

The Comet

AUTUMN/WINTER 2009

EDITION 3



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Are you a member of a committee that hasn't met in a while? Read on ...

A couple of you have been in touch recently about committees that haven't met in some time. You have been wondering if your committee had become dormant, or even extinct! A few others have been in touch to check up on the status of their membership, wondering if they are still a nominee to a particular committee or working group. The good news is that **you can now check your membership** on a new feature of our website where a committee member, or a member of the general public, can check to see who is a member of what committee. No addresses or other contact details are provided – if we get queries to the NCCA office looking for those, we always refer them to the nominating agency. You can view the list at www.ncca.ie/about and if you have any queries, contact Ursula Corcoran at info@ncca.ie or 057 8682470.

Meetings of committees are only convened if there is work to be done in a particular subject or area. This may seem self-evident, but it is important to remember that a committee meeting will take teachers away from students in classrooms across the country and incur travel and other costs.

If you would like to see if there is a meeting planned for your committee please contact:

Early Childhood and Primary committees – Kathryn Crowley, info@ncca.ie or 01 7996400.

Junior Cycle committees – Janet Wallace, info@ncca.ie or 057 8682470.

Senior Cycle committees – Majella O'Shea, info@ncca.ie or 057 8682470.

In our new strategic plan, you will see that we hope to gather feedback from our committees about the experience of working as part of the NCCA. We will use that feedback for future planning. More on this in your next COMET.

Apologies at NCCA dot IE

A new and more efficient way to let us know you can't attend a meeting ... if you've been at a recent NCCA meeting, then you may already know about this new method.

You no longer need to contact an individual in the NCCA offices if you are unable to attend a meeting. Simply email apologies@ncca.ie and your message will be forwarded to the Education Officer convening your meeting. We are conscious however, of the fact that not everybody has an email address. In this case the usual phone call is the way to go.

Why has there been a reduction in my Travel and Subsistence payment?

If you have attended a recent meeting and submitted a claim for your travel costs, you have probably noticed that the payment is less than that for previous meetings. This is because T & S rates were **reduced by 25%** from 5th March last to make savings in the public sector.

In recent times, we have noticed that more and more committee members are using public transport to travel to our offices in Portlaoise and in Dublin. If you need to use your own car, remember that you must explain on the expenses claim form why this was necessary. Jackie can't process claims for car travel unless an indemnity form has been completed. You can pick one up at your next meeting.

In general, a correctly completed claim form is processed within 6 weeks, and we ask that you claim for expenses incurred immediately after the meeting. Hoarding those forms and submitting them all at once will delay the payment.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Next time you're in the NCCA you'll notice that we recently acquired defibrillators for the Dublin and Portlaoise offices. Staff in both locations have been trained in their use.

Strategic Planning 2009-2011

Our unusual approach to strategic planning has generated some news! If you haven't done so, check it out on the website. Of particular relevance for you is the work proposed at the committee site. Note that your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Keeping up-to-date with NCCA online

Have you visited www.ncca.ie lately? You might be surprised at the range of new content, resources and publications. If perhaps your committee hasn't met in a while, the website can be a great way of keeping up-to-date with what's happening in curriculum and assessment. Below is a quick tour to help you out.

Remember those crescents?

The homepage has three of them setting out the three sections to our website and what you'll find in each.



BLUE: Click into the blue crescent to access the **corporate section** of our website. Here you'll find information about current work at NCCA, our publications and information for parents. Our 'hot topics' items will bring you quickly into new areas of work and/or relevant topics at a particular time of the year, such as Report Card Templates. This is also where you'll find the newly added lists of committee members. Alternatively, you might like to check out the recently launched strategic plan.

RED: Click into the red crescent to access the **curriculum online section** of our website. All of the *Primary School Curriculum*, and Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Curricula are available to browse and search.

ORANGE: Click into the orange crescent to access the **ACTION** part of our website. ACTION stands for *Assessment, Curriculum and Teaching Innovation on the Net*, where the focus is on showing, rather than telling, the 'how to' of teaching and learning in schools and early childhood settings. ACTION contains sample materials that are developed with practitioners, teachers, principals, managers, and students.