

St John Bosco Community College



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SNA Policy

Ratified on: 10/12/18

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*SNA – Special Needs Assistant

*ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder

*PPP – Personal Pupil Plan

*NCSE – National Council for Special Education

*SENO – Special Educational Needs Organiser

*NEPS – National Educational Psychology Service

*BOM – Board Of Management

Introduction

1 Allocation of Special Needs Assistants

- **Role of the NCSE**

- SNA allocation is made by the NCSE and does not automatically continue with a child from primary to secondary school
- SNA support is provided where a child's care needs have been outlined in professional reports as being so significant that a pupil will require adult assistance in order to be able to attend school and to participate in education.

- **Role of the Principal/Board of Management.**

- In line with circular 0071/2011, SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal/Board of Management.
- SNA support will be given at the minimum level required to meet the needs of the student as the majority of students with care needs will only require attention/assistance at certain times of the school day. SNA support should not contribute to isolation by creating a barrier between the student and his/her peers.
- A core group of students, who have been allocated SNA support by the NCSE, will be identified early in the school year
- The SNAs will meet with the Principal in September to draw up the initial timetables. If SNA hours are subsequently granted to additional student/students, the timetables will be re-configured accordingly.
- Issues which may impact on SNA time-tabling include whether there is team-teaching in place already or the requirement to accompany certain students for practical subjects due to health and safety considerations.
- There may occasionally be a need to deviate from a timetable in response to a specific situation arising with another student who has an SNA allocation.

2 The Role of the SNA

Primary Care Needs

- The purpose of the SNA is to provide for the significant additional care needs, which some pupils with special education needs may have. These students will have a formal SNA allocation from the NCSE, based on these significant needs.
- The SNA will also assist with severe communication difficulties, enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities, sensory needs or significant and identified social and emotional difficulties. This includes help with assistive technology, typing and handwriting.
- The SNA will support the teacher in supervising the student as detailed below.

Secondary Care Needs

SNAs may assist with secondary care needs ONLY for those with an allocation for primary care needs. These include but are not limited to:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces or helping a child who is physically unable to present materials, display work, transition from one activity to another, clean materials where necessary.
- Assisting a child who has poor organisational skills with organising of books, copies, ensuring homework diary is filled in, ensuring that day-to-day school communications reach the child's parents. Where information on day-to-day school activities and/or materials requirements is unlikely to reach home via the student, the SNA communicates this information to parents/guardians through the use of the school journal.
- Assisting teachers in the supervision of children with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- Input to the development of what the circular calls PPPs for SEN pupils with a particular focus on the care plan element of the PPP. The SEN team in ST John Bosco CC Kildysart has settled on the use of the term Student Support Plan within the school.

- SNAs will submit a daily record sheet and a fortnightly record to the lead teacher for each of their assigned students. This report will be circulated to the relevant year head, the ASD team where this applies and to SEN team members.
- With the guidance of the Coordinator or class teacher(s), to plan for activities where there are additional care requirements e.g. walks/visits/trips, etc.
- With the guidance of the Coordinator/class teacher(s), to attend meetings with parents/SENO/NEPS psychologists/OTs, etc. as the need arises.

Behaviour Related Care Needs

In instances where SNA support is sanctioned to assist with behaviour-related care needs of a student, the SNA's role is to meet these needs by:

- Preserving the safety of the pupil and others.
- Assisting to ensure the prevention of self-injury or destructive behaviour.
- Reinforcing good behaviour/act as a positive role model.
- Recording data in relation to pupil behaviour/behavioural development.
- The SNA's role in relation to the behaviour management of specific pupils will be specified in that pupil's Individual Education Programme, which will include time-bound targets for behavioural improvements.
- In relation to reporting of incidents, a reflective diary is kept by all SNAs. Any serious incidents can be referred to class tutor, year-head or if very serious, to the Deputy Principal and Principal. If the need for a response is immediate or requires contact with a parent or guardian, the SNA should bring the issue directly to the attention of the Year-Head. If the incident relates to one of our ASD students, the SNA should also involve the ASD Co-ordinator.

