



# A Guide to **IPPN**

*Tacaíocht, Spreagadh, Misneach*  
**Supporting School Leadership**

# *‘Leadership – discovering and pursuing initiatives that enhance the quality of learning and teaching in the school’*


***Towards a Better Future – A review of the Irish school system***

Coolahan, Drudy, Hogan, Hyland and McGuinness, 2017.

The research publication was commissioned by IPPN and NAPD

[Link](#)



A photograph of a man in a dark suit and glasses, holding a small device, presenting to an audience of people seated in a room. The background is slightly blurred, showing a large window and other attendees.

IPPN articulates the collective knowledge and professional experience of over **6,000 principals and deputy principals**.

## IPPN: The Organisation

School leadership is both professionally challenging and personally demanding. The Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) was established in 2000 to address school leaders' professional and personal needs. IPPN's focus from the beginning has been to support school leaders at local and county level and to represent their views nationally. From very humble facilities initially, the IPPN National Support Office has been located in state-of-the-art facilities in Glounthaune, Co. Cork since 2010.

IPPN is the officially-recognised professional body for Irish primary school leaders. It is an independent, not-for-profit, voluntary association with a local, regional and national presence. Recognised by the Minister for Education as an official Education Partner, IPPN works with the Department of Education and Skills (DES), education stakeholders including management bodies, unions, education agencies, representative bodies,

academic institutions and children's charities towards the advancement of primary education. The Republic of Ireland has almost 560,000 children attending 3,239 primary schools. IPPN articulates the collective knowledge and professional experience of over 6,000 principals and deputy principals. IPPN supports school leaders at a local and county level and represents their interests nationally.

“I would strongly recommend the services provided by IPPN to any school leader no matter how experienced or inexperienced they may be. One never knows what issues may arise which need to be dealt with but, with the myriad of supports IPPN offer, it certainly puts you at ease to know that you will not be facing these issues alone.”



# Supports & Services

From the National Support Office in Cork, IPPN provides the following supports and services to the 6000+ principals and deputy principals of over 3000 IPPN-member primary schools. IPPN members tell us that they value knowing that the back-up and support is there when they need it.

## ❖ Leadership Support Service

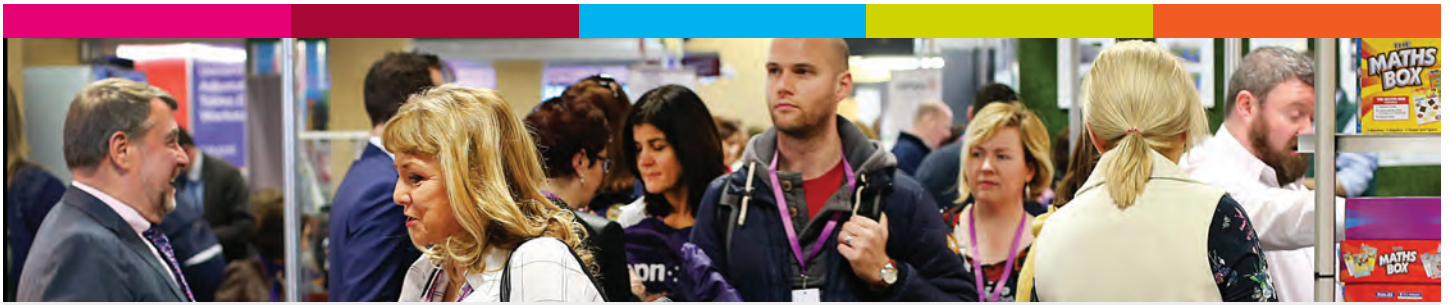
This one-to-one confidential advisory service, provided by a team of skilled serving and retired principals, offers collegial support and guidance of a non-directive and non-legal nature. The team also provides a Professional Guidance service, answering queries of a factual nature. In 2019, the Leadership Support team responded to over 2,700 individual queries of principals and deputy principals. Among the topics dealt with, the following were the most common:

- ❖ Interpersonal issues
- ❖ Parent Relations
- ❖ Absences/Leave
- ❖ Enrolment
- ❖ HR Administration - Career Breaks/Secondments/Job sharing
- ❖ Disruptive Pupil Behaviour
- ❖ Policy Development.

