

Rannóg Oideachais Speisialta,
An Roinn Oideachais agus
Eolaíochta,
Corn a Madadh,
Baile Atha Luain,
Co. na hIarmhí.



Special Education Section
Department of Education & Science,
Cornamaddy,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath

SPECIAL EDUCATION CIRCULAR SP ED 02/05

**To Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and all
Teaching Staff in Primary Schools**

**Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need
Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools**

Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Principals should bring this circular to the attention of members of the Board and teachers and should retain a copy for future reference.

The Circular may also be viewed and downloaded on the Department of Education and Science website www.education.gov.ie

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KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE GENERAL ALLOCATION SCHEME

PUPILS' NEEDS CAN BE MET IMMEDIATELY

- The general allocation scheme is designed to ensure that all schools have enough resource teaching hours to meet the immediate needs of pupils with high incidence special educational needs and those who require learning support. It reflects the fact that most schools would have children with these needs.

INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS WILL CONTINUE FOR PUPILS WITH LOW INCIDENCE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- As pupils with low incidence special educational needs are not found in every school, individual resource applications for these pupils will continue to be made.

THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT CAN BE MATCHED TO THE LEVEL OF NEED

- Schools should allocate teachers to pupils in line with the pupils' needs, ensuring that those with the greatest need get the highest level of support.

ONE-TO-ONE AND GROUP TEACHING ARE BOTH POSSIBLE

- It is up to the school to decide whether one-to-one or group teaching, or a mix of both, is the best type of support for each individual pupil, depending on the nature of their needs.

PUPILS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE MOST APPROPRIATE TEACHER

- The training, experience and expertise of teachers should be taken into account in deciding which pupil(s) to assign to which teacher.

1. PURPOSE

The main purpose of this circular is to provide guidance for mainstream primary schools on the deployment and organisation of the teaching resources that were allocated recently under the general allocation model. Reference is also made in this circular to the deployment of additional teaching resources that are allocated to schools for the support of individual pupils with low incidence disabilities. (The various categories of low incidence disability are listed in Appendix 1.)

2. BACKGROUND

2.1.1 Circulars 08/99 and 08/02

An automatic response to applications for additional teaching support for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream primary schools was implemented by the introduction of a system of resource teaching allocation in 1999 (*Circular 08/99*). This system, which allocated varying levels of resource teaching hours to individual pupils with assessed special educational needs, was reviewed and revised in 2002 (*Circular 08/02*). Under the terms of these circulars, pupils with assessed learning disabilities in ordinary classes in mainstream primary schools were allocated resource teaching support in accordance with their level of assessed need.

2.2 Circular 24/03

Circular 24/03 (*Allocation of Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in National Schools*) provided clarification in relation to the flexible deployment of these resources in primary schools. It pointed to the need for pupils with special educational needs to belong to a peer group and to mix with pupils of different levels of ability in a variety of situations. It maintained that an exclusive reliance on using resource teaching hours for individual tuition only is contrary to the principle of integration in learning and teaching and advised that primary schools should deploy their allocated special education resources in a way that best accommodates the special educational needs of pupils. It recommended that, wherever possible, schools should provide additional teaching support for pupils in the mainstream classroom or in small groups. Such an approach will help to maximise effective and efficient teaching and learning and to minimise disruptions to the class programme.

Circular 24/03 also stated that the Department of Education and Science would support school management in the development of special education support teams, consisting of specialist teachers such as learning-support teachers and resource teachers, in primary schools. These teachers are expected to collaborate with class teachers in the planning and delivery of special education provision.

Circular 24/03 specifically advised that the development of a staged approach to assessment, identification and programme planning was appropriate in the area of special education. This staged approach has been described in the Model of Service leaflet produced by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and is also summarised in Appendix 3 to this circular.

3. THE GENERAL ALLOCATION MODEL

3.1 Pupils covered by the general allocation model

The general allocation model provides additional teaching resources to assist schools in making appropriate provision for

- pupils who are eligible for learning-support teaching;
In determining eligibility for learning-support teaching, priority should be given to pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests of reading or mathematics.
- pupils with learning difficulties, including pupils with mild speech and language difficulties, pupils with mild social or emotional difficulties and pupils with mild co-ordination or attention control difficulties associated with identified conditions such as dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD;

Pupils with conditions such as dyspraxia, ADD and ADHD who have been assessed as being in the low incidence category, will continue to receive an individual allocation of support through the relevant Special Education Needs Organiser.

Pupils in the two categories described above can be considered to have learning needs that require intervention at stage II (i.e. where the classroom support plan has not succeeded and it is considered necessary to refer the pupil to the learning support/resource teacher for further diagnostic testing) of the Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning set out in Circular 24/03 and in Appendix 3 of this document.

- pupils who have special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities (borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability and specific learning disability).

Some of the pupils who have borderline mild general learning disability and virtually all of the pupils described above with mild general learning disability or with specific learning disability, can be considered to have learning needs that require intervention at stage III of the staged approach (i.e. where significant concerns remain following interventions and adaptations to the learning programme at stage II and the pupil may require more intensive intervention) of the staged approach. (Please note that pupils with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities are also considered to have learning needs that require intervention at stage III).

Most of the pupils described above will receive additional teaching support in the classroom or in small withdrawal groups in addition to the support they receive from the class teacher. However, some pupils may also require intensive additional one to one teaching support for a specific period of time.

3.2 Rationale for general allocation system

The allocation of additional teaching resources to schools under the terms of the general allocation model is intended to make possible the development of truly inclusive schools. The general allocation of teaching resources ensures that schools have a means of providing additional teaching support to pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities without recourse to making applications on behalf of individual pupils. The general allocation model is an allocation that includes additional teaching time that was previously allocated for learning-

support teaching as well as an allocation of additional teaching time for what was termed resource teaching for pupils with special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities.

Schools should note that where the need for such intervention arises, pupils may receive individualised teaching within the general allocation model. However, effective additional teaching support for literacy and numeracy can usually be provided in small group situations either within the classroom or by withdrawal to another room. All additional teaching support will build on and complement the support planned for and delivered by the class teacher.

It is intended that the general allocation will enable schools

- to ensure that additional teaching support is provided in a timely manner;
- to deploy additional teaching resources in a flexible manner, leading to more effective and efficient delivery of services;
- to ensure that permanent access to additional teaching support is available in schools for pupils with special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities;
- to put in place transparent and equitable whole-school plans and procedures for the selection of pupils for additional teaching support;
- to ensure that additional teaching resources are allocated differentially to pupils in accordance with their levels of learning need;
- to allow for the grouping for additional support of pupils with similar needs as appropriate; and
- to allow for in-class as well as out-of-class teaching support by the learning-support/resource teacher.

The general allocation will also give more security to special education teaching posts.

School management should note that the additional teaching resources that are allocated to schools under the terms of the general allocation model cannot be used for mainstream class teaching or to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. The general allocation should be deployed to provide additional support for the pupils described in 3.1. Some suitable models of organisation are set out in this circular.

4.1 Allocating additional teaching resources to identified pupils:

The staged approach to assessment, identification and learning programme planning for pupils with special educational needs is set out in Appendix 3. Schools should establish a system of screening, identification and diagnostic testing to assist in the selection of pupils for additional support. In drawing up whole-school policies and procedures, teachers and schools should follow the guidance provided in the *Learning-Support Guidelines*, particularly in relation to whole-school planning, partnership, screening, selection, assessment and review, and planning and teaching.

4.2 Allocation of additional teaching support based on the staged approach:

The pupils with learning needs who require intervention at stage II are those who in the past were eligible for supplementary teaching by the learning-support teacher (with priority being given to pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests of reading or mathematics). The general allocation model also provides schools with the resources to provide additional support for pupils with mild or transient learning difficulties (or both) as a result of speech and language difficulties, social or emotional difficulties, or identified conditions such as dyspraxia, ADD, or ADHD. These pupils can also be considered to have learning needs that require intervention at stage II.

