

Rannóg Oideachais Speisialta
An Roinn Oideachais & Scileanna
Cor na Madadh
Átha Luain
Co. na hIarmhí
N37 X659



Special Education Section
Department of Education & Skills
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co. Westmeath
N37 X659

Circular 0050/2017

Home Tuition Grant Scheme 2017/2018 – Special Education Component

1. Introduction

This circular provides information in relation to the Home Tuition Grant Scheme and should be read carefully by applicants before completing the relevant Application Form, HTSEN1 or HTMED1.

The Circular contains information on:

- Purpose of the scheme
- Criteria for eligibility under the terms of the scheme
- Allocation of hours under the terms of the scheme
- Criteria for the provision of Grant Aid (Qualification and Vetting requirements of Tutors)
- Child Protection
- Grant Payment Procedures
- General Information
- Queries and appeals

Key Points of the Circular:

Section 2 sets out the purpose of the Home Tuition Grant Scheme.

- The purpose of the Home Tuition Grant Scheme is to provide funding towards the provision of a compensatory educational service for children who, for a number of specific reasons, are unable to attend school. However, it should also be noted that the Home Tuition Grant Scheme is not an alternative to a school placement and is provided in very limited and specific circumstances

Section 3 sets out the Criteria for eligibility under the 3 categories of the scheme.

- Children aged between 2.5 and 3 years with a diagnosis of autism
- Children with special educational needs seeking an educational placement in a recognised school
- Students with a significant medical condition which has caused, and is likely to continue to cause major disruption to school attendance.

Section 4 sets out the hours which are allocated under each category.

- Applicants should note the number of hours which are allocated under each category.
- Applicants should also note that allocations to siblings will normally be on a combined basis.

Section 5 sets out the criteria for the provision of Grant Aid under the scheme, including the qualification, registration and vetting requirements of tuition providers.

- It is a condition of the scheme that tutors are qualified in the relevant education sector and are registered with the Teaching Council for the duration of the approved tuition, up to and including issue of final payment.
- Where an applicant cannot source a fully qualified teacher the Department may permit the engagement of a person who is registered with the Teaching Council and who has a degree (minimum Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications) in a relevant area.
- All tutors must be vetted by the Teaching Council of Ireland since 29th April, 2016 via the Teaching Council's online vetting process prior to the commencement of the delivery of tuition.
- All tutors must submit a completed Section 4, Form of Undertaking and Statutory Declaration.
- Parents/Guardians are not permitted to act as tutors for their children under the Scheme.

Section 6 provides information on Child Protection issues.

Section 7 provides information relating to the Payment of the Home Tuition Grant.

- A detailed payment information note is available at www.education.ie/en/Parents
- It should be noted that home tuition funding will not be back-dated.

Section 8 provides General Information in relation to the scheme.

Applicants should note the following:

- Information supplied will be shared between various Government Departments and Agencies.
- Unused hours from one week cannot be transferred to another week.
- Seeking a school placement and the enrolment of a child in school is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- Where a parent/guardian has failed to enrol a child in a school placement as identified by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), a grant for Home Tuition will not be provided
- That the role of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) is to confirm that the child meets the eligibility criteria, in the context of the Home Tuition Grant Scheme.
- Parents/Guardians may, if it is their wish to do so, enter into either a new group arrangement with other parents/guardians of children for whom home tuition has been approved or a group arrangement where there is a current agreement with the Department. It is not however the role of the Department to establish such provision. Such arrangements must be sourced and procured by parents/guardians.
- Students who are undertaking study of subjects for Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations need to read carefully the requirements of the State Examinations Commission for practical coursework. If the State Examinations Commission requirements are not met, this may result in a student not being able to achieve all of the marks available for the subject.

Section 9 provides Contact Details for queries and appeals in relation to the scheme.

Priority will be given to completed applications received before 11th August 2017.

