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Job Share, Career Break & Leave Policy including Maternity, Parents' and Parental Leave

Policy Statement

This Policy has legislative underpinnings, which are contained in Section 24 of the Education Act (as amended), which directs employers to implement the regulations and procedures, as stated, for eligible registered teachers employed in approved teaching posts funded by monies of the Oireachtas.

As outlined in DES Circulars 54/2019, 41/2014 & 22/2012 each employer shall develop and maintain a policy on staff absences, including non statutory schemes e.g. Job Sharing, Career Breaks, Unpaid Leave, specific to the needs of the school authority. In drawing up this policy, the welfare and educational needs of pupils must take precedence over all other considerations and must be in accordance with the rules of this circular.

Aims & Purposes

The aims and purposes of the policy are to:

- develop and maintain a policy statement specific to the needs of the school in relation to the approval of career breaks, job-sharing and other leave
- ensure the welfare and educational needs of the pupils takes precedence over all other considerations in relation to the sanctioning of career breaks, job-sharing and other leave
- ensure that career breaks, job-sharing and other leave have due regard to the capacity of the school to meet its obligations to its pupils and therefore apply a reasonable limit to the number of its teaching/SNA staff that may be absent on career break or on leave at any one time
- clarify the school's procedures in relation to career breaks, job-sharing and other leave

Policy Development

In drawing up this policy the relevant legislation and Dept. of Education Circulars were consulted. Circulars 54/2019, 41/2014 & 22/2012 should be read in conjunction with this policy. The eligibility of staff, guidelines for application, application forms and the decision making process for various leave schemes is outlined in these circulars. It should be noted that these circulars may be updated by the Department of Education.

A draft policy document was prepared by the Board of Management and shared with all staff for consultation and feedback. The Job Share Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Any teacher/SNA wishing to apply for leave is expected to familiarise themselves with this policy, and relevant legislation and DES Circulars, all of which are available on the Department of Education website and attached as links to this policy in Appendix I.

Job Sharing

Eligibility

A teacher may apply to job share where he/she;

- is registered with the Teaching Council
- will have satisfactorily completed at the end of the school year in which they are applying 12 months continuous service with the current employer and
- holds a full time permanent post for the following school year

A special needs assistant may apply for a job-sharing where s/he:

- has satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are applying 12 months continuous service in the school

Job Sharing is not available to the Principal or any teacher on Secondment.

There are two options for a job sharing arrangement:

1. Sharing a wholtime post: Two whole time teachers/ SNAs in the same school apply to job share
2. Interschool job sharing arrangement: two wholtime, probated teachers in two different schools apply to job share.

Staff are expected to secure their own suitably qualified job share partner with whom they are confident they can plan, collaborate and work professionally with, during the duration of the job share arrangement.

Where the arrangement results in an inter school job share, the Principal and/ or Chairperson will meet with or interview the proposed job share partner to assess their suitability for Knocknagree NS. The decision of the Board of Management is final.

Number of Staff Involved

The Board of Management is conscious that the welfare and educational needs of pupils must take precedence over all other considerations and must be in accordance with the rules of this circular.

The Board of Management of Knocknagree N.S.has determined that no more than 2 job sharing teaching positions and one SNA job sharing position will be allowed in any one school year. In addition to this a maximum of 1 job sharing position will be allowed in mainstream classes and 1 job sharing position among Special Education Teachers.

Application Process

All persons applying to Job Share are expected to familiarise themselves with the details of the Job Sharing scheme as outlined in the relevant circulars. An application to job share must be made prior to the 1st of February of the year in which the teacher/SNA is applying to job share.

An application form and a cover letter must be submitted to the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management. The application form is an appendix to the relevant circular. A draft/ proposed Plan must be submitted to the Principal and this should outline ways in which the job share partners will collaborate with one another in partnership to cater for the needs of the children and to fulfil their role as members of staff.

