



In-person Supplementary Programme to Support the Education or Care Needs of students with complex needs during this period of school closure at Post Primary

11 February 2021

Dear Principal,

The Department of Education recognises that students with complex needs experience the impact of school closures and the cessation of in-person teaching and learning in a very considerable way.

I would like to acknowledge the significant efforts your school is making to provide effective remote teaching and learning for these students.

The Department and stakeholders recognise that on its own remote learning cannot realistically replace the benefits of in-school provision.

Following intensive engagement and input from post primary and special education partners, a framework has now been developed and agreed with all partners, including unions and management, in order to achieve a phased return to in-school provision for students with the most complex special educational needs.

Under the framework

- **Post Primary Special Classes will reopen from Monday 22nd February 2021.**

In addition there is agreement that some in-home support would benefit all post primary students with complex needs to alleviate the impact of this period of school closure.

For this reason, the Department has announced an **In-Person Supplementary Programme** to support the education or care needs of post primary students with complex needs.

This programme of in-person support is intended to supplement the teaching and learning provided by the student's school and alleviate the impact of this period of school closure through the provision of 5 hours per week in-person teaching or care support to be delivered in homes.

Please bring the scheme to the attention of parents of eligible students and school staff. Where parents wish to participate in the scheme, please complete Part 1 of the attached **Grant Claim Form** and provide it to the eligible parents.



Please advise parents that Part 2 must be completed before tuition/care support commences and Part 3 must be completed as the support is provided.

Purpose of the Programme

Despite the provision of remote teaching and learning by schools, there is a widespread concern that the lack of in-person support for learning may lead to regression in students with complex needs.

Therefore, there is good reason to offer an in-person supplementary programme to those students with complex needs at post primary level to alleviate the impact of this period of school closure.

It is intended that this programme would be provided by teachers or SNAs on a voluntary but paid basis to enhance the learning experience for these students and build on the learning taking place as part of the remote provision by the school.

5 hours per week home-based supports will be available to eligible students for 4 weeks which may commence from 22 February 2021.

The support programme must be delivered outside of the normal school day (i.e. evenings and weekends), so that the student can continue to engage as fully as possible with the teaching and learning provided by their school.

Any unused hours must be delivered to families at any time before 30 April 2021, including during the Easter holidays.

Similar to the Department's home based summer programme, parents can engage either a teacher or an SNA in a private arrangement. It is voluntary for teachers and SNAs to participate.

Teachers and SNAs will be paid for this additional work through the Department's NTS payroll upon receipt of the completed claim form from parents when the programme has been completed.

Eligibility

The following students are eligible to avail of the scheme

- All students enrolled special classes at post primary level
- Students in mainstream classes in post primary schools who are accessing the highest level of the continuum of support (i.e. School Support Plus/for a Few). This will include students with Autism, Down syndrome, sensory impairments, and other disabilities.
- Schools have flexibility to identify students that require the highest level of individualised and specialist support at any given time. This will ensure that students presenting with exceptional needs due to the current school closures can participate in the scheme.



Funding for additional In-Person Support Programme

The Department will provide funding to enable parents to engage either a teacher or an SNA in a private arrangement for up to 5 hours per week for 4 weeks home-based in-person learning or care support.

The Department will facilitate parents through acting solely as payroll agents on their behalf.

This will facilitate direct payment to Teachers/SNAs via the Department's NTS payroll.

Allocation of hours

A maximum of 5 hours per week home-based supports will be available to eligible students for 4 weeks which may commence from 22 February 2021 and can be used by families at any time up until the end of April.

Delivery of unused hours during Easter Holidays

The Department will allow parents to arrange for the delivery of any of the unused hours of support during the Easter holidays.

This will ensure that parents who cannot source a Teacher/SNA during this period of school closure have another opportunity to avail of the provision at Easter.

All banked hours must be used by Friday 30th April and completed claim forms must be submitted by parents to the Department by close of business on Friday 14th May. No claim forms will be accepted after that date.

Supports Provided by Teachers or SNAs

Teachers participating in the scheme must be registered and vetted with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

SNAs must be Garda vetted in order to participate in the scheme.

