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**St. Sinneach’s National School**

**Colehill**

**Co. Longford**

**Uimhir Rolla 14672 F**

**Special Needs Assistant Policy**

**Introductory Statement:**

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are appointed by the Board of Management and allocated duties and children by the school’s Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator(SENCO) and Principal. This policy is guided by the relevant circulars, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004.

**Rationale:**

It is necessary to have a policy for SNAs to:

Have clear guidelines and expectations for the roles and responsibilities the SNAs have in the school.

Ensure each SNA understands their role in contributing positively to the learning experiences of the children in the school.

Ensure best practices and continuity in their work.

**Aims:**

* To ensure the effective deployment of SNAs in Colehill National School.
* To enable the SNAs to effectively support class teachers.
* To enable the SNAs to effectively support the children with Special Educational Needs(SEN). (Children with SEN encompass all children in every stage of the continuum of support.)
* To clarify the roles and tasks of the SNAs.
* To ensure accountability and effective record keep

**Responsibilities:**

**The Principal:**

* Assigning role specific and child specific tasks to the SNA in association with the class teacher.
* Manage extra hours and tasks required.
* Assigning role specific and child specific tasks to the SNA in association with the class teacher.
* Co-ordinating the integration and devising the role profile of the SNA
* Monitoring the effectiveness of the SNAs contribution to the needs of designated children.
* Promoting in-service training. The Board of Management may fund or part-fund this professional development.
* Managing areas of conflict which may arise, with the assistance of the Deputy Principal.

**The Special Needs Assistants:**

* Responsible for their timetable in conjunction with class teachers and principal.
* Responsible for duties assigned in IEPs by SET team.
* Responsible for duties assigned by class teachers.
* Awareness and knowledge of policies which are relevant to their work – Code of Behaviour/ Special Ed policy and Child Safeguarding Statements and risk assessment guidelines.
* The SNA always works under the direction of the class teacher and the principal.
* There are 2 SNAs presently employed in the school.  They are considered an important part of the school team and carry out duties of a non-teaching nature.
* The teacher plans lessons and directs learning. The SNA provides support in assisting the pupil to access the curriculum.

**The Class Teacher**:

* Identify tasks which the SNA is to complete in the classroom when the time allows – make a list of duties.
* Collaborate with the SNA in matters of timetabling and planning where necessary.
* Devise a list of classroom tasks to be undertaken by the SNA when time is available.

**The Special Educational Teacher:**

* Include the SNA in IEP planning.
* Bring awareness to the SNA of their role in supporting the child to meet targets within the IEP
* Meet regularly with the SNA to review and plan work to support the child’s targets

**Guidelines: Work carried out by the SNA’s.**

* Assistance in regulating a child who presents with behaviours of concern.
* Assistance during dysregulation and crisis situations- behaviours of concern.
* Follow school action plan for child who presents with behaviours of concern.
* In line with circular 0081/2024, all incidents of physical restraint must be reported to the principal, Board of Management and NCSE.
* Assistance with the boarding/disembarking of transport.
* Assistance as necessary with tasks such as accessing IT or other equipment in school.
* Assistance with completion of teacher assigned work, staying on task, following classroom procedures, building of self-esteem and developing independence.
* Assisting in out of school trips, school tours, and other activities such as sport events.
* Assistance with clothing, toileting, and general hygiene of all children.
* Assisting teachers in supervision during breaks.
* Engaging with parents of special education children in an informal way.
* Document progress and set targets made on given time period i.e. 2 months. This plan should also record any incidents where the care needs of the child are evident.
* A copy of the SET’s IEP should be given to the Teacher, Principal and SNA.
* SNA must refer all matters on curriculum, classroom management, discipline or incidents of concerns etc. to the classroom teacher
* Confidentially deal with information received on children, and observations made in classrooms, need to be handled sensitively and carefully
* Explain how to do tasks but avoid giving the solution to a task or problem. Instead encourage the child to come up with the answer by questioning and prompting.
* Limit physical contact as much as possible, if the child’s attention is required,
* Physical contact may be required to protect a pupil from harm to themselves or others.
* SNAs are encouraged to build a positive relationship based on trust with the parents of children with SEN.
* Parents with questions, requests or concerns regarding school policy or practice should be referred directly to the class teacher or the Principal. This applies to direct face- to face communication or indirect telephone communication. Parents should contact teachers for information on the child’s progress.
* It is not appropriate for parents to have a private phone number of a member of staff or to contact the SNA outside of school hours
* If there are any minor incidents inform class teacher.
* A SNA should only sit with a child with SEN when and where deemed necessary by the class teacher
* Allow sometime during the school day where the child doesn’t have SNA sitting with him
* SNA should also have their own chair and table not beside the child.
* Supervise pupils from a distance if possible
* Supervision in the yard should promote social interaction and inclusion. After lunch SNA should assist pupils to form a line on the yard outside the classroom door and await the teacher.
* The SNA should never supervise alone in the classroom. If the class teacher leaves the room at any stage, the classroom door should remain open and the neighbouring teacher should be requested to supervise the class until the teacher returns.
* Be mindful of danger of a child absconding. Assist a child who poses as a flight risk.
* Time out sessions should follow a specific timetable to be most effective. The content should be worked out with the help from Physiotherapists and/or Occupational Therapist in conjunction with the teacher and a specific programme should be followed.
* Teacher should be informed of what’s happening and of progress being made
* Working one to one is best when helping a child to learn a new skill/game however working in pairs or with a small group may develop social skills, inclusion and teamwork.
* Care plans for pupils with a medical diagnosis must be followed at all times.
* Identify and engage in training or continuing professional development (CPD) to strengthen their ability to support students with special educational needs
* Assist with or administer medication discreetly in the classroom, only when required and in line with care plan and Anaphylaxis Policy
* Store all medicines appropriately in line with our Anaphylaxis Policy and pupil care plans.

