

Frequently Asked Questions – Mainstream SNA Exceptional Reviews 2020/21

1. How will the school be informed of its SNA Allocation for 2020/21?

NCSE will publish in April 2020, the mainstream SNA Allocation for each school as at April 2020.

NCSE will publish SNA allocations for Special Schools and Classes in May 2020 as normal.

2. Do these changes apply to Mainstream only?

Yes these changes apply to Mainstream SNA Allocations only.

3. How are SNAs allocated to Special Schools and Special Classes for 2020/21?

There have been no changes to the way in which SNAs are allocated to Special Schools and Special Classes. As in prior years SNAs are allocated to Special Schools and Special Classes based on numbers of enrolled students and the profile of care needs expected in the class.

4. How does the School apply for their 2020/21 Mainstream SNA allocation?

There is no requirement to apply for the schools 2020/21 Mainstream SNA Allocation. No application forms for individual students should be submitted to your local SENo.

5. What will happen to SNA applications a school has submitted previously for 2020/21 SNA allocations?

While no 2020/21 SNA Application Process was published by NCSE, some schools have submitted applications for 2020/21 SNA allocations to their local SENo. These applications along with supporting documentation will be returned by registered post, **unprocessed**, by your local SENo once COVID 19 restrictions permit. Such applications will not be considered as part of the allocation for 2020/21.

6. What will happen to SNA applications my school submitted previously for critical cases in 2019/20?

All applications received up to and including 3 April 2020 for critical cases in 2019/20 will be processed and NCSE will advise schools of the outcome of these applications as soon as possible.

7. What does a school do if they have no SNAs currently?

If a school currently has no SNAs and there are students enrolled for 2020/21 with primary care needs that require the support of an SNA, the school should apply for an Exceptional Review. Applications for exceptional reviews from schools with no SNAs currently will be prioritised.

8. Has the role or duties of the SNA changed?

The role of the SNA to support the care needs of students in mainstream classes remains unchanged.

9. Has the definition of primary and secondary care needs changed?

There have been no changes to the definition of primary or secondary care needs as set out in DES Circular 30/2014.

10. What does a school do if they perceive they have insufficient SNA resources to meet the primary care needs of students?

Where a school perceives they have insufficient SNA resources they should review current deployment of SNA resources, identifying any capacity created by diminishing care needs or leavers; any other support such as environmental supports (e.g physical school building, technological adaptions to classrooms) that can address primary care needs and reprioritise deployment of resources to ensure the greatest level of support is provided to students with the greatest level of need.

Where the school still perceives they have insufficient SNA resources they should apply to NCSE for an Exceptional Review.

11. How does a school apply for an Exceptional Review

The school should complete the [NCSE application form](#) and submit by email, along with any relevant supporting documentation to exceptionalreviewSNA@nsce.ie

Alternatively, Schools can post applications to NCSE, 1-2 Mill Street, Trim, County Meath. C15 P2KC. Schools should be aware there may be delays in receiving post due to COVID 19 restrictions.

12. What should a school do if documentation supporting an Exceptional Review cannot be submitted to NCSE due to COVID 19 restrictions

NCSE acknowledges that due to COVID 19 restrictions a school principal may not be able to submit documentation supporting the identification of new or emerging primary care needs within the school. The application should include a reference to any supporting documentation and NCSE will undertake school visits in 2020/21 to review such documentation and ensure it is as outlined in any application for an exceptional review.

Any application for an Exceptional Review that is not accompanied by SNA timetables for 2019/20, and SET timetables for 2019/20 will not be processed and will be returned to schools as incomplete.

13. What should a school do, where due to COVID 19 Restrictions there are challenges in getting written Parental Consent?

NCSE acknowledges that due to COVID 19 restrictions a school principal may not be able to obtain Parent/Guardian signatures consenting to providing information to NCSE for the purposes of applying for SNA supports. In such circumstances, the principal should obtain consent by alternative means such as email or verbally (recorded by way of file note by Principal). As part of this, principals should inform the Parent/Guardian that their telephone contact details will be provided to the NCSE in order that the SENo can follow up to confirm consent.

Ultimately, it remains the responsibility of the school principal to ensure appropriate Parental Consent has been obtained prior to sharing any personal data with NCSE.

14. When will a school be advised of the outcome of an Exceptional Review?

Schools will be advised, in writing, as soon as possible of the outcome of exceptional reviews. NCSE will prioritise applications from rapidly developing schools and schools who currently have no SNAs.

15. How does a school appeal the outcome of an Exceptional Review?

A school can appeal the outcome of an exceptional review as set out at <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/GuidanceSchoolAppealing-Exceptional-Review-outcome.docx>

16. Who is responsible for allocating SNA access to individual students?

The decision to provide SNA access to a student rests with the school. The SENo is not involved in the allocation of SNA access to individual students.

17. What should parents do if they are not satisfied with the level of SNA support their child receives?

It is a matter for schools to allocate SNA support as required, through identifying and monitoring the care needs of students in the school which allow schools flexibility in how the SNA support is utilised. In instances where a parent is not satisfied with the level of SNA support their child has been allocated by the school, they should discuss

this with the School Principal, and if still not satisfied, with the School Board of Management.