The team closely monitors the issues and queries raised by members and this information is factored into the plans for the development of resources and CPD.

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## ❖ E-Scéal

This weekly electronic bulletin informs school leaders of current issues within the education sector and provides professional guidance, from FAQs on circular releases, to topical issues relating to leadership and management. Our links with education stakeholders ensure that IPPN is kept informed at the earliest opportunity of key developments, enabling us to pass that information to our members.

[Sample E-Scéal](#)

## ❖ Continuous Professional Development

In 2019, IPPN hosted 119 local, regional and national CPD events for school leaders with over 2,700 school leaders participating at regional and national events and almost 1,200 members attending local IPPN County Network Meetings across the 26 counties.

These CPD events offer an opportunity to hear fresh thinking from national and international figures in education, participate in stimulating workshops and network with colleagues.

Other examples of CPD events organised by IPPN:

- ❖ Annual Principals' and Deputy Principals' Conferences
- ❖ Professional Briefing Day
- ❖ County Network meetings – at least one per term
- ❖ Roadshow events dealing with issues of a topical nature e.g. GDPR, Child Protection
- ❖ School Leaders' Summer Schools, offering a blended approach of online and face-to-face
- ❖ 'Ciall Ceannaithe' online summer course
- ❖ 'Headstart' for newly-appointed principals, now offered in conjunction with Misneach 1.

It is worth noting that IPPN endeavours to ensure that CPD events do not duplicate the CPD on offer by other parties, such as INTO and the management bodies.

The most popular mailing list is 'networking', which has over **4,000 subscribers** and over **16 million emails were sent** during 2019.

IPPN hosted **119** local, regional and national CPD events in 2019.

## ❖ Mailing Lists

IPPN's mailing lists are among the most valued supports available to members. They are 'closed' mailing lists i.e. the emails are for principals and deputy principals who are members of IPPN.

The most popular mailing list is 'networking', which facilitates a peer-support community. It has over 4,000 subscribers and over 16 million emails were sent during 2019. The [advice@ippn.ie](mailto:advice@ippn.ie) mailing list is for sensitive, confidential and non-generic queries, which are answered offline by members of our Leadership Support Panel as an extension of the Leadership Support service.

There are also mailing lists dedicated to cohorts of our members e.g. teaching principals, newly-appointed principals, deputy principals, DEIS schools, special schools, and those with autism classes, as well as county mailing lists which are used for more local information.

## ❖ Leadership+

The journal for principals and deputy principals, Leadership+ is issued to members throughout the year. It offers a wide range of articles of relevance to school leaders, including practical hints and tips, professional guidance, research summaries, information on new procedures and forthcoming events, to name just a few.

[Leadership+](#)



## Online Services

### www.ippn.ie

Our member website [www.ippn.ie](http://www.ippn.ie) provides a wealth of resources, sample policies, templates, publications, research, information updates and education news, including 'resource bundles' which collate all relevant information and professional guidance about specific topics into one easy-to-use document.

[www.ippn.ie](http://www.ippn.ie)

### Resource Bundles

IPPN Resources Bundles are a one-stop-shop where school leaders will find the answers, supporting documentation and reading materials relating to the most common queries school leaders encounter in the day-to-day management of their schools. These comprehensive resources are produced in an easy-to-use, interactive e-publication format.

[Child Protection Resource Bundle](#)

*"The resource bundles and planning templates available on the IPPN website are always up to date. It is clear that the IPPN has their finger on the pulse with regard to new and upcoming resources to make the day-to-day management of schools easier."*

**More than 28,000 users** availed of the **TextaParent App** for delivery of messages from schools.

### Dashboard

[dashboard.ippn.ie](http://dashboard.ippn.ie) provides everything school leaders need to know on one webpage, including a calendar of events, sector updates, latest IPPN resources and E-scéals and networking mailing list posts.

[dashboard.ippn.ie](http://dashboard.ippn.ie)

**The following online services have dedicated support staff, ensuring that school leaders' needs are met in a timely and comprehensive manner:**

### TextaParent.ie

**TextaParent** is a fast, reliable and cost-effective way for schools to contact parents and staff. In the 2018/2019 school year, over 6 million text messages, along with over 1 million 'push notifications', were delivered to parents and staff. More than 28,000 users availed of the TextaParent App for delivery of messages from schools.

