

Role Title	General Secretary
Reporting to	Board of Directors, Secretariat of Secondary Schools
Salary Scale	Commensurate with experience Secondment arrangements may apply
Nature of post	Full-time permanent
Location of work	The General Secretary will be based at the Secretariat of Secondary Schools Office at Emmet House, Milltown, Dublin 14
Hours of work	The usual working week is Monday to Friday The nature of the role requires flexibility in terms of hours worked
Application details	An application form and relevant materials are available from www.jmb.ie

The Secretariat of Secondary Schools: The Secretariat of Secondary Schools is the management body for all voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland and exercises this function through its Joint Managerial Body (JMB), and Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) divisions.

The JMB/AMCSS has a leadership role at national level in the formulation, development, and implementation of policy and represents the voluntary secondary school sector in negotiations on issues which affect the leadership and management of schools.

JMB/AMCSS also provides support, advice, and training across a wide range of operational and leadership areas of activity in voluntary secondary schools.

Summary of role:

The General Secretary performs a vital role in ensuring the provision of support, advice, and information for voluntary secondary schools as well as negotiating on their behalf with relevant agencies and representing their interests where necessary.

The General Secretary leads a highly motivated team providing support to voluntary secondary schools and negotiating on their behalf.

The General Secretary is required to exercise managerial and leadership skills in developing the organisation to meet its strategic objectives and goals.

The General Secretary must display excellent organisational and communication skills in dealing with staff, personnel in our schools and the partners in Irish education.

The General Secretary is required to have excellent negotiating skills and a demonstrated capacity for initiative, strategic planning, and policy development.

The General Secretary must have a strong commitment to faith-based education, the voluntary secondary school system, and a commitment to advance education in accordance with Catholic ethos and the ethos of schools within the Irish Schoolheads Association.

KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Secretariat of Secondary Schools

The General Secretary exercises management and oversight of the organisation, in the delivery of the key outcomes of the strategic development plan, and in compliance with the Constitution and Internal Regulations of The Secretariat of Secondary Schools.

His/her duties and responsibilities are not exhaustive and are subject to change as the organisation evolves.

In reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the General Secretary is expected to be flexible regarding any other such duties that may be so prescribed from time to time.

1. Promoting Denominational Education in Voluntary Secondary Schools (3.2.1 SDP, 2022-2025)

To advance education in accordance with Catholic ethos and the ethos of schools within the Irish Schoolheads Association.

The General Secretary shall:

- Ensure that all planning and activities of the organisation are aligned to the principles set out in the Constitution of the SSS and its operational framework, as set out in its Internal Regulations
- Work with the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) and Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) in the advancement of Catholic education and the continuing development of excellence in schools with a Catholic ethos
- Work with the Irish Schoolheads Association (ISA) in the advancement of school ethos and the continuing development of excellence in schools comprehended by the ISA
- Develop the AMCSS Regional structure and ensure that the AMCSS Regions are supported in their operation
- Actively support the professional and faith development of school leaders

2. Carrying out the Role of a Recognised School Management Body (3.2.2 SDP, 2022-2025)

To negotiate on behalf of all schools in the voluntary secondary sector and to develop strategic relationships in influencing education policy.

The General Secretary shall:

- Represent, advocate for, and advise the SSS in their negotiations with the Department of Education, government and other statutory bodies, trade unions, and any other relevant organisations. In all such negotiations the General Secretary shall be subject to the direction and policy as set down by the Board of Directors of SSS
- Negotiate with all relevant agencies and partners on behalf of the SSS on all matters pertaining to the work of the organisation and in developing an awareness of school management concerns in all policy implementation

- Create and maintain effective relationships with educational organisations in Ireland and abroad and maintain contact with developments in educational research in such areas as the Teaching Council, NCCA, the third level sector and other statutory authorities
- Establish formal and informal links with equivalent education bodies in UK and European jurisdictions
- Act as Public Relations Officer for the SSS and as such, always express the policy and views of The Secretariat of Secondary Schools in statements to the media either when requested by the SSS, or when approached by the media or on other opportune occasions

3. Providing Management, Compliance and Advisory Services (3.2.3 SDP, 2022-2025)

To provide information, advice, support, professional development, and training to all our schools.

The General Secretary shall:

- Ensure the provision of a comprehensive range of support relevant services to schools
- Ensure that the professional development needs of our schools are identified and that appropriate professional development opportunities are created and provided
- Ensure that the human resource capacity of the SSS is developed to meet the current and developing needs of our schools
- Identify and provide for support and development opportunities in relation to board of management chairpersons and region leadership teams
- Ensure regular review and identify future and enhanced needs of our schools and to oversee the expansion of the SSS Management Advisory Service to meet these requirements
- Ensure the monitoring and review of service recipient satisfaction

4. Promoting Educational Research and Development (3.2.4 SDP, 2022-2025)

To generate, use, and share knowledge and research in support of the educational development aims of the voluntary secondary sector.

