



# Croke Park Hours



## **Which circulars address Croke Park hours for primary teachers?**

The initial circular in respect of the Croke Park Agreement is 08/2011, and this was further updated by circular 42/2016.

## **Are teachers required to do Croke Park hours in 2023/24?**

Yes, Croke Park hours are still in place for the 2023/24 school year.

## **Additional time of one hour per week is provided for in the Agreement. How many hours in total is this per annum?**

The Croke Park Agreement provides for an additional 36 hours per school year at primary level. Job-sharing teachers will be required to undertake an additional 18 hours per annum; a pro-rata requirement will apply in respect of part-time teachers.

## **When did the Croke Park Agreement become operative?**

The terms of the agreement became operative for primary schools in February 2011.

## **How many hours apply in the case of a jobsharer or part-time teacher?**

Job-sharing teachers will be required to undertake an additional 18 hours per annum; a pro-rata requirement will apply in respect of part-time teachers.

## **Are all non pupil contact activities such as school planning meetings, staff meetings to take place out of tuition time?**

The purpose of the Croke Park Agreement is to provide a block of 36 hours to be allocated to non-class contact activities which would previously have necessitated a school closure / half day.

Accordingly, such closures on a teaching day are no longer allowed (with the exception of the three half in/half out staff meetings previously agreed under [Circular 14/04 \(Word\)](#)).

## **What is the position with regard to supervision before and after school?**

The INTO would recommend that the additional hours would be spent on professional work rather than supervision. However as the Croke Park Agreement specifically provides that the additional hours can be used for pre and post school supervision it is open to a school to allocate some hours to assembly / dismissal time supervision if this is one of the priorities identified by the school concerned.

This may be a particular priority for a rural school where pupils depend on school transport which does not dovetail with the actual opening and closing time of the school.

## **Who is involved in the consultation process: Principal and teaching staff/BOM/non-teaching staff, etc.?**

A plan for the use of the 36 additional hours should be drawn up by the principal and the teaching staff. However, the board of management or ETB will have the final 'sign off' on the usage of the 36 hours. The additional 36 hours element of Croke Park does not apply to non-teaching staff.



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## **Can Croke Park hours be used for work on an individual basis, or for smaller groups of teachers?**

It is intended that the additional 36 hours can be used in a flexible manner to meet the identified needs of the school. Some of this time will be used on whole school activities such as staff meetings; other hours could be used on activities affecting a group of staff such as the Special Education Team/infant teachers etc. and some of the hours may be counted on an individual basis e.g. assembly time supervision.

Circular 42/2016 provides for up to ten hours to be “available for planning and development work on other than a whole-school basis and as approved by management.” The use of this time will be subject to verification and accountability to management.

Paragraph 5(a) of Circular 0008/2011 will not apply to the delivery of these hours, save that they must be delivered outside normal school hours for class/pupil contact and supervision/substitution and in tranches of no less than 30 minutes duration.

## **Can we simply lengthen each school day by 12 minutes?**

It is not open to a school to use the 36 hours by simply lengthening the school day.

## **Can a school aggregate Croke Park hours into full extra days?**

Where there is a consensus among staff to do so, Croke Park hours may be aggregated into full days, to a maximum of two days. Each full day allocated would use a minimum of 6 hours from the 36 hour bank.

## **The Agreement provides for one hour per week. Croke Park does not explicitly provide for extra days. Why then is the aggregation of hours into full days allowed under the Agreement?**

The implementation of the additional 36 hours was always subject to negotiations between School Management, the Teachers’ Unions and the Department of Education and Skills. The outcome of these negotiations has provided for a range of approaches in how the time may be used including, where there is consensus, the aggregation of hours as full days up to a max of 2 additional days.

Aggregating days to make full days (to a max of two) is just one option on how the hours may be used and many schools will be opposed to using the additional hours in this manner. However, other schools may avail of the facility to aggregate hours as additional days. For example, many members have expressed the view that they wish to have the option to attend school for 1 full day prior to the commencement of the school year for pupils.

The INTO has insisted however, that where such aggregation is adopted, it would be limited to a maximum of 2 school days in a school year. The INTO does not support a position where all of the Croke Park hours could be aggregated as full days.

## **What does “consensus” among the school staff mean?**

Consensus means “a general agreement of opinion”. Consensus is a broader level of agreement than that provided by a simple majority.



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**The 36 hours is to provide additional time to deal with some or all of the following items: school planning; CPD; induction; pre/post school supervision; policy development; staff meetings; nationally planned inservice and school arranged inservice. Is this list exhaustive?**

The above eight broad areas of activity are listed in the Agreement. There is sufficient scope under these headings for a school to identify its own priorities. It should be noted however that the areas identified cover the system needs of the school and do not encompass voluntary after school activities such as school games, etc.

**What are the existing arrangements for parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings which have been agreed under previous agreements?**

Circular 14/2004 remains in operation. Under the terms of this circular, teachers are required to attend one “half-in/half-out” staff meeting per school term, and one parent-teacher meeting per school year. These commitments are in addition to Croke Park hours.

In respect of the “half-in/half-out” staff meetings, circular 14/04 states:

“All schools will make provision to allocate from normal school time a period equivalent to the time given outside school. (Example: a staff meeting of two hours duration which was normally held before school closing time should now take place one hour preceding and one hour following normal school closing time).”

The half-in/half-out arrangement arose from the Sustaining Progress Agreement and commenced in the 2004/2005 school year.

However if a school decides to have these three staff meetings completely outside tuition time, the Croke Park hours can be used to address the “half-in” element.

(For example: a school chooses to have their three-hour staff meeting entirely outside of school hours. Under 14/2004, ninety minutes would have been during the normal school day, and ninety minutes after school. By having the whole meeting outside of school hours, the school must use Croke Park hours for the ninety-minutes that would previously have been during the school day.)

Where more than the three staff meetings provided for in Circular 14/04 are held they will now take place outside tuition time from the time provided by the Croke Park hours.

In respect of parent-teacher meetings, circular 14/04 states: “In each school year there will be one formal parent-teacher meeting. This meeting will normally commence at 3.15 and will end at 5.45 pm unless otherwise agreed at local level between all relevant parties.”

This existing commitment to one two-and-a-half-hour parent teacher meeting outside of tuition time also remains.

Croke Park hours could be used to extend the duration of this meeting or to provide for formal parent-teacher meetings on more than one afternoon/evening.



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**Schools should record the full usage of the additional hours and publicise this in the normal school communication to parents. Is this an individual record or general staff record?**

Many schools issue a periodic newsletter to parents in relation to school activities.

A general notice of how the additional hours have been used may be included in such a communication with parents. This should be a positive announcement indicating the gains arising from the public sector reform agenda for the school community.

It is not intended that how the hours applied to an individual teacher would be published.

## **Do substitute teachers have to complete Croke Park hours?**

Yes, the additional 36 hours per school year as identified in the Croke Park Agreement applies to all teachers.

Employers should use their judgement on whether it is useful or appropriate for a substitute to attend staff meetings using Croke Park hours. Substitute teachers working between a number of schools may wish to keep their own record of Croke Park hours completed.

Updated information provided by INTO on 24 August 2023

<https://www.into.ie/help-advice/other-school-matters/croke-park-hours-2/?cb=13648581509734669381694417536#>