

OUR LADY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL



Secondment 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 compassionate

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 800 students and over 60 teachers as well as a range of ancillary and support staff. The school has a Board of Management comprised of 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 Secondment. In doing so, the Board of Management has made every effort to balance the legitimate expectations of teachers with the over-riding needs of pupils.

In order to achieve this balance the Board will consider all applications for secondment taking into account its statutory obligations as outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Circular 107/2006, Circular 0029/ 2018 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.**

Overview of Secondment Scheme

- Secondment provides a process for an external organisation to meet a short term specialised human resource requirement, where that need cannot be effectively met through the normal appointment process.
- This scheme is designed to facilitate the temporary assignment of a teacher to a vacant position in an external organisation where the work to be carried out by the seconded teacher is of clear benefit to the educational system and/or is in the public interest.
- Teachers in Voluntary Secondary schools are eligible for secondment provided they are employed on a permanent basis or under a contract of indefinite duration and who have successfully completed their probationary and, where required, induction periods.
- A secondment must be based on mutual agreement between the teacher, the school authority and the host organisation.
- A secondment arrangement must:
 - Be demonstrated to be of clear benefit to the educational system and/or is in the public interest.
 - Specify the exact duration of the secondment and specify that the seconded staff member will return to the school authority at the end of the fixed term.
 - A secondment shall be initiated by the school authority by completing an application form prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills from time to time. The school authority shall forward by 1st May in any year the prescribed application form to the Department of Education and Skills as appropriate together with:
 - The written agreement of the secondee to the secondment and, where appropriate, to the release by the paying agent of details of his/her salary to the host organisation.
 - The written undertaking and guarantee set out in section 13 below.
 - The written approval of the Board of Management of the secondee's school.
 - A detailed description of the work to be carried out by the teacher, sufficient to allow the Department to determine clearly the benefit to

accrue to the educational system and/or how the public interest is to be served by the secondment.

- The approval of the Department will be dependent on it being satisfied that the content of the work involved is of clear benefit to the educational system and/or is in the public interest and that no additional costs will accrue to the Department as a result. The school authority and the host organisation will be notified in writing of the decision.
- Applications for an extension of a secondment shall be made by the school authority by completing the prescribed application form in sufficient time to forward it to the Department by 1st May.

Further specific information can be sourced in relevant DES Circulars relating to:

- ☐ Participation in the S and S scheme while on secondment
- ☐ Pension Scheme
- ☐ Leave of Absence
- ☐ Sick Leave
- ☐ PRSI
- ☐ Reimbursement of monies to the DES

Duration of Secondment Arrangement

- To avoid disruption to the work of the school, the minimum period for which a secondment may be granted shall normally be one school year commencing on 1st September and ending on the following 31st August. In exceptional cases, where a secondment commences after 1st September, the period of secondment shall end on the following 31 August.
- Where the services of the secondee are required for a period longer than one school year the period may be extended in increments of one full year. In such cases approval shall be subject to the following maxima being adhered to:
 - A maximum period of ten school years for secondments to Department-approved national programmes.
 - A maximum period of nine school years for secondments to European Schools subject to terms and conditions of appointment to those schools.
 - A maximum period of five school years for all secondments in other cases.
- In the case of a secondment to a Department-approved national programme, the full period of the secondment may be agreed between the secondee, the school authority, the host organisation and the Department of Education and Skills at the start of the secondment arrangement.
- Notwithstanding the above, the school authority, having given reasonable notice to the host organisation and the secondee, has the right to terminate a secondment to ensure that the educational needs of the school are given priority.
- Where a secondee continues in the employment of the host organisation beyond the limits set out in this policy, s/he shall be regarded as having resigned from his/her teaching post.
- From time to time the Board of Management may approve short term release for teachers from their teaching duties (up to a maximum of 20 days) to facilitate teacher participation in Department of Education & Skills initiatives such as NIPT and JCT. In the cases of such absences the following procedure will be followed:

- The teacher will apply to the Board of Management for release from teaching duties and the application should state the following:
 - The exact number of days requested.
 - How the proposed initiative will benefit the teacher and students of Our Lady's Secondary School.
- The Board of Management will notify the teacher in question of its decision in writing specifically stating the number of days the Board of Management has approved for short term leave.
- The decision of the Board of Management to grant a teacher short term release from teaching duties will be on condition that:
 - The Board of Management can secure a suitable substitute teacher.
 - A written copy of work to be covered for all classes is left with the Principal and substitute teacher.
- The decision of the Board of Management in relation to a short term release from teaching duties shall be final.

