**SNA Policy:**

**School Name:** Edmund Rice Secondary School, Carrick-on-Suir.

**School Address:** Mount St. Nicholas, Carrick-on- Suir, Co. Tipperary.

**School Details:** ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship and the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

**School Management:** The Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

**Mission Statement:**

Inspired by its founder, ERSS Carrick-on-Suir’s mission is to “*To provide a caring Christian community which celebrates effort and talent in an environment of hope and happiness"* , with a vision to *“Learn together, succeed together in a respectful environment.”*

**Ethos**:

As an Edmund Rice School ERSS Carrick-on-Suir seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

● Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values

● Promoting partnership in the school community

● Excelling in teaching and learning

● Creating a caring school community

● Inspiring transformational leadership

Please Note:

Personal data collected about prospective students/students and their parents/guardians will be retained and used strictly in accordance with the provisions of GDPR legislation as introduced 25th. May 2018. Further details on data protection are set out in the school’s Data Protection Policy.

**1. Scope of Policy**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the various stakeholders of ERSS. This policy outlines the role, responsibilities and good practices of the Special Needs Assistants in ERSS.

**2. Allocation of SNAs to ERSS**

SNAs are allocated to ERSS, to provide care assistance to students who have additional and/or special educational needs. Special needs assistant posts are allocated currently following application to the SENO. This year a school allocation was considered for schools with little or no SNA allocation.

SNAs may be appointed for the care of students with assessed special educational needs who have, for example, a significant medical need for assistance or a significant impairment of physical or sensory function, or on behalf of students with emotional behavioural difficulties.

It is the responsibility of school management, acting on behalf of the Board of Management, to assign the SNAs to particular students who have access to SNA support in a way that best meets their individual needs. These arrangements are designed to support students becoming more independent. SNA’s work under the direction of either the principal or another designated person, as determined by the principal.

**3. Role of SNA - Circular Letter 12/05 Based on Circular 0030/2020 the role of the SNA has not changed**

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist schools in providing the necessary non–teaching services to pupils with assessed educational needs. The duties of SNAs involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

i. Preparation and tidying up of classrooms

ii. Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary, travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required.

iii. Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs pupils with typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment.

iv. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil.

v. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.

vi. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.

vii. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.

viii. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special 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).

ix. Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and cooperation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.

x. Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.

xi. 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 reassigned to other work appropriate to the grade when special needs pupils are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise.

**Seating Arrangements:**

• A SNA should only sit with a student with SEN when and where deemed necessary by the subject teacher.

• If an SNA wishes to move their Core student, they should prior seek the advice of the subject teacher. • To build independence, an NA should increase the times when the Core student is left to work independently as appropriate.

• SNAs should avoid blocking the view of another student and the whiteboard

• SNA should also have their own chair and table not beside the student

**Supervision:**

• Supervise pupils from a distance if possible.

• Supervision at break and lunch times should promote social interaction and inclusion.

• After break and lunchtimes, SNAs should assist pupils to form a line outside the classroom door and await the teacher.

• The SNA should never supervise alone in the classroom. If the class teacher leaves the room at any stage, the classroom door should remain open and another teacher should be requested to supervise the class until the teacher returns.

• Be mindful of students that are a flight risk.

• Accompany students with medical needs on school outings as arranged with the SENCO, Guidance Councillor or Principal.

**Medication:**

• SNAs may be expected to work with students with diabetes, hypopituitarism, ADHD, allergies, asthma or epilepsy.

• Information about pupils with medical needs is collated by the SEN /Principal/Deputy Principal

• The SEN department documents the medical needs of some students in particular students with SEN. Care plans can be accessed through Teams and VSware for all members of staff.

• Administration of medication can be done discreetly within the classroom, in the Guidance office or the Principal/Deputy Principal’s office.

• Students themselves will administer the medicines as witnessed and documented by an SNA.

• Only prescribed medication and approved by the student’s parent /guardian should be given.

• Store all medicines appropriately in line with The ERSS Health and Safety Policy.

• SNAs should engage with regular CPD on the administration of medication and procedures to be taken in medical emergencies.

**4. Working Hours**

SNAs are expected to work the normal classroom hours including class break periods.

SNA breaks are provided in line with Organisation of Working Time Act 1997

a. 15 minute break for 4.5hrs worked (Morning Break)

b. 30 minute break for 6hrs worked (Lunchtime)

In addition, SNAs are to attend before and after school in order to help organise students with SEN through the preparation/tidying up classrooms and reception/dispersal of students.

4.1 **SNA Work In June**

Furthermore, Circular 12/05 specifically states that SNAs in the post primary sector are required to work the month of June on examinations and other work appropriate to the grade including training.

