



Circular 0045/2011

To: Boards of Management of Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools,

Minimum Notice Period for Retirement

1. The Department of Public Expenditure has advised that a three-month minimum notice period for retirement is being introduced for the Public Service. In many areas of the education sector such a notice period is already a standard feature. This circular on the notice period follows the extension of the 'Grace Period' to 29 February 2012 i.e. the period during which the calculation of public service pensions is unaffected by the pay reductions applied under the *Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No. 2) Act 2009*. This circular letter is therefore of particular relevance to staff who are members of a public service occupational pension scheme.
2. It is anticipated that there could be a large increase in the number of retirements in the run-up to the end of the 'Grace Period'. In order to protect services it is critical that school management have knowledge of the numbers retiring to enable them to assess the likely effect on the welfare and education needs of students by potentially large scale departures. We are also obliged under the terms of our Memorandum of Understanding with the EU/ECB/IMF to make quarterly returns to our external partners on the progress being made in relation to reductions in public service numbers. Better quality – and earlier – information on intended retirements will be an important part of this reporting requirement.
3. **You should inform all staff in your school (who are members of an occupation pension scheme) who intend to retire on or before 29 February 2012 that from 11 July 2011 they are required to give 3 calendar months' notice of their date of retirement.**
4. While the minimum notice period is 3 calendar months, school management should seek the cooperation of staff in giving the earliest possible notice of their intention to retire in order to facilitate resource planning and timetabling.
5. All school staff, whose pensions are administered by the Department of Education and Skills, are required to notify the Pensions Unit of the Department by submitting a completed retirement application at least 3 calendar months before their date of retirement. Relevant forms are available on request from the Pensions Unit.

In summary:

1. A completed application form for retirement must be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills at least 3 months before the last day of service.
2. The notice of retirement must be unconditional.
3. The last day of service must be clearly indicated.
4. A notification may not be withdrawn on or after the date indicated as the last day of service.

Where Staff members are retiring within 3 calendar months from 11 July 2011, they should give as much notice as possible in order to protect service levels. It is recognised that these staff will be unable to give the full 3 months' notice.

6. Staff who have already submitted notification of retirement

Where a completed application form has already been submitted to, and acknowledged by, the Pensions Unit of the Department of Education and Skills at the date of this circular, no further action is required by the individual retiring.

7. Failure to give required notice

Staff should be informed that any failure to give the required notice could result in a delay in payment of pension benefits and any other payments due.

8. Retirements after 29 February 2012

A three-month notice period is being introduced for the Public Service at this point as a temporary measure to assist employers in the management of what may be a very high number of retirements.

The Department of Public Expenditure has advised that further instructions will issue in relation to notice requirements for retirements which take place after February 2012.

9. Circulation

This Circular should be brought to the notice of all pensionable employees currently in service with the school (including employees on maternity leave, career break or any form of approved leave of absence). Pensionable employees comprise teachers, special needs assistants and certain other employees who are members of a public service pension scheme.

This circular can be accessed on the Department's website under <http://www.education.ie>.

All enquiries regarding this circular should be e-mailed to: Pensions@education.gov.ie

Anne Killian
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Pensions Unit

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