



## Circular 0022/2026

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Post-Primary, Community and Comprehensive and Special Schools and Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards.**

### **Special Needs Assistants (SNA) Redeployment Scheme**

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#### **1. Purpose of this Circular**

- 1.1 The SNA Redeployment Scheme will operate nationally across all school settings. Within the terms of this circular, eligible SNAs may be redeployed to a post in any recognised school which includes primary, post-primary, special classes and special schools.
- 1.2 This circular and its provisions are subject to review and amendment.



1.3 This circular should be read in conjunction with:

- the SNA Redeployment Scheme Guidance Document,
- the NCSE SNA Review Guidelines
- the annual Department of Education and Youth SNA Allocations circular
- Circular 0044/2026 Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements
- [Circular 0058/2026](#) Redundancy Arrangements for Special Needs Assistants in Primary and Second Level Schools

and other relevant documents, including those set out in Appendix A to this circular.

All employers and SNAs are required to comply with the SNA Redeployment scheme and must adhere to provisions in this circular.



## 2. Glossary of terms and definitions

For the purposes of this circular the following terms shall have the meanings assigned to them herein unless the context indicates otherwise:

- 2.1 **Board of management** refers to the board of management of a school and has the meaning assigned to it in the Education Act 1998 and includes an Education and Training Board (ETB) in the case of a school under the patronage of the ETB.
- 2.2 **Care needs** refer to core care needs and has the meaning assigned to core care needs as per Department of Education and Youth Circular 0032/2026 on the Role of the SNA.
- 2.3 **Department** – Department of Education and Youth.
- 2.4 **Eligible SNA** means an SNA employed in a standard full-time or part-time post in a primary, post-primary, or a special school whose post is deemed surplus following an NCSE review of the school's allocation.
- 2.5 **Employer** Under Section 24 of the Education Act, 1998 (as amended by the Education (Amendment) Act, 2012) the board of management is the employer of teachers and other staff of the school. In the case of schools established or maintained by an ETB the relevant ETB is the employer and not the board of management.
- 2.6 **ETBI** – Education and Training Boards Ireland
- 2.7 **Infant Day Post** refers to a 0.83 contract for an SNA, designed to match the shorter school hours of junior and senior infant classes.
- 2.8 **NCSE** is the National Council for Special Education.
- 2.9 **Redeployment active period** refers to the timeframe each year during which schools and eligible SNAs are required to engage in the redeployment process, in accordance with this circular.



- 2.10 **Redeployment panel** refers to the list of eligible SNAs available for redeployment during the redeployment active period.
- 2.11 **Redeployment Scheme** refers to the scheme set out in this circular for redeployment of eligible SNAs to vacant posts, unless otherwise stated.
- 2.12 **School** means a recognised school and has the meaning assigned to 'recognised school' in the Education Act - a primary or post-primary school recognised by the Minister in accordance with section 10 of the Education Act 1998.
- 2.13 **SNA** – Special Needs Assistant.
- 2.14 **SNA Redeployment Portal:** an online secure dashboard developed by the NCSE for the specific purpose of recording required details on the SNA Panel List and vacant post processes associated with the scheme. The dashboard facilitates the administrative, monitoring and reporting tasks associated with the operation of the scheme.
- 2.15 **Special educational needs** has the meaning assigned to it in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004: Special educational needs means, in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.
- 2.16 **Standard SNA post** – means an SNA post which is part of the annual NCSE quantum of SNA support to a school.
- 2.17 **Student** means a child or young person enrolled at a recognized school.
- 2.18 **Vacant post** – refers to a vacancy which occurs in any standard SNA post, of 0.5 and above, including 0.75, 0.83 and full-time senior day posts as a result of:



- an SNA leaving employment such as in the case of retirement or resignation, or an increase in a school's SNA allocation

and:

- after offering additional hours to existing SNAs in part time standard posts in the school in accordance with department Circular 0044/2026 on Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements and any future iteration of this circular.

Vacant post in the case of an ETB school refers to a vacant post, as defined above, remaining after the ETB internal transfer process has been completed.

### **3. SNA Allocations to Schools**

- 3.1 SNA support is one of the central elements to the successful inclusion of students with special educational needs in education, including in mainstream classes, special classes in mainstream schools and special schools.
- 3.2 SNAs are allocated to schools as a school-based resource and not to individual students.
- 3.3 The NCSE manages the allocation of the SNAs to schools, and it is the responsibility of the NCSE to ensure that these resources are allocated to support the students with the greatest level of need.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that their SNA allocation is deployed to meet the identified and recorded care needs of the students in the student support file. The key premise in the deployment must adhere to the principle that the student with the greatest level of care need receives the greatest level of SNA support.



- 3.5 The NCSE will confirm allocations for the upcoming school year for recognised schools. To ensure the greatest level of transparency and fairness possible, the NCSE publish details of all SNA allocations which are made to school each year on their website. These details are also available at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).
- 3.6 All SNA allocations are subject to review by the NCSE.

