

St Joseph's National School Cong

# S.N.A. Policy

2023

Implementation of this policy is effective immediately.

#### Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson of the Board of Management and will be reviewed each year and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process that is monitored on an ongoing basis.

Signed:

Date:

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Definitions .....	3
Special Educational Needs:.....	3
Inclusion: .....	3
3. The Key Principles of Personal Pupil Plans in our school .....	6
4. Child Protection .....	7
5. Planning.....	8
6. SNA Role and Responsibilities * .....	8
7. Positive Approaches to assistance and care .....	9
Elements of Good Practice for all Staff: .....	9
8. Training .....	10
9. Facilities .....	10
10 Grievance procedure .....	10
<i>Appendix i</i> .....	11
The Role of the SNA.....	11
<i>Appendix ii</i> .....	12
Review of Care Support for SSF.....	12

## 1. Introduction

St Joseph's National School Cong seeks to be a warm and welcoming place respectful and accommodating of diversity in race, culture, religion, gender and ability. We strive to provide an inclusive environment responsive to the needs of all. We aim to promote equity in all areas and to provide extra support for any child with a learning disability, difficulty or problem through our resource allocation.

*Cong NS Mission Statement*

In tandem with the spirit of the school's mission statement all pupils with support needs will be treated with respect and their right to privacy upheld and actively promoted. To this end Cong NS strives to maintain standards, develop a supportive professional environment and promote positive attitudes and behaviours based on student-centred care.

The aim of the policy is to increase knowledge, enhance skills and promote good practice in this sensitive area. All staff will be made aware of the standards expected of them. Intimate care will be carried out only by regular school employees.

Relationship to the School Ethos. All pupils and staff members have the right to feel safe and be treated with dignity and respect.

Aims and Objectives.

The aims of this policy are;

- To ensure that the dignity and privacy of the pupil involved is paramount
- To develop a framework of procedures whereby support needs are dealt with in an appropriate manner with appropriate staffing Levels.

This policy should increase knowledge, enhance skills and promote good practice in this sensitive area. All staff will be made aware of the standards expected of them. Both primary and secondary care needs will be carried out by school SNA staff.

## 2. Definitions

### Special Educational Needs:

A restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.

Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004)

### Inclusion:

Inclusion is defined as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and removing barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements, to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school. National Council for Special Education (2011)

Table 1: Examples of primary and secondary care needs

Circular 0030/2014

Examples of the primary care needs which would be considered significant – and which might require SNA support are:

λ **Assistance with feeding:** where a child with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time

λ **Administration of medicine:** where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time

λ **Assistance with toileting and general hygiene:** (including professional training for SNA's to provide catheterization in line with our Intimate Care Policy) where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until they are able to do so.

λ **Assistance with mobility and orientation:** on an ongoing basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a child to access school transport), or helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)

λ **Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds:** at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision

λ **Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions:** such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.

λ **Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential:** This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.

- λ **Assistance with moving and lifting of children**, operation of hoists and equipment.
- λ **Assistance with severe communication difficulties** including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs (See also section 9) and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.

The tasks noted above are the primary care support tasks for which access to SNA support will normally be provided. The following tasks are the type of secondary care associated tasks which SNAs will often perform, but only once they have been allocated on the basis of the primary care support tasks listed above. The indicative list of secondary associated tasks listed below is not definitive and is reflective of the tasks detailed in Circulars 08/02 and 71/2011.

The associated support tasks which may be carried out, but which would not in themselves normally constitute a reason for the allocation of SNA support include:

- λ Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.
- λ Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans for children with special educational needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
- λ Assist teachers and/or Principal in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs. Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
- λ Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities, liaising with class teachers and other teachers such as the resource teacher and school principal, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal
- λ Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel<sup>1</sup>, including class teachers or support teachers.
- λ Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

