

OUR LADYS SECONDARY SCHOOL



Career Break & Job Sharing Policy

Our Lady's Mission Statement

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School operating under the trusteeship of CEIST according to the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, cooperation and challenge. We take a holistic approach focusing on the wellbeing and development of each individual socially, culturally and academically. Within our school community, each student is treated equally. All are considered uniquely talented, with effort valued as much as excellence. On a day-to-day basis, the Christian message inspires everyone in the school to be charitable, inclusive and understanding.

School Context

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST. The school is Co-Educational and currently has approximately 880 students and over 70 teachers as well as a range of ancillary and support staff. The school has a Board of Management comprising Trustee Nominees, Teacher Nominees, and Parent Nominees. The Board of Management delegates the day-to-day running of the school to the Principal. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and parental choice in relation to enrolment. In supporting these principles it also recognizes the rights of the Trustees CEIST, the Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy and the funding and resources available.

Mercy Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Students, Parents/Guardians and the wider community.

CEIST Core Values

The Core Values of CEIST are:

- Promoting Spiritual & Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

Introduction

The Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School has engaged with the relevant stakeholders involved in the education of our pupils in the formation of the school's policy on Career Breaks & Job Sharing. The Board will consider all applications for Career-Break & Job Sharing, taking into account its statutory obligations as outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Circulars **0054/2019** and any subsequent Departmental Circulars or Information Notes that may temporarily amend the operation of these schemes 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

Eligibility

- Permanent, CID, TWT, RPT (with duration not extending beyond the date of termination of a fixed term contract) up to compulsory retirement age.
- Registered with the Teaching Council.
- Satisfactorily completed at least 12 months of continuous service with the school. [

Career Break Scheme

Duration of Career Break: A Career Break is for a period of not less than one school year. It 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.

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. *[This requirement may be waived in cases where the teacher avails of a Career Break for voluntary service abroad, missionary/diplomatic/military/Oireachtas or study leave, as per Circular 0054/2019.]*

Application Procedures

A teacher seeking a Career Break must submit the completed Application Form in Appendix A to the employer not later than 1st February of each school year.

The Board of Management's decision on the Career Break application must include a written notice of approval or refusal to the teacher no later than 1st March. *[The employer must also notify the Department/ETB via OLCS by 1st April, in line with Circular 0054/2019.]*

Taking into account the extent of the 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 or once a replacement teacher has signed a contract, whichever occurs first.

Employment while on Career Break

A teacher absent on Career Break may not be employed in an approved teaching or special needs assistant post funded by monies provided by the Oireachtas. In exceptional circumstances, an employer may appoint a qualified teacher on Career Break for substitute teaching purposes, subject to the following limits:

- In Primary – for a maximum of 90 days in a school year
- In Post Primary – for a maximum of 300 hours in a school year

[Under Information Notes issued in 2023, 2024 and 2025, these limits have been suspended. Teachers on Career Break may be employed for substitute work without restriction for the duration of those school years. This policy will adapt automatically to any such future Departmental directions.]

Return to Work following Career Break

A teacher must notify the Board of Management by 1st February of his/her intention to return to work from a Career Break at the beginning of the next school year. Where a teacher fails to notify, the employer must write to the teacher. If no response is received, the teacher may be deemed to have resigned four weeks after the end of the Career Break (Circular 0054/2019).

A teacher returning from a Career Break following an absence greater than two school years must undergo a medical assessment and be certified medically fit by the OHS before returning to work.

Resignation while on Career Break

A teacher on a Career Break who wishes to resign from his/her teaching post must notify the employer in writing in accordance with the teacher's terms of employment. If a teacher resigns from the Career Break during the course of the school year, that year will be deemed a full school year for the purposes of the Career Break Scheme should the teacher re-enter the teaching service at a later date.

If a teacher fails to resume duty at the end of an approved period of Career Break, the Board of Management shall immediately notify the Paymaster so that salary will not be restored. The employer shall also take timely action to establish the position and take appropriate action.

Leadership and Management Posts

A teacher on a career break's seniority in his/her school shall not be affected by participation in a secondment arrangement, and the teacher shall be notified by the managerial authority of any post of responsibility that may become vacant in the school in the course of the career break. Where the teacher on career break is appointed to a vacant Leadership and Management post in the course of the career break:

- The appropriate Leadership and Management post allowance will not be paid to this teacher until s/he returns to his/her teaching post in the school.
- The vacant Leadership and Management post may be filled on a temporary basis for the duration of the career break, subject to any moratorium on appointments which may be in place.

