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**An Bille um Gharchabhair agus Meabhairshláinte i  
Scoileanna (Múinteoirí Reatha), 2018  
First Aid and Mental Health in Schools  
(Existing Teachers) Bill 2018**

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*Meabhrán Mínitheach  
Explanatory Memorandum*

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**AN BILLE UM GHARCHABHAIR AGUS MEABHAIRSHLÁINTE  
I SCOILEANNA (MÚINTEOIRÍ REATHA), 2018  
FIRST AID AND MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS  
(EXISTING TEACHERS) BILL 2018**

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**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

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**Purpose of the Bill**

The purpose of this Bill is to—

- (i) provide for the introduction of a requirement that all existing staff in schools be trained in occupational first aid response and mental health first aid,
- (ii) require that training in occupational first aid response and mental health first aid forms part of a continuing professional development requirement for school staff,
- (iii) provide for the approval of courses in both first aid response and mental health first aid,
- (iv) require schools to devise a first aid policy and to put in place a first aid box.

**Provisions of the Bill**

The Bill contains 11 sections and is divided into four Parts.

In *Part 1, section 1(1)* sets out the short title of the Bill. *Section 1(2)* provides that the Bill comes into force on 1 January 2019.

*Section 2* defines 8 key terms which are used in the Bill.

*Section 3* provides for the making of regulations to prescribe matters under this Bill or to ensure that the Bill takes full effect. Regulations made under this section must be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

*Part 2* of the Bill contains five sections which address the first aid and mental health training requirements for existing teachers.

*Section 4(1)* states that a serving teacher will be required to prove that within two years of the coming into operation of this section, he or she has completed a training course in occupational first aid response, and mental health first aid training. *Section 4(2)* provides that the mental health first aid training must incorporate particular elements which are spelled out in this subsection. *Section 4(3)* disapplies the requirements of this section in the case of teachers who qualified within the previous five years where their initial teacher training covered occupational first aid response, and mental health first aid.

*Section 5(1)* addresses the need to have periodic refresher training in occupational first aid response and mental health first aid training every five years. *Section 5(2)* explains the meaning of the phrase “every five years” in this context.

*Section 6(1)* requires the Minister to consult with the Teaching Council and to then prescribe particular training courses as being suitable to enable existing teachers to train in occupational first aid and mental health first aid, and it also required the Minister to prescribe refresher training courses which cover those topics. *Section 6(2)* states that in addition to prescribing training courses under *subsection (1)*, the Minister may also provide guidance on the course syllabus for those courses.

*Section 7* makes it clear that there is an obligation on Boards of Management to facilitate teachers' attendance at the required training.

*Section 8* requires that each school, pre-school etc maintain a log of the occupational first aid response and mental health first aid training which has been undertaken by each member of staff. There is also a requirement that copy certificates of completion of the courses be retained by the school.

*Part 3* contains two sections which relate to the need to have a first aid policy and also a first aid box.

*Section 9(1)* requires that each school, pre-school etc prepare a first aid policy which is reviewed each year. *Section 9(2)* provides that a first aid policy must address the matters which have been prescribed by the Minister in regulations. *Section 9(3)* requires that the first aid policy be given to each member of staff, and also that it be prominently displayed in the school. *Section 9(4)* imposes a duty of each member of staff to familiarise themselves with the content of the most recent version of the first aid policy.

*Section 10(1)* requires each school, pre-school etc to make available on the premises a suitably equipped first aid box. *Section 10(2)* defines the phrase "suitably equipped first aid box".

*Part 4* contains one section - *section 11* - which makes it clear that it is the duty of each Board of Management to ensure that the various requirements which are imposed by this Bill are adhered to.

*Senators Robbie Gallagher, Diarmuid Wilson and Keith Swanick, Bealtaine, 2018.*