**Scoil Charthaigh Naofa**

**Roll:20273A**

**Career Break and Leave Policy for Teachers and SNA’s (A separate policy exists for Job Share)**

**Scoil Charthaigh Naofa**

**Jan ’22 Reviewed September 2025**

**Introduction**

The Board of Management of Scoil Charthaigh Naofa, in line with departmental regulations has drawn up the following policy taking account of relevant circulars. This policy is specific to the needs of Scoil Charthaigh Naofa and in framing this policy the welfare and educational needs of pupils take precedence over all other considerations.

**Vision**

This policy complements the school ethos. At Scoil Charthaigh Naofa we strive for a child centred approach and equal opportunities for all. This policy will endeavour to provide opportunities for staff while ensuring children are reaching their full potential with the staff in the school.

**Rationale**

The Board of Management identified the need for a policy to ensure procedures are in accordance with Circulars 0054/2019, 0041/2014, 22/2012 and 0035/2019.

**Aims**

We aim to:

• Develop and maintain a policy specific to the needs of the school in relation to the approval of career breaks and other leave.

• Ensure the welfare and educational needs of the pupils takes precedence over all other considerations in relation to the sanctioning of career breaks and other leave.

• Ensure that the consideration of a career break or other leave application has due regard to the capacity of the school to meet its obligations to its pupils and therefore apply a reasonable limit to the number of teaching staff and SNAs that may be on leave at any one time.

• Clarify the school’s procedures in relation to career breaks and other leave.

**CAREER BREAKS**

**Definition:**

A Career Break is a period of special leave without pay. The main objective of the Career Break Scheme is to facilitate applicants where possible, in relation to areas such as:

a) Personal Development

b) Voluntary Service Overseas

c) Accompany spouse/partner on Diplomatic/Military Posting

d) Educational purposes

e) Public Representation

f) Family Reasons

g) Self-employment

**Eligibility:**

• A teacher is eligible to apply for a Career Break where he/she will have satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are applying, 12 months of continuous service with the current employer. This requirement is waived where a teacher is compulsorily redeployed into a school or where a school is amalgamated provided that he/she has worked at least one full year in his/her former school prior to redeployment/amalgamation.

• A special needs assistant may apply for a career break where he/she will have satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are applying, 12 months of continuous service with the current employer.

**Duration of Career Break:**

1. A Career Break is for a period of not less than 1 school year and may be extended on an annual basis provided the total period of the Career Break does not exceed 5 years at any one time, subject to an overall maximum of 10-years absence in the course of the teacher’s/SNAs career.

2. A subsequent Career Break may not be taken until the teacher/SNA has served for a period equal to the duration of the previous Career Break. In the case of a teacher wishing to avail of a Career Break to undertake voluntary service abroad/missionary/diplomatic/military/Oireachtas or study leave this requirement will be waived.

3. A Career Break must commence at the start of a school year. A return to duty in the school which granted the Career Break or to the school where the teacher has been redeployed is not permitted other than at the beginning of a succeeding school year.

4. In exceptional circumstances, an employer may approve a Career Break to commence during the course of a school year and terminate not earlier than the end of that school year. This is deemed to be a 1-year Career Break.

5. The duration of a Career Break may not extend beyond:

a) the date of termination of a fixed term contract

b) the date of compulsory retirement

c) the limits set out at point 1

d) the end of the relevant school year (in cases where an application for extension has not been submitted/approved) Career Break, Job-Sharing and Leave Policy December 2020 Page | 3

**Application Procedures:**

**Teacher:**

1. A teacher seeking a Career Break must submit the completed Application Form at Appendix A of circular 0054/2019 to the employer not later than 1st February of each school year.

2. A late application may be considered by the employer in exceptional circumstances.

3. A teacher who wishes to extend his/her Career Break must apply for this extension on an annual basis within the deadline set out at point 1.

4. Each application for, or extension of, a Career Break shall be considered on its own merits by the employer within the context of the school policy on teacher absences. The decision of the employer is final.

5. The employer’s decision on the Career Break application must include a written notice of approval or refusal to the teacher no later than 1st March. Where an application is refused the employer must include the grounds for refusal.

6. The Career Break absence must be notified by the employer to the Department via the OLCS on or before 1st April. The employer must also list the names of all teachers availing of a Career Break on the annual Change of Staff form.

7. Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the employer to accommodate the Career Break, the applicant is not permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14th April. In exceptional circumstances the employer may consider a later withdrawal of a Career Break application.

**Special Needs Assistant:**

• A special needs assistant seeking a career break must submit a written application to the employer not later than the 1st March of the school year prior to that in which he/she proposes to commence/continue the career break. The application must provide clear details of the exact purpose of the career break. A late application may be considered by the employer in exceptional circumstances.

