

An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta
Rannóg Oideachais Speisialta 1
Corn a Madadh,
Átha Luain
Co. Na hÍarmhí



Department of Education & Science
Special Education Section 1
Cornamaddy
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath

Circular SP ED 13/04

Circular to Boards of Management and Principal Teachers of Primary Schools

Allocation of Teaching and Special Needs Assistant Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

On 24 June 2004, schools were notified of the introduction of the general weighted allocation and how this would impact on individual schools. The revised arrangements will be fully implemented from September 2005. In that regard, schools should note the following:

1. Support for Children with Low Incidence Special Educational Needs (SEN)

As notified on 24th June, schools may make arrangements to acquire the additional teaching support required **for pupils with lower incidence SEN only** as identified on the accompanying Schedule A. This support should be met in the first instance from existing resources where the school has been advised that it currently has an excess of part time hours (Schedule F). Only where the figure in Schedule A is greater than the figure in Schedule F may schools acquire the difference in the schedules.

2. Support for Children with High Incidence SEN and Learning Support Needs

Further communication will issue to schools in relation to filling posts arising from the general weighted allocation in the context of revised clustering arrangements. The Department will support schools in the implementation of the revised model. Details of this support will be communicated to schools following consultation with the partners. Meanwhile, schools may retain excess resource hours as identified on Schedule F. However, as outlined above, any additional hours required for children with low incidence SEN should be met from this excess.

Schools are advised that they may not recruit additional resources in respect of the weighted allocation at present. The Department's written approval must be secured prior to filling any temporary or full-time post. Any appointment made by Boards of Management without such approval will not be considered a valid appointment.

3. Support for New Entrants

At this stage, schools will have received a decision on applications for resource teaching support for pupils entering school for the first time in September 2004 where complete applications were received by 30 June 2004. Later applications for new entrants are being processed on a continuous basis.

4. Support for Non-New Entrants

Schools will be advised shortly regarding the outcome of applications for resource teaching support for pupils with lower incidence SEN received between 1 September 2003 and 30 June 2004.

5. Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

The Department prioritised applications for SNA support for new entrants and decisions on the majority of these were communicated to schools on 12 August. We are continuing to communicate with schools in respect of other new entrant cases as additional supporting information is provided.

It has been the Department's intention for some time to carry out a review of the deployment of SNAs in schools. We accept the view expressed by schools that any such review should have regard to the actual situation on the ground. Accordingly, we have decided that the review should involve a visit to each school which has SNA support. Arrangements are being made to implement this review at an early date and a further communication will issue to schools in this regard.

Decisions regarding the appropriate level of SNA support in individual schools will be based on the outcome of this review.

Pending notification of the outcome, schools which have been advised by the Department that they have surplus SNA capacity, or which themselves consider that they have such a surplus, may retain the excess up to the level of applications made to the Department for which a response is awaited.

Liam Hughes
Special Education Section

September 2004