

19th November, 2015

Deputy Jan O'Sullivan TD,
Minister for Education & Skills,
Department of Education & Skills,
Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.

REF: 46816

RE: Clondalkin Area Committee Meeting of South Dublin County Council held on 18th November, 2015.

Dear Minister,

At the meeting of the Clondalkin Area Committee held on 18th November, 2015 the following motion was passed by the Members:

"In light of the under - provision of support services for children with autism in the Community Care Organisation 7 area (which covers Clondalkin) this committee agrees to write to the Ministers for Health and Education calling on them to increase investment in staff resources at the early intervention team in Rosscourt; to increasing funding for special autism units across the area; and to increase investment in teacher supports and Special Needs Assistants to support children with autism and related special needs."

I would be obliged for your comments and responses as soon as possible to enable me to revert to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Breda Clifford,
Staff Officer,
Operations,
Environment Water & Climate Change



Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna
Office of the Minister for Education and Skills

Ms Breda Clifford
Staff Officer
Operations
Environment Water & Climate Change
Count Hall, Tallaght
Co Dublin

Environment Water & Climate Change

- 1 DEC 2015

PLEASE QUOTE OUR REF NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE

Our ref: 1505889/SR

26 November 2015

Dear Ms Clifford

I refer to you recent correspondence to the Minister for Education and Skills, Ms. Jan O'Sullivan TD in relation to the provision of support services for children with autism in the Community Care Organisation 7 area.

I wish to advise you that the policy of the Department is that children with special educational needs, including children with autism, should be included, where possible and appropriate, in mainstream school placements with additional supports provided. In circumstances where children with special educational need require more specialised interventions, special school or special class places are also available.

Children with autism over the age of four may be eligible for home tuition if a school placement is not available for them.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOS), is responsible for processing applications from primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports, including the establishment of special classes in various geographical areas as required. The NCSE operates within the Department's criteria in allocating such support.

SENOS engage with schools annually in order to plan for, and to open, new special classes each year, in order to ensure there are sufficient special class placements available at primary and post primary school level to meet demand in a given area. All schools have the names and contact details of their local SENO. Parents are encouraged to liaise with the local SENO to discuss placement options for their child.

The NCSE will continue to monitor and review the requirement for special class places in particular areas and has capacity to establish such new special classes, where necessary, subject to the willingness of schools to open classes. Where a school opens a special class the NCSE will allocate supports to the class to meet the educational and care needs of the students enrolled.



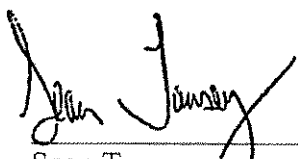
In addition to the mainstream educational provision provided for, there are over 1,000 special classes throughout the country at primary and post primary level. The number of special classes at post primary level has risen by approximately 70 classes in the last 3 years.

Furthermore the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is also responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOS) for allocating resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to schools to support children with special educational needs. The NCSE operates within the Department's criteria in allocating such support. All schools have the contact details of their local SENO. Parents may also contact their local SENO directly to discuss their child's special educational needs, using the contact details available on www.ncse.ie.

The criteria by which SNA support is allocated to pupils is set out in the Department's Circular 0030/2014. Once allocated, the deployment of SNAs within schools is a matter for the individual Principal/Board of Management. SNAs should be deployed by the school in a manner which best meets the care support requirements of the children enrolled in the school for whom SNA support has been allocated. It is a matter for schools to allocate support as required, and on the basis of individual need, which allows schools flexibility in how the SNA support is utilised.

All schools were asked to apply for SNA support for the 2015/16 school year by 18th March 2015. The NCSE also continued to accept applications after this date in recognition that enrolments may not have been completed or where assessments were not completed. The NCSE has published details of SNA allocations for schools for September 2015 on its website www.ncse.ie.

Yours sincerely



Sean Tansey
Private Secretary