



# **Career Break, Job Sharing and Secondment Policy**

**St. Caimin's Community School**



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## 1. Introduction

The Board of Management of St Caimin's Community School has consulted with the principal partners involved in the education of our students in the formation of the school's policy on Career Break, Job Sharing and Secondment Leave and other forms of leave by teachers.

The Board of Management has made every effort to balance the legitimate expectations of teachers with the needs of students in this policy.

To achieve this balance, the Board will consider all applications for Job-Sharing, Career-Break, Secondment, Study Leave etc. taking into account its statutory obligations as outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Circulars and the Education Act 1998. In particular, the Board recognises that in drawing up this policy **the welfare and educational needs of the students shall take precedence over all other considerations.**

Taking these factors into consideration the Board of Management must take account of:

- The overall number of teachers who are not in the school on a full-time basis.
- That subject departments are not weakened by granting job-sharing, career breaks, secondments, study leave which would result in creating an imbalance in any subject department.
- The likely availability of a suitably qualified replacement teacher to take up duty on the applicant's departure.

## 2. Rationale

The Board of Management recognises the benefits of the Department of Education and Skills schemes for teachers in relation to career breaks, job-sharing, and secondment. These schemes provide family friendly working arrangements for those teachers who need them on a temporary basis. They provide teachers with the opportunities to further their professional and personal development through the acquisition of professional skills, academic qualifications, and alternative experiences, which may directly benefit the students they teach in our school.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to staff who:

- Are permanent, CID, TWT, RPT (with duration not extending beyond the date of termination of a fixed term contract) up to compulsory retirement age.
- Are registered with the Teaching Council and
- Have satisfactorily completed at least 12 months of continuous service with the school.

## 4. Related Documents

- Circular 0054/2019 – Leave Schemes for Registered Teachers Employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
- Circular 0022/2012 - Career Break Scheme for Special Needs Assistants
- Circular - 0035/2019 - Changes to the Career Break Scheme for Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools - Employment while on Career Break
- The Education Act 1998

## **5. Benefits of Job Sharing/Career Break/Secondment**

It is worth noting that there are many and varied reasons why an individual teacher would apply for job share/career break/secondment . While there are clearly benefits to the teacher, it is worth noting that there are also benefits to the students and the school.

- It allows flexibility to teachers with family responsibilities and demands
- It allows the teacher to find a work life balance – reduced hours result in a reduced workload on the teacher and allows the teacher to use their time and energy to be the most organised and effective teacher they can be while still being able to balance their other responsibilities. Fewer classes can translate into a happier and more productive teacher .
- A less stressed teacher means the learning environment is more positive and this is hugely beneficial to the students in that environment
- It allows scope for individuals who wish to pursue further education opportunities
- It can enhance a subject department as additional teachers can bring new ideas, skills and approaches that are shared with colleagues
- It allows the teacher a mechanism to ‘take a breather’ and avoid burnout. Job- sharing/career break/secondment allows the school to be more likely to retain experienced teachers instead of losing them when workload and personal commitments become too much.

## **6. Considerations**

- Important factors in the stability of our school are the continuity of teaching, the professionalism and expertise of our staff, and an appropriate balance between the number of long-serving members of staff and those who may be inexperienced or Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) teachers.
- An important consideration is that the school may have a limited number of suitably qualified and experienced personnel to draw on when seeking replacement teachers for job- sharing since replacement teachers will always be appointed as temporary. If ongoing replacements are required, the school may have to substitute further replacements in the event that the temporary teachers seek more permanent employment elsewhere.
- Teachers participating in the job-sharing scheme must be aware that the arrangement may be terminated at any time if it is not operating in the best interests of students.
- In these circumstances the Board of Management must seek to strike a balance between the needs of teachers and students and the long-term good of the school as a stable educational environment and workplace. Such a balanced approach will prevent the tendency towards the casualization of the school’s teaching team and will provide the best learning environment for students.
- The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that subject departments are not weakened by granting job-sharing, career-break, secondment, study leave etc which would result in creating an imbalance in any subject department, leading to the undermining of the stability of a subject department or otherwise weakening that department.
- The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that there is an effective and adequate middle management structure in the school when considering applications for leave of absence.
- The Board of Management will endeavour to consider favourably applications for career breaks and job sharing, bearing in mind that the welfare and educational needs of the students will take precedence over all other considerations.

