

12 March 2007

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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.*

**Summary of Changes in Procedures since 2006**

- PPS Number required for all new applications for resources in order that the Council may plan for current and future provision for each child.
- Addresses required for those children leaving the school so that the SENO may invite parents to discuss options available to their child
- In order to streamline the decision making process, a composite decision in respect of *all applications processed to date* will issue to schools between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April (see issue of decisions by SENO). Further decisions will issue as they are processed by the SENO, taking into account the 4-6 week turnover time.

## ***1. Applications Process – Submission of Applications by School for Resources for the 2007/08 Academic Year***

### ***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 Appendices 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.

Please note that the PPS Number will be required so that the NCSE may plan for current and future provision for the child through the establishment of an administration database. If this number is not readily available, you may still submit the application but the SENO will require you to forward the number before a decision can issue.

- 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 07/08 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 2007/08 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.

It is the intention of the Council that the SENO will invite the parents of those children leaving the school to discuss the options available to their child in the 2007/08 academic year. In order that they may do so, the address details should be provided for each child listed on *Appendix 4*.

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 and that Appendix 5 be used for subsequent notification of children who are leaving the school.
- 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 submit the list when making the initial application for resources but in any event, should have submitted this list by 30 March so that the first decisions may issue to schools.**

#### *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.

#### *Issue of Decisions by the SENO*

- In general, applications accompanied by the relevant professional reports will be processed within 4 – 6 weeks of receipt of same. However, in order to streamline the issue of information to schools, a composite decision on those applications processed will issue by April 30<sup>th</sup> so that schools can begin to plan for the 2007/08 academic year.
- Decisions on subsequent applications will issue as they are received.
- Applications received after 4 June may not be processed by 30 June but the school will be informed of the position before it re-opens in September 2007.
- Schools will be required to confirm in September 2007 that those children for whom resources have been allocated have in fact enrolled in the school.
- An illustration of how the application and decision making process will operate is set out at *Appendix 7*.

### 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 Pupil Teacher Ratio (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 or 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
  - a new special class/group is being established following consultation with the SENO.
- 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 a 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.

### *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 for children with special educational needs, the Department of Education & Science will wish to draw on the local knowledge of the SENO as part of their 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 the Dept of Education & Science, Athlone.

#### **4. Clarification on Role of SENO in Relation to School Transport**

Similarly, while the SENO is not currently responsible for deciding on applications for school transport, the Department of Education & Science will wish to draw on the local knowledge of the SENO as part of their decision-making process.

In this context, please note that the SENO in their deliberations will take into account whether the child is enrolled in the nearest suitable school. Therefore if you are proposing to enrol a child who is not from your general catchment area, you should clarify the position with the SENO in advance of enrolment so that parents may be aware of the position regarding the provision of school transport.

Queries in relation to a child who does not meet the criteria for school transport should be addressed to School Transport Section, in the Dept of Education & Science, Tullamore

#### **5. Applications for Resources for Schools in the Current Academic Year (2006/07)**

While SENOs will in the main be engaged in processing applications for resources for schools, which will take effect from September 2007, 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 appropriate forms (*see Appendices 1, 2 and 3*), clearly indicating that the resources are required in the 2006/07 academic year.

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

#### **6. Submission of Incomplete Application Forms**

During the 2006/07 applications process, a number of incomplete applications were submitted, which required further information from the school and which ultimately led to a more time

consuming and drawn out applications process. The most common areas, which were omitted, related to

- The category of assessed disability
- The number of hours sought
- Either the parents names or the date missing from the parental consent section of the form

While it is accepted that schools may have a significant number of forms for completion, the SENO cannot process these until all relevant information is provided therefore in order to prevent any undue delay in the decision making process, it would be appreciated if such occurrences could be minimised.

#### *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 2007/08 academic year.

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](http://www.ncse.ie)

## List of Attached Appendices

<b>Appendix 1 - App1 LIH/SNA</b>	Individual application form for resource teaching and SNA support
<b>Appendix 2 - NCSE Transport 1</b>	Individual application form for transport
<b>Appendix 3 – NCSE Appl Ass Tec</b>	Individual application form for assistive technology
<b>Appendix 4 – NCSE Appl 4</b>	List of pupils with SEN currently accessing resources who will not be returning to the school in Sept 2007. <i>This form should be submitted by 30 March in order that the SENO can issue a decision.</i>
<b>Appendix 5 – NCSE Appl 5</b>	List of pupils with SEN who have left the school since the previous application for resources submitted to the SENO.
<b>Appendix 6</b>	List of disability codes
<b>Appendix 7</b>	Example of how the application and decision making process will operate