



EOLAS

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NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

660 ADDITIONAL TEACHERS FROM NEXT SEPTEMBER

1. The new general allocation model (GAM) for special education needs in mainstream schools is underpinned by two principles:
 - (a) That as many full-time posts as possible will be created through (i) the general allocation model for learning support and pupils with high incidence special educational needs and (ii) the individual response for pupils with low-incidence special educational needs.
 - (b) That resources that are in schools and can no longer be warranted because the pupils have now left will be suppressed.
2. The new model has three elements:
 - (a) A general allocation model based on ratios applied to the school enrolment. The implementation of this model from September 2005 will see an additional 340 permanent posts deployed throughout the primary school system.
 - (b) A further 320 temporary posts are being made available to cater for the existing individual allocations to children with high-incidence special needs who are in schools that would be due to lose resources if the GAM was implemented without transitional arrangements.
 - (c) Children with what is now termed low-incidence special educational needs disability will continue to be provided for based on an individual assessment. The total number of posts deployed to children in this category since the beginning of this school year is 484 whole time teacher equivalents.

In reviewing the proposed model for the general allocation system for special education needs, the DES has developed revised ratios from those proposed last year. It should be noted that:

- In calculating the ratios for schools, the number of Travellers and pupils in special classes is excluded as separate provision is made for these particular pupils.
- The enrolment date for the calculation of schools' entitlements is 30 September 2003.
- The DES has confirmed to the INTO that new schools, developing schools and schools where there has been a significant change in enrolment will be looked at in the context of the implementation of the new model.
- The ratios developed by the DES take into account factors including the needs of small schools, a higher rate of special education needs in designated disadvantaged schools and also allow for differentiation on a gender basis.

In keeping with the underlying principles of the new scheme, the General Allocation Model will provide schools or a cluster of schools with a permanent allocation to deal with children with learning support needs and high-incidence special educational needs, while resources that are targeted at specific children will be transient and therefore temporary in nature.

3. The DES has developed Notification for Schools, including a schedule outlining the entitlement under the General Allocation Model and what clustering arrangements, if any, are to be made for the school. A further comprehensive circular related to guidance on professional issues regarding the implementation of the new model for special education needs will issue to schools as early as possible. The INTO has pressed for this circular to issue by mid-June at the latest and further discussions are to take place on this matter.

RATIOS

- **Boys' schools with 135 pupils or more – 1st post at 135; 2nd post at 295; 3rd post at 475, 4th post at 655 and so on.**
- **Mixed schools with 145 pupils or more: 1st post at 145; 2nd post at 315; 3rd post at 495, 4th post at 675 and so on.**
- **Girls' schools with 195 pupils or more: 1st post at 195; 2nd post at 395; 3rd post at 595; 4th post at 795 and so on.**
- **Disadvantaged schools: 1st post at 80; 2nd post at 160; 3rd post at 240; 4th post at 320 and so on.**
- **It should be noted that schools would qualify for a pro rata part of a post for pupil numbers between the 1st and 2nd post, the 2nd and 3rd post and so on. In the case of a boys' schools with 215 pupils, the school would get 1.5 posts.**
- **Small boys' schools will qualify for their first post at 100 pupils, small mixed schools at 105 pupils and small girls' schools at 150 pupils.**
- **Schools with an enrolment of 106-144 (in the case of mixed schools) will be allocated one full post**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *HOW IS MY GENERAL ALLOCATION CALCULATED*

Allocations are calculated on a mathematical basis, using the enrolment figure for your school on 30 September 2003, and the formula devised by DES. There are different formulae for different types of school.

2. *CAN I COMBINE MY HIGH INCIDENCE AND LOW INCIDENCE HOURS?*

Under the new arrangements, a distinction is made between permanent hours given under the general allocation, and hours given either in respect of children with low-incidence special educational needs, or retained in the school on a transitional basis for children with high-incidence special educational needs. These later hours and low-incidence hours may be combined to form full-time posts, but these posts are temporary and subject to review at the end of the year as children may have left the school.

In short, hours allocated on a transitional basis can be combined with hours allocated for low incidence special educational needs to form full time temporary posts.

