

Information note for students attending a focus group during a subject inspection

What is a subject inspection?

- A school inspector will visit your school to look at what teaching and learning is like in a subject you are studying.

Before the inspection, the inspector will:

- Phone the principal to tell them that the inspector will visit the school to look at how the subject is being taught and what learning is like for the students
- Remind the principal that there are leaflets and animated videos available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d3832-guide-to-inspection/> that tell students and also parents about inspection and the work of inspectors
- Ask the principal to tell the teachers and students that the inspection will be happening in the school

As part of an inspection, the inspector will:

- Meet the teacher(s) of the subject and the principal
- Look at the school's planning to teach the subject
- Look at school resources for the subject such as the classrooms, storage areas and equipment for subjects such as Science or Woodwork
- Visit classrooms to look at the teacher(s) teaching and chat to students about their learning
- Look at students' work such as copybooks, folders, portfolios and homework journals
- Meet with some students to hear what it is like for them to learn in the subject
- Tell the teacher(s) what is working well and give advice about how to make teaching and learning better in the subject
- Write a report about what the inspector saw during the visit and how well the subject is being taught and what the learning experiences were like in the subject for the students.

What happens in the focus group?

- During a focus group, the inspector will meet with a small group of students to talk about what it is like for them to learn in that subject. It is not a test.
- The inspector meets with about 10 students. The students will come from different classes and year groups.
- The students are invited to be in the focus group. They can choose to take part or not to take part in the focus group.
- If a large number of students volunteer, 10 students will be picked by the inspector.
- The inspector will explain how the focus group works and answer students' questions.
- Listening to the students' views will help the inspector to understand how well the subject is being delivered in the school.

To help you to get ready for the focus group, you might like to:

- Think about lessons or work that you have done recently in the subject: what was it about that lesson or piece of work that you really liked?
- Think about your learning experiences: are they fun and why?
- Think about what happens if you are finding learning hard
- During the focus group, the inspector will make some notes. The notes help the inspector to remember what was said. The inspector will not write down any student names. At the end of the focus group, the inspector will go over the main things that were said with the students. After the focus group, the inspector will share the main things that were said with the school and may include them in the inspection report.

Do I have to take part?

- No, you do not have to take part in the focus group. You have a choice to take part. If you decide that you do not want to talk to the inspector after agreeing to take part, that is fine too. You can change your mind at any time and you don't have to give a reason.



After the inspection, the inspector will:

- Write a report about how well the subject is being delivered in the school and what the teaching and learning is like. The report will talk about things that are working well and give advice about how to make other things better in the subject. The report will also mention the meeting with the focus group of students (no names will be included in the report).

