

Salesian Secondary College. Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick.



Policy Statement on Career Breaks

Mission Statement

We state our mission as follows:

“Salesian Secondary College is a voluntary, catholic, secondary school under the trusteeship of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Our school dedicates itself to educational excellence taking into account the uniqueness and complexity of each individual pupil. We strive to create an atmosphere where pupils are happy and thrive in an environment imbued with St. John Bosco’s three educational principles of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness.”

To achieve this mission aim to provide opportunities for students:

- We strive for academic excellence and skill, according to the abilities of each individual
- We strive to enable our students to develop “wholistically”, in a balanced way, i.e. physically, spiritually, morally, artistically, mentally and emotionally
- We strive, as a Catholic school, to be faithful in passing on Gospel values
- We strive to nurture mutual respect and concern for others, irrespective of ethnicity, colour, gender, sexual orientation, social status or creed.

Rationale

The policy exists within the framework provided by Circulars 0054/2019 and 0010/2011.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that teachers / SNA’s are fully aware of the factors which the Board of Management takes into account when making decisions regarding career breaks.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Job Sharing Policy and Teaching Council Guidelines.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff of Salesian Secondary College equally.

A teacher may apply for a career break where s/he: is registered with the Teaching Council and has satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are applying, 12 months of continuous service in the school.

A special needs assistant (SNA) may apply for a career break where he/she: has satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are applying, 12 months of continuous service in the school.

This Policy takes effect from the date of ratification.

Definition

A career break means special leave without pay. The main objectives of this scheme listed below, which are not exhaustive, is for Board of Management, wherever possible to facilitate applicants in the areas of:

- Personal Development
- Voluntary Service Overseas (teacher only)
- Accompany spouse/partner on Diplomatic/Military Posting (teacher only)
- Education
- Public Representation
- Childcare/Dependent care
- Self-employment

Duration of Career Break

- A teacher/SNA may engage in this scheme subject to an overall maximum absence of 10 years in the course of his/her professional career.
- A career break shall be 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.
- 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.
- A career break shall commence on the start of a school year and a return to duty in the school which granted the career break shall not be permitted other than on the start of a succeeding school year.

Operation of the Scheme

- The Board of Management shall consider favourably applications for career break.
- A teacher/SNA seeking a career break must submit a written application to the Board of Management not later than the 1st February of each school year prior to that in which s/he 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 Board of Management in exceptional circumstances.
- Career breaks can be granted for a number of purposes. The management authority should not grant/deny career-breaks based on subjective decisions regarding the purpose of the break. However a career break should not be granted where there is a conflict of interest between the employment in which the teacher proposes to engage and the educational purposes of recognised schools.
- The number of teachers granted career-breaks in any one-year shall not exceed 10% of the school's Whole Time Equivalent (wte), save in exceptional circumstances.
- In cases where the Board is unable to grant all requested breaks, favour will be given as follows, priority will be given to members of staff who have not previously availed of career-break (minus 1 point for each year already taken).
- A teacher/SNA who wishes to extend his/her career break must apply for this extension on an annual basis before the 1st of February.
- Each application for / or extension of a career break shall be considered on its own merits by the Board of Management. The decision of the Board of Management shall be final.
- The Board of Management shall issue a written notice of approval or refusal to the teacher/SNA by 1st March at the latest and submit notice of the career break absence to the Department (via the OnLine Claims System) /VEC on or before 1st April.
- The Principal will list the names of all teachers/SNAs availing of a career break on the annual change of staff form. An applicant shall not be permitted to withdraw his/her application after the 14th April.

Teachers granted Career Break are reminded that they are advised to avail of opportunities to keep up with subjects and levels for which they are not timetabled during the Career Break period, so that they are confident meeting the demands of a full timetable in their subject areas at all levels at the end of that period.

Posts of Responsibility

Ability

A teacher on career break will retain eligibility to apply for a Post of Responsibility which occurs in the school and s/he shall be notified of any vacancies by the Board of Management.

Resumption of Duty following a Career Break

- A teacher/SNA must notify the Board of Management by the 1st February of his/her intention to return to teaching from a career break at the beginning of the next school year. Failure to do so may result in the return being deferred for a further school year (e.g. in the event that the late notification resulted in contractual difficulties for the Board of Management).
- It is the responsibility of the teacher/SNA returning from a career break to ensure that s/he is registered with the Teaching Council on the intended date of resumption.
- A teacher/SNA returning from a career break in excess of two school years shall be screened by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). It is a prerequisite for the restoration of salary that the teacher/SNA is deemed medically fit for teaching duties by the OHS before s/he is permitted to resume his/her teaching post.
- A teacher/SNA returning from career break must comply with the Garda Vetting regulations in operation at the time of return.
- The terms and conditions of teachers in general including the terms of any redeployment scheme existing at time of return shall apply to a teacher 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 post must notify the Board of Management in writing in accordance with the teacher/SNA's terms of employment
- In the event that a teacher/SNA fails to resume duty at the end of an approved period of career break, the Board of Management shall immediately notify the Department so that incremental salary will not issue. The Board of Management shall also take timely action to establish the position and may if appropriate initiate agreed disciplinary procedures

Evaluation.

School management will accept feedback from staff, students and parents / guardians made through the proper use of the appropriate channels i.e. staff meetings, student committees and Parents' Council. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by management.

Review.

This policy will be reviewed periodically.

Signed: _____

Date: May 2020

David Dwyer, Chairperson.