

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Rannóg Oideachais Speisialta
Cor na Madadh
Átha Luain
Co. na hIarmhí



Department of Education and Skills
Special Education Section
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Circular No. 0010/2012

Circular to the Management Authorities of Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees on Revised Arrangements for the Provision of Resource Teaching Supports for the 2012/13 school year.

1. Resource Teaching Support

The overall allocation of Resource Teacher support for the 2012/2013 school year is being maintained at the same level as for 2011/2012. All of the available Resource Teacher posts will be allocated over the school year – providing there are sufficient valid applications.

An Employment Control Framework (ECF) has been agreed for the Department of Education and Skills (DES) for the period 2011 to 2014 as a measure to control public sector numbers and the public sector pay bill. Successful implementation of these controls forms a vital component of compliance with the EU/IMF Agreement of Financial Support for Ireland.

Accordingly, last year the Department of Education and Skills put in place new arrangements to manage the Resource Teaching allocation process and to allocate the resources in a more phased way, to take account of demand and to ensure that the terms of the ECF were not breached. These arrangements were set out in DES Circular 0037/2011.

The purpose of this Circular is to inform Post Primary schools of the Resource Teaching arrangements which will apply for Post Primary schools for the 2012/13 school year.

These arrangements are being put in place following consultation between the DES and Post Primary School Management bodies. They are also being put in place pending further consideration by the DES and the Management Bodies as to how a permanent allocation of Resource Teaching support might be made to Post Primary schools for children with High Incidence special needs in future years. It is intended that this work will be completed in advance of the 2013/14 school year.

The main elements of the arrangements for the 2012/13 school year being outlined in this Circular are:

(i) All second level schools have been given earlier certainty on the bulk of their allocations for resource hours for the coming school year through an initial allocation in January based on 70% of their resource allocation as at 31st December, 2011. The balance of each school's approved resource hours will be allocated when the NCSE application process is concluded and taking into account the criteria set out below in (ii) to (iv) below.

(ii) In addition this year, in order to reduce the administrative burden on schools, the need for Post Primary schools to submit applications and assessments for High Incidence Resource Teaching hours is being dispensed with (other than for schools which have no current High Incidence allocation). In May of this year, Post-Primary schools will be given an allocation for High Incidence Resource Teaching equating to 95% of their High Incidence Resource Teaching hours allocations as at 31st December, 2011. There will therefore not be a requirement for schools to have assessments conducted for entrants with High Incidence needs. The High Incidence allocations to these schools will then be maintained at this level for the duration of the 2012/13 school year.

(iii) The remaining 5% of Resource Teaching hours for Post-Primary High Incidence Needs will be retained by the NCSE in order that they may allocate them to schools, including new schools, which do not currently have any such allocation.

(iv) The NCSE will continue to process individual Resource Teaching applications from Post Primary schools for Low Incidence special educational needs, based on assessments.

Should there be any unallocated remainder from the retained 5% for Post Primary High Incidence, it may also be used for Low Incidence Needs pupils, providing there are sufficient valid applications.

(v) Schools are asked to submit all applications for Resource Teaching support for the 2012/13 school year to the NCSE by 16th March, 2012.

(vi) Following consideration of all of the applications for Low Incidence Resource Teaching hours received by the NCSE, including current pupils and new applications, allocations will be made to schools for Low Incidence hours, in the context of ECF obligations, and taking into account the number of valid applications received.

The final allocation for schools will be determined on the basis of 95% of their existing High Incidence allocation plus the allocation of Low Incidence teaching hours for new and existing pupils.

(vii) Schools will be informed of their overall Resource Teaching allocations in May.

2. Supporting Circular

This circular should be read in conjunction with:

- DES: Reform of the Teacher Allocation Process which is available at:
http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/ta_teacher_allocations_reform_measures_2011.pdf
- Circular 0009/2012: Staffing arrangements in post primary schools for the 2012/13 school year
- NCSE Circular 01/12: Submission of applications for resources for the 2012/13 school year

- Circular 37/2011: Revised Arrangements for the Provision of Resource Teaching Supports for the 2011/12 school year
- Circular PPT 01/05: The National Council for Special Education
- Circular 08/02: Applications for full-time or part-time resource teacher support to address the special education needs of children with disabilities
- SP ED Circular 02/05: Organisation of teaching resources for pupils who need additional support in mainstream primary schools.

3. Background

Resource Teaching hours are allocated to schools by the NCSE, in accordance with DES criteria, for students requiring additional educational support based on assessed levels of special educational need and based on disability categorisation. The additional hours sanctioned for resource teaching may be combined into full or part time posts.

Resource Teaching Hours which are provided for children with learning difficulties that fall into the mild/ borderline mild range of learning difficulty or for specific learning disability are referred to as ' High-Incidence ' resource hours due to the high incidence or prevalence of this level of special educational need among the general population.

'Low Incidence' Resource Teaching hours are provided for children with more complex special educational needs which have a lower level of prevalence among the population such as physical disability or moderate general learning disability. The disability categories are set out in Circular 08/02, while the breakdown of high and low incidence special needs are detailed in SP ED Circular 02/05.

4. Initial allocation for 2012/13

Post Primary schools are being given earlier certainty on the bulk of their allocations for resource hours for the coming and future school years through an initial allocation in January of each year based on 70% of their existing current allocation (i.e. the initial allocation for 2012/13 school year is based on 70% of the approved allocation for 2011/12

school year as at 31st December 2011). Post Primary schools have now been informed of their initial (70%) allocation for the 2012/13 school year.

This new arrangement, which commenced in January 2012, forms part of the initial overall allocation for each school for the 2012/13 school year. The balance of each school's approved resource hours for 2012/13 school year will be allocated when the NCSE process is concluded.

5. High Incidence Hours

A General Allocation Model (GAM) has been in place for primary schools since 2005. Children who enrolled in primary school since then have not been required to have assessments for High Incidence special needs in primary schools, as resources were automatically provided to schools under the GAM.

These pupils are now increasingly transferring from primary to post primary schools without assessments. Post Primary schools will not therefore be aware of children with High Incidence needs until these needs become apparent over time and then, as there is currently no post primary GAM, schools would normally need assessments to access supports.

The existing resource allocation model is now being adjusted so that supports can be put in place quickly without the need for individual applications and assessments being required in each instance and thus reducing the administrative burden on schools.

There will be no overall reduction in the number of Resource Teaching hours being allocated to schools in 2012/13.

High Incidence Resource Teaching hours may be combined with the learning support allocations in each school to provide a learning support/resource teaching service to all pupils with High Incidence special educational needs, general learning support needs and language support. At Post Primary level language support and learning support is currently being amalgamated, as set out in DES Circular 0009/2012: Staffing arrangements in post primary schools for the 2012/13 school year

6. Guidelines for Schools

Schools should refer to DES guidelines: Inclusion of Pupils with Special Educational Needs Post Primary Guidelines; the National Psychological Services Continuum of Support Guidelines; and NCSE Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan process.

Circular SP.ED 08/02 also sets out that the post of Resource Teacher is an additional post allocated to assist a school in providing an education which meets the needs of children assessed on the basis of individual need as having special educational needs arising from disability. Meeting the needs of such children is a whole school effort and not the responsibility of resource teachers alone because these children are fully integrated into a mainstream school and will spend most of his/her time with a mainstream teacher.

The NCSE is being authorised to allocate Resource Teaching support to schools on the basis set out in this Circular.

If you have any queries with regards to this circular please contact Special Education Unit on - 090-648 3747

This circular can be accessed on the Department's website www.education.ie

Jim Mulkerrins
Principal Officer
Special Education Unit

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