**St. Joseph’s Specialist School,**

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**Chairperson of the Board of Management: Audrey Pidgeon**

**Principal: Sarah McGinley**

**STAFF LEAVE**

**Policy on Staff Leave**

This policy was drawn up in April 2009. It was reviewed and updated in June 2015 & 2020. The updated policy reflects changes in DES conditions of service for all staff.

The policy includes procedures relating to:

* General absences
* Career breaks
* Job-sharing

**General Absences**

* Teacher absences as per IPPN Resource Bundle ( On file in the school and available to all teachers)
* SNA absences are as per Circulars 13/05, 32/10, 37/12, 17/13, 19/13, 27/13, 60/14 (copies issued to all SNAs)
* Ability West staff have contracts with Ability West and in as far as possible should try to take holidays in line with school closures.
* Career breaks and job share applications must be submitted to the Board of Management by March 1st. The Board must reach a decision by March 31st and notify the DES before April 10th.
* All requests for unpaid leave should be submitted to the BOM for approval six weeks in advance of the absence. Permission should first be sought from the DES. Whereas the BOM will consider all applications there is no automatic entitlement to unpaid leave. Decisions made will be based on the impact on the education and welfare of the pupils at any given time throughout the school year.
* A part day absence is considered a full day absence under DES rules. Staff are encouraged to seek hospital/doctor appointments outside of school hours. However, where this is not possible the BOM will try to grant this leave bearing in mind that the needs of pupils are paramount in all situations.
* Elective surgical procedures should be arranged during school closures/holidays where possible.
* The BOM will keep a file on applications/approvals for leave.

**Career Breaks**

* Staff may apply for a career break, as per guidelines published on the DES website. Applications must be submitted to the Board of Management by March 1st  The Board must reach a decision by March 31st and notify the DES before April 10th.
* As a general principle every effort will be made by the Board of Management to facilitate applications for career breaks. However, the welfare and educational needs of pupils shall take precedence over all other considerations
* Decisions on applications will take into consideration the total number of staff requesting or already availing of long term leave i.e: study leave, secondment, job-sharing, parental leave, carers leave, leave of absence, maternity/paternity/adoptive leave.
* Each application will be considered on its own merit. Where there are a large number of requests and the BOM is unable to facilitate all staff, a sub-committee of the BOM and a member of the Ability West HR department will interview each applicant so as to reach the most equitable decision. The committee will brief the principal before the final decision.
* The reason for taking leave may, if desired by the applicant, remain confidential to the BOM.
* Each career break will be reviewed at the end of the school year.

**Job Sharing**

Staff may apply to job share as per guidelines published on the DES website. Applications must be submitted to the Board of Management by March 1st.The Board must reach a decision by March 31st and notify the DES before April 10th.

* As a guiding principle, the welfare and educational needs of the pupils will be the underpinning factor in all issues around job-sharing. Staff applying for job sharing arrangement will be interviewed together to assess the viability of their proposed arrangement.
* Decisions on applications will take into consideration the total number of staff requesting or already availing of long term leave i.e: study leave, secondment, job sharing, parental leave, carers leave, leave of absence,

maternity/paternity/adoptive leave.

* Each application will be considered on its own merit. Where there are a large number of requests and the BOM is unable to facilitate all staff, a sub-committee of the BOM and a member of the Ability West HR Department will interview each applicant so as to reach the most equitable decision. The committee will brief the principal before the final decision.
* Job sharing will not be permitted in Junior 1. This does not preclude staff in this class applying for job share.
* Both teachers along with the principal will offer an information session for parents explaining the strategy employed to manage, teach and assess the class through a job sharing scheme.
* In consultation with the principal both teachers will prepare a yearly scheme, a fortnightly scheme and an agreed weekly and daily timetable
* All job sharing partners will work on alternate weeks unless advised otherwise by the DES.
* The principal will agree the procedure for any scheduled parent/teacher meeting with both teachers.
* End of year school reports will be jointly prepared and signed by both teachers.
* All job sharing partners will meet for a sufficient period of time after school at the end of each week to discuss and prepare the necessary handover
* As a general principle jobsharers will display significant flexibility in relation to absences, and holidays and will ensure the class’s participation in school events
* All job sharing staff will attend all staff meetings.
* Each job sharing arrangement will be reviewed at the end of the school year.

**Review and Ratification**

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents’ Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy can be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management as required.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on September 2020.

**Signed ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Chairperson, Board of Management Principal**

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