



Special Needs Assistant/Inclusion Support Assistant Deployment and Access Policy

Introduction

Our School aims to provide a happy, orderly, secure and friendly learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, Special Needs Assistants (Inclusion Support Assistants), ancillary staff and board of management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

The vision of Citywest & Saggart CNS is to create a safe, calm, respectful and inclusive learning environment in which the school community works in close partnership to encourage children to develop skills which will allow them to participate to their full potential in school and society. We strive for the highest quality teaching and learning while fostering the holistic development of the individual child. Our school recognises and celebrates the individual abilities, talents and achievements of the children whilst also instilling a sense of belonging, respect and empathy towards those around them. As part of its ethos, Citywest & Saggart CNS welcomes all.

The school recognises the important role played by our Special Needs Assistants (Also known as Inclusion Support Assistants) in the support of students who require assistance with primary and secondary care needs. This is central to the ethos and vision of Citywest & Saggart CNS by ensuring all pupils are given opportunities to access aspects of school life in as independent and dignified way as possible.

The Policy was devised following a consultative process with all interested parties, and is guided by the relevant legislation such as The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004 and DES Circulars 07/02, 08/03, 24/03, 13/04, 02/05.

Rationale

The policy was formulated:

- To provide staff and parents with clear guidelines and expectations with regard to the SNA (ISA) role and responsibilities within the school.
- To ensure each SNA (ISA) appreciates and understands the important role they have in contributing positively to the school experiences of the children and the overall efficiency of the school.
- To ensure best practice and continuity in how we work in Citywest & Saggart CNS

Aims:

- To facilitate the recognition SNA(ISA)s as valuable members of staff in a whole school context.
- To ensure the effective deployment of SNA (ISA)s in enhancing the social skills and self esteem
- of the children with Special Educational Needs.

- To enable the SNA (ISA) to be an effective support to the class teacher.
- To provide optimum learning experiences for all children through judicious use of the skills and talents of the SNA (ISA)
- To clarify the tasks and duties to be undertaken by the SNA (ISA).
- To ensure accountability

Role of the ISA

The duties of the SNA (ISA) are contained in circular Sp. Ed 07/02. Duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal, or another person acting on behalf of the Principal and/or the Board of Management.

1. Preparation and tidying up of classrooms in with the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught
2. Assisting pupils to board and alight from school buses.
3. Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
5. Assisting on out of school visits, walks, swimming (within the pool where necessary) and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. SNA (ISA)s cannot be left in sole supervision of a class of children
9. Where an SNA (ISA) has been appointed in a school catering for a specific pupil, duties shall be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned.

The SNA (ISA) should:

- foster the participation of pupils in the social and academic processes of the school
 - Assist children in small group activities set by the teacher
 - Avoid frequent separation from peers during task work
 - Assist in social skills programme and strategies as set out by the teacher
 - Assist the children in the playground to socialise and play
 - Spot early signs of mistreatment by others (i.e bullying)
- enable pupils to become more independent learners
 - Keeping specific children, identified by the teacher, on task. Helping the child to maintain focus and bringing them back on task will enable them to become better learners. The SNA (ISA) can do this by explaining points quietly, and repeating teacher's instructions.
- help raise standards of achievement for specific pupils.

Care Needs

The role of the SNA (ISA) in the first instance is to tend to the Primary Care Needs of the child where such needs cannot be met by the class teacher alone. The SNA (ISA) may also be involved with the secondary care needs of the pupil. The primary care needs are listed in relevant circulars by the Department of Education:

- Assistance with feeding
- Administration of medicine
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene
- Assistance with mobility and orientation
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds
- Care needs associated with specific medical conditions
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of pupil from classroom when essential
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties

