

From: NiCheallaigh, Muireann Muireann_NiCheallaigh@education.gov.ie 
Subject: RE: Formal Acknowledgement of Internal Review - DES-FOI-2023-0043
Date: 5 April 2023 at 10:44
To: John Hamill 
Cc: Freedom of Information foi@education.gov.ie

Dear Mr Hamill,

The Internal Review of DES-FOI-2023-0043 has concluded and the decision has issued to you

In regards your queries in the email below dated 14 March, should you wish to submit a fresh FOI request with regards these queries, you can do so by emailing foi@education.gov.ie


Kind regards,
Muireann Ni Cheallaigh
Higher Executive Officer
Teacher Education Section

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education
Cor na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí
Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co Westmeath, N37 X659

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An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

From: John Hamill < >
Sent: Tuesday 14 March 2023 17:30
To: NiCheallaigh, Muireann <Muireann_NiCheallaigh@education.gov.ie>
Cc: Freedom of Information <foi@education.gov.ie>; Geraghty, Brian <Brian_Geraghty@education.gov.ie>
Subject: Re: Formal Acknowledgement of Internal Review - DES-FOI-2023-0043

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Hi Muireann,

Your Department has repeatedly told parents like myself that all of the work you fund around the teaching of RE, relates exclusively to the NCCA course. Your Department has stated that this course is suitable for those of all faiths and none, since it does not involve any faith formation. Your Department has also stated that you do not fund faith formation. In relation to the PDST specifically, your Department has said that:

“The PDST can on occasion be invited to provide inputs at various educational conferences and events. This can happen for all subjects including Religion. Any input provided by the PDST is directly connected to the curriculum and classroom methodologies/assessment.”

I don't believe this is the case. I believe that the PDST has been much too close to one

I don't believe this is the case. I believe that the PDST has been much too close to one denomination in particular, participating in joint events that involve faith formation. In the attached email, it seems that joint events with the Le Chéile Schools Trust (a body comprising 15 Roman Catholic congregations) have included explicit faith formation and have been credited by your Department towards CPD considerations within school inspections.

With respect to the current FoI request, I had expected to see the presentations that were delivered by the PDST at all of these events, which seem to be missing. I would also like to see what other topics the PDST has discussed with Le Chéile Schools Trust. Since the issue is whether or not the PDST has become too close to one religious denomination, I would like to see all of the topics discussed between the PDST and representatives of that denomination. It seems that several of these discussions have been redacted. While I have no interest in seeing for example the name of a student, it seems as if much more than that has been redacted from the emails. The context of these emails is an unsolicited request from Le Chéile to have State-funded support at their training events. In the context of making such requests there should be no expectation of confidentiality and I believe that all of these emails should be released to me unredacted.

As an aside, in response to my FoI request 2021-0192 your Department told me that these events were typically arranged by telephone such that no emails or other records with Le Chéile existed. Quite obviously, none of these events were arranged by telephone and all of these records should have been released to me years ago. This came after I was told that there were no joint events at all between the PDST and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, and also that there have been no communications at all between the PDST and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. Is there any reason why your FoI responses concerning the PDST have been consistently false?

Best Regards,
John Hamill.

... from the sessions in a way that teachers would get the most benefit from I would welcome any suggestions you might have for these workshops. One change we will be introducing this year is – mindful of WSEs and the Department's emphasis on Reflective Practice and CPD we hope to present a Le Chéile certificate of attendance which teachers who attend will be able to put into their folders to show to any visiting inspector, WSE or subject inspection, as proof of ongoing professional development.

Thanks to those of you who have already sent back the booking form for our Anam Cara day on Wednesday September 21. If you any of you are in a school that does not already have an Anam Cara...

have an *Amhar* Cara and would like more information about it please do not hesitate to contact me.

I also attach both the final version of the Brochure for the Faith Development Course and the application form. For those of you who know our Middle Leaders Course it is modelled on that format. Last year we had some teachers from our schools who attended and seemed to find it helpful and stimulating. You might have some colleagues who could find it of interest and I would be grateful if you would pass it on to them.

Finally the dates for LCA RE training are:

1. Limerick Education Centre September 13th
2. Drumcondra EC September 22nd.

All booking through the pdst.ie website.

Kind Regards

JOHN SCALLY

Le Chéile Schools Trust Ltd.

On 14 Mar 2023, at 16:20, Freedom of Information <foi@education.gov.ie> wrote:

Dear Mr. Hamill,

I refer to your appeal in relation to **DES-FOI-2023-0043** which you made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and receipt of your €30.00 electronic fee which was received by the Department on 14/03/2023.

In accordance with section 21(3) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, the internal review must be conducted by an officer of a grade higher than that of the officer who made the initial decision on your request. **Muireann NiCheallaigh will be handling your appeal and can be contacted at Muireann_NiCheallaigh@education.gov.ie should you have any queries regarding your request.**

Under section 21(4) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, this review must be completed and a decision conveyed to the requester no later than 15 working days after the receipt of the request for an internal review. This means **a reply should therefore issue to you by 05/04/2023**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review then you may, in accordance with the terms of section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act

2014, appeal the decision within 6 months by writing to the Office of the Information Commissioner, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773, phone: (01) 639 5689 email: info@oic.ie).

