



## **Circular No. 0037/2011**

### **Circular to the Management Authorities of Primary Schools, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees on Revised Arrangements for the Provision of Resource Teaching Supports for the 2011/12 school year.**

#### **1. Resource Teaching Support**

The overall allocation of Resource Teacher Support for 2011/2012 has been increased from the 2010/2011 allocation. However an Employment Control Framework (ECF) has been agreed for the Department of Education and Skills for the period 2011 to 2014 as part of a control of public sector numbers and the public sector pay bill. Successful achievement of these numbers controls forms a vital component of compliance with the EU/IMF Agreement of Financial Support for Ireland. Failure to comply with this agreement will put in jeopardy the package of international financial support being made available.

Accordingly the Department of Education and Skills has now put in place new arrangements to manage the allocation process to allocate the resources in a more staged way to take account of demand and to ensure that the terms of the Employment Control Framework are not breached.

The purpose of this Circular is to inform schools of the arrangements which are being put in place for the 2011/12 school year for the allocation of Resource Teaching hours for children with assessed special educational needs.

The main elements of the arrangements being outlined in this Circular are:

(i) For the coming 2011/12 school year, an allocation of 90% of valid identified resource teaching allocations will be made to schools, in the first instance, to provide schools with the majority of their allocation, while also preserving enough capacity to deal with late applications and ensure that the DES can remain within Employment Control Framework obligations.

(ii) Schools are asked to forward as soon as possible any outstanding applications, or additional outstanding materials to support incomplete applications, to the NCSE for consideration, but in any event by no later than 16th September 2011.

(iii) Following consideration of all of the applications received, if the level of demand permits, the initial 90% allocation may be revisited and increased.

## **2. Supporting Circular**

This circular should be read in conjunction with Circular 30/2011: *Arrangements for the 2011/12 School Year in Relation to Learning Support/Resource Teacher (LS/RT) Posts – Full and Part Time Posts*. That Circular provided details to schools of the interim arrangements to apply in relation to the allocation of Resource Teaching posts for the 2011/12 school year.

Primary schools should determine the surplus capacity in full-time posts based on the NCSE approved allocations that are now being notified to schools. The NCSE approved allocation will be in hours and may include parts of an hour. The local sharing arrangements between primary schools should be done in such a manner as to ensure that surplus capacity in full-time posts is fully utilised to the greatest extent possible.

Circular 37/2011 also provides a revision to Circular 08/02: *Applications for full-time or part-time resource teacher support to address the special education needs of children with disabilities* and Circular SP ED 02/05: *Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools*.

### **3. Background**

Resource Teaching hours are allocated to schools by the NCSE, in accordance with DES criteria, for students requiring additional educational support based on assessed levels of special educational need and based on disability categorisation. The additional hours sanctioned for resource teaching leads to the creation of full or part time posts.

Arising from the fact that the rate of applications for Resource Teaching hours/posts being received to date this year had the potential to cause a breach of teacher numbers under the Employment Control Framework (ECF), the allocation process was paused from the end of March of this year.

The introduction of the pause was designed to allow the DES and the NCSE to quantify the level of demand and to devise a revised allocation process to ensure that the ECF was not breached.

NCSE Circular 04/11 advised schools that this pause had been put in place and requested schools to submit all applications for resource teachers by 13th May, 2011.

### **4. Allocation for 2011/12**

Based on the number of applications received in advance of the deadline date and in recognition of the fact that some schools may not have been in a position to finalise their applications by that date, an allocation of 90% of the identified resource teaching allocations can now be made to schools, in the first instance, to provide schools with the majority of their allocation. This will allow the NCSE to consider further applications and to account for any redeployment inefficiencies that may arise, while also preserving

enough capacity to ensure that allocations can remain within Employment Control Framework obligations. **This allocation rate applies to all NCSE determined resource teacher allocations and not just to new allocations.**

This allocation measure will ensure that all schools who will be in receipt of Resource Teaching support will be treated the same.

Circular SP.ED 08/02 provides that the post of Resource Teacher is an additional post allocated to assist a school or cluster of schools in providing an education which meets the needs of children assessed on the basis of individual need as having special educational needs arising from disability. Meeting the needs of such children is a whole school effort and not the responsibility of resource teachers alone because these children are fully integrated into a mainstream school and will spend most of his/.her time with a mainstream teacher.

Circular 34/03 further provides that, although resource teaching allocations have been sanctioned on the basis of individual applications, the overriding principle is that the resources be deployed in the manner that best meets the needs of pupils with special needs in the school. This can be achieved by supporting pupils in the mainstream classroom or teaching in small groups. The purpose of the allocation is not necessarily to provide 1:1 individual teaching support.

The DES has met with Primary and Post Primary school Management bodies to inform them of the position.

The NCSE is being authorised to allocate Resource Teaching support to schools on the basis set out in this Circular.

## **5. Outstanding Applications**

The deadline for receipt of applications for Resource Teaching support for the coming school year was 13th May, 2011.

Notwithstanding this, and in recognition that some schools may be awaiting applications or awaiting medical reports schools, are now asked to forward any outstanding applications, or additional outstanding materials to support incomplete applications, to the NCSE for final consideration for Resource Teaching support for the coming school year as early as possible but in any event by no later than 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

Following the receipt of outstanding allocations, if the level of demand turns out to be less than expected, the initial 90% allocation may be revisited and increased.

If you have any queries with regards to this circular please contact Special Education Unit on - 090-648 4166 / 4187

This circular can be accessed on the Department's website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

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**31<sup>st</sup> May 2011**