



May 2023

2023 Home-Based Summer Programme to Support the Education or Care Needs of Students with Complex Needs

Dear Principal

The purpose of this letter is to set out the arrangements for the home-based summer programme for students with complex special educational needs.

It is accepted that school-based programmes provide a more holistic experience for the students and help retain the important connection with school and peers.

The Department is conscious that many principals and boards of management are currently liaising with teachers, SNAs and parents in considering if they can run a school based programme this year.

However, the Department recognises that not all schools will be in a position to provide a school-based programme. For this reason, the Department will continue to provide a home-based summer programme to support the education or care needs of students with complex special educational needs during the summer break period where their school is not providing a school-based programme.

What's new for 2023?

Since the Programme was established, the Department has only ever sanctioned 1:1 tuition or tuition for siblings in the home. For 2023, the Department is allowing a small-group arrangement whereby individual registered teachers can deliver a programme for students in group of up to three. Therefore, if parents wish, they may enter into an arrangement with a registered teacher to tutor their child in a small group, up to a maximum of 3 children.

For groups of 4 or larger, the Department will continue to approve Private Group Provider Arrangements between parents and private providers as it has done in previous years. The terms and conditions of Private Group Provider Arrangements must be followed where students are taken together as a group, around issues such as governance and child protection.

Additionally, allocations to siblings will no longer be a shared allocation; each student will be sanctioned on an individual basis.

Please bring the programme to the attention of parents of eligible students and school staff.

Eligibility Criteria

Students with complex special educational needs for whom there is no school-based programme available are eligible for the 2023 Home-Based Programme. For the purposes of the Home-Based Programme students with complex special educational needs are defined as:



1. Any student enrolled in a special school or a special class - primary and post primary.
2. Students presenting with the most significant needs in mainstream classes in primary or post-primary schools who are accessing the highest level of the Continuum of Support (School Support Plus). This will include a small number of students with enduring needs which significantly affect their capacity to learn, to function independently and to participate in education.

These students require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are significantly different to their peers. These students may present with the following:

- Significant needs with physical and/or sensory functioning (including students who are Deaf or have severe to profound hearing loss and students who are blind or have severe to profound visual impairment).
 - Significant needs in cognitive functioning and independence/daily living skills (including students who have moderate to severe OR significant/profound learning disability).
 - Significant needs in social communication, social interaction combined with rigid repetitive patterns of behaviour.
 - Students with Down syndrome.
 - Students with severe OR significant emotional behavioural needs to the extent that these behaviours of concern are impacting on a student's ability to learn, to function independently and to participate fully in school life.
3. Autistic students are eligible for this Programme.
 4. Children in the above categories entering primary school and Early Intervention ASD classes in September 2023 are also eligible for the programme.

This home-based summer programme provides 10 hours per week for 4 weeks of home based tuition or care support for an individual eligible pupil.

Online Sanctioning Portal

For the 2023 Home-Based Summer Programme, an Online Sanctioning Portal for use by schools. Where parents wish to participate in the scheme, schools are asked to submit the details of applicant students onto this portal. This will allow the Department to confirm eligibility automatically and issue a sanction email to the parent along with a link to the Grant Claim Form for the programme. By using this Sanctioning Portal for the 2023 programme, this will provide clarity to the parents regarding the number of hours their child has been allocated.

The following documents have been attached with this letter:



1. Overview/Terms and Conditions for Parents, Teachers and SNAs

We request that schools provide a copy of this document to parents of eligible student(s). We would also ask that you draw it to the attention of teachers and SNAs in your school.

2. Application form for Sanctioning

This document should also be provided to the parent of eligible student(s), along with the Overview document. Schools do not need to enter all eligible students. Schools should only input data onto the Sanctioning Portal, where the parent has completed the application form for Sanctioning with their child's details and their own contact details and returned it to the school. This form is provided solely to facilitate the inputting of details and does not need to be returned to the Department.

3. Sanctioning Portal Instructions for Schools

This document gives instructions on the application process and how the Portal should be completed when the parent provides the information required on the Application Form for Sanctioning.

The link for the Online Sanctioning Portal is now live and will remain open until **Friday 09 June 2023**.

Assisting Parents in sourcing a teacher/SNA

The school should make every effort to support parents in securing the services of a Teacher or an SNA known to the school.

Potential Staff to provide in-home support	
Teachers	SNAs
The child's classroom teacher	An SNA that works in the child's class
The school SET	An SNA that has worked with the child
Any other teacher in the school	Any other SNA in the school
Teachers on the schools substitute list	Any other SNA on the schools substitute list
Recently retired teachers	Recently retired SNAs

Where the number of available school staff is not sufficient to cover the number of applications for support under the programme, it is requested that schools provide information on other teachers and SNAs who are known to them who might be in a position to assist the family.

To help parents source a teacher/SNA for the summer programme in their local area, the IPPN has created a Summer Programme Noticeboard for teachers and SNAs to advertise their availability for the programme. Parents can also post notices on the board to source suitable candidates. The Summer Programme Noticeboard is available on www.educationposts.ie.



Your co-operation and support for the 2023 summer programmes would be appreciated and if you or parents have any queries please email homebasedsummerprogram@education.gov.ie or phone the helpline on 090648 4292.

Yours faithfully

Frank Hanlon
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Special Education