This condition of service places a clear onus and obligation on SNAs to attend and be available for work during the month of June. In ERSS the SNA will be expected to run the book lending scheme. In ERSS, it is expected that SNAs be available for 10 full days (8.30am-3am) of work in the month of June. Days that SNAs are assistant examiners in the State Examinations and being paid by the State Exam Commission for such work, will not be considered as part of the 10 days of work to be completed in June.

In April, a schedule will be prepared by school management, in consultation with all SNAs, to identify which 10 days the SNAs will each work in June to ensure there is consistency of cover throughout the month of June and a continuous presence for the duration of the State Examinations.

4.2 **Assistant Examiners in the State Examinations**

SNAs may be invited to apply to be Assistant Examiners in the State Examinations. The days working as assistant examiners will not be counted as part of the 10 working days in June. If there are more applications from SNAs to be assistant examiners than positions available, a rotation will be organised for following years that will prioritise SNAs who were not assistant examiners in the previous year.

**5. Administration - Timetables / Weekly Logs / Reporting**

a. SNAs’ Timetables are to be prepared in discussion with the year head team.

b. SNAs should always be with their student(s) in the classes as per the timetable.

c. Any change to the timetable should be sent to the Principal / Deputy Principal and SEN Coordinator and an updated timetable prepared.

d. Weekly logs on students with SNA access are to be completed bi-weekly by Monday for the previous two weeks. Student logs are to be stored in the specific ‘Observations’ folder.

e. Any other reporting on students should be done via an incident report form and shared with the Year Head / SEN Coordinator / Deputy Principal as appropriate. Incident report forms are available in the staff room.

f. SNA meetings with the SEN Coordinator and school management will take place at regular intervals throughout the school year to discuss and develop any SEN related matters. These meetings aim to encourage commitment, team spirit and provide an opportunity for the SNAs to pool their skills for the overall benefit of the students with SEN. In the school.

**6. Break / Lunchtime Supervision**

a. SNAs are expected to undertake one break time supervision duty and one lunchtime supervision duty on a weekly basis. While efforts are made to allocate preferred days for break supervision, the need may arise to change the day(s) to ensure an even spread of cover and adequate levels of student supervision.

b. During break and lunchtime supervision, SNAs should be present in the area designated on the supervision roster.

**7. Public Sector Agreement ‘72 Hours’ - Circular 0071/2011**

a. Under the existing contract, SNAs are required to be available for a number of days at the start and finish of each school term, not exceeding 12 in total, and no more than 5 consecutive days. Instead of these days being solely used as days outside of the normal school calendar, they can be used as an additional bank of hours to be utilised and delivered outside of normal school opening hours and/or the normal school year. These 12 days equate to 72 hours (pro-rata for part-time SNAs).

b. The 72 hours can be used in one of the following two ways (or a combination of both):

i. The SNAs in ERSS are obliged to be available for 4 days before the start of term. The SNAs will work for 6 hours on each of these days which will constitute 24 hours of the ‘72 Hours’.

ii. A proportion of the ‘72 Hours’, amounting to 8 hours, will be attributed to completing biweekly journals.

iii. The remaining 40 hours of the ‘72 Hours’ may be aggregated in hourly blocks, scheduled on days when SNAs would normally be in attendance and outside of normal attendance hours. A block of time so scheduled should be immediately before or after normal attendance hours. However, a reasonable period may be allowed for a work break. A longer delay may be allowed (e.g. because of an evening event in the school) where there is a consensus to do so.

iv. At the discretion of school management, the remaining hours may also be aggregated in blocks of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 consecutive days (Maximum 5 at any one time), scheduled outside of days when SNAs would normally be in attendance. A block of days so scheduled will immediately follow or precede school terms or occur within a couple of days thereof. A longer gap to the start or end of terms may be allowed where there is a consensus to do so.

v. The 72 hours can be designated at the sole discretion of school management to deal with some or all of the items set out in set out in point c below. However, it is recognised that because of the range of needs of pupils, it is not possible to identify every circumstance that might arise, and therefore other appropriate duties might require to be carried out.

