



Allocating Special Education Teaching Resources in Primary Schools

Special education teachers must be deployed to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs in schools. An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. This gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility in how they allocate special education teaching resources. Schools may deploy special education teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs (for example, in-class support, group withdrawal). Schools' previous experiences of allocating resources under the general allocation model will be useful in guiding them as they allocate resources under the revised model.

Effective communication and engagement with parents is critically important in moving towards a needs-based approach to the allocation of additional teaching resources. This is enhanced when parents are consulted in relation to their child's needs, support plan, and are involved in regular reviews of progress.

When allocating teaching resources, schools should be mindful of the benefits of early-intervention and prevention programmes and should allocate teaching resources as required, based on identified needs and school context. Schools should also aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support. Importantly, the level and type of support should reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and be informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

When deploying teaching resources, schools need to maintain time for co-ordinating, planning and reviewing activities to ensure effective and optimal use of supports. Co-ordination time should, however, be kept to a minimum in order to ensure that teaching time is maximised. Additionally, flexibility in terms of resource allocation is required to allow for emerging needs during the school year. School principals should also take into account the professional development record and acquired expertise of teachers when allocating teaching roles and supports.

Planning the allocation of special education teaching supports

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning. To guide them in allocating teaching supports, schools are again referred to the principles to guide the implementation process.

A planning template is provided to assist schools in the allocation of special education teaching. In addition, a school provision planning template is provided to support schools in planning and documenting provision for pupils with special educational needs at whole-school level.

Two case studies from the pilot schools and a worked example of how teacher allocation can be applied in a school setting are provided. While it is not feasible to illustrate the application of the model to all types of schools, it is intended that these examples will be helpful in demonstrating how the revised allocation model can be used to meet the diverse needs in any given educational setting.

- Case Study 1 - Small School - Pilot - Teacher Allocation Model
- Case Study 2 - Larger School - Pilot - Teacher Allocation Model

Contextualised guidance for the implementation of the revised allocation model in Gaeltacht schools and in Gaelscoileanna.

Source URL:

<https://www.sess.ie/special-education-teacher-allocation/primary/allocating-special-education-teaching-resources>