

19 May 2020

Income Support Scheme for substitute teachers

Education Minister Peter Weir has announced a scheme to help support substitute teachers during the Covid-19 crisis.

Substitute teachers have been unable to access secure work as schools are closed except for vulnerable children and those of key workers.

The Minister said: **“I am fully aware of the significant impact this pandemic has had on our pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff. The issue of funding for substitute teachers, who are unable to work and therefore unable to be paid, is one that and I, and my Department, have been working hard to resolve.**

“Today, I am pleased to announce that we will be introducing an income support scheme for substitute teachers through the Covid-19 Response fund.

“The estimated total cost of the scheme is around £12m. My Department will allocate up to £8m and the Executive has agreed to fund the remaining £4m. I would also like to thank the Finance Minister for his support in this matter.”

The scheme will ensure that eligible substitute teachers, engaged between 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2020, will have access to an income for the period April to June 2020. They will receive an additional income through this scheme which will top up their income to at least 80% of that earned in the period January to March 2020.

Continuing, the Minister said: **“Substitute teachers in Northern Ireland are a unique group of staff and the education sector depends on these individuals to be available in normal circumstances to cover for absences of permanent teachers.**

“This will be welcome news to those staff for whom substitute teaching has been their regular source of income. Their income stopped abruptly when schools were instructed to close to pupils except for vulnerable children and those of key workers, and it is only right that they are not disadvantaged when so many other workers have been able to access the UK-wide furlough scheme.”

The Department’s COVID-19 page will be updated later today to enable applications from eligible substitute teachers: <https://bit.ly/3bDGYbC>