



24 September 2025

Dear Principal,

Trusting you are well after a very busy start to the school year.

Further to my earlier correspondence, I write once again to inform you that the NCSE SNA Guidelines have issued on the NCSE website at:

[https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/NCSE\\_SNA\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/NCSE_SNA_Guidelines.pdf)

It is of utmost importance that school communities familiarise themselves with the content of the guidelines which indicate that:

- The NCSE guidelines for SNA reviews for 2025/26 was published by the NCSE on the 12th September 2025.
- The SNA allocation circular for the 2025/26 school year which issued in May 2025 outlined to schools that the NCSE would be undertaking SNA reviews during the 2025/26 school year. It should be noted that any school can apply for a review where they require additional SNA support on the basis of newly presenting significant primary care needs in the school.
- The guidelines again restate that the NCSE assesses the level of need within the school as a whole with reference to students with significant care needs and the number of SNA posts already allocated to the school.
- The role of the SNA and the criteria for allocation has not changed and is guided by circular 30/2014.
- SNAs remain responsible for meeting primary care needs for students with special educational needs. The review guidelines published by the NCSE clearly reference this.
- Schools can apply for a SNA review from the 15th September to 24th October via the NCSE school portal. This is to support the earlier announcement of

allocations for the 2026/27 school year to align with the release of the annual staffing schedule and was requested by schools to facilitate improved planning.

- In addition, it also supports the announced implementation of the SNA redeployment scheme.
- Where an emerging requirement for further SNA support arises outside this time the school can contact their NCSE special education needs organiser (SENO) as in previous years, to discuss the need for a SNA review.
- It is important to reiterate that the NCSE guidelines issued relate solely to SNA reviews and there is no change to the standard allocation process for resourcing mainstream or special classes in mainstream schools.
- There has been some concern expressed regarding the 2 posts assigned to each special class for autistic learners:
  - The allocation of baseline SNAs for special classes in mainstream schools has not changed.
  - Any school which has a special class or which is opening a new special class will be allocated the baseline number of SNAs according to class category and this will not be reduced.
- NCSE reviews incorporate a review of three key elements:
  - Student significant primary care needs
  - School deployment of existing resources
  - School practice
- NCSE has made available supportive tools online to support schools understanding of these components.
- Outcomes to reviews have three potential implications:
  - An increase in an allocation
  - A decrease in an allocation
  - No change to an allocation
- An outcome where the allocation is deemed more than the required allocation to fully address the significant primary care needs does not take impact until the following school year.

- This allows for schools to prepare for the outcome and for SNAs to remain in place throughout the school year.
- The NCSE Relate document is intended to support the development of best practice over-time. Schools are not expected to have embedded all practices from the document before making an application for an SNA review for 2025/26.

Should you have any additional queries that this letter does not address or if you require support on any element of the guidelines, please make contact with your local SENO and Regional Team.

Wishing you the very best for the coming months.

Kind regards,

*Helen Walsh*

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