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LETTER CIRCULAR

Information: X

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Action Required: X

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To: College Principals, All Heads of School (State and Non-State) and Sections

From: Joanne Grima, CEO, Institute for Education
Gaetano Bugeja, Director Curriculum Management

Subject: In-Service Courses 2017

College Principals, Heads of School and Sections are kindly requested to note the following and bring the relevant points to the attention of all members of staff concerned.

1. Professional Learning Sessions organised by the Institute for Education

- 1.1 Following the agreement between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers, *“teaching grades shall be required to attend In-Service training for three working days immediately prior to their reporting for duty in September or immediately following the closure of schools for the summer recess”*, the Institute for Education will be organising Professional Learning sessions as indicated below.
- 1.2 Professional Learning sessions will be held on the following dates: **7th, 10th and 11th July; 15th, 18th and 19th September.**
- 1.3 The **duration** will be from 08:30 to 12:30.
- 1.4 Venue/s for each course will be published in the Course Catalogue.
- 1.5 In conformity with reduction of carbon footprint policies, notification to attend Professional Learning sessions will be as follows:
- Course Co-ordinators (Education Officers, Principals, etc) will send a notification **by email** to attend Professional Learning sessions to each individual school, listing the teachers who are being requested to attend.
 - Course Co-ordinators will **copy each individual teacher they are listing into the email** indicated above, using the teacher’s **ilearn mailing address**. No paper convocation will be sent.
 - Schools will notify teachers of the receipt of the email mentioned above. Acknowledgement of receipt of this mail should be sent to the Education Officer.

- iv. Teachers will read their copy of the convocation sent on their personal ilearn account, and **reply** in acknowledgment of receipt. This will serve **in lieu of the signed copy** of the convocation sheet which used to be sent in past years, and will assure the Course Co-ordinator that the convocation has been received for record purposes.
- 1.6 The course days are **service days**, i.e. they are working days and regulations holding for school days apply for the duration of the Professional Learning sessions. Attendance should be **punctual**. The Institute for Education will take a strong stand on any unjustified absenteeism by members of the teaching staff detailed to attend Professional Learning sessions. With this in mind, participants are to note the following regulations regarding absenteeism:
 - i. Medical certificates are to be passed on by the participant to the course co-ordinator, who shall then submit medical certificates to the Institute for Education by not later than a week after the course has ended. The participants are also to notify the school where they teach about the details of their absence.
 - 1.7 SMT and teaching staff are advised that **no activities, visits abroad, staff meetings**, etc. should be organised during days involving these Professional Learning sessions as these days are contractual working days. All teaching staff are again reminded that no bookings for holidays during these days can be undertaken before the publication of the **Professional Learning Course Catalogue, which is scheduled to be available online on the 10th April 2017**.
 - 1.8 Only the **Director, Curriculum Management** can excuse/exempt a member of the teaching staff from attending a Professional Learning session which he/she has been called for.
 - 1.9 Voluntary courses are organised by professional people and require a great deal of planning and preparation. It is expected that applicants exhibit a degree of professional commitment when applying, and know that being accepted for a course often means that someone else may be refused admission. Resignations from courses are to be considered only in exceptional circumstances. It is often the case that the Institute for Education is unable to fill places vacated by participants who do not turn up because the information arrives at the last moments.
 - 1.10 All participants attending the Professional Learning sessions are advised that they are attending a professional activity and are therefore expected to respect the dress code applicable as per letter circular OPS/6/2000 i.e. *"The Dress Code is applicable for all schools' and Education Directorates' activities including In-Service Training and Conferences/Seminars."*
 - 1.11 Participants attending the Professional Learning sessions are expected to exercise respect for other participants when using their own car to arrive at the venue of training. Traffic and parking regulations must be respected and cars which are parked in such a way as to obstruct traffic, access to passages, as well as the exit of other vehicles are subject to the provisions of the law, apart from the serious consequences that irresponsible parking can entail on other colleagues who may be obliged to leave the premises due to unforeseen circumstances.

1.12 Any member/s of staff who would like to organise Voluntary Professional Learning sessions can do so provided that they contact the Institute for Education by not later than **Monday 27th February, 2017**.

2. Professional Learning sessions Organised by Heads of School/College Principals within Service Days

It is to be noted that for 2017 School/College based courses will have precedence over Compulsory Courses organised by Education Officers, except for the following subjects/areas:

- **Year 5 teachers and LSAs - training in the use of tablets. This training is being offered as an accredited or non-accredited version. Members of staff who wish to apply for the accredited version of the course are kindly requested to apply through this link <https://goo.gl/WdjMt0>**

2.1 The points mentioned above for Professional Learning sessions organised by the Institute for Education also hold for Voluntary School-based Courses.

2.2 Heads of School who wish to run Voluntary School-based Professional Learning Sessions can contact the: **Institute for Education** (attn: marisa.schembri@ilearn.edu.mt) by not later than **Monday 27th February 2017**. The Institute for Education will provide guidelines and any other assistance that Heads of School might need to run such courses.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Joanne Grima
CEO Institute for Education

Gaetano Bugeja
Director Curriculum Management