



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

Abacas Special School Kilnamanagh Career Break and Job-Sharing Policy

1. Introduction

The Board of Management recognises the benefits of the schemes provided by the Department of Education and Skills for teachers and SNAs in relation to career breaks and job-sharing. These schemes provide family-friendly working arrangements for those teachers and SNAs who need them, on a temporary basis. They also provide teachers and SNAs with the opportunities to further their professional and personal development through the acquisition of professional skills, academic qualifications, and alternative experiences, which may directly benefit the pupils they work with in our school.

However, while the Board of Management supports the implementation of job-sharing and career break schemes for teachers and SNAs at Abacas, it is mindful that any school policy on these schemes must strike a balance between the needs of staff and pupils and the long-term good of the school as a stable educational environment and workplace. Such a balanced approach prevents a tendency towards the casualization of the school's staff and will provide the best learning environment for pupils.

2. Rationale

This policy was put in place to satisfy the requirements of the following DES policy documents, in which it is stated that each employer shall develop and maintain a policy statement specific to the needs of the school in relation to the approval of job-sharing and career break arrangements:

- Terms & Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools, Edition 2 (27 June 2017)
- Circular Letter 0041/2014 Job-Sharing Scheme for SNAs in Recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools (8 May 2014)
- Circular Letter 22/2012- Career break scheme for SNAs (11 June 2012)
- The Education Act 1998

3. Considerations

Any decision taken by the Board of Management with regard to job-sharing and career break arrangements shall be based on the following considerations:

1. The welfare and educational needs of the pupils take precedence over all other considerations.
2. The continuity of teaching and the professionalism and expertise of our staff are important factors in the stability of our school. Therefore, an appropriate balance must



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

be struck between the number of long-serving members of staff and those who may have less experience.

3. The likely availability of suitably qualified replacement staff to fill any vacancy left by job-sharing staff or staff on career breaks. The school may have a limited number of suitably qualified and experienced personnel to draw on when seeking replacement teachers/SNAs for career breaks/job-sharing since replacement teachers/SNAs will always be appointed on a temporary basis only. If ongoing replacements are required, the school may have to substitute further replacements in the event that the temporary teachers seek more permanent employment elsewhere.
4. All applications must be considered in the context of other non-statutory leave and statutory leave.
5. The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that there is an effective and adequate middle-management structure in the school.

4. Restrictions regarding the number of career breaks/job-sharing applications approved

The following restrictions apply to the number of job-sharing positions /career breaks approved in a given school year:

1. A maximum of two full-time teaching posts may be affected by career breaks/job-sharing in any one school year. This is equivalent to two teachers on career break OR one teacher on career break and two teachers job-sharing.
2. A maximum of two teachers will be permitted to job-share in any one school year.
3. A maximum of four full-time SNA posts may be affected by career breaks/job-sharing in any one school year. This is equivalent to four SNAs on career break OR three SNAs on career break and two SNAs job-sharing OR two SNAs on career break and four SNAs job-sharing OR one SNA on career break and six SNAs job-sharing.
4. A maximum of six SNAs will be permitted to job-share in any one school year.

5. Eligibility criteria

The following eligibility criteria apply to staff seeking to apply for a career break / job-sharing:

1. Teachers and SNAs applying for job-sharing must be existing staff members.
2. Teachers applying for job-sharing must be registered with the Teaching Council.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

3. Teachers and SNAs may apply for job-sharing/career breaks if they have satisfactorily completed at the end of the school year in which they are applying, at least 12 months of continuous service with the current employer in either a temporary (fixed-term) or permanent capacity.

6. Application process

The closing date for all career break and job-sharing applications is **1st February** each year. Application forms will not be accepted by the Board of Management after this date.

All applicants must explain clearly in their application why they wish to take a career break or avail of job-sharing. Applications should be submitted as an e-mail attachment and sent to **abacasBOMd24@gmail.com**.

A teacher or SNA who wishes to extend his/her existing job-sharing/career break arrangement must re-apply on an annual basis in accordance with the application procedures outlined in this policy.

Process for teachers wishing to job-share:

Teacher applications for job-sharing should be submitted **in pairs**; that is that two job-sharing teachers involved in any job-sharing arrangement must be existing permanent staff-members, agreeing to apply together. This means that only an even number of job-sharing positions will be sanctioned for teachers. In other words, if only one existing teacher applies for job-sharing, no job-sharing position will be sanctioned for this role.