[TextaParent.ie](http://TextaParent.ie)

### EducationPosts.ie

**EducationPosts** is Ireland's longest-established and most widely used website dedicated to education recruitment. There were over 130,000 job-seekers registered on the site in 2019 and over 14,000 vacancies were advertised across the education sector. The service has dedicated support.

[EducationPosts.ie](http://EducationPosts.ie)

### Sub Seeker

**Sub Seeker** is an online service, hosted on EducationPosts.ie, that enables primary and post-primary schools to find qualified teachers available for subbing work in selected counties.

[Sub Seeker](http://Sub Seeker)





## Supports for Newly-Appointed Principals

Once IPPN is aware of a retirement or other vacancy for the role of principal, we ensure that information is provided to the incoming principal about the various supports available to them such as One to One Mentoring.

In 2019, the Leadership Support Team designed and delivered training in relation to Group Mentoring to 100+ mentors across the country to enable them to act as mentors to cohorts of new school leaders.

We also engage with principals who are retiring to let them know about opportunities to get involved in IPPN projects and to stay in touch with what is happening in the education sector.

**Call 021 482 40 70 / Lo-Call 1800 21 22 23 to avail of these services and supports.**



*“When I began my leadership journey the initial contact with the IPPN Support Office proved to be crucial. Without this, I would have really struggled and would have more than likely made the wrong decisions and not have followed procedures correctly.”*

**Educationposts.ie** is Ireland’s longest established and most widely used website dedicated to **Education Recruitment**

## Future Developments

Over the next few years, IPPN plans to further develop its supports and services to meet the changing needs of school leaders. Among the current plans are:

### Webinars/CPD

IPPN is developing a series of webinars on topics of relevance to school leaders. Webinars allow you to access online CPD wherever you are – home or school – at a time of your choosing, as they will be recorded. Webinars will supplement, but will not replace our face-to-face events, which also allow school leaders to network with their peers.

### EducationPosts.ie

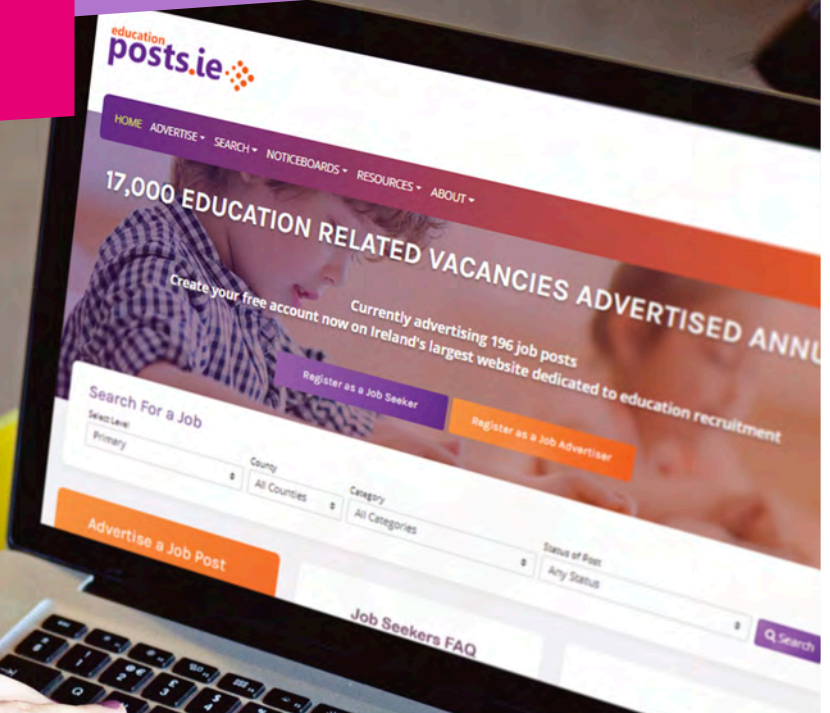
We plan to invest in the development of a comprehensive recruitment portal to facilitate the acceptance of applications and communication in relation to the recruitment process.

