



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

Information for newly-established schools

A Guide for PPOD users

Information for newly-established schools **(i.e. new schools which are NOT the result of an amalgamation)**

Annual October Return Requirement

All recognised post-primary schools, including newly-established schools, are required to make an annual return to the Department of Education and Skills regarding the number of students enrolled and under regular instruction as at 30th September each year. It is completed and submitted in October each year and is known as the **October Return**.

Once a school is up and running the allocation of teaching posts and school funding is based on the number of recognised students in a school as at 30th September. Recognised students are students enrolled as at 30th September who are under regular instruction following an approved course as per the *Rules and Programme for Second Level Schools* and associated departmental circulars, and who are not classed as 'short-term' pupils. Detailed information on October Returns is issued to all schools in August.

Schools and PPOD

A school's October Return is submitted to the Department via the Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD). In order for schools to be in a position to do this it is essential that the data on PPOD for students enrolled in the school is accurate and up to date.

Data relating to pupils who intend to sit a state examination, either Junior Cycle or Leaving Certificate, at the end of the school year are extracted from PPOD and forwarded on to the State Examinations Commission.

For a new school it is important that the school starts to record a student onto PPOD once the student has been offered a place in the school. The school should first enter the student onto PPOD. This will ensure that the student's data, including the Departmental Pupil Identity Number (DPIN), are available for synchronisation back to the local school administration system which the school intends to use (see further details below). PPOD is made available to newly-established schools well in advance of opening to allow sufficient time to ensure that all relevant records have been fully and accurately input.

The PPOD system is accessed through the Esinet portal which is the secure network provided to schools by the Department.

It is imperative that the principal of a newly-established school, as soon as he/she is appointed to that role, inform themselves on all aspects of PPOD as soon as possible.

To this end, the department's PPOD webpages provide all of the information a new school requires to get started using PPOD.

Local School Administration software suppliers and Data Synchronisation

It should be noted that it is solely a matter for each school to decide upon which type of school software administration system they may wish to use locally to support internal administration within the school. Schools may wish to contact their management body which may be able to provide them with advice and further information.

The Department does not recommend any school administration software applications to any school. The Department provides existing software providers or any potential new companies planning to enter the school administration market with all the technical specifications for PPOD to enable these software providers to develop Data Synchronisation routines for their own software packages so that a school's local administration system can communicate with PPOD. Data synchronisation allows the data entered by the school into PPOD to be extracted to populate or update information on the local school administration system. The level and range of data from PPOD available through synchronisation depends on the particular routine developed by each of the software providers. There can be variations in the level of synchronisation supported by each of the routines available from software providers.

A guide to synchronisation (*PPOD Guide to Initial Data Synchronisation*) is provided on the department's PPOD webpages so that you can inform yourself as to the extent of synchronisation supported by each of the current software providers. This is updated from time to time as software providers update their products. The Department continues to liaise with software providers on an ongoing basis regarding the continuing development of PPOD.

PPOD access for school users

New schools which want to have staff set up with access to PPOD can do so by sending a request containing the following details to p-podhelpdesk@education.gov.ie:

- School name and roll number
- Staff member's name
- Staff member's PPSN
- Staff member's phone number
- Staff member's email address
- Staff member's role (e.g. PPOD data entry)

Such requests to set up new users should always be made by the school principal.

NOTE: Every member of staff who accesses PPOD must have their own account. PPOD accounts should not be shared under any circumstances.

Further information

Individual queries may be e-mailed to p-podhelpdesk@education.gov.ie. Don't forget to include your school's roll number and your contact details.