Pupils with identified significant special educational needs arising from low incidence disabilities for whom the school has been given specific individual allocations of resource teaching hours are considered to be at stage III.

The following pupils are considered to be at stage III:

- pupils who have significant special educational needs and who have been identified as being at stage III through the application of the staged approach to intervention (see Appendix 3);
In the past, many of these pupils may have had assessments involving external agencies: However this is not a prerequisite for being at this stage of intervention.
- pupils who have significant special educational needs arising from high-incidence disabilities (borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability, and specific learning disability) who were previously assessed as meeting the criteria for resource teaching in accordance with Circulars 08/99 and 08/02 and who continue to have a significant level of need.

The general allocation of additional special educational needs teaching resources is therefore intended to enable schools to cater for the needs of all pupils with learning needs requiring teaching support in addition to that provided by the class teacher, other than for those pupils with complex and enduring needs (see Appendix 1) for whom the school has been given a specific individual allocation of resource teaching hours.

The allocation of additional teaching resources to schools under the general allocation is intended to ensure that the pupils with learning needs at stage III will continue to receive a differential allocation of teaching support. Pupils with learning needs at stage III for whom additional teaching support is allocated by means of the general allocation should generally receive more additional teaching time than pupils with learning needs at stage II. However, the level of support to be allocated to an

individual pupil, or to groups of pupils, will essentially be based on the varying levels of need of the pupils and within the parameters of the additional teaching time available to the school under the general allocation model.

(See Appendix 4 for examples)

4.3 Allocation of teaching responsibilities to learning-support/resource teachers and resource teachers

An essential principle of the general allocation is that the teaching resources made available under the model will be allocated to pupils according to their needs. Pupils with the highest level of need will, therefore have the highest level of support.

Principals and teachers will therefore need to have regard to the following considerations when allocating teaching responsibilities for pupils catered for by the general allocation, as well as for those pupils for whom resources have been allocated on the basis of low-incidence disabilities:

- It is the needs of all pupils who require additional support that should determine the manner in which full-time and part-time learning-support teachers and resource teachers are deployed.
- Whenever possible, pupils with the greatest need should be taught by teachers who have the relevant expertise and commitment and who have a degree of permanence of status that can guarantee continuity of provision.
- The training, experience and expertise of teachers should be taken into account by the principal when allocating teaching responsibilities in respect of pupils with learning needs at stages II and III.
- Logistical factors, such as timetabling for in-class additional teaching support and for withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes, should be taken into account in order to ensure an inclusive approach to the education of the pupils to the greatest extent possible.

It is important that, where possible, schools should deploy experienced and qualified teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

4.4 Formation of special education support teams in schools

While the primary responsibility for all pupils continues to rest with class teachers, each school should adopt a whole-school approach to meeting special educational needs as outlined in the *Learning-Support Guidelines*. Very useful advice on whole-school planning and organisation for learning support and partnership for learning support is provided in Chapters Two and Three of the *Learning-Support Guidelines*. Advice for schools is provided on the development of whole-school policies and procedures for learning support. The roles of each of the partners in learning support - the principal teacher, the class teacher, the learning-support teacher, the parent and the pupil is discussed. The circumstances of schools in areas of educational disadvantage and of schools that have a shared learning-support service are considered.

The formation of special education support teams in individual schools or across clusters of schools is advocated in Circular 24/03. These teams should consist of learning-support/resource teachers (LS/RT) (who are allocated under the general allocation model) and resource teachers (RT) (who are

allocated on behalf of individual pupils) with assistance from other specialist teachers. Members of special education support teams should collaborate closely with principal teachers and assist class teachers in the planning and delivery of education provision for pupils with special educational needs. Interventions with pupils or groups of pupils may be undertaken by either a learning support/resource teacher or resource teacher, depending on the needs of the pupils in question. Both class teachers and members of special education support teams may avail of additional support from agencies of the Department such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education, the Visiting Teacher Service, the Special Education Support Service, the Primary Curriculum Support Programme, and the School Development Planning Service.

5 PLANNING IN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS

In planning to meet the special educational needs of pupils, schools should plan in a manner consistent with the size of the school, the learning profile of the pupils with special educational needs, and the expertise of the school staff.

As stated in Circular 24/03, the over-riding principle is that resources should be deployed in individual schools in the manner that best meets the needs of the pupils with special educational needs in that school. In addition to adherence to the principles set out in Section 4, the following factors should be considered in order to achieve this:

- **Interventions with pupils should be delivered in a manner that best meets the needs identified, which may be through group or individual teaching.**
- **Intervention with pupils at stages II and III should include a classroom support plan to ensure that the pupils' needs are met for the whole of the school day.**
- **The development of literacy and numeracy skills will be a major component of many interventions at stages II and III. However, special educational needs in areas such as oral language, social interaction, behaviour and application to learning tasks may also need to be addressed.**

Outline of a possible approach to planning for the deployment of resources at individual school level:

Step 1	Identify all the pupils in need of additional teaching support, both learning-support teaching and resource teaching and including pupils who have special educational needs arising from high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.
Step 2	Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the pupils' learning needs. (stage II or stage III). It is up to the school to decide whether one-to-one or group teaching, or a mixture of both, is the best type of support for each individual pupil, depending on the nature of their needs.
Step 3	Identify the members of the teaching staff who will be allocated to the identified pupils (all teachers who are appointed on foot of the general allocation model, allocations of additional teacher hours for the support of pupils with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, and any other allocation to the school).
Step 4	Allocate the identified staff members to the pupils, taking account of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the learning programme needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils, including whether it is short-term focused intervention or long-term, continuing support,• the time available to all pupils and the proportion of time needed by individual pupils and groups of pupils, based on identified needs,• the expertise and interest of the teachers, and• practical and logistical considerations, including increasing chances for LS/RTs and RTs to liaise with mainstream class teachers, availability of staff at times of greatest need, etc
Step 5	Cross-reference the programme needs of pupils with learning needs at stages II and III, and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree on which teacher or teachers will cater for these groups.

Step 6

- Establish a tracking and recording system to ensure that a record is maintained of all pupils who are receiving additional teaching support and of their progress in response to the established interventions.
- Learning-support/resource teachers and resource teachers should regularly and actively monitor the progress of the pupils who receive support under the general allocation model and those who have special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, in consultation with parents, class teachers, and relevant professionals. This is particularly important in cases where support for a pupil has been increased, reduced or discontinued.

See Appendix 4 for Worked Models of such deployment.

6.1 Qualifications required for Learning Support/Resource Teaching (LS/RT) Posts and Resource Teaching (RT) Posts

Boards of Management are obliged to recruit and employ fully recognised and probated primary teachers for any vacancies arising for LS/RT posts. Any posts that comprise an element of general allocation hours and low incidence hours are regarded as LS/RT posts and must be filled by fully recognised and probated primary teachers.

In relation to RT (low-incidence) posts, the following teachers can be appointed:

- (i) fully recognised and probated primary teachers; or
- (ii) teachers who hold provisional or restricted recognition from the Department of Education and Science.

However, interim arrangements for the 2005/2006 school year have been put in place and are outlined in Section 6.5 below.

6.2 Status of posts

Posts consisting entirely of general allocation hours are permanent posts. The allocations are based on the criteria set out in Appendix 2. To allow the new allocation system and associated clustering arrangements to settle, it is not intended to alter these allocations for a period of three years. This excludes any interim or temporary arrangements referred to in this circular and for which specific procedures have been outlined. Arrangements will be made in cases where significant increases in pupil enrolments occur within this period. Changes may also be made in the case of disadvantaged schools arising from the development of a new policy framework for educational inclusion. (Please read in conjunction with Section 6.10 below “Review of General Allocation Model”).

