



July Education Programme 2019 School Based Programme - Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the July Programme?

The scheme provides funding for an extended school year for children with a severe and profound general learning disability or children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The extended year is more commonly known as July Provision or the July Education Programme. Under this scheme the school year of participating schools is extended by four weeks for eligible pupils. Where school-based provision is not feasible, home-based provision may be granted.

2. What schools are eligible to participate?

Schools that have special classes for autism and/or severe and profound learning disability can participate in the July Programme. The Department has contacted all eligible schools to invite them to participate.

3. Can eligible schools with special classes for autism /severe and profound learning disability accept eligible pupils from other schools?

Yes, in limited circumstances subject to the agreement of the participating school, the Department, and on the basis that the host school can accommodate the additional children within the existing resources of special classes for autism/severe and profound of the host school. No additional resources will be provided to the host school to accommodate children from non-participating schools and resources allocated for a child in its own school and wishing to participate in another school's July Programme are non-transferable. School transport arrangements for the relevant pupil(s) are similarly not transferable.

Where host schools facilitate eligible pupils from other schools, arrangements should be made for the transfer of all relevant pupil documentation, i.e. student profiles, IEPs etc, in order that teachers can plan appropriately. In addition, parents should be advised of all necessary school policies, procedures etc. of the host school.

4. Can eligible children enrolled in mainstream classes in a school be accommodated in the school's special class for July?

Children in mainstream classes can be accommodated in a school's special class(es) for the July Programme, where a) capacity exists in a class and b) their participation does not give rise to the need for additional resources.

Note

For the purpose of clarity, if the inclusion of children from a mainstream class enables schools to retain the resources of the special class(es) where otherwise they would be required to reduce staffing levels due to the non-participation of children from those class(es), then this practice is also deemed to create the need for additional resources. Where this occurs schools will be required to apply separately to the Department for the retention of the additional resources, see paragraph 5 below.

Overall, the number of special classes for autism /severe and profound providing July Programme should not differ from what is provided by the school during the normal school year. Similarly, class numbers or the staffing resources for the special classes should not exceed that which is approved during the normal school year. Where the number of children enrolled in the special classes and participating in the July Programme is less than the number attending in the normal school year, then the staffing resources should be reduced accordingly.

Children who cannot be facilitated within the special classes in their school without incurring the need for additional resources, may be eligible to apply for home based tuition.

5. Are there exceptions to the above?

The Department may, in limited circumstances, consider some exemptions to the above. Any such exemption will however, only be considered where the child is enrolled in that school and where it is determined that the best interests of the child would be more appropriately addressed by their inclusion in a dedicated autism or special class for the period of July, having regard to the additional cost arising. Requests for exemptions must be submitted separately to the Department by the 24th May 2019 and supported by an appropriate proposal. The final decision will, having considered all variables, rest with the Department.

Any decision by this office to grant an exemption in this regard is without prejudice to any subsequent decision of the School Transport Section regarding the approval or otherwise of existing school transport arrangements into July for relevant children.

6. Is there a post-primary based programme?

Only four mainstream post primary schools are eligible to participate in the programme on a pilot basis; Salesian College Celbridge, St David's Artane, Colaiste Eoin, St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla, Co Clare. No other post primary schools may participate in the scheme. However, children who are attending special classes for autism in other mainstream post primary schools may be eligible to apply for tuition under the Home Based JEP.

7. What is the content of the July Programme?

The programme must be educational in content and similar to that delivered during the normal school year.

8. What is the length of the school day?

The length of the school day is aligned with the normal school day as outlined in Circular 11/95. You can access this circular on www.education.ie. The length of the school day should be consistent with the provisions of the above circular and the age profile of the participants. The July Programme cannot be provided on Saturday or Sunday or on a bank holiday.

9. What are staffing resources for the July Programme

Staffing resources for the JEP are the same as those provided for the *participating children* during the normal current school year, having regard to the prevailing Pupil Teacher Ratio and, subject to the full participation of the relevant students. No staffing resources will be approved in excess of the current allocation to the class (es) providing the programme.

