funded by monies provided by the Oireachtas and who are covered by the terms of the 2022 Workplace Relation Commission (WRC) agreement and the terms of Circular 36/2022.

All employers and school secretaries must adhere to the agreed terms and conditions as stated with immediate effect.

Please ensure that the contents of this Circular are brought to the attention of all members of the Board of Management and all school secretaries in your employment, including those on leave of absence.

All queries should initially be brought to the attention of the employer who may wish to consult with their representative organisation. Any further queries may be directed to the Department at the following email addresses:

- a) Queries on terms and conditions for Domestic Violence Leave:-
secretaryleave@education.gov.ie
- b) Queries on recording of leave on OLCS:- onlineclaims@education.gov.ie
- c) Queries on salary:- [Payroll Query Form \(education.gov.ie\)](#)

This Circular can be accessed on the Department's website at www.gov.ie.

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Definitions and Abbreviations

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

Cohabitant - means one of 2 adults (whether of the same or the opposite sex) who live together as a couple in an intimate and committed relationship and who are not related to each other within the prohibited degrees of relationship or married to each other or civil partners of each other.

Employer –means a Board of Management/Manager in the case of primary (excluding community national schools) and voluntary secondary, community and comprehensive schools.

On Line Claims System (OLCS) – means the system for recording absences and claiming substitution currently operating in primary, voluntary secondary, community and comprehensive schools.

Paymaster – means the organisation in charge of paying salaries. This is the Department of Education in the case of secretaries who are covered under Department Circular 0036/2022.

Recognised School – means a school which is recognised by the Minister for Education in accordance with Section 10 of the Education Act 1998.

School Secretary-means a secretary employed in a recognised primary or voluntary secondary school or community and comprehensive school that are paid directly by the Paymaster.

The Department – means the [Department of Education](#).

1. Domestic Violence Leave

1.1 Domestic Violence Leave is regulated by the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

1.2 A school secretary, who is a victim of domestic violence, or a school secretary, who is assisting a relevant person (as defined in paragraph 2.1), is entitled to apply for Domestic Violence Leave for the following reasons:

- seek medical attention;
- obtain services from a victim services organisation;
- obtain psychological or other professional counselling;
- relocate residence temporarily or permanently;
- obtain an order from a court under the Domestic Violence Act 2018;
- seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner
- seek assistance from the Garda Síochána.
- seek or obtain any other relevant services

2. Eligibility for Domestic Violence Leave

2.1 Domestic Violence Leave can be availed of by a school secretary or where a school secretary is providing support to a relevant person. As defined in the Work life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, a relevant person includes:

- the spouse or civil partner of the school secretary;
- the cohabitant of the school secretary;
- a person with whom the school secretary is in an intimate relationship;
- a child of the school secretary who has not attained full age; or
- a person who, in relation to the school secretary, is a dependent person

3. Entitlement to Domestic Violence Leave

3.1 Domestic Violence Leave is a period of paid leave and consists of one or more school days, but must not exceed a maximum of 5 school days in a consecutive 12 months.

4. Arrangements whilst on Domestic Violence Leave

4.1 A school secretary who is absent on another form of statutory or non-statutory leave may not be granted Domestic Violence Leave instead of that leave.

4.2 Absence on Domestic Violence Leave for part of a school day constitutes an absence for a full school day.

5. Application Procedures

- 5.1 The approval of the employer must be sought for Domestic Violence Leave.
- 5.2 A school secretary who avails of Domestic Violence Leave is required to complete the Application Form at [Appendix A](#) of this Circular. The Application Form should be completed and submitted to the employer, as soon as is reasonably practicable prior to or after availing of such leave.
- 5.3 The employer should satisfy themselves that, in the circumstances, an application for Domestic Violence Leave is justified and can be granted.
- 5.4 The employer must provide the school secretary with a written acknowledgement confirming receipt of the leave application and their decision to approve/refuse the request. Where an application is refused, the employer must include the grounds for refusal.

6. Recording of Leave

- 6.1 Following the employer's approval of Domestic Violence Leave, the absence must be recorded by the employer in a timely manner, on the OLCS system.
- 6.2 On the OLCS, Domestic Violence Leave should be recorded under 'Personal Leave', and then sub-category 'Domestic Violence Leave'.
- 6.3 **Interim arrangements for recording of Domestic Violence Leave on OLCS**
 - a) At publication stage of this circular, "Domestic Violence Leave" will be under development in the Department.
 - b) Pending the availability of the "Domestic Violence Leave" category on the OLCS, the following arrangements apply:
 - i. Email secretaryleave@education.gov.ie
 - ii. The subject line of the email should read "Domestic Violence Leave: Interim Arrangement"
 - iii. In such cases, the employer must provide the following details to the Department, so that the leave can be recorded on OLCS by Department Staff:
 - School Secretary's Name
 - School Secretary's PPS Number
 - Roll No. of school where school secretary is currently employed
 - The start and end date of the absence.

7. Status during Domestic Violence Leave

- 7.1 A school secretary on Domestic Violence Leave is deemed for all purposes to be in employment at that time including remuneration. Domestic Violence Leave is fully reckonable for seniority and progression on the incremental salary scale.

8. Replacement School Secretary

- 8.1 The employer may appoint a substitute school secretary paid by the Paymaster for the duration of this leave and this must be recorded by the employer via the OLCS.

9. Employment while on Domestic Violence Leave

- 9.1 A school secretary on Domestic Violence Leave may not engage in any type of other paid employment.