The Role of the Classroom Teacher and Resource/Learning Support Teachers and the Role of an SNA to support those teachers Students with special educational needs can have very complex learning needs and should be taught by qualified and experienced teachers who are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the needs of these students. SNAs are recruited specifically to assist in the care needs of pupils with disabilities in an educational context. SNAs therefore do not have a teaching/pedagogical role and it would

not be appropriate for pupils with special needs to be taught by unqualified personnel. Section 22 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the teacher in the education and personal development of students in schools. The classroom teacher is responsible for educating all pupils in his/her class, including any pupil with a special educational need. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in his/her classroom, including pupils with special educational needs. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that each pupil is taught in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment where all pupils feel equal and valued. The teacher will have access to all information that is likely to be relevant to teaching or supervising a pupil with special educational needs. The classroom teacher also has a central role in identifying and responding to pupils with additional needs. These responses will be informed and assisted by collaboration with colleagues, parents/guardians and others such as the school's NEPS psychologist and the local SENO.

*From Circular 0030/2014 The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme to support teachers in meeting the care needs of some children with special educational needs, arising from a disability*

<sup>1</sup>Therapy interventions such as speech and language and physiotherapy services are often provided to students who require such therapy in schools by HSE medical professionals. The role of the SNA is to support the care needs of a child. Therefore, while it is appropriate for SNAs to assist students to access therapy support in schools, or to assist a therapist in providing support for a child or assist the child to perform therapy tasks directed by a therapist, it is not appropriate for an SNA to be expected to be responsible for the management or provision of therapy services in view of the particular skill-set required to deliver therapeutic interventions. Accordingly, the delivery of therapies is not in itself a reason to warrant the allocation of an SNA post nor can the provision of SNA support be made to compensate for a lack of therapy provision by qualified personnel.

### 3. The Key Principles of Special Needs Assisting in our school

This policy and related procedures have been developed bearing in mind that this:

- Should be aimed at meeting the needs of pupils
- Should respect the dignity of each student
- Should be consistent with professional integrity of staff members Policy rationale.

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to pupils' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

*DES Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*

Circular 0030/2014 clarifies and restates the purpose of the SNA scheme, which is to provide schools with additional adult support staff that can assist pupils with special educational needs who also have additional and significant care needs. Such support is provided in order to facilitate their attendance at school and minimise disruption to class or teaching time for the pupils concerned, or for their peers, and with a view to developing their independent living skills.

Where relevant, and in any instance where SNA support is provided, a care dimension in the form of Personalised Pupil Planning should be developed in conjunction with the Student Support File in the Continuum of Support framework, in the planning for care needs of students with special educational needs. A feature of provision for all students with special educational needs, is a team approach in the development, implementation and review of Personal Pupil Plans.

A Personal Pupil Plan for each pupil outlines the pupil's special care needs and shows how the SNA will be deployed to assist the pupil. The plan should demonstrate how the school intends to actively reduce, and where appropriate, eliminate dependency on SNA support within a reasonable timeframe. The plan should include time-bound targets for the development of independence skills. Only a very small number of pupils with severe special educational needs and very significant care needs will continue to access to SNA support throughout their education.

In deciding the level and extent of access to SNA support which should be provided to a child, the best interests of the child should be the paramount consideration. As far as practicable, the views of a child capable of forming his/her own views should be obtained and given due weight, having regard to the age and maturity of the child. The views of the child, where possible, should therefore be taken into account in reviewing the extent of access to SNA support required.

#### 4. Child Protection

People with disabilities and older people can be particularly vulnerable to abuse. The protection of people with disabilities is paramount. It is essential that all staff are familiar with intimate care policies and procedures and national guidance including Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

The following are factors that increase the vulnerability of a pupil with a disability:

- they may have less control over their lives than is normal
- they may often not recognise abuse
- they may have multiple carers
- differences in appearance may be attributed to a pupil's disability or medical condition rather than to abuse
- they may not always be able to communicate what is happening to them.

The PPP may describe the requirement for Intimate care and in this situation, the Intimate Care Policy must be followed. It is unrealistic to eliminate all risk but this vulnerability places an important responsibility on staff to act in accordance with agreed policies and procedures.