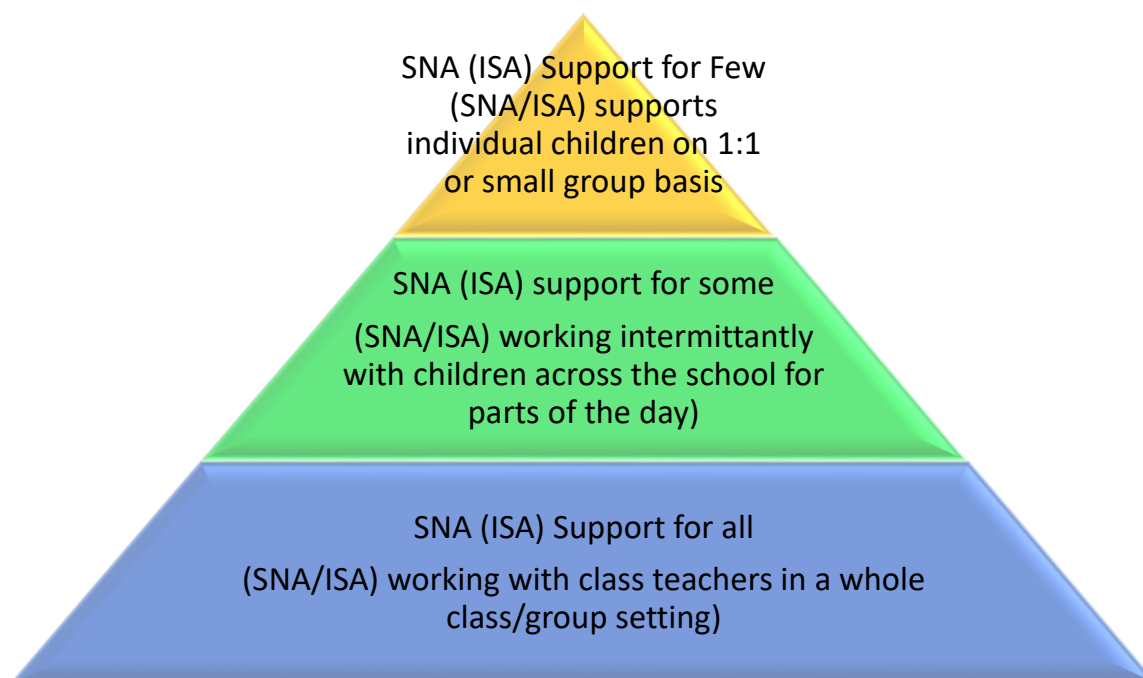
- EBD where behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date
- History of violent behaviour, assault, self-harm, leaving school premises

SNA (ISA) Working Hours

In our school, the working hours for our SNA (ISA) staff are 8.55 to 2.35. The practice in Citywest & Saggart CNS is that SNA(ISA)s are present from 8.45 to receive the children with whom they work with or to greet other pupils as directed by the principal or teaching staff. Similarly, SNA(ISA)s remain in school for 10 minutes after the school day finishes to help with the dismissal of pupils and the organisation of the classroom alongside the class teachers.

SNA (ISA) Deployment

The deployment of SNA(ISA)s in the school, as with teaching staff, lies with the principal or person designated by the principal to take this role. The deployment of SNA(ISA)s in the mainstream classes will follow a calendar below which sets out a timetable and cyclical process of review to determine the needs across the school. In determining the deployment of SNA(ISA)s, the principal must consider deploying the greatest level of SNA (ISA) support where the greatest need exists. There may be children who require intensive 1:1 support from an SNA(ISA), some who may require intermittent SNA (ISA) access from an SNA (ISA) while also sharing this responsibility with teaching staff and the SNA (ISA) can also assist teaching staff with larger groups of children (E.g in the a whole class/group setting)



SNA (ISA) Deployment Cycle and Calendar	
September	<p>SNA/ISAs are assigned to individual children and classes based on information gathered in June of the previous academic year.</p> <p>Children with the greatest primary care needs are given priority</p>

	Training is provided where necessary Plans are shared with parents
October/November	Interim reviews of the Student Care Plans, tracking progress. Gathering of data* usually begins in November.
December	Class teachers, Support Teachers and SNA/ISA's review Student Care Plans. They are tasked with reviewing targets and decreasing dependence on ISAs over time where targets are being achieved. Gathering of data** is essential in reviewing the targets.
January	SNA(ISAs) are assigned to individual children and classes based on information gathered in December from the Student Care Plan review. Priority is given to pupils with primary care needs. Plans are shared with parents
February	Interim reviews of the Student Care Plans, tracking progress. Gathering of data* usually begins in February.
March	Class teachers, Special Needs Teachers and SNA(ISAs)'s review Student Care Plans. They are tasked with reviewing targets and decreasing dependence on SNA(ISAs) over time where targets are being achieved. Gathering of data** is essential in reviewing the targets.
April	SNA(ISAs) are assigned to individual children and classes based on information gathered in December from the Student Care Plan review. Priority is given to pupils with primary care needs. Plans are shared with parents
June	Class teachers, Special Needs Teachers and SNA(ISAs)'s review Student Care Plans. They are tasked with reviewing targets and decreasing dependence on SNA(ISAs) over time where targets are being achieved. Gathering of data** is essential in reviewing the targets. The new targets will be put in place for the new academic year.