c. **Non-exhaustive List of Duties**

i. SEN pupil-centred activity:

a. Provide input with regard to care needs for the preparation of Student Support Files;

b. Assist with care planning;

c. Provide assistance and information in relation to care needs for preparation of physiological and school reports and files;

d. Assist transition process in relation to care needs for pupils from one school or education centre to another;

e. Assist SEN pupils to display their work;

f. Assist in analysis of attendance for SEN pupils;

g. Assist teachers and/or principal in maintaining a journal and uniform care monitoring system for SEN pupils;

h. Assist Principal or other teacher designated by Principal in preparing briefing profiles on SEN pupils;

i. Under the direction of the Principal or designated teacher, assist in compiling information for staff for the return to class in the new academic year e.g. special section in staff handbook, particularly in relation to care and assistance required in class for SEN pupils

ii**. Learning resource administration:**

a. Preparation, organising, tidying of Class Rooms:

b. Prepare materials and equipment in classrooms used by SEN pupils including cleaning any specialist equipment used by SEN pupils, e.g. computer keyboards, special desks;

c. Provide assistance for students with SEN in relation to assembling their class materials, displays, programmes, books and preparing their materials for class.

iii. Class and school planning and development:

a. Participation with school development planning and policy development, where appropriate, including reference to particular assistance required by SEN pupils to participate fully in school;

b. Planning for the following day’s classes; in particular where there may be additional care or assistance requirements for certain classes or projects;

c. Liaising with the class teacher;

d. Liaising with other teachers such as resource teachers and/or Principal;

e. Meetings with parents as appropriate with the agreement and guidance of the Principal and/or class teacher;

f. Preparation for and attendance at whole team meetings and staff meetings;

g. Participation in and assistance with school operational structures which are in place to facilitate the full integration and participation of SEN pupils in school; Examinations(Both State and House Examinations):

h. Assist in the setting up of Special Examination Centres and appropriate accommodation centres for examinations;

i. Assist in ensuring that special centres are properly organised, and that SEN pupils with assigned SNA are present and have the appropriate equipment;

j. Where rooms are adapted for use as special centres, assist in restoring those rooms for normal school use after the examinations have finished. Training and development:

k. Training (nationally or school mandated);

l. Inform colleague SNAs of best practice based on professional and experiential knowledge in relation to the educational and care needs of SEN pupils, with the agreement and guidance of the Principal, and/or class teacher;

m. Up-skill in the use of ICT as learning tools for SEN pupils;

iv. **Other:**

a. Other work which is appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the SEN pupils and the school.

**8. Sick Leave / Brief Absences - Circular 0054/2015 / Circular 0032/2010**

a. SNAs should be familiar with circulars that deal with sick leave and brief absences.

b. SNAs should be aware of their certified / self-certified sick leave (number of days in the last year/two year/four year period). The Deputy Principal will provide an individual letter to each SNA detailing their leave biannually in September and January of each school year.

c. Any SNA who is sick and unable to attend work on a given day should contact the Deputy Principal as soon in advance of work as is practical.

d. Medical certs should be obtained and presented in a timely manner.

e. The maximum number of self-certified sick leave days allowable in any rolling period of 2 consecutive years of special needs assistant service counting backwards from the latest self-certified sick leave absence is 7. Any self-certified sick leave absence in excess of the maximum 7 days will be recorded as unauthorised leave, is unpaid and may be dealt with under the agreed disciplinary procedures. At a minimum, the absence will be made known to the Board of Management.

f. Each SNA will be eligible to apply for two days of personal leave in a school year. This is a local arrangement in ERSS. Any personal leave taken should be arranged well in advance of the leave. This leave is to be taken for specific personal reasons e.g. Wedding of Friend etc. This leave must be sanctioned by the Principal on behalf of the BOM. SNAs should use the relevant school forms to apply for personal leave.

g. Details of leave entitlements for Bereavement / Force Majeure / Jury Service / Witness in

Court / Marriage Leave etc. are detailed in Circular 0032/2010.

**Developing the Role of the SNA**

• It is the subject teacher and SNAs joint responsibility to ensure that the SNA is clear about where help is needed. Planning together and communication is essential.

• It is the subject teacher’s responsibility to affirm the value of the role of the SNA with their class.

• Diaries recording significant events are essential, noted with the date incidents occurred.

• An atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect is fostered.

• Regular meetings with the SNA, SENCO, Guidance councillor and/or Principal are good opportunities to discuss issues and address concerns.

• So that students do not build an unhealthy dependency on the SNA it is desirable that the SNA, rather than work exclusively with one child, should work with the whole group of students around the designated student’s workspace. In that way several students in the classroom get the benefit of the SNA’s support.

• SNAs allocated to students with physical disabilities will support them as needs require both within the classroom and outside it. This may include shadowing the student while at break or lunch or helping them to make their way to the school bus.

• On days when the teaching staff are attending in-service courses, SNAs will report for work as usual. These non-structured days are a prime opportunity for SNAs to assess the needs of the SEN department ie PPE, refresh classroom displays on wellbeing and anti-anxiety techniques, plan out routes for anti-anxiety walks, replace laminated signs, photocopying, engage in online CPD etc.