#### **4. The role of the NCSE in the SNA Redeployment Scheme**

- 4.1 The NCSE is the statutory body responsible for the provision of special education and allocating supports for students with special educational needs. The SNA Redeployment Scheme will be operated by the NCSE with the support of the department.
- 4.2 The NCSE will manage the Redeployment Portal for the specific purpose of recording required details on the SNA Panel List and vacant post processes associated with the scheme and facilitate the administrative, monitoring and reporting tasks associated with the operation of the scheme.
- 4.3 The NCSE will liaise with schools and eligible SNAs to ensure prompt engagement with the SNA Redeployment Scheme during the redeployment active period. The Department and the NCSE will monitor compliance with these arrangements.

#### **5. NCSE SNA Allocation Review Process**

- 5.1 The SNA allocation review process involves a comprehensive examination of core care needs in all settings within the continuum of provision in a school.
- 5.2 Where an SNA allocation review is conducted, the NCSE will establish and maintain a record of the outcome to:



- Identify SNA(s) available for redeployment arising from a reduction in allocation to the school.
- Identify schools with an approved increase in SNA allocation for the following school year. This will generate a list of vacant posts which may be filled through the redeployment of SNAs (following the offer of increased hours to any existing SNAs in part time standard posts in the school).

5.3 The relevant vacant posts for the purposes of the SNA Redeployment Scheme are:

- All additional allocations to a school of whole or part-time standard SNA posts.
- Posts arising due to the departure of an existing SNA from a standard post, e.g. arising from retirement or resignation.

## **6. Scope of the SNA Redeployment Scheme**

- 6.1 The purpose of the SNA Redeployment Scheme is to facilitate the redeployment of an eligible SNA to a school that has a vacant post.
- 6.2 The SNA Redeployment Scheme is designed to ensure that experienced SNAs are retained in the education sector, maintaining capacity in the SNA workforce and enhancing the service to students with special educational needs.
- 6.3 However, it does not guarantee that equivalent posts, that is, posts in the same sector or with the same work pattern will be secured through the operation of the scheme.
- 6.4 Additionally, it does not guarantee that all eligible SNAs will secure a post through the SNA Redeployment Scheme, or that all vacant posts will be filled via the SNA Redeployment Scheme.



## 7. Vacant Posts

- 7.1 In the first instance, if a school has a vacant SNA post, then the additional standard hours/posts must be offered to existing part-time SNAs in standard posts in that school, in order of seniority, before the employer has recourse to these arrangements.
- 7.2 Subsequently, the vacant SNA posts shall be filled wherever possible through redeployment in accordance with the terms of this circular, before proceeding to other methods of recruitment. The employer shall not proceed to open recruitment without the express written authority of the NCSE.
- 7.3 On receipt of notification from an SNA of their intention to leave an existing standard post such as through retirement or resignation, as per requirements as set out in their employment contract, schools will register vacant posts on the SNA Redeployment Portal within five working days, so that the school can be included in the national list of schools with potential vacancies for the following school year.
- 7.4 Where an SNA review results in an increase in the annual SNA allocation to the school concerned, the additional standard posts shall be filled on a fixed term basis and will be considered a vacant post which will be subject to the SNA Redeployment Scheme, when it commences. Such posts are not to be confused with fixed term contracts based on substitution arrangements which will not be considered for the purposes of redeployment.
- 7.5 In circumstances whereby either:
- an increase in the annual allocation is confirmed by the NCSE to commence during the school year, and/or;



- schools have a vacant post arising during the school year due to the resignation or retirement of a standard SNA,

The school shall recruit by way of a fixed term contract to fill the post for a specified purpose for the duration of the remainder of the school year.

- 7.6 It shall be a condition of the subsequent filling of such a vacant post that it is notified to the NCSE and Non-Teaching Staff Payroll division of the department, as soon as it arises.

## **8. Operation of the Redeployment Scheme**

### **8.1 Identification of an eligible SNA(s) for the SNA Redeployment Scheme**

- 8.1.1 The employer will identify the SNA(s) to be placed on the redeployment panel based on seniority in accordance with Circular 0051/2019.
- 8.1.2 SNAs employed by the school in a standard post on a full-time or part-time basis, are eligible for redeployment.
- 8.1.3 SNAs employed by the school on a fixed term contractual basis are not eligible for redeployment.
- 8.1.4 When the school has identified the eligible SNA for the redeployment panel, the school enters the SNA's details on the SNA Redeployment Portal.
- 8.1.5 Where school closure will result in the loss of SNA post(s) the school concerned should contact the NCSE directly in order to establish eligibility for redeployment in respect of SNA(s) impacted.
- 8.1.6 An SNA identified by a school as eligible for redeployment may opt out of the SNA Redeployment Scheme and seek to revert to the provisions within the supplementary assignment arrangements



or opt to be made redundant in line with prevailing redundancy arrangements. Details on these alternative options can be found by accessing relevant circulars from the list provided at Appendix A below.