Student Care Plans (Formally Personal Pupil Profiles)

Each child who has been determined to require access to supports from an SNA (ISA) should have a detailed Student Care Plan (Formally known as PPP). The care plan will set out the nature of the primary and secondary care needs and targets for the child to increase independence in various areas and to reduce dependence on the support of the class teacher and/or the ISA. These Student Care Plans will be assessed and reviewed as per the yearly timetable above. These care plans should be designed with the pupil, parents, SNA (ISA) and any staff relevant. These Care plans may also be done in conjunction with medical care plans. A template for a Student Care Plan can be found in appendix A.

Target Setting

Targets within the Student Care plan should be specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time bound. The list below gives an indication of what should be included in a target for primary and secondary care needs. In this way, targets can be easily reviewed and amended where needs are diminishing. Targets should include:

1. Condition
2. The desired observable behaviour
3. Criteria for performance.

“With adult and visual prompts, Mary will wash her hands after using the toilet, 60% of the time”

“With SNA (ISA) assistance, Daniel will return to class calmly after break, most of the time”

“John will clean himself after using the toilet, independently, 90% of the time” (this pupil is reaching independence)

“Claire will work independently, with some reminders from an ISA, for most of the time”

SNA (ISA) Deployment in Autism Classes

Currently, SNA(ISAs) are assigned to our Autism classes separately from the mainstream allocation. However, school management may deploy individual SNA(ISAs) across the school, dependent on the needs of the school and of the children in the Autism classes.

Responding to Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of concern are in the first instance dealt with by the class teachers, using a suite of strategies to reduce and prevent them. However, where the efforts of teaching staff are not successful in preventing or reacting appropriately to these behaviours of concern, an SNA (ISA) may be assigned to this child to implement more intensive supports and to help in dealing with behaviours of concern as they occur.

An SNA (ISA) will not engage in any unnecessary manual handling of a pupil. Gentle hand holding to encourage correct direction will be used and any handling above this will only be used if the safety of the child or another child is at risk e.g. preventing a child running on to a road, climbing on a high ledge. The school employs a Low Arousal Approach to dealing with behaviours of concern and for deescalating heightened situations. Training and support is provided to staff in maintaining this approach.

The risk in certain settings may include bites, scratches etc. In the first instance, the adult should ensure all measures have been used to prevent such injuries. However, where these incidents occur, the SNA (ISA) involved should report it immediately to the class teacher and the principal so that appropriate medical treatment can be sought. All instances of assault should be logged and recorded in the incident book.

SNA (ISA) Planning and Reporting

As with teaching staff, SNA(ISAs) are expected to complete a certain amount of planning throughout the year. This involves:

- Creating their timetable at the beginning of the year, dependent on the needs of the children
- Cocreation and review of Student Care Plans
- Cocreation and review of Student Support files

SNA(ISAs) will, on occasion, be asked to report on such plans to the principal where requested. Such planning should be documented in the booklet provided to SNA(ISAs) at the beginning of the year.

Administration of Medication

The administration of medication by SNA(ISAs) should be in line with the Administration of Medication Policy in the school. The SNA (ISA) plays a vital role in assisting vulnerable students in their administration of medication, while over time (in consultation with the teachers, parents and principal) increasing the child's ability to administer medication independently. No medication should be administered without prior approval from the principal or person designated by the principal in this role.

SNA (ISA) Duties in the Classrooms

It is expected that SNA(ISA)s would be provided with space within the classroom to make themselves at home. This may include an adult chair, a place to put their belongings etc.

When working within the classrooms, SNA(ISA)s should avoid sitting beside a particular child for the duration of their time there. This can sometimes increase dependence on the adult, single out children and can impact on the child's self esteem. Some questions that the SNA (ISA) could ask –

- Is my constant presence necessary? Can I move away for a while and come back around
- Can the child be observed and helped from a distance?
- Can I assist any other children in the room while also keeping a close eye on the target child(ren)?
- How do I increase the independence of the child over time?

Staff Meetings

There are a number of staff meetings each year which may involve the attendance of all staff members. However, there will be a number of SNA (ISA) specific meetings throughout the year:

- **Get Together Meetings (1 each term):** SNA(ISA)s meeting within their own group to discuss good practice, share challenges and create action plans. These meetings will be chaired and minuted by a rotating member of SNA (ISA) staff.
- **General SNA (ISA) Meetings (1 each term):** A meeting will be held with the principal each term. This is chaired by the principal or designated post-holder.
- **Teacher/SNA (ISA) planning meeting (1 each month):** During the first week of each month, ordinarily the first Tuesday, each SNA (ISA) will meet with the teacher(s) that they are assigned to in order to discuss the most current Student Care Plan and strategies/approaches within the classroom.

