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## **Special Needs Assistants Policy**

### **Introductory Statement:**

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are appointed by the Board of Management and allocated duties and children by the school's Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator(SENCO) and Principal. This policy is guided by the relevant circulars, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004.

### **Rationale:**

It is necessary to have a policy for SNAs to:

1. Have clear guidelines and expectations for the roles and responsibilities the SNAs have in the school.
2. Ensure each SNA understands their role in contributing positively to the learning experiences of the children in the school.
3. Ensure best practices and continuity in their work.

### **Aims:**

1. To ensure the effective deployment of SNAs in Bunscoil Chríost Rí.
2. To enable the SNAs to effectively support class teachers.
3. To enable the SNAs to effectively support the children with Special Educational Needs(SEN). (Children with SEN encompass all children in every stage of the continuum of support.)
4. To clarify the roles and tasks of the SNAs.
5. To ensure accountability and effective record keeping.

## **Responsibilities:**

### The Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator(SENCO):

- Monitor the effectiveness of the SNAs contribution to the needs of the designated children
- Collect and file timetables and Personal Pupil Profiles
- Assign roles and specific tasks to each SNA
- Assign priority children to each SNA

### The Principal/Deputy Principal:

- Manage areas of conflict which may arise between SNAs and teachers and/or pupils
- Manage extra hours and tasks required
- Manage professional development
- Promote training and professional development

### The Special Needs Assistants:

- Responsible for their timetable in conjunction with class teachers and SENCO
- Responsible for duties assigned in IEPs by SET
- Responsible for duties assigned by class teachers
- Awareness and knowledge of policies which are relevant to their work – Code of Behaviour/ Special Ed policy and Child Protection guidelines.
- The SNA always works under the direction of the class teacher

### The Class Teacher:

- Identify tasks which the SNA is to complete in the classroom when the time allows – make a list of duties
- Collaborate with the SNA in matters of timetabling and planning where necessary

### The Special Educational Teacher:

- Include the SNA in IEP planning
- Bring awareness to the SNA of their role in supporting the child to meet targets within the IEP
- Meet regularly with the SNA to review and plan work to support the child's targets

## Guidelines:

### 1. Work:

- Preparation and tidy of classrooms.
- Assistance with the boarding/disembarking of transport.
- Assistance as necessary with tasks such as accessing IT or other equipment in school.
- Assistance with completion of teacher assigned work, staying on task, following classroom procedures, building of self esteem and developing independence.
- Assisting in out of school trips, school tours, and other activities such as sport events.
- Assistance with clothing, toileting, and general hygiene of all children.
- Assisting teachers in supervision during breaks.
- Engaging with parents of special education children in an informal way.

### 2. Confidentiality:

- Due discretion is expected in all matters of a confidential nature.

### 3. Timetables:

- SNAs are expected to engage in ten minutes, at the start and end of each day, doing supervision
- SNAs can be requested to work 12 days outside the school calendar at the discretion of the BOM. (These days equate to 72 hours which can be used in a flexible manner outside of school hours on school days,c/f Circular 71/2011)
- SNAs will create their timetables in consultation with class teachers, SETs and the SENCO.
- SNAs break times should be agreed with class teachers as yard time and supervision can be varied with staggered lunches.

### 4. Planning and Reporting:

- SNAs will create a Personal Pupil Profile (PPP) for every child in their care in consultation with SET/Class Teacher in the first school term of each year.
- PPPs should have relevant codes indicating the area of need of the child. (Codes will be provided by the SENCO)
- PPPs should be given to the SENCO and teachers of the individual children.

#### 5. Parental Contact:

- SNAs are encouraged to build positive relationships with parents.
- SNAs will escort their child to the school gates at the end of the day, unless otherwise stated in IEP.
- SNAs should not provide their phone number to parents or be contactable outside of school hours.
- SNAs should not pass on any information regarding a child's education.
- SNAs should not be in contact with parents outside of school hours.

#### 6. Seating Arrangements/Classroom assistance:

- A primary duty of the SNA is to build independence. S/he should not be sitting with any one child for the whole school day.
- Class teachers, where suitable, will provide a table for the SNA in their room. This may not always be required or possible.
- SNAs should avoid over-talking and direct the children in a manner which doesn't disrupt the class.
- The focus from the SNA should be to enable the child at all times to access their relevant curriculum.

#### 7. Supervision:

- SNAs provide morning and afternoon supervision as part of their general working hours.
- SNAs are encouraged to supervise pupils from a safe distance.
- SNAs should assist pupils in lining up after break times and wait for their teacher.

#### 8. Medication:

- The procedures for administering any medication should be understood and followed where necessary.
- Medication should be administered discreetly.
- SNAs and School secretaries will be responsible for making sure medication is stored correctly in either the office or a safe place in the classroom.
- If necessary the teacher can support or witness the administration of medication.
- Clear instructions must be provided by the parents on how to administer the medication and they must also sign an indemnity form, available from school office.

- Parents of child and/or BOM will provide training where necessary for administration of medication.

### **Best practices in developing the role of the SNA in school:**

- Teachers should work closely with SNAs to ensure that everyone is clear on where help is needed.
- Daily diaries or note taking is encouraged for professional reflection purposes.
- CPD is encouraged and the sharing of knowledge between SNAs and teachers is important.
- An atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect between all staff should be fostered.
- Regular meetings between the SNAs and the SENCO, Deputy Principal or Principal should be facilitated.
- SNAs are assigned to the school as a whole. Through consultation, the school will decide how best to utilise the SNAs.

### **Seniority**

- The sequence in which the SNAs are appointed to the school determines their seniority.
- The seniority listing will be used in determining a last in, first out policy in times when allocations may be cut.

### **Success Criteria:**

- This policy will achieve its aims if:
  1. Children with SEN are included in the whole school.
  2. Children with SEN are in a safe and stimulating environment.
  3. Children with SEN are becoming independent learners.
  4. SNAs and teachers have a clear understanding of their roles and expectations.

**Review Date:** May 2025

Signed

School Principal



Chairperson of BOM



