

**Information on staffing, supports and grants
to Primary and Post Primary schools
on setting up a new ASD class
(including an Early Intervention Class)**

Staffing – Primary Level

1. A special class for autism has a 6:1 pupil teacher ratio. The class will operate under the authority of the Board of Management.
2. Two special needs assistants (SNAs) will be allocated to each class. Additional SNA posts for the class will be considered on request by NCSE on the basis of the individually assessed needs of the pupils attached to the class.
3. The teaching and SNA staff appointed to the class will be paid through the centralised payroll systems operated by the Department.
4. The school management will be responsible for the appointment and employment of these staff. The Special Education Support Service provides continuing professional development for teachers.
5. A post in a special autism class can, in the first instance, be filled internally by the deployment of an existing permanent/CID holding teacher in the school. If the post is still vacant it should be filled from the appropriate Panel in accordance with Circulars 0005/2015 and 0072/2014. If the panels are clear the post should be advertised in accordance with agreed procedures.
6. Documents which provide primary schools guidance on best practice for inclusion of students with special educational needs are:
 - Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support
 - Sp. Ed Circular 02/05: Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools (DES, 2005)
 - Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process (NCSE, 2006)
 - Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General learning Disabilities (NCCA, 2007)
 - Inclusive Education Framework- A guide for schools on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (NCSE, 2011)

Staffing – Post Primary Level

1. A special class for autism has a 6:1.5 pupil teacher ratio. The post is a temporary whole-time position. The class will operate under the authority of the Board of Management.
2. Two special needs assistants (SNAs) will be allocated to each class. Additional SNA posts for the class will be considered on request by NCSE on the basis of the individually assessed needs of the pupils attached to the class.
3. The staff appointed to the class will be paid through the centralised payroll systems operated by the Department.
4. The school management will be responsible for the appointment and employment of these staff. The Special Education Support Service provides continuing professional development for teachers
5. The recruitment of the teacher in the special autism class, as with any teacher recruitment, should be in accordance with the provisions set out in Circular 31/2011 - Schools Division Section, Department of Education & Skills – Contact Number: 090 6483600.
6. Comprehensive guidance has been provided to post primary schools on best practice for inclusion of students with special educational needs. The guideline document "Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs: Post-Primary Guidelines" was published by the Department's Inspectorate in June 2007 and is a significant step to further support second level schools in the inclusion of students with special educational needs. The guidelines advocate a whole-school approach to effectively meet the educational needs of students with special educational needs. Practical advice is provided to schools on the organisation and co-ordination of resources so as to maximise the support to each individual student.

Supports

1. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is located at 1-2 Mill Street, Trim, Co. Meath and can be contacted at (046) 9486400. SENOs provide a direct service to parents and to schools. They will liaise with parents, schools, the HSE and other services. They will assist in planning the transition of children to school, between schools and onwards from school.
2. Therapeutic supports (speech and language/occupational etc) are provided by the Health Service Executive in line with their assessment of each child's needs. The local Health Service Executive should be contacted in relation to professional advice from multidisciplinary teams including occupational and speech and language therapies required for pupils with autism.

3. The National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) can be contacted at Frederick Court, North Frederick Street, Dublin 1, or (01) 8892700. As part of service planning, schools may consult with the NEPS psychologist on the needs of pupils in ASD classes. NEPS psychologists engage in an ongoing planning and review process with schools where they jointly explore the needs of students and broader school needs. This may then lead to a plan which incorporates both individual and systemic approaches to meeting the identified needs.
4. The DES supports the training and professional development of teachers working with students with special educational needs through the Special Education Support Service (SESS). This service consolidates, co-ordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures, as appropriate, for teachers working with students with special educational needs in a variety of educational settings. Generally this support is available by direct application to SESS by the school Principal for training or professional development for the teachers in the school to attend courses which are recognised and funded through the SESS. The SESS can be contacted at 021 4254241 or via their website www.sess.ie.
5. School Capital Appraisal Section, Department of Education and Skills, Portlaoise Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly can be contacted at (057) 9325442 for any accommodation issues.

Grants – Primary Level

1. The school may submit an application for a once-off set-up grant for €6,500 to cover the cost of furniture and general equipment. If specialised furniture/equipment is required for a particular child then an application, supported by a report from an occupational therapist, should be submitted to the Department. School Building Unit, Tullamore can be contacted for more information (057 9324300).
2. Primary schools with NCSE sanctioned ASD classes will be paid an enhanced level of capitation grant per pupil enrolled in the special class for autism. The enhanced rate of capitation in the current school year (i.e. 2015) is €670 per pupil in addition to the mainstream rate of €170 per pupil. Capitation for the year will be paid based on a schools POD enrolment figure on 30th September of the current school year. This enrolment figure will contain the enrolment in the ASD Special Class. The first moiety (70%), paid in January, will be calculated using the enrolment figures from the previous school year and, as such, will not reflect the new class. However, when the second moiety is being paid in June, the enrolment figure for the current school year will be taken into account and the first moiety will be reconciled at that stage.

3. Children enrolled in a special class for autism may be eligible for school transport or grant assistance in accordance with the Department's School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs; full details are available on the Department's website at www.education.ie. Funding for the employment of escorts, where they are required, to accompany children on school transport services is also available. Contact telephone number for School Transport is 057 - 935466/7.

Grants – Post Primary Level

1. The school may submit an application for a once-off set-up grant for €6,500 to cover the cost of furniture and general equipment. If specialised furniture/equipment is required for a particular child then an application, supported by a report from an occupational therapist, should be submitted to the Department. School Building Unit, Tullamore can be contacted for more information (057 9324300).
2. Children enrolled in a special class for autism may be eligible for school transport or grant assistance in accordance with the Department's School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs; full details are available on the Department's website at www.education.ie. Funding for the employment of escorts, where they are required, to accompany children on school transport services is also available. Contact telephone number for School Transport is 057 - 935466/7.

For further information regarding children with ASD please see details available on the NCSE website at:

www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Pamphlet-3-Autism-01_09_14.pdf

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