



Circular 0032/2019

**TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL TEACHERS AND TEACHING STAFF IN
SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

**Appointment of Administrative Deputy Principal and Staffing Arrangements in
Special Schools for the 2019/2020 school year**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this circular is to inform all special school management and staff of:

- The introduction of, and criteria for, appointment of Administrative Deputy Principal posts in special schools commencing in the 2019/2020 school year.
- The restatement of teaching staff arrangements in special schools, as introduced in 2012 in accordance with [Circular 0042/2011](#).
- Enrolment of pupils in special schools.

2. Appointment of Administrative Deputy Principal in Special Schools for the 2019/2020 school year

From the 2019/2020 school year, special schools may appoint an Administrative Deputy Principal on the basis of a teaching staff complement of Principal + 15 or more class teachers.

This will be based on the number of class teacher posts in the year of appointment.

For the purpose of this, class teacher posts are teaching posts allocated on an annual basis, in response to the number and profile of students enrolling in a school.

Exceptional teaching posts for short term specific purposes; Part-time Specialist Teaching Hours and Cooperation Teaching Hours should not be included.

Special schools should contact Special Education Section of the Department, if they are unsure of what teaching posts qualify for the appointment of Administrative Deputy Principal.

Administrative Deputy Principal Posts in special schools should be filled by open competition. The appointment must be made in accordance with procedures for the appointment of principal posts as set out in the Governance Manual for Primary Schools.



3. Teaching Staff arrangements for Special Schools.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible for determining the appropriate staffing levels in relation to the support of pupils with special educational needs in special schools, in accordance with the policies of the Department of Education and Skills. Special school staffing allocations are reviewed and updated each year by the NCSE.

Since 2012, special schools are staffed on the basis of their actual pupil profiles and the disability category of each pupil, as opposed to being based principally on school designation, as set out in Department [Circular 0042/2011](#). This is in recognition of the work of many special schools in expanding their remits and enrolling pupils with a wide range of special educational needs, in order to meet the needs of their communities. The Department welcomes this practice and special schools are encouraged to expand their enrolment policy, in order to meet the needs of pupils with the most complex needs.

Special schools will continue to be staffed on the basis of each year's current school enrolments and disability category of each pupil. Pupil teacher ratio in the special school sector varies between 11:1 and 6:1 depending on the profile of the student population in a school.

It is a matter for special schools to deploy their teaching staff to cater for the needs of the pupil cohort and to ensure age appropriate placement.

4. Redeployment Arrangements

The allocation of teaching posts to special schools is contingent on special schools complying with redeployment arrangements. Boards of Management should refer to current redeployment arrangements in order to fill teaching vacancies.

5. Enrolment of pupils in Special Schools

The policy of the Department of Education and Skills is that children with special educational needs should be included where possible and appropriate in mainstream placements with additional supports provided. In circumstances where children with special educational needs require more specialised interventions, special school or special class places are provided for.

Legislative provision for inclusive education is set out in Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 which requires that:

“A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:



The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act

The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.”

The nature and level of the educational response is based on the professionally-assessed needs of each individual child. All pupils enrolled in special schools must have professional recommendation which states that the student has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special school setting and the reasons why this is the case.

6. NCSE Policy Advice on the Educational Provision in Special Classes and Special Schools

The NCSE is currently developing policy advice on the educational provision that should be in place for students educated in special schools and classes and will make recommendations on the provision required to enable students in special schools and classes achieve better outcomes. The NCSE has been asked to complete and submit its report to the Minister no later than June 2020.

There will be no change to the staffing arrangements currently in place in special schools, pending the receipt of this policy advice.

Eddie Ward
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