### Sub Seeker

IPPN’s newest service hosted on EducationPosts.ie, Sub Seeker continues to evolve. Development will continue in Autumn 2020 to enhance the system further, including time limits on offer acceptance, more comprehensive search tools and member profiles, as well as updates to communication tools for job seekers and employers.

### www.ippn.ie

We are redeveloping the website to streamline communication with members and facilitate faster access to the many resources available on the site.





*“I have found the network of support from the IPPN to be invaluable to date. I began my leadership journey just over 2 years ago and the mentoring support was invaluable.”*

# Advocacy

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IPPN also supports school leaders by advocating for improved policy and funding for primary education, as well as leadership development and supports for school leaders. Our advocacy work covers IPPN’s overall vision for school leadership, as well as our key objectives outlined above, as well as specific issues and concerns that relate to particular cohorts of our members, including special schools, one-teacher schools, schools led by teaching principals, and DEIS schools.

## ❖ Stakeholder Development

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We put effort into building positive, collaborative relationships with the key stakeholders in education, to ensure that the challenges, concerns and opportunities relating to primary education and school leadership are fully understood. This approach helps when key policy and funding decisions are being made, as the needs and concerns of school leaders are more likely to be taken into consideration. Close collaboration with our post-primary counterpart NAPD and international school leadership associations has also reaped rewards, in deepening our understanding of alternative approaches and policy developments.

## ❖ Position Papers and Submissions

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IPPN uses ‘position papers’ to set out our vision for particular aspects of primary education that require change. They are evidence-based and reflect the real issues on the ground in our schools.

Similar to our position papers, submissions also set out IPPN’s views on a particular issue, however they are generally in response to an invitation to contribute a viewpoint or suggestion, for example to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education & Skills. We would generally include our key objectives where relevant, as well as responding to the specific issue under discussion.



In the past few years, IPPN has prepared position papers and submissions on the following topics, among others:

- ❖ Teaching Principalship
- ❖ Teacher supply and the shortage of substitute teachers
- ❖ Annual pre-Budget submissions
- ❖ Reduced timetable for pupils with SEN
- ❖ The use of physical intervention for the prevention and management of crisis situations
- ❖ The future direction of policy on exemptions from the study of Irish
- ❖ Draft national standards for children's social services
- ❖ DES Statement of Strategy 2019-2021.

The full set of position papers and submissions is available in the Advocacy section of [www.ippn.ie](http://www.ippn.ie).

**Special Schools Position Paper**

**Recent Submission - Physical Intervention**

## ❖ Research

IPPN conducts and commissions research to determine the nature and depth of the issues at stake in primary education, particularly in relation to school leadership and management. The resulting research publications are used both to develop understanding of the issues, challenges and potential solutions among stakeholders, as well as to support school leaders directly in their work.

In recent years, we have undertaken research in relation to special schools and the particular health and safety issues in one-teacher schools as well as the perspectives of our deputy principal cohort on school leadership and management. A current focus is on the wellbeing of school leaders, and on the workload of school leaders, teaching principals in particular.

IPPN has undertaken a number of significant research projects over the years, the results of which have been published in the following reports, which are available to members on [www.ippn.ie](http://www.ippn.ie) – Advocacy – Publications:

- ❖ Ciall Ceannaithe - Sound Advice and Borrowed Wisdom for Newly-Appointed Principals
- ❖ Defining the Role of the Primary Principal in Ireland
- ❖ Giorraíonn Beirt Bóthar - Distributing Leadership
- ❖ In-School Management - A Critical Review
- ❖ Investing in School Leadership
- ❖ Left to their own devices: Trends in ICT at primary school level
- ❖ New Horizons for Smaller Schools and Teaching Principalship in Ireland
- ❖ Primary School Governance - Challenges & Opportunities
- ❖ Priorities for Principal Teachers - In Clear Focus
- ❖ Quality Leadership - Quality Learning
- ❖ Supporting Each Other - a guide to best practice for the effective partnership between Principals and Parent Associations
- ❖ The Value of Leadership?
- ❖ Towards a Better Future - A Review of the Irish School System.