All posts which contain an element of individual hours in respect of pupils with special educational needs arising from low incidence disabilities are considered temporary posts. Accordingly, as pupils with an individual allocation of hours leave the school at the end of any school year, the full-time temporary post(s) will revert back to the appropriate reduced level of part-time hours. In all situations where pupils who have been sanctioned resource hours on an individual basis leave the school, the hours allocated to the school must be reduced at the end of the school year in which the pupil leaves and the relevant teacher placed on the appropriate panel, if eligible.

Schools should review annually any temporary posts for which they have received sanction and where the number of hours is less than the minimum of 22 hours needed for such a post, the post must revert to part time-hours. However it is open to a school, or a cluster of schools, to replace hours that they may be losing with any new low incidence hours that were not used to make up the original post.

It should be noted that while a post will be sanctioned at 22 hours, a full-time teaching post is equivalent to 25 hours. The excess capacity within the full post must be off set against any future

allocations for resource teaching support. Furthermore, where a school has an entitlement to part-time hours, but where it also has a teacher on a panel who has not been redeployed, the school must use the teacher on the panel to deliver the part-time hours rather than employing a part-time teacher to do so. The purpose of this is to ensure that a part-time teacher would not be employed where a teacher on the panel is available to the school.

6.3 Filling of posts and panel arrangements

The Department of Education and Science has not introduced any new recruitment procedures for the filling of special educational needs posts.

Accordingly, the positions of LS/RT or RT should in the first instance be notified internally in the school. In cluster arrangements, the position should in the first instance be notified internally in the base school. If no teacher in the base school wishes to take up the position it should then be notified in the other schools sharing the post. In the event of a teacher from the non base school taking the post, he or she will be staffed in the base school. If in either single or cluster arrangements the post is still vacant it should be filled in the normal way, i.e. by taking someone from the appropriate panels or if the panels are clear, the post should be advertised in accordance with agreed procedures.

In allocating the posts of LS/RT or RT, account must be taken of the provisions set out in Circulars 07/03 (Appointment to Posts of Responsibility) and 15/05 (Regulations Governing the Appointment and Retention of Teachers in Primary Schools for the school year 2005/2006).

6.4 Special National Panel

The Department of Education and Science operates a Special National Panel for the redeployment of teachers with *restricted recognition. (*restricted recognition in this case excludes teachers with provisional recognition.) It should be noted that only teachers with restricted recognition are eligible to be placed on this panel. The operation of the panel is governed by Circular 22/92. Please refer to Circular 25/00 for advice on recognition of teacher qualifications for the purposes of teaching in National Schools. Both circulars may be accessed on the Department's website www.education.ie.

Where a post in a special school or a post in a special class is to be filled, whether it is a new post or an existing post, the schools in which the vacancy arises should, once all local processes as outlined in Section 6.3 above have been concluded, attempt to fill the post from the Special National Panel or if the panel is clear, the post should be advertised in accordance with agreed procedures.

Further information on the operation of the panel, and the teachers who may be on the existing panel, are available from the Special Education Section of the Department of Education and Science, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath (Phone: 090 6484149).

6.5 Interim arrangements for 2005/2006 school year

A number of interim arrangements relating to the general allocation model have been put in place for the 2005/2006 school year. These are as follows:

6.5.1 *Qualifications*

While teachers must be fully qualified and have satisfactorily completed their probationary period to take up any new LS/RT posts, teachers with restricted recognition who held full-time resource teaching posts in schools prior to the introduction of the general allocation model may be retained in schools where the school has sufficient hours (22), consisting of general allocation, low incidence or transitional hours, to retain the post for the 2005/2006 school year.

Teachers with restricted recognition continue to be eligible for appointment to posts in special schools and classes and to posts consisting entirely of low incidence hours and to posts consisting of low incidence and transitional hours.

6.5.2 *Recruitment/filling of temporary posts*

While teachers who were placed on panels were not obliged to take up temporary posts that had been created in schools, the Department agreed that teachers on the panels who agreed to take up such posts will retain their panel rights in the following circumstances:

- *Mainstream Panels*

A number of schools have an entitlement to gain a post which is composed of low incidence hours only or a combination of general allocation hours and/or transitional hours and/or low incidence hours. These posts are regarded as temporary posts under current arrangements. However, where the panel is in operation these posts may be offered to teachers on the panel. In the event of a teacher on the panel accepting such a post it will be deemed permanent for the purposes of the panel for the 2006/2007 school year and the teacher will preserve all panel entitlements. In other words should the allocation to the school be decreased next year because of a reduction in transitional hours or as a result of pupils with low incidence hours leaving the school, or for some other reason causing the allocation of hours to be reduced, the teacher will retain panel rights.

- *Special National Panel*

Where the main and supplementary panels are clear schools may offer temporary posts created under the new special education system to teachers with restricted recognition on the special education panel. In the event of the teacher accepting such a post he or she will retain panel rights for the special education panel.

6.5.3 *Status*

All temporary posts are for the 2005/2006 school year initially.

6.6 **Notification of appointments to the Department of Education and Science**

A Board of Management appointing a LS/RT or RT should specify this post in Section 2 under “Other” on the Notification of Permanent (and Temporary, if applicable) Appointment Form(s).

The procedures for the appointment of teachers are set out in the publication “Appointment of Principals, Permanent and Temporary Teachers” updated version, – April 2002. Information regarding recognised qualifications can be obtained from the Primary Administration Section of the Department of Education and Science (Tel: 090 6483735/6) or the Department’s website at www.education.ie.

6.7 School clusters

One of the objectives of the general allocation model is to maximise the extent of full-time permanent posts available to support the needs of pupils with special educational needs arising from higher-incidence disabilities and pupils requiring learning support. To this end, schools, particularly those with small enrolments, are grouped in clusters where possible.

As outlined in the letter to schools of 18th May, where it is not possible for schools to form permanent posts under the general allocation model, such schools may, for the purposes of creating temporary full-time posts, form clusters to combine permanent part-time hours allocated under the general allocation model with hours allocated for individual children with low incidence disabilities, or transitional hours retained for children with high incidence disabilities. Such posts may be created with a minimum of 22 hours. Schools wishing to form such temporary full-time posts should contact Special Education Section in writing with details of their proposal.

However, the Department of Education and Science confirmed in June 2005 that any school that had submitted such a proposal may proceed to fill the post subject to the following conditions:

- i) The post must have a minimum of 22 hours, comprising either approved general allocation and approved low incidence hours, or approved low incidence hours only. However, where an application includes transitional hours it is still subject to sanction in advance by the Department of Education and Science.
- ii) The temporary post must not interfere with clustering arrangements already notified to schools.
- iii) The proposal must have the agreement of all the schools concerned where there is more than one school involved.

The Department of Education and Science has replied in writing to the majority of schools that have lodged any such applications with it. Responses are issuing to the remainder on an ongoing basis. However the above arrangements have been agreed to enable schools to fill or retain these posts in advance of receiving written confirmation.

This arrangement will apply only for the 2005/2006 school year and is being allowed on the strict understanding that, as pupils with an individual allocation of hours leave the school at the end of that school year the full-time temporary posts will revert back to the appropriate reduced level of part-time hours, and the relevant teacher will be placed on the appropriate panel, if an entitlement to panel rights arises.

6.8 Transitional arrangements in respect of pupils with special educational needs arising from high-incidence disabilities

In the letter to schools of 18th May 2005, schools were advised of the general allocation, their clustering arrangements (if they had been included in a cluster), and their transitional hours (if appropriate). Schools that were not informed that they were entitled to transitional hours should not have, under any circumstances, used high incidence hours that were previously allocated to children in their schools in making up the minimum of 22 hours that are required to either retain a post or create a new post. Any schools that have used such previously allocated high incidence hours to retain or create posts, without receiving written confirmation in advance from the Department of Education and Science that they were entitled to regard these hours as a transitional allocation should immediately contact Special Education Section, Athlone.

