

## **Career Break, Job Sharing and Secondment Policy. St. Louis Community School**

### **Introduction:**

The Board of Management of St. Louis Community school, Kiltimagh has consulted with the principal partners involved in the education of our pupils 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 pupils in this policy.

In order 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 107/2006, 10/2011, 75/2015 and the Education Act 1998. **In particular, the Board recognises that in drawing up this policy the welfare and educational needs of the pupils 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.

Taking these considerations into account the number of whole-time, fully qualified teachers in full-time work in the school at any time should be 90% of this cohort.

### **Considerations:**

- 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 pupils they teach in our school.
- 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 novice 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 pupils. (Para12.1 of CL75/2015)
- In these circumstances the Board of Management must seek to strike a balance between the needs of teachers and pupils and the long-term good of the school as a stable educational environment and work place. 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 pupils.
- The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that particular 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 moratorium on Posts of Responsibility in place since March 27, 2009 means that the Board of Management may be unable to replace an absent post holder subject to limited alleviation numbers. The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that there is an effective and adequate middle management structure in the school.
- 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 pupils will take precedence over all other considerations.

#### **Eligibility:**

- Permanent, CID, TWT, RPT (with duration not extending beyond the date of termination of a fixed term contract) up to compulsory retirement age.
- Teachers must be registered with the Teaching Council to be eligible.
- Teachers must have satisfactorily completed at least 12 months of continuous service with the school.

#### **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 will be determined in accordance with Circular Letter 10/2011, the granting of job sharing will be determined in accordance with Circular Letter 75/2015 and the granting of secondments will be determined in accordance with Circular Letter 107/ 2006 **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.
- 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)
- Job-sharing teachers may not engage in any substitute teaching, act as a special needs assistant in any school or undertake home tuition hours (Para 9.1, CL75/2015)

- It is not permissible for a job-sharing teacher to engage in outside employment without the consent of the employer. (See Para 9.2, CL75/2015 for further details)

**Application:**

- Applications for a career break must submit a written application to the school not later than March 1 of each school year prior to that in which s/he proposes to commence / continue the career break. The application must provide clear details of the exact purpose of the career break.
- Applications for a job share should be made on form JS1 attached to CL 75/2015 and submitted not later than February 1 of each school year prior to that in which s/he proposes to commence/ continue the job share.
- 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.
- Applications approved by the Board of Management will be notified to the Department of Education and Skills in accordance with procedures set out by the DES.
- Prior to the submission of applications to the Department of Education and Skills, the Board of Management will inform candidates of its decision whether to support such applications.
- Teachers approved for career breaks, job shares or secondment must respond in writing to an offer made. It will be understood that an acceptance is based on the conditions contained in CL 10/2011 for Career Break, CL 75/2015 for Job Share, CL 107/06 for secondment and also on the Board of Management's policy as outlined in this document.

**Resumption of Duty following a Career Break**

- A teacher must notify the school by the 1<sup>st</sup> March of his/her intention to return to teaching from a career break at the beginning of the next school year. Failure to do so may result in the return being deferred for a further school year (e.g. in the event that the late notification resulted in contractual difficulties for the school).
- It is the responsibility of the teacher returning from a career break to ensure that s/he is registered with the Teaching Council on the intended date of resumption.
- A teacher returning from a career break in excess of two school years shall be screened by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). It is a pre-requisite for the restoration of salary that the teacher is deemed medically fit for teaching duties by the OHS before s/he is permitted to resume his/her teaching post.
- A teacher returning from career break must comply with the vetting regulations in operation at the time of return.
- The terms and conditions of teachers in general including the terms of any redeployment scheme existing at time of return shall apply to a teacher resuming duty after a career break.

**Revised and updated by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016**