



Frequently Asked Questions on the replacement of the 72 Hours and new guidance on June Working

*This document will be updated on a rolling basis.
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June Working

1. Are SNAs required to be in attendance during June?

The SNA contract for Post Primary Schools mentions that SNAs may be required to attend work in June for examinations and relevant training. The new Circular states that SNAs can undertake training offsite in the month of June, there is no requirement for SNAs to be present in the school other than to directly support a student who is sitting an examination or assessment.

2. Am I expected to attend work in June on a daily basis and time bound fashion?

The new Circular states that you should not be scheduled to work in a time bound fashion, for example, it would not be appropriate for an SNA to be scheduled to attend work from 9am to 3.30pm on daily basis. The requirement to work in June is task dependent and be contingent on whether there is appropriate work available in the same way as it is for teachers.

3. When I am finished my work, can I go home?

Yes, you should be allowed to go home once all your work is completed, there is no requirement for SNAs to stay on site, for example, sitting in staffrooms waiting for work to be produced in a time bound fashion.

4. Should I be provided with a list of work prior to June?

Yes, you should engage with your Principal/SENCO at the earliest opportunity and request a list of potential work, that is if there is any.

5. What should I do if the work that I am being asked to perform during June is not appropriate?

Advise school management that the work is not appropriate and should be removed. Additionally, if you're not sure if the work is appropriate, you should contact your local Fórsa representative or official for advice & assistance to determine if the work is appropriate or not.

6. Is it compulsory for an SNA to perform roles such as supervisor, reader and scribe during examinations?

No, there is no contractual obligation for SNAs to perform these roles. These are paid roles and performed on the basis that there is consensus/agreement between the SNA and school management to do so. The new Circular makes this clear.

7. What is my role in supporting Students with SEN during examination time?

SNAs will be required to attend during examination time in order to provide care support to students who have an identified care need and whom would have had SNA support and assistance during the school year.

8. In June, should I be asked to perform the duties of other grades, for example, School Secretary, Teacher, Caretakers, etc?

No, the new Circular states that your work is aligned to students with care needs. You should not be asked to perform task that would ordinarily be performed by other grades, such duties include, cleaning, moving furniture, cleaning out lockers, administrative work that is linked with the whole school population or work that should be performed by a teacher or SEN Co-Ordinator.

9. Do I have to attend work in June for homework clubs, sports clubs, summer camps, etc.?

No, there is no obligation nor should you be asked to attend such events. Generally, if SNAs are working these events, they are separate and distinct from their SNA duties. Generally, staff working these roles receive a separate payment for performing these duties.

10. During June, do I have to attend for work for the school based Summer Programme?

There is no requirement for SNAs to take part in the School Based Summer Programme. SNAs can take part in the programme if there is a consensus/agreement between the SNA and School Management to do so. There is additional pay that an SNA would receive for taking up this role.

11. What is my role in setting up exam centres

You will be expected to ensure all equipment or material required for students with additional needs is in situ prior to the exam. It is important to note that SNAs should not perform the roles of other grades, for example, SNAs should not perform the role of the Caretaker in moving furniture or heavy equipment when setting you an examination centre.

Replacing the 72 Hours

12. Are the 72 hours staying the same?

No, this new Circular replaces Circular 71/2011. The 72 hours will be abolished and replaced with learning and development/continual professional development and school community time.

13. The new hours talk about hours outside the normal hours; do I have to work with the children outside the classroom ours?

No. This is still non-contact time.

14. How much time for training will be required in this new system?

SNA's must undertake learning and development for a minimum of 10 hours per annum. This can be self-directed training such as watching an appropriate relevant video on the SNA Hub or other appropriate learning.

Where the school, Department of Education or the NCSE organise and fund other formal training opportunities SNA's could be asked to undertake a maximum of 36 hours training per annum. It is not the responsibility of the SNA to pay for any training. If you decide to do the level 6 SNA course a credit of 20 hours will be given to you for this. SNA's will also be expected to assist with other activities under school community time as outlined below.

15. What sort of training is involved

There are three types of training described in the Circular:

- i. Mandatory training such as induction, manual handling, child protection etc.
- ii. Training specific to the needs of current students.
- iii. Training that be helpful in improving the skillset within the school (to meet the needs of future students).

SNA's can also request to undertake specific training of interest to them. The national SNA training programme is also available.

16. Who will organise the training?

There will be training inside the minimum time of 10 hours that will be organised and paid for by management, there may be more training organised during the year outside the minimum that management organise and pay for, this is also their responsibility to pay for.

SNA's can go out and find training that they think will be of benefit them in their job however this must be approved beforehand to qualify.

There is an expectation that SNA's will undertake a minimum of 10 hours training and if the school does not organise anything this would be self-directed learning.

17. Previously I did training that I had to pay for out of my own pocket even though management instructed me to do this training, does this continue?

Any training that management instruct you to undertake must be paid for by them if they want you to do it during training time. You are not expected to pay for training organised by your employer.