The following items should be addressed in the Plan:

- Compatibility between job share partners and a commitment to work cooperatively together
- The need for continuity and the agreed methodologies to be used for planning and preparation
- The frequency of hand over planning meetings to discuss their work and the children's progress
- Curriculum content to be covered by each teacher (if applicable)
- Timetable and a calendar outlining days to be worked by each job share partner including a plan for brief absences.
- Agreed division of responsibilities (as applicable)
- Breakdown of days worked in the week for example
- Commitment to undertake Croke Park Hours on a pro rata basis and to share any and all relevant information from staff or other meetings with each other
- A commitment to attend parent/teacher meetings and school planning days, such as days to roll out the new/revised curriculum as applicable
- Methodologies for communicating with one another, to ensure the best outcomes for pupils and the smooth running of the job share arrangement and school
- Agreed approach to disciplinary matters in keeping with the school's Code of Behaviour and agreed methodologies for communicating with parents

In considering applications for job sharing the Board of Management shall satisfy itself that the plan adequately addresses all the key issues as outlined above and that the welfare and educational needs of pupils will be met.

A teacher/SNA who wishes to extend his/her Job Sharing arrangement must apply for this extension on an annual basis, in the normal way as outlined in the relevant circulars.

If the Board of Management receives a Job Share application from a teacher(s)/SNA(s) other than those involved in an existing Job Sharing arrangement, this application will be given preference for the following academic year, ahead of any extension of an existing Job Share arrangement. In other words, there will be a 'first in, first out' approach to ensure fairness and equality for all teachers/SNAs.

Each application to Job Share shall be considered on its own merits by the Board of Management within the context of the school's policy statement and its primary deliberations will reflect that teaching and learning is impacted positively. There is no obligation on the Board of Management to grant a successive year of Job Share. Where such requests are made, the previous year's performance of such a Job Sharing arrangement will be taken into account.

Board Decision

The employer shall issue a written notice of approval or refusal, which will set out the basis of the refusal, to the teacher/SNA by March 1st at the latest. Staff who are granted a job sharing arrangement can withdraw their application up until the 14th April.

As stated previously, in all matters relating to the Job Share Policy the welfare and educational needs of pupils will take precedence. The following factors will also be considered by the Board of Management for job sharing arrangements:

Teachers/SNAs who have applied to continue an existing job share arrangement up to a maximum of three years total

Teachers/SNAs who have previously applied and have been refused – provided they meet the requirements in relation to length of service etc.

Seniority

Impact on school management

Compatibility of the two proposed candidates for job share

- Any other relevant circumstances

The decision of the Board of Management is final.

Parental Involvement

The parents of a class involved with a Job Sharing Scheme will be informed at an appropriate time that their children will be taught by Job Sharing Teachers in the following school year. This will normally happen in Term 3. In the case that a Job Sharing Scheme is commencing in a mainstream classroom, a letter will be sent to parents advising them of the decision and inviting them to attend a meeting in the school in June, if they wish to have further information/ clarification regarding the Job Sharing scheme.

Both class teachers whose Job Sharing Applications have been approved by the Board are required to attend such a meeting. Both teachers will present, along with the Principal teacher, an information session for parents explaining the positive aspects, strategies to be employed when managing, teaching and assessing the class through a Job Sharing scheme. Should the Job Sharing scheme extend to more than one year an information meeting will be held for each year of the scheme's operation.

In the case of two Job Sharing SETs or SNAs, parents to which the Job Sharing arrangement applies:

- Only parents of children with complex needs who are accessing School Support Plus level of support or children who are receiving individual support as part of School Support will be informed in early June of any given academic year, the SET teacher being assigned to their child.
- All other pupils receiving variations of less significant support will be informed of SET allocation in late September, when need of access has been identified and agreed by the SET team, principal and mainstream teachers in accordance with the Continuum of Support.

Termination of Job Sharing Arrangement

The Board of Management of Knocknagree N.S. reserves the right to terminate any job sharing arrangement which is if the arrangement is not operating in the best interests of the pupils.

Should such a situation arise during the school year, a job sharing teacher/SNA must resume full time teaching if directed to do so by the Board of Management. This stipulation will also apply to a teacher on secondment from the staff of another school. The temporary replacement teacher should also be made aware at interview that their appointment may be terminated in such circumstances.

Other Matters

EPV Days

Teachers in a Job Sharing arrangement will swap to facilitate EPV days.

EPV Days During Extended Leave

Teachers who are on extended leave including maternity, paternity, parents' or parental leave, will not be permitted to take EPV days during their period of Leave, as the school is unable to facilitate such leave due to staffing shortages and the need to ensure appropriate care and medical supports for pupils.