However, all such arrangements are subject to DES approval

3. *WHY IS THERE NO ADDITIONAL PROVISION FOR SCHOOLS BETWEEN 105 AND 145 PUPILS (IN THE CASE OF MIXED SCHOOLS)?*

Schools with 105 pupils or less are defined as small schools, and their allocation is calculated on the basis of (enrolment/105). Schools with an enrolment of 145+ have theirs calculated on the basis of (enrolment/145). Schools in between are allocated one full post, instead of using the calculation for bigger schools, ie, a school of 120 pupils will get 1 full post, rather than $(^{120}/_{145})$ of a post.

4. *WHY IS THERE A HIGHER RATIO FOR ALL-GIRLS' SCHOOLS?*

Allocations made under the General Allocation System are to cater for children with learning support needs, mild general learning disability, borderline mild general learning special educational needs and specific learning disability (high incidence special educational needs). The SERC Report (1993) stated that the ratio of boys to girls in learning support was 3:2, and that the ratio of boys to girls with Specific Learning Disability is 7:3. The 2003 census by DES showed that 65% of the children receiving support for the high incidence special educational needs were boys, i.e. roughly 3 boys for every 2 girls. The ratios decided on by the DES seek to make allowance for these differences.

A school is considered to be an all girls' school if it has less than 30% boys enrolled. The INTO will monitor the effects of the various ratios on categories of schools and individual schools.

5. *WILL PUPILS WHO TRANSFER FROM A JUNIOR TO A SENIOR SCHOOL BE ENTITLED TO INDIVIDUAL HOURS IN THEIR NEW SCHOOL?*

A senior school enrolling a pupil with low incidence special educational needs will be entitled to apply for the continuation of hours on an individual basis through the SENO. Children enrolling with high incidence special educational needs will be catered for under the general allocation system but individual cases of difficulty will be reviewed.

6. *CAN TEACHERS WITH RESTRICTED RECOGNITION TAKE A POST UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM?*

Teachers being appointed to new posts created by the general allocation system must be fully recognised and probated. This is to ensure that there is mobility within schools and that all staff may have the opportunity to undertake a variety of teaching roles during their career.

Teachers with restricted recognition may take up full-time posts created to meet the needs of children with low-incidence disabilities and/or transitional hours for children with high-incidence special educational needs. In cases where a permanent post is to be suppressed in the school, the teacher with restricted recognition, rather than the most junior teacher should be placed on the Special Education Panel. It is, however, open to that teacher to defer his/her panel rights to take up a full-time temporary post. The implication for panel arrangements and permanent post holders are the subject of ongoing discussions between the INTO and DES.

7. *HOW WILL TIME BE ALLOCATED TO CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES?*

This will be the subject of a further circular from DES. The circular is expected to deal with professional issues such as:

- * Guidance on the selection of pupils.
- * Differentiation between learning support and resource teaching provision.
- * A whole school approach to special educational needs.

8. *WILL THERE BE A MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW SYSTEM?*

The DES has indicated that a full review of the system will be carried out in two years time. A number of issues remain the subject of ongoing discussions between the DES and INTO. Further updates will be given in *InTouch* and on the INTO website at www.into.ie.

CLUSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

The purpose of the General Allocation Model is to provide as many permanent, full-time posts as possible, be it in individual schools or in clusters of schools. In discussions between the INTO and DES Officials, the issue of clustering of other allocations, ie, existing high-incidence individual provision or low-incidence provision was explored. As the existing high-incidence individual allocations and low-incidence individual allocations are transient in nature, the DES will not appoint permanent teachers to these positions. The DES has agreed on a number of underlying principles related to clustering in temporary positions.

These include:

- That a school or cluster of schools may combine a number of individual high-incidence allocations to create a temporary post for the coming year.
- That schools may similarly combine low-incidence hours to create a temporary post for the coming year.
- That individual high-incidence and low-incidence allocations may be combined in a school or cluster of schools for the purposes of creating a temporary post for the coming year.
- Temporary posts will be sanctioned on a year-to-year basis. When an individual high-incidence or low-incidence allocation leaves the school or cluster of schools, the temporary post will be suppressed at the end

of the year and the school or cluster will revert to part-time hours, unless there is a further allocation to make up the shortfall.

- The DES has also agreed that in a clustering arrangement for temporary posts the minimum required will be 22 hours provision.
- That any such clustering does not interfere with permanent cluster arrangements under the GAM.