- A Leadership and Management post vacated by a teacher on career break, and which is within the school's quota, shall be filled on a temporary basis for the duration of the career break, subject to any moratorium on appointments which may be in place.

Board of Management Considerations

- The Board of Management 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.
- When considering applications for career breaks, the Board of Management shall carefully consider how the granting of a career break 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 54/2019, other relevant circulars and directives **and** by the criteria outlined below.
- A combined maximum of 50% of a subject area will be applied to applications for full-time, year-long Secondments, Career Breaks and Job Sharing. The total number of teachers on career break and full-time year-long Secondments at any one time shall not exceed 10% of the total number of whole-time equivalent teachers, as defined in the school's allocation of staff, rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- In the event of an application from a staff member who is the sole teacher in his/her subject area, the application will be treated sympathetically.
- The following criteria will be applied by the Board of Management when the number of applicants for a career break exceeds the limits set down in the policy:
 - In the first instance, the Board of Management will grant career break leave to the applicants who have availed of this facility for the shortest cumulative period of time during their service in Our Lady's Secondary School.
 - Should two or more applicants have availed of this facility for the same length of time approval will be given (subject to all the aforementioned criteria) to the most senior applicant as per the most senior years of service in Our Lady's Secondary School.
- All staff granted career break leave by the Board of Management will return any ICT equipment (laptop, ipad etc) purchased by the Board of Management to the school before they commence their leave.

Job Sharing Scheme

Eligibility: A teacher may apply for a Job Sharing arrangement where he/she 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 or hold a post for the following school year which is equivalent to or over 50% of a wholetime teacher.

Job Sharing is not available to the following: Principal, Deputy Principal, Home School Liaison Co-ordinator, or teacher on secondment.

Job-sharing teachers may, under Information Notes issued in 2023–2026, undertake substitute work during periods when they are not rostered for teaching. Outside of these temporary measures, the baseline restriction remains that job sharers cannot undertake substitute work.

Application Procedures (Job Sharing)

A teacher seeking to Job Share must submit, on an annual basis, the completed Application Form to the Board of Management not later than 1st February.

The Board of Management must issue a decision in writing, approving or refusing the application to the teacher, no later than 1st March. Employers must also record approved Job Sharing arrangements on OLCS by 1st April.

Taking account of the extent of arrangements to be put in place by the Board of Management to cater for a Job Sharing post, the teacher should not be permitted to withdraw his/her application after 14th April, or once a replacement teacher's contract has been signed, whichever occurs first.

Pay Arrangements (Job Sharing)

A Job Sharing teacher will receive remuneration equal to 50% of a full-time post, inclusive of qualification allowances, but ensure any reference to allowances reflects current Department rules, which have not materially changed since Circular 0054/2019.]

Leadership and Management Posts

Where a teacher on Career Break or Job Share holds a Leadership and Management post, the Board of Management must review whether the duties can be fully discharged. If not, the allowance must be suspended, with a temporary acting appointment made where permitted.

Termination of Job Sharing Arrangement

The Board of Management may make a decision to terminate the Job Sharing arrangements at any time if it is not operating in the best interests of the pupils. The Board must provide written reasons to the teacher concerned.

Board of Management Considerations

- The Board of Management recognises the benefits of the Department of Education and Skills schemes for teachers in relation to job sharing. 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.
- When considering applications for job sharing, the Board of Management shall carefully consider how the granting of job sharing 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 54/2019, other relevant circulars and directives **and** by the criteria outlined below.
- A combined maximum of 50% of a subject area will be applied to applications for full-time, year-long Secondments, Career Breaks and Job Sharing. The total number of teachers on career break and full-time year-long Secondments at any one time shall not exceed 10% of the total number of whole-time equivalent teachers, as defined in the school's allocation of staff, rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- In the event of an application from a staff member who is the sole teacher in his/her subject area, the application will be treated sympathetically.

- The following criteria will be applied by the Board of Management when the number of applicants for job sharing exceeds the limits set down in the policy:
 - In the first instance the Board of Management will grant job sharing to the applicants who have availed of this facility for the shortest cumulative period of time during their service in Our Lady's Secondary School.
 - Should two or more applicants have availed of this facility for the same length of time approval will be given (subject to all the aforementioned criteria) to the most senior applicant as per the most senior years of service in Our Lady's Secondary School.

This policy is subject to and shall be amended in line with Department of Education circulars and Information Notes as issued from time to time. The Board of Management will review this policy every two years or earlier if required by updated Departmental guidance.

Signed: Nancy Lyons (Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Date: 11th December, 2025.

Date of next review: December 2027