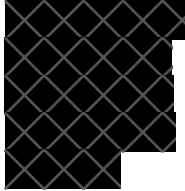




Mr John Hamill



20<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Re: Freedom of Information Request – DES-FOI-2020-0201**

Dear Mr Hamill

I refer to your request dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020 made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which was received on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020 for records held by the Department of Education. Your request sought:

1. All correspondence between the PDST and representatives of the Catholic Church (including emails and written correspondence) during calendar year 2016. This is to include Diocesan Advisors working with schools on behalf of the Catholic Church.
2. All minutes from meetings, policy documents or other agreements between the PDST and representatives of the Catholic Church that were applied during the calendar year 2016, which relate to in-service days for religion teachers. This is to include agreements and discussions relating to the content to be presented at such in-service days; arrangements for physical premises to be used; how costs should be covered and the management of any fees paid; how such in-service days should be advertised towards schools; and what commercial products would be promoted at such in-service days (for example, from suppliers such as Veritas).
3. Any minutes from meetings, policy documents or other agreements between the PDST and representatives of the Catholic Church during calendar year 2016, which relate to how religion should be taught or how teachers should be instructed in the teaching of religion.
4. All written correspondence and all emails between the PDST and the Department of Education and Skills during calendar year 2016, relating to the teaching of religion.
5. All written correspondence and all emails between the PDST and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment during calendar year 2016, relating to the teaching of religion.
6. Details of any payments made by the PDST to the Catholic Church or Diocesan Advisors acting on behalf of the Catholic Church.

**Corr na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí, N37 X659**

Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 X659

T +353 90 6483946 | karen\_ryan@education.gov.ie

[www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)



I, Karen Ryan, Higher Executive Officer, have now made a final decision to grant your request on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

I list below the steps that Teacher Education Section has taken to locate the records.

The Department considers that all relevant personnel were consulted and their records searched.

Circulation of an email to the staff of Teacher Education Section, Inspectorate and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit advising them of the request.

A search of the electronic databases and records held by Teacher Education Section on the computer server dedicated to Teacher Education Section.

A physical search of all relevant areas of Teacher Education Section in which the records sought might possibly be held.

The above are the reasonable steps which we have taken to locate the records which were requested. In choosing these steps, Teacher Education Section has tried to maximise the chance that the records will be found, while not overly disrupting its operations. On this basis, Teacher Education Section has identified and implemented the steps to locate the records that were reasonable to take in this case. The records were searched both manually and by computer. The searches for the records requested were carried out during March 2021. The files searched were correspondence files and any other files which was deemed to possibly hold the records requested.

On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, I emailed Ciara O Donnell, Director PDST asking them to review their records and if any records relevant to the request exist, the relevant records should be copied, attached and returned to me. PDST replied and advised that they only had documentation in relation to item 1 above and sent on the relevant emails which are now enclosed.

Attached are the only records pertaining to your request. Also attached are extracts from the PDST annual reports for 2015-2016 (reference pages 275- 278) and 2016-2017 (reference pages 253-254). Highlighted are CPD inputs PDST provided in relation to Religious Education curriculum to external agencies.

### **Right of appeal**

You may appeal this decision. In the event that you need to make such an appeal, you can do so by writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 RC96 or email [foi@education.gov.ie](mailto:foi@education.gov.ie) . There is a fee of €30 for processing the appeal. For further information regarding payment methods, please email [foi@education.gov.ie](mailto:foi@education.gov.ie)



You should make your appeal within 4 weeks from the date of this notification, where a day is defined as a working day excluding, the weekend and public holidays. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this body.

**Publication**

All non-personal FOI requests will be recorded on an FOI disclosure log which will be published on the Department of Education and Skills website in due course.

Should you wish to discuss the above, please contact me at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Karen Ryan  
Higher Executive Officer