Application form HTSEN1 is to be completed for children with Special Educational Needs seeking an educational placement or children aged between 2.5 and 3 years of age who have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Application form HTMED1 is to be completed for students with a significant medical condition.

Data Protection

The Department of Education and Skills will treat all personal data you provide on the application form as confidential and will use it solely for the stated purpose. Personal information provided will only be disclosed as permitted by law or for the purposes listed in the Department's registration with the Data Protection Commissioner - REF 10764/A.

If personal information you have provided is required to be used for purposes other than outlined in the Department's registration with the Data Protection Commissioner your permission will be sought.

2. Purpose of the scheme

The purpose of the Home Tuition Grant Scheme is to provide a compensatory educational service for

- (a) Early educational intervention for children with autism who meet the schemes eligibility criteria
- (b) Students with special educational needs seeking an educational placement in a recognised school
- (c) Students, enrolled in schools, with significant medical conditions which has caused, and is likely to continue to cause, major disruption to their attendance at school

The preferred approach is that children are educated in school settings where children may have access to fully qualified teachers, individualised education programmes, special needs assistants, school curriculum with the option, where possible and appropriate, of full or partial integration and interaction with other students. Accordingly, Home Tuition is provided as an interim measure only for children for whom a placement in a recognised school is not available and should **not** be regarded as an optional alternative to a school placement.

3. Criteria for eligibility under the terms of the scheme

Category (a) Early Intervention for Children with ASD (who have been assessed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder based on the DSM V or ICD 10 criteria)

- (1) Children aged between 2.5 and 3 years of age with an ASD diagnosis.
- (2) Children between 3 and 4 years of age with an ASD diagnosis and for whom an early intervention placement is not available, as confirmed by the NCSE.
- (3) Children over 4 years of age with ASD diagnosis and a recommendation for an early intervention placement (who will not reach the age of 6 during the 2017/18 school year) and for whom an early intervention placement is not available, as confirmed by the NCSE.

Section 2(A) of the application form HTSEN1 should be completed by the applicant and the SENO for children aged between 2.5 and 3 years of age. Section 2(B) of the application form HTSEN1 should be completed by the applicant and the SENO for children aged over 3 years.

Early Intervention settings

The State supports early intervention for children with special educational needs through providing funding to a number of crèche/pre-school settings including:

- Early Intervention settings in mainstream and special schools
- Early Intervention settings in HSE funded service providers
- Pre-school settings supported by the Early Childhood Care & Education Scheme (ECCE)
- Pre-school settings supported by HSE grant aid or HSE funded Pre-School Assistant.
- Home Tuition Grant Scheme for children aged between 3 and 4 years of age with a diagnosis of autism where a placement in an early intervention setting is not available

In certain circumstances attendance in an early intervention setting (excluding Early Intervention settings in mainstream and special schools) may be supplemented by the Home Tuition grant. Parents/Guardians are requested to declare if their child is availing of any of the schemes listed above.

If the child avails of one of the schemes, after the application for the Home Tuition grant has been approved, parents/guardians must notify this Department immediately.

Please note that the maximum number of combined hours which can be availed of under the above schemes is 10 hours per week for children between 2½ and 3 years of age and 20 hours per week for children over 3 years of age.

Category (b) Children with Special Educational Needs seeking an educational placement:

Children with Special Educational Needs who are over the age of four may avail of Home Tuition where a school placement (including a placement in an early intervention class, if such a placement is specified in the assessment) is not available as confirmed by the NCSE, through the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO).

The availability of a school placement will be assessed by the NCSE having regard to, although not limited to, the relevant diagnosis and relevant professional report.

The Home Tuition Grant Scheme is an interim measure to provide for education until an educational placement becomes available. When a school placement becomes available the Home Tuition Grant will be discontinued.

A school placement can be:

- A place in a mainstream class in a mainstream school.
- A place in a special class attached to a mainstream school.
- A place in an early intervention class for children with ASD (where the child will not reach the age of 6 during the 2017/18 school year).
- A place in a special school.

