

Rannóg Oideachais Speisialta
An Roinn Oideachais & Scileanna
Cor na Madadh
Átha Luain
Co. na hIarmhí



Special Education Section
Department of Education & Skills
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Circular 0006/2013

Boards of Management and Principal Teachers of Schools

Home Tuition Scheme 2013 /2014 – Special Education component

1. Introduction

The purpose of this annual circular is to provide information in relation to the Home Tuition Scheme and to inform tuition providers of **revised requirements for all tutors participating in the scheme who commence providing tuition on or after 1st September 2013.**

With effect from September 2013, all tutors providing tuition in the Home Tuition Scheme must be registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

The Circular contains information on:

- Purpose of the scheme
- General Information
- Criteria for eligibility under the terms of the scheme
- Allocation of hours under the terms of the scheme
- Qualifications of tuition providers and revised requirements from **1/9/2013**
- Payment Procedures

Please note applicants for tuition for the 2013/2014 school year are requested to return their application forms to the Department of Education and Skills by 16th August 2013.

2 Purpose of the scheme

Home Tuition is provided as an interim provision only and should not be regarded as an optional alternative to a place in school.

The preferred approach is that children are educated in school settings where children may have access to individualised education programmes, fully-qualified professional teachers, special needs assistants, the appropriate school curriculum with the option, where possible and appropriate, of full or partial integration and interaction with other pupils.

The purpose of the Home Tuition Scheme is to provide a compensatory educational service for children who, for a number of reasons such as chronic illness, are unable to attend school. The scheme was extended in recent years to facilitate tuition for children awaiting a suitable educational placement and also to provide early educational intervention for pre-school children with autism.

Home tuition under this scheme is intended to provide a compensatory educational service to children in the following 3 categories:

Category (a) Children with a significant medical condition which has or is likely to cause major disruption to their attendance at school on a continuing basis.

Children in this category may be eligible for home tuition in circumstances where:

- (i) they cannot attend school at all.
- (ii) they are absent for a significant proportion of the school year and where the degree of absence is such that without supplementary instruction the pupil is unlikely to be able to perform academically at the level appropriate to his/her level of ability.

Category (b) Children with Special Educational Needs awaiting an educational placement,

Children in this category may avail of Home Tuition, as an interim measure, until a school placement has been identified.

This category includes children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), aged from 3 years upwards who cannot access a place in an ASD setting which can include an early intervention class.

Home tuition funding is only provided to children aged between 3 years and 4 years of age with a diagnosis of ASD where a placement in an early intervention setting is not available.

Home tuition funding is not provided to children with ASD aged 4 years old unless a school placement is not available. A school placement can be a place in a special school which enrolls children with ASD; a place in a special class for children with ASD attached to a mainstream school; a place in an early intervention class for children with ASD or a place in a mainstream class in a mainstream school - with additional resources allocated by the NCSE in line with DES policy.

Once a child has been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, parents/guardians should make immediate contact with their local SENO to establish whether there is/will be a school place in their locality and, if not, to supply the SENO with their child's details to ensure that planning for their child's future education can commence at the earliest opportunity. Your local SENO contact details are available on www.ncse.ie.

Seeking a school placement and the subsequent enrolment of a child in school is the responsibility of parents/guardians. Home Tuition will not be available where a school placement has been identified. Failure to enrol a child in school will not give rise to eligibility under this scheme. Parents experiencing difficulties in this regard should contact the SENO.

If a school refuses to enrol a child, aged over 4, it is open to a parent to appeal the refusal to enrol their child through section 29 of the Education Act. Home Tuition will not be available in the event that the refusal to enrol has not been appealed.

Please note that where a child has not availed of a placement available to them, they will not be eligible for any provision under the Home Tuition scheme at any point during the academic year nor will they be eligible under the terms of the July Programme.

Role of the NCSE:

In the context of the Home Tuition scheme, the role of the NCSE is to confirm that no place is available for a child in a school setting. The SENO can advise parents, should a special class or special school place be required. If a non-mainstream place is not specified in the professional report, the SENO cannot recommend Home Tuition if a mainstream place is available.

When Placements Become Available During the 2013/14 School Year:

Places in special classes and/or in special schools can become available during the school year – sometimes very early in the school year. In the event that a child over 3 years of age is being funded through the home tuition scheme, and a placement becomes available, the SENO will advise all the parents in the general school placement area as well as the DES that such places are now available. If a placement becomes available during the year, parents in receipt of home tuition funding will be requested to provide evidence to the DES of their application to secure the available placement. Home tuition funding will be discontinued for any parent who does not apply for such places. In order for home tuition funding to continue, parents must be able to demonstrate to the DES that such applications have been made within 3 weeks of being notified by the SENO and that the application to the school for enrolment has not been successful.

