



**Circular 0059/2006**

## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE**

### **PAYROLL DIVISION**

**TO: Boards of Management, Chief Executive Officers,  
Principal Teachers and Special Need Assistants in  
Primary and Second Level Schools.**

### **Seniority of Special Need Assistants**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Minister for Education and Science wishes to advise Boards of Management and Vocational Education Committees of the factors that should be considered in determining the seniority of special need assistants employed in Primary and Second Level Schools.

#### **2. Importance of Seniority:**

- 2.1 The sequence in which special need assistants are appointed to Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive schools or Vocational Education Committees determines their seniority. The seniority is important in determining which special need assistant(s) should be offered reduced hours or have their employment terminated when the allocation of the school is reduced. The seniority listing will be used in determining last in first out for the purpose of redundancy.

#### **3. Responsibility of Board of Management/VEC:**

- 3.1 The Board of Management/VEC determines the seniority, based on the special need assistant's date of commencement of duty as an SNA in a school/VEC.
- 3.2 Each Board of Management/VEC should ensure that the seniority listing of special need assistants employed is made available to them.

#### **4. Rules for Determining Seniority:**

- 4.1 A special need assistant's ranking for seniority purposes will only commence from the date that s/he commences duty as an SNA in the school/VEC.
- 4.2 If two or more special need assistants commence duty on the same day, the Board of Management/VEC should establish the order of seniority based on the order that the special need assistants were listed as a result of an interview process i.e. the SNA who was ranked highest following the interview process should be given the higher seniority rating.

In the event that the special need assistants were appointed prior to the issue of Circular Letter SNA 03/03 in August, 2003 and there was no interview process, any qualifications held by the SNA which are deemed appropriate and relevant to the future needs of the school/VEC may be considered by the Board of Management/VEC in determining seniority.

The employment of a special need assistant with a child specific contract will continue to be dependent on the assessed needs of the child specified in the contract irrespective of the seniority position that s/he holds in the school.

- 4.3 If a special need assistant leaves a post in a school either voluntarily or arising from the termination of his/her employment and is subsequently reappointed to the school following a break in service then his/her seniority will only commence from the date of the most recent appointment.
- 4.4 Job sharing service is reckoned as full service for the purpose of seniority. Authorised absences e.g. maternity leave, adoptive leave, parental leave, paternity leave, paid sick leave and career break do not affect the seniority of a special need assistant.
- 4.5 A special need assistant employed in a regular part time capacity shall not be treated less favourably in determining their seniority on account of their status as a part time employee. The seniority of a special need assistant employed for a regular number of hours each week is the same as that of a full time special need assistant employed for the same period.
- 4.6 Service given in any type of community employment scheme in which the person worked in a school prior to appointment as a special need assistant should not be reckoned in determining seniority.
- 4.7 In the case of an amalgamated school, where a special need assistant has given unbroken service continuously in one or more of the schools being amalgamated, the aggregate of that service will be reckoned in determining seniority.

#### **5. Dissemination of Information**

- 5.1 Vocational Education Committees and management authorities are requested to bring the contents of this Circular to the attention of all special need

assistants in their schools, including those on maternity leave, sick leave etc. and also to the attention of the members of the Boards of Management.

**6. Queries on this Circular**

- 6.1 If you have any query in relation to this circular please contact the SNA Payroll Section, Payroll Division at 090 648 4136 or e-mail your query to [sna\\_pay@education.gov.ie](mailto:sna_pay@education.gov.ie).

*An Irish version of this circular is available, on request.*

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