

Dear Principal,

The Department has developed an electronic individualised database of primary school pupils, called the Primary Online Database (POD). POD will collect individual information on each pupil, including their PPSN. This has been thoroughly piloted with a selection of schools and has been extensively discussed with the education partners and management bodies.

We acknowledge that the move to the new database will be challenging but are confident that in the course of time POD will be a very useful tool for schools.

In the near future, POD will

- replace the need for schools to complete the National School Annual Census,
- replace the need for schools to maintain the Clárleabhar,
- facilitate inter-school transfers,
- facilitate the transfer of data from primary to post-primary schools,
- help to identify pupils who do not make the transition from primary to post-primary
- allow schools to update DES centrally-held, school-level data such as School Name, Address and Telephone Number. This will provide schools with one point to correct or amend contact details which will then be available to be accessed by all areas across the Department.

In the longer term it is proposed that POD will also share data with the Department of Social Protection, the HSE and the NCSE, and other bodies, eliminating the need for many of the current data requests to schools from these bodies, for example in relation to vaccination programmes, child benefit claims, application for special educational needs.

As part of the transition process schools will still be required to return the current Special School Annual Census for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 academic years.

Mainstream schools have been asked to start populating POD with individual pupil data from the 15th of September onwards. **Special schools will be asked to start populating the Primary Online Database in early 2015. Further communication will be issued in advance of this.** In the meantime it would be useful for Special Schools to take the opportunity to ensure that they have the details of the information required on each pupil. A full list of the required data items is available on our website at the link below.

Hospital schools and Detention Centres will not be incorporated into the Primary Online Database (POD) and will be required to continue to complete the Special School Annual Census.

Further information on POD is available on our website at

<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Primary-Online-Database-POD-/>

If you have any queries or comments please do not hesitate to contact us at pod@education.gov.ie
Please include your school's roll number on all correspondence.

Best regards,

POD Helpdesk – Statistics Section
Department of Education & Skills
Block 2, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1
T: 01 889 2311 E: pod@education.gov.ie
F: 01 889 6419 W: www.education.gov.ie

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