

## **Clarification Document to be read in accompaniment with SNA Guidelines**

### **Background**

The recently announced annual SNA review process, which was published on the NCSE website on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025, does not change the criteria for determining a school's SNA allocation.

The new timeline is intended to support the earlier announcement of allocations for the 2026/27 school year to align with the release of the annual staffing schedule in February which will now include SNAs, as well as teachers. This will allow schools to plan better for the following school year. In addition, it provides certainty to the SNA workforce and facilitates the implementation of the upcoming SNA redeployment scheme.

### **Key points for schools**

#### **Criteria:**

- There is no change to the SNA role in supporting primary care needs as per circular 0030/2014 and no narrowing of criteria.
- Significant primary care needs including behaviours of concern are included in SNA reviews.
- Students with significant primary care needs including behaviour will be considered in an allocation.
- Schools are advised to seek training and support on behaviour management strategies through the NCSE: <https://ncse.ie/tpl>
- As per circular 0030/2014 Provision of SNA Support should therefore not be considered as a first response for the management of behaviour
- SNA support should only be provided where behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date and where it is demonstrated how access to such support can assist with ongoing planning and intervention for the child as part of a whole school approach.
- Schools are required to show evidence of the use of a variety of approaches to behaviour in all applications.

#### **Allocations**

1. There is no change to the baseline of 2 SNAs allocated to each special class for autism or the equivalent baseline for other types of special? class.
2. An SNA review in the school will not alter this baseline allocations.
3. All other SNA reviews are carried out on a whole school basis to ensure that the care needs of the students in the entire school are identified and that the school is resourced to meet these identified needs. Separate allocations processes continue to operate for mainstream and special classes in individual schools.
4. All primary care needs at a significant level whether in mainstream or special classes will be supported.

## **Clarification Document to be read in accompaniment with SNA Guidelines**

### **Documentation**

- Schools are not required to use inclusive practice document [https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Inclusive\\_Practice\\_Relection\\_Document.pdf](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Inclusive_Practice_Relection_Document.pdf) for 2025/26
- This document can be commenced and is intended to support schools' approach to managing behaviour
- Schools are required to provide evidence of care needs and the school's approach to the management of all care needs set out in SSPs (student support plans) and:
  - a. Schools are required to evidence same needs in SSP in line with 0030/2014
  - b. Schools can provide other documentation they consider relevant to the review
  - c. If SSPs do not contain sufficient detail, the NCSE will request additional information to support the school's application.
- It is not necessary for psychological reports to be provided as evidence of care needs.
- The NCSE will shortly set up focus groups with school leaders to review their experiences of completing the SNA review documentation. This will help NCSE to gain direct insight into any issues arising with the application process.

### **SNA Redeployment scheme**

- Work to establish a Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) Redeployment Scheme is ongoing between the DEY, the NCSE and other key stakeholders.
- Implementation of the SNA Redeployment scheme will start during the 2025/26 school year.
- Updates will be published on the NCSE website and on the SNA Information Hub on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)

### **Timeline for applications**

- The NCSE has considered the timeline to submit SNA review applications and are extending this until **7<sup>th</sup> November 2025 for all schools** due to particular circumstances that may arise in a small number of schools including:
  - A number of developing schools for whom an extension of the deadline is critical in relation to students with presenting care needs.
  - A number of schools with junior students for whom the use of strategies has not to date proven effective.
- The NCSE will review any school with a review request relating to increase insignificant care needs received past the deadline on a case-by-case basis and schools are advised to contact their SENO in this regard. This has always been the case and there are no changes in this process.