

**ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL
MEADOWBROOK, DUBLIN 16**



**POLICY ON
DISCRETIONARY LEAVE**



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Discretionary Leave Policy of St. Attracta's Senior National School.

*Italic Print = from the relevant D.E.S. circulars
as these outline the provisions governing all discretionary leave*

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Management of St. Attracta's Senior School has drawn up this policy. It has been developed specific to the needs of our school so that staff may be fully aware of the Board of Management's position on this matter. It will be reviewed regularly.

Prior to applying for Career Break, Teacher Exchange, Job-Sharing or Secondment, the Board of Management of St. Attracta's Senior School strongly advises teachers firstly to familiarise themselves with Primary Circulars 11/02 (Secondment), 11/03 (Job Sharing), 12/03 (Teacher Exchange), & 10/11 (Career Breaks), from the Department of Education and Science. These circulars supersede all other circulars from the Department of Education & Skills. It is the responsibility of staff members to keep themselves informed of updates to these and any other relevant circulars.

The granting of an application for any of the above forms of leave is at the discretion of the Board of Management.

The Board of Management of St. Attracta's Senior School promotes excellence in teaching and learning and views the school as a learning organisation which is open to change and innovation. However, in framing a policy position on discretionary leave, we - the members of the Board of Management of St. Attracta's Senior School - wish to state that at all times we strive to ensure that the welfare and educational needs of pupils take precedence over all other considerations. This is in accordance with the school's Mission Statement which emphasises that all aspects of the child - academic, spiritual, moral and cultural - are cherished.

POLICY STATEMENT

In any one school year, a maximum of 20% of the full-time teaching staff **may** be granted Discretionary Leave (**Career Break, Teacher Exchange, Job Sharing, Secondment**) - without prejudice to the absolute discretion of the Board in this matter.

However, the maximum number of teachers who may be permitted to participate in Job Sharing arrangements in any academic year based in St. Attracta's Senior School is either two under type A, one under type B or several teachers under type C provided this falls within the 20% maximum stipulated above. (cf: Job Sharing Section of this policy)

In reaching a decision regarding applications for discretionary leave, the Board will take account of:

- (a) the overall number of temporary posts within the school.
- (b) the overall capacity of the school to recruit and retain temporary teachers.
- (c) the number of teachers on long term sick leave or on approved study leave.
- (d) the number of teachers in the school who are likely to be on other types of leave such as maternity, adoptive, parental or carer's leave.
- (e) the suitability of the exchange-teacher who proposes to participate in an exchange arrangement. The Board reserves the right to interview and evaluate this candidate.

In general, but most particularly where the number of applicants for discretionary leave exceeds the school's stated quotas, the following criteria will be used in reaching decisions:

- length of service of the applicant in the school
- number of years cumulative discretionary leave, of any type, already granted to the applicant in St. Attracta's Senior School.

However, the Board of Management will judge each application for discretionary leave on its own merits.

DURATION OF ANY FORM OF DISCRETIONARY LEAVE

The minimum period for which any form of discretionary leave may occur is one year.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND APPROVAL

Applications for any form of discretionary leave must be submitted to the Board of Management for approval on an annual basis. Each teacher is required to submit a written request to the Board of Management before March 1st.

In relation to Job Share Applications:

The principal will be required to appraise the Board of Management in detail regarding a proposal to Job Share. Specifically the principal will outline for the Board of Management the extent to which the proposed jobsharers are compatible, co-operative, flexible and complement one another's skills and professionalism. The principal will also indicate the levels of organisation and communication skills displayed by the proposed partners, as well as their attendance records.

In the case of an inter school Job Sharing arrangement appropriate consultation with the Board of Management of the partner school on all matters relating to the proposed arrangement will be an integral part of the processing of the application.

The Board of Management shall assess all applications for discretionary leave during the month of March and shall give its formal decision in writing to the applicants as soon as possible, but no later than 1st April; and shall submit all approved applications to the DES before 10th April. Where an inter school Job Sharing arrangement is being entered into, the Board(s) must indicate the school in which the Job Sharing teachers will be based - the application form contains a section in relation to this matter.

CAREER BREAK

ELIGIBILITY:

Please refer to the most recent DES Circulars or the DES Website www.education.ie

RESUMPTION FROM A CAREER-BREAK:

A teacher who intends to return to teaching from a career break must notify the Board of Management by 1st March using the 'Resumption from a Career Break' form (see Circular 10/11 appendices). The Board must then forward the duly completed and signed form to the DES before 30th May.

On resuming their teaching position in St. Attracta's Senior School, it is the responsibility of each teacher to familiarise himself/herself with any new curricular developments and any new or revised policies drawn up by the Board of Management during their absence on Career Break.

