



Circular Letter 0034/2010

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community, and Comprehensive Schools  
and  
The Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees**

### **Introduction of Occupational Health Strategy for Special Needs Assistants in Recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools**

The Minister for Education and Skills wishes to inform management authorities of the commencement with immediate effect of an Occupational Health Strategy for special needs assistants.

The aim of this strategy is to promote the health of special needs assistants in their workplace, with a focus primarily on prevention rather than cure. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises of the Employee Assistance and Occupational Health Services for special needs assistants.

The Employee Assistance Service incorporates confidential counselling on issues such as health, relationships, bereavement, stress, conflict, critical incident and trauma. The Occupational Health Service incorporates pre-employment health assessments, sickness absence referrals, medical assessments of fitness for work and ill health retirement assessments.

The Occupational Health Service – special needs assistants - Standard Operating Procedures Manual for Boards of Management/VECs and an Employee Assistance Service for special needs assistants information booklet have been prepared in consultation with both service providers to assist employers of special needs assistants in accessing the services.

Both booklets can be accessed on the [Department's website](#).

The regulations and procedures set out in the attached Occupational Health Service Standard Operating Procedures manual are to be implemented with immediate effect and supersede all previous circulars, memoranda, rules and regulations in relation to assessment of medical fitness prior to or during the course of employment.

Please ensure that copies of this circular and attachments are provided to all members of the Board of Management/Vocational Education Committee and to bring its contents to the attention of all special needs assistants in your employment including those on leave of absence.

All enquiries regarding this circular should be e-mailed to [teachersna@education.gov.ie](mailto:teachersna@education.gov.ie)

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May 2010

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