Duiske College
Special Needs Assistant Policy

The Policy was devised following a consultative process with all interested parties, and is guided by the relevant legislation such as The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004 and D.E.S Circulars 07/02, 08/03, 24/03, 13/04, 02/05 0030/2014 and 0049/2024.

Rationale
The policy was formulated so that
- All staff, including SNAs, have clear guidelines on procedures within the school
- Each SNA can see themselves as contributing positively to the learning experiences of the students and to the overall efficiency of the school.
- A culture of fairness and equality is clearly in operation throughout the school.

Aims
- To facilitate the inclusion of SNAs as valuable members of staff in a whole school context
- To ensure the effective deployment of SNAs in enhancing the social skills and self- esteem of students with special needs
- To enable the SNA to be an effective support to the class teacher
- To provide optimum learning experiences for all children through judicial use of the skills and talents of the SNA
- To clarify the tasks and duties to be undertaken by the SNA.

Overview of Role of SNA:
 "The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme is designed to provide schools with additional adult support staff who can assist children with special educational needs who also have additional and significant care needs. Such support is provided in order to facilitate the attendance of those pupils at school and also to minimise disruption to class or teaching time for the pupils concerned, or for their peers, and with a view to developing their independent living skills." (p.3, DES Circular 0030/2014).

 "The type of significant care needs that pupils may have can be varied, depending on the nature or level of the disability or sensory impairment that a child may have". Circular 0030/2014. The Information Pamphlet for Parents/Guardians of Children/Young Persons with Special Educational Needs (SEN) – entitled 'Special Needs Assistant (SNA) Scheme' and available from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is a useful source of information re the role of the SNA.

Staff Roles

The Principal and Deputy Principal
- Responsibility for assigning role specific and student specific tasks to the SNA in collaboration with their class teachers
- Direct responsibility for co-ordinating the integration and devising the role profile of the SNA
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the SNA contribution to the needs of designated children
- Responsibility for the provision of in-service training
- Ensuring the implementation of Department of Education Guidelines
- Managing areas of conflict which may arise, with the assistance of the Deputy Principal.
- The Principal may delegate these duties to the Learning Support Department Coordinator or ASD Coordinator, where deemed appropriate.

LEARNING SUPPORT/ASD Coordinator
- Identify the appropriate tasks to be completed by the SNA team in accordance with the relevant circulars.
- Ensure SNA support is available and provided for those who may need it.
- Coordinate all relevant documentation.
- Coordinate Learning Support team and facilitate information sharing and record keeping.
- Promote good practice in Learning Support teaching.
- Liaise with Management re the implementation of care needs and delegate roles where appropriate.
- Coordinates the recording of Student Support Plans and other relevant documentation.
- Oversees the recording of observations of students.
- Meet with the SNA team regularly to monitor progress and deal with any issues as they arise.
- Act as a conduit between management and the SNA team where appropriate.
- Ensure the care needs of each student are being met through regular observation and communication with SNA team.

Class/Subject Teachers
- Collaboration with the SNA, where this is appropriate.
- Completion of paperwork evaluating and observation of the students.
- Differentiation of lessons.
- Ensure SNA support is available for those who need it in a class situation and identify the appropriate tasks to be completed by the SNAs
- To ensure the effective deployment of SNAs in enhancing the social skills and self-esteem of the children with Special Educational Needs
- To enable the SNA to be an effective support to the class teacher

- To provide optimum learning experiences for all children through judicial use of the skills and talents of the SNA
- To clarify the tasks and duties to be undertaken by the SNA in their classes.
- To ensure accountability and effective record keeping.

The Role of the SNA

SNAs are considered an important part of the school team and carry out duties of a non-teaching nature.

The SNA always works under the direction of the class teacher, Learning Support teacher or Autism class coordinator.

The teacher plans lessons and directs learning. The SNA provides support to the teacher and the pupils and supports the teaching of the curriculum.
The teacher is responsible for discipline in the classroom, at all times.

