

February 24th 2021

Ref No: NCSE 01/2021

Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Management of Special Schools for 2021/2022

Key Dates

19th March 2021 Leavers: Schools submit, by email or post, NCSE Form 5 (Leavers Form for students' end of 2020/21 school year) to their local SENO.

19th March 2021 Expansion and New Entrants: Schools to notify their SENO of any proposed expansion, if not already notified and submit NCSE Form 7 for new entrants for the school year 2021/22.

30th April 2021: The Department of Education (DoE) School Transport Section closing date for receipt of applications is Friday **30th April 2021**.

Applications for school transport should be submitted to the SENO in advance of DoE closing date to facilitate transfer of applications to DoE by 30th of April. Thereafter any outstanding applications should be submitted to NCSE as soon as possible. NCSE and DoE Transport Section will continue to process transport applications as received.

May 2021: Publication of Special School Teacher and SNA allocations on the NCSE website.

24th September 2021: Schools to submit the **Student Attendance Confirmation Form** (NCSE Form 6) to their local SENO confirming that new and existing students have taken up or retained their placements.

24th September 2021: Schools to submit **Leavers Form** (NCSE Form 5) **for students leaving in June 2022** (this should be updated throughout the year should students leave).

COVID -19: In light of current COVID 19 restrictions, NCSE will be as flexible as possible in relation to the above deadlines. Please contact your local SENO where required.

All application forms are available to download from www.ncse.ie

Students Leaving at the End of 2020/21 School Year

Schools should forward the Leavers Form (NCSE Form 5) by post or email to their SENO by **19th March 2021**. Where there are no students leaving the school should complete the form and return it to the SENO with a **NIL** return.

Expansion of Enrolment

Where a special school is seeking to expand its enrolment, they should notify the SENO of this by **19th March 2021**. This will enable the NCSE to determine the position regarding an application for additional teacher/SNA support from the school.

Notification of New Entrants

A deadline of **19th March 2021** applies for the receipt of notification of enrolment forms (NCSE Form 7) for new entrants.

Information on school leavers and new entrants is required to determine teaching and SNA supports for Special Schools. It is acknowledged that the enrolment process for special schools can continue up to May. However, all available documentation and details for known new entrants should be returned by 19th March 2021.

Special school teacher and SNA allocations are based on the number and profile of students enrolled in the school in a given year in line with the provisions of DoE Circular 0042/2011.

Given the impact of the response to the COVID-19 crisis, it is acknowledged that some Principals may not have access to all supporting documentation for new entrants. **All outstanding documentation must be received by 24th September 2021 and any necessary staffing adjustments may be made at that time.**

Principals are advised to contact the SENO to discuss where documentation or enrolment is outstanding on a student by student basis.

For those schools that have received approval to expand their enrolment, additional resources will be considered once the relevant documentation has been received.

By 24th September 2021 each school will be required to confirm student attendance to the SENO using the Student Attendance Confirmation Form (NCSE Form 6).

By September 24th 2021 each school will be required to forward NCSE Leavers Form (Form 5) for Students Leaving at the End of 2021/22 School Year. Where there are no students leaving, the school should complete the form and return it to the SENO with a NIL return.

Applications for Resources for Students aged 18 years and over

Each year, the NCSE receives a small number of applications for resources for students who are aged 18 years or over at the time of application. In such cases the school should

submit the relevant form (Form 1A for access to additional SNA support, Form 3A for Assistive Technology applications). These forms make provision for the consent of students aged 18 years and over, where appropriate.

Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP)

Section 15 of Circular 0030/2014 indicates that a Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP) should be a feature of provision for all students with special educational needs. Schools are encouraged to use individual planning for students with special educational needs and a care needs dimension should be included. A stand-alone document is not necessarily required. The PPP requirement may in fact be incorporated into the NEPS Student Support File or the NCSE BCN Form 1 document in the case of pupils with behaviour related care needs. The NCSE acknowledges that where a new pupil is starting school the school will require time to develop a PPP. In such cases the PPP should be submitted within six weeks of the student's start date.

Students with Behavioural Care Needs

Schools should be aware that where SNA support is being requested for a pupil with SEN and where the primary reason for the application relates to behavioural care needs, the application should be accompanied by the BCN1 form. The BCN1 form allows the school demonstrate what intervention strategies and positive behaviour supports have been put in place to aid the student and manage behaviour prior to requesting access to SNA supports. This should only be submitted when the schools have explored all enhanced supports provided by NEPS, NCSE etc. and the school can demonstrate that following the implementation of strategies and interventions the student's additional care needs still persist. Application forms for NCSE support are available on the website www.ncse.ie.

NEPS has published '*Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - A Continuum of Support for Primary Schools - Guidelines for Teachers*' to help schools develop systems, skills and structures for responding to the needs of Students with behavioural, emotional and social, as well as learning, needs. These guidelines can be downloaded from www.education.ie.

Applications for School Transport and/or Assistive Technology

Applications for School Transport (NCSE Form 2) and applications for Assistive Technology (NCSE Form 3) can be made to the SENO.

Please consult The DoE School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Education Needs Arising from a Disability (November 2011) for more information.

Applications for school transport should be submitted to the SENO by DoE closing date of 30th April 2021. While recognising that enrolment in special schools can take place after this date, applications after 30th April 2021 will be processed on the basis that completed applications received by the closing date will be prioritised. Please consult the Circular 0010/2013 for more information on the DoE Assistive Technology scheme.

COVID-19 Restrictions - Parental Consent

Parental/guardian signatures should be obtained, where possible. While every effort should be exhausted to ensure that parental signatures are completed in respect of consent, it is acknowledged that there may be an impact as consequence of COVID-19.

In light of current COVID-19 restrictions it is acknowledged that some Principals may not be able to obtain parent/guardian signatures consenting to providing information to NCSE. Where schools are not in a position to provide signatures for parental consent, Principals should satisfy themselves and confirm to NCSE that parental consent has been obtained. Parental consent in such scenarios may include email consent from the parent or verbal consent from the parent (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. Once the application is received by the NCSE, the SENO will contact the parent/guardian, in advance of reviewing the application, to confirm that consent has been given explicitly for the processing of the child's information as part of the application process. The SENO will record this by way of a file note. The application will only be processed once consent is confirmed to the SENO.

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. Parental/guardian signatures should be obtained, where possible.

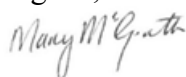
COVID-19 Restrictions - Principal Declaration

In light of COVID-19 Restrictions it is acknowledged that some Principals may not be able to provide original signatures. NCSE will accept application forms with the Principal's signature typed provided the application is submitted from the school's official email account.

List of Forms (Available on www.ncse.ie)

Application Form for additional SNA Support	<i>Form 1</i>
Application for additional SNA Support for student aged 18 years & over	<i>Form 1A</i>
Application Form for Transport	<i>Form 2</i>
Application Form for Assistive Technology	<i>Form 3</i>
App. Form for Assistive Technology for student aged 18 years & over	<i>Form 3A</i>
Leavers Form	<i>Form 5</i>
Confirmation of Attendance Form	<i>Form 6</i>
Notification of Enrolment in Special Class or Special School	<i>Form 7</i>
BCN1 Form	
Quick Reference Guide to Care Needs	

Signed,



Mary McGrath, Head of Operations