It is also important to remind schools that were allocated transitional hours in the letter of 18th May 2005 that they should provide to Special Education Section details of the children in respect of whom the transitional hours applied prior to Special Education Section giving final confirmation to those schools that the transitional allocation may be applied. Schools should not regard the transitional allocation notified in the letter of 18th May as final sanction for those hours – that letter specifically stated that in order to qualify for the transitional allocation, a school must provide details of the pupils in respect of whom the transitional allocation was required. If schools have not provided this information to the Department of Education and Science, and have used transitional hours to retain or create a post, they should immediately contact Special Education Section, Athlone.

6.9 Accommodation

Please note that if additional accommodation is required to facilitate a new post or posts, then the Board of Management must apply to the Planning Section, Department of Education and Science, Portlaoise Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. (Tel: 0506 24300).

6.10 Review of general allocation model

As stated in paragraph 6.2 above, it is anticipated that a review of general allocations will be undertaken after three years of operation. Further reviews will occur at regular intervals thereafter. A further communication in this regard will be issued to schools in due course. However, in relation to disadvantaged schools the position may be reviewed at an earlier stage in the context of the development of a new policy framework for educational inclusion.

6.11 Necessity for an inclusive enrolment

The general allocation is conditional on the Board of Management implementing an inclusive enrolment policy in accordance with the Education Act (1998) and the Equal Status Act (2000).

6.12 Schools' co-operation

The Department of Education and Science accepts that the transition to a general allocation system is a major change for schools when compared to the previous model. However, it also considers that the new system will bring benefits to schools and pupils that were not available under the previous model. It is accepted that schools did not have a lot of time to implement the changes for the new school year, and the co-operation of schools in implementing the change is acknowledged and appreciated by the Department of Education and Science.

6.13 Queries

Any queries in relation to the general allocation model should be addressed to the Special Education Section, Department of Education and Science, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. Telephone enquiries can be made to 090 6474621 / 01 8734700 and when enquiring you should specify the school's roll number and the county in which your school is located.

Paul Kennedy,
Principal Officer.

APPENDIX 1

CATEGORIES OF LOW-INCIDENCE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

This Appendix is divided into two Sections, A and B:

Section A

This section sets out the various categories of low incidence disabilities and the level of resource teaching support available to schools in respect of each category.

Low Incidence Disabilities	Hours of resource teaching support available to school per week
Physical Disability	3
Hearing Impairment	4
Visual Impairment	3.5
Emotional Disturbance	3.5
Severe Emotional Disturbance	5
Moderate General Learning Disability	3.5
Severe / Profound General Learning Disability	5
Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorders	5
Specific Speech and Language Disorder	4
Assessed syndrome in conjunction with one of the above low incidence disabilities	3 to 5, taking into account the pupil's special educational needs including level of general learning disability
Multiple Disabilities	5

Section B

This is an information note for professionals in relation to the various low incidence disability categories.

Physical disability

Such pupils have permanent or protracted disabilities arising from such conditions as congenital deformities, spina bifida, dyspraxia, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, brittle bones, or severe accidental injury. Because of the impairment of their physical function they require special additional intervention and support if they are to have available to them a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities.

Many require the use of a wheelchair, mobility or seating aid, or other technological support.

They may suffer from a lack of muscular control and co-ordination and may have difficulties in communication, particularly in oral articulation, as for example severe dyspraxia.

Pupils with a physical disability who have learning difficulties arising from the disability *may* need resource teaching where there are consequent significant learning difficulties. Others may need assistive technology only.

Hearing impairment

Such pupils have a hearing disability that is so serious to impair significantly their capacity to hear and understand human speech, thus preventing them from participating fully in classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction. The great majority of them have been prescribed hearing aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher. *(This category is not intended to include pupils with mild hearing loss.)*

Schools that have a pupil who has been assessed as having hearing impairment and no other assessed disability, may be allocated a maximum of 4 hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher, or from a visiting teacher and resource teacher combined.

Where a pupil with a hearing impairment also meets the criterion for another low-incidence disability category, provision is allocated as for multiple disabilities.

Visual impairment

Such pupils have a visual disability which is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to see, thus interfering with their capacity to perceive visually presented materials, such as pictures, diagrams, and the written word. Some will have been diagnosed as suffering from such conditions, such as congenital blindness, cataracts, albinism and retinitis pigmentosa. Most require the use of low-vision aids and are availing of the services of a Visiting Teacher. *(This category is not intended to include those pupils whose visual difficulties are satisfactorily corrected by the wearing of spectacles and/or contact lenses.)*

Schools that have a pupil who has been assessed as having a visual impairment, and no other assessed disability, may be allocated a maximum of 3.5 hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher, or from a visiting teacher and resource teacher combined.

Where a pupil with a visual impairment also meets the criterion for another low-incidence disability category, provision is allocated as for multiple disabilities.

Emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems

Such pupils *are* being treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist for such conditions as neurosis, childhood psychosis, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and conduct disorders that are significantly impairing their socialisation and/or learning in school. *(This category is not intended to include pupils whose conduct or behavioural difficulties can be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures on discipline.)*

Some pupils in this category *may* need resource teaching support. Care support from a special needs assistant may be required where a pupil's behaviour is a danger to himself or others or where it seriously interferes with the learning opportunities of other pupils. In certain circumstances, some pupils may require both supports.

Moderate general learning disability

Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a moderate general learning disability.

A maximum allocation of 3.5 hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher may be made to schools in respect of each pupil assessed as having a moderate general learning disability (the pupils full-scale IQ score will have been assessed in the range 35 – 49).

Severe or profound general learning disability

Such pupils have been assessed by a psychologist as having a severe or profound general learning disability. In addition, such pupils may have physical disabilities.

Five hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher may be made to schools in respect of each pupil with a severe/profound general learning disability (the pupil's full-scale IQ score will have been assessed as being below 35).

Autism/autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)

A psychiatrist or psychologist will have assessed and classified such pupils as having autism or autistic spectrum disorder according to DSM–IV or ICD–10 criteria.

In the interest of the pupil with an ASD and in order that the needs of the pupil are adequately addressed, it is important, where feasible, that for a definitive assessment of ASD, a multi-disciplinary assessment team should be involved. The need for a multi-disciplinary assessment is also in keeping with the policy of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

A maximum allocation of 5 hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher may be made to schools in respect of each pupil assessed as having ASD.

Pupils with special educational needs arising from an assessed syndrome

The level of additional support to be provided for pupils who present with a particular syndrome e.g. Down syndrome, William's syndrome and Tourette's syndrome will be determined following consideration of psychological or other specialist reports which describes the nature and degree of the pupils special educational needs.

Where a pupil with an assessed syndrome has a general learning disability, resource teaching support will be allocated to schools in line with hours allocated to pupils assessed as being within the same IQ band (moderate/severe/profound GLD). Where a pupil with an assessed syndrome has any of the other low-incidence disabilities, resource teaching support will be allocated on that basis.

Specific speech and language disorder

Such pupils should meet *each* of the following criteria:

- The pupil has been assessed by a psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence that places non verbal or performance ability within the average range or above.
- The pupil has been assessed by a speech therapist on a standardised test of language development that places performance in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development at two standard deviations or more below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level.
- The pupil's difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; where the pupil is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech-related frequencies should be 40Db;
- Emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes.
- Pupils with speech and language delays and difficulties are not to be considered under this category.
- In the case of specific speech and language disorder it is a pupil's **non-verbal or performance ability** that must be within the average range or above. (i.e. non-verbal or performance IQ of 90, or above).
- The pupil must also have been assessed by a speech and language therapist and found to be at two or more standard deviations (S.D.) below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level (i.e. - 2 S.D. or below, at or below a standard score of 70) in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development.
- **Two** assessments, a psychological assessment and a speech and language assessment are necessary in this case.
- A maximum allocation of 4 hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher may be made to schools in respect of each pupil assessed as having specific speech and language disorder.

Multiple disabilities

Pupils assessed with multiple disabilities meet the criteria for two or more of the disabilities described above. A maximum allocation of five hours teaching support per week from a resource teacher may be made to schools in respect of each pupil assessed as having multiple disabilities.