## 7. Criteria

The Board of Management shall carefully consider how the granting of career break, job sharing, or secondment might affect the standards and continuity in particular subject departments and subject provision within the overall curriculum. The granting of career breaks, job sharing, secondment etc. will be determined in accordance with Circular Letter 0054/2019 and by the criteria outlined below.

Please note that the criteria hereunder are not necessarily in order of priority.

- Welfare and educational needs of students.
- The curricular needs of the school, including the number of applicants from particular subject departments.
- The anticipated effect on the welfare and educational needs of the students.
- The overall number of teachers on leave during the school year in question.
- Eligibility of applications with reference to the various circular letters from the Department of Education and Skills.
- The case made for the teacher's application.
- The balance between the individual needs of the teacher applicants, and the number of applications received.
- The anticipated benefit to be gained by the teacher and, consequently the students taught by that teacher.
- Practicalities of facilitating teachers seeking career breaks/ job sharing/ secondments by school timetable arrangements. Resultant time-tables should not impact negatively on the time-tables of students or on time-tables for other teachers. However, within these constraints, teachers seeking career breaks/ job sharing/ secondments should be facilitated insofar as is possible.
- The staffing quota allocated to the school for the following school year.
- The anticipated effect on the ratio of permanent to temporary staff in the school.
- The anticipated effect on the middle management structure of the school.
- The amount of leave previously granted to applicant teachers.
- Arrangements available for the teaching of classes.

The school consider each application for job-sharing, career break or secondment on its own merits within the context of the school's policy on employee absences. The Board of Management seek to strike a balance between the needs of staff and students and the long-term good of the school as a stable educational environment and workplace. **In relation to this policy, however, the needs of the students shall take precedence over all other considerations.**

Points to note in relation to job-sharing:

- A job-sharing teacher must be timetabled for 11 hours per week, 10 hours and 40 minutes of teaching time and 20 minutes professional time.
- A job-sharing teacher must be available for relevant staff and parent meetings in accordance with school policy and agreements.
- The obligation to provide additional hours under the existing Public Service Agreements is pro-rata for teachers who are job-sharing (e.g., S&S, Croke Park Hours). A job-sharing teacher is required to undertake half of the Croke Park hours and all the hours as per circular M58/04. The principal should inform each job-sharing teacher of the schedule of meetings requiring

attendance. The annual commitment for a job-sharing teacher to the Supervision & Substitution scheme is 21.5 hours (if s/he has opted in).

- Job-sharing teachers may not, act as a special needs assistant in the school in which s/he is employed or any other school.
- It will be understood that an acceptance is based on the conditions contained in circular letter 54/2019 relating to career break and job-sharing schemes and CL 0029/2018 for secondment and on the Board of Management's policy as outlined in this document.

## **8. Application**

### Job-Sharing, Career Breaks and Secondments

Applications from teachers for job-sharing and career breaks must be made to the Board of Management of the school by 1st February for the following school year.

#### **Key dates:**

##### Job-sharing – teachers

- Applications for job-sharing must be submitted by 1st February using the form, Appendix A of Circular Letter 0054/2019 Leave Schemes for Registered Teachers Employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools. See chapter 8 of: [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0054\\_2019.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0054_2019.pdf)
- A teacher wishing to extend a job-sharing arrangement must apply, using the form in Appendix A, on an annual basis by 1st February.
- The Board of Management is required to issue a written notice of approval or refusal to the teacher by 1st March.
- If a job-share approval is conditional on the recruitment of a suitably qualified replacement teacher, this should be stated in the letter of approval.
- A teacher is not permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14th April.

