

Dear Principal,

The following email is to provide further information to school principals, teachers, parents and students on queries which have been raised with the State Examinations Commission in relation to the examination events that are taking place over the Easter period and afterwards, i.e. the orals, Leaving Certificate Music practical performance and the LCA tasks.

Entry of candidates for oral interviews

- Candidates who have not registered on the Candidate Self-Service portal, or who registered on the portal but did not complete their selection of subjects and levels, can present for the oral interview. The details of these candidates must be added onto the '*Candidate Entry Roll*' as described in section 4 page 8 of SEC Circular 13/21.
- Candidates who had opted out of the written examinations and selected accredited grades only, and who now want to opt back in to sit the written examinations, should be facilitated by schools in undertaking their oral interview(s) as long as the oral interview takes place within the original time window (26 March to 15 April). The details of these candidates must be added onto the '*Candidate Entry Roll*' as described in section 4 page 8 of SEC Circular 13/21. Late orals in this circumstance are not permitted.
- When the portal reopens at end April/early May, candidates can update their choices to reflect their participation in the orals. (Note they will not be able to add new subjects).
- Extensions for oral interviews are only available to candidates who are unable to attend due to illness and on the provision of medical certification.

Testing and sign-off of the Oral recordings

As set out in the SEC Circular S13/21 *Guidance to School Management*, and the supplementary note (24 March, 2021), the principal sign-off now requires that the quality of **each** individual recording is tested in advance of submission of the recordings to the SEC to ensure that each individual recording is of sufficient and satisfactory quality to be marked by the SEC, including the voices of the interviewer and the candidate are not muffled. This testing of each individual recording must involve the school listening to a sufficient portion of the recording to satisfy themselves that the quality of that particular recording is satisfactory.

PPE

In relation to the reasonable additional costs specifically incurred in relation to light, heat, cleaning, caretaking and PPE, within schools, associated with the examinations taking place in the evenings, weekends and Easter holidays these will be reimbursed by SEC. This includes in respect of the orals, LCA Tasks and Music.

School Transport.

With regard to school transport, and under the terms of the Department of Education's School Transport Scheme, school transport services for eligible children generally operate during the standard school year to facilitate a child's attendance during normal school opening and closing times only. The LC Music performance tests and the LCA Tasks are taking place over the Easter holidays and the designated period for the Oral Language interviews includes evenings, weekends and the Easter Holidays; time periods during which the School Transport Scheme is not operational. For public health reasons, and as these events are of short duration in schools, it would not be appropriate to have a normal school transport system in operation.

Schools are asked to facilitate the attendance of students using taxi services in the following limited circumstances; The student must;

- be eligible for school transport under the terms of the Department's School Transport Scheme and
- be availing of school transport in the current school year for whom transport services will not be available over the period 26 March to 11 April (noting school resumes on 12 April) and
- have to attend for an examination event over this period noting that this should be considered when scheduling candidates.

The SEC will reimburse schools for reasonable costs of such services on the production of valid receipts.

Leaving Certificate Aides

The SEC will be issuing a circular to second -level schools next week on the appointment and payment of Leaving Certificate Aides.

This information should be brought to the attention of school management, teachers, students and parents at the earliest opportunity.

Many thanks for your ongoing cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Feeney
Chief Executive Officer
State Examinations Commission