Applications for resources for pupils with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities should be made to the assigned Special Educational Needs Organiser.

APPENDIX 2

Background and Details of General Allocation

The general allocation model replaces the system proposed in June 2004 and provides for the allocation to schools of permanent teachers on a basis of enrolment to cater for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs arising from high-incidence disabilities. The advantages of the new system are that:

- It provides schools with permanent resources for pupils with special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities and thereby facilitates flexible and early intervention for these pupils;
- It reduces the need for individual applications and supporting psychological assessments for pupils with special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities;
- It provides resources more systematically, thereby giving schools more certainty about their resource levels;
- It gives greater flexibility to school management in the deployment of resources;
- It provides greater levels of certainty about resource allocations thereby facilitating better planning within the system both at central and local level, leading to a more effective and efficient delivery of services.

The general allocation model will operate as follows:

Larger schools

Differing pupil teacher ratios apply to boys', mixed and girls' schools.

- Boys' schools with 135 pupils or more get their first post at 135; second post at 295; third post at 475, fourth post at 655, and so on.
- Mixed schools with 145 pupils or more get their first post at 145; second post at 315; third post at 495, fourth post at 675, and so on.
- Girls' schools with 195 pupils or more get their first post at 195; second post at 395; third post at 595; fourth post at 795, and so on.
- All designated disadvantaged schools get their first post at 80; second post at 160; third post at 240; fourth post at 320, and so on.

It should be noted that schools qualify for a *pro rata* part of a post for pupil numbers below the enrolment point for the first post and between the first and second post, the second and third post, and so on. For a designated disadvantaged school with 60 eligible pupils the general allocation is 0.8 of a post; for a boys' school with 215 pupils the general allocation is 1.5 posts; for a mixed school with 700 pupils the general allocation is 4.1 (rounded to one decimal place).

Small schools

To ensure that small schools are not disadvantaged by the introduction of the general allocation model, the point at which smaller schools can appoint their first post is significantly reduced. For the purposes of the general allocation model, a boys' school is considered to be small if it has an enrolment of fewer than 135 pupils, a mixed school is considered to be small if it has an enrolment of fewer than 145 pupils, and a girls' school is considered to be small if it has an enrolment of fewer than 195 pupils.

Boys' small schools will qualify for their first post at 100 pupils; mixed small schools will qualify for their first post at 105 pupils; and girls' small schools will qualify for their first post at 150 pupils. However, no additional general allocation will be made to boys' small schools on the basis of an enrolment between 100 and 135, to mixed small schools on the basis of an enrolment between 105 and 145, or to girls' small schools for an enrolment between 150 and 195.

APPENDIX 3

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

Stage I

A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. The teacher should then administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists and profiles for pupils in senior infants and first class, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists where appropriate.

The class teacher should then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the classroom support plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the special education support team or the learning support/resource teacher in the school may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at stage II.

Stage II

If intervention is considered necessary at stage II, then the pupil should be referred to the learning support/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. In the case of pupils with learning difficulties, if the classroom support plan fails to achieve the desired outcome the pupil should be referred to the learning support teacher/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. If this diagnostic assessment suggests that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this should be arranged. The parents and the class teacher should be involved with the learning-support/resource teacher in drawing up the learning programme, which would include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching.

The learning support/resource teacher and the class teacher should review regularly, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving supplementary teaching. If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at stage III.

In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases the pupil's needs should, with parents' permission, be discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or the case should be referred to the clinical services of the Health Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment (stage III).

Stage III

Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage III. The school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional

disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc.¹

The learning support/resource teacher, resource teacher, if available, and the class teacher, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists should then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special educational needs, intervention at stage III will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such pupils, and primary responsibility for the pupil will remain with the class teacher, in consultation with the learning support/resource /or resource teacher.

¹Following the introduction of the general allocation model teaching resources are available to schools for pupils at Stage III without necessarily having recourse to an assessment by an external specialist outside the school.

Deploying special educational resources using the general allocation

Three models are presented to assist schools in planning, at the level of the whole school and at the level of the individual pupil, for the deployment of additional teaching resources. In drawing up these models the framework suggested in part 1 of this circular was used. Schools should note that the principles and procedures in the *Learning-Support Guidelines* continue to apply and that the guidance provided in them should continue to be followed. Where necessary, the advice provided in the *Learning-Support Guidelines* can be adapted in the light of teacher allocations made to schools under the terms of the general allocation model.

What follows in this appendix are the three worked models of how the general allocation can be applied in different settings. Example A is a small mixed school, example B is a mid-sized all-boys' school and example C is a large all-girls' school. These models use the structure suggested in part 1, section 5 of this circular.

While it is not feasible to illustrate all possible types of schools and settings, it is hoped that these three models will be helpful in illustrating various possibilities. Equally, some timetables for pupils and teachers are outlined for each type of school. These timetables are also intended as samples and do not cover the full range of possible options, nor do they refer to the classroom support plans being implemented by the class teacher.

EXAMPLE SCHOOL A

A mixed small school with an enrolment of 60 pupils, no disadvantaged status

General Allocation: 15 hours
(a full-time permanent post, shared with a neighbouring school)

plus

allocation for low incidence resource teaching:
3.5 hours (temporary hours)

In total, therefore, the school has 18.5 hours, with a part-time permanent shared post, plus part-time (3.5 hours) temporary hours.

Step 1

Identify all the pupils in need of additional teaching support, both learning-support teaching and resource teaching and including pupils who have special educational needs arising from high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.

In this case the school identified a total of nine pupils.

Step 2

Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the pupils' learning needs (stage II or stage III).

Pupils with learning needs at stage II:

Five pupils, (*Paul, Aidan, Emma, Vicky & Teresa*) need support for literacy (Traditionally, these pupils would have been described as needing learning support).

One pupil (*Ola*) has mild emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Pupils with learning needs at stage III:

Those with special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities:

One pupil (*Heather*) has a mild general learning disability, and one pupil (*Samir*) has borderline general learning disability and additional behavioural difficulties, both of whom have been previously assessed.

Those with special educational needs arising from low incidence disabilities for whom 3.5 hours have been allocated, which is additional to the general allocation:

One pupil, *Adam* has a moderate general learning disability (3.5 hours).

Summary of pupils in need of additional support and stage of intervention

	Pupils with learning needs at stage II (literacy and numeracy)	Pupils with learning needs at stage II (other special educational needs)	Pupils with learning needs at stage III (pupils with high incidence disabilities)	Pupils with learning needs at stage III (pupils with low incidence disabilities)
Junior Infants	None yet identified			
Senior Infants				
First Class	1 pupil (<i>Paul</i>) for literacy support			1 pupil (<i>Adam</i>) with moderate GLD
Second Class	2 pupils (<i>Aidan & Emma</i>) for literacy support	1 pupil (<i>Ola</i>) with mild emotional and behavioural needs		
Third Class			1 pupil (<i>Heather</i>) with mild GLD	
Fourth Class	1 pupil (<i>Vicky</i>) for literacy support			
Fifth Class			1 pupil (<i>Samir</i>) with borderline mild GLD/ behavioural difficulties	
Sixth Class	1 pupil (<i>Teresa</i>) for literacy support			

In this school, junior infants, senior infants and first class are in one classroom, second, third and fourth class are in a second classroom and fifth and sixth class are in a third classroom.

Step 3

Identify the members of the teaching staff who will be allocated to the identified pupils. (All teachers who are appointed on foot of the general allocation model, allocations of additional teacher hours for the support of pupils with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, and any other allocation to the school).

Ms McMahon (15 hours): a full-time permanent post, shared with a neighbouring school. She will be offering the school 15 hours, from noon to 3 p.m. five times per week. Ms Mc Mahon also gives one additional session, on Friday from 11:15 a.m. to noon.

