

SNA Policy – Scoil Íde

Introduction

Under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004, children with special educational needs are entitled to supports to enable them to participate in inclusive education. Such supports include Special Needs Assistants – SNAs.

Rationale

The policy was formulated so that

All staff, including the SNAs have clear guidelines on procedures within the school

Each SNA can see themselves as contributing positively to the learning experiences of the children and the overall efficiency of the school

A culture of fairness and equality is seen to be in operation throughout the school

To address issues such as seniority and suppression of posts.

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Relationship to school ethos

PETNS has principle of equal respect for both children and their families and for the staff of the school, both teaching and non-teaching. The purpose of this Policy is to utilise our SNA provision to the maximum benefit of all.

Aims/Objectives

To facilitate the inclusion of SNAs as valuable members of staff in a whole school context

To ensure the effective deployment of SNAs in enhancing the social skills and self-esteem of the Special Needs Child.

To enable the SNA to be an effective support to the class teacher

To provide optimum learning experiences for all children through judicious use of the skills and talents of the SNA

To clarify the tasks and duties to be undertaken by the SNA.

Procedures and Content

Contract

The contract of employment and the duties of an SNA are regulated by Department Circular. This includes an actual job description - Appendix 1.

SNAs are not specifically assigned to an individual child but rather to the school as a whole. However, during lunch break each SNA must have direct responsibility for a particular child or children.

The school operates a "last in first out" Policy. However, it must be noted that all positions are up for regular review in association with the DES, the BOM, NEPS, and NCSE.

Hours of Work

The full time SNA is expected to work 32 hours per week and the part-time SNA is expected to work the number of hours outlined by the NCSE.

SNAs begin work at 8.30 am and full-time SNAs finish at 3pm.

SNAs as part of their contract are expected to perform some duties before and after school duties (SNA Circular 15/05) i.e. the preparation and tidying up of classrooms, reception and dispersal of children.

An additional 72 hours (pro-rata for part-time SNAs) per year outside of the normal school year must be worked. These days are at the discretion of the Board of Management in consultation with the individual SNAs.

Recruitment Procedures

The recruitment procedures for the appointment of ancillary staff (SNAs) to Scoil Íde are as follows:

The post is advertised on Education Posts

The nature of the post is stated and the applicant is asked to supply references / referees

The closing date is listed as 2 weeks after the insert of the advertisement

The selection Board gives at least one week's notice of interview

Agreed criteria is agreed prior to interview and applied to all candidates

The Selection Board consists of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, Principal and an independent assessor with an appropriate gender balance

A marking scheme is used and retained as a record

All appointments are subject to Board of Management approval and the provisions of the Employment Equality Act.

The successful candidate is required to furnish the Board with:

- a) A medical cert
- b) A Garda Clearance Cert
- c) A signed Confidentiality Clause.

On Appointment

On appointment to the school (an SNA is not appointed to a specific child) each SNA is required to:

Sign a contract of employment and a Confidentiality Clause

Supply school administration with P.P.S number, telephone number etc.

Asked to become familiar with circulars detailing sick leave, maternity leave, leave of absence etc.

Sign the D.E.S appointment form.

Duties

The duties of SNAs are contained in Circular Sp.Ed. 07/02

SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal, or another person acting on behalf of the principal (Special Educational Needs Organiser), and/or the Board of Management.

The duties of the SNA are listed in Appendix 1 of this Circular as follows:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
2. . Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, swimming and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature.
9. Where a Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to cater for a specific pupil, duties shall be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned.

Supervision Duty

SNAs will assist supervision of special needs children at each break time. It is school policy that in the case of an injured child, the teachers on duty remain on the yard and one of the snas bring the injured child inside to receive relevant care. While the sna is inside, she/he hands over supervision of her child/children, to the teacher on duty.

Accident Reports to be written up by the teacher on duty.

Depending on the needs of individual children, sna lunch break times may be split.

Rotation

SNAs can be allocated to different children throughout the school on a rotational basis.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

The Principal has:-

Responsibility for assigning role specific and child specific tasks to the SNA in association with the class teacher

Direct responsibility for co-ordinating the integration and devising the role profile of the SNA

Monitoring the effectiveness of the SNAs contribution to the needs of designated children

Responsibility for passing on information received regarding any training opportunities for the role

Managing areas of conflict which may arise

Ensure that the SNA is inducted appropriately not just to their specific SNA role but the whole school community.

Class teacher and Resource teacher

SNA must work under the direction of the Class Teacher

All communication with parents re SEN pupils will be done via class teacher - not SNA.

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The Role of the SNA and Responsibilities

The role of the SNA is

To foster the participation of pupils in the social and academic processes of the school

To enable pupils to become more independent learners

To help to raise standards of achievement for specific pupils.

