

**ST. JOSEPH'S N.S.
LEAVE POLICY**

Career Breaks

A permanent member of the teaching staff of St. Joseph's NS may apply for a Career Break, or other forms of leave, as per the conditions set out in DES Circulars. While referring to this Circular, an application for a Career Break and other forms of long-term Leave will be examined under the additional points laid out in this policy. It also sets out further information and procedures as outlined in Circular 0054/2019 titled 'Leave Schemes for Recognised Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools', in particular Chapter 7, 'Career Break Scheme'.

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

As a general principle every effort will be made by the BoM to facilitate applications for Career Breaks and other forms of extended Leave from members of the teaching staff. While recognising a teacher's desire to take Leave for whatever reason, it will be recognised that **the welfare and educational needs of pupils shall take precedence over all other considerations**. Similarly, the Board is conscious that a significant change to staffing may impact negatively on the culture of the school. Therefore, the Board will restrict the maximum number of leaves granted and all leave applications may not be successful.

1. Career breaks are granted for **one year only** and will be reviewed annually in light of all applications applying for extended leave. An applicant already on career break will hold no advantage over another who is applying for a career break for the first time. However, the Board of Management will judge each application for discretionary leave on its own merits.

2. Apart from statutory leave entitlements, all extended leave requests, such as Career Breaks and Job sharing etc – (*leave requests of more than four weeks*) will be assessed by the Board of Management based on staffing levels of the 'year of application'.
3. The maximum number of teachers on Leave (*including Career Break, Exchange, Leave of Absence, Study Leave, Job Sharing, Secondment etc.*) in any school year shall **not exceed 20% of teachers**. Exceptions to this quota may be made where exceptional specific personal/family circumstances prevail.
4. Current teaching staffing 24/25 is 27 teachers which means **up to 5 teachers** may be granted leave for **25/26**.
5. All extended leave applications are to be with the BOM by **1 February annually** on the appropriate paperwork.
6. Subsequent Career Breaks may not be taken until the teacher has served for a period equal to the duration of the previous Career Break.
7. **Job sharing** within school **counts as 1 staff member** only.
8. A teacher 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 procedures to be followed are available in the Employers Procedures Manual (Chapter 2) which is located at Appendix A of the Sick Leave Scheme.
9. Where the number of applications for any form of long-term Leave (*including the extension of existing arrangements*) exceed the available quota, such applications will be considered on their merit by the BOM.
10. The Board's decision is final.

The Board will use the following criteria, not necessarily in hierarchial order, to guide and inform their decision of applications for extended leave as follows:

- Cumulative leave, of any type, already granted to the applicant.

- Length of service - 3 full completed years as fixed-term/permanent member of staff in SJNS.
- Previous staff refusal of breaks.
- The Board of Management will consider applications in the context of other statutory and non-statutory leave and will take into account the availability of an appropriately qualified replacement teacher.

A member of the permanent teaching staff of St. Joseph's NS may apply to work on a job-sharing basis under the conditions set out in DES Circulars 54/19. As a guiding principle, **the welfare & educational needs of the children will be the underpinning factor in all issues around Job Sharing**. Teachers applying for job sharing arrangement may be interviewed individually to assess the viability of their proposed arrangement. The following points outline additional factors influencing any job-sharing arrangement:

APPLICATION FOR JOB SHARING IN SJNS

1. Permanent teachers within the school, with **three years continuous service** in a permanent capacity, are eligible to apply for job-sharing.
2. Each job-sharing arrangement will be for **one year only**. 'Roll Over' is not an option and will be viewed as a separate application.
3. Special consideration shall be given by the BOM before approving job sharing for Junior Infants and special needs pupils as per DES Circular.
4. As per Para 5.3: It is a matter for the employer to decide the Job Sharing arrangement(s) which it is prepared to endorse e.g. week on/week off or split week. Subject to the employer's responsibility in this regard, timetable arrangements for Job -Sharing teachers should be designed within the spirit of the scheme to facilitate the teacher, so far as is practicable. In SJNS, if a split week is decided upon, **the 'new week' starts for the class on the day each teacher starts their week and runs for 5 consecutive days**, rather than starting on a Monday. This will allow teachers to teach the complete lesson each week, i.e. the full Irish, Maths, English, PE, Art, Music, SESE, Religion etc.
5. The Board of Management reserves the right to terminate a job-sharing arrangement, in the event that it is not operating in the best interests of pupils and school. **(Para 19.1)**
6. Taking into account the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the employer to cater for a Job Sharing post, the teacher should not be permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14 April, or from once the replacement teacher's contract has been signed, whichever happens first. **(Para 6.4 Circular 54/19)**
7. In St. Joseph's NS, an application for job sharing must be made to the Board of Management, on the official application form (Appendix A below) before **February 1st** of the year in which the teacher proposes to take the Leave.
8. Teachers shall be **notified in writing of the Board's decision by March 1st**. The decision of the employer is final.

Appendix A - Application Form for Job Sharing

The Application Form should be fully completed annually and submitted to the employer not later than 1st February. A separate Application Form must be completed by each Job Sharing applicant.

PART 1A – TEACHER APPLICATION

Teacher's Name: _____ Contact No: _____

Home Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

PPSN: _____

School Name: _____ Roll No: _____

Data Protection Privacy Statement

The main purpose for which the Department requires you to provide this personal data to your employer enable your Job sharing application to be processed. Your employer will retain your application form and accompanying documents in accordance with their Data Protection policy. Further information in relation to this policy is available on request from your employer.