**Contract of Employment :**

SNAs are not specifically assigned to an individual student but rather to the school as a whole. School Support Plus students and students with medical needs are a priority for SNA support.

SNAs will be assigned a Core group of students in which they support and communication about this student will be directed to this SNA.

It is expected that SNAs will be called upon to help facilitate Special centres during the Christmas and Mock exams. This is in consultation with the Exam secretary, SENCO and Principal.

**9. Child Protection**

a. All SNAs are to complete CP Training upon commencement of working in ERSS. This training should be repeated periodically, at least once in a three year period.

b. It is the responsibility of an SNA to know who is the DLP and DDLP in the school.

c. SNA’s must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with school management to safeguard students with SEN.

**10. Professionalism (Please Read in Conjunction with Appendix I)**

a. SNAs should not be in contact with students directly on their personal mobiles.

b. SNAs should only make contact with parents on the advice of the SEN Coordinator.

c. SNAs should not be engaging with any students on social media.

d. It is understood that SNAs establish close and supportive relationships with their students. However, conversations should never become too personal and it is the responsibility of the SNA, as an adult, that the relationship remains professional with appropriate boundaries in place.

e. Smoking at the school gates is not allowed. Please cooperate with school management on this matter.

f. SNAs should use the staff room for eating lunch. Lockers can be arranged for storage of personal belongings if required.

g. SNAs are expected to treat all matters relating to school business and their work in the school as strictly confidential. SNAs will carry out their duties in a caring, professional and confidential manner. Information pertaining to students with SEN shall only be disclosed on a need to know basis to the relevant people.

h. SNA’s should be aware of the relevant policies of ERSS.

**Approval:**

This policy has been distributed to staff, parents and students for their approval.

Amendments have been made after consultation with these stakeholders.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir;

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This policy will be due for review on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix I - SNA Professional Standards**

The Professional Standards for SNA’s are set out in four themes. Within each theme there are everal standards. It is intended that the standards assist SNA’s to shape their own practice and professional development.

The standards can be used:

● As a focus for reflection on their own practice.

● To have a constructive conversation with the principal, teachers and others about areas where support is needed for professional development.

● To give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe.

● To aid, guide and inform schools’ processes for identifying training and development needs.

**A. Personal and Professional Conduct**

SNA’s should uphold public trust in the education profession by:

● Having proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of ERSS as professional members of staff.

● Demonstrating positive attitudes, values and behaviours to develop and sustain effective relationships with the school community.

● Having regard for the need to safeguard students’ well-being by following relevant statutory guidance along with school policies, procedures and practice.

● Upholding values consistent with those required from teachers by respecting individual differences and cultural diversity.

● Committing to improve their own practice through self-evaluation and awareness.

**B. Knowledge and understanding**

SNA’s are expected to:

● Share responsibility for ensuring that their own knowledge and understanding is relevant and up to date by reflecting on their own practice, liaising with school leaders, and identifying relevant professional development to improve personal effectiveness.

● Take opportunities to acquire the appropriate skills, qualifications, and/or experience required for the SNA role, with support from the school.

● Demonstrate expertise and skills in understanding the needs of all pupils (including specialist expertise as appropriate) and know how to contribute effectively to the adaptation and delivery of support to meet individual needs.

● Understand their roles and responsibilities within the classroom and whole school context, recognising that these may extend beyond a direct support role.

**C. Teaching and learning**

SNA’s are expected to:

● Demonstrate an informed and efficient approach to teaching and learning by adopting relevant strategies to support the work of the teacher and increase achievement of all pupils including, where appropriate, those with special educational needs and disabilities.

● Promote, support and facilitate inclusion by encouraging participation of all students in learning and extracurricular activities.

● Use effective behaviour management strategies consistently in line with the policy and procedures of ERSS.

● Contribute to effective assessment and planning by supporting the monitoring, recording and reporting of pupil performance and progress.

● Communicate effectively and sensitively with pupils to adapt to their needs and support their learning.

**D. Working with others**

SNA’s are expected to:

● Recognise and respect the role and contribution of other professionals, parents and carers by liaising effectively and working in partnership with them.

● With the class teacher, keep other professionals accurately informed of performance and progress or concerns they may have about the pupils they work with.

● Understand their responsibility to share knowledge to inform planning and decision making.

● Understand their role in order to be able to work collaboratively with classroom teachers and other colleagues, including specialist advisory teachers.

● Communicate their knowledge and understanding of pupils to other school staff and education, health and social care professionals, so that informed decision making can take place.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of ERSS Carrick on Suir;

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Secretary:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_