## 5. Planning

Where possible arrangements for assistance care should be informed by parents' and pupils' experiences of how this process can be made comfortable and appropriate. Records should reflect arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of intimate care plans. Some procedures may require two members of staff for health and safety reasons, for example, manual handling. This should be clearly stated in the pupil's individual plan (PPP).

- Assess pupils to determine how much care can be carried out independently and how support can be given to improve self-care skills.
- Plan assistance using student-centred approaches at all times.
- Address each pupil by their given or preferred name.
- Address each pupil in an age-appropriate way.
- Provide explanations of what is happening or will happen in a straightforward and reassuring way so that pupils are aware of the focus of the activity and know what is happening or what will happen.
- Agree terminology for parts of the body and bodily functions that will be used by staff and encourage them to use these terms consistently and appropriately.
- Encourage the pupil to undertake as much of the actions/procedures for themselves as possible.
- Respect a pupil's preference for a particular sequence of care.
- Be aware of, and respect, any cultural or religious sensitivities related to aspects of physical care.
- Seek the pupil's permission before physically moving them.
- Provide facilities that afford privacy and modesty for any intimate care needs (see the intimate care policy).
- Keep records noting responses any changes in behaviour.
- Be mindful of the psychological effect that a pupil might experience due to relying on others for support with tasks.
- Pupils have the right to expect that information about them is only shared to enable care.

## 6. SNA Role and Responsibilities \*

In St Joseph's National School Cong, SNA staff are involved on a daily basis in assistance care to pupils who use services arising from learning difficulties, sensory impairments, medical needs and physical impairments. This places staff in a position of great trust and responsibility. They are required to attend to the safety and comfort of those pupils and to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

\*For a detailed description of the role of the SNA see appendix 1.

## 7. Positive Approaches to assistance and care

### Elements of Good Practice for all Staff:

While it is not possible to prescribe guidelines that will apply in all situations, it is important the elements of good practice be followed:

- In the case that a pupil has a Personal Pupil Plan for assistance, ensure you are completely familiar with the plan.
- Address the pupil by name and ensure he/she is aware of the focus of the activity.
- Verbalise your actions to the pupil in a reassuring way to prepare them for each action/activity.
- Use visual cues for pupils with limited communication, e.g. pointing at a wipe or picture board.
- Use appropriate and professional language. Specific language may be detailed in a care plan.
- In physical assistance, the touch should be affirmative and supportive, not rough or insensitive.
- Respect the dignity and allows the pupil the maximum level of privacy at all times.
- Have all equipment and materials to hand before commencing.
- Use discreet observation if checking to see if a nappy needs changing.
- Use protective gloves or masks as required for pupils with autoimmune disorders.
- Take all precautions when disposing of soiled material in the bin provided.
- Manual handling procedures will be carried out in a manner which treats the pupil in a respectful way. Religious and cultural values must always be taken into account.
- The pupil's independence will be encouraged.
- Staff should demonstrate their respect for the dignity, modesty and privacy of all pupils through their general demeanour, through the manner in which they address and communicate with each student, by avoiding inappropriate comments or jokes and through discretion when discussing the pupil's medical condition or treatment needs.

## 8. Training

Staff should receive training in good working practices which comply with Health and Safety regulations such as dealing with body fluids, wearing protective clothing, manual handling and child protection.

Staff should also receive training in intimate care and for very specific intimate care procedures (for example, stoma care) where: relevant.

Intimate care plans should be recorded in a student's personal pupil plan. The plan must be reviewed on a regular basis at least annually and included in the Student Support File written by the class teacher.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

Teachers, and the Principal assume shared responsibility, participates in, and contributes to the implementation of an effective and equitable 'Personal Pupil Plan'

Success Criteria The school evaluates the success of the policy through;

1. Participation of all staff in the policy
2. Safe and effective care of all pupils in our school
3. Feedback from all staff
4. Feedback from relevant parents/guardians.

