

17 February 2011

Ref No: NCSE 03/11

## **To: Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Management of Special Schools**

### **Summary of Guidelines for 2011/2012**

- NCSE is operating within the SNA cap of 10,575 whole time equivalent posts as per DES circular 06/11
- Schools to submit leavers form to SENO by 18<sup>th</sup> March at the latest
- Schools should provide their SENO with the professional reports in respect of all children enrolling for the 2011/12 school year
- All schools to submit applications to SENO by 18<sup>th</sup> March. *All application forms may be downloaded from the NCSE website*
- NCSE to take into account the provisions of DES Circ 0009/2009 in relation to management of student behaviour
- SENO to arrange visits to schools to process applications between 21<sup>st</sup> March and end June
- Decisions on class teaching and SNA resources to issue to all special schools starting week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> June

*These guidelines and forms are available in English and Irish on the NCSE website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)*

*NCSE 01/05 and DES Circ Sp Ed 01/05 set out the position regarding the submission of applications for resources (resource teaching, SNA support assistive technology and transport) to the Council in relation to pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Schools should also refer to these guidelines when submitting applications for supports.*

*The applications process will be broadly similar to that which applied in relation to the 2010/11 school year (ref NCSE 03/10) however it will take into account the reference in the National Recovery Plan and subsequently in Circular 06/2011 to the placing of a cap on the number of whole-time equivalent SNA posts.*

*Furthermore the NCSE is moving towards an annualised allocation of supports to schools, as set out in Circ 06/2011 and as a first step in this process, will allocate SNA supports on this basis within the context of the national cap.*

*Copies of NCSE 01/05, DES Circ Sp Ed 01/05, NCSE 03/08 and relevant Appendices of this circular may be accessed on the NCSE website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)*  
**Summary of Applications Process**

### ***Annualised Allocations Process***

In order to operate an annualised allocations process for pupils with SEN in the school, the key requirement is that all applications for supports will have to be submitted by 18<sup>th</sup> March in order that SENOs may process all requests for supports in time for schools to plan and organise these supports for the next school year.

Class teaching will be allocated in line with the Pupil Teacher Ratio as set out in Appendix 1 of DES Circular 0038/2010.

As was the case last year it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that SNA support over and above the level set out in Appendix 1 of DES Circular 0038/2010 will be considered.

### ***Children with SEN Leaving at the end of 2010/11 School Year***

Schools will forward the list of children who will be leaving at the end of the school year to their SENO as per Appendix 4 (copy attached). This will enable the SENO to determine the level of class teaching posts and SNA supports, which will be freed up at the end of the school year. In particular, it will also assist in identifying the level of SNA support that will be available for reallocation under the terms of the national cap on SNA posts. In schools where no children with SEN are leaving, the school should complete the form signalling a NIL return.

The list of such children will be required by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at the latest.

### ***Deadline for Submission of Applications – 18<sup>th</sup> March***

In order to move towards and manage an annualised allocation of teaching and SNA supports, all appointments will be arranged by the SENO with the schools in their district of operations. This will require schools to submit all applications by 18<sup>th</sup> March in order that the SENO can prepare and plan for each school visit as appropriate. Given the tight timeframe for the national allocations process, it may not be possible for SENOs to process applications received from schools after this date, before the end of June.

Schools should make every effort to obtain the necessary professional reports in respect of all children enrolling for the 2011/12 school year for submission within the deadline. It is essential that the school maintains close links with the SENO in relation to this issue.

All applications for SNA support must be considered in the context of the national cap of 10,575 whole time equivalent SNA posts in schools as provided for in the National Recovery Plan 2011 – 2014 and DES Circular 06/2011.

In this regard, it is clear that the cap has now been reached in the 2010/11 school year. Therefore new applications for support in respect of the 2011/12 school year can only be considered in the context of the SNA posts freed up primarily as a result of

- Children leaving the school at the end of the 2010/11 school year and
- Where appropriate, children whose requirement to access to SNA support is diminishing because they are developing a greater level of independence in the school setting.

**It will not be possible to process an application without the PPS number.** Parents can obtain the number from the Dept of Social and Family Affairs, Client Identity Section, Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim, Tel No 01-7043281 if necessary or contact their local Social Welfare office for assistance.