Category (c) Children aged between 2 ½ year and 3 years of age (who have been assessed as having Autistic Spectrum Disorder based on the DSM IV or ICD 10 criteria).

Home Tuition funding is provided for children with an ASD aged between 2½ years of age and 3 years of age as they cannot enrol in a school.

3 General Information

Parents will be required to complete an application form and are requested to pay particular attention to the documentation/information that is required. All relevant parts of this form must be completed in full. Failure to complete the form in full may result in delays. It should be noted that sanction is only available on completion of the full application process which culminates in the issue of an approval letter confirming the date of commencement of the tuition.

Home Tuition is for educational teaching intervention only. The provision of therapeutic services such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, psychological services, etc. are a matter for the HSE. Home Tuition funding may not under any circumstances be used for such services. In this regard, the Department reserves the right to evaluate the education provision being delivered as part of the funding provided and all hours are approved subject to this condition.

Please note that applications for Home Tuition are accepted in the knowledge that information supplied including PPSN will be shared between the HSE, NCSE, Office for Minister Children & Youth Affairs and the Department of Education and Skills to ensure that duplicate funding does not occur.

Unused hours from any given week cannot transfer to a subsequent week. Parents are especially required to note this limitation on the weekly tuition available and tutors are required not to exceed this limitation with any one pupil.

This circular, together with all relevant information, will be available to download from the Department's website - www.education.ie.

4 Criteria for eligibility under the terms of the scheme

(a) Children with a significant medical condition which is likely to cause major disruption to their attendance at school on a continuing basis are eligible for tuition under the scheme:

Eligibility in this regard is assessed in the main by reference to a completed medical report.

Whilst this may suffice in the majority of cases, there may be cases whereby it will be necessary for the applicant to supply a separate medical /relevant professional report in order to allow the Department to fully consider the application by reference to the prescribed criteria. In addition, and in all cases, attendance records supplied and verified by the school in which the pupil is enrolled is required. The School should confirm that all of the absences confirmed were as a result of the medical condition cited on the application form.

- Consequently, Section 2(A)(2) of the application form must be fully completed in respect of applications arising from school phobia and/or depression/anxiety and must be accompanied by a separate full report from a psychologist / psychiatrist, which should clearly confirm the diagnosis, the specific reason for the diagnosis, if appropriate e.g. If related to a particular subject or period of the day. Details of the plans in place to remedy the situation should also be submitted by the parents or the school in which the child is enrolled. This should include reference to liaison with relevant agencies and bodies e.g. HSE, NEWB, NEPS, as appropriate. The Department may seek updated reports during the course of the year which should provide a detailed account of the efforts being undertaken to reintegrate the child back to the school environment. In such cases, a psychotherapist which the child is attending may provide the report.
- In the case of all other medical conditions, Section 2 (A)(1) of the application form should be completed in full.

(b) Children with Special Educational Needs awaiting an educational placement:

Eligibility in this regard is determined in consultation with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) through the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) as appropriate. Tuition hours are allocated to provide education for pupils awaiting an educational placement as an interim measure. Section 2 (b) of the relevant application form should be completed by the applicant, which should be signed by the SENO and where necessary, accompanied by the relevant professional assessments/reports.

The State supports early intervention for children with special educational needs through providing funding to a number of crèche/pre-school settings including:

- Early Intervention settings attached to mainstream and special schools
- Early Intervention settings attached to HSE funded service providers.
- Private pre-school settings supported by the Early Childhood Care & Education Scheme.
- Private pre-school settings supported by HSE grant aid or HSE funded Pre-School Assistant.
- Home Tuition Scheme for children aged between 3 years and 4 years of age with a diagnosis of autism where a placement in an early intervention setting is not available.

The intention is over time to support a single early intervention setting structure. In the meantime, subject to availability of service and where applicable meeting the eligibility criteria for support, parents can access one or more of the above mentioned early intervention settings.

The maximum number of hours which can be availed of under the above schemes is 20 hours per week. In certain circumstances attendance in an early intervention setting (excluding school based settings) may be supplemented by home tuition.

Category (c) Children aged, between 2 ½ and 3 years of age (who have been assessed as having Autistic Spectrum Disorder based on the DSM IV or ICD 10 criteria).

Eligibility in this regard is dependent on a diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder using the DSM IV or ICD 10 criteria.

