St. Patrick’s N.S.

Drumshanbo,

Co. Leitrim.

Roll No: 19423J

**Leave of Absence**

**Reviewed: August 2021**

**Ratified: September 2021**

**Due for review: 2025/26**

**Leave of Absence Policy**

This policy was originally drawn up in January 2017 in response to a number of requests by teachers, for leave of different kinds. Since then we have had some teachers on career breaks and others availing of job-sharing. In light of this and of changes to DES policy and procedure with regard to certain types of leave, we are reviewing the policy in order to make every effort to meet the needs and wishes of our staff in the years ahead, without compromising on the education we wish to provide for our pupils.

Teachers and SNAs may apply to the Board of Management for a variety of types of Leave of Absence. Circulars outlining terms and conditions of the various types of absence are available on the Department of Education website www.education.ie and on the IPPN website under Supports & Services – [DES Circulars](http://www.ippn.ie/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=listcats&cat_id=210&Itemid=208).

The most significant circulars for teachers which relate to leave include

* 54/19 which includes information on
* Sick leave
* Maternity leave
* Paternity leave
* Adoptive leave
* Parental leave
* Carer’s leave
* Career break leave
* Job-sharing leave
* Secondment/temporary reassignment
* Unpaid leave
* 30/21
* Parents’ leave
* 32/07
* Brief absences

The most significant circulars for SNAs which relate to leave include

* 60/19
* Sick leave
* 17/13
* Maternity leave
* 35/21
* Parent’s Leave
* 41/14
* Jobshare
* 22/12 and 35/19
* Career break
* 18/04
* Brief absences
* Circulars are regularly updated. The above list is current at the time of drawing up the policy but it is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that they are using the most up-to-date circular, especially in light of changes that pertain during Covid.
* All circulars should be read in conjunction with the Web-book: **Terms and Conditions of Employment for registered Teachers**
* This is not an exhaustive list so, in the case of any other type of leave request teachers/SNAs should access the appropriate circular.

**School Secretary/Caretaker** may apply to the Board of Management for the following types of leave of absence:

* Maternity Leave/Paternity
* Leave/Adoptive Leave
* Parental Leave/Carer’s Leave
* Force Majeure Leave
* Brief Absences.

**Criteria used by the BOM for approval of long-term absences:**

Applications for leave that require the approval of the BOM will be considered on receipt of appropriate documentation in accordance with the following criteria, in no particular order:

* Number of teachers/SNAs on leave or seeking leave: There are currently 15 teachers and 7 SNA based in our school. We will facilitate leave for approximately 25% of staff – 4 teachers and 1/2 SNAs in any given school year. We do not include maternity/parental leave in this but are including longterm leave, career breaks and job-sharing. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Board will consider additional applications.
* Type(s) of Leave of Absence sought
* Purpose of proposed leave, as outlined on the official application form
* Availability of qualified suitable substitute/temporary teachers
* Length of service in the school
* The suitability of the partner in the case of job sharing/teacher exchange for the class concerned.

**Brief Absences** may be approved at the discretion of the Chairperson including short term unpaid personal leave with suitable substitution being a critical factor.

**Members of Staff applying for leave of absence must:**

1. Apply in writing in time to the Chairperson where applicable
2. Comply with terms laid down by the DES, BOM and relevant legislation. Applicants may be asked to attend a BoM meeting to further inform the Board if necessary.

**The Board of Management will:**

* Process each application for leave of absence as quickly as possible and comply with the terms of reference laid down by the DES, this policy statement and the law
* Inform the applicant of the Board’s decision, within one week of its decision
* Respect the confidentiality of all applicants request for leave
* Facilitate the granting of leave in all circumstances that in the opinion of the Board do not adversely affect the process of education the school.

**EPV Leave – see policy**

**Sick Leave**

School staffs are asked to contact the Principal or Deputy Principal as soon as they are aware of their inability to attend school. A text message will not suffice – personal contact must be made. This will give the school management the opportunity to secure substitute cover for the class at the earliest notification*.* Normally, the Board of Management can employ a substitute teacher from the second consecutive day of absence of uncertified sick leave*.* However, because of Covid restrictions, for the 2021/22 year, a substitute teacher may be employed from day one. Teachers may take a maximum of 7 days of uncertified sick leave in a 2 year rolling period. Where a teacher is absent on sick leave for more than three consecutive days, a medical certificate is required for the total period of the absence. All certified absences are substitutable. Where a teacher is absent on sick leave prior to and after a weekend or before and after a school closure, a medical certificate is required to include the inclusive period of absence.

**General Principles regarding Leave**

1. As a general principle, every effort will be made by the BOM to facilitate applications for career breaks and other forms of leave from members of the teaching staff.
2. **While recognising a teacher’s desire to take leave for whatever reason, the BOM has a duty to give the welfare and educational needs of pupils precedence over all other considerations.**
3. Should a teacher wish, the reason for taking leave need only be made known to the Principal and /or Chairperson of the BOM.
4. The maximum number of teachers on leave (including Career Break, Exchange, Leave of Absence, Study Leave, Job Sharing and Secondment) in any school year shall not exceed 1/4 of the teaching/SNA staff. Exceptions to this quota may be made where specific personal/family circumstances prevail.
5. Where the number of applications for any form of long-term leave (including the extension of existing arrangements) exceed the available quota, such applications will be considered on their merit by the BOM, under the following criteria:

* Length of service in this school
* Previous leave of absence(s)
* Reasons for leave and
* Other relevant information.

1. All leave of absence is granted on condition that a suitably qualified teacher is available to replace the teacher on leave.