10. How can I be assured that the resources proposed are correct?

It is a matter for schools to establish and ensure that their programme operates within existing approved and appropriate allocations for the participating children. Where schools are in any doubt about approved or permissible allocations in the normal school year, they should contact their SENO in this regard. This information submitted by schools may also be subject to verification and where differences are identified these will be raised directly with the school.

11. Are ex quota allocations reckonable?

No, ex quota allocations are not reckonable for the purposes of determining 'additional' teaching posts for the July Programme. Teaching resources for the July Programme should be in accordance with prevailing Pupil Teacher Ratio (1:6) and SERC allocations or as determined by the SENO.

12. What happens if a) staff are unexpectedly absent or b) if children do not attend the JEP as planned?

- a) It is recommended that as in the regular school year, schools would maintain a relief staffing list for teachers and SNAs in order that vacancies that may arise during the July Programme can be filled.
- b) Schools that have sought written undertakings and re-confirmed intentions to participate in the programme will have minimised the likely requirement to adjust staffing levels during the course of the July Programme. Schools are not required to adjust staffing levels to take account of sporadic non-attendance of pupils. It may however be useful for schools to consider how staffing might appropriately be reduced in the unlikely event that, having implemented the measures referred to above, some participants do not attend the July Programme and where otherwise the staffing requirements would therefore be less than originally anticipated.

13. What is the actual start and finish date for the school programme?

Schools wishing to participate in the July Education Programme that have completed their 183 days on or before Friday 21st June must commence their Programme on Monday 24th June 2019. Schools that have not completed 183 days on or before 21st June 2019 should commence their July Programme on the first date immediately after the designated school closure date, but in any event not later than 1st July 2019, where a maximum programme of 20 days is proposed

Approved post primary schools participating in the programme can commence the programme in June.

14. Can programmes be less than four weeks?

In order that children with an ASD diagnosis and/or severe/profound learning disability can obtain the maximum benefit from the programme, it is recommended that every effort would be made to provide the programme for the longest possible duration. While programmes of less than the maximum duration are permitted, they must be provided for a minimum of two weeks.

15. Can the relevant claim forms be completed manually?

No, in order to facilitate the processing of school claims, claim forms once issued, must be completed electronically and emailed by the closing date of the 14th June 2019 (this date may be subject to change). Overseers and/or Preparers are responsible for the accurate submission of information on the relevant forms as upward adjustment of payments cannot be considered after the specified payment date. The Department will similarly not be responsible for the correction of payments/overpayments arising from the submission of incorrect/inaccurate information.

16. What is the pay date for the staff employed under the programme?

All payments under the programme will issue on the common pay date of 31st October 2019.

17. Can schools pay teachers/SNAs from their own funds in advance of the pay date?

Schools are strongly advised **not** to issue payments in advance of the common pay date in order to avoid potential overpayments which may occur as a result of; incorrect application of rates and incorrect information regarding the teaching or employment status, termination/re-employment on the Department's payroll, etc. Responsibility for any overpayments incurred as a result of issuing advance payments to staff by the school prior to the common pay date, rests with the school. Furthermore, payments will not be withheld by the Department to offset or correct overpayments arising to schools/staff from the advance issue of payment.

18. What are the vetting requirements for people employed by the school?

Schools must comply with the Department of Education and Skills vetting requirements as outlined in Circulars 0031/2016, 16/2017 and 72/2017.

19. Is it mandatory for staff or schools to participate in the July Programme?

No, participation in the July Programme is voluntary. Where school based provision is not feasible, eligible children may qualify for home based provision.

20. Are teachers/SNAs required to work for the full duration of the programme?

In order to ensure continuity of provision, schools should make every effort to secure staff for the duration of the programme. Where this is not possible, schools should employ teachers/SNAs for the longest possible duration in order to minimise disruption to the students.

21. Can a teacher be an Overseer for the Programme?

The Overseer must be a principal, deputy / vice principal or permanent qualified teacher, employed in and by the participating school. Only one person should be employed to fill this position.

22. Can an SNA carry out the preparatory work?

No, this must be undertaken by a permanent teaching employee of the school.