Kind Regards,
Caroline Scully

Caroline Scully
Data Compliance & Support Section

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Sráid Maoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath, D01 RC96.
Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 RC96.

T +353(0)1 889 2240 | foi@education.gov.ie | www.gov.ie/education/

From: John Hamill <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday 13 March 2023 20:23
To: Geraghty, Brian <Brian_Geraghty@education.gov.ie>
Cc: Freedom of Information <foi@education.gov.ie>
Subject: Re: DES-FOI-2023-0043 Formal Acknowledgement

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Hi Brian,

Thanks for all of this information. I really appreciate it.

According to the terms of the Act, I would like to formally request a review of this FoI response by a more senior member of your organisation. I have attached confirmation of electronic payment of the commensurate fee.

The scope of the review can be limited to the redactions that have been applied. Some of the redactions seem to relate to the name of students and that is fine. I have no interest in those names. However, some of the redactions relate to much more than that and I'm not satisfied that there is any valid reason to apply those redactions. If representatives of Catholic bodies write to public bodies seeking State-funded support for their events, they must accept that all such records are subject to FoI.

I will look forward to the result of this review in 3 weeks.

Best Regards,
John.

<image001.png>

On 13 Mar 2023, at 18:53, Geraghty, Brian
<Brian_Geraghty@education.gov.ie> wrote:

Dear Mr Hamill,
Please see the link below to Dropbox folder (FOI Athlone)
containing decision letter, decision schedule and files that have
been released regarding your Freedom of Information request.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fqxz80vynungpnk/AABKR1aAnaBWUM0d64z1NRw9a?dl=0>

Yours sincerely,
Brian Geraghty.

Brian Geraghty
*Executive Officer,
Teacher Education Policy
ITE & Professional Development.*

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Corr na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co na hIarmhí N37 X659.
Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 X659.

T +353(0) 90 648 3786
<[image001.jpg](#)>

From: eFOI (Education) <Education-eFOI@cloud.gov.ie>
Sent: Tuesday 14 February 2023 12:28
To: John Hamill <[\[REDACTED\]](#)>
Cc: Geraghty, Brian <Brian_Geraghty@education.gov.ie>; Freedom
of Information <foi@education.gov.ie>
Subject: DES-FOI-2023-0043 Formal Acknowledgement

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known.

Dear Mr. Hamill,
I refer to your request, made under the Freedom of Information Act
2014, which was received by the Department of Education on
13/02/2023.

Request:

I would like to make a formal request for access to records under
the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. In accordance with Section
12 of the Act, I am requesting access to all non-personal
records within PDST relating to communications with the Le
Chéile Schools Trust during the calendar year 2016. Specifically,
this should involve searching the following two email accounts:

- ciaraodonnell@pdst.ie
- garycarley@pdst.ie

The search should seek all emails to and from the domain “@lecheiletrust.ie”. Also specifically within the scope of this FOI request are all presentations, training materials, meeting minutes, communications or other records relating to the arrangement and delivery of an event at the Stillorgan Park Hotel on March 8th 2016. I’m interested in records relating to how the event was arranged, what content was requested, what content was delivered during the event, and what internal PDST considerations were made with respect what content should be delivered.

In accordance with the provisions of section 13(1) of the FOI Act 2014, a decision is to be conveyed to the requester no later than 20 working days after the receipt of the request. A reply should issue to you therefore by 13/03/2023

The file, reference number **DES-FOI-2023-0043** has been forwarded to the ITE and Professional Development section for direct reply. Brian Geraghty is the decision maker and can be contacted by email at brian_geraghty@education.gov.ie should you have any queries regarding your request.

If you are not satisfied with the eventual outcome of your request then you are entitled to seek an internal review in accordance with the terms of section 21 of the FOI Act 2014. The internal review will be conducted by an officer of a grade higher than that of the officer who made the initial decision regarding your request. You must submit your request for an internal review within 20 working days from the date of the decision notification.

Furthermore, you are also entitled to seek an internal review if no reply is issued to you by the date specified above. This internal review proceeds on the legal basis that the initial request is considered to be refused once the specified time for responding to it has expired.

In the event that you wish to make an application for an internal review, you may do so by writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D09 RC96 or by emailing foi@education.gov.ie. Under the FOI Act 2014. Please note: in accordance with Section 8 of the FOI Act, the Department of Education and Skills has a policy of posting a summary of non-personal requests and decisions on the Department’s website for references purposes. All personal information will be redacted from any records published.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact this Office – foi@education.gov.ie

Yours sincerely
Caroline Scully

Caroline Scully
Data Compliance & Support Section

An Roinn Oideachais

Department of Education

Sráid Maoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath, D01 RC96.
Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 RC96.

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The FOI Request DES-FOI-2023-0043 has been emailed to you
by Scully, Caroline.

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