

Advice on SNAs and Supervision/Teaching

The Principal Teacher has a duty of care for all students while they are on school property. This includes time before and after school (i.e. from drop-off to collection). Department of Education Circular 16/1973 allows a Principal Teacher to delegate their supervision responsibility, in this sense, to others. However, supervision cannot be delegated to SNAs. This is made clear in Circular 30/2014, in which it is made clear that supervision is a teacher role and not an SNA role. It states, however, that SNAs can 'assist' with supervision at arrival/dispersal times. The only dispensation that can be given to allow an SNA to take on supervision duties is in cases where "the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision."

There may also be cases where an SNA needs to assist a child with getting from one location in the school to another. This is acceptable.

There are absolutely no circumstances whatsoever where an SNA or SNAs should be left in sole supervision of a classroom.

On the face of it, the SNA role is a role designed to meet the care needs of SEN students. Therefore, if a SEN student needs specific assistance with arrival and dispersal, it is right that such a care need should be met by the SNA. But meeting a care need is not the same as supervising. In summary, SNAs cannot be given supervision duties. However, they can be asked to assist a supervising teacher. If no teacher is present, the role cannot be filled by an SNA save in cases where the school has made a robust case to the Department.