## 8.2 Distance Criteria

8.2.1 Redeployment will be within 45km of an eligible SNA's current place of work (school) or home address per department payroll, whichever is the shorter commute.

## 8.3 Access to the SNA Redeployment Panel

8.3.1 Access to the SNA Redeployment Panel will be provided by the NCSE to schools registering vacant SNA post(s) annually.

8.3.2 The NCSE will notify schools of the details of the opening and closing dates for the redeployment active period for eligible SNAs in advance annually.

8.3.3 The SNA Redeployment Panel applies to appointments to full-time and part-time standard posts only.

## 8.4 The Redeployment Active Period

8.4.1 The school will enter onto the SNA Redeployment Portal the details of SNAs who are eligible for redeployment and who have agreed to be placed on the panel.

8.4.2 When the SNA Redeployment active period commences, schools that register vacant post(s) will gain access to a panel of eligible SNAs.

8.4.3 During the active period, and subject to the 45km radius, schools with a vacant post are required to make an offer to one of the SNAs on the redeployment panel.



## 8.5 SNA Acceptance of Offer

- 8.5.1 SNAs are required to consider the offer received within 45km of their current school (or home), noting this may not be the same work pattern to the post previously held in their last employment. If no offer is made, the SNA shall proceed to opt for supplementary assignment arrangements or redundancy, where applicable.
- 8.5.2 When an offer has been accepted by an SNA via the SNA Redeployment Portal, the appointment of the SNA post will be binding on all parties, and the SNA will become a member of the staff of the receiving school and an employee of the board of management/ETB and will be governed by the terms and conditions applicable to SNAs.
- 8.5.3 A contract of employment shall be prepared in duplicate and signed by both parties (i.e. the employer and the SNA) within the first five days of appointment in compliance with the terms of department Circulars 0039/2026 and 0040/2026, as appropriate and associated policy and legislative provisions.
- 8.5.4 An SNA will carry over their reckonable service for payroll and pensionable purposes. In addition, an SNA who is redeployed will carry forward any reckonable service that they have already accrued as an SNA with their previous employer, for redundancy purposes, if a future redundancy situation arises.
- 8.5.5 However, any existing service as an SNA will not be reckonable for future seniority purposes as an SNA with the new employer i.e. that SNA becomes the least senior SNA for seniority purposes in their new employment.



## 8.6 SNA Refusal of Offer

8.6.1 If an SNA declines the first offer, the SNA is considered to have withdrawn from the SNA redeployment panel and shall proceed to opt for supplementary assignment arrangements or redundancy, where applicable.

## 8.7 After the Active Period

8.7.1 The NCSE will monitor the outcomes of the SNA Redeployment Scheme and, at the end of the redeployment active period, will ascertain the number of SNAs yet to be redeployed and schools with remaining vacant posts. The NCSE will assist schools where SNAs to be considered for redeployment may be candidates that could fill any remaining vacant posts.

8.7.2 Likewise, if an eligible SNA registered on the SNA Redeployment portal has not obtained a post at the end of the redeployment active period, the NCSE will endeavour to assist the SNA and schools with remaining vacant posts and advice on the next steps.

8.7.3 At the end of the process based on case-by-case analysis the NCSE will notify schools when they can progress to open recruitment.

8.7.4 Vacant posts can be filled via open recruitment once there are no available SNAs on the redeployment panel, or when approved by the NCSE.

## 9. Arrangements for SNAs in ETB schools

9.1 The ETBI runs a separate internal transfer panel for ETB schools which will continue to operate.

9.2 Where the ETB has transferred all SNAs for the year and has remaining vacancies, the ETB will inform the school of the requirement to register on



the SNA Redeployment Portal in order to gain access to SNAs subject to redeployment.

## **10. Communications**

- 10.1 A comprehensive SNA Redeployment Scheme Guidance document which provides information on the redeployment process and relevant timelines is available on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie), on [the SNA Information Hub](#) and on the [ncse/sna\\_redeployment](#).
- 10.2 SNAs should initially bring any queries to the attention of their employer who may wish to consult with their relevant management body. Please refer to the guidance document in the first instance. Any other queries should be sent to [snaredeployment@ncse.ie](mailto:snaredeployment@ncse.ie) .
- 10.3 Please ensure that this circular is brought to the attention of all members of the board of management and to the attention of all SNAs in your employment, including those on leave of absence. This circular can be accessed on the department's website under Department of Education and Youth - [www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education](http://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education) .

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## Appendix A

### Redundancy:

[Redundancy Arrangements for Special Need Assistants in Primary and Second Level Schools](#)

### Seniority of SNAs:

[Circular\\_0051\\_2019](#)

### Supplementary Assignment Arrangements:

[Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants \(SNAs\) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements"](#)

### Information and Reference:

- SNA Information Hub:  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/special-needs-assistant-sna-information-hub/>
- NCSE: [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)
- INSERT NCSE REDEPLOYMENT EMAIL ADDRESS