10. Leave Entitlements for Fixed Term/Fixed Purpose Appointments

- 10.1 A school secretary who is on a fixed term/fixed purpose contract of employment shall, during the term of the contract, have full Domestic Violence Leave entitlements. The granting or taking of this leave will not affect a fixed term/fixed purpose appointment or the renewing of such an appointment.

11. Data Protection

- 11.1 All documentation relating to the school secretary's absence on Domestic Violence Leave must be retained by the employer with the relevant personnel records in a safe and secure manner and in line with the employer's data protection policy and data protection regulations. These records may be selected for inspection by nominated Department officials.

12. Compliance

- 12.1 Failure to abide with the regulations and procedures set out in this Circular may be dealt with under the school's agreed disciplinary procedures and may lead to cessation of salary for a school secretary or withdrawal of substitute cover for a school.

13. Employee Assistance Service

- 13.1. The Employee Assistance Service is available as a supportive resource for school staff and provides advice on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict and mediation. Where appropriate, short-term counselling is available to school employees and their family members. A family member includes a spouse, civil partner or dependent, where the family member can be described as a person over the age of 18 and residing at the family home. The dedicated Freephone confidential helpline is 1800 411 057 and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. See [Employee Assistance Service for school staff in recognised primary and post-primary schools](#) for more information.

14. Child Protection

- 14.1 Employers should be aware of the obligations set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools

15. Useful Information

- 15.1 Contact details for support organisations and resources can be found at Appendix B.

Appendix A - Application for Domestic Violence Leave

The Application Form should be fully completed and submitted to the employer as soon as is reasonably practicable after the absence.

PART 1A – SCHOOL SECRETARY APPLICATION

School Secretary's Name: _____ Contact No: _____

Home Address: _____

Personal E-mail Address:

PPSN: _____

School Name: _____ Roll No: _____

PART 1B – LEAVE DETAILS

Start date: _____ End date: _____ Duration (Days): _____

No. of days Domestic Violence Leave taken in past 12 months: _____

Declaration

I wish to apply for Domestic Violence Leave in accordance with Circular 0015/2024.
I confirm that the information provided in the application is true and accurate.

I have not exceeded my entitlement to Domestic Violence Leave, as detailed in
Circular 0015/2024

Signature of School Secretary: _____

Date: : _____

Data Protection Privacy Statement

The main purpose for which the Department requires you to provide this personal data to your employer is to enable your Domestic Violence Leave application to be processed. Your employer will retain your application form and accompanying documents in accordance with their Data Protection policy. Further information in relation to this policy is available on request from your employer.

The Privacy Notice outlining further information in relation to this Application Form can be found on gov.ie. 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 on gov.ie. Details of this policy are also available in hard copy from the School Secretaries Leave Administration Section, Department of Education, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 X659, or Secretaryleave@education.gov.ie, upon request.

PART 2– EMPLOYER DECISION

I certify that I have approved/refused the application for Domestic Violence Leave in accordance with Circular 0015/2024. The following documents have been retained on file for audit purposes:

1) Application for Domestic Violence Leave under Circular 0015/2024

2) Copy of Decision Notice issued to School Secretary

Approved Domestic Violence Leave has been recorded on the OLCS

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Employer)

Application Form/Supporting Documentation should NOT be submitted to the Department of Education. They should be retained in the school with any other relevant documentation for record and audit purposes with the relevant personnel records.

Appendix B – Contacts

Women’s Aid

24hr National Freephone Helpline:
1800 341 900
Email: info@womensaid.ie
www.womensaid.ie

Men’s Aid

National Confidential Helpline: 01 554
3811 (Mon –Fri, 9.00am to 5.00pm)
Email: hello@mensaid.ie
www.mensaid.ie

MOVE Ireland

(Men Overcoming Violence)

Provides Domestic Violence Perpetrators
Intervention Programmes for men where
they are challenged to take responsibility
for their abuse and to change their
attitudes and behaviour and develop
respectful, non-abusive relationships.
www.moveireland.ie

SAFE Ireland

Programme for creating safety for women
and children with a focus on research,
public policy and awareness and provision
of training.

→ [Contacts for National Services](#)

→ [Advice for Employers](#)

www.safeireland.ie

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

24-hour helpline: 1800 77 8888
→ [Webchat support service](#) (Mon – Fri,
10.00am to 5.00pm (excl. bank holidays)
→ [Counselling & therapy services](#)
www.drcc.ie

HSE Sexual Assault Treatment Units

Information on care options if you have
been raped or sexually assaulted.
<https://www2.hse.ie/services/satu/>

LGBT Ireland

National Helpline: 1890 929 539
Transgender family support line 01 9073707 (open
Tuesday/Sundays)
→ [On-line chat support service](#)
→ [Peer support services](#)
www.lgbt.ie

BeLONg To

LGBTI+ youth support organisation for young
people aged between 14–23 years
Tel: 01 670 6223
→ [Support Services](#)
Email: info@belongto.org
www.belongto.org

TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland)

Gender Identity Family Support Line
01 9073707
www.teni.ie

Tusla

The State Child and Family Agency
Operates under the [Child and Family Act 2013](#)
→ [Reporting Concerns – Child protection and
welfare services](#)
→ [Domestic and Gender Based Violence Services](#)
→ [Family Resource Centres](#)
www.tusla.ie

The Courts Service of Ireland

www.courts.ie

Citizens Information www.citizensinformation.ie

Legal Aid Board

www.legalaidboard.ie

Garda Síochána www.garda.ie

Employee Assistance Service

Freephone confidential helpline 1800 411 057