##### Career break – teachers

- Applications for career break must be submitted to the Board of Management by 1st February using the form, Appendix A of circular letter 54/2019 (chapter 7).
- Applications for an extension to a career break must also be made by 1st February, provided the total period of the career break does not exceed 5 years at any one time.
- A teacher who intends to return to work from a career break must notify the Board of Management by 1st February of their intention to return.
- The Board of Management is required to issue a written notice of approval or refusal by 1st March and submit notice of the career break scheme to the Department (via OLCS system) on or before 1st April.
- If a career break approval is conditional on the recruitment of a suitably qualified replacement teacher, this should be stated in the letter of approval.
- An applicant is not permitted to withdraw their application after 14th April.

##### Secondment – teachers

Details of the application process for secondment are contained in circular letter 0029/2018.

Applications for secondment must be submitted using the form Application for Secondment in Circular 0029/2018 [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0029\\_2018](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0029_2018)

- The teacher, host organisation and the employer must complete the relevant parts of the Application Form at Appendix A (Part 1 to be completed by the employee, Part 2 by the host organisation and Part 3 by the employer).

Where an application for an initial secondment or extension of a secondment is approved by the employer, it must be returned (by the employer) to the relevant section in the Department by the deadline date of 1st May for approval.

If a secondment approval is conditional on the recruitment of a suitably qualified replacement teacher, this should be stated in the letter of approval. A Secondment Agreement must be put in place by the host organisation at the commencement of the secondment.

Point to note in relation to career break, job-sharing, and secondment applications:

- Applications may be initially screened by a subcommittee of the Board of Management, who will then make recommendations to the Board of Management in accordance with relevant circular letters.
- Prior to the submission of applications to the Department of Education, the Board of Management will inform candidates of its decision whether to support such applications.
- The decision to approve or refuse will be in writing from the Board of Management.
- Teachers approved for a career break, job share, or secondment must respond in writing to an offer made.
- The decision of the Board of Management shall be final.

The school should consider each application for job-sharing, career break or secondment on its own merits within the context of the school's policy on employee absences. In relation to this policy, the needs of the students shall take precedence over all other considerations and the Board of Management must seek to strike a balance between the needs of staff and students and the long-term good of the school as a stable educational environment and workplace.

In the event of a shortage of teachers in some subject areas, the Board of Management may consider making the approval of an application conditional on the recruitment of a suitably qualified replacement teacher by the end of June on the year of application.

The Board of Management should advise the teacher as soon as a suitably qualified replacement teacher has been recruited. In the event that the school is unsuccessful in finding a suitably qualified replacement teacher, the teacher should be advised that the job-share/career break cannot proceed.

## **9. Special Needs Assistants:**

### *Job-Sharing – Special Needs Assistants*

- Special Needs Assistants interested in job-sharing must apply to the Board of Management by 1st March using the application form attached to circular letter 41/2014.
- A Special Needs Assistant must re-apply if s/he is seeking to avail of an extension to a job-sharing arrangement for a further year by 1st March.

- The BOM is required to issue a written notice of approval or refusal to the Special Needs Assistant by 31st March at the latest.
- An SNA is not permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14th April.
- A copy of the approved job-sharing application should be submitted to the Non-Teaching Payroll Section of the Department by 1st May.

Career Break – Special Needs Assistants

- Special Needs Assistants seeking a career break for the next school year must submit a letter of application to the Board of Management by 1st March. Details of the Career Break Scheme for SNAs can be found in circular letter 22/2014. The letter of application must provide clear details of the exact purpose of the career break.
- A special needs assistant who wishes to extend his/her career break must apply for this extension by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.
- The BOM is required to 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 (if approved) to the Department (via the OLCS)/VEC on or before 1<sup>st</sup> of May.
- An SNA is not permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14<sup>th</sup> of April.

**10. Implementation**

The school should consider each application for job-sharing, career break or secondment on its own merits within the context of the school’s policy on employee absences. In relation to this policy, the needs of the students shall take precedence over all other considerations and the Board of Management must seek to strike a balance between the needs of staff and students and the long-term good of the school as a stable educational environment and workplace.

**11. Ratification**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management on a regular basis. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to the school community on the school website. A record of the review and its outcomes will be made available, if requested to the Trustees and the Department of Education and Skills.

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022

The policy will come into effect from 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Once ratified this policy will be shared on the school website and Staff Teams. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Trustees if requested.