

Subject:

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT DAYS 2022/23 SCHOOL YEAR

Circular Number: 2022/06

Date of Issue: 6 June 2022

Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors (BoG) of all grant-aided schools;
- Education Authority (EA);
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS);
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG);
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE);
- Governing Bodies Association;
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA);
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI);
- Controlled Schools' Support Council; and
- Teachers' Unions.

Summary of Contents:

This circular, issued by the Department of Education, sets out the arrangements for schools to take up to five School Development Days in the 2022/23 school year.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the content of this circular should be addressed to:

School Improvement Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
BANGOR,
BT19 7PR

Governor Awareness:
Essential

Status of Contents:
For information and
action by schools

Related Documents:
DE Circular 2016/04
2016/04 Addendum
2016/04 2nd Addendum
2016/04 3rd Addendum
DE Circular 2021/08

Expiry Date: 31 July 2023

DE Website:
Department of Education NI

E-mail:
DEsit@education-ni.gov.uk

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT DAYS 2022/23 SCHOOL YEAR

1. The purpose of this circular is to advise schools that in the 2022/23 academic year they may again take up to five additional days (referred to as School Development Days or SDDs) for the purposes of school improvement and school/staff development. The expiry date for use of these days will be **31 July 2023**.
2. SDDs are intended to allow time for self-evaluation and continuing professional development in pursuit of school improvement and raising of standards. They provide time to devote to matters identified in School Development Plans and any interim plans developed due to COVID-19, as priorities for school development and improvement and should involve all staff, teaching and non-teaching, in planned development activities.
3. In 2022/23, schools should consider setting aside at least one SDD to conduct whole school development to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This is particularly important as we move towards staged implementation of the new SEN Framework.
4. This circular should be read in conjunction with Circular 2016/04 which provides details of what SDDs should be used for; the mechanisms for reporting the uptake and use of these days; and the need to evaluate SDDs. It is the responsibility of school principals to ensure that SDDs are used appropriately for whole school and staff development and to assure themselves that the use of SDDs is having a positive impact on school improvement.
5. A previous review of the use of SDDs highlighted a number of issues including confusion about the definitions of Baker Days, SDDs and Exceptional Closure days; the non-reporting of school development days to the Education Authority by some schools; limited detail in some of the returns to managing authorities about the training that is being delivered; and a lack of information about the impact and effectiveness of SDDs. Definitions of Baker Days, SDDs and Exceptional Closure days can be found in 'A Guide for Governors' on the DE website at the following link: [Guide to governor roles and responsibilities - \(opens in a new window\)](#)

6. The Department will advise on the future availability of SDDs beyond the 2022/23 school year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. B. BROWN".

JEFF BROWN
Head of School Improvement Team