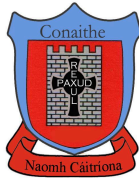


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Conna National School Policy on the Role of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

Introduction

Conna National School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all pupils. Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) play a vital role in supporting the care needs of pupils with additional needs, enabling them to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life. This policy outlines the role, responsibilities, and expectations of SNAs in our school.

Rationale

This policy has been developed to:

- Clarify the role of SNAs within the school.
- Ensure consistency and transparency in the deployment of SNAs.
- Support the effective integration of pupils with additional needs.
- Uphold Department of Education and NCSE guidelines regarding SNA allocation and duties.

Role of the SNA

The role of the SNA is primarily a care role, supporting pupils with additional care needs so they can engage with the learning environment as independently as possible. The SNA works under the guidance of the Principal and class teachers and forms an important part of the school team. SNAs do not have a teaching role but assist in creating a safe and supportive environment.

Duties of the SNA

In line with DES Circulars (e.g. 0030/2014), duties may include:

- Assisting pupils with physical, sensory, or medical needs (e.g., toileting, mobility, feeding, hygiene).
- Supporting pupils with behavioural or emotional needs to ensure safety and inclusion.
- Assisting pupils with accessing equipment, technology, or materials required for learning.
- Promoting independence and social interaction among pupils.

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- Accompanying pupils on school outings, activities, or appointments where necessary.
- Assisting with supervision in the schoolyard, at arrival and dismissal times, and during transitions.
- Contributing to the implementation of care plans and behaviour support plans.
- Providing support during emergencies or evacuations.
- Other appropriate duties as directed by the Principal, in line with Department guidelines.

Deployment of SNAs

- The Principal, in consultation with staff, will assign SNAs to classes/pupils based on care needs identified by the NCSE and/or relevant reports provided to the school from psychologists, NEPS, etc.
- SNAs may be reallocated within the school as needs change.
- The SNA team works collaboratively, supporting multiple pupils and assisting across classrooms where necessary.

Professional Conduct

SNAs are expected to:

- Maintain confidentiality regarding pupils and families.
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with teachers, parents, and other staff.
- Participate in relevant training and professional development.
- Model positive behaviour and uphold the ethos of Conna NS.

Collaboration with Parents and External Professionals

SNAs play an important role in ensuring that pupils with additional needs receive consistent care and support, both at school and in partnership with families and external professionals.

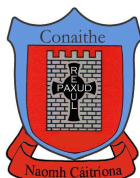
Key aspects of collaboration include: -

With Parents/Guardians:

- Communicating relevant observations regarding the pupil's care needs, behaviour, or wellbeing to the class teacher or Principal.
- Supporting agreed care routines in line with care plans and individual pupil support plans (IPSPs).

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- Maintaining sensitivity and confidentiality in all interactions.

With External Professionals:

- Supporting the implementation of recommendations from professionals such as:
- National Education. Psychological Service (NEPS).
- Occupational therapists
- Speech and language therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Medical professionals
- Participating, when appropriate, in meetings or assessments with these professionals under the guidance of the Principal or class teacher.
- Helping to monitor and record progress related to specific care or therapeutic interventions.

Collaboration is always guided by the pupil's best interests, with SNAs acting under the direction of the Principal and class teacher, ensuring consistency across home, school, and therapy settings.

Monitoring and Review

- The Principal will oversee and monitor the effective use of SNAs.
- This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if required by changes in Department of Education and Youth/National Council for Special Education (NCSE) guidelines.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Conna NS on October 1st 2025.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

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