



Teacher and SNA Career Break Policy

**Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's
Navan, Co Meath
64370T**

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1. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to teachers and special needs assistants employed by Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's wishing to avail of the opportunity to take a Career Break. It has been developed to provide a framework within the provision of the relevant Circular Letters and to assist staff in understanding how Career Breaks are managed within the school. This policy operates within the terms and conditions of the following circulars

[Circular 0054/2019](#)

[Circular 0035/2019](#)

2. Career Break Scheme

A career break is a period of special leave without pay. The main objective of a career break is to facilitate applicants where possible, in relation to areas such as:

- Personal development
- Voluntary service overseas
- Accompanying spouse/partner on Diplomatic/Military posting
- Educational purposes
- Public representation
- Family reasons
- Self employment

3. Eligibility

A teacher ¹ is eligible to apply for a Career Break where they will have satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are applying, 12 months of continuous service with the current employer. This requirement is waived where a teacher is compulsorily redeployed into a school or where a school is amalgamated provided that they have worked at least one full year in his/her former school prior to redeployment/amalgamation.

An SNA may apply for a Career Break where s/he will have satisfactorily completed, at the end of the school year in which they are applying, 12 months of continuous service within Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's and wherein their position is confirmed by the NCSE for the following year.

4. Duration of Career Break

4.1 A Career Break is for a period of not less than 1 school year and may be extended on an annual basis provided the total period of the Career Break does not exceed 5 years at any one time, subject to an overall maximum of 10 years absence in the course of the teacher's career.

4.2 A subsequent Career Break may not be taken until the teacher has served for a period equal to the duration of the previous Career Break. In the case of a teacher wishing to avail of a Career Break to undertake voluntary service abroad/missionary/diplomatic/military/Oireachtas or study leave this requirement will be waived.

4.3 A Career Break must commence at the start of a school year. A return to duty in the school which granted the Career Break or to the school.

4.4 Where the teacher has been redeployed is not permitted other than at the beginning of a succeeding school year.

4.5 In exceptional circumstances, an employer may approve a Career Break to commence during the course of a school year and terminate not earlier than the end of that school year. This is deemed to be a 1 year Career Break.

4.6 The duration of a Career Break may not extend beyond:

- (i) the date of termination of a fixed term contract
- (ii) the date of compulsory retirement
- (iii) the limits set out at paragraph 3.1
- (iv) the end of the relevant school year (in cases where an application for extension has not been submitted/approved)

¹ These procedures apply to teachers who are in receipt of incremental salary under a permanent contract, contract of indefinite duration (CID), or fixed-term contract (e.g. temporary whole-time (TWT), regular part-time (RPT)) as defined in the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003.

5. Application Procedures

All applicants should familiarise themselves with all terms and conditions outlined in the relevant circulars ²

5.1 A teacher seeking a Career Break must submit the completed Application Form³ to the Principal in writing no later than 1st February of the school year prior to that in which they proposes to commence the career break.

5.2 In order for the Board to make a fully informed decision regarding the awarding of the career break, and to plan for the provision of teaching and learning the applicant is asked to provide details on the purpose for which the career break is required and projected number of years they anticipate the career break may last.

(i) The purpose for which it is required

(ii) Whether it is likely that a second (extension year) may be sought to the initial Career Break year. ⁴

5.3 Late application may be considered by the employer in exceptional circumstances.

5.4 A teacher who wishes to extend his/her Career Break must apply for this extension on an annual basis within the deadline set out at 5.1.

5.5 The school Principal will approve or reject the Career Break application bearing in mind the curricular needs of the school. This is a two step process whereby the school manages the request which is subject to final approval by the Board of Management. The decision of the Board of Management is final.

5.6 The Board of Management's decision on the Career Break application will include a written notice of approval or refusal to the teacher no later than 1st March.

5.7 Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the Board of Management to accommodate the Career Break, the applicant is not permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14th April. In exceptional circumstances the employer may consider a later withdrawal of a Career Break application.

² Circulars 0054/2019, 0010/2011, 0022/2012, 0035/2019

³ [Application form](#) available in appendices

⁴ This does not imply an undertaking or obligation by the applicant or the Board of Management, applications are processed on a year on year basis.

6. Consideration of Applications by the Board of Management

6.1 The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's recognises the benefits of the Department of Education and Skills schemes for teachers in relation to career breaks. These schemes provide teachers with 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.

The Board of management looks positively on the Career Break Scheme and wishes to support staff in availing of such leave, subject to the condition that the day to day obligations of the school are not adversely affected. Accordingly, the welfare and educational needs of the pupils shall take precedence over all other considerations.

6.2 It may be necessary to limit the number of teaching and SNA staff that may be absent on Career Break at any one time having due regard to the capacity of the School to meet its obligations to our pupils and also to take into account the likely availability of a suitably qualified replacement teacher or SNA to take up duty on the applicants departure.

A number of factors will be considered by the Principal in assessing all applications for Career Break, regardless of the number of applications.