## 9. Facilities

- There should be sufficient space, heating and ventilation to ensure the safety and comfort of pupils receiving assistance care.
- There should be hot and cold running water available in all facilities. Antibacterial hand wash facilities should be available. Hand hygiene should be carried out in accordance with national guidelines.
- Items of protective clothing, such as disposable gloves and aprons should be provided. There should be no re-use of disposable gloves.
- The arrangements for the disposal of any contaminated waste/clinical materials should be carried out in accordance with national guidelines. Supplies of suitable cleaning materials should be available. Anti-bacterial spray should be used to clean surfaces. The latest infection control advice should be followed, for example, for clearing blood spills or for cleaning specialist equipment.
- The correct storage and fitting of continence products should be adhered to.

## 10. Grievance procedure

Issues of concern should be made know to the principal who will follow the standard procedure for dealing with a complaint or concern

*Appendix i*

**The Role of the SNA**

- To provide care assistance to named pupils who have special educational needs. They make a valuable contribution to the school's capacity to provide inclusive education to these pupils.
- To be made aware of the SEN plan, devised by the Special Needs Support Team, and given guidance on their role in the successful implementation of this plan.
- To recognise their role in the health and safety of the pupil and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency.
- Attending both Staff and Departmental meetings when appropriate.
- Assisting / escorting pupils on school trips.
- Giving special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping pupil with SEN with typing, writing or other use of equipment.
- Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and hygiene. being mindful of health and safety needs of the student.
- Assisting with house examinations (if appropriate).
- Assisting the teacher in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and in movement from one classroom to another.
- Accompanying individual or small groups who may be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom. **An SNA should not be asked to withdraw a pupil from a classroom unless this is a strategy that has been agreed by the SEN department and Principal, where teachers and parents will have been informed.**
- Give general assistance to the subject teacher, under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal, of a non-teaching nature. **The SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class.**
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- Engagement with parents of pupils with SEN as required and directed by school management.
- Other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school.
- The SNA may be re-assigned to other appropriate work when special needs pupils are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise.
- To treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential.
- SNA's are expected to provide and update a timetable during the school year and furnish the Principal and SEN Co-ordinator with a copy.

**St Josephs National School Cong Special Educational Needs** Policy 20...

Appendix ii  
Review of Care Support for SSF

<i>Student Information: Review of Care Support</i>			
<i>Student Name</i>		<i>Class</i>	
<i>Class Teacher</i>		<i>SET teacher</i>	
<i>SNA</i>		<i>SNA allocation</i>	
<i>SEN Category</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Current care assistance being given: SNA / Class teacher.</i>	<i>Future targets to independence: to feed into Student Support File (SSF). Input from Class Teacher + SNA + parent + pupil</i>	
Primary care needs:			
<b>Assistance with feeding:</b> where a child with special needs requires adult assistance.			
<b>Administration of medicine:</b> where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine.			
<b>Assistance with toileting and general hygiene:</b> (with professional training in catheterisation) where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so			
<b>Assistance with mobility and orientation:</b> on an ongoing basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport. Helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school.			
<b>Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds:</b> at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school.			
<b>Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions:</b> such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health. EG, Rescue medications, or masking for autoimmune vulnerabilities.			
<b>Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential:</b> This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis.			

<p><b>Assistance with moving and lifting of children</b>, operation of hoists and equipment.</p>		
<p><b>Assistance with severe communication difficulties</b> including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs, and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.</p>		
<p><b>Secondary care needs:</b></p>		
<p><b>Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms</b> or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another. To assist with cleaning of materials.</p>		
<p>Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans (PPP) by enabling children with special educational needs, to voice their views</p>		
<p><b>Care monitoring system, to assist teachers and/or principal.</b> EG Journal, care monitoring system/other</p>		
<p><b>Additional care requirements associated with particular in school activities.</b> Liaising with class teachers and other teachers such as the resource teacher and school principal, attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of class teacher/principal</p>		
<p><b>Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy</b> such as Occupational therapy, physiotherapy, anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of qualified personnel<sup>1</sup>.</p>		
<p><b>Additional care requirements associated with particular out of school activities:</b> walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.</p>		
<p><b><i>OTHER SUPPORT NEEDS:</i></b></p>		