Mr Doyle (3.5 hours): a temporary post allocated for pupils with low incidence disabilities.

Step 4

Allocate the identified staff members to the pupils, taking account of:

- *the programme needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils, including whether it is short-term/focused intervention or long-term/continuing support,*
- *the time available to all pupils and the proportion of time needed by individual pupils and groups of pupils, based on identified needs,*
- *the expertise of the teachers, and*
- *practical and logistical considerations, including increasing chances for LS/RTs and RTs to liaise with mainstream class teachers, availability of staff at times of greatest need, etc.*

Ms McMahon is a qualified primary school teacher, working in the area of learning support for the last 6 years. She will be offering the school 15 hours, from noon to 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday and from 11:15 to 3 p.m. on Friday.

Mr Doyle is a retired teacher, available on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:15 a.m. to 11 a.m.

In this case it was decided to allocate Mr Doyle to in-class support work with younger pupils in the school, to assisting with identification and screening and early intervention, to give focussed support to *Paul* (who has literacy needs at stage II), and to offer *Adam* (who has moderate general learning disability and is at stage III) in-class support. It is envisaged that both *Adam and Paul* will have focussed support for 30 minutes each on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Ms McMahon will then use her 15 hours to support the remaining pupils and to further support Adam.

Step 5

Cross-reference the programme needs of pupils with learning needs at stages II and III and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree on which teacher or teachers will cater for these groups.

Weekly timetable for Special Education - Ms. McMahon and Mr Doyle

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Session 1		<i>Adam & Paul</i> (Mr Doyle)		<i>Adam & Paul</i> (Mr Doyle)	
Session 2					<i>Samir</i> (Ms McMahon)
	Lunch Time				
Session 3	<i>Adam</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Aidan & Emma</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Adam</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Aidan & Emma</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Adam</i> (Ms McMahon)
Session 4	<i>Ola</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Samir</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Heather</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Samir</i> (Ms McMahon)	
Session 5	<i>Vicky & Teresa</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Heather</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Vicky and Teresa</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Heather</i> (Ms McMahon)	<i>Aidan & Emma</i> (Ms McMahon)

EXAMPLE SCHOOL B

A boys' school with an enrolment of 230 pupils, no disadvantaged status

General Allocation: One full-time permanent post, plus 15 hours
(a full-time permanent post, shared with a neighbouring school)

plus

Allocation for low incidence resource teaching: 11.5 hours (temporary hours)

In total, therefore, the school has a full-time permanent post and 15 hours (full-time permanent post, shared with another school) plus 11.5 temporary hours.

Step 1

Identify all the pupils in need of additional teaching support, both learning-support teaching and resource teaching and including pupils who have special educational needs arising from high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.

In this case the school identified a total of 32 pupils.

Step 2

Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the pupils' learning needs (stage II or stage III).

Pupils with learning needs at stage II:

Eighteen pupils needing support for literacy and six needing support for maths. (Traditionally, these pupils would have been described as needing learning support).

Two pupils (*Bartak and Ajith*) have mild emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Pupils with learning needs at stage III:

Those with high incidence disabilities:

One pupil (*Jack*) has a mild general learning disability, and one pupil (*Michael*) has a borderline general learning disability and additional behavioural difficulties, and a further pupil (*Eoin*) has severe reading difficulties.

Those with low incidence disabilities, for whom 11.5 hours have been allocated, which is additional to the general allocation:

One pupil (*Kyle*) has an autistic spectrum disorder (5 hours), one (*Kevin*) has emotional and behavioural disturbance (3.5 hours), and one pupil (*Joshua*), has a hearing impairment (4 hours).

Summary of pupils in need of additional support and stage of intervention

	Pupils with learning needs at stage II (literacy and numeracy needs)	Pupils with learning needs at stage II (other special educational needs)	Pupils with learning needs at stage III (pupils with high incidence disabilities)	Pupils with learning needs at stage III (pupils with low incidence disabilities)
Junior Infants	None yet identified			
Senior Infants		1 pupil (<i>Bartak</i>) with mild emotional and behavioural difficulties		1 pupil (<i>Kevin</i>) with emotional and behavioural disturbance
First Class	3 pupils for literacy support		1 pupil (<i>Michael</i>) with borderline mild GLD and behavioural difficulties	
Second Class	5 pupils for literacy support and 2 for maths support			
Third Class	3 pupils for literacy support			1 pupil (<i>Kyle</i>) with autistic spectrum disorder
Fourth Class	3 pupils for literacy support and 2 for maths support	1 pupil (<i>Ajith</i>) with mild emotional and behavioural difficulties		1 pupil (<i>Joshua</i>) with hearing impairment
Fifth Class	1 pupil for literacy support and 2 pupils for maths support		1 pupil (<i>Jack</i>) with mild GLD	
Sixth Class	3 pupils for literacy support		1 pupil (<i>Eoin</i>) with severe reading difficulties	

Step 3

Identify the members of the teaching staff who will be allocated to the identified pupils (all teachers who are appointed on foot of the general allocation model, allocations of additional teacher hours for the support of pupils with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, and any other allocation to the school).

Ms. Mulhall: a full-time permanent post.

Mr. Murphy (15 hours): a permanent full-time post shared with neighbouring girls' school

Ms. Hogan (11.5 hours): a temporary post allocated for pupils with low incidence needs

Step 4

Allocate the identified staff members to pupils, taking account of

- *the programme needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils, including whether it is short-term/focused intervention or long-term/continuing support,*
- *the time available to all pupils and the proportion of time needed by individual pupils and groups of pupils, based on identified needs,*
- *the expertise of the teachers, and*
- *practical and logistical considerations, including increasing chances for LS/RTs and RTs to liaise with mainstream class teachers, the availability of staff at times of greatest need, etc*

Ms. Mulhall has a full-time permanent post. She has 10 years' experience in learning support and has attended a one year course in learning support in a College of Education.

Ms. Mulhall has been allocated learning support (literacy and maths) for first, second, third and sixth class. She is also responsible for early identification and screening and support for literacy at the infant phase. Ms. Mulhall is also working with *Eoin*, who has stage III needs because of his severe reading difficulties.

Mr. Murphy has 15 hours, a permanent full-time post shared with neighbouring girls' school. He previously worked in a special school for pupils with mild and moderate general learning disabilities.

Mr. Murphy will be working with some of the pupils with learning needs at stage III (*Jack, Michael, Kyle* and *Joshua*). He will be taking care of fifth class stage II learning support (literacy and maths).

Ms. Hogan has 11.5 hours, a temporary post. She is a qualified primary teacher and has expressed an interest in working with pupils in the area of social interaction and physical education. She is available on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Ms. Hogan will be offering in-class support and some social skills training to *Bartak* (stage II, mild emotional and behavioural needs) and to *Kevin* (stage III, emotional and behavioural disturbance), both of whom are in senior infants. She will also be working with *Ajith* (stage II, mild emotional and behavioural needs), who is in fourth class. Additionally, she will be offering learning support in literacy and maths to five pupils in fourth class.

Step 5

Cross-reference the programme needs of pupils with special educational needs at stages II and III and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree on which teacher or teachers will cater for these groups.

In this school, it was felt that it would be helpful to group *Kevin and Bartak* together for some of the time, as they had similar needs.

Although *Joshua** was allocated to Mr Murphy for resource teaching, it was felt that he would also benefit from joining the small maths learning support group with Mr Hogan.

Mr Hogan was also providing the fourth class with some learning support. However, to supplement this, Ms Mulhall also offered them one session per week, to specifically develop reading comprehension skills.

It was also felt that a paired reading scheme, between the first class learning support pupils and the sixth class learning support pupils would be beneficial. Ms Mulhall undertook to co-ordinate this, although the activity took place in the first class classroom after lunch, three times per week for 20 minutes.

