

Advice on SNAs obligation to work the 72 hours

As SNAs will know, there is a bank of hours that, should there be work available, SNAs can be called on to work from time to time. As this work is the subject of a national industrial relations agreement, it is important that it is adhered to in every school.

Recently, Fórsa has lodged a claim to abolish the obligation for SNAs to be available to work an additional 72 hours each year. In the interim it is envisaged that work will commence with the DES regarding the ongoing misinterpretation and misuses of the Circular.

It is important to note that '72 hours' or '12 days' are not targets. Unlike the 'Croke Park' situation with teachers, there is no liability to complete all or any of the hours unless there happens to be work to be done. In many schools, there will be no need to work any additional time during the year. Simply put, if there is no work to be done, there is no obligation to work the time. SNAs can **only** be asked to undertake work that is SNA-appropriate during this time.

The SNA contract has, from the outset, included an obligation to be available for 12 additional days during the school year. This reflects the pay link between the SNA grade and the clerical officer grade which has a longer working week, (currently 37 hours per week). When the first Public Service Stability Agreement was concluded in 2010 (the Croke Park Agreement), the 12 additional days were subsequently changed to a bank of 72 flexible hours which could be used both within the normal school opening hours as well as outside of normal hours. In addition, the hours should not be scheduled weekly as this has the impact of lengthening the working week – something that is specifically precluded under the circular.

When is it counted as 'hours' and when is it counted as 'days'? This is particularly important to note. If a school asks you to carry out such work on a day that you are already in work, it should be counted as hours. If a school asks you to carry out such work on a day that you would not normally be scheduled in, for example, the week before or after term, then it is counted as a day – *no matter how short a time you are in for*.

The Labour Relations Commission Agreement (referred to in Circular 71/2011) sets out the range of duties that could be performed within the 72 Hours (see below). Generally, work assigned to an SNA must relate to the SNA role of supporting the SEN needs of children.

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.

We continue to press the Department to abolish the obligation for SNAs to be available for the 72 Hours.

Instruction:

If a school expects an SNA to carry out inappropriate work, we can issue the SNA with a union instruction not to cooperate with any inappropriate duties. The list of inappropriate work is regularly updated on the Fórsa website.