It should also be noted that in the development of the revised model, many schools may find their allocation for SEN staffing will now consist of permanent and temporary teachers. For example, a smaller school could end up with five class teachers including the principal, a full-time permanent post under the General Allocation Model and a temporary post due to individual allocations. This seven teacher school may deploy the teachers in accordance with the relevant DES circulars. This means that an existing permanent member of staff could take up the post dealing with the individual high-incidence and low-incidence hours while a temporary teacher is put into class teaching duties or vice-versa (subject to probation requirements).

NB: All clustering arrangements are subject to DES approval

SAMPLE ALLOCATIONS

Disadvantaged School

(Receiving Staffing under Urban Giving Children an Even Break)

Enrolment	Formula	Teaching Posts
50	$50/80 = 0.625$	0.6
130	$130/80 = 1.625$	1.6
400	$400/80 = 5$	5

All Boys School

Enrolment	Formula	Teaching Posts
50	$50/100 = 0.5$	0.5
130	Post triggered @ 100 (no pro rata between 100-135)	1
400	2 posts at 295 $400-295=105/180= 0.58$	2.6

Mixed

Enrolment	Formula	Teaching Posts
50	$50/105 = 0.47$	0.5
130	Post triggered at @105 (no pro rata between 105-145)	1
400	2 posts at 315 $400-315 = 85/ 180 = 0.47$	2.5

All Girls (Including schools with less than 30% boys)

Enrolment	Formula	Teaching Posts
50	$50/150 = 0.33$	0.3
130	$130/195$	0.6
400	2 posts triggered at 395 $400-395 = 5/200 = 0.02$	2

SAMPLE SCHOOLS

SCHOOL A: 55 PUPILS ON ROLL, MIXED SCHOOL

CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION/ LEARNING SUPPORT PROVISION

- * Shared Learning Support, based in the school, 0.3 time in the school.
- * Shared Resource, 9 hours for children with low-incidence disabilities, 5 hours for children with high-incidence disabilities.

REVISED PROVISION

- * 0.5 teacher, General allocation, based in the school, shared with another school.
- * 9 hours (0.4 teacher) for children with low-incidence disabilities (temporary, part-time hours, can be combined with another school to make a full-time temporary post).
- * No transitional hours, as there is no loss in the overall level of support.

SCHOOL B: 350 PUPILS ON ROLL, MIXED SCHOOL

CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION/ LEARNING SUPPORT PROVISION

- * 1 full-time learning support.
- * 3 full time resource teachers, (23 hours for children with low incidence disabilities + 45 hours for high incidence disabilities).

REVISED PROVISION

- * 2.2 teachers, general allocation (2 permanent posts based in the school, 1 shared with a neighbouring base school).
- * 23 hours low incidence (full time temporary post).
- * Balance of 0.8 of a teacher retained as temporary hours for children with high incidence disabilities still in the school.

SCHOOL C: 200 PUPILS ON ROLL, MIXED SCHOOL

CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION/ LEARNING SUPPORT PROVISION

- * 0.5 Shared Learning Support, not based in the school.
- * 5 hours part-time for children with high incidence disability.

REVISED PROVISION

- * 1.3 teachers, general allocation. Permanent post created in the school, 0.3 shared with neighbouring base school.
- * No transitional hours for high incidence, as revised provision exceeds previous provision.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE

The recruitment process for the additional posts as Special Education Needs Organizers is ongoing, and the Council hopes that the full complement of SENOs will be in place for the new school year.

SENOs have cleared the backlog of applications for resource hours for children with low incidence disabilities, and Special Needs Assistant support for mainstream schools. Some applications for support for children in special schools and classes remain to be processed. Decisions on these applications are imminent.

A Sub-Committee of the Council is continuing work on guidelines on drawing up IEPs. It is expected that they will make an initial report to the Council shortly.

ISSUES STILL UNDER DISCUSSION

A number of issues are still under consideration and discussion between the INTO and DES including:

- The issue of eligibility of teachers for SEN posts particularly in the context of those teachers with restricted recognition.
- There is a concern that while the majority of schools will gain under the new system, some schools may lose resources which they have retained over the years. There is also a concern that some designated disadvantaged schools could lose resources for next September and regain resources under the revised frame-

work for educational disadvantage recently announced by the Minister. The INTO has raised these issues with both the Social Inclusion and Special Education Sections of the DES and further discussion is to take place.

- The DES has also confirmed to the INTO that the General Allocation Model will be reviewed after two years of operation. In the interim, individual schools where the level of special educational need is distinctly different from what can be catered for under the allocations provided will be the subject of discussions between the INTO and DES.