

Párolla Cúntóir Riachtanis Speisialta,
An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta,
Cor na Madadh,
Baile Átha Luain,
Co. na hIarmhí.



Special Needs Assistants Payroll,
Department of Education and Science,
Cornamaddy,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath.



Circular SNA 03/03

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE PAYROLL DIVISION

TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT, PRINCIPALS AND SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Appointment Procedures for Special Needs Assistants

Introduction:

Boards of Management in accordance with the guidelines hereunder are responsible for the appointment of Special Needs Assistants in primary schools. The appointment is subject to the prior approval of the Patron. The post to be filled must be within the allocation of posts approved by the Minister for Education and Science.

1. Advertising a Post of Special Needs Assistant:

A post of Special Needs Assistant must be advertised in a local newspaper. The advertisement shall invite applications from eligible persons to be submitted by a specified date to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Subject to any exceptions permitted by the Employment Equality Act 1998, the advertisement must not indicate an intention to discriminate or contain information in any form which might reasonably be understood as indicating an intention of this kind.

2. Details that should be included in the advertisement:

- i. The name and address of the school.
- ii. The date of commencement of the post.
- iii. That the post is for a fixed purpose.
- iv. State if the post is full time or part time and the number of part time hours.
- v. General description of duties, which, may be allocated to the post.
- vi. The latest date for receipt of application.
- vii. Specify if a curriculum vitae must be submitted with the application.
- viii. That references or the names and addresses of referees are required.

3. Selection Board for Appointment of Special Needs Assistants:

The Selection Board should consist of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, the Principal of the school and another person nominated by the Board of Management. The Selection Board must include at least one male and one female.

4. Functions of the Selection Board:

The Selection Board prior to interviewing the candidates should establish in writing the criteria for assessment of applications, having regard to appropriate legislation and the requirements of the post. The Selection Board should meet within a reasonable period after the closing date for receipt of applications.

5. Applicants for Interviews:

The Selection Board may decide to limit the number of applicants called for interview. However, a minimum of three eligible applicants must be called. If less than three applicants have applied for the post, all of the eligible applicants must be invited to interview.

6. Conducting the Interviews:

- i. The Selection Board must keep to the agreed criteria for the assessment of applicants.
- ii. The Chairperson must keep a record of the agreed criteria and of the scoring used to assess applications and interviews.
- iii. When interviewing applicants, the Selection Board must adhere to the provisions of the Employment Equality Act (1998) and the Code of Practice of the Equality Authority.
- iv. Particular caution must be taken at the interview to ensure that no questions, comments or statements might be construed as discriminatory on grounds of gender or marital status or any of the nine discriminatory grounds.

7. Appointing the successful Candidate:

The Board of Management shall meet and appoint the candidate nominated by the Selection Board unless it has good and sufficient reason not to do so, in which instance the matter shall be referred to the Patron, whose decision in this matter shall be accepted by the Board. The Board of Management should retain a list of the candidates deemed suitable for appointment. This list would be effective for one school year for any appointments to posts of Special Needs Assistants.

8. Medical Certification:

The Board should obtain from the successful candidate prior to appointment a certificate of medical fitness that s/he is fit to undertake the duties of the post. A sample form is attached as Appendix B. The Board of Management should nominate the medical practitioner.

9. References and Garda Clearance:

Before notifying the successful candidate the Board of Management should check his/her references and ensure that the candidate has not been investigated in relation to substantiated complaints made concerning his/her treatment of children.

Efforts should be made with the local Gardaí to provide clearance for employees employed as Special Needs Assistants. It is important to bear in mind that the clearance process may take some time. Applicants should only be employed on a provisional basis pending the outcome of the clearing process. A Special Needs Assistants appointed on a provisional basis pending Garda clearance should be made aware that in the event that they do have convictions making them

unsuitable to work with children this will be a substantial ground for dismissal without notice. A sample form for completion by the candidate is attached as Appendix A.

This circular should be retained for future reference in the school. It may also be accessed on the Department of Education & Science website at **www.education.ie** under Education Personnel / Special Needs Assistants. Please note that queries regarding the Circular may be E-Mailed to **sna_pay@education.gov.ie**

P. Maloney,
Principal Officer.

August, 2003

Declaration to be completed by a Special Needs Assistant

Surname: _____

Forename: _____

PPS No.: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Any other name previously known as: _____

I, the undersigned, who has applied to work as a special need assistant in:

_____ School, hereby authorise the Garda Síochána, to furnish to the Chairperson a statement that there are no convictions recorded against me in the State or elsewhere which deems me unsuitable for a post that involves working with children.

Please return to the Chairperson of the Board of Management by _____ on or before 5.00 p.m.

I confirm that nothing within my personal or professional background deems me unsuitable for a post that involves working with children.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Certificate of fitness to commence employment as a Special Needs Assistant

To be completed by a Medical Practitioner nominated by the Board of Management.

Surname: _____

Forename: _____

I certify that I have examined the above named and found that s/he is fit to undertake duties as a Special Needs Assistant.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Stamp or Seal