

Special Needs Assistants Policy and Guidelines Killeen N.S.

SNAs are appointed by the Board of Management subsequent to the allocation of SNA hours for children by the NCSE. Depending on the cumulative number of hours allocated to the school they may be appointed on a full-time or part-time basis.

The Policy was devised following a consultative process with all interested parties, and is guided by the relevant legislation such as The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004 and DES Circulars 07/02, 08/03, 24/03, 13/04, 02/05.

Rationale

The policy was formulated:

- To provide staff and parents with clear guidelines and expectations with regard to the SNA role and responsibilities within the school.
- To ensure each SNA appreciates and understands the important role they have in contributing positively to the learning experiences of the children and the overall efficiency of the school.
- To ensure best practice and continuity in how we work in Killeen NS.

Aims

- To facilitate the recognition 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 children with Special Educational Needs.
- 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.
- To ensure accountability and effective record keeping.

Staff Roles

The Principal has responsibility for

- Assigning role specific and child specific tasks to the SNA in association with the class teacher.
- 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.
- Promoting in-service training. The Board of Management may fund or part-fund this professional development.
- Managing areas of conflict which may arise, with the assistance of the Deputy Principal.

Special Educational Teachers

- Assume responsibility for Pupil Support Plans in consultation with all relevant parties including the parents, SNA, class teacher and principal.

Class Teachers

- Ensure SNA support is available for those who need it in a class situation and identify the appropriate tasks to be completed by the SNAs.
- Collaborate with the SNA with regard to planning and timetabling.
- Devise a list of classroom tasks to be undertaken by the SNA when time is available e.g. staff meetings, 10 minutes before/after school, etc.

SNAs

- There are three SNAs presently employed in the school. They are considered an important part of the school team and carry out duties of a non teaching nature.
- The SNA always works under the direction of the class teacher or Principal
- The teacher plans lessons and directs learning. The SNA provides support in assisting the pupil to access the curriculum.
- The SNA should be familiar with all relevant school policy, in particular the school Code of Behaviour and Child Safe-Guarding Statement.

Guidelines for Special Needs Assistants

Hours of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full time SNAs are expected to work for the normal school hours in the school that they are working in, and in addition be available for a period of time before and after school in order to help with reception and dispersal of children and preparation and tidying of classrooms etc.• In line with Circular 71/2011, an additional 72 hours (pro rata for part time SNAs) may be worked at the discretion of the school in line with school requirements.
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due discretion is expected in all matters of a confidential nature.
Times and Timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SNAs will be given a timetable at the start of the year. SNAs will have a break time of 15 mins in the morning and 25 mins in the afternoon. This is to be taken outside of yard supervision time.• Class teacher will give the SNA a copy of class timetable also pointing out where the child will work with class or at own level during the day. Suitable times for sensory breaks will also be identified.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SNA should document work carried out and pupils' progress. This diary should also record any incidents where the care needs of the child are evident.• A copy of this diary should be available to the Principal / Teacher.• Teacher and SNA should work closely re. planning.
Level and type of classroom Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information received on children and observations made in classrooms need to be handled sensitively and carefully.• The focus will be on an "Enabling mode" and avoiding the "Velcro mode".• Rather than work exclusively with one child the SNA should work with the whole group of children around the designated child's table, where appropriate. In that way several children in the classroom get the benefit of the SNA's support.
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical contact may be required to protect a pupil from harm to themselves or others.• Help where necessary with changing etc. while encouraging independence.
Parental contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SNAs are encouraged to build a positive relationship based on trust

	<p>with the parents of children with SEN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents with questions, requests or concerns regarding 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. Do not pass on information regarding child's educational progress.
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNAs will supervise children with additional needs at yard time on each break. They must be on yard at 11am and 1.05pm sharp in order to carry out this duty. Supervision in the yard and classroom should promote social interaction and inclusion. After lunch, the SNA should assist pupils to form a line on the yard outside the classroom door. SNAs should not have responsibility for class supervision and should always report incidents and arising behavioural / classroom issues to class teacher.
Sensory Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movement/sensory breaks-content should be worked out with the help from Physiotherapists and/or Occupational Therapist in conjunction with the teacher. Working one to one is best when helping a child to learn a new skill/game however working in pairs or with a small group may develop social skills, inclusion and teamwork.
Medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's Administration of Medicines Policy should be understood and followed at all times. Administer medication discreetly in the classroom. Only prescribed medication should be given. Store all medicines appropriately in line with our Health and Safety Policy.
Relevant work	<p>SNAs work under the guidance of the classroom teacher and should not be left in sole charge of a pupil or class. They may however work on their own with children provided that the work in question has been allocated by the class teacher. Work may include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation and tidying up of classrooms Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required. Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs pupils with typing, writing, computers or other use of equipment. Assisting children to stay on task, follow classroom procedures and interact appropriately Assisting children in establishing and maintaining a consistent routine. Assisting children to build self-esteem and to develop independence Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil. Assistance with accessing the curriculum as far as is possible for children with SEN. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompanying and supervising assigned pupil/pupils on swimming outings. Where direct assistance is needed to change into swimming gear, specific parental consent must be received. • Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another. • Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another. • General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. • Participation with school improvement planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school improvement process. • Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management. • The encouragement of good attendance and punctuality. • Acting as a positive role model for the children in their care. • Other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the class when children with SEN are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise.
Staff Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAs may be required to attend Staff Meetings when issues of relevance to their own particular work are up for discussion. • Regular meetings with the principal/deputy principal are good opportunities to discuss arising issues. • On days of In-Service ancillary, SNAs may be required to attend school to complete tasks laid out by class teachers/principal.

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 should have direct responsibility for a particular child, where possible. 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.

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 Support Plans.

Ratification and Review

This plan was formally ratified by the Board of Management on 9-10-23

It will be reviewed every two years.

Signed: Mairéad Staunton Date: 9-10-23
Chairperson, BoM