**Confidentiality:**

* Due discretion is expected in all matters of a confidential nature.

**Timetables:**

* SNAs will be given a timetable by the Principal at the start of the year. Full time SNA works hours of 9:30am-3:10pm, break time is 10:50am to 11:10 am and lunch is 1:20pm to1:40pm. Part- time SNA works hours of 10:10am-1.20pm, break at 11.30-11.50am.
* SNAs can be requested to work up to 72 hours outside the school calendar at the discretion of the BOM. (These days equate to 72 hours which can be used in a flexible manner outside of school hours on school days (Circular 71/2011)
* SNAs will create their timetables in consultation with class teachers, SENCO, and principal.

**Planning and Reporting:**

* SNAs will create a Personal Pupil Profile (PPP) for every child in their care in consultation with SET/Class Teacher in the first school term of each year.
* PPPs should be given to the SENCO and teachers of the individual children.

**Parental Contact:**

* SNAs are encouraged to build positive relationships with parents.

**Seating Arrangements/Classroom assistance:**

* A primary duty of the SNA is to build independence. S/he should not be sitting with any one child for the whole school day.
* Class teachers, where suitable, will provide a table for the SNA in their room. This may not always be required or possible.
* SNAs should avoid over-talking and direct the children in a manner which doesn’t disrupt the class.
* The focus from the SNA should be to enable the child at all times to access their relevant curriculum.

**Supervision:**

* SNAs are encouraged to supervise pupils from a safe distance.
* SNAs should assist pupils in lining up after break times and wait for their teacher.

**Medication:**

* The procedures for administering any medication should be understood and followed where necessary.
* Medication should be administered discreetly and in line with pupil care forms and Anaphylaxis Policy.
* SNAs and class teacher will be responsible for making sure medication is stored correctly in either the office or a safe place in the classroom.
* If necessary the teacher can support or witness the administration of medication.
* Clear instructions must be provided by the parents on how to administer the medication and they must also sign an indemnity form, available from school office.
* The BOM will ensure that appropriate training is provided, where necessary, for the safe administration of medication.

**Best practices in developing the role of the SNA in school:**

* Teachers should work closely with SNAs to ensure that everyone is clear on where help is needed.
* Daily diaries or note taking is encouraged for professional reflection purposes.
* CPD is encouraged and the sharing of knowledge between SNAs and teachers is important.
* An atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect between all staff should be fostered.
* Regular meetings between the SNAs and the SENCO, Deputy Principal or Principal should be facilitated.
* SNAs are assigned to the school as a whole. Through consultation, the school will decide how best to utilise the SNAs.

**Seniority**

* The sequence in which the SNAs are appointed to the school determines their seniority.
* The seniority listing will be used in determining a last in, first out policy in times when allocations may be cut.

**Success Criteria:**

This policy will achieve its aims if:

* Children with SEN are included in the whole school.
* Children with SEN are in a safe and stimulating environment.
* Children with SEN are becoming independent learners.
* SNAs and teachers have a clear understanding of their roles and expectations.

**This policy was ratifies by the Board Of Management of Colehill National School in October 2025.**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Brenda Lavelle, Principal.

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Fr. Liam Murray, Chairperson, Board of Management.

**Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**