



Additional Needs Assistants (ANAs) Policy and Guidelines

ANAs are appointed by the Board of Management subsequent to the allocation of ANA hours for individual children by the SENO. Depending on the cumulative number of hours allocated to the school they may be appointed on a full-time or part-time basis.

All ANAs, whether full-time or part-time, will be required to sign a contract which lays out the terms of their employment.

The Policy is guided by the relevant legislation such as The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004 and DES Circulars 07/02, 08/03, 24/03, 13/04, 02/05, 0071/2011, 0030/2014

Rationale

The policy was formulated:

- To provide staff and parents with clear guidelines and expectations with regard to the ANA role and responsibilities within the school
- To ensure each ANA appreciates and understands the important role they have in contributing positively to the learning experiences of the children and the overall efficiency of the school
- To ensure best practice and continuity in how we work in GSR.

Aims

- To facilitate the recognition ANAs as valuable members of staff in a whole school context
- To ensure the effective deployment of ANAs in enhancing the social skills and self esteem of the children with Additional Needs
- To enable the ANA to be an effective support to the class teacher
- To provide optimum learning experiences for all children through judicious use of the skills and talents of the ANA
- To clarify the tasks and duties to be undertaken by the ANA
- To ensure accountability and effective record keeping.

Staff Roles

The Principal and the SEN Coordinator have responsibility for

- Assigning role specific and child specific tasks to the ANA in association with the class teacher
- Co-ordinating the integration and devising the role profile of the ANA
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the ANAs 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.

Special Educational Teachers

- Assume responsibility for IEPs in consultation with all relevant parties including the parents, SNA, class teacher and principal.

Class Teachers

- Ensure ANA support is available for those who need it in a class situation and identify the appropriate tasks to be completed by the ANAs
- Provide a suitable seating arrangement for the ANA and child in the mainstream setting
- Collaborate with the ANA with regard to planning and timetabling
- Devise a list of classroom tasks to be undertaken by the ANA when time is available e.g. Staff meetings, 10 minutes before/after school, etc.

ANAs

- There are 3 ANAs 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 ANA always works under the direction of the class teacher or Principal/SEN Coordinator
- The teacher plans lessons and directs learning. The ANA provides support in assisting the pupil to access the curriculum.
- The ANA should be familiar with all relevant school policy, in particular the school Code of Behaviour and Child Protection guidelines.

Guidelines for Special Needs Assistants

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| Hours of Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The full time ANA is paid for 32 hours per week and the part-time ANA is expected to work the number of hours outlined by the NCSE. The ANA is required to work normal classroom hours and in addition to attend before and after school in order to help with the preparation and tidying of classrooms. The time before and after schools to be agreed by the Board of Management. In addition the ANA must be available for an additional 72 hours(Public Service Agreement, Croke Park) per year outside of the normal school year must be worked. These hours are at the discretion of the Board of Management in consultation with the Principal and SNAs. |
| Confidentiality | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due discretion is expected in all matters of a confidential nature. |

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| Times and Timetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANAs will be given a timetable by the Principal at the start of the year. ANAs break time is 10- 10:15 am or 10:30-10:45am and lunch is 11:50-12:15pm or 12:40 -1:05pm. As part of the ANA contract, ANAs are required to spend ten minutes each morning and evening preparing, tidying and organising the classroom. ANAs also work 12 days outside the school calendar at the discretion of the Board of Management and Principal. This is on a pro rata basis for part-time ANAs. Class teacher will give the ANA a copy of class timetable also pointing out where the child will work with class or at own level during the day. Suitable times for movement breaks will also be identified. |
| Planning and Reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of the SET's timetable should be shared with the Teacher, Principal and ANA. Time for the teacher to meet with the ANA re. planning should be organised once a month. Teacher should outline expectations for child and ANA. ANA must refer all matters on curriculum, classroom management, discipline or incidents of concerns etc. to the classroom teacher |
| Level and type of classroom Assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information received on children, and observations made in classrooms, need to be handled sensitively and carefully The focus will be on an "Enabling mode" and avoiding the "Velcro mode" Avoid over-talking and providing a 'running commentary' of what to do next – this allows the child to concentrate and think independently Explain how to do tasks but avoid giving the solution to a task or problem. Instead encourage the child come up with the answer by questioning and prompting. |
| Physical contact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to have as little physical contact as possible, if the child's attention is required, place a hand lightly on the child's shoulder Physical contact may be required to protect a pupil from harm to themselves or others Help where necessary with changing for PE etc. while encouraging independence Actions of affection from a child towards an ANA should be handled sensitively but also appropriately To carry out some activities, an ANA may need to guide the child's body. This should be done by gently touching the shoulder, back, arms, hands or lower leg only. |
| Parental contact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANAs are encouraged to build a positive relationship based on trust with the parents of children with SEN If required at the end of the school day, escort the child to the school gate and greet the parent It is helpful to chat about how the day went or upcoming events but do not pass on information regarding child's educational progress 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 |