TEACHER EXCHANGE

ELIGIBILITY:

Please refer to the most recent DES Circulars or the DES Website www.education.ie

SIGNING FORM OF AGREEMENT

*The Board of Management of St. Attracta's Senior School will be the incoming exchange-teacher's employer for the duration of the exchange and the exchange-teacher will **sign a Contract of Employment with this board.***

TERMINATION OF TEACHER EXCHANGE DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

A teacher may not terminate an exchange during a school year except by resigning his/her post. If a teacher resigns his/her post, the Board of Management may appoint a temporary teacher for the remainder of the school year. (D.E.S. Circ 12/03)

POSITION REGARDING POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY WHILE TEACHERS ARE ON TEACHER EXCHANGE

A teacher applying for teacher exchange in another school must relinquish his/her post of responsibility in St. Attracta's Senior School for the duration of the exchange scheme. The post of responsibility vacated by a teacher participating in a teacher exchange scheme may be filled on an acting basis from one school year to another, if the post is still warranted by reference to Primary Circular 7/03.

Teachers on teacher exchange may apply for posts of responsibilities arising in their former school during their exchange but are not eligible to apply for posts in the school to which they have exchanged. If successful an acting post of responsibility is appointed, subject to the post still being warranted. (D.E.S. Circ. 12/03)

EXCHANGE TEACHER RESUMING TEACHING IN ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR N.S.

On resuming their teaching position in St. Attracta's Senior School, it is the responsibility of each teacher to familiarise himself/herself with any new curricular developments and any new or revised policies drawn up by the Board of Management during their absence.

SECONDMENT

ELIGIBILITY:

Please refer to the most recent DES Circulars or the DES Website www.education.ie

A teacher must first seek the approval of the Board of Management of his/her school if he/she wishes to seek secondment to another education related post. A decision by a Board of Management to refuse a secondment request shall be final.

In framing a policy position on secondments, the Board of Management is required to ensure that the welfare and educational needs of pupils take precedence over all other considerations.

The Board of Management of the school has the authority to terminate a secondment at any time to ensure that the educational needs of the school are given priority.

POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY WHILE ON SECONDMENT

Posts of responsibility vacated by teachers participating in a secondment arrangement will be filled on an acting basis from one school year to another, if the post is still warranted by reference to Primary Circular 7/03.

JOB-SHARING WHILE ON SECONDMENT

A teacher on secondment must not enter into a job-sharing arrangement for the duration of the secondment.

SECONDED TEACHER RESUMING TEACHING IN ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR N.S.

On resuming their teaching position in St. Attracta's Senior School, it is the responsibility of each teacher to familiarise himself/herself with any new curricular developments, or any new or revised policies drawn up by the Board of Management during their absence.

JOB SHARING

ELIGIBILITY:

Please refer to the most recent DES Circulars or the DES Website www.education.ie

TYPES OF JOB SHARING

Subject to the regulations laid down in Circular 11/03 and all other conditions contained in this policy, the Board of Management may allow the following types of Job Sharing arrangements:

- A) Job Sharing which involves two teachers based in St. Attracta's Senior School, sharing a full-time post on a 50:50 basis in St. Attracta's Senior School. Both applicants must be members of the teaching staff of the school at the date of application.
- B) Job Sharing which allows one teacher from St. Attracta's Senior School to job-share a full time post on a 50:50 basis with a teacher from another school, in St. Attracta's Senior School.

Note: In any one academic year only Job Sharing of either type A or B may be permitted, based in St. Attracta's Senior School.

- C) Job Sharing, which allows teacher/s from St. Attracta's Senior School to Job Share a full time post on a 50:50 basis with a teacher from another school, based in another school.

TEACHING DUTIES

The principal assigns teaching duties in accordance with circular 16/73, which states:

“He/She should assign a fair distribution of teaching duties amongst the staff taking into account the needs of the pupils and the ability, experience, personality and preference of each teacher.”

If assigning Job Sharing teacher/s to a class level, it must not include Senior Infants as it is felt that these pupils need the stability of one teacher to help ease the transition from pre-school to primary school. In making a decision on what class level will be taught, account may also be taken of pupils who might be regarded as vulnerable or having special needs.

TIME SHARING ARRANGEMENTS

The Board of Management is only prepared to endorse a **one-week on/one-week off** time-sharing arrangement.

NOTICE TO PARENTS

As soon as the Board of Management sanctions a Job Sharing arrangement, and the Principal has allocated teachers to teaching duties, a special meeting shall be called by the Principal/Board of Management to inform the parents of a class that their children will be taught by Job Sharing teachers in the following school year. Teachers whose Job Sharing arrangements have been approved by the Board of Management are required to attend such a meeting to address queries or question that may arise. An information sheet will also be available to parents at the meeting.

