

14 February 2008
02/08

Ref No: NCSE

**To: The Management Authorities of Secondary, Community
and Comprehensive Schools, and the Chief Executive
Officers of Vocational Education Committee**

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

The process for requesting applications for resources for children with special educational needs has been in operation for 3 years at this stage.

NCSE 02/05 and Dept of Education & Science (DES) Circular PPT 01/05 set out the position regarding the submission of applications for resources (additional teaching support, SNA, assistive technology and transport) to the Council in relation to pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Schools should also refer to these guidelines when submitting applications.

The applications procedure for 2008 will be broadly similar to that which applied in 2007 (ref NCSE 02/07)

Copies of NCSE 02/05, DES Circ PPT 01/05 and NCSE 02/07 may be accessed on the NCSE website at www.ncse.ie

Summary of Applications Process

- *Applications may be submitted immediately using the attached forms, which are also available from the NCSE website. The PPS Number must be provided in order to process the application.*
- Schools should list those pupils with SEN who are not returning in September 2008 on the relevant form (Appendix 5) and submit this list to the SENO by 14 March.
- As part of the development of a review process on decisions, schools can now list the manner in which the SNA cohort in the school is deployed and forward same to the SENO, as part of the SNA allocations process (Appendix 4).
- Schools should aim to have the majority of applications submitted before 17 April in order that a decision may issue before the end of the current school year.
- Schools should notify the SENO immediately, should they be planning to apply for the establishment a special class in 2008

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

Applications Process

1. Submission of Applications by Schools for the 2008/09 Academic Year

- As schools are aware, SENOs make decisions in relation to
 - applications for additional teaching support
 - applications for access to SNAs to meet the care needs of children with SEN arising from a disabilityand provide reports to the DES so that they can make decisions in relation to
 - applications for transport
 - applications for assistive technology
- *On receipt of these guidelines, schools may submit applications for the above-mentioned resources for children with SEN. The relevant application forms for resources are attached (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3).*
- Application forms must include or be accompanied by
 - The PPS Number of the child. *It is important to note that claims cannot be processed without this number*
 - parental/guardian consent in order that the SENO may access the reports

- the required professional reports

2. Allocation of SNAs to Schools to meet the Care Needs of Children with SEN

- As schools are aware, the SENO is responsible for the allocation of SNA resources to the school to meet the specified care needs of children with SEN where the frequency and extent of the care needs have been detailed in the relevant professional report.
- In some circumstances, the outcome of this process has led to a difference of opinion between the SENO and the school as to the level of such resources required by the school to meet the identified care needs of those children with SEN.
- In order to address this issue, schools will now be able to complete a profile of the current deployment of SNAs in the school and forward this to the SENO, when submitting the initial application for resources for 2008/09. Schools will only be required to complete this when submitting an application for additional SNA support and detail the changes to the deployment of SNAs in relation to subsequent applications. This form is attached as *Appendix 4*.
- SENOs will maintain a record of the process which led to the decision in relation to the identification of the level of SNA resources required by the school to meet the care needs of the children for whom applications have been made.
- While the NCSE is not empowered under the EPSSEN Act to establish a formal appeals mechanism in relation to resource allocation, it is intended that these new procedures will assist the Council in the establishment of a review mechanism for decisions relating to the allocation of resources to schools.

3. Listing of Pupils with SEN who will not be Returning to School in September 2008

- When submitting the initial application/group of applications for resources in respect of the 08/09 academic year, schools must list those pupils *with either a high or low incidence disability* whom they are aware will not be returning to school in September. The relevant details relating to these pupils should be listed on *Appendix 5*.

Where a school has no new entrants with a diagnosed disability, the Principal should complete the appropriate list of children leaving the school on *Appendix 5* and forward this to the SENO for their attention.

In any event all schools should have submitted this list by 14 March if they have not already initiated the allocations process.

4. Listing of Children who have left the school since the previous application.

- Once the initial application/group of applications for resources have been submitted to the SENO, it is likely that schools may have to submit further applications in respect of pupils e.g. when school re-opens in September 2008 or where professional reports are only available after the initial applications process.

When submitting these applications, schools should also complete *Appendix 6*, which provides for those pupils with SEN who have left the school since the last application was submitted.

5. *List of Disability Codes*

- The list of Disability Codes for use in completing Appendices 5 and 6 is set out in *Appendix 7*.

6. *Issue of Decisions by the SENO*

- In general, applications accompanied by the required professional reports will be processed within 6 weeks of receipt of same.
- However it should be borne in mind that 80 SENOs are responsible for processing applications in respect of over 4,300 primary, second level and special schools. Given that these applications will require follow-up contact with schools, it would be appreciated if schools submitted applications on a scheduled basis e.g. every 3 weeks rather than on a piecemeal basis. Schools should also take account of the fact that the lead-in time for SENO appointments will generally be in the region of 3 - 4 weeks, given the scale of appointments with schools that will arise from the applications process.
- Consequently, while every effort will be made by Council staff to do so, it may not be possible for the SENO to process applications and issue a decision to the school before the end of the current school year, should the application be received after 17 May.
- It is important to note that the submission of incomplete application forms will lead to a more time consuming and drawn out applications process. Areas which might require attention in submitting applications are
 - the category of assessed disability
 - the inclusion of the parental consent
 - signature of the Principal

7. *Use of Professional Reports*

- It is very important, when submitting applications, that the most recent professional reports are used. However, in the case of the following disabilities, reports prior to January 2004 will need to be supplemented by additional information;
 - Borderline Mild Learning Disability

- Specific Learning Disability

The supporting information required is set out in *Appendix 8*.

8. Schools with no SENO in Situ

- 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 office in Trim and in this regard, applications should be forwarded to

Marian Rodgers, Operations Section, NCSE Head Office,
1-2 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 2008/09 academic year.

Sé Goulding
Head of Operations

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

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

List of Attached Appendices

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Appendix 1 - App1 LIH/SNA | Individual application form for resource teaching and SNA Support |
| Appendix 2 - NCSE Transport | Application for School Transport |
| Appendix 3 - NCSE Appl Ass Tec | Application for Assistive Technology |
| Appendix 4 - | School SNA Profile Form |
| Appendix 5 - NCSE App1 5 | List of pupils with SEN currently accessing resources who will not be returning to the school in September 2008. <i>This form should be submitted by 14 March</i> |
| Appendix 6 – NCSE Appl 6 | List of pupils with SEN who have left the school since the previous application for resources submitted to the SENO. |
| Appendix 7 - | List of disability codes |
| Appendix 8 - | Use of old reports. |