Applications from external teachers for job-sharing positions will not be accepted for the purpose of creating an even number of applicants. Nor will the Board of Management seek to recruit external, part-time teachers for job-sharing positions in cases where there is an uneven number of applicants.

Process for permanent SNAs wishing to job-share:

SNA applications for job-sharing should be submitted **in pairs**; that is that two job-sharing SNAs must be existing permanent staff-members, agreeing to apply together.

However, if a permanent SNA is unable to find a job-sharing partner, they may submit an application to the Board of Management to job-share with an SNA who is currently on a temporary contract, but who has completed 12 months of continuous employment with the school, once they can confirm to the Board that they have made every effort to find a job-sharing partner among the school's permanent SNA staff.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

If a permanent SNA is unable to find a job-sharing partner among the school's existing permanent or temporary SNA staff, they may still submit an application to the Board of Management to job-share, once they can confirm to the Board that they have made every effort to find a job-sharing partner among existing permanent and temporary staff.

Process for SNAs on temporary contracts wishing to job-share:

SNAs on temporary contracts, who have completed at least 12 months of continuous employment with the school, may apply for job-sharing together with a permanent SNA as their job-sharing partner, only on condition that the permanent SNA has been unable to source a partner among the other permanent SNA staff.

7. Selection process

The Board of Management will consider all eligible applications for job-sharing/career breaks, taking into account its statutory obligations as outlined in the DES Terms & Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, Edition 2, Circular Letter 0041/2014, Circular Letter 22/2012 and the Education Act 1998, and taking into account the considerations outlined under Section 3 above.

Each application for career break or job-sharing will be considered on its own merits by the employer within the context of this policy statement. The decision of the Board of Management shall be final.

In the event that the number of applicants exceeds the number of career breaks / job-sharing positions available in any given year, the Board of Management may take other factors into consideration. These include but are not limited to the following, which are listed in no particular order:

- The seniority of the staff members in question
- If the candidates have already taken a career break or held a job-sharing position in the past
- If the candidates were previously unsuccessful in their application for a career break or job-sharing position.

8. Notification of offers / refusal

Prior to the submission of applications to the Department of Education and Skills, the Board of Management will inform candidates in writing of its decision to approve or refuse career break/job-share by **1st March** at the latest.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

In the case of refusal, the written notice will set out the basis for refusal.

Teachers/SNAs approved for career breaks and job-sharing must respond in writing to an offer made. It will be understood that an acceptance is based on the conditions contained in the relevant circular listed above.

Applications for career break approved by the Board of Management will be notified to the Department of Education and Skills in accordance with procedures set out by the DES using the OLCs system.

Job-sharing teaching positions that have been approved by the BOM should be submitted to the DES using form JS1 in Appendix A of Chapter 9 of the Terms & Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Approved job-sharing SNA applications positions should be submitted to the DES on form JS1 attached to Circular Letter 0041/2014.

Photocopies of applications approved by the Board of Management will be sent to the Department of Education and Skills in accordance with procedures set out by the DES no later than **1st May** each year.

9. Conditions of career breaks

1. A teacher may engage in this scheme subject to an overall maximum absence of 10 years in the course of his/her professional career.
2. 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.
3. A subsequent career break may not be taken until the teacher 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.
4. A career break shall commence at the start of a school year and a return to duty in the school shall not be permitted other than on the start of a succeeding school year.
5. The duration of a career break may not extend beyond a) the date of termination of a fixed-term contract where the applicant is employed under such a contract or b) the date of compulsory retirement age.
6. Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the Board of Management to cater for a career break, a successful applicant is not permitted to withdraw his/her application after 1st March or once the replacement teacher/SNA's



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

contract has been signed, whichever happens first.