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| | <p>communication. Parents should contact teachers for information on the child's progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not appropriate for parents to have a private phone number of a member of staff or to contact the ANA outside of school hours Any incidents should be reported to the teacher. |
| Seating Arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ANA should only sit with a child with SEN when and where deemed necessary by the class teacher Allow some time during day where child doesn't have ANA sitting with him Avoid blocking view of another child ANA should also have their own chair and table not beside the child. |
| Supervision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervise pupils from a distance if possible Supervision in the yard and lunch room should promote social interaction and inclusion. The ANA 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. |
| Timeout Sessions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Due to short span of concentration timeouts are necessary daily and should last 10 minutes. |
| Medication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's Administration of Medicines Policy should be understood and followed at all times Administer medication discreetly in the classroom Only prescribed medication should be given Store all medicines appropriately in line with our Health and Safety Policy. |
| Relevant work | <p>ANAs work under the guidance of the classroom teacher and should not be left in sole charge of a pupil or class. They may however work on their own with children provided that the work in question has been allocated by the class teacher. Work may include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation and tidying up of classrooms Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required. Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs pupils with typing, writing, computers or other use of equipment |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting children to stay on task, follow classroom procedures and interact appropriately • Assisting children in establishing and maintaining a consistent routine • Assisting children to build self-esteem and to develop independence • Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil. • Assistance with accessing the curriculum as far as is possible for children with SEN • Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities. • Accompanying and supervising their assigned pupil on swimming outings • Where direct assistance is needed to change into swimming gear, specific parental consent must be received in writing. • Promoting the importance of personal hygiene and report any difficulties to the class teacher. • Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another. • Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another. • General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Additional needs assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class or group of children). • Participation with school improvement planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school improvement process. • Engagement with parents of pupils with additional needs in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management. • The encouragement of good attendance and punctuality • Acting as a positive role model for the children in their care • Other duties appropriate to the class as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Additional Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the class when pupils with additional needs are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise. • Work carried out during 'Croke Park' hours should be related to SEN provision in the school. |
| Staff Meetings | ANAs may be required to attend Staff Meetings when issues of relevance to their own particular work are up for discussion. The SEN Coordinator will have a structured staff meeting with the ANAs at least once per term. On |

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| | days of In-Service ancillary, ANAs may be required to attend school to complete tasks laid out by class teachers/Principal/SEN Coordinator. |
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Developing the Role of the ANA

- It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the ANA is clear about where help is needed. Planning together is essential
- It is also the teacher's responsibility to affirm and outwardly value the role of the ANA
- An atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect is fostered
- Regular meetings with the principal/SEN Coordinator and the ANAs are good opportunities to discuss issues and address concerns
- So that children do not build an unhealthy dependency on the ANA it is desirable that the ANA, rather than work exclusively with one child, should work with the whole group of children around the designated child's table. In that way several children in the classroom get the benefit of the ANA's support.
- ANAs allocated to children with physical disabilities will support them as needs require both within the classroom and outside it. This may include shadowing the child while in the playground or helping him to make his way in and out of the school.
- On days when the teaching staff are attending In-service courses, ANAs will report for work as usual. They will be assigned duties to help the classroom organisation of the absent teachers i.e. preparation of classroom displays, organisation of the classroom libraries, preparation of teaching equipment, photocopying etc.

Contract of Employment

ANAs are not specifically assigned to an individual child but rather to the school as a whole. However, during lunch break ANAs may have direct responsibility for a particular child. The school operates a 'last in, first out' policy. However, it must be noted that all positions are up for regular review in association with the DES, the BOM, NEPS, and NCSE.

Seniority

The sequence in which special need assistants are appointed to the school determines their seniority. Seniority is important in determining which special need assistant(s) should be offered reduced hours or have their employment terminated when the allocation of the school is reduced. The seniority listing will be used in determining 'last in, first out' for the purpose of redundancy.

The Board of Management determines the seniority based on special need assistants' date of commencement of duty as an ANA in a school.

Success Criteria

This policy is aimed at making a difference to the teaching and learning of children with Additional Needs in our school. We will know that the policy is achieving its aims when

- children with Additional Needs are included in whole school activities
- children are experiencing a safe and stimulating environment
- the children are becoming independent learners and acquiring life skills
- the child is reaching the targets set out in School Support Plans.