

Policy

SPECIAL NEEDS **ASSISTANT**

Gorey Community School
March 2009

This is a statement of school policy for the role of Special Needs Assistants (SNA) working with pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

SCOPE

This policy statement has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students of Gorey Community School. This Policy outlines the role and function of the SNA in Gorey Community School (GCS).

AIM

The aim of the SNA in Gorey Community School is to support and facilitate those pupils with SEN, so that they feel happy, valued and supported to enable them to develop to their full potential.

ROLE OF SNA (see circular 15/05)

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist Gorey Community School in providing the necessary non teaching services to pupils with assessed special educational needs.

In particular, SNA's play a very important role in the health and safety of the pupil/s and in his/her/their social and emotional development.

The duties of the SNA have been delineated by the Principal on behalf of the Board of Management.

Their work is assigned and supervised by the SEN Co-ordinator.

The SNA's are part of the SEN team.

SNA duties include:

1. To provide special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties, for example, helping SEN pupils with typing, writing, computers or any other equipment as required.
2. To assist with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of the health and safety needs of the pupil.
3. To assist on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.

4. To assist the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.
5. To accompany individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.
6. To provide general assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. It is accepted that the SNA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstance will they be left in sole charge of a class or group of children.
7. To participate with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
8. To engage with parents of SEN pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.
9. To assist in preparation and tidying up of classroom.
10. To assist school children to board and alight from school buses.
Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required. Any contact with parents to be logged.
11. To assist with other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the grade when SEN pupils are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise.

FUNCTION OF THE SNA

- To assist the pupils assigned to them in accessing as much of the normal curriculum as possible.
- To assist the class teacher in implementing the curriculum.
- To help pupils carry out assigned tasks.
- To help pupils learn and adopt new skills.
- To praise, support and encourage pupils and to be a positive influence in the class.
- To facilitate periods of time-out for pupils where appropriate.
- To encourage and support pupils to be as independent as possible.
- To foster co-operative learning and facilitate development of friendships.

CONFIDENTIALTY

SNA's will carry out their duties in a caring, professional and confidential manner. Information on SEN pupils shall only be disclosed on a need to know basis to the relevant people.

While supporting the pupil's development in ways that will foster security and confidence, SNA's must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with school management in order to safeguard children.

WEEKLY SNA MEETING

Where possible, the school's complement of SNA's will meet, on a weekly basis with the SEN Co-ordinator, to discuss and develop any SEN related matters. These meetings aim to encourage commitment, team spirit and

provide an opportunity for the SNA's to pool their skills for the overall benefit of the pupils and school. A record of these meetings are kept in a Meetings record binder.

TEAM SPIRIT

At all times SNA's should endeavour to create an environment which is conducive to achieving the aims of Gorey Community School and recognize that the aims of SNA's are best achieved in a caring, mutually supportive and respectful manner.

SCHOOL POLICIES

SNA's should be aware of all Gorey Community School Policies, particularly those policies relating to Safety, Health and Welfare at Work, the Policy for Special Needs Education and the school's Fire Drill.