



Circular 0029/2021

To: Management Authorities of all Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools

Special Needs Assistant Allocations for the 2021/22 School Year for Mainstream Classes in Primary and Post Primary Schools

1. Purpose of this circular

The purpose of this Circular is to advise schools of the arrangements for the allocation of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) for mainstream classes in primary and post primary schools for the 2021/22 school year.

The aim of this circular is to provide clarity on the arrangements for allocating SNAs in respect of mainstream classes for schools, parents, families and SNAs for 2021/22.

2. Background

In December 2019, Government approved the national roll out of a new frontloading model for the allocation of SNAs support to primary and post-primary schools for students in mainstream classes, as part of the phased roll out of the School Inclusion Model (SIM).

In light of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the introduction of the new Frontloaded Allocation Model for SNAs for students in mainstream classes in primary and post -primary schools is to be deferred for a further year to the beginning of the 2022/23 school year.

The disruption prevented the delivery of the necessary training and information workshops to support the roll out of the new allocation model which had been planned for earlier this year.

The training and workshops are designed to help school leaders and teachers in their in-school planning for the new model and their engagement with parents. These sessions will now be rescheduled to take place during the 2021/22 school year. Further information will be issued by the NCSE in due course.



3. Allocation Arrangements for 2021/22 School Year

In order to minimise disruption for schools, in the current circumstances, and to provide for continuity of allocations, the Minister for Special Education and Inclusion and the Minister of State for Education have agreed on the following arrangements for the allocation of Special Needs Assistants for mainstream classes for the 2021/22 school year:

- Existing mainstream class SNA allocations in schools on 30 April 2021 will be maintained and will automatically rollover into the 2021/22 school year.
- No school will therefore receive an allocation less than that which they had on 30 April 2021.
- SNAs currently in mainstream settings can continue in post for the next school year in the normal way.
- Priority consideration will now be given by the NCSE to applications for increased support for the 2021/22 school year. In particular, applications from schools with no SNAs and developing schools will be prioritised and determinations made before 30 June. Other applications will be processed in order of date received.
- Where circumstances change during the course of the 2021/22 school year that materially increase the level of care need in a school to the extent that the school can clearly demonstrate that it cannot be met within the existing SNA allocation, the school may apply to the NCSE for a review.
- The NCSE will publish allocations on their website www.ncse.ie by the end of May 2021.
- SNA allocations for special classes and special schools are not affected by this arrangement and will be published by the NCSE along with special classes and special school teaching allocations on www.ncse.ie by end of May 2021.

Provisions set out in Circular 30/2020 is being extended for the 2021/22 school year.

4. Introduction of the Frontloaded SNA Allocation Model

Further advice will issue in the course of the 2021/22 school year on the introduction of the frontloaded model with effect from September 2022. This



will outline the overall approach, including the professional development and other supports to be made available for schools and teachers.

5. Information or queries on this Circular

If you have any queries with regards to this Circular please contact:

special_education@education.gov.ie

This circular can be accessed on the Department's website www.education.ie

Issued by: Eddie Ward, Principal Officer, Special Education Section

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