



CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
CUMANN BAINISTÍOCHTA NA MBUNSCOLIEANNA CAITLICEACHA

Brief Absences – SNAs

Frequently Asked Questions

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SNAs

Absent SEN Pupils

Q.1. What do SNAs do when the SEN pupil is absent?

- A. If a pupil to whom a Special Needs Assistant is assigned is absent from school, the Special Needs Assistant should attend at school and undertake assigned duties. If a pupil has a continuous absence, payment will be made to the Special Needs Assistant for a maximum of 4 weeks or until the end of the school term, whichever is the more favourable to the Special Needs Assistant. However, payment cannot extend beyond the end of the Special Needs Assistant's contract. The Special Needs Assistant Payroll should be notified if the limits as above are due to expire so that the Special Needs Assistant may be removed from the payroll to help avoid the occurrence of any overpayment. **(Circular PPT 07/04 & Circular SNA18/04)**

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Adoption

Q.2. Can an SNA avail of time off work to attend pre-adoption classes or meetings held within the state?

- A. Yes, an adopting SNA may avail of time off to attend pre-adoption classes or meetings held within the state which s/he is obliged to attend as part of the adoption process. Evidence of the dates and time of classes and/or meetings is required by the BoM. Such certification should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. **(Circular 0019/2013)**

Q.3. What notice should be given regarding attendance at such meetings?

- A. SNAs should give two weeks' notice for each absence to attend pre-adoption meetings and classes, with evidence of the dates and times of meetings and/or classes concerned. Such certification should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. **(Circular 0019/2013)**

Q.4. Can the BoM employ a substitute SNA?

- A. If the absence is for at least one day the BoM may employ a substitute SNA. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by DES. **(Circular 0019/2013)**

Q.5. Is an SNA entitled to time off work to attend meetings and/or classes held outside the state relating to foreign adoptions?

- A. Yes, in the case of foreign adoptions an adopting SNA may take some or all of the statutory unpaid leave prior to the date of adoption to allow the SNA to attend meetings and/or classes held outside of the state. **(Circular 0019/2013)**

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Ante-Natal Care Appointments/Classes

Q.6. Can an SNA avail of leave to attend ante-natal care appointments?

- A. Yes. An SNA may avail of leave for medical appointments related to ante-natal care. Evidence of appointment is required by the BoM. A copy of such evidence should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. A substitute SNA may be employed **if** the

absence of the SNA is of duration of at least one day. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

Q.7. How much notice is a female SNA required to give in relation to absence due to attendance at ante-natal appointments?

A. Two weeks notice should be given by the SNA for each appointment. Evidence of appointment is required by the BoM. A copy of such evidence should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

Q.8. Can a female SNA avail of time off work to attend ante-natal classes?

A. Yes, a female SNA may avail of leave to attend one set of ante-natal classes in a working career, other than the last 3 classes in such a set of classes. (These three classes take place while the teacher is on maternity leave). Evidence of attendance is required by the BoM a copy of which should be retained for audit purposes. A substitute SNA may be employed **if** the absence of the SNA is of duration of at least one day. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

Q.9. How much notice is a female SNA required to give in relation to absence due to attendance at ante-natal classes?

A. Two weeks notice should be given by the SNA of each absence. Evidence of appointment is required by the BoM. A copy of such evidence should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

Q.10. Can a male SNA avail of leave to attend ante-natal classes?

A. A male SNA may avail of leave to attend the last two ante-natal classes in a set attended by the pregnant mother. Evidence of attendance is required by the BoM. A copy of such evidence should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. A substitute SNA may be employed **if** the absence of the SNA is of duration of at least one day. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

Q.11. How much notice is a male SNA required to give in relation to absence due to attendance at ante-natal classes?

A. Two weeks notice should be given by the SNA of each absence. Evidence of appointment is required by the BoM. A copy of such evidence should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

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Bereavement Leave

Q.12. Can an SNA avail of bereavement leave?

A. Yes, an SNA may avail of bereavement leave in the event of the bereavement of a family member. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Special leave with pay is allowed to an SNA in the event of the bereavement of a family member.

An SNA may avail of **5 consecutive days (including weekends)** in the case of a spouse*, partner, child, or a person to whom the SNA is in loco parentis.

An SNA may avail of **3 consecutive days (including weekends)** in the case of a parent, brother, sister, parent-in-law, step-parent, grandparent or a person who resides with the SNA in a relationship of domestic dependency.