5 Allocation of hours under the terms of the scheme

(a) Children with a significant medical condition which is likely to cause major disruption to their attendance at school on a continuing basis.

Generally, a range of between 2 & 10 hours may be approved with the allocation reflecting the age of the child and their level of attendance

(b) Children with Special Educational Needs awaiting an educational placement,

The maximum allocation of home tuition hours for children awaiting a placement is 20 hours per week subject to the appropriate school calendar.

(c) Children 2 ½ and 3 years of age (who have been assessed as having Autistic Spectrum Disorder based on the DSM IV or ICD 10 criteria).

The allocation for children with ASD up to 3 years of age is 10 hours tuition per week and is intended to provide an individualised early educational intervention programme.

All allocations to siblings will be reflective of the school grouping principle. The pupil teacher ratio in school settings can result in one teacher being allocated to a class of six pupils with children of

mixed age and ability at the appropriate educational level, primary or post primary. Accordingly, it is considered appropriate, as in a school situation, that a tutor can provide tuition at the appropriate educational level to more than one sibling at that level simultaneously in the home.

Under the scheme, in certain cases and where appropriate having regard to the criteria, Home Tuition may be extended until the end of July. Similarly, for children who qualify, their school year may be extended until the end of July under the terms of the July Programme. You may wish to note that in cases where more than one member of the same family qualify for such an extension under either of the above schemes, a combined allocation will apply.

6 Qualifications of tuition providers and revised requirements

As tuition takes place outside the usual school structure it is important that home tutors are qualified to provide an educational programme. Accordingly, it is a condition of the scheme that parents **must recruit a fully qualified teacher who is registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland.**

Where all efforts have failed to secure the services of a teacher qualified to teach in the sector concerned, the Department may consider the engagement of a person who is registered with the Teaching Council and has a primary degree (minimum Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications) in a relevant area, e.g. Psychology.

Parents for whom this causes a difficulty may contact the Department directly for assistance – see contact details under Section 10 of this Circular.

Teachers must grant permission to the Teaching Council for their details to be displayed on the website of the Teaching Council in order for this Department to verify that teachers have current registration. This is done by sending notification to the Council. Further information is available on www.teachingcouncil.ie

To be eligible for the qualified rate of payment, a teacher must be registered and recognised by the Teaching Council of Ireland in the sector in which the tuition is being provided.

Where a tutor intends to provide Home Tuition to 2 or more children, further details will be required before approval is given for the tuition to commence.

Parents/Guardians are **not** permitted to act as tutors for their children under the scheme.

Tuition may **not** commence until the qualifications and identification of the nominated tutor have been approved.

Teachers who are currently availing of any of the following schemes - maternity leave, sick leave, disability pension, early retirement schemes or any approved leave of absence are not eligible to deliver Home Tuition. Teachers who are on a career break should refer to circular 0010/2011 with regard to their capacity to work as a home tutor.

7 Vetting Arrangements

All tutors must be vetted prior to commencing the delivery of tuition.

- Tutors who are currently registered and vetted with the Teaching Council will be required to supply such details in the application form. Tutors registered with the Council who have not been vetted in the current or previous calendar year are required to complete the vetting process again. **These tutors will need to request a Garda Vetting application form on-line via the Teaching Council website (<http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/applying-to-register/request-for-garda-vetting-application-form.1569.html>) or by emailing vetting@teachingcouncil.ie and providing their full name and postal address. Alternatively, they may call the Teaching Council at 01 6517900.**
- Tutors who have been vetted by the Teaching Council in the current or previous calendar year need not reapply for vetting. However, such tutors must provide the Teaching Council's Garda vetting result letter to the parent/legal guardian and to the Department of Education and Skills.
- All tutors must also return a completed Statutory *Declaration** (Appendix 1) and *the Form of Undertaking* (Appendix 2) to the Department of Education and Skills.
- **Please note that a Statutory Declaration submitted to the Department in the context of the Home Tuition Scheme or the July Provision is regarded as currently valid if made in the same or previous calendar year. In such circumstances, a copy of this document will suffice.**

8 Child Protection Issues

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 promotes the protection of children from abuse. It sets out what organisations need to do to keep children safe,

and what different bodies and the general public should do if they are concerned about a child's safety and welfare.

Information on Child Protection issues can be obtained by accessing the following:

<http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Child-Protection/Child-Protection.html>

9 Payment Procedures

Parents/Guardians are advised that, under no circumstances will home tuition funding be back-dated. Home tuition funding is only available on completion of the full application process which includes the issue of an approval letter confirming the date of commencement of the tuition.