Movements with children from classrooms

In the interest of inclusion, where a child requires a movement throughout the day, such movements, in the first instance, should be performed within the classroom. However, where the required movement is not possible within the confines of the classroom, there are a number of spaces made available around the school. **All movements from the classroom must be agreed with the class teacher and parents through the Student Care Plan.**

In deciding on the focus of the movement break, the Student Care Plan should consider whether the child requires:

- Sensory retreat/therapy as a result of overwhelm
- Calming, regulating and organising movements for fidgety/active children
- Arousing movements for pupils who need to be motivated and alerted
- A combination of both

Where a child is on an individual behaviour/support plan which promotes behaviour through a reward system, these rewards may also involve a movement from the classroom. However, such rewards must be agreed with the class teacher, child and parent and should be monitored and reduced over time to increase independence. The Code of Positive Behaviour should be consulted and adhered to.

Haddington Road Agreement

Under the Haddington Road Agreement (Circular 0034/2013), SNA(ISA)s are required to complete 72 additional hours over the course of an academic year. However, credit is given to the work that is already being completed by our SNA(ISA)s in the school including:

- Staff meetings, Get Together Meetings, Teacher/SNA (ISA) planning meetings

- Induction at the beginning of the year

Some of the remaining hours will be utilised for:

- Continuous Professional Development
- Assisting class teachers in preparing materials for the class and the children in their care

A calendar of required and flexible hours will be made available to SNA(ISA)s at the beginning of each year.

Continuous Professional Development

SNA(ISA)s will be consulted each year on their needs and priorities for the year ahead with regard to CPD. CPD will also be linked to the individual needs of the pupils with whom the SNA(ISA)s will be working. CPD in our school is divided in the following way, and will be planned accordingly:

- Whole school core training for all staff (E.g Restorative Practice, Autism Training)
- SNA (ISA) training (E.g Low arousal, Braincalm, Intimate Care)
- SNA (ISA) specific/Child dependent training (Diabetes, Epilepsy, Behaviour Management)
- Optional CPD (First Aid, ICT etc)

Intimate Care

Intimate care is carried out by SNA (ISA) staff in line with the schools' intimate care policy. Training on intimate care is offered on occasion to staff.

Parent Contact

SNA(ISA)s are encouraged to build a positive relationship based on trust with the parents of children with additional needs. If required at the end of the school day, the SNA (ISA) should accompany the child to the door to greet the parent. It is helpful to chat about how the day went or upcoming events but do not pass on information regarding child's educational progress.

Parents with questions, requests or concerns regarding school policy or practice should be referred directly to the class teacher or the Principal. This applies to direct face- to face communication or indirect telephone communication. Parents should contact teachers for information on the child's progress.

It is not appropriate for parents to have a private phone number of a member of staff or to contact the SNA (ISA) outside of school hours

All incidents should be reported to the teacher and communicated in a way which is agreeable by all concerned.

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

Grievance and disciplinary procedures are set out in circular 0072/2011 and the school follows the procedures where necessary.

Staff Roles

The Principal

- Assigning role specific and child specific tasks to the SNA (ISA) in association with the class teacher
- Meeting staff at the beginning of the year to speak about expectations
- Co-ordinating the integration and devising the role profile of the SNA (ISA)s
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the SNA(ISA)s' contribution to the needs of designated children
- Promoting in-service training. The Board of Management may fund or part-fund this professional development.
- Managing areas of conflict which may arise, with the assistance of the Deputy Principal.

Special Educational Teachers

- Assume responsibility for Support Plans in consultation with all relevant parties including the parents, SNA(ISA), class teacher and principal as per the school's SEN policy.

Class Teachers

- Ensure SNA (ISA) support is available for those who need it in a class situation and identify the appropriate tasks to be completed
- Provide a suitable seating arrangement for the SNA (ISA) and child in the mainstream setting
- Collaborate with the SNA (ISA) with regard to planning and timetabling
- Co-create a list of classroom tasks to be undertaken by the SNA (ISA) when time is available e.g. 10 minutes before/after school, etc.

Inclusion Support Assistants

- SNA(ISA)s will be considered an important part of the school team and carry out duties of a non-teaching nature
- SNA(ISA)s are deployed in a manner which best meets the care support requirements to the children enrolled in the school.
- Provide additional adult assistance to children with special educational needs who also have additional and significant care needs
- Facilitate the attendance of those pupils at school and also minimise disruption to class or teaching time for the pupils concerned or their peers
- Develop independent living skills
- The SNA (ISA) always works under the direction of the class teacher or Principal
- The teacher plans lessons and directs learning. The SNA (ISA) provides support in assisting the pupil to access the curriculum.
- The SNA (ISA) should be familiar with all relevant school policies, in particular the school Code of Positive Behaviour, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Special Needs Assistant policies.