THE PLEAN OIBRE/SCHEME OF WORK

The plan must address the need for continuity, the need for planning for an agreed methodology, and an agreed approach to disciplinary matters. It should also provide for the use of the combined talents of the two teachers as well as assigning responsibility. It should comply with school policies as outlined in the Plean Scoile and in all other relevant policy documents. The Board of Management must be satisfied that the scheme of work adequately addresses all of the key issues outlined above. Additionally the board requires that the partners arrange meetings to discuss their work and that all such meetings take place out-of-class. The two Job Sharing teachers (the partners) must present the Plean Oibre to the Principal/Board at the end of the second week of September.

OPERATION OF JOB SHARING WITHIN ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR SCHOOL

Once a Job Sharing Scheme has commenced, it shall be the responsibility of the Job Sharing Partners to:

- *ensure that detailed short term planning (fortnightly) occurs between the partners*
- *ensure that records are kept - a monthly Progress Report should be handed to the principal at the beginning of each month.*
- *maintain a diary or pupil profile in which records of progress and important events are noted*

- *ensure that both partners attend the official Parent Teacher Meetings held once a year.*
- *ensure that both Job Sharers attend the September and June Staff Meetings, as many important matters are discussed and decisions arrived at, during these two meetings in particular. At staff meetings in other months, the partner rostered to work that week must attend.*
- *ensure that both Job Sharing Partners attend In-Service Days. The teacher who attends such courses on days that he/she is not rostered to work will be granted leave in lieu or be paid at the full time rate of pay in respect of the course days. (See section 11.1 - 11.3 of Circular 11/03)*

Both partners are very welcome to attend all staff meetings, however, if the partner who is not rostered to work does not attend, he/she must accept the outcomes of decisions made at those meetings. That partner must also inform himself/herself of all decisions taken at meetings at which he/she is not in attendance.

It is the responsibility of the principal, on behalf of the Board of Management to ensure that all of the above arrangements are complied with.

THE ATTENTION OF JOB SHARING APPLICANTS IS DRAWN TO THE FOLLOWING SECTION OF CIRCULAR 11/03

Outside Employment (Circular 11/03)

It is not permissible for a job sharing teacher to engage in outside employment without the consent of the Board of Management, which must be obtained beforehand, and which consent will be granted only where it is clear that such outside employment will not affect the teacher's work under the Board of Management or be in competition with it or bring the School in to disrepute.

Job sharing teachers may not engage in part-time or substitute teaching.

RESIGNATION WHILE JOB SHARING

A Job Sharing teacher who wishes to resign from his/her teaching post (as opposed to resigning from their Job Sharing arrangement) must give the Board of Management (or Boards of Management where an inter school job sharing scheme exists) notice in writing in accordance with the teachers' terms of employment. The remaining job sharing teacher must seek another permanent teacher to job share with or alternatively must resume full time teaching.

In accordance with Circular 11/03, the Board of Management reserves the right to terminate a Job Sharing arrangement if the arrangement is not operating in the best interests of the pupils.

JOB SHARING TEACHER RESUMING FULL TIME TEACHING IN ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR SCHOOL

On resuming their teaching position in St. Attracta's Senior School, it is the responsibility of each teacher to familiarise himself/herself with any new curricular developments and any new or revised policies drawn up by the Board of Management during their absence.

The sanctioning of any Job Sharing Post by the Board of Management of St. Attracta's Senior School is conditional on the individual signing his/her acceptance of this policy document.

SPECIAL DUTIES TEACHERS WHO WISH TO JOB SHARE

The needs of the pupils and the school come first and school arrangements cannot be determined by the dates upon which a teacher may or may not be rostered for work. Therefore, teachers who apply for Job Sharing and who hold a Special Duties Post have a number of options from which to choose in relation to their Special Duties Post:

OPTION 1: He/she may opt to carry out his/her duties in full, having met with the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal, and, having outlined in writing to the satisfaction of the Board, how his/her duties can be carried out in full, while job sharing on a one week on/one week off basis.

OPTION 2: He/she may opt to fulfil his/her duties in a 50/50 capacity, in which case the board will seek an Acting Special Duties Teacher from amongst the staff in a shared capacity. (See the terms of Circular 7/03, Section 15) However, if the Board is unsuccessful in attracting an Acting Special Duties Teacher in a shared capacity, the Job Sharing Teacher will then have to commit to either, taking on the post in a full time capacity (As in OPTION 1 outlined above) or else relinquish the post for the duration of the Job Share.

Should two members of staff, who hold Special Duties Posts, seek a Job Sharing Post, they may opt to share one post for the duration of the job share, in which case the board will then seek a full time Acting Special Duties Teacher from amongst the staff.

OPTION 3: He/she may opt to relinquish his/her post for the duration of the Job Share, in which case the board will seek a full time Acting Special Duties Teacher for the period of the job share.

MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed occasionally and as deemed necessary. The views and opinions of the partners in education are welcome at all times.