

23 March 2006

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To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and All Teaching Staff of Primary Schools

The National Council for Special Education
Information and Guidelines for Primary Schools and Special Schools
in Processing Applications for Resources for
Pupils with Special Educational Needs

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

Applications for resources may be submitted in accordance with the guidelines below.

1. Applications Process – Submission of Applications by School for Resources for the 2006/07 Academic Year

The NCSE is introducing new forms to replace the SER1, SER2 and NCSE Appl.1. The changes are being introduced in order to streamline the applications process and to meet our own data recording requirements. The new forms (copies attached) should be used for applications made following receipt of this circular. Copies are also available to download at www.ncse.ie

Primary Schools (Mainstream Classes only)

New enrolments/Applications for Pupils Already Enrolled Where Reports Are Now Available

- On receipt of these guidelines, schools may submit applications for resources in respect of a pupil with special educational needs arising from a diagnosed disability together with the relevant professional reports. The relevant application forms for resources are attached (*see Appendix 1, 2, and 3*). It is important to note that the individual application form provides for parental/guardian consent in the context of the SENO accessing the relevant professional reports. It is essential that such consent accompanies the application in order that it may be processed.

- In order to facilitate a more efficient administration of the process, schools should where feasible, submit to the SENO in one group, those applications on hand in respect of pupils with SEN arising from a diagnosed disability who will enrol next September.
- When submitting this initial application/group of applications for resources in respect of the 06/07 academic year, schools should list those pupils *with either a high incidence or low incidence disability* of whom they are aware will not be returning in September e.g. those transferring to another school, moving on to second level. In effect the school will list the resources related to pupils with SEN arising from a diagnosed disability, which will be freed up because of pupils leaving the school. The relevant details relating to these pupils should be listed on *Appendix 4*.
- These resources will be offset against any resources allocated to the school by the SENO in respect of those pupils for whom applications have been submitted for the 2006/07 academic year. Only the level of resource teaching allocated to pupils with a low incidence disability will be used in calculating the overall offset total that the SENO will take into account. However the level of SNA resources freed up for pupils with a high incidence disability will be included to arrive at an offset.

In providing these details, the particular disability of the pupil should be listed using the relevant disability code as provided for (*see Appendix 6*).

- It is important to note that Appendix 4 should only be completed once i.e. when submitting the initial application/group of applications in respect of the 2006/07 academic year.

Where a school has no new entrants with a diagnosed disability, it should submit the list of pupils leaving the school on Appendix 4 and forward this to the SENO for their attention. All schools should have submitted this list by 31 May.

- An example of this process is set out on page 3 of these Guidelines.

Subsequent Applications Submitted by the School

- Once the initial application/group of applications for resources are submitted to the SENO, it is likely that the school may have to submit further applications in respect of pupils e.g. those for whom professional reports are only now available.
- When submitting these applications, schools should also complete *Appendix 5* and should list those pupils who have left the school since the last application was submitted.

The list of disability codes as set out in Appendix 6 should also be used in completing this form.

Example:

SEN Resources Available to the School

A school is currently allocated 19 hours Resource Teaching (RT) to meet the needs of pupils with a low incidence disability and 3 SNAs to meet the SEN needs of all pupils with SEN in the school.

Initial Group of Applications from the School

A school submits four applications for resources to a SENO in respect of new entrants into mainstream in the 2006/07 academic year as follows

Pupil A is diagnosed with a Moderate General Learning Disability (3.5 hours RT) and requires access to an SNA.

Pupil B is diagnosed with a Physical Disability (3 hours RT) and requires access to an SNA

Pupil C is diagnosed with a hearing Impairment (4 hours RT).

Pupil D is diagnosed with a Mild General Learning Disability (resource teaching met under General Allocation Model) and requires access to an SNA.

In arriving at a decision, the SENO determines that the school will require 10.5 RT hours in respect of the low incidence disabilities and 2 SNAs (taking their individual care needs into account), to meet the needs of these pupils.

Pupils Leaving the School

When submitting these applications, the school has listed on *Appendix 4*, that two pupils have left the school, who had accessed resources as follows:

Pupil 1 is diagnosed with a Mild General Learning Disability (resource teaching hours accessed under the General Allocation Model) with individual access to an SNA

Pupil 2 is diagnosed with a Specific Speech and Language Disorder (4 hours RT) with individual access to an SNA.

The total offset in this case will be 4 hours RT and 2 SNAs

SENO Decision

In arriving at a decision, the SENO will offset the resource teaching allocated in respect of pupil 2 and will also offset the SNA resources allocated to pupil 1 and 2 and will arrive at a net allocation to the school of 6.5 additional resource teaching hours and no increase in the level of SNA support.

The SENO will therefore determine that the school will have a total of 25.5 RT hours for pupils with a low incidence disability and 3 SNAs to meet the needs of all pupils with SEN in the school from September 2006.

Special Schools/Special Classes in Primary Schools

- Currently, special schools and special classes in primary schools are resourced in a manner, which sets out the PTR and level of SNA resources for a specific grouping of pupils with a disability. Since May 2005, the Council, through the SENO, has processed applications for resources for special schools/classes in line with these parameters, taking the individual needs of the pupil into account.
- Once a school has decided which pupils will be accepted into a special class/special school where it is proposed to establish such a special class the SENO should be notified indicating whether:
 - places are now available because of pupils leaving the school
 - the pupil is enrolled into a special class/group which has not yet reached the PTR ratio
 - a new special class/group is being established following consultation with the SENCO
- In such cases, the school should contact the SENO regarding the applications process

The school should also inform the SENO in relation to those pupils in a special school/class setting who are leaving the school.