23. Can schools recruit staff from other schools?

Yes, with the exception of the Overseer and Preparator roles which must be undertaken by permanent teachers in the participating school, schools can employ teachers and/or SNA's from other schools if the staff normally employed by the school are not available for any/all of the JEP. Schools must comply with relevant governing circulars and documents as identified in the "Key Terms and Conditions" document, and appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures in the employment of all staff.

Schools are advised to establish procedures to facilitate the transfer of pupil information, relevant planning documentation and details of school policies and procedures to new teachers or to teachers who are unfamiliar with the pupils.

24. What is the rate of payment for teachers employed under the July Programme?

Comprehensive details in relation to the payment terms for all teachers are outlined in the "Key Terms and Conditions" document and the relevant "Programme Rates" document.

25. Can an unqualified teacher be employed under the programme?

All teachers employed in the July Programme should be recruited in accordance with circulars 31/2011 and 52/2013.

26. Do Newly Qualified Teachers need to have their Teaching Council numbers prior to the commencement of the programme?

Yes, newly qualified teachers must have effective teaching council registration numbers prior to the commencement of employment on the programme in order to be compliant with the terms of relevant governing circulars and avoid any associated payment restrictions. It is recommended that prior to the commencement of the programme, that Overseers would verify the teaching council numbers of all prospective teachers, including NQTs through the Teaching Council portal. This is necessary given the likely processing times for registration applications and the fact that pending applications will often only become effective after the dates worked on the July Programme. Where this occurs NQTs will be considered unqualified for the duration of the programme and subject to restrictions governing the number of days for which payment can be made.

27. Can retired teachers be employed under the July Programme?

Paragraph 10 of the “Key Terms and Conditions” document outlines the categories of retired teachers ineligible to participate in the programme. The recruitment of retired teachers is provided for in specific circumstances under Circular 31/2011 and such teachers will be remunerated in accordance with the provisions of the relevant governing circulars and documents referred to in the “Key Terms and Conditions”.

28. Can a teacher work as a SNA?

Yes. In exceptional circumstances a teacher can work as an SNA. Remuneration for this role will be at the relevant SNA rate and must be paid via the Board of Management of the school even where that teacher is a permanent teacher or a temporary/substitute teacher who has been paid by the Department’s payroll in 2019.

29. What is the rate of payment for Special Needs Assistants?

Full details are outlined in the “Key Terms and Conditions” document and the relevant “Programme Rates” document

30. Is there an appeal mechanism?

While there is no official appeals process, it is open to schools to query decisions directly with this office. Responsibility for compliance with the terms of the Programme rests with the Overseer and the School authority. Any error, omission or failure on the part of the Overseer/School authority to clarify aspects of the scheme prior to its commencement will not subsequently constitute grounds for appeal. Individuals employed to work on the July Education Programme should also satisfy themselves as to their eligibility and to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of pay prior to commencement of employment in order to avoid any subsequent disputes regarding payment.

31. How is payment made?

Payment will be made via the Department's payroll to permanent primary school teachers and full-time/regular part-time Special Needs Assistants. Temporary, casual, CID, Fixed Term and substitute teachers /SNAs currently or previously paid on the Department's payroll **in 2019** will also receive payment via the relevant payroll. Requests for the issue of payment by any other means will not be considered.

Teachers or SNA's who have not previously been paid directly by the Department or whose period of employment with the Department refers exclusively to the period prior to 1st Jan 2019, may be employed and paid directly by the Board of Management of the school. Funding in respect of such employments will issue from the DES to the Board of Management of that school by way of grant by the prescribed pay date. Payments due for the 2019 JEP, made directly by the Boards of Management to their employees, are subject to all statutory deductions including income and pension levies, where appropriate. Under Section 891b of the Finance Act 2006, Government Payments Reporting, the Department is required to send full details of all payments made under the programme to the Revenue Commissioners. Schools will be required to submit a declaration following receipt of payment, confirming that all necessary statutory deductions have been submitted to the Revenue Commissioners.

Please note that from 1 January 2019, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners have introduced a real time method of applying PAYE to earnings. Further information can be accessed at www.revenue.ie

32. Are EPV days available under the Programme?

Details regarding EPV entitlements are outlined in the "Key Terms and Conditions" document.