Should the death occur after school hours the special leave commences from the following day. Should the death occur at the weekend, for example, a Saturday, the special leave commences from the day directly following the death i.e. Sunday. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

*spouse should be read as spouse or civil partner

Q.13. Is substitute cover provided by the Department for the SNA while s/he is on bereavement leave?

A. Yes, a substitute may be employed by the BoM. Substitution **will be** paid by the DES while the SNA is on bereavement leave. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

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Brief Absences

Q.14. What does the term “brief absence” mean?

A. The term “brief absence” is used to describe short-term occasional absences sanctioned by the employer during the school year. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Q.15. Does an SNA need to seek prior approval in order to avail of a brief absence?

A. Yes. The prior approval of the employer **must be** sought and granted for all brief absences. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Q.16. What happens if an SNA is absent without the approval of the employer?

A. Any absence without the approval of the employer will be regarded as unapproved leave, will be dealt with under disciplinary procedures and could lead to the cessation of salary. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Q.17. Can a part-time SNAs avail of brief absences?

A. Yes. Pro-rata entitlements to brief absences will apply to SNAs employed on a part-time basis. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Q.18. Can an SNA be absent for part of a school day and work for the other portion of the day?

A. No, absence for part of a school day constitutes an absence for a full school day **(Circular 0032/2010)**, **except** in the case of attendance at antenatal classes. In the case of ante-natal classes where possible the SNA should, having regard to travelling distances etc. attend work before and after the classes **(Circular SNA 13/05)**.

Q.19. Can a brief absence of an SNA extend beyond the duration of the SNA’s contract of employment?

A. No, absences shall not extend beyond the duration of the SNA’s contract of employment **(Circular 0032/2010)**

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Court Attendance

Q.20. Can an SNA avail of leave for court attendance related to school?

A. Yes an SNA may avail of leave for court attendance related to school business. The maximum number of days allowed is the number of days as deemed necessary by the court. The SNA will be paid and a substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. Documentary evidence must be retained by the employer and notification of absence must be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills via the OLCS. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Q.21. Can an SNA avail of leave to be a witness in court?

A. Yes an SNA may avail of leave to be a witness in court subject to receipt of a summons or subpoena. The maximum number of days allowed, is as required by the summons or subpoena. Documentary evidence must be retained by the employer and notification of absence must be submitted to the Department of Education and

Skills via the OLCS. The SNA will be paid. A substitute SNA **will not** be paid by the DES. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

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Examination Leave

Q.22. [Can an SNA avail of examination Leave?](#)

- A. Yes, the SNA may avail of examination leave relevant to SNA duties. The leave is confined to the day(s) of the exam only. Substitution **will not** be paid by DES. Documentary evidence must be retained by the employer and notification of absence must be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills via the OLCS. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

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Force Majeure Leave

Q.23. [Can an SNA avail of Force Majeure Leave?](#)

- A. Yes, an SNA may avail of Force Majeure Leave where for urgent family reasons, owing to an injury or the illness of a family member, the immediate presence of the SNA at the place where the family member is, whether at his/her home or elsewhere, is indispensably required. A substitute SNA may be employed. The substitute **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

In this context “family member” means a child or adoptive child, spouse*/partner, a person to whom the SNA is in loco parentis, a brother or sister, a parent or grandparent or a person who resides with the SNA in a relationship of domestic dependency. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

*spouse should be read as spouse or civil partner

Q.24. [What is the maximum amount of Force Majeure leave that can be availed of by an SNA?](#)

- A. The maximum amount of Force Majeure leave that an SNA may avail of is 3 days in 12 consecutive months, or 5 days in 36 consecutive months. School Authorities must ensure that these limits are not exceeded. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Q.25. [Can a substitute SNA be employed by the BoM to cover for the absent SNA on Force Majeure Leave?](#)

- A. Yes, a substitute SNA may be employed. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

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Graduation

Q.26. [Can an SNA avail of leave in respect of his/her graduation?](#)

- A. An SNA may apply to the BoM for **unpaid leave** to attend his/her graduation which may be considered by the BoM. If unpaid leave is approved by the BoM a substitute SNA may be employed who **will be** paid by DES.

Q.27. [Can an SNA avail of leave to attend the graduation of a family member?](#)

- A. An SNA may apply to the BoM for **unpaid leave** to attend the graduation of a family member which may be considered by the BoM. If unpaid leave is approved by the BoM a substitute SNA may be employed who **will be** paid by DES.