Weekly timetable for Ms. Hogan

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Session 1		Literacy learning support, fourth class	Literacy learning support, fourth class		
Session 2		Maths, learning support, fourth class, 2 pupils + <i>Joshua</i> *	Maths, learning support, fourth class, 2 pupils + <i>Joshua</i> *		
Break Time					
Session 3		<i>Ajith</i>	Computer time		
Lunch time Developing playing skills in the yard, focusing on senior infants (<i>Bartak & Kevin</i>) on Tuesday and fourth class (<i>Ajith</i>) on Wednesday (Ms. Hogan takes a later lunch herself on these days.)					
Session 4		<i>Bartak & Kevin</i>	<i>Bartak & Kevin</i>	<i>Bartak & Kevin</i>	
Session 5		In class support and small group work with senior infants, to include <i>Bartak & Kevin</i>			

Weekly timetable for Ms. Mulhall

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Session 1	Eoin (individual for 30 minutes)	Eoin (individual for 30 minutes)	Eoin (individual for 30 minutes)	Eoin (individual for 30 minutes)	Eoin (individual for 30 minutes)
Session 2	Individual session for 30 minutes with pupil from sixth class, to follow intensive computer-based literacy programme for a five-week block. Three pupils to be seen by rotation in first term, followed by review.				
Session 3	Learning support, second class group 1	Learning support, second class group 1	Learning support, third class	Learning support, second class group 1	Learning support, second class group 1
Break Time					
Session 4	Learning support, second class group 2	Learning support, second class group 2	Learning support, second class group 2	Learning support, second class group 2	Learning support, comprehension workshop, fourth class
Lunch					
Session 5	Learning support, third class	Junior and senior infants, identification, screening and early intervention.		Learning support, third class	Time for review of peer reading scheme involving three pupils at stage II in the first class and three pupils at stage II in sixth class
Session 6	Learning support, first class	Learning support, second class, maths workshop	Learning support, first class	Learning support, first class	

EXAMPLE SCHOOL C

An all girls' school with an enrolment of 497, no disadvantaged status

General Allocation: 2 full posts, plus 12.5 hours
(a full-time permanent post, shared with a neighbouring school)

plus

allocation for low incidence resource teaching of:
11.5 hours (a full-time temporary post shared with a neighbouring school)

In total, therefore, the school has two full-time permanent posts, a part-time (12.5 hours) permanent post, and a part-time temporary post (11.5 hours).

Step 1

Identify all the pupils in need of additional teaching support, both learning-support teaching and resource teaching and including pupils who have special educational needs arising from high-incidence disabilities.

In this case the school identified a total of 66 pupils.

Step 2

Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the pupils' learning needs (stage II or stage III)

Pupils with learning needs at stage II:

Forty-six pupils need support for literacy (including eight who also need support with numeracy,) and a further six need support with numeracy only. (Traditionally, these pupils would have been described as needing learning support).

A pupil with dyspraxia (*Clodagh*) and two pupils with mild emotional and behavioural difficulties (*Sinead & Rachel*) were also identified as requiring intervention at stage II.

Pupils with learning needs at stage III:

Seven pupils have special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities.

Four pupils (*Alison, Ciara, Michaela & Kate*) were assessed as having mild general learning disability.

Two pupils (*Tara & Lauren*) have borderline general learning disability and additional learning needs (as outlined in circular 08/02).

One pupil (*Toni*), as assessed, meets the criteria for specific learning disability as set out in circular 8/02.

One pupil (*Eilish*), with severe reading difficulties, as assessed, would not have been eligible for an allocation of resource teaching hours, being just outside the criteria for specific learning disability as set out in circular 8/02. However, based on the staged approach to assessment, identification and programme planning, it has been decided in the school that focussed, short-term intervention at stage III is warranted for her also.

For pupils with special educational needs arising from low incidence disabilities, 11.5 resource teaching hours have been allocated in addition to the general allocation. The pupils with low incidence disabilities, as set out in Appendix 1, are:

- one (*Raksandra*) with a physical disability (3 hours),
- one (*Samantha*) with Asperger's syndrome (5 hours),
- one (*Kerry*) with emotional disturbance and associated behavioural difficulties (3.5 hours).

Summary of pupils in need of additional support and stage of intervention

	Learning needs at stage II (literacy and numeracy needs)	Learning needs at stage II (other special educational needs)	Learning needs at stage III (pupils with high incidence disabilities)	Learning needs at stage III (pupils with low incidence disabilities)
Junior Infants	None yet identified		1 pupil (<i>Alison</i> , has mild GLD/ language delay)	
Senior Infants	4 pupils for literacy (<i>Sarah, Lisa, Laura & Nadia,</i>) 3 for numeracy (<i>Sarah, Lisa & Sorcha</i>)	1 pupil (<i>Sinead</i>) with mild emotional and behavioural difficulties	1 pupil (<i>Ciara</i>) with mild GLD, another (<i>Lauren</i>) with borderline mild GLD/ language difficulties	1 pupil (<i>Raksandra</i>) with physical disability (3 hours)
First Class	9 pupils for literacy, 2 pupils for numeracy			
Second Class	7 pupils for literacy 2 pupils for numeracy		1 pupil (<i>Eilish</i>) with severe reading difficulties	
Third Class	6 pupils for literacy, 2 pupils for numeracy	1 pupil (<i>Clodagh</i>) with dyspraxia	1 pupil (<i>Tara</i>) with borderline GLD and significantly low attainments	
Fourth Class	4 pupils for literacy	1 pupil (<i>Rachel</i>) with mild emotional /behavioural difficulties	1 pupil (<i>Michaela</i>) with mild GLD	1 pupil (<i>Samantha</i>) with Asperger's syndrome (5 hours)
Fifth Class	5 pupils for literacy, 3 pupils for numeracy		1 pupil (<i>Toni</i>) with severe reading difficulties	
Sixth Class	6 pupils for literacy, 2 pupils for numeracy		1 pupil (<i>Kate</i>) with mild GLD	1 pupil (<i>Kerry</i>) with emotional and behavioural needs (3.5 hours)

Step 3

Identify the members of the teaching staff who will be allocated to the identified pupil (all teachers who are appointed on foot of the general allocation model, allocations of additional teacher hours for the support of pupils with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, and any other allocation to the school).

Ms. O' Malley: a full-time permanent post.

Ms. Hennessy: a full-time permanent post.

Mr. Walsh: 12.5 hours, and holds a permanent post, shared with another school.

Ms. Dunne: 11.5 hours, with a full-time temporary post shared with another school

Step 4

Allocate the identified staff members to the pupils, taking account of

- ***the programme needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils, including whether it is short-term/focused intervention or long-term/continuing support,***
- ***the time available to all pupils and the proportion of time needed by individual pupils and groups of pupils based on identified needs,***
- ***the expertise of the teachers,***
- ***practical and logistical considerations, including increasing chances for LS/RTs and RTs to liaise with mainstream class teachers, the availability of staff at times of greatest need, etc.***

Ms. O' Malley is a qualified primary teacher who has worked in the area of developing literacy for twelve years and has completed a one year course in learning-support teaching in a College of Education. Ms. O' Malley has a full-time permanent post.

This teacher was allocated responsibility for providing learning-support to pupils in first, second and third class (twenty two pupils at stage II) and for the two pupils with severe reading difficulties at stage III, as well as one pupil with mild general learning disability in fourth class.

Ms. Hennessy is a qualified primary teacher but is new to learning support since last year. She has expressed an interest in working with younger pupils and has expertise in the area of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Ms Hennessy has a full-time permanent post.

(Names are noted here to help illustrate the sample timetable overleaf)

This teacher was allocated the pupils in need of early intervention with literacy and numeracy needs at stage II in junior infants. She also provides additional support for two pupils at stage II who have emotional and behavioural difficulties (*Sinead & Rachael*) and four pupils with needs at stage III in infants: one in junior infants with mild general learning disability (*Alison*), one in senior infants with mild general learning

disability (*Ciara*), one in senior infants with borderline general learning disability and significant language difficulties (*Lauren*) and one in senior infants with a physical disability (*Raksandra*).