Success Criteria

This policy is aimed at making a difference to the teaching and learning of children with Additional Needs in our school. We will know that the policy is achieving its aims when

- children with additional and complex needs are included in whole school activities
- children are experiencing a safe and stimulating environment
- the children are becoming independent learners and acquiring life skills
- the child is reaching the targets set out in their Student Care Plans and School Support Plans

Ratification and Review

This plan was formally ratified by the Board of management on 18th January 2023.

The plan will be implemented by the teachers and SNA (ISA)s supported by the Board of Management from 19th January 2023.

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended in the academic year 2025/2026 or sooner if required.

This policy was ratified by the school's Board of Management

Signed: 

Chairperson

Signed: 

Principal

Date: 18.1.23

Date: 18.1.23

SNA Deployment

Student Care Plan (Level 1 - Support for all)			
Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
SNA Involved			
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
<p>Details of Primary Care Needs (As per circular 0030/2014) - Delete as necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance with feeding Administration of medicine Assistance with toileting and general hygiene Assistance with mobility and orientation Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds Care needs associated with specific medical conditions Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of pupil from classroom when essential Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment Assistance with severe communication difficulties EBD where behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date History of violent behaviour, assault, self-harm, leaving school premises 			
Details of Secondary Care Needs			
Long term Goal(s) for this pupil			
Targets for the Student and strategies to increase independence			
Target	Classroom Strategies	SNA (ISA) Intervention	
1.			

2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Staff involved and resources needed		
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)		
Signature of teacher		

Review					
Review Date					
Review comments (Which targets have seen a reduction in dependence?/Which needs have diminished? How must targets be changed to see further progress?)					
Targets to be amended and continued within class (support for all)		Greater support required by an SNA intermittently (Support for some)		More individualised support needed by and SNA (Support for Few)	

SNA Deployment – Student Care Plan

Student Care Plan (Level 2 - Support for some)			
Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
SNA Involved			
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
<p>Details of Primary Care Needs (As per circular 0030/2014) - Delete as necessary</p> <p>Assistance with feeding</p> <p>Administration of medicine</p> <p>Assistance with toileting and general hygiene</p> <p>Assistance with mobility and orientation</p> <p>Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds</p> <p>Care needs associated with specific medical conditions</p> <p>Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of pupil from classroom when essential</p> <p>Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment</p> <p>Assistance with severe communication difficulties</p> <p>EBD where behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date</p> <p>History of violent behaviour, assault, self-harm, leaving school premises</p>			
Details of Secondary Care Needs			
Long term Goal(s) for this pupil			
Targets for the Student and strategies to increase independence			
Target	Classroom Strategies		SNA (ISA) Intervention

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Staff involved and resources needed		
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)		
Signature of teacher		

Review					
Review Date					
Review comments (Which targets have seen a reduction in dependence?/Which needs have diminished? How must targets be changed to see further progress?)					
Targets to be amended and continued within class without SNA (support for all)		Current support required by an SNA intermittently (Support for some)		More individualised support needed by and SNA (Support for Few)	

SNA Deployment – Student Care Plan

Student Care Plan (Level 3 - Support for Few)			
Student's name		Age	
Lead teacher		Class/year	
SNA Involved			
Start date of plan			
Review date of plan			
Student's strengths and interests			
<p>Details of Primary Care Needs (As per circular 0030/2014) - Delete as necessary</p> <p>Assistance with feeding</p> <p>Administration of medicine</p> <p>Assistance with toileting and general hygiene</p> <p>Assistance with mobility and orientation</p> <p>Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds</p> <p>Care needs associated with specific medical conditions</p> <p>Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of pupil from classroom when essential</p> <p>Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment</p> <p>Assistance with severe communication difficulties</p> <p>EBD where behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date</p> <p>History of violent behaviour, assault, self-harm, leaving school premises</p>			
Details of Secondary Care Needs			
Long term Goal(s) for this pupil			
Targets for the Student and strategies to increase independence			
Target	Classroom Strategies	SNA (ISA) Intervention	
1.			

2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Staff involved and resources needed		
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s)		
Signature of teacher		

Review					
Review Date					
Review comments (Which targets have seen a reduction in dependence? /Which needs have diminished? How must targets been changed to see further progress?)					
Targets to be amended and continued within class without SNA (support for all)		Reduce support required by an SNA to intermittently (Support for some)		Continue with more individualised support needed by and SNA (Support for Few)	