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Health and Safety Leave

Q.28. Can an SNA be placed on of Health and Safety leave?

- A. A pregnant SNA may be placed on health and Safety leave if, following a maternity related Health and Safety risk assessment, a risk is identified and if (a) it is not possible to remove it (b) a temporary adjustment in the work environment of the SNA is not possible (c) moving the SNA to suitable alternative work which does not entail the risk is not available and (d) following consultation with and certification from the OHS. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

Q.29. Can maternity related Health and Safety leave be granted in respect of more than one period?

Yes, maternity related Health and Safety leave can be granted in respect of more than one period provided the conditions outlined at Q.25 above are met. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

Q.30. Will an SNA receive paid Health and Safety leave?

- A. An SNA who is placed on Health and Safety leave will be paid for the first 21 days of Health and safety Leave by the DES. Subsequently the SNA may be entitled to receive H&S benefit from the Department of Social Protection.

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Jury Duty

Q.31. Can an SNA avail of leave for Jury Service?

- A. Yes an SNA may avail of leave for jury service. The maximum number of days allowed is the number of days as deemed necessary by the court. The SNA will be paid. A substitute SNA may be employed. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES.

Documentary evidence must be retained by the employer and notification of absence must be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills via the OLCS. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

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Paternity Leave

Q.31. Can an SNA avail of paternity leave?

- A. Yes, an SNA may avail of paternity leave in respect of the birth or adoption of his child. Up to three school days may be taken within four weeks of the birth or in the case of adoption within 4 weeks of the placement of the child. In the case of multiple births or the adoption of more than one child at the same time the maximum of three days applies. A substitute SNA may be employed. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular SNA 13/05)**

Q.33. How much notice should an SNA give to the BoM of his intention to take paternity leave?

- A. AN SNA must give the BoM at least four weeks notice of his intention to take paternity leave. **(Circular SNA 13/05)**

Q.34. Can a substitute SNA be employed by the BoM while the SNA is on paternity leave?

A. Yes a substitute SNA may be employed. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular SNA 13/05)**

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Post Natal care appointments

Q.35. Can an SNA avail of leave to attend post-natal care appointments?

A. Yes. An SNA may avail of leave to attend medical appointments related to post-natal care within 14 weeks of the birth. Evidence of appointment is required a copy of which should be retained by the BoM for audit purposes. A substitute SNA may be employed **if** the absence is of duration of at least one day. The substitute SNA **will be** paid by the DES. **(Circular 0017/2013)**

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School Trips

Q.36. What are the requirements on SNAs when there is a school trip?

A. SNAs must attend the school and undertake appropriate duties or accompany the children on the school trip. In the event of the SNA not attending this day will be unpaid. **(Circular PPT 07/04 & Circular SNA 18/04)**

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Teacher In-Service Days

Q.37. Does an SNA get leave when teachers have an in-service day?

A. No, the Board of Management should assign appropriate duties to the Special Needs Assistant(s) employed in their school on days when teacher in-service courses are being held. **(Circular PPT 07/04 & Circular SNA 18/04)**

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Wedding* Leave

Q.38. Can an SNA avail of marriage* leave?

A. Yes, an SNA may avail of a maximum of 7 days (including weekends) and applicable only if the marriage takes place during term time. If the marriage takes place during holidays no leave in lieu is allowable. A substitute SNA **will not** be paid by the DES. Documentary evidence must be retained by the employer and notification of absence must be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills via the OLCS. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

Q.39. Can an SNA avail of leave for the wedding* of a family member?

A. Yes, an SNA may avail of 1 days' leave for the wedding* of an 'immediate' family member. Immediate family means child or adoptive child, a person to whom the SNA is in loco parentis, a brother, sister or a parent if the wedding* takes place on a day when the school is open. A substitute SNA **will not** be paid by the DES. Documentary evidence must be retained by the employer and notification of absence must be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills via the OLCS. **(Circular 0032/2010)**

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*spouse should be read as spouse or civil partner

*marriage should be read as marriage or civil partnership

*wedding should be read as wedding or civil ceremony

References:

- 0019/2013 Adoptive Leave Entitlements for Special Needs Assistants
- 0017/2013 Maternity Leave Entitlements for Special Needs Assistants
- 0032/2010 Brief Absences for Special Needs Assistants in Recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools
- Pay SNA 18/04 Rules governing Brief Absences of Special Needs Assistants
- PPT 007/04 Rules governing brief absences of Special Needs Assistants

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