The General Secretary shall:

- Lead the commission and collaboration of purposeful research activity with other relevant bodies, in the generation of high-quality research that supports the strategic aims of the organisation
- Prioritise principal and deputy principal wellbeing
- Lead research on the value of Catholic education and the assessment of the impact of government policy on denominational education generally
- Lead research and reporting on the inequitable state funding arrangements relating to schools in the voluntary secondary sector
- Encourage and support the research activities of voluntary secondary principals and deputy principals, and work to disseminate relevant outcomes from such activity

5. Organisational Effectiveness and Governance (3.2.5 SDP, 2022-2025)

To develop The Secretariat of Secondary Schools' governance and organisation structures, processes, skills, and competences, and to communicate the work and achievements of the Secretariat.

The General Secretary shall:

- Promote the key objectives of the SSS as set out in its constitution and Internal Regulations
- Be responsible to the Board of SSS for the day-to-day management and leadership of staff, ensuring that all statutory obligations affecting the organisation, and its activities are observed
- Lead the internal operational structure and ensure that it is aligned with an efficient and effective service model and key strategic objectives of the organisation, and as an efficient source of information, advice and support for voluntary secondary school management and principals
- Undertake such other duties that may be assigned from time to time by the Board of Directors of SSS
- Ensure that the accounts of the SSS are properly recorded and an update on finances is prepared for each meeting of the Board of Directors
- Arrange that the annual accounts are prepared for audit in sufficient time for the Annual General Meeting of the Board of Directors
- Ensure that the work and functioning of the organisation's governance structures are regularly evaluated
- Be responsible for maintaining an effective flow of information and advice to voluntary secondary schools
- Lead an effective communications and media strategy and process so that key messages relating to the work of the SSS are shared both internally and externally

Terms and Conditions:

The terms and conditions will be fully outlined in the contract of employment. They will include the following:

1. The General Secretary shall be appointed by the Board of SSS, initially for a specified probationary period of six months. The position thereafter will be subject to regular review by the Board
2. The contract of the General Secretary may be terminated by either party on receipt of three months' notice in writing
3. The General Secretary shall receive remuneration which takes account of qualifications, experience and other factors related to the nature of the position. The details of his/her remuneration package will form an Appendix to the Contract of the General Secretary when finalised. The Board is open to consider applicants on the basis of secondment from their present posts
4. The General Secretary shall be paid travel and subsistence expenses in respect of any business of the organisation. Such expenses shall be paid on receipt of vouched claims
5. Annual holidays shall be thirty working days together with all public and bank holidays
6. The normal working week shall consist of five days. The nature of the position requires flexibility in terms of the hours worked
7. The General Secretary shall not be an active member of any organisation with whom the SSS might negotiate from time to time
8. The General Secretary shall attend all meetings of the SSS unless s/he requests to be absent, or unless requested by the Board to withdraw for any discussion relating to his/her own conditions of service. S/he shall not have a vote at these meetings. S/he shall act as Secretary to these bodies and arrange to have the minutes recorded. S/he shall ensure that the Chair is fully briefed for all meetings and that members are in a position to brief themselves adequately on all matters on the agenda of such meetings

9. The General Secretary shall lead and organise the Secretariat and exercise other duties within the limits of an annual budget which shall be prepared and presented to the Board for approval
10. The General Secretary shall prepare and present to the Board a report on the operation and financial position of the SSS at each Board meeting and shall facilitate the auditors in every reasonable way in their annual audit and other duties
11. The General Secretary shall obtain prior sanction from the Board before undertaking any extraordinary duties. Work undertaken for any body other than the SSS is deemed to be extraordinary
12. While the General Secretary is answerable to the Board of the Directors of the SSS, s/he will be expected to report to and work closely with the President of AMCSS-JMB, and the Deputy President, as appropriate

*The SSS company is organised in two divisions, the AMCSS and the JMB. Each has a distinct role and function which are governed by the Board of Directors.

Key Competencies

A number of key competencies have been identified as being essential for the effective performance in the role and function of the General Secretary:

1. Strong leadership with the capacity to implement the multi-faceted priorities stemming from the Strategic Plan
2. Good character, with a strong commitment to faith-based education and the ability to articulate that vision for the future of the multi-faceted voluntary sector
3. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills within the strands of the organisation, with partners and the wider public
4. Experience in the best practice of organisational management and the ability to manage a complex portfolio of diverse schools, advocating-for, and working with each
5. A demonstrated capacity for initiative and strategic planning with an ability to be proactive in influencing the direction of change initiatives at national level
6. Proven negotiating skills based on an ability to influence others for the benefit of our sector's schools

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