

Policy on the Role and Responsibilities of Special Needs Assistants

This policy is informed by the mission statement of the School.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are assigned to address additional care needs that left unaddressed would be a barrier to inclusion. Each student assigned an SNA will either have shared or full-time access depending on the level of need. All students assigned a SNA will have a *Student Support File* with a specified role for the SNA. The role of the SNA, whilst being mindful of health and safety, is to support students' participation in all activities of the School and to ensure that, whenever possible, their additional care needs do not prevent inclusion. SNAs support programmes aimed at developing students' independence and basic life skills, both inside and outside the classroom.

The Role of the SNA:

The SNA supports the care needs of students. They assist teachers (mainstream and additional education needs teachers) to ensure that the student can access education (Section 5, Circular Letter 0030/2014)

When deploying SNAs to students, the School's most vulnerable students with the highest care needs are prioritised. Supports are in place from the start of the school year where possible.

SNAs are important and valued members of the school community. An SNA is an important whole school resource. SNAs participate fully in the life of the School and may therefore also assist other children in the School, who from time to time need assistance, or who have intermittent care needs, but who may not have been assessed as requiring SNA support on a permanent basis.

The SNA works under the direction and supervision of the Principal, Deputy Principals and/or Additional Educational Needs (AEN) team and specifically under the direction and supervision of the AEN keyworkers of the students presenting with care needs.

The Responsibilities of the SNA include:

- Support the care needs of students in effectively accessing the curriculum.
- Contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the students.
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Support the supervision of students at break times.
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the School.
- Liaise with the keyworkers on a weekly basis to discuss and develop AEN matters.
- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principals and Assistant Principal (AEN coordination)
- Attend student support plan meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when requested.
- Maintain an observation record/record of support provided to their AEN student.
- Assist and escort students on school trips.
- Facilitate sensory breaks and maintain a record of such.

- Collaborate with other SNAs by providing profiles of students at start of year and updating at the end of the year for handover.
- Carry out other appropriate duties as determined by the needs of the students and the School.
- Be available to substitute when another SNA is absent or when needs arises.
- Recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, whilst promoting a culture of independence
- Where appropriate, ensure a second SNA is present when attending to a student's personal care needs.
- Communicate with parents/guardians when necessary, and as directed by the Principal, Deputy Principals, Assistant Principal (AEN Coordination) or AEN team
- Treat all matters relating to School business and their work in strict confidence.
- Being available during the month of June to assist with exam centres for State Examinations.
- Being available for a couple of days at the start and end of each school term, as per contract. These days (12 in total) may be combined at the discretion of school management to be utilised flexibly throughout the year for work appropriate to the grade, including training.

This policy was reviewed in the 2022/2023 academic year and will remain under review going forward, as required and in line with changing information, guidelines, legislation and feedback from stakeholders.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting on 8th March 2023.