Section 2(B) of the application form HTSEN1 should be completed by the applicant and the SENO.

Category (c) Students enrolled in schools with significant medical conditions which has caused, and is likely to continue to cause, major disruption to their attendance at school

Eligibility is assessed having regard to, although not limited to, the following criteria

- The student's attendance levels during the previous school year.
- A relevant medical /relevant professional report - a separate report may be requested in some cases if required.

School Phobia and related anxiety disorders

In **exceptional cases** the Department will consider home tuition applications on behalf of students with diagnoses of school phobia and/or associated depression/anxiety **which has caused, and is likely to continue to cause, major disruption to their attendance at school.** This exception will only apply where a continued absence from school is required to facilitate appropriate medical or therapeutic intervention with a view to the reintegration of the student in their school.

In relation to applications in respect of students with diagnoses of school phobia and/or associated depression/anxiety, the principle that Home Tuition cannot be provided as an alternative to school applies.

Eligibility in exceptional cases is assessed having regard to, although not limited to, the following criteria:

- The student's attendance levels during the previous school year.
- Psychologist's/psychiatrist's report which should
 - i. Clearly confirm a diagnosis of school phobia and/or associated depression/anxiety.
 - ii. Provide details of medical or therapeutic intervention plans in place with a view to reintegrate the student back into his/her school.
- Details of engagement with the relevant support agencies (e.g. School, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), TUSLA (Child and Family Agency), HSE, NCSE).

Note: It is not the role of diagnosing professionals to recommend Home Tuition as an alternative to school. Such recommendations will not be taken into consideration when determining an application.

Section 2(A) of the application form HTMED1 should be completed by the Principal of the school and the medical practitioner for students with a significant medical condition.

Section 2(B) of the application form HTMED1 should be completed by the Principal of the school and a report should be supplied by the student's psychologist/psychiatrist.

HSE/NEPS Good Practice Guide in relation to school refusal is available on the DES website at the following link: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Guidelines-Handouts-and-Tips/School-Refusal/School-Refusal.pdf>

4. Allocation of hours under the terms of the scheme

(a) Children between 2.5 and 3 years of age (who have been assessed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder based on the DSM V or ICD 10 criteria).

The maximum home tuition grant for children with ASD up to 3 years of age is based on 10 hours tuition per week.

(b) Children with Special Educational Needs seeking an educational placement

The maximum home tuition grant for children awaiting a placement is based on 20 hours tuition per week subject to the appropriate school calendar. Where a child is attending an early intervention or private pre-school setting (see section 3a above), the home tuition hours allocated will be the difference between the

hours approved in the pre-school or early intervention setting and the maximum home tuition hours for which the child would normally be eligible under the terms of this scheme.

(c) Students enrolled in schools with significant medical conditions which has caused, and is likely to continue to cause, major disruption to their attendance at school

Generally, grant aid based on a range of between 2 and 10 hours tuition may be approved with the allocation reflecting the level of attendance in the previous school year and whether the attendance was at primary or post primary level. As a general guide, up to 5 hours may be granted to children at primary level while students at post primary level may be granted between 2 and 10 hours.

Allocation of hours for siblings

All grant allocations to siblings will be reflective of the school grouping principle i.e. where the pupil teacher ratio in school settings can result in one teacher being allocated to a class of six students with children of mixed age and ability at the appropriate educational level (i.e. primary or post primary). However, in recognition of the differentiated needs of some siblings, applications for separate allocations will be considered on a case by case basis.

Under the scheme, in certain cases and where appropriate having regard to the criteria, the Home Tuition Grant may be extended until the end of July.

