

18 March 2020

**To all Principals**

Dear Principal

Management Side, on behalf of all employing and managing authorities wishes to acknowledge the difficult position you are in as school leaders and the importance of the decisions you are making for your school community.

The primary sources of advice and guidance remain the Department of Education and the Public Health Agency. We, like you, continue to take our lead from the guidance provided by both.

We thank you for notifying us about decisions you have made to close schools in the short term by using optional staff development days or additional holidays. Outside of those arrangements all applications for exceptional closures should be made, in the normal way, to the Department of Education.

As you are aware, the Minister of Education has indicated that he will make a decision to close all schools at some date in the future. We must await this decision and have no authority to act without the Minister's direction.

However, Management Side officials continue to engage regularly with officials from DE to support future planning and to ensure schools have appropriate advice and guidance. We will feedback to the Department the many issues you have raised with us, in recent days.

Management Side has also been meeting with representatives of the teaching and non-teaching unions to develop an agreed approach to working together through these difficult and challenging times.

As committed by the Minister in his letter of 16 March, you will continue to receive regular updates from the Department as the guidance is refined.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Long'.

**Sara Long**  
**CHAIR**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Campbell'.

**Gerry Campbell**  
**VICE-CHAIR**