



To: Members of the School Communications Group

Re: SNA availability to schools pending assignment to the HSE under the temporary assignment scheme

13 May 2020

Dear All,

As you are aware, the Minister for Education and Skills announced on April 1st a contingency plan for all Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to be available for a new temporary assignment scheme as part of the Government's response to Covid-19.

The HSE has finalised the details of the new service which SNAs will provide during the school closure period and it is expected that the HSE will very shortly begin matching SNAs to families and children identified in their services.

The Department of Education and Skills '*Guidance on Continuity of Schooling: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs*' document provides a framework for SEN Teachers and SNAs to maintain contact with SEN students and to provide appropriate learning support.

It is acknowledged and welcomed that many SNAs have been engaged in such work through their schools since the closure period began. The Department is conscious that as we approach the end of the school year, there is a need to continue and strengthen that service to SEN students. Accordingly, it is confirmed that, in the interim period pending the assignment of an individual SNA to the HSE, that SNA is available to support their allocated students through their school. Contemporaneous public health advice provided by the National Public Health Emergency Team and the terms of Circular 0024/2020, which sets out the special arrangements to cater for COVID-19 for SNAs, must be complied with in this regard.

I would be grateful if you would disseminate this letter to all schools/ ETBs that you represent.

I trust that this clarifies the position. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries in relation to the above.

Yours sincerely,

Tara Carton
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External Staff Relations