5. Criteria for the Provision of Grant Aid

Qualifications of tuition providers

As tuition takes place outside the usual school structure it is important that home tutors are qualified to provide an educational programme. Accordingly, it is a condition of the scheme that parents/guardians **must recruit a tutor who is qualified in the sector in which tuition is being provided, and is registered with the Teaching Council for the duration of the approved tuition, up to and including issue of final payment.**

Where all efforts have failed to secure the services of a teacher qualified to teach in the sector concerned, the Department may consider the engagement of a person who is registered with the Teaching Council and has a primary degree (minimum Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications) in a relevant area, e.g. Psychology.

Tutors must grant permission to the Teaching Council for their details to be accessible on the website of the Teaching Council in order for this Department to verify that teachers have current registration. This facility can be enabled on the 'My Registration' section of the Teaching Council's website www.teachingcouncil.ie.

To be eligible for the qualified rate of payment, a tutor must be registered and recognised by the Teaching Council in the sector for which the tuition is being provided. Tutors, who are retired, who are registered with the Teaching Council and who are in receipt of payment of a public service pension will be paid at the modified rate – See Appendix 1 for further details

Where a tutor intends to provide Home Tuition to 2 or more children, a timetable detailing the provision of hours will be required before approval is given for the tuition to commence.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to source a tutor at the earliest possible opportunity to allow for applications for registration/vetting to be made by the tutor to the Teaching Council, if necessary. This Department does not keep lists of tutors available to carry out Home Tuition. It may be helpful to contact local schools in the first instance, or alternatively, the Department is aware that many parents use education provider websites to advertise for tutors or indeed place advertisements in local newspapers or on shop/community notice boards.

Parents/Guardians are not permitted to act as tutors for their children under the scheme.

Home Tuition should not commence until the approval letter is received by the parent/guardian confirming the date of commencement of the tuition and that the qualifications and identification of the nominated tutor/s have been formally approved in writing by the Department.

Teachers who are currently availing of any of the following paid or unpaid schemes – maternity leave, sick leave, disability pension, early retirement schemes or any approved leave of absence are **not eligible** to deliver the home tuition. Teachers who are on a career break or job-sharing should refer to the web book “Terms & Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools” with regard to their eligibility to work as a home tutor.

Vetting Arrangements for Tutors

All tutors must be vetted prior to commencing the delivery of tuition.

- Parents/Guardians must satisfy themselves that all tutors have been vetted by the Teaching Council since 29th April 2016 via the Teaching Council’s online vetting process.
- Full information for tutors in relation to the process of applying for vetting is available at: <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Vetting>
- It should be noted that this is a requirement for all tutors and that the process can take approximately four weeks.

- Parents can confirm that tutors are vetted by viewing the result of the tutors vetting search, known as a vetting disclosure, which the tutor can share through the Teaching Council's secure online vetting facility called Digitary.
- Vetting does not provide clearance for tutors to work with children, but provides particulars of any criminal record and/or specified information in respect of the tutor concerned or, where there is no criminal record or specified information, states this fact.
- Please note that each application for Home Tuition must be accompanied by a Statutory Declaration Form and a Form of Undertaking (Appendices 1 & 2 respectively of the relevant Application Form).

6. Child Protection

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 promotes the protection of children from abuse. It sets out what organisations need to do to keep children safe, and what different bodies and the general public should do if they are concerned about a child's safety and welfare.

Information on Child Protection can be obtained on the Department's website at <http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Child-Protection/Child-Protection.html>.

As Home Tuition takes place outside the usual school structure, parents should be mindful of additional risks or potential dangers involved in engaging tutors in a private arrangement.

- Parents should satisfy themselves that tutors are aware of their child's medical or behavioural needs.
- In addition to vetting disclosure, parents may request references and/or employment history in order to satisfy themselves regarding the suitability of the person to carry out tuition with their child.