The Department will issue an advance of the home tuition grant aid where possible provided both the child and the tutor are approved for the same duration upon receipt of a completed claim form.

If approval is not issued for the entire advance period of Sept to Dec or of Jan to June; payment must be made monthly in arrears and no advance payment can be issued. Once approval has been granted for the provision of Home Tuition, the approval letter is copied to the home tuition payment section of this Department. All further dealings will be with the payment section. Details of payment rates are attached in the Appendix. However if the circumstances for which home tuition was granted change then the Special Education Section should be informed immediately.

How the grant is paid

Parents and Legal Guardians are strongly recommended to read the FAQ notes on the payment procedures for the Home Tuition Grant Aid before any tuition is provided. The FAQ should be downloaded from the website of this Department at www.education.ie

Home Tuition grants are paid using two separate methods:

(A) If home tuition is provided by a teacher who is currently on the primary teachers' payroll of the Department of Education and Skills as a **permanent primary** school teacher, payment will be made directly to the teacher through the Department's payroll.

A completed claim form signed by both the parent and the teacher should be returned to the payments section at the end of each month. Parents must not pay their tutors who are permanent primary school teachers as the Department will not refund you any payments made by you.

(B) If home tuition is provided by a teacher / tutor who is NOT currently on the primary teachers' payroll as a permanent primary school teacher, payment must be made directly to the legal guardian. Such payments are made **only by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)** directly into the bank account of the legal guardian only. Direct payment into the bank account of a tutor is not permitted. Only the parent / legal guardian of the child can seek payment of Home Tuition.

When will payment issue?

Payment should issue within four to six weeks of receipt by the Department of the claim form. Parents should note that where they have engaged an unqualified tutor, the grant aid cannot be issued in advance but must be claimed monthly in arrears. Where parents engage a qualified tutor, the home tuition may be issued in advance subject to certain criteria which are outlined in the detailed FAQ which is available on the website of this Department. It should be noted that if more than one tutor is providing tuition to a child at different rate of payment, advance payments are not possible and parents will have to claim on a monthly basis in arrears. Subsequent claims should be processed within a 10-15 working day period. Parents are strongly recommended to read the published FAQ in order to familiarise themselves with the payment options available to them.

Other issues relating to the payment of Home Tuition:

To comply with existing legislation, the PPS numbers of all persons, both parent(s) and tutor(s) / teacher(s) must be supplied in order for payment to be considered.

Parents / legal guardians who receive direct grant payments must provide a current tax clearance certificate in their own name. Payments cannot issue until this tax certificate is submitted. Information on tax clearance certificates can be obtained by accessing www.revenue.ie. An application for a tax clearance certificate from the Revenue Commissioners can be made by accessing: www.revenue.ie/en/business/running/tax-clearance.htmlonline.

Parents, teachers and tutors should note that under existing legislation financial details in respect of this scheme are forwarded annually to the Revenue Commissioners.

No travel or subsistence allowances are applicable for home tuition.

Additional claim forms for the payment of the home tuition grants are available at www.education.ie.

10 Queries

Queries in relation to the home tuition scheme can be addressed to:

Home Tuition Unit, Special Education Section, Department of Education & Skills, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Contact No: 090 648 4187

Email Address: special_education@education.gov.ie

Queries in respect of Home Tuition payments can be addressed to:

Special Needs and Tuition Grants, Schools Division – Financial,
Department of Education & Skills, Athlone, Co. Westmeath -

Contact No: 090 6483750, 090 6484239, 090 6483872.

Email Address: sntg@education.gov.ie

Jim Mulkerrins
Principal Officer
Special Education Section

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APPENDIX

The Home Tuition Scheme

Rates of payment

There are two rates of payment applicable to tutors engaged in the provision of Home Tuition - the standard rate and the modified rate

Payment rates may be subject to change. The rates applicable are as follows:

Standard rate:

Where registered with the Teaching Council and a

qualified Primary School Teacher
tutoring a primary student: € 31.92 per hour worked.

qualified Post-Primary School Teacher
tutoring a post-primary student: € 38.87 per hour worked.

Modified rate:

Teachers who are not registered by the Teaching Council as qualified teachers in the sector, for which tuition is being provided, will receive the modified rate of payment as well as registered recognised qualified teachers who are in receipt of a public service pension.

Modified rate: € 26.91 per hour worked

Please note that these rates may be subject to alterations during the year and, consequently, the rate payable will be reflective of the rate applicable for the period in respect of which the claim is made.