

COVID-19 – The impact on SENA funded sessions – Questions & Answers

Q1. My child's school has continued to provide learning support sessions via E-learning during school closure, can I also claim for a further term?

No. If your child continues to receive additional support sessions during this time, we would ask that you do submit a new SENA application before the expiry date on your current SENA certificate (at least 6 weeks prior as per our usual request). Within the new application, we would ask that both parents and the school provide details regarding the impact of the sessions that have taken place. This will then help our panel to better understand any requests for further SENA support.

Q2. I have still been charged for learning support sessions during this period of school closure, do I have to pay for these?

As always, the contract regarding fees is between parents and the school. If you do not feel you should have been charged for sessions, for example, if they haven't taken place or have been different to the original SENA funded sessions, please raise this directly with the school. CEAS cannot get involved in discussions regarding school charges.

Q3. My child is currently missing sessions, but I also feel that he/she may require more support/ a change in support on return to school. Does this letter allow me to claim for any additional SENA support for an extra term?

No. In the event that children do not return for the Summer Term 2020, this letter is for an additional term of SENA support sessions that matches the agreed support outlined on your current SENA certificate. You will not be able to claim for any additional / different sessions. You would be required to submit a new application for a change in provision.

Q4. My child is due to change school in September, can this additional term of SENA be claimed at the new school?

No. If your child changes school, we would require a new SENA application to be submitted before SENA can be claimed. This is due to the change in circumstances. The new school would need to outline within the new application, what support can be met from within their own resources and what is being requested through SENA. This may be different to the current school. If it is felt by your child's current school and you that your child requires continued SENA funded support, the current school should liaise with the new school in order to put a request forward. Please note that often in these cases, applications are rejected due to the lack of evidence and required detailed information from the new school, as they do not yet know the child. Clear, detailed evidence regarding appropriate transitioning support should be included within the application for it to be considered and to enable the SENA panel to assess the application in line with the regulations.

Q5. If schools reopen during the Summer Term, can I still claim this additional term without the need to submit a new SENA application?

As a general rule, if children return to school before 1st June, you will be required to submit a new SENA application as per our usual process (at least 6 weeks prior to the expiry date on the current certificate).

If children return to school during the Summer term but after 1st June, this additional term will still be granted.

As always, each application will be individually assessed in line with policy (JSP 752, chapter 14); there may be circumstances around this timeframe that affect the ultimate decision, so you are advised to clarify any variance or exceptions you are requesting to this timescale.

Q6. What can I do if my child's school is closed therefore I am unable to get a new application completed prior to my current SENA certificate expiring?

Most schools will have staff working remotely. We would suggest that you contact the school and ask if there are staff available to complete the SENA application. If not, please provide us with the school's response to your request and we will then advise accordingly.

Q7. My current SENA certificate will expire at the end of Spring Term 2020, should I apply for Summer Term 2020 or wait until schools have re-opened?

In most circumstances, it is best to reapply for SENA as per the normal process, prior to the expiry date on the current certificate. However, we would also advise that you make contact with the school to ask what provision they are able to put in place, if any, during this closure period. If no additional support sessions are being provided during the Summer Term, it would make sense to apply in time for the Autumn Term 2020.

As SENA is rarely back-dated, if a new application is not able to be submitted until Autumn Term 2020, this would need to be completed as soon as possible (before October half term) and parents should be aware that they may incur the costs of sessions that have already taken place, from the start of the Autumn term, should SENA not be awarded.

Q8. My child attends an 'SP' (Specialist Provision) school, does this additional term also apply to them?

No. For those children at SP schools, the process will remain the same and a new application should be submitted in line with the usual process. Parents should contact CEAS for more information, where this is not possible.

Q9. I'm concerned that my next SENA application will not be much different to the previous one, due to being out of school, will this affect my chances of the allowance being awarded?

As always, SENA is looked at on a case-by-case basis. We acknowledge that there may be similarities in the application form, certainly if it was only one or two terms since your previous application. However, we would expect to see evidence or details regarding the impact of the school closure to help our CEAS SENA panel assess the application appropriately.

Q10. My child will be transitioning into the school's sixth form following Summer 2020, can I continue to receive SENA for sixth form studies?

SENA is very rarely granted for sixth form, due to the independent nature of these studies. Therefore, we would ask that a new application is submitted if you strongly feel that additional support is required.

We kindly remind all parents to ensure they continue to remain conversant with the rules and regulations regarding CEA and CEA(SENA) as outlined in JSP 752, Chapter 14. As always, any queries regarding eligibility for CEA should be directed to your Unit HR.

We would encourage parents, as always, to remain in close contact with your child's school so that you are fully aware of the range of support available.