- Schools may in exceptional circumstances submit an application for resources in relation to pupil in the special school/class where the individual needs of the pupil require specific attention. In such circumstances, the SENO will determine the level of resources to be allocated to the school, taking into account the resourcing parameters, the relevant professional reports and the individual needs of the pupil.

Schools with No Current SENO – Applications Process

Since the transfer of functions from DES to the Council in January 2005, all primary schools, special schools and second level schools are situated in one of 80 districts in which they submit applications for resources to the relevant SENO.

At present there are a number of such districts where a vacancy has arisen or where the SENO is on extended leave. The relevant schools in these districts have been requested to forward any applications for resources to the Council head offices in Trim and in this regard, applications should be forwarded to

Marian Rodgers, Operations Section, NCSE Head Office, Mill Street, Trim, Co Meath

Every effort will be made to ensure that these applications are dealt with promptly in order that schools may plan for the 2006/07 academic year.

Application Process – Future Developments

In this regard, the administration of the applications process is still evolving and will take account of future developments, including where feasible the electronic transfer of information. Further information notifications/guidelines will issue from the Council as appropriate.

2. *Review of Decisions*

In the absence of a formalised appeals process, the NCSE, through the SENO will undertake to review the relevant decision on teaching or SNA supports on foot of a request from the school or parents/guardians, when accompanied by relevant additional information, which may not have been to hand at the time of the decision. Any such information should be forwarded to the SENO as appropriate.

3. *Clarification on Role of SENO in Relation to Assistive Technology*

While the SENO is not currently responsible for deciding on applications for assistive technology/special equipment, the Department of Education & Science will wish to draw on the local knowledge of the SENO as part of the decision-making process.

Applications should be submitted to the SENO who is assigned responsibility for your school who will forward them to the Department with a recommendation regarding the application.

In the case of applications for special equipment for visually or hearing impaired pupils, the school should include the recommendation of the appropriate Visiting Teacher and any relevant professional report before submitting the application to the SENO.

Schools should note that only applications for assistive technology/special equipment for pupils who have an diagnosed disability as per Sp Ed 01/05 and for whom a relevant professional has identified the necessity for such equipment should be forwarded to the SENO.

For example applications for laptops/word processors for pupils with a Specific Learning Disability can only be made to the SENO where they are of average intelligence or higher and have a degree of learning disability specific to basic skills in reading, writing or mathematics, which places them at or below the 2nd percentile on suitable, standardised, norm-referenced tests.

Queries in relation to a pupil who does not meet the criteria should be addressed to Special Education in DES, Athlone.

4. Applications for Resources for Schools in the Current Academic Year (2005/06)

While SENOs will in the main be engaged in processing applications for resources for schools, which will take effect from September 2006, it is recognised that a small number of applications for resources in respect of pupils with special educational needs will be submitted by some schools where the resources are required before the end of the current school year. This will generally arise where a professional report is only now available.

In such cases, these applications should be submitted accompanied by the form (*see Appendix 1, 2 and 3*), clearly indicating that the resources are required in the 2005/06 academic year.

If you have any queries regarding the provisions of this circular, you can contact your local SENO where they are not available the Council headquarters in Trim by e-mail at info@ncse.ie

Sé Goulding
Principal Officer
National Council for Special Education

An Irish language version of these guidelines and the relevant forms will shortly be available to schools.

Both the Irish and English language versions of the forms and guidelines will be available on the NCSE website www.ncse.ie

List of Attached Appendices

Appendix 1 - App1 LIH/SNA	Individual application form for resource teaching and SNA NCSE support
Appendix 2 - NCSE Transport 1	Individual application form for transport
Appendix 3 – NCSE Appl Ass Tec	Individual application form for assistive technology
Appendix 4 – NCSE App1 4	List of pupils with SEN currently accessing resources who will not be returning to the school in Sept 2006. <i>This form will only be completed and submitted with the first application/batch of applications in relation to the 2006/07 academic year.</i>
Appendix 5 – NCSE Appl 5	List of pupils with SEN who have left the school since the previous application for resources submitted to the SENO.
Appendix 6	List of disability codes

School Name: _____ Roll No: _____ School Email Address: _____

Pupils in receipt of resources currently enrolled who will not be in the school in September 2006

Pupil Name		Gender	DOB	PPS No	Current Class	Dis Code (See Appendix 6)	Support Accessed			
1 st Name	Surname						SNA Access Individual /Shared	No of Resource Hours	Assist Tech	Transport

Signature of School Principal: _____

Date _____

School Name: _____

Roll No: _____

School Email Address: _____

List pupils previously in receipt of resources and who have left the school since the previous Application Submitted

Pupil Name		Gender	DOB	PPS NO	Dis Code (See Appendix 6)	Support Accessed			
1 st Name	Surname					SNA Access Individual /Shared	No of Resource Hours	Assist Tech	Transport

Signature of School Principal: _____

Date _____

Appendix 6

Disability Codes

No	Category of Special Educational Need	Incidence
1	Physical Disability	Low
2	Hearing Impairment	Low
3	Visual Impairment	Low
4	Emotional Disturbance	Low
5	Severe Emotional Disturbance	Low
6	Borderline Mild General Learning Disability	High
7	Mild General Learning Disability	High
8	Moderate General Learning Disability	Low
9	Severe / Profound General Learning Disability	Low
10	Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorders	Low
11	Specific Learning Disability	High
12	Assessed Syndrome	Low
13	Specific Speech and Language Disorder	Low
14	Multiple Disabilities	Low