**Job-sharing**

A member of the permanent teaching staff of St. Patrick’s NS may apply to work on a job sharing basis under the conditions set out by the DES. The following points outline additional factors influencing any job sharing arrangement:

1. As a guiding principle, the welfare & educational needs of the children will be the underpinning factor in all issues around Job Sharing. Teachers applying for job sharing arrangement will be interviewed individually to assess the viability of their proposed arrangement.
2. The maximum number of applications for Leave (including Career Break, Exchange, Leave of Absence, Study Leave, Job Sharing and Secondment) in any school year shall not exceed four, except in exceptional circumstances **(Circular 10/2011)**
3. In the case of a job share, which involves class teachers, both teachers shall present, along with the principal teacher, an information session for parents explaining the strategy employed to manage, teach & assess the class through a Job Sharing scheme.
4. In consultation with the Principal both class teachers shall prepare together a full year’s work-plan as well as a weekly/fortnightly scheme for the class. At the end of each week/fortnight both teachers shall complete a detailed report of the curriculum taught and the progress made by the children during the week/fortnight under both teachers.
5. Copies of the long-term plan, short-term plans and fortnightly reports shall be presented to the Principal Teacher at the appropriate times.
6. Together, both teachers shall prepare an agreed weekly and daily timetable.
7. Job sharers are required to maintain a diary in which records of progress and important events shall be noted. Both teachers shall meet for sufficient period of time after school at the end of each “teaching shift” to discuss and prepare the necessary handover.
8. As a general principle both teachers will display significant flexibility in relation to absences, holidays and also ensuring the class’s participation in school events shall continue to happen normally.
9. The two teachers shall work on the basis of week on - week off or a split week.
10. Both teachers shall be present for any scheduled parent/teacher meetings.
11. Both teachers shall attend staff meetings.
12. Teachers will complete 50% Croke Park hours, to include staff meetings.
13. Teacher working on that day shall attend inservice training.
14. End of year school reports/ shall be jointly filled out by both teachers for each child.
15. The Board of Management reserves the right to terminate a job-sharing arrangement, in the event that it is not operating in the best interests of pupils and school.
16. Each job-sharing arrangement will be reviewed at the end of each school year.
17. All applications are subject to a qualified replacement teacher being secured by June 30th of the year of application.
18. An application must be made to the Board of management, in writing before February 1st of the year in which the teacher proposes to take the leave is available as part of the 54/19 circular.
19. Teachers may apply for job sharing positions on a joint basis. The B.O.M. reserve the right to decide on the pairings.
20. A teacher may make an application to share a wholetime post on a 50:50 basis or may apply to reduce their hours to 50% of a wholetime teacher. This amounts to 14 hours 10 minutes per week in the case of a Primary teacher.
21. There are two options for a job sharing arrangement:
    1. Sharing a wholetime post: Two wholetime teachers in the same school apply to job share or in the case of interschool job sharing, two wholetime teachers in two different schools apply to job share.
    2. A teacher applies to job share and the employer is willing to recruit a teacher for the balance of the available hours on a specified purpose (fixed term) contract which will terminate at the end of the school year. Our BOM is unwilling to recruit unless the candidates are actively seeking a job-share. Otherwise we feel that candidates might not remain in the post for the allotted time, which would impact negatively on the children.
22. Applications will be considered by the B.O.M. from teachers where the Board employs the second teacher on a fixed term contract. If the application is successful, point 17 above shall apply.
23. A teacher who wishes to extend his/her job-sharing arrangement must apply for this extension on an annual basis.
24. A teacher on a career break or other approved leave of absence may apply to resume teaching duties on a job sharing basis.
25. The employer shall issue a written notice of approval or refusal, which will set out the basis of the refusal, to the teacher by 1st March at the latest.
26. Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the employer to cater for a job sharing post, the applicant should not be permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14th April, or from once the replacement teacher’s contract has been signed, whichever happens first. This should be included in the notice from the school to the teacher
27. In exceptional circumstances if the applicant can be accommodated within the approved staffing allocation and subject to contractual arrangements, an application for withdrawal from a job sharing scheme and/or an earlier return to full-time employment may be considered by the employer. However, such an application may not be considered beyond 1st November.
28. The obligation to provide additional hours under the existing Public Service Agreements is pro-rata for teachers who are job sharing.
29. It is not permissible for a job sharing teacher to engage in outside employment without the consent of the employer. It shall be a matter for the employer to determine whether or not any such employment is in conflict with their ability to carry out their duties as an employee of the school. If such a conflict is deemed to exist, the approval of the employer shall be withheld.
30. Where a primary school Deputy Principal is approved for job sharing he/she must relinquish his/her post of responsibility and the appropriate allowance for the duration of the job sharing arrangement.
31. An Assistant Principal or Post-holder may retain his/her post of responsibility allowance while job sharing provided the employer decides that the duties of the post can be performed in full.
32. Teachers shall be notified in writing of the Board’s decision.
33. Postholders who are job-sharing and who opt to retain the full postholder’s allowance, shall attend all meetings relevant to that postholders duties, including I.S.M. and (if applicable) Senior Management Meetings.

*For further details see the following:*

**Department of Education and Science Circular 75/2015 (54/19)**

**Implementation and review**

**Implementation/Ratification and Review**

This policy will be shared with the ISM team before the 2021/22 school year. It will then be shared with the staff of the school. Following input from them, it will be presented to the Board of Management at the next meeting (September 2021). If ratified, it will become school policy and will be included in the Plean Scoile

It is due for full review in 2025/26. The responsibility for the review will lie with the ISM team, teachers and BOM

However, changes in DES policy/circulars or concerns within the school community may necessitate earlier review.

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**Ratification of policy for St. Patrick’s NS**

**Martin McGowan 28/09/2021**

**Chairperson Date**

**Máirín O’Keeffe 28/09/2021**

**Principal Date**