Fostering the participation of pupils in the social and academic processes of the school

This form of support for pupils is seen in:

Supervising and assisting small groups of pupils in activities set by the teacher - Activities are set by teachers and the SNA works with the group under the management of the teacher. The SEN pupil is then able to work with the group without being stigmatised as 'different' because of frequent separation from their classmates for individual tuition.

Developing pupils' social skills.

Supporting children in groups, who might otherwise have been separated from other children for individual attention, promotes the inclusion of those children in mainstream work.

Spotting early signs of bullying

Some children find it easier to confide in an SNA and (s)he may be the first to be alerted to instances of bullying. All such information must be treated as serious and be notified to the class teacher straight away

Helping the inclusion of all children

(S)he can do much to help the inclusion of children into their school and support individual children who for one reason or another find it difficult to form friendships and good relationships with others. Organising games on the yard is a particularly successful way to do this.

Keeping specific children, identified by the teacher, on task.

Helping the child to maintain focus and bringing him/her back on task will enable them to become better learners. (S)he can do this by explaining points quietly, and repeating teacher's instructions. It is helpful to make notes for the pupil as the teacher is speaking.

Enabling Pupils to Become More Independent Learners

Children learn better if their efforts are appreciated and they feel valued. As they gain confidence, they will become more independent. SNAs can help pupils develop independence in their learning in several ways:

Showing Interest

SNAs have an important part to play in raising the self-esteem of children by showing interest not only in their work but in what they do outside of school.

Assisting Individuals in Educational Tasks

The SNA can assist the pupil to increase his/her knowledge, skill and understanding, but this assistance must be balanced. Only intervene if absolutely necessary. Allow the pupil to make mistakes- never do the work for them. Be there to help, support and encourage - not to provide the right answer.

It is important not to allow or encourage the child to 'cling' as this can be stultifying and demeaning for the pupil. It can also mean the child gets insufficient input from the teacher.

The SNA needs to know when to stand back and enable the child to work with other pupils in a group.

Working with Outside Agencies

The SNA can play an important part in supporting the work of outside agencies such as speech therapists and educational psychologists, under the guidance of the class teacher.

Assisting Pupils with Physical Needs

Assisting pupils, when help is necessary, in a tactful manner, and not at other times, enables pupils with physical disabilities to become more independent learners and to move towards independence as adults. This applies to assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene. The pupil may need assistance to board and alight from school buses or on out of school visits, walks and similar activities. The SNA will also be required to assist the teacher in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.

Help to Raise Standards of Achievement of all Pupils

Even when working with individual pupils, the SNA is assisting the other children in the class as they are thereby free to progress at their own pace.

Being involved at Whole Class Level

SNAs can alternate helping with particular pupils, identified by the teacher. An extra pair of hands, eyes and ears is very useful in art, games and PE. Supporting the teacher by listening to reading or reading to small groups is very helpful. (S)he can also reinforce the teachers work on request, for example with spellings.

Preparing Classroom Materials

Getting materials ready for the lesson, preparing worksheets, preparing books and setting up equipment all help free up teaching time to the benefit of all the class.

SNA's will have an input in drawing up and reviewing IEPs.

SNA's will keep appropriate records which are filed securely. (Such records in Diary format are essential for progress review, IEP review and any requirement for retrospective information.)

In the interest of whole staff development, SNAs will, where possible, attend all relevant staff meetings.

Parents with questions or issues about school policy or practice should be referred directly to the class teacher or the Principal. This applies to direct face- to face communication or indirect telephone communication. (It is not appropriate for parents to have a phone number of a member of staff).

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

We follow the Procedures for SNAs that have been agreed by all parties (IMPACT, SIPTU, Management Bodies and Department of Education and Skills). These procedures are contained in Circular 0072/2011.

Contract of Employment

SNAs are not specifically assigned to an individual child but rather to the school as a whole. However, during lunch break each SNA must have direct responsibility for a particular child.

Seniority

The sequence in which special need assistants are appointed to the school determines their seniority. Seniority is important in determining which special

need assistant(s) should be offered reduced hours or have their employment terminated when the allocation of the school is reduced. The seniority listing will be used in determining 'last in, first out' for the purpose of redundancy.

The Board of Management determines the seniority based on special need assistants' date of commencement of duty as an SNA in a school.

Success Criteria

This policy is aimed at making a difference to the teaching and learning of children with Special Educational Needs in our school. We will know that the policy is achieving its aims when

- children with Special Educational Needs are included in whole school activities
- children are experiencing a safe and stimulating environment
- the children are becoming independent learners and acquiring life skills
- the child is reaching the targets set out in Individual Education Plans.

Covid 19 Implications.

Please see Scoil Ide's Covid 19 Response Plan - this outlines duties of snas and all staff.

Ratification and Review

This plan was formally ratified by the Board of Management on

Signed:_____

Chairperson of Board of Management.

This plan is due for review in September 2022.