Operating the scheme

- Teachers shall apply on an annual basis for secondment.
- When the number of applications for secondment exceeds the limits set down in the policy, in the first instance the Board will grant secondment to these applicants who have availed of secondment for the shortest cumulative period of time during their service in Our Lady's Secondary School. Should two or more applicants have availed of secondment for the same length of time sanction will be given to the most senior applicant.
- A decision by the school authority to refuse a secondment request shall be final.
- The school authority shall retain the right to terminate a secondment and short term release from teaching duties should it encounter difficulties in filling the vacant teaching post at a later date or where the needs of the school authority otherwise require.
- The school authority must ensure, where appropriate, that a qualified replacement teacher can be obtained.
- In the exceptional case of the secondment of a Principal where it is not possible to source an Acting Principal from within the school authority, an Acting Principal may be sourced through normal selection procedures and seconded from another school to act as Principal for the duration of the absence of the incumbent Principal.

- The school will only sanction a secondment request if the Department of Education and Skills sanctions the filling of the vacated post by a fully qualified teacher for the duration of the secondment.
- A secondee who is due to go on the re-deployment panel may defer his/her panel rights in order to participate in a secondment arrangement. The maximum period for which a teacher on secondment can defer his/her panel rights is five school years

Posts of Responsibility

- A secondee's seniority in his/her school shall not be affected by participation in a secondment arrangement and the secondee shall be notified by the managerial authority of any post of responsibility that may become vacant in the school in the course of the secondment.
- Where the secondee is appointed to a vacant post of responsibility in the course of the secondment:
 - The appropriate post of responsibility allowance will not be paid to this teacher until s/he returns to his/her teaching post in the school.
 - The vacant post of responsibility may be filled on a temporary basis for the duration of the secondment subject to any moratorium on appointments which may be in place.
- A post of responsibility vacated by a secondee, and which is within the school's quota, shall be filled on a temporary basis for the duration of the secondment subject to any moratorium on appointments which may be in place.
- Any decision by the Board of Management to grant short term release (NIPT / JCT/Oide etc) from teaching duties should not impact on the post holder's ability to carry out the duties outlined in their Assistant Principal's post.

Eligibility

The following are the eligibility requirements for those wishing to apply for secondment positions:

- 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 2 years of continuous service with the school.

Board of Management Considerations

The Board of Management recognises the benefits of the Department of Education and Skills schemes for teachers in relation to secondment. These schemes 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.

When considering applications for secondment positions, the Board of Management shall carefully consider how the granting of such arrangements might affect the standards and continuity in particular subject departments and subject provision within the overall curriculum. The granting of secondments will be determined in accordance with Circular Letter 107/ 2006, Circular 0029/ 2018 and the Education Act 1998 **and** by the criteria outlined below:

- The total number of teachers who are not in the school on a full-time / short term basis. This should not exceed 10% of the total number of whole-time equivalent teachers as defined on the schools allocation of staff rounded up to nearest whole number.
 - **Reason:** 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.
- The effect on particular subject departments by granting secondments which would result in creating an imbalance in any subject department.
 - **Reason:** The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that particular subject departments are not weakened by granting secondment arrangements 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 need for the school to maintain continuity of teaching for students affected by such arrangements.
 - **Reason:** 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.
- The likely availability of a suitably qualified replacement teacher to take up duty on the applicants' departure.
 - **Reason:** From time to time and for various reasons, certain subject disciplines are difficult to replace and could leave the school in a situation where they are unable to find a suitable replacement.

The Board of Management will endeavour to consider favourably applications for secondment bearing in mind that the welfare and educational needs of the pupils will take precedence over all other considerations. In the event that some applications will have to be declined, the Board will take all of the above into account in addition to:

- 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 secondments through school timetable arrangements. Resultant time-tables should not impact negatively on the timetables of students or on time-tables for other teachers. However, within these constraints, teachers seeking secondments should be facilitated insofar as is possible.
- The amount of leave previously granted to applicant teachers.

Resumption of duties

- It is the responsibility of the teacher returning from a secondment to ensure that s/he is registered with the Teaching Council on the intended date of resumption.
- A teacher returning from a secondment 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 secondment 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.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: April 2023

Date of Review: June 2026

Chairperson of Board of Management: Gary Carville