Calendar

A calendar outlining the days in which each teacher/SNA will be in the school must be provided to the Board of Management along with the application for Job Share. Once this calendar has been agreed it cannot be changed. The Board of Management will not allow ad hoc swapping of days to take place.

In the exceptional circumstance where a teacher/SNA needs to exchange a day with their partner teacher/SNA, prior approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management must be requested in writing, along with a reason for the requested change.

Career Breaks

Definition

A career break means special leave without pay. Its main objectives of this scheme below, which are not exhaustive, is for Board of Managements, wherever possible to facilitate applicants in the areas of:

- Personal Development
- Voluntary Service Overseas (teacher only)
- Accompany spouse/partner on Diplomatic/Military Posting (teacher only)
- Education
- Public Representation
- Childcare/Dependent care
- Self-employment

Eligibility

A teacher may apply for a career break where s/he:

- is registered with the Teaching Council and
- has satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are
- applying, 12 months of continuous service in the school

A special needs assistant (SNA) may apply for a career break where he/she:

- has satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are
- applying, 12 months of continuous service in the school

Posts of Responsibility

A teacher on career break will retain eligibility to apply for a Post of Responsibility which occurs in the school and s/he shall be notified of any vacancies by the Board of Management

Duration of Career Break

- A teacher/SNA may engage in this scheme subject to an overall maximum absence of 10 years in the course of his/her professional career
- A career break shall be a period of not less than 1 school year and may be extended
- on an annual basis provided the total period of the career break does not exceed 5 years at any one time
- A subsequent career break may not be taken until the teacher/SNA has served for a period equal to the duration of the previous career break. In the case of a teacher wishing to avail of a career break to undertake voluntary service abroad/ missionary/ diplomatic/military/oireachtas/or study leave this requirement will be waived
- A career break shall commence on the start of a school year and a return to duty in the school which granted the career break shall not be permitted other than on the start of a succeeding school year
- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a teacher/SNA to commence a career break during the course of a school year and terminate not earlier than the end of that school year. This is deemed to be a one year career break

Operation of the Scheme

- A teacher/SNA seeking a career break must submit a written application (included in the relevant circulars) to the Board of Management no later than the 1st February of each school year prior to that in which s/he proposes to commence/continue the career break. The application must provide clear details of the exact purpose of the career break.
- A late application may be considered by the Board of Management in exceptional circumstances.
- A teacher/SNA who wishes to extend his/her career break must apply for this extension on an annual basis
- Each application for or extension of a career break shall be considered on its own merits by the Board of Management.
- The decision of the Board of Management shall be final.

- The Board of Management shall issue a written notice of approval or refusal to the teacher/SNA by 1st March at the latest and submit notice of the career break absence to the Department, via the OnLine Claims System, on or before 1st May
- The Principal will list the names of all teachers/SNAs availing of a career break on the annual change of staff form.
- Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the Board of Management to cater for the career break, an applicant shall not be permitted to withdraw his/her application after the 14th April. In exceptional circumstances the Board of Management, in its sole discretion, may consider a later withdrawal of a career break application.

Resumption of Duty following a Career Break

- A teacher/SNA must notify the Board of Management by the 1st February of his/her intention to return to teaching from a career break at the beginning of the next school year
- Failure to do so may result in the return being deferred for a further school year (e.g. in the event that the late notification resulted in contractual difficulties for the Board of Management)
- It is the responsibility of the teacher/SNA returning from a career break to ensure that s/he is registered with the Teaching Council on the intended date of resumption
- A teacher/SNA returning from a career break in excess of two school years shall be screened by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). It is a prerequisite for the restoration of salary that the teacher/SNA is deemed medically fit for teaching duties by the OHS before s/he is permitted to resume his/her teaching post
- A teacher/SNA returning from career break must comply with the Garda Vetting regulations in operation at the time of return
- The terms and conditions of teachers in general including the terms of any redeployment scheme existing at time of return shall apply to a teacher resuming duty after a career break.

Resignation while on Career Break

A teacher/SNA on a career break who wishes to resign from his/her post must notify the Board of Management in writing in accordance with the teacher/SNA's terms of employment.

