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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 coordinator and principal. This policy is guided by the relevant circulars, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSN 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 SNA's 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.
4. To clarify the roles and tasks of the SNAs.
5. To Ensure accountability and effective record keeping.

Responsibilities:

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of the SNA's contribution to the needs of the designated children
- The collection and storing of timetables and Pupil Profiles
- Assigning of roles and specific tasks to each SNA.
- Assigning of priority children to each SNA.

The Principal/Deputy Principal:

- Management of areas of conflict which may arise between SNA's and teachers/pupils.
- Management of extra hours and tasks required.
- Management of professional development.
- Promotion of 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.
- Be aware of policies which are relevant to their work – Code of behaviour/Special Ed policy and Child Protection guidelines.
- The SNA always works under the discretion of the class teacher

The Class Teacher:

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

The Special Educational Teacher:

- Should include the SNA in IEP planning.
- Should make the SNA aware of their role within the structure of the IEP.
- Should meet the SNA regularly to plan work and assign duties for IEP.

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 of 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 spend ten minutes at the start and end of each day doing supervision
- SNAs are expected to work 12 days outside the school calendar at the discretion of the BOM.
- SNAs will make their timetables in consultation with class teachers, SETs and the SENCO.
- SNAs break times are _____

4. Planning and Reporting:

- SNAs are required to have a personal pupil profile (PPP) for every child in their care.
- PPPs should have relevant codes indicating the area of need of the child.
- 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 should where needed escort their child to the school gates at the end of the day.
- SNAs should not provide their 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. He/She should not be sitting with any one child for the whole school day.
- Class teachers at their discretion can provide a table and seat for the SNA in their room.
- 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.

7. Supervision:

- SNAs provide morning and afternoon supervision.
- SNAs are encouraged to Supervise pupils from a safe distance
- SNAs should assist pupils in lining up after yards and wait for their teachers.

8. Medication:

- The procedures for administering any medication should be understood and followed where necessary.
- Medication should be administered discreetly.
- SNAs are responsible for making sure medication is stored correctly.

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 the 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/SNAs 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 utilize the special needs assistants.

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

Chair of BOM