She will also provide support for a pupil with Asperger's syndrome in fourth class (*Samantha*) and a pupil in sixth class (*Kerry*) with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Mr. Walsh is a primary trained teacher who has been working in the area of resource teaching in the last two years. He has a particular interest and expertise in the teaching of mathematics. Mr. Walsh has 12.5 hours and holds a permanent post that is shared with another school.

This teacher was allocated the numeracy support for pupils at stage II, from first to sixth class. He is also allocated two other pupils in third class, one with dyspraxia (at stage II) and one with mild general learning disability (at stage III).

Ms. Dunne is a primary teacher trained in Northern Ireland who worked in resource teaching part-time last year and has attended courses in literacy development. She has 11.5 hours and holds a full-time temporary post that is shared with another school.

This teacher provides learning support to pupils in fourth, fifth and sixth classes (fifteen pupils at stage II). She was also allocated one pupil in sixth class with mild general learning disability.

Note

As well as matching teachers with pupils based on the teacher's expertise, the following factors were also considered:

Mr. Walsh was allocated two pupils in third class so that he could maximise liaison with teachers and so that third class teachers did not find that they needed to liaise with up to four different people. Some aspects of the programme to be offered the pupil with dyspraxia (handwriting activities, ideas for structuring written work and general motor development) are relevant to the pupil with a borderline general learning disability.

Ms. Hennessy is concentrating much of her time in the infant classes. However, in the afternoon she also provides teaching support to a pupil with Asperger's syndrome and one with mild emotional and behavioural difficulties, both in fourth class. There is some overlap in the programmes that these pupils need, particularly with regard to being aware of the feelings of others and taking turns.

At the end of each day Ms. Hennessy is working with a pupil in sixth class with emotional and behavioural needs (at stage III). This allows for this pupil to be provided with regular support, and facilitates the implementation of a daily behavioural review, school-based rewards, and some homework support, as needed. It was decided that both these pupils would need to be allocated to a teacher who was working full-time in the school.

Step 5

Cross-reference the programme needs of pupils with learning needs at stages II and III and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree on which teacher or teachers will cater for these groups.

This step is inherent in much of what has been discussed above. However, in this worked model there are some particular grouping arrangements that are worthy of further comment.

A suggested timetable for Ms Hennessey is shown overleaf. As noted above, Ms Hennessey concentrates much of her time in infant classes.

In senior infants there are four children requiring stage II learning support in reading (*Sarah, Lisa, Laura, Nadia*).

There are three pupils who require stage II learning support in mathematics (stage II) (*Sarah, Lisa, Sorcha*).

In senior infants there is one pupil with mild emotional and behavioural difficulties (*Sinead*), one with mild general learning disability (*Ciara*) and one with borderline general learning disability and additional significant language difficulties (*Lauren*). One pupil has a physical disability (*Raksandra*).

In junior infants there is one pupil with mild general learning disability (*Alison*). It should also be noted that two hours per week have been set aside for early stage II work in junior infants, including in-class support, screening, and early intervention.

One pupil has Asperger's syndrome (*Samantha*) and one has mild emotional and behavioural difficulties (*Rachel*). Both are in fourth class. One pupil in sixth class has emotional and behavioural needs (stage III) (*Kerry*).

In the infant programme it was decided to offer a language enrichment group, which included some work on social skills, and this was offered to pupils with stage II needs (*Sinead*) and stage III needs (*Alison, Ciara, Lauren and Raksandra*). *Sinead* needed to work on taking her turn and listening to others, while *Raksandra* needed to build social confidence and to be more forthcoming in a group and whole-class situation.

Weekly timetable for Ms Hennessy

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Session 1	<i>Raksandra</i>	<i>Ciara & Lauren</i>	<i>Raksandra</i>	<i>Ciara & Lauren</i>	<i>Raksandra</i>
Session 2	<i>Samantha</i>	Junior Infants, stage II support, in-class support, screening and early intervention, as negotiated with class teachers.	<i>Samantha</i>	<i>Sinead/ Samantha (alternate weeks)</i>	
Break Time					
Session 3	Language enrichment group (<i>Alison, Lauren, and Ciara</i>)	<i>Alison</i>	Language enrichment group (<i>Alison, Lauren, and Ciara</i>)	<i>Alison</i>	Language enrichment group (<i>Raksandra, Sinead and Lauren</i>)
Lunch Time					
Session 4	Sen infants, stage II literacy support (<i>Sarah, Lisa, Laura and Nadia</i>)	Sen infants stage II literacy support (<i>Sarah, Lisa, Laura, and Nadia</i>)	Sen infants stage II literacy support (<i>Sarah, Lisa, Laura and Nadia</i>)	Sen infants stage II literacy support (<i>Sarah, Lisa, Laura and Jade</i>)	Cookery afternoon for <i>Rachel, Samantha, Michaela*</i> and two others from fourth class, alternating with sixth class group, <i>Kerry, Kate*</i> and up to three others as selected by the class teacher by way of a reward.
Session 5	<i>Alison</i>	Sen infants stage II maths support (<i>Sarah, Lisa and Sorcha</i>)	<i>Ciara</i>	Sen Infants Stage II maths support (<i>Sarah, Lisa & Sorcha</i>)	
Session 6	<i>Samantha</i>	<i>Samantha & Rachel</i>	<i>Samantha</i>	<i>Samantha</i>	
Session 7	<i>Kerry</i>	<i>Kerry</i>	<i>Kerry</i>	<i>Kerry</i>	

It is envisaged that sessions 6 and 7 will be relatively short (30 minutes each).

It has been agreed by Ms Hennessy and the class teachers that a flexible arrangement will apply in relation to the location for additional teaching to these pupils. As often as possible, additional teaching will be provided in the classroom, with withdrawal to another classroom only when this is absolutely necessary.

*Michaela and Kate are girls in fourth and sixth class respectively, both of whom have mild general learning disability. Michaela will generally be working with Ms. O'Malley for her resource needs, while Kate will be working with Ms. Dunne. However, it was felt that these girls would benefit from the cookery afternoon, as a way of developing social skills and applying mathematical concepts in a practical setting.

SIX KEY STEPS TO PROVIDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR ALL PUPILS WHO NEED IT

Outline of a possible approach to planning for the deployment of resources at individual school level

Step 1	Identify all the pupils in need of additional teaching support, both learning-support teaching and resource teaching and including pupils who have special educational needs arising from high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.
Step 2	Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the pupils' learning needs. (stage II or stage III). It is up to the school to decide whether one-to-one or group teaching, or a mixture of both, is the best type of support for each individual pupil, depending on the nature of their needs.
Step 3	Identify the members of the teaching staff who will be allocated to the identified pupils (all teachers who are appointed on foot of the general allocation model, allocations of additional teacher hours for the support of pupils with special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, and any other allocation to the school).
Step 4	Allocate the identified staff members to the pupils, taking account of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learning programme needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils, including whether it is short-term focused intervention or long-term, continuing support, • the time available to all pupils and the proportion of time needed by individual pupils and groups of pupils, based on identified needs, • the expertise and interest of the teachers, and • practical and logistical considerations, including increasing chances for LS/RTs and RTs to liaise with mainstream class teachers, availability of staff at times of greatest need, etc
Step 5	Cross-reference the programme needs of pupils with learning needs at stages II and III, and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree on which teacher or teachers will cater for these groups.
Step 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a tracking and recording system to ensure that a record is maintained of all pupils who are receiving additional teaching support and of their progress in response to the established interventions. • Learning-support/resource teachers and resource teachers should regularly and actively monitor the progress of the pupils who receive support under the general allocation model and those who have special educational needs arising from low-incidence disabilities, in consultation with parents, class teachers, and relevant professionals. This is particularly important in cases where support for a pupil has been increased, reduced or discontinued. <p><i>See Appendix 4 for Worked Models of such deployment.</i></p>

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