In the event that a teacher/SNA fails to resume duty at the end of an approved period of career break, the Board of Management shall immediately notify the Department so that incremental salary will not be issued. The Board of Management shall also take timely action to establish the position and may if appropriate initiate agreed disciplinary procedures

Other Leave

Leave of absences included under 'Other Leave'. Each of these leave categories are further detailed in Circular 54/ 2019 (available via Appendix I)

Type A

All of the 'Type A' leaves below will be subject to their relevant circulars as per the Dept of Education website: (<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-education/>).

They require direct notification to the **Board of Management**.

- Adoptive Leave
- Assault Leave
- Carers Leave
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Parental Leave
- Unpaid Leave

Type B

All of the 'Type B' leaves below will be subject to their relevant circulars as per the Dept of Education website: (<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-education/>). They require direct notification to the **Principal**.

- Brief Absences

Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) Days

As agreed at the staff meeting September 26

- Teachers are required to spread out their EPV days over the course of the school year
- Only one class teacher can be on an EPV day at a time.
- If 2 teachers want to take an EPV day on the same day, the person who asked first gets priority
- Teachers are not to request EPV days in June or busy times of the year unless it is urgent
- Teachers cannot take more than 2 courses days together
- Classes with large numbers of pupils will not receive any additional pupils for supervision due to EPV days
- All EPV days must be approved by the Board of Management
- Teachers will have ample work prepared for their pupils if they are taking an EPV day
- Teachers will request EPV days as soon as possible with the Principal and these will be noted on the Staff Calendar
- A member of the ISM team will draw up a class numbers to be divided list in the event of a class teacher being absent on an EPV day
- Sick leave

All staff members will contact both the Principal and the Deputy Principal as soon as they know they will be absent from school due to illness or for a medical appointment.

- As per Circular 54/2019 a Medical Certificate is required for all sick leave of more than 3 days

Limits of Staff on Leave

As a general principle every effort will be made by the Board of Management to facilitate applications for career breaks, job sharing and other forms of leave from members of the teaching staff.

The maximum number of teachers on leave (including career break, exchange, job sharing, secondment and Type A 'Other Leave') in any school year shall not exceed one quarter of the teaching staff.

Exceptions to this quota may be made where specific personal/family circumstances prevail

The maximum number of SNAs on leave (including career break, job-sharing and Type A 'Other Leave') in any school year shall not exceed one quarter of the teaching staff. Exceptions to this quota may be made where specific personal/family circumstances prevail

Where the number of applications for any form of long-term Leave (including the extension of existing arrangements) exceed the available quota, such applications will be considered on their merit by the Board of Management. The Board of Management may enlist the help of an independent assessor/advisor

Other Matters

Other matters for consideration including but not limited to public holidays, posts of responsibility and resignation while on leave are dealt with in the Circulars linked in Appendix I.

Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be evaluated on the basis of

1. The welfare and educational needs of pupils
2. Positive feedback from all stakeholders

3. The efficient and smooth operation of the various leave schemes
4. Revised/ new Circulars and Guidelines/ Directives from the Department of Education.
5. Regular reports by the Principal to the Board of Management on the operation of the Job Share arrangement

Ratification and Review

Ratification Date	1st Review Due	2nd Review Due	3rd Review Due
	September 2028	September 2030	September 2032
	Completed?	Completed?	Completed?

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix I

- Circular 54/ 2019 is available on the Department of Education website here:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/leave-schemes-for-registered-teachers-in-primary-post-primary-schools/>
- Details of the following leave schemes for Teachers and SNAs can be found on the Department of Education website here:
- Career Breaks: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/837ef0-career-break/>
- Job Sharing: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/aa5d83-job-sharing/>
- Adoptive Leave: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/5544be-adoptive-leave/>
- Assault Leave: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/9d6d99-leave-of-absence-following-assault/>
- Carers Leave (teachers only): <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/9e9efa-carers-leave/>
- Maternity Leave: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/60b672-maternity-leave/>
- Paternity Leave: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/e71fd8-paternity-leave/>
- Parental Leave: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/8339e2-parental-leave/>
- Unpaid Leave: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/991f78-unpaid-leave/>
- Brief Absences: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/8428c7-brief-absences/>
- Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) Days (teachers only): <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/4754b2-extra-personal-vacation-days/>
- Sick leave: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/e58e52-sick-leave/>