



## **Re: Primary Online Database (POD) and Primary Online Database Implementation Grant**

Dear Principal,

As you are aware the Department has developed the Primary Online Database (POD). Early in 2015 Special Schools will be contacted asking that you populate the database with your pupil data. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank those schools that participated in the POD pilot and have provided us with valuable comments and feedback on the new system.

The Department acknowledges that the move to POD is challenging and an additional body of work for schools in the short term. To assist with this, a once off Primary Online Database (POD) Implementation Grant has been approved for the initial population of POD. This amounts to a payment of €1.50 per pupil. For schools with 60 pupils or less, the payment level is based on 60 pupils.

We are confident that in the course of time POD will bring significant benefits for schools, and that the work involved for schools in maintaining POD will be offset by a reduction and streamlining of requests for data from schools.

Once operating fully, POD will:

- replace the need for schools to maintain hard copies of the Clárleabhar and Roll Book (Pending the publication of an update to circular 28/213, schools are reminded that the official Register (Clárleabhar) and Roll Book (Leabhar Rolla) must continue to be maintained in the existing manual format)
- serve as a basic computerised records system for schools that are currently keeping paper records only
- using the PPSN, help to identify cases where pupils appear to be enrolled in two schools
- facilitate electronic transfer of records for pupils moving between primary schools
- facilitate electronic transfer of records from primary to post primary schools
- replace the need for schools to complete the National School Annual Census
- allow schools to update DES centrally-held, school-level data such as School Name, Address and Telephone Number
- identify pupils that leave the system early, do not transfer from primary to post primary school, and leave your school without notifying you of their destination

It is also proposed that in time POD will share appropriate data with a number of other bodies eliminating the need for many of the current data requests to schools from these bodies. For example POD will share data with the

- Department of Social Protection, eliminating the need for individual queries on child benefit claims
- HSE eliminating the need for class lists for vaccination programmes
- NCSE eliminating the need for lists of leavers from special classes

## **What Next?**

Special schools will be contacted asking them to populate the database. It will be possible to enter data on a phased basis if preferred, it is not necessary to populate all records in one go. Schools will also have the ability to transfer their data using an upload facility to Esinet if preferred. Further details on POD, including a list of all the data items required on each pupil, Data Protection Guidelines, FAQs for Schools and Parents and a suggested data collection and consent form are available on our website. Instructional videos and manuals are also available on our website at

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

## **Data Protection**

You are reminded that as Data Controllers, schools are obliged to inform the parents/guardians of their pupils that some of the data you collect will be passed to the Department, explain the purpose that the data is being collected for and outline how long it will be retained for and how it will be stored. You are also reminded that consent is also required for certain pieces of information. A suggested information note that can be issued to parents/guardians is enclosed with this letter and also available on the POD area of the Department's website. Further information on data protection issues and obligations for school can be found at [www.dataprotectionschools.ie](http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie).

## **POD in Irish**

The Irish version of the POD screens will not be available at the same time that POD is opened to special schools, however note that it will be possible to enter names and addresses into POD in Irish. The Irish version of POD will be fully implemented no later than the end of June 2015.

## **POD Helpdesk**

A POD helpdesk has been set up which will be available to assist schools with any POD queries. If you have any queries or comments please do not hesitate to contact us at [pod@education.gov.ie](mailto:pod@education.gov.ie) or by phone at 01 – 889 2311. Note that the helpdesk is fully staffed from 8:30 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday.

Best regards,

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