The attached programme overview contains further information about the scheme.

Child Protection Procedures

Please advise parents/guardians of eligible students, that in line with well-established Child Protection Procedures the Statutory Declaration (Appendix 1) of the attached Grant Claim Form, and that the Form of Undertaking (Appendix 2) of the Grant Claim Form must be completed **prior** to the commencement of any tuition/care support. A



statutory declaration signed by the relevant authority in 2020 remains valid until the end of 2021.

The Teacher/SNAs vetting disclosure must be provided directly to the parent/guardian by the Teacher/SNA.

Payment of Teachers/SNAs under the scheme

Grant Funding will be paid directly to Teachers/SNAs via the Departments NTS payroll on submission of the completed Grant Claim Form by the Parent once the delivery of the programme hours by the teacher/SNA has been completed. Exact dates and times of provision must be entered on the Timetable of Support. Please see attached Grant Claim Form.

Where a student in your school is eligible to avail of the scheme and wishes to participate, please complete PART 1 of the form confirming the student's eligibility. Please forward the Grant Claim Form to the parents/guardians for further completion to be submitted to the Department when the programme is completed.

Grant Rates

The grant rates per hour for all tuition provided is:

Fully Qualified Post Primary Teacher	€47.01 per hour
Modified Rate	€ 35.14 per hour
SNA	€ 16.77 per hour

Assisting Parents in sourcing a Teacher/SNA

The school should make every effort to support parents in securing the services of a Teacher or an SNA known to the school.

School principals are asked to contact their teachers and SNAs in order to ascertain their availability to provide support to students with complex needs under the scheme. Having examined the applications for support and matched them with the available teachers and SNAs, principals should then inform the parent of the named teacher or SNA who will deliver the support.

Potential Staff to provide in-home support	
Teachers	SNAs



Any of the students teachers	An SNA that works in the students classes
A member of the school SET team	An SNA that has worked with the student
Any other teacher in the school	Any other SNA in the school
Teachers on the schools substitute list	Any other SNA on the schools substitute list
Recently retired teachers	Recently retired SNAs

Where the number of available school staff is not sufficient to cover the number of eligible students for support under the programme, it is requested that schools provide information on other teachers and SNAs who are known to them who might be in a position to assist the family.

Similar to summer programme, the NCSE also provides information on how to source a Teacher or SNA where parents cannot source one through their schools.

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Supplementary-Programme-2021.pdf>

Appendix 1 attached gives a brief guide to putting the In-person programme into operation.

Your co-operation with this important initiative is appreciated.

If you have any queries, please email supplementaryprogramme@education.gov.ie

Yours sincerely

Special Education Section



Appendix 1

Brief Guide to putting the In-person programme into operation:

- The school invites Parents/Guardians of students with complex special needs to apply for either tutor or SNA support in accordance with their child's needs.
- Parents/Guardians inform the school of their preferred support i.e. teacher or SNA.
- When all requests have been received, the school reviews the applications and invites the appropriate number of teachers and/or SNAs from the staff to participate. Priority is given to staff already supporting the student.
- If enough staff members are not available to participate, the school invites other teachers or SNAs from the substitute lists to participate.
- When teachers or SNAs have agreed to participate, they should consult with the student's Parents/Guardians and the school's SEN team to establish priorities for supporting the student at home. Teachers/SNAs should refer to the Department's guidelines for the in-person programme to ensure that their plans reflect the intention of the programme. Copies of a brief support plan should be shared with the parents/guardians and the school before support begins.
- The four-week programme (20 hours) can commence from 22 February.
- The teacher/SNA can deliver 5 hours per week home-based supports for each eligible student for 4 weeks.
- These hours supplement existing school provided by the school, therefore they will be delivered outside of the normal school day and/or at weekends. Unused hours can be delivered at any time up until the end of April, including during the Easter holidays.
- A record of provision and achievement will be maintained and shared with the parent/guardian and the school at the end of the programme. This record should be retained in the Student Support File and be available to the Department's Inspectorate, on request.