- The total number of teachers who are on a career break at any one time shall not exceed 10% of the total number of whole-time equivalent teachers as defined on the schools allocation of staff rounded down to the nearest whole number. The number may vary from year to year, depending on the number of applications and the specific requirements. The number of Teachers and Special Needs Assistants on Secondment / Job Sharing within the school, and within subject teaching departments/curricular areas will affect decision.
- Any potential conflicts of interest between the purpose of the Career Break and the educational purposes of the school. This includes
 - The need for the school to maintain continuity of teaching students affected by such arrangements.
 - The effect any such arrangements might have on the ability of the school to replace the teachers availing of such schemes
 - The effect on particular subject departments by granting a career break which would result in creating an imbalance in any subject department.
 - The effect any such arrangements would have on the balance between the number of long- serving members of staff and those who may be inexperienced or novice teachers.
- The reason for the Career Break
- The length of service of the teacher/SNA in the school in the first instance, and in total in the second
- Previous periods of Career Break, in the context of equality of opportunity for staff in availing of the scheme

7. Decision Regarding Application

7.1 In the event of approval of application

- The applicant will be notified of the decision to *provisionally* approve their application by March 1st ⁵
- The applicant must confirm in writing that they wish to proceed with the career break.
- The applicant is not permitted to withdraw their application after April 14th or from once the replacement teacher's contract has been signed, whichever happens first.

7.2 In the event of denial of application

- The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision to deny their application by March 1st.
- The letter will set out the basis for refusal.
- The Board of Management's decision is final. However, this does not preclude a staff member from appealing a decision to the Board of Management.

8. Terms and Conditions of the Career Break Scheme

- 8.1. In accordance with [Changes to the Career Break Scheme for the 2018/19](#) school year teachers who are on a Career Break can cover in a substitute capacity without the restrictions imposed in [Paragraph 5.1, Chapter 8 \(Career Break Scheme\) of the Terms and Conditions of Employment for Registered Teachers in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools](#).
- 8.2. The taking up of regular employment of any kind elsewhere in the State by a SNA while on Career Break would be contrary to the objectives of the scheme and shall lead to refusal of an application or withdrawal of approval already given.
- 8.3. A teacher on Career Break will retain eligibility to apply for a post of responsibility which occurs in the school and s/he will be notified of any vacancies by the employer
- 8.4. Time spent on Career Break does not reckon as service for seniority purposes. Service prior to and post Career Break will be treated as continuous for seniority purposes but the actual period of the Career Break will not be counted as reckonable service
- 8.5. An employee returning from a career break in excess of two years/two school years shall be screened by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). It is a prerequisite for the restoration of salary that the employee is deemed medically fit for duties by the OHS before h/she is permitted to resume his/her post
- 8.6. All employees, where applicable, must comply with vetting regulations in operation at time of return
- 8.7. It is the sole responsibility of the teacher returning from Career Break to ensure that h/she is registered with the Teaching Council on the intended date of resumption
- 8.8. Any member of staff whose intention is to return to duty after Career Break is requested to contact payroll at the Department of Education as well as notifying the Principal. Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's cannot be held responsible for any delay in payment resulting from failure to notify the department in writing of their intention.
- 8.9. The terms and conditions of teachers in general including the terms of any redeployment scheme existing at the time of return shall apply to a teacher resuming duty after a career break.
- 8.10. A teacher must notify the Board of Management by the 1st February of his/her intention to return to teaching from a career break at the beginning of the next school year. Failure to do so

⁵ Approval is conditional on the recruitment of a suitably qualified replacement. In the event a suitably qualified replacement cannot be recruited by 30th June, the applicant may be advised that their career break cannot proceed.

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 employer).

Note : It is the responsibility of the individual staff member to make whatever enquiries and arrangements as are necessary regarding issues such as, Superannuation, Incremental Credit, Promotion, Leave, etc. Full details of the schemes are available in the Department of Education and Skills Terms & Conditions of Employment webbook for teachers which can be accessed on [DES Website](#) [Ref Chapter 8 (Career Break Scheme) and Chapter 9 (Job Sharing Scheme)].

Review of Policy

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's, Navan on 14th November 2022

This policy will be subject to review in accordance with organisational needs and/or where it is necessary to do so due to changes in DES regulations, legislation or other such situations.

Signed Liz Colgan
Chairperson

Maria Harney
Principal

Date 14th November 2022

14th November 2022



Loreto Secondary School St Michael's

APPLICATION FORM FOR CAREER BREAK

Note: The Application Form should be fully completed annually and submitted to the employer prior to commencing or seeking an extension to a Career Break and not later than 1st February.

Part 1A - Teacher Application			
Applicants Name		Contact Number	
Home Address			
Email Address (Personal)			
PPSN			
School Name	Loreto Secondary School, St Michael's		
Roll Number	64370T		

Have you previously taken a Career Break?	Yes ☐	No ☐
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If yes please provide details	
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Part 1B - DETAILS OF PROPOSED CAREER BREAK	
Proposed Start Date of Career Break	
Objective of Career Break (please tick relevant box)	☐ Personal Development ☐ Voluntary Service Overseas ☐ Accompany spouse/partner on Diplomatic/Military Posting ☐ Educational purposes ☐ Public Representation ☐ Family Reasons ☐ Self-employment ☐ Other
Additional information to support career break application	

Declaration

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

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

Signature of Applicant

Date

Data Protection Privacy Statement

The main purpose for which the Department requires you to provide this personal data to your employer is to enable your Career Break 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 2 - EMPLOYER DECISION

I certify that I have approved/refused (delete as appropriate) the Career Break application in accordance with the Career Break Scheme as set out in Circular 54/2019 titled 'Leave Schemes for Registered Teachers Employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools'. The following documents will be retained for audit purposes:

- ☐ Application for Career Break
- ☐ Copy of Decision Notice Issued to Teacher
- ☐ Approved career break has been recorded on the OLCS

Signature of Employer

Date

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