The Privacy Notice outlining further information in relation to this application form can be found at: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Data-Protection/gdpr/gdpr.html> Full details of the Department's Data Protection policy setting out how we will use your personal data as well as information regarding your rights as a data subject are available at <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Data-Protection/>. Details of this policy are also available in hard copy from Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions, Department of Education & Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 X659, upon request.

PART 1B - DETAILS OF JOB SHARING APPLICATION

Proposed start date of Job Sharing Arrangement: _____

Please indicate in the table below your proposed Job Sharing Options.

Tick relevant box	Job Sharing Options	Details
	Option 1: (a) Share a wholetime post on a 50:50 basis with an existing wholetime teacher in the same school.	Teacher's name: _____
	Option 1: (b) Share a wholetime post on a 50:50 basis with an existing wholetime teacher in another school under an inter-school Job Sharing arrangement (Primary schools only).	Name of other teacher: _____ Name of other school: _____ Roll No of other school: _____
	Option 2: Reduction of wholetime teaching hours to 50% with a teacher recruited by my employer for the balance of available hours.	

Declaration

I wish to apply for Job Sharing in accordance with the Job Sharing Scheme as set out in Circular 0054/2019 titled 'Leave Schemes for Registered Teachers Employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools'.

Where relevant, I consent to the transfer of the personal information provided by me on this Application Form to the partner school involved in the proposed Job Sharing arrangement.

I confirm that the information provided in the application is true and accurate.

Signature of Teacher: _____ Date: _____

PART 2 – EMPLOYER DECISION

I certify that I have approved/refused (delete as appropriate) the Job Sharing application in accordance with the Job Sharing Scheme as set out in Circular 0054/2019 titled 'Leave Schemes for Registered Teachers Employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools'. The following documents will be retained for audit purposes:

- 1) Application for Job Sharing
- 2) Copy of Application from Job Sharing partner (where applicable)
- 3) Copy of Decision Notice issued to teacher

Approved Job Sharing has been recorded on the OLCS/relevant ETB system

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Employer (Host school))

*** The second signature below is only required in respect of an Inter-school Job Sharing Arrangement (Primary schools only)**

*Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Employer of base school)

*School Name _____ Roll No: _____

Application Form should NOT be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills. It should be retained in the school/ETB with any other relevant documentation for record and audit purposes with the relevant personnel records.

Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) days

Where a teacher has, during the summer break, attended a course approved by DES, personal leave may be taken on presentation of the necessary **Certificate** and subject to Board of Management approval. Leave will be sanctioned on the usual basis of 3 days for attendance at a 5 day course or as approved by DES. Further information in relation to number of days permitted can be found on page 172 of CPSMA Handbook. We are aware of the importance of professional development to effective teaching and learning.

Rationale for EPV Policy

- a) To provide encouragement to teachers to undertake professional development courses which enhance their teaching and promotes a standard of excellence throughout the school.
- b) The need for the school to devise a policy on course days is primarily to assist in the smooth operation of the school
- c) To minimize disruption to classes

Aims and Objectives of a policy

- To encourage continued learning for teachers which leads to the on-going enrichment and motivation of teachers. This, in turn, provides multiplied beneficial effect to the school's "end learners", i.e. the children.
- To ensure that all staff members are clear on their entitlements to days 'in lieu' of courses (EVP days)
- To assist the Senior Management Team in ensuring that disruption to the pupils is kept to a minimum
- To ensure that no teacher has too many children from other classes in their classroom.

Procedures

- According to Rule 58, EPV days are **subject to the prior approval of the "Manager"** i.e. Board of Management. The BOM of St. Joseph's NS empowered the School Principal, in conjunction with her Deputy, to sanction EPV days. The BOM will have the final decision in all cases.
- Staff are encouraged to take **1 day per term**, as far as possible.
- Teachers may take **up to 3 days EPV in a school year**. Should there be exceptional situations, teachers may apply for additional days by writing to the Board of Management. Their decision is final.
- **A maximum of 2 EPV days can be taken in a row**, only where necessary.

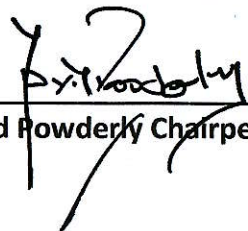
- **Verbal requests** for an EVP day are made in the first instance to the Principal. This request will subsequently be discussed with the Deputy Principal. If granted, the day is noted on the School Calendar in the Principal's Office.
- Where possible, prior **notice** at least a week in advance should be given.
- Teachers must **avoid**, *as far as possible*, taking their EVP days in
 - September and June
 - the week leading up to/after Christmas, mid-terms, Easter and Summer
 - Staff meeting and/or Planning days
 - days when other classes are away on school tours, Sports Day or attending events.

However, a written application to the Board can be sought in the event of extraordinary circumstances.

Ratification and Communication

This policy will be in operation in the school year 2024/2025 having been ratified by the BOM. Every teacher will be provided with a copy of this policy and it will be available also on our website.

This policy was ratified by the BOM on 28/11/24 and will be reviewed annually.



David Powderly Chairperson BOM



Úna O' Kelly School Principal