### ***Issue of Decisions on Class Teaching and SNA Support to Special Schools – June 2011***

It is intended that issue of decisions to special schools in relation to both class teaching and SNA support will commence in the week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> June. In this regard, the SENO will contact your school in March with a view to making the necessary arrangements for processing applications for teaching and SNA support.

This time-scale will require SENOs to process applications from over 3,000 schools within a 12 week period and in doing so, to visit schools. Therefore it would be appreciated if schools would recognise that the capacity of the NCSE to revert to schools by phone etc. during this period, in relation to individual cases, will be minimal, until the conclusion of the applications process in all schools.

In summary, the capacity to allocate SNA supports for the 2011/12 school year will be largely determined by the level of SNA posts freed up at the end of the 2010/11 school year due primarily to the factors listed above.

### ***Management and Deployment of SNA Support in 2011/12 School Year***

The DES has written to the NCSE in relation to those measures that will be utilised by schools for the 2011/12 school year, in relation to the management and deployment of SNA support and which should be taken into account in arriving at a level of SNA allocation to the school including

- The individualised planning and outcomes focused approach that schools will apply in relation to all pupils availing of SNA support and
- The development of a policy governing the management and deployment of Special Needs Assistants, as part of the school planning process.
- The development and implementation of specific learning/behavioural programmes, following assessment of needs and strengths.

Therefore in the case of new applications where the professional report has identified the care needs as being related to behaviour, in general it will not be possible to consider access to SNA support until the school has set out the specific strategies that have been employed and that have been implemented to minimise the pupil's difficulties and to promote more adaptive behaviours.

As outlined in Circular 0009/2009, schools were advised that where an application relates to the management of a student's behaviour, there must be **clear** evidence that the student's behaviour is a danger to themselves or others and that **sustained** efforts by the school have not proven to be successful in the amelioration of such documented behaviours.

NEPS has published 'Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - A Continuum of Support for Primary Schools - Guidelines for Teachers' to help schools develop systems, skills and structures for responding to the needs of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social, as well as learning, needs. These guidelines can be downloaded from [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

A further guideline for schools will issue with regard to the operation of allocation of SNA support for future years on this basis.

### **Review of Operation of the Annualised Allocation**

DES Circular 06/2011 signalled that the NCSE would move towards an annualised allocation of Special Needs Assistant support. The process set out above is the first stage in moving towards this.

It is possible this year that some schools may wish to submit applications for access to SNA support following the scheduled visit by the SENO, in particular where professional reports are only received after the processing of applications submitted by 18 March. The NCSE is aware of this and will monitor this issue in the context of the capacity to allocate SNA support to schools within the level of the national cap, which will apply

In some cases, on receipt of the outcome of the allocations process, some schools may wish to seek a review of the decision of the SENO, in relation to the allocation of teaching and SNA supports. In February 2010, the NCSE introduced an appeals mechanism for schools, which was utilised primarily in relation to the level of SNA support allocated to mainstream schools.

It is envisaged that a mechanism will be developed through which schools may seek to have the position in relation to the level of SNA resource revisited. However, given that there is now a finite cap on the level of such supports, the current model of appeal is not appropriate for use in the context of SNA allocation. Therefore the new mechanism for use by schools and parents will be developed after the operation of the above resource allocation process itself has been examined. This is scheduled to take place in September/October next in the context of the conclusion and the outcome of the 2011/12 allocations process.

***Note:** Application forms may be downloaded from the NCSE website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)*

### **List of Appendices (Available on Website)**

Application Form for Class Teaching/SNA Support	<i>Appendix 1</i>
Application Form for Transport	<i>Appendix 2</i>
Application Form for Assistive Technology	<i>Appendix 3</i>
List of Children Leaving the School (copy attached)	<i>Appendix 4</i>
Disability Codes	<i>Appendix 5</i>

Sé Goulding  
Head of Operations

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Roll No: \_\_\_\_\_ School Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pupils in receipt of resources currently enrolled who will not be in the school in September 2011**

Pupil Name & Address		Gender	DOB	PPS No	Current Class	Disability Code (See Appendix 6)	Support Accessed			
1 <sup>st</sup> Name	Surname						SNA Access Individual /Shared	Class Teaching	Assist Tech	Transport
Address										
1 <sup>st</sup> Name	Surname									
Address										
1 <sup>st</sup> Name	Surname									
Address										

**Signature of School Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_