The full set of **research publications** is available in the Advocacy section of our website.

**Research Publications**





# IPPN Structure

IPPN's network of principals and deputy principals is structured as follows:

## ❖ Local Support Groups

Support groups form the main 'cell structure' of IPPN. Principals' and Deputy Principals' support groups are sustained with the support of local Education Centres.

## ❖ County Networks

IPPN facilitates 26 County Networks and each Network meets for up to three Continuous Professional Development events per year. These CPD events are funded through IPPN nationally and are open to all principals and deputy principals of member schools.

## ❖ National Council

Two school leaders are elected from each of the 26 counties to the National Council and are responsible for governance and policy and to ensure effective communication between County Networks, Council and the Board. The National Council elects a President and officers who form the Board of Directors. In 2019, 50% of Council members were administrative principals, 42% were teaching principals, and 8% were deputy principals.

## ❖ Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for the strategic direction and overall governance of IPPN. The Board manages the affairs of the organisation through focus groups established to research and develop IPPN policy.





# Aims

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**Our stated vision is *Empowered Leaders; Inspired Learners* and our mission is to support and advocate for exemplary school leadership - *Tacaíocht, Misneach agus Spreagadh*.**

IPPN's goals centre on the task of leadership across a spectrum of issues and activities:

## ❖ Supports and Services

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- ❖ To provide all school leaders with a continuum of high quality personal and professional development, support, advice and guidance in order to maximise the learning outcomes of every child
- ❖ To promote collegiality and professional dialogue and the sharing of best practice throughout the network of school leaders.

## ❖ Advocacy & Communications

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- ❖ To provide leadership to all school leaders
- ❖ To positively influence education policy
- ❖ To be the trusted voice for children and their learning

## ❖ Infrastructure

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- ❖ To be financially secure and independent, providing the human and financial resources to maintain our Supports & Services and Advocacy needs
- ❖ To diversify funding sources for long-term organisational sustainability.

## ❖ Strategic Objectives

In addition to the goals outlined above, IPPN has four strategic objectives to achieve its vision and mission:

- ❖ To strengthen its Network by harnessing the capacity and capability of school leaders
- ❖ To maximise IPPN's impact and ensure that school leaders' experience is central to education policy by continuing to build collaborative relationships with key stakeholders
- ❖ To ensure IPPN supports and services are enhanced to reflect the needs of today's school leaders
- ❖ To continue the ongoing work in achieving its primary organisational goals.

We aim to maximise **IPPN's** impact and ensure that school leaders' experience is **central to education policy**

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*“The calm, reassuring and non-judgemental voice of an experienced school leader on the phone helped me to gain perspective at a time when I couldn't see the wood from the trees.”*





*“The Centre for School Leadership (CSL) actively advocates for the importance of school leaders accessing system support. Engagement with stakeholders in the system who support school leaders in their daily work is essential for sustained system improvement and the attainment of better outcomes for pupils.*

*These supports improve both the practice and the personal development of the leader. They provide opportunities to share and discuss good practice and to address challenge collaboratively. When leaders avail of good quality professional learning, they manage change, negotiate challenge and deal better with the demands of the role.*

*CSL endorses professional learning for school leaders provided by recognised stakeholders in the Irish system. Endorsement is underpinned by the Continuum and Model of Professional Learning and aims to support learning at all stages of leadership. This ensures that school leaders have the support, information, assurance and the social-professional space that they need to sustain their energy, enthusiasm and positivity for the role.”*

*The Centre for School Leadership*



## Contact us

We are keen to hear from school leaders and any other stakeholders who share our vision for primary education.

You can contact us through one of the media below

### GENERAL ENQUIRIES

+353 21 4824070

[info@ippn.ie](mailto:info@ippn.ie)

[www.ippn.ie](http://www.ippn.ie)

[@IPPN\\_Education](https://twitter.com/IPPN_Education)

IPPN National Support Office  
Glounthaune  
Co. Cork

More information about IPPN and the supports and services we offer to school leaders is available on our website [www.ippn.ie](http://www.ippn.ie).

### CHARITABLE STATUS

IPPN is a registered charity with CHY number 17221.