18. Is it required to use all of this time for training?

No, there is no requirement to use all the time, however management should organise training for a minimum of 10 hours, if the school does not organise anything, this can be self-directed learning selected by the SNA.

If training up to the value of 36 hours is organised then it has to be SNA relevant and not designed for other roles e.g., teacher specific training like Droichead,

Remember this time cannot be transferred from training to school community time.

Examples of potential training patterns below –

- I. The school organises 3 one day courses during the year for all SNAs which last 6 hours each, the school does not organise anything else, there is no obligation for SNAs to undertake further training beyond 18 hours.
- II. The school does not organise any training for SNAs as they have no funding to do so. Therefore, the SNAs should carry out 10 hours of self-directed learning throughout the year.
- III. The NCSE organises a one-day course for SNAs, the school has funding and also organises 5 courses lasting a day each, therefore a total of 36 hours could be spent training during the school year.

19. What is a community of practice and how does it work?

A community of practice is a group of SNAs coming together to discuss strategies for dealing with issues common to them across multiple schools. It should be organised and funded by school management.

20. What is school community time?

School community time is time dedicated to ensuring SNAs are included in the significant planning and policy work of the school. This is broken down into two categories:

- I. student support planning and review.
- II. school policy and planning.

21. Is there an obligation to complete all of the hours?

No. There is a minimum of 10 hours for participation in student support planning and evaluation and a maximum of 10 hours for attending relevant staff meetings and policy development work.

22. How much time is available for this school community time?

School community time, in exceptional circumstances could be up to a maximum of 36 hours. This is broken down into 2 sections with a minimum of 10 hours dedicated to student support planning and review and a maximum of 10 hours dedicated to policy planning and whole school collaboration.

Examples of potential school community time patterns below:

- i. SNAs are asked to attend a staff meeting 3 times during the school year and to attend a session on local policies and procedures amounting to 5 hours. If no further staff meetings or new policy developments take place the SNA works for 5 additional hours only. However, this could rise to 10 hours if school management require more staff meetings.
- ii. SNAs meet with the SENCO to discuss the needs of students with additional needs prior to the start of the school year, they draw up student support plans (SSP) and the SNAs give their specific input to that discussion, the SSP is then evaluated during the year and reviewed at the end of the school year. The Circular states this will be a minimum of 10 hours per year.
- iii. Where students have complex needs the new arrangements allow for more time to be spent on the SSP process and examples would include time spent in multi-disciplinary meetings. This time cannot exceed 26 hours in total.

23. What is student support planning and review?

Each student with SEN support requires a personal plan. This time it's dedicated to work on these plans and their review and potentially engagement on the progress of the children with parents with teachers. This is about substantial SNA engagement and involvement with the SEN team around each student.

24. What is policy planning / whole school collaboration?

This is where SNAs engage in work on issues that affect the whole school community i.e. school policies and engagement with staff meetings.

25. Can this time be transferred to training?

No, time cannot be moved from school community time to training or vice versa training time cannot be part of the school community time.

26. Can this time be scheduled?

While this time is used on the basis of arising need, there might be some instances they are set out in a school calendar e.g., planned staff meetings, parents' evenings etc. but this would not be all of the time available or the norm.

Where the time is to be used the employer should give reasonable notice about usage in addition to the above examples of planned usage.

27. How is the time recorded, by the minute or in blocks?

This time is used for specific tasks and tasks are recorded in blocks, with a minimum recorded amount of time of 1 hour regardless of the length of time the task takes, and the maximum recorded time is 2 hours 30 minutes. For example, a task that takes 45 minutes is recorded as 1 hour and a task that takes 1 hour and 5 minutes is recorded as 2 hours and 30 minutes.

28. Does all this time apply if I work less than full time hours?

No, if you work less than full-time hours the overall availability that exists would be in proportion to your working hours; for example, if you work half-time then you have an availability of half of the hours, if you work on a junior day you have an availability of 83% of the time which is a maximum of 30 hours each for training and school community time.

29. Who keeps a record of this time?

The SNA keeps a record of the time on the Department provided template sheet that can be found at the end of Circular 32/2026. This is then handed into the school management at the end of each term to be kept on file if the Department ever wants to inspect it.

30. The school principal does not seem to have gotten the message on the changes and is instructing me to do the work of a cleaner / caretaker / school secretary / teacher, what can I do?

The new Circular makes it very clear that this is not your work, you are fully entitled to refuse, if they persist you can contact your local Fórsa committee or official who will advise and if necessary, intervene.

The Schools Inspectors will, for the first time, be examining the deployment of SNAs as part of their school's inspection framework, therefore if SNAs are not being deployed as the Department intends the Inspectorate can intervene.

31. When does all this come into effect?

Once agreed this will come into effect from September for the 2026/2027 school year.

32. What if there are practical changes that need to be made to this agreement because of unforeseen problems?

There will be a review involving Fórsa after 2 years, in the 2028/29 school year.