Role of SNA in ASD Classroom

Along with the primary and secondary care needs listed above from an Autism perspective here are additional roles for the SNA:

- The SNA must adopt ways to help the child feel comfortable and safe in their school environment as children with Autism can find the anxiety usually associated with school more challenging than others. The SNAs role of ensuring the child feels comfortable with their surroundings is significant and they are encouraged to develop a bond with the child overtime.
- Children with Autism may need space and often find it very difficult to cope when over crowded. Therefore the SNA establishes a balance between supporting the student in their work and allowing them space.
- The SNA will endeavour to ensure that a child with Autism is not subjected to a situation which they find particularly hard to cope with.
- The SNA can withdraw a child from difficult circumstances and allow the issue to be addressed at a later stage when they have calmed down.
- The SNA plays an important role in enabling a child with Autism to become more independent thereby establishing the balance between encouraging independence and being mindful of their limits.
- The SNA can be a support in helping a child with Autism to socialise by encouraging them to engage with other children in the class as much as they are capable of. Equally, they can play a great role in ensuring other children are kind and inclusive of the child.
- The SNA plays a significant role in ensuring that a child with Autism gets the most from class time and applies themselves to a task as best they can. SNAs will encourage the child to stay focused and avoid circumstances where the child is subjected to undue distraction. The SNA will assist the child if clarity is needed regarding teacher instruction.
- The SNA will take both a caring role to affirm positive behaviour and an assertive role to address unacceptable behaviour in the school setting.
- The SNA has an important role in assisting teachers in the supervision of children with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.

Interaction of SNA and Teacher Roles

- SNAs are recruited specifically to assist with the care needs of pupils with disabilities. They do not have a teaching/pedagogical role.
- When a pupil has significant and complex care needs, the teacher will work closely with the SNA, but the teacher continues to have primary responsibility for teaching and learning.
- While it is appropriate for an SNA to assist students to access therapy support or to perform therapy tasks directed by a therapist, it is not appropriate for an SNA to be responsible for the management or provision of therapy services.
- Both teachers and SNAs will participate in school development planning.

Supervision

- The SNA will support the teacher in supervising the student at arrival, assembly, recreation, transitions, and at departure times as may be deemed necessary by the Principal.
Catering for the student's care needs may include withdrawal of a student from a classroom when essential – for safety reasons, medical reasons, and personal care reasons or due to distress. In such circumstances of one-to-one supervision, the SNA will always comply with current child protection guidelines from the Dept of Student and Youth Affairs (Ref: "Children First" www.dcy.gov.ie)
- In exceptional circumstances, where a SNA finds themselves alone with a class group where the class teacher or substitute teacher has not yet arrived in the GP Area, the SNA's primary responsibility is the supervision of the student to whom they are allocated.

Confidentiality

- SNAs will treat all matters relating to school business and their work with students as strictly confidential.

3 The SNA and the Personal Pupil Plan (Individual Education Programme)

- PPP Planning is a feature of provision for all students with special educational needs. Since September 2014, all SNA allocations are linked to the provision of a PPP and are reviewed annually.
- From 2014/15, the PPP has to show how the SNA will be deployed to assist the student. The PPP should include details of a plan showing ways in which the pupil's dependency on the SNA will be reduced over time.
- Where a student has an SNA allocation, the SNA should have a particular contribution to the care-plan element of the PPP.
- They should also support the student to voice their views on the PPP.
- The SNA has a role in monitoring the impact of the care plan and to document the progress being made in relation to the plan.

4 St John Bosco Community College's Commitment to CPD for SNA's

- The LCETB is committed to facilitating additional training for SNAs where such training is available – especially any training available through The Limerick Education Centre at Marshall House or through local support agencies for specific disabilities.
- SNAs are invited to identify any such training which they feel would be of benefit to them and to make their request through the Principal.
- Should the Principal come across any courses, which he/she feels might be of interest, he will pass on the information to the SNA group.