The role and responsibilities of the SNA are as follows:
- To foster the participation of assigned pupils in the social and academic processes of the school. This is done through **supervising and assisting small groups of pupils in activities Learning Support by the teacher.**
- Promoting the **inclusion** of these children in mainstream work and keeping them on task.
- Escorting groups of students to work areas outside the classroom, boarding and alighting from buses, preparing gym equipment, assisting in PE and Art classes etc.
- Assist students with transportation, where necessary.
- The SNA will supervise their assigned children during assigned break times.
- **An extremely important function of the SNA is to enable their assigned students to become more independent learners and to progress**. The SNA team is encouraged to develop the skills of independence in collaboration with their assigned students.
- Should act as a positive role model, be calm and in control and aim to build trust and a rapport both in the classroom and during breaktimes /leisure activities.
- The school does not encourage the 'Velcro model' whereby a student is assigned to a particular SNA for a prolonged period of time. It is the policy of the school to rotate SNAs between students.
- The SNA team plays an important role in supporting the work of outside agencies such as Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists under the guidance of the Learning Support teacher.

- The SNA will also be required to assist teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods, school visits, walks and similar activities.
- The SNA team will be responsible for assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene among other care needs as appropriate.
- Meet with the Learning Support/ASD coordinator to be assigned students and tasks.
- Attend to the care needs of students with designated SNA access.
- Implement strategies to support these students academically.
- Liaise with Learning Support team.
- Add a record of any behavioural or other unusual occurrence in the Silaire chat.
- Make themselves available for all other SEN related tasks as they may arise.
- Collaborate with Learning Support teachers to inform target setting and evaluation of Progress
- Act as an advocate for their students
- Act as a positive role model.

Hours of Work
The full time SNA is expected to work 32 hours per week and the part-time SNA is expected to work the number of hours outlined by the NCSE. It is vital that the SNA is punctual to school and to class. In addition, 12 additional days per year outside of the normal school year may be worked. These days are at the discretion of the Board of Management in consultation with the Principal and SNAs.

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

Timetables

SNAs will be given a timetable by the Principal or designated Coordinator at the start of the year. These may be subject to change if student needs arise/change. Most likely these will change often.
No SNA shall be permanently in any class/position and may be utilised to serve the best interests of our students.
Planning and Reporting

All behavioural or other unusual occurrences should be recorded in the Silaire chat. We will use the process of Restorative Practice to talk to students about their behaviour when they are regulated.
Time for the Learning Support/ASD team to meet with the SNA re planning should be organised no less than once a week.
SNA must refer all matters on curriculum, classroom management, discipline or incidents of concerns etc. to the classroom teacher.

<u>**Parental Contact**</u>

- SNAs 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 student to the school gate and greet the parent.
- SNAs may be requested to attend meetings with the Learning Support/ASD Coordinator and Parents of assigned students, where appropriate.
- All communication must go through the assigned Learning Support teacher.
- Parents with questions, requests or concerns regarding school policy or practice should be referred directly to the ASD Coordinator 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 contact the SNA outside of school hours regarding a student.

Classroom Procedure
- The SNA must refer all matters on curriculum, classroom management, discipline etc. to the classroom teacher
- SEN (AEN) information is available to staff on VSWare.
- Information received regarding students and observations made in classrooms, need to be handled sensitively and carefully and comply with KCETB GDPR guidelines .

Contract of Employment
- Each SNA will not be specifically assigned to an individual student, but rather to the school as a whole. As such, tasks will be delegated which benefit the learning environment or support the teaching and learning in the classroom.
- During lunch break each SNA may have direct responsibility for a particular student or be required to monitor a small group of students (in ASD classroom).

Staff Meetings
Each SNA may be required to attend whole Staff Meetings when issues of relevance to their own particular work is to be discussed.
 On days of In-Service the SNA team may be required to attend school to complete tasks laid out by class teachers/Principal. These days may also be used for upskilling SNA team via in house or external CPD.

CPD Training
Regular training is provided for SNAs where appropriate. This may coincide with in-service days for mainstream staff or may be during the personal time of the SNA (as these may only be availed of as and when courses become available through the local Education Centre.

Success Criteria
This Policy is geared to making a difference to the teaching and learning of students with Additional Needs in our school. We will know that the Policy is achieving its aims when:
- Children with SEN are included in selected whole school activities without disruption to mainstream class procedures
- All students are experiencing a safe and stimulating environment
- The SEN students in our care are becoming independent learners and acquiring life skills
- The student is reaching the targets set out in their Student Support Plan.

Implementation and Review
The plan will be implemented by the teachers and SNA team and supported by the Board of Management.
It will be reviewed in_____
Ratification and Communication
This Policy will be circulated to the Parents Association and the Board of Management for approval.

This plan was formally ratified by the Board of management on _____.

The plan will be implemented by the teachers and SNAs supported by the Board of Management from _____.
It will be reviewed every ___ years.

Signed: _____   Date: _____
         Chairperson, BoM