7. Grant Payment Procedures

- Parents/Guardians engage tutors for the provision of Home Tuition in a private arrangement. The payments made to tutors on behalf of parents are subject to statutory deductions at source. The Department acts as a payroll agent only on behalf of the parents/guardians. This is to facilitate compliance with statutory deduction provisions including taxation and associated provisions.
- The Home Tuition Grant Rates are set out in **Appendix A**.
- The Home Tuition Grant will be paid directly to the approved tutor by the Department
- Parents should not commence Home Tuition until they have received a grant approval letter from the Department confirming that they meet the terms and conditions of the scheme and the date of commencement of grant aid.
- Parents/Guardians are advised that the home tuition grant will not be back-dated.

- The parent/guardian who has made application for home tuition must sign the payment claim form. In this regard, the signature provided by the parent/guardian may be used for verification.
- A false declaration for the purposes of claiming resources from the Department may result in the matter being referred by the Department to An Garda Síochána and, if appropriate, the Teaching Council.
- Parents/Guardians as well as tutors should ensure that they are fully aware of how the grant will issue under this Scheme before any tuition is provided.
- Parents/Guardians are advised that under no circumstances should they make payments to tutors for tuition provided by them under this scheme.
- Parents/Guardians and tutors should also note that, under existing legislation, financial details in respect of this scheme are forwarded annually to the Revenue Commissioners, as home tuition payments are reckonable for taxation purposes.

How the grant is paid

A separate more detailed payment information note is available to parents/guardians and tutors on the website of the Department at www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/Home-Tuition/.

Other issues relating to the payment of Home Tuition:

To comply with existing legislation, the PPS numbers of all persons, both parent(s)/guardian(s) and tutor(s) must be supplied in order for payment to be considered.

8. General Information

- Parents/Guardians will be required to complete the relevant Application Form and are requested to pay particular attention to the documentation/information that is required. It should be noted that sanction is only available on completion of the full application process which culminates in the issue of an approval letter confirming the date of commencement of the tuition.
- In certain cases, where no tutor has been nominated by the applicant, an initial approval letter will issue to the applicant pending receipt of tutor details. However, tuition cannot commence until the tutor has been nominated by the applicant, relevant documentation received in the Department and full approval for the commencement of tuition is issued in writing.
- The Home Tuition Grant is for educational teaching interventions only. The provision of therapeutic services such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, psychological services, etc. will require engagement with the Health Service Executive (HSE). Home Tuition funding may not,

under any circumstances, be used for such services. In this regard, the Department reserves the right to evaluate the education provision being delivered as part of the funding provided and all hours are approved subject to this condition.

- Please note that applications for Home Tuition are accepted in the knowledge that information supplied, including Personal Public Service Number (PPSN), may be shared between the HSE, TUSLA (Child and Family Agency), National Council for Special Education (NCSE), Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), Revenue and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) for stated reasons and to ensure that duplicate funding does not occur.
- Unused hours from any given week cannot transfer to a subsequent week. Parents/Guardians are especially required to note this limitation on the weekly tuition available and tutors are required not to exceed this limitation with any one student. Home Tuition should reflect the school day and be provided between the hours of 9am – 6 pm. Home Tuition should not take place during school holidays, bank holidays and weekends.
- All references to “schools” or “school placements” refer to State schools which are recognised under Section 10 (3) of the Education Act 1998.
- Seeking a school placement and the subsequent enrolment of a child in school is the responsibility of parents/guardians. However, parents/guardians who may need advice or are experiencing difficulties in locating a school placement should contact their local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). Your local SENO contact details are available on www.ncse.ie. Home Tuition will not be available where a school placement has been identified by the NCSE. Similarly, **failure to enrol a child in school will not give rise to eligibility under this scheme.**
- Parents/Guardians may also wish to access “Choosing a School – A guide for Parents and Guardians of Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs” – a publication which is accessible on the website of the National Council for Special Education – www.ncse.ie.
- If a school refuses to enrol a child, aged over 4, it is open to a parent to appeal the refusal to enrol their child through section 29 of the Education Act where there is a placement available in the school. Home Tuition may not be available in the event that the refusal to enrol has not been appealed.
- Please note that where a child has not availed of a placement available to him/her, they will not be eligible for any provision under the Home Tuition Grant Scheme at any point during the academic year nor will they be eligible under the terms of the July Education Programme.

