



IPPN Response

SNA Workforce Development Draft Circular and School Community Time Draft

Introduction

IPPN appreciates the opportunity to respond to the draft SNA circular and accompanying document as well as involvement in the various working groups involved in this process. Much of the discussion at the various working groups has included IPPN thinking and positions on the various aspects explored over the last eighteen months.

IPPN recognises the significant contribution of SNAs in our schools and the efforts the school team makes in nurturing and maintaining relationships with all in the school community. The vision for the review of the SNA role is informed by all partners and has at its heart the delivery of best outcomes for pupils. Overcoming barriers to learning and development is central to the school staff working as a team where school culture determines the values, beliefs and attitudes that underpin their work with pupils of all abilities. Building team in schools and fostering relationships helps to create a supportive and engaging, positive learning environment for all pupils. IPPN welcomes the clarity on roles and responsibilities as well as completion of additional working hours for SNAs.

Draft SNA Circular (Observations)

Time was spent at the beginning of the process looking at the **vision** for the role. It may be worth putting the vision into the circular.

3.4 reference to the “education and care plan” should refer to **Individual Education Plan/ Student Support File and Individual Care Plan**. It would achieve a consistency of language to be used by all.

3.10 A lot of time was spent on discussion about the SNA as part of a team so reference here should be made to the distinct roles on the **school team** -school leader, classroom teacher, **support teacher** and SNA to collaborate and work together to achieve the best outcomes for the students in the school.

Allocation and Deployment of SNAs

4.1 SNAs are allocated based on the overall profile need of the school and not to an individual student.....final sentence could read that “all other students will have **access to SNA support as deployed by school management**. Parents and school staff understand the word **access** in terms of what is available as support.

4.4 It is widely agreed that **SNA allocations** come very late in the year and causes significant challenges for school leaders in planning and recruitment for the following year. It would be so much better if all allocations, teacher and SNA were published at the same time enabling school management to have an overview of staffing for the following year.

SNA Duties and Responsibilities

5.1 The SNA shall be responsible for core care support tasks. Again, the language needs to be consistent with the attached appendix which reads **Core Care Duties**. This should then align with the language used in School Community Time document.

5.3 Suggested addition - assist the teacher or support teacher with relationships and activities in a **social space** e.g. school garden, local shop or post office.

9. Holistic Support Suggestion to move this section up to **No. 6** as this is central to the existence of the role

7 Fostering Independence Suggestion this section is a good follow up to No. 6 as this is also central to the existence of the role.

Supporting Transitions

10.1 extra bullet point to support transitions between settings external to the school e.g. early years and secondary school. The SNA is important in the transition programme for students with complex needs moving to secondary school.

Student Planning and Review

11.1 reference as mentioned before to accurate titles of school documentation – Individual Education Plans/Student Support File/ Individual Care Plan. The team will generally include **support teacher should be included as should school SENCO**.

11.2 Putting together a plan **to include targets and interventions**

School Community Time

15.4 three categories ... I know there was much discussion about what categories we would finally agree on but it is worth considering what makes sense in terms of school operations. **Suggestion to use:**

School Planning and Review	Training and Collaboration	School Community Events and Activities
School Policy Student Support Plans Individual Care Plans Individual Education Plans Suggestion -raise to 15%	School protocol and procedures Whole School Training Relevant Training to role Individual CPD/Training Leave at 50%	Co-curricular activities Extra-curricular activities Sport activities School Tours School Concerts/Shows Religious or Cultural Ceremonies Suggestion 35%

Appendix 2

Reference re health conditions should refer to **Individual Care Plan**. Consistency of language is important across both documents and in line with terms used in schools.

Timeline

As discussed at the last meeting, this circular/documentation may not be ready for publication in time for school opening. It would be helpful if it was published as early as possible in the school year. Many schools will already have plans in place for training etc. at the start of the school year. Consideration should be given to full implementation in September 2026.

School Community Time Document

Introduction

It is important that the additional hours makes **reference to 72 hours** in this opening section.

What is school community time?

Again, consistency of language across the documents needs to be accurate – reference here to essential SNA duties ... Core Care Support Tasks/Core Care Duties/Core Care Support Duties.

SCT document should name the circular when circular number is known.

The SCT cannot be used for periods that SNAs are already required to work before and after school..... **this needs to be much clearer as we receive many calls from school leaders about this issue. Can this be clarified? (10-15mins?)**

See suggested revision of 3 category areas

3.1 Againall staff working with the student are involved in the planning and review process for that student..... no harm again to name the planning areas of Individual Education Plan, Student Support Planning and Individual Care Planning.

This includes time allocated to: suggestion to include additional bullet point

(e) collaborate with school management, staff and parents re Individual Care Plans

Appropriate training/learning may include:

- (a) Suggestion to add redeployment here**
- (b) Training for further professional development relevant to SNA role and duties...add in consultation with school leadership.**
- (c) end of this point to include Code of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure**

Note: Is it worth referring to training as **Mandated/Relevant /Voluntary?**

How should schools plan for these hours?

Upon reasonable notice... this will cause issues for school leaders. Can we suggest that **reasonable notice of a week could be used?**

Training

- Training should be agreed in advance with the **relevant school leader....** This may not be the Principal as workload is an issue here. This responsibility may be devolved to a member of the Leadership and Management Team.
- SNAs may record SCT time completed SNAs should discuss with the **relevant school leader** if they have any queries around the recording of these hours

(Relevant school leader as assigned by the Principal)

Appendix 1

SNA Record -School Community Time

- Consideration to be given to **online form** Schools may insert this into Aladdin.
- **Box 2 Principal/Relevant School Leader**

- **Could Section be re-named as per suggestion to revise names of 3 categories.**
- Final sign off box could read **Principal/Deputy Principal**

Conclusion

1. Flexibility on the part of the unique school contexts should be built in to the % time as set out for each category area. It is useful to state that a 50% minimum completion should apply in each area.
2. Access for all staff to confidential information on pupils falls under the school GDPR policy and procedure. It should be a given that no such documentation in hard copy leaves the school premises.
3. Consideration must be given to recognition of the SENCO role in schools as a standalone management role and the huge benefit that this could bring to the school community in terms of SEN provision in school, liaison with all parties involved in SEN to include SNAs, liaising with parents, external agencies and the Department of education and Youth.
4. **Consideration should be given to the existing heavy workload on the senior school leadership of Principal and Deputy Principal and the added responsibility in terms of the review of the SNA Role and requirements of this new circular and accompanying School Community Time.**
5. IPPN would welcome a review of the changes in this area in a timely manner with input from all parties concerned.