10. Conditions of job-sharing

Candidates who are successful in their application for job-sharing must comply with the following conditions:

1. Job-sharing positions are sanctioned for a period of one full school year only. Staff must re-apply if they wish to seek to avail of a job-sharing arrangement for a further year.
2. The working hours of a job-sharing teacher/SNA are reduced to 50% of a whole-time teacher/SNA's hours. Pay is reduced accordingly to 50% of the whole-time salary for the role in question.
3. The job-sharing arrangement for teachers and SNAs shall operate on the following basis: ONE SNA works Mondays and Tuesdays, ONE SNA works Thursday and Friday and EACH SNA works every second Wednesday.
4. A job-sharing teacher/SNA must be available for relevant staff and parent-teacher meetings in accordance with school policy and agreements.
5. The obligation to provide additional hours under the existing Public Service Agreements is pro-rata for teachers and SNAs who are job-sharing (e.g. Croke Park hours). This means that employees must be available at every second staff meeting/training day scheduled.
6. A job-sharing teacher may not engage in any substitute teaching or act as a special needs assistant in any school. (See Terms & Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, Chapter 9, Para 8.1).
7. A job-sharing SNA may not substitute for his/her job-sharing partner or engage in any additional SNA/teaching duties (see Circular Letter 0041/2014, Para 9.1).
8. It is not permissible for a job-sharing teacher/SNA to engage in outside employment without the consent of the employer. (See Terms & Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, Chapter 9, Para 8.2 and Circular Letter 0041/2014, Para 9.2 for further details.)
9. Entitlements arising to a job-sharing teacher/SNA, e.g. from bank holidays, will accrue to the teacher/SNA who would otherwise be scheduled for duty on the day in question. In such cases however, the normal attendance regime will, where necessary, be varied slightly with a view to allowing both job-sharing partners to benefit equally from school closures.
10. Teachers/SNAs participating in the job-sharing scheme must be aware that the arrangement may be terminated at any time if it is not operating in the best interests of pupils. (See Terms & Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Primary



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

and Post-Primary Schools, Chapter 9, Para 11.1 and Circular Letter 0041/2014, Para 13.1.)

11. Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the Board of Management to cater for a job-sharing post, a successful applicant is not permitted to withdraw his/her application after 1st March or once the replacement teacher/SNA's contract has been signed, whichever happens first.

11. Special working arrangements for job-sharing teachers

The following conditions apply to teachers engaged in a job-sharing arrangement:

1. Once the Board of Management has approved the application of two teachers to job-share, the parents whose children will be affected by this arrangement will be informed at the earliest opportunity that their children will be taught by job-sharing teachers in the following school year. The Board will notify parents by way of a special meeting called by the Principal/Board of Management. Teachers whose job-sharing applications have been approved by the Board are required to attend such a meeting and to present to parents the strategies that will be used to manage, teach and assess the class.
2. In consultation with the Principal, both teaching partners in a job-sharing arrangement shall prepare together a full year's work-plan as well as a fortnightly work-plan for the class. At the end of each month, the teachers shall complete a joint report of the curriculum taught and the progress made by the children during the month under both teachers.
3. Copies of the long-term plan, short-term plans and monthly reports shall be presented to the Principal at the appropriate times.
4. Together both teachers shall prepare an agreed timetable and plan an agreed calendar.
5. Job-sharing teachers are required to maintain a diary in which records of progress and important events shall be noted. Both teachers shall meet for a sufficient period of time after school at the end of each "teaching shift" to discuss and prepare the necessary handover.
6. Both teachers shall be present for any scheduled parent-teacher meetings, including IEP meetings.
7. End-of-year school reports shall be jointly filled out by both teachers for each child.
8. As a general principle, both teachers will display significant flexibility in relation to absences and holidays and will also ensure that their class's participation in school outings and events is not compromised in any way.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

12. Resumption of Duty following career break / job-sharing

A staff member must notify the school by 1st February of his/her intention to return from a career break or terminate a job-sharing arrangement 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 school).

In the case of teachers, it is the responsibility of the teacher 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 pre-requisite for the restoration of salary that the teacher 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 vetting regulations in operation at the time of return.

The terms and conditions of teachers/SNAs in general, including the terms of any redeployment scheme existing at time of return, shall apply to a teacher/SNA resuming duty after a career break.

13. Policy review

The Board of Management reserves the right to review the availability of job-sharing schemes for teachers and SNAs on an annual basis and/or to reduce the number of job-sharing positions and/or career breaks on offer in any given school year based on the considerations outlined in Section 3 above.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 25 January 2022.

Signed: _____

Chairperson