- Should parents/guardians wish to enter into a group arrangement with other parents/guardians of children for whom home tuition has been approved, or if they wish to avail of a group arrangement where there is a current agreement with this Department, they must notify Special Education Section in advance for approval.
- Students who are undertaking study of subjects for Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations need to read carefully the requirements of the State Examinations Commission for practical coursework. The subjects with practical coursework are listed at (https://www.examinations.ie/candidates/S_68_08_Certificate_Examinations_Practical_Coursework.pdf). If the State Examinations Commission requirements are not met, this may result in a student not being able to achieve all of the marks available for the subject.

Role of the National Council for Special Education in the context of the Home Tuition Grant Scheme:

In the context of applications made under the Home Tuition Grant Scheme, the role of the NCSE is to confirm that no placement is available for a child in a school setting. Should a special class or special school place be required the SENO can advise parents/guardians accordingly.

When Placements Become Available During the 2017/18 School Year:

Places in mainstream classes, special classes and/or in special schools can become available during the school year – sometimes very early in the school year. In the event that a child over 3 years of age is being funded through the Home Tuition Grant Scheme, and a placement becomes available, the SENO will advise the parents/guardians of all children in the general school’s catchment area, as well as the Department of Education and Skills, that such places are now available.

Parents/Guardians in receipt of home tuition grant funding will be requested to provide evidence to the Department of their application to secure the available placement. The home tuition grant will be discontinued in any case where the parent does not apply for such placements.

In order for the home tuition grant to continue, parents/guardians must be able to demonstrate to the Department that such applications have been made within 3 weeks of being notified by the SENO and that the application to the school for enrolment has not been successful.

Where the parent’s application for enrolment has been successful, the Department may consider, on request, the continuation of Home Tuition for a specified period and on a reduced basis to allow the child to transition into the new placement where such an extension of the provision is deemed necessary. However, this is entirely conditional upon the child being enrolled in the school.

9. Queries and Appeals

Queries and appeals in relation to the Home Tuition Grant Scheme can be addressed to:

Home Tuition Unit, Special Education Section, Department of Education & Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 X659

Contact No: 090 648 4187

Email Address: special_education@education.gov.ie

Appeals in relation to decisions under the Home Tuition Grant Scheme may be submitted in writing to the above address, quoting the Home Tuition Reference No., and outlining the reasons for the appeal along with additional documents or reports, as appropriate.

Queries in respect of Home Tuition payments can be addressed to:

Special Needs and Tuition Grants, Department of Education & Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 X659

Contact No: 090 648 3883/3895/3885/3754/3750

Email Address: hometuition@education.gov.ie

This Circular, together with all relevant information, is available to download from the Department's website - www.education.ie - under Parents/Services/.

Jim Mulkerrins

Principal Officer

Special Education Section

July 2017

APPENDIX A

The Home Tuition Grant Scheme

Grant Rates:

There are two rates for the Home Tuition Grant based on the qualifications of the tutors engaged by Parents - the standard rate and the modified rate.

Grant rates may be subject to change. The grant rates applicable are as follows:

Standard Home Tuition Grant Rate:

For teachers registered with the Teaching Council where a

Qualified Primary School Teacher
tutoring a primary student: € 36.03 per hour worked.

Qualified Post-Primary School Teacher
tutoring a post-primary student: € 42.16 per hour worked.

Modified Home Tuition Grant rate:

Teachers who are not registered by the Teaching Council as qualified in the sector for which tuition is being provided, will receive the modified rate of payment. Teachers who are registered and qualified and who are in receipt of payment of a public service pension will receive the modified payment.

Modified rate: € 29.14 per hour worked

Please note that these grant rates may be subject to alterations during the year and, consequently, the grant rate payable will be reflective of the rate applicable for the period in respect of which the claim is made.