• A special needs assistant who wishes to extend his/her career break must apply for this extension on an annual basis not later than the 1st March.

• Each application for a career break shall be considered on its own merits by the employer within the context of the school’s policy statement. The decision of the employer shall be final.

• The employer shall issue a written notice of approval or refusal to the special needs assistant by 1st April at the latest and submit notice of the career break absence to the Department (via the OLCS) on or before 1st May. In the case of special needs assistants paid on the Departments payroll the employer must also indicate the names of those availing of a career break on the NTS Appointment Position Form.

• Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the employer to cater for the career break, the applicant shall not be permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14th April. In exceptional circumstances the employer in its sole discretion may consider a later withdrawal of a career break application.

**Return to Work following Career Break:**

• A teacher must notify the employer by 1st February of his/her intention to return to work from a Career Break at the beginning of the next school year. A special needs assistant must notify the employer by the 1st March of his/her intention to return to work from a career break at the beginning of the next school year.

• It is the responsibility of the teacher returning from a Career Break to ensure that he/she is registered with the Teaching Council on the intended date of resumption. Please note that the Teaching Council registration process, which includes vetting, may take up to 12 weeks during the peak period of July and August. Additional police clearance requirements may also be applicable where teachers have lived abroad. Teachers are therefore advised to commence the registration process once they have notified the school of their intention to return to work.

• A special needs assistant returning from a career break must comply with the vetting regulations in operation at the time of return.

• A teacher/SNA returning from a Career Break following an absence greater than 2 school years must undergo a medical assessment and be certified medically fit by the OHS prior to returning to work.

• The terms and conditions of teachers/SNAs in general including the terms of any redeployment scheme existing at the time of return shall apply to those resuming duty after a Career Break.

**Resignation while on Career Break:**

• A teacher/SNA on a Career Break who wishes to resign from his/her teaching post must notify the employer in writing in accordance with the teacher’s/SNAs terms of employment. If a teacher resigns from the Career Break during the course of the school year, that year will be deemed to be a full school year should the teacher/SNA re-enter teaching service at a later date.

• In the event that a teacher/SNA fails to resume duty at the end of an approved period of Career Break, the employer shall immediately notify the Paymaster so that salary will not be restored. The employer shall also take timely action to establish the position and take appropriate action.

**Please see Circulars 0054/2019, 22/2012 and 0035/2019 for full details of the Career Break Scheme.**

**OTHER LEAVE**

**LEAVE OF ABSENCES INCLUDED UNDER ‘OTHER LEAVE’**

**Type A:**

• Adoptive Leave

• Assault Leave

• Carer’s Leave

• Maternity Leave

• Paternity Leave

• Parental Leave

• Temporary Re-Assignment

• Unpaid Leave

**Type B:**

• Brief Absences

• Extra Personal Vacation Days (teachers)

• Sick Leave

**TYPE A LEAVE**

• All of the above Type A leaves will be subject to their relevant circulars as per the Department of Education and Skills website ([www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie))

• They require direct notification to the Board of Management.

**TYBE B LEAVE**

• All of the above Type B leaves will be subject to their relevant circulars as per the Department of Education and Skills website ([www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie))

• They require direct notification to the Principal.

**Limitations of Sanctioning Career Breaks, Job-Sharing and other Leave**

• As a general principle, every effort will be made by the Board of Management to facilitate applications for career breaks, job-sharing and other forms of leave from members of the teaching staff and SNAs.

• The maximum number of teachers on leave in any school year shall not exceed 30% of the teaching staff. Exceptions to this quota may be made where specific personal/family circumstances prevail.

• The maximum number of SNAs on leave in any school year shall not exceed 20% of the SNA staff. Exceptions to this quota may be made where specific personal/family circumstances prevail.

• The Board of management will consider applications in the context of other statutory and nonstatutory leave and will take into account the availability of an appropriately qualified replacement teacher.

**Success Criteria**

Our Career Break, Job-sharing and Leave Policy will be seen to be working well when;

• Positive feedback from members of the school community is received

• The school community are clear about and are committed to the principles that are outlined in this policy and correct procedures are being implemented

• A policy statement specific to the needs of the school in relation to the approval of career breaks, job-sharing and other leave is developed and maintained

• The welfare and educational needs of the pupils takes precedence over all other considerations in relation to the sanctioning of career breaks, job-sharing or other leave

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board of Management, Principal, Teachers and SNAs have both a role and a responsibility in successfully implementing this policy.

**Implementation Date**

This policy was implemented in September 2025

**Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically.

**Ratification and Communication**

This policy will be communicated to members of the Board of Management on 01/10/2025

**Date of ratification:**

01/10/2025

Signed: