

St. Gabriel's School
Springfield Drive, Dooradoyle, Limerick

www.stgabrielsschool.ie

Roll No.	19603L
Designation	Non-denominational
Principal Teacher	Derek Cox.
Policy	Career Break Policy
Date created	May 2021
Date reviewed	
Date reviewed	
Approved by	Mary O'Donovan
	Chairperson, Board of Management
Date for review	May 2023

**St. Gabriel's School.
Policy on Career Break.**

Policy Statement:

1. The Board of Management of St. Gabriel's School is committed to equality of opportunity for all the staff. The Board recognises the benefit of the scheme provided by the Department of Education and Skills for teachers and Special Needs Assistants in relation to career breaks. A career break means special leave without pay. The main objectives of this scheme are to facilitate applicants, where possible, 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

1.2: Members of the teaching and Special Needs Assistants staff may apply for a career break under the conditions set out in the following DES Circulars:

Teachers may apply for a career break under the conditions set out in Circular 54/2019, Chapter 7. Pages 3-5 of the Circular, which outline the general Provisions of the Circular, should be read in conjunction with Chapter 7.

Special Needs Assistants may apply for a career break under the conditions set out in Circular 22/2012.

1.3: However, the Board of Management is mindful that any school policy relating to this scheme must strike a balance between the needs of the pupils and staff, and the long term good of the school as a stable educational environment and workplace. The welfare and educational needs of the students and the needs of the school shall take precedence over all other considerations when the Board considers applications for career breaks.

2. **Scope:** This Career Break policy should be read in conjunction with the current DES Circulars: 54/2019, Chapter 7 for Teachers, and 22/2012 for Special Needs Assistants.

3. Application Process.

3.1: The Board of Management, as the employer, taking into account the welfare and care of the pupils and the maintenance of a stable educational environment and workplace, shall decide each year the school's capacity to meet its obligations to its pupils by determining the number of staff, if any, that may avail of the Career break scheme at any one time.

The number of Job Share Applications received will play a part in making this decision.

3.2: Taking into account the needs of the school community, the closing date for receipt of all career break applications (Teachers and Special Needs Assistants) is 1st February prior to the school year in which it is proposed to commence or to extend a Career Break.

Applications for a Career break should be submitted in writing and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Teachers are requested to use the form found at Appendix A in Circular 54/2019. As there is no formatted application form for Special Needs Assistants, they are requested to put the application in writing, providing clear details of the exact purpose of the career break.

Information re: eligibility requirements:

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

- A teacher/Special Needs Assistant 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 and that the Board of Management are in a position to approve the leave.
- A subsequent Career Break may not be taken until the teacher/ Special Needs Assistant 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.
- 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. In exceptional circumstances, an employer may authorise a teacher/ Special Needs Assistant to commence a Career Break during the course of a school year and terminate not earlier than the end of that school year. This is deemed to be a one-year Career Break.
- The duration of a Career Break may not extend beyond
the date of termination of a fixed term contract where the applicant is employed under such a contract or

the date of compulsory retirement age.

For Special Needs Assistants: Seniority while on Career Break

- Time spent on career break does not reckon as service for seniority purposes.
- Service prior to and post career break will be treated as continuous for seniority purposes but the actual period of the career break will not be counted as reckonable service.

- Special needs assistants should be aware in applying for a career break that their seniority position in the school may change as a result and this may have consequences for future employment and redundancy.
- Schools must update the seniority list for special needs assistants in their school to reflect the loss of seniority for special needs assistants who avail of a career break.

3.3: Each application for a career break will be considered on its own merits by the employer within the context of this policy statement. The decision of the Board of Management shall be final.

The following may be taken into account when considering all applications for a career break:(Listed in no particular order)

- **The educational and welfare needs of the pupils and the long term good of the school as a stable educational environment and workplace.**
- If the applicant(s) was/were previously unsuccessful in their application for a career break.
- If the applicant(s) has/have already had access to a career break.
- Length of service, both in a temporary and permanent capacity, in St. Gabriel's School.
- The number of applications received from teaching Staff and Special Needs Assistant Staff requesting career breaks.
- The maximum number of teachers on the following forms of leave: Job Share/ Career Break in any school year will not exceed 2 individual members of the teaching staff.
- The maximum number of Special Needs Assistant staff on the following forms of leave: Job Share/Career Break in any school year will not exceed 4 individual members of the Special Needs Assistant staff.
- The maximum number of successive school years that a teacher or SNA may combine job sharing and career break leave will be two school years (either two years Job-sharing or two years Career break or two years in a combination of Job Sharing followed and Career Break). This is to give opportunities to all members of staff to apply for the Career Break scheme.
- Where a teacher or Special Needs Assistant has availed of the maximum number of successive years on Job Share/Career Break, a new application by them for either a Job Share or Career Break will only be considered when two school years have elapsed since they have availed of the Schemes.
- Taking into account the benefit to the school community, applications for Secondment will be treated separately.

4. Notification of decision of the Board of Management to applicants.

The Board of Management will inform candidates, in writing, of its decision to approve or refuse career break applications by the 1st March at the latest.

4.1: In the case of a refusal, the written notice will set out the basis of the refusal.

4.2: The decision of the Board of Management shall be final.

4.3: Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the Board of Management to cater for a Career Break post, the approved applicant shall not be permitted to withdraw her/his application after 14th April and this shall be included in the notice from the Board of Management to the approved applicants.

5. Resumption of Duty following a Career Break.

5.1 A teacher/Special Needs Assistant **must notify** the employer by the 1st February of his/her intention to return to their post from a Career Break at the beginning of the next school year.

5.2 A teacher/Special Needs Assistant returning from a Career Break in excess of two school years shall be screened by the Occupational Health Service and deemed medically fit by the OHS for return to work.

6: Implementation of Policy:

The Board of Management will implement this policy taking into account the capacity of the school to meet its obligations to its pupils and its commitment to the long term good of the school as a stable school environment and workplace.

This Career break policy will take effect from the start of School year 2021/2022.

7: Review:

The Board of management will review its policy on Career breaks as the need arises. This policy is to be reviewed in May 2023. Teachers and Special Needs Assistants will receive a copy of the revised policy.

8: Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on
Copies of the Policy were circulated to teachers and Special Needs Assistant following ratification.