

Advice and FAQs on June working in schools for SNAs

The obligation to be available for work in June within the Post Primary sector was confirmed with the 2005 SNA national contract which states that “you will also be required to work the month of June on examinations or other work appropriate to the grade including training”.

The negotiations in 2011 produced a list of duties that were appropriate for SNAs to carry out in June which is included below.

SNAs and June Working: FAQs

Q: If there is no work for me, can I leave the school?

A: This is a matter that Fórsa has raised with the Department of Education as it is a grey area. However, there is nothing in the contract of employment that would prevent a Principal/Board of Management from allowing an SNA from going home if there is no SNA work to do.

Q: If the work I'm doing in June does not appear on the lists below, can I do it?

A: You need to make a decision. If the work is based around supporting a SEN assessed child, then yes, it is something that is SNA appropriate. This can count even if it is not for the SEN child/children that you usually work with.

Q: What do I do if I believe that the work I am being asked to do is inappropriate?

A: The union will support you in raising the matter with your school management. This must be done, on an individual basis, by raising the matter via the Grievance Procedure (available here). If it is a matter for a group of employees, Fórsa can work with you to move the matter collectively.

Q: I have been asked to attend training during June. Is this appropriate?

A: Yes. This is perfectly appropriate for June as long as the training is related to your work.

Q: The work I'm being asked to do is part of the job of another grade (eg, school secretary or caretaker). Should I do it?

A: No. This is an example of displacement. Displacement is, basically, when you are doing the job of another person.

Q: But what if there is nobody else to do it?

A: This does not really matter, it still shouldn't be done because if we do it then the school will have no need to hire the right person for the job.

Q: What work is appropriate to do in June?

A: There is a list of SNA tasks in:

- Circular 12/2005
- Circular 71/2011
- Circular 30/2014

The duties are as follows:

SEN pupil-centred activity:

- Provide input with regard to care needs for the preparation of Individual Education Plans;
- Assist with care planning;
- Provide assistance and information in relation to care needs for preparation of physiological and school reports and files;
- Assist transition process in relation to care needs for pupils from one school or education centre to another;
- Assist SEN pupils to display their work;
- Assist in analysis of attendance for SEN pupils;
- Assist teachers and/or principal in maintaining a journal and uniform care monitoring system for SEN pupils;
- Assist Principal or other teacher designated by Principal in preparing briefing profiles on SEN pupils;
- Under the direction of the Principal or designated teacher, assist in compiling information for staff for the return to class in the new academic year e.g. special section in staff handbook, particularly in relation to care and assistance required in class for SEN pupils;

Learning resource administration:

- Preparation, organising, tidying of Class Room, Resource Room, Learning Support Room, ASD classrooms and such other rooms used by SEN pupils, and appropriate equipment and resources used, including those related to ICT;
- Prepare materials and equipment in classrooms used by SEN pupils including cleaning any specialist equipment used by SEN pupils, e.g. computer keyboards, special desks;
- Provide assistance for SEN pupils in relation to assembling their class materials, displays, programmes, books and preparing their materials for class. Class and school planning and development;
- Participation with school development planning and policy development, where appropriate, including reference to particular assistance required by SEN pupils to participate fully in school;
- Planning for the following day's classes; in particular where there may be additional care or assistance requirements for certain classes or projects;
- Liaising with the class teacher;
- Liaising with other teachers such as resource teachers and/or Principal;
- Meetings with parents as appropriate with the agreement and guidance of the Principal and/or class teacher;
- Preparation for and attendance at whole team meetings and staff meetings;
- Participation in and assistance with school operational structures which are in place to facilitate the full integration and participation of SEN pupils in school; Examinations(Both State and House Examinations);
- Assist in the setting up of Special Examination Centres and appropriate accommodation centres for examinations;
- Assist in ensuring that special centres are properly organised, and that SEN pupils with assigned SNA are present and have the appropriate equipment;
- Where rooms are adapted for use as special centres, assist in restoring those rooms for normal school use after the examinations have finished.

Training and development:

- Training (nationally or school mandated);
- Inform colleague SNAs of best practice based on professional and experiential knowledge in relation to the educational and care needs of SEN pupils, with the agreement and guidance of the Principal, and/or class teacher;
- Up-skill in use of ICT as learning tools for SEN pupils; Other;
- Other work which is appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the SEN pupils and the school.

Many of the tasks listed here will not be able to be done in June because the children will not be present.

Q: There is a reference in the circular to SNA duties being undertaken at the discretion of the Principal. What does this mean?

A: A Principal gives an SNA tasks based on the lists of tasks in these circulars. A Principal has the discretion to choose which of the tasks on these lists an individual SNA needs to do. In some circumstances, a Principal may ask an SNA to carry out tasks that are not on this list. However, when this happens, the spirit of the task needs to be in keeping with the other things on the lists. It cannot be something completely different.

June: Examples of work that are inappropriate for SNAs:

Note - Up to date list available on Fórsa website

- Gardening
- Cleaning toilets
- Working at the reception
- Directing traffic
- Laminating and shredding for the whole school
- Painting classroom
- Making tea/coffee for teachers/parents/exam staff
- Barcoding all books in the school
- Cleaning the library
- Building maintenance and repair
- Cleaning windows
- Cleaning cars
- Cleaning and mopping the floor
- Book covering
- General cleaning
- Administration/clerical work (any work that would take work away from, or would normally be completed by a school secretary, including general school filing and shredding)
- Breakfast clubs
- Cleaning out lockers
- Photocopying for the whole school population
- Summer camps
- Ironing
- Music camps
- Sports camps
- Book rental scheme (including handling money for the scheme)
- Work in school library (all aspects, including organising and scanning books, entering books onto database, etc)
- Sorting and covering books and journals for the whole school
- Stamping books for the whole school
- Secretarial work that should be undertaken by a SEN coordinator
- Work covered by teachers posts of responsibility

