

OUR LADY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL



Student Teacher Placement Policy

Our Lady's Mission Statement

Our Lady's Secondary School is a holistic centre of development and learning where each person is special and treated as such. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realize our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, cooperation and challenge. Christian community is our heritage and goal, the Good News of the Gospel is our story.

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 750 students and over 55 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

This policy was created in accordance with Our Lady's Vision Statement.

Introduction

School placement is a critical part of initial teacher education and is designed to give the Student Teacher an opportunity to experience teaching and learning in a real environment, to apply educational theory in a variety of teaching and learning situations and school contexts,

and to participate in school life in a way that is structured and supported. The Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School acknowledges that positive school placement experiences are critical to ensuring appropriate initial teacher education for all students. Our school aims to provide Student Teachers with the opportunity to observe high quality teaching and to teach classes independently in close collaboration with the class teacher and / or Cooperating Teacher. In the course of school placement, Student Teachers require the support of the whole-school community in their journey towards professional competence. This policy was formulated having regard to the increased number of requests to provide opportunities for Student Teachers in Our Lady's Secondary School. It is expected that the implementation of this policy will provide for a fair allocation of opportunities for Student Teacher placements throughout the school year while also ensuring continuity of the teaching and learning routine for the students in the classroom. This policy outlines the procedures to be followed to ensure the process works for everyone's benefit.

Aims

- To support Student Teachers in their studies
- To provide an opportunity for Student Teachers to work with students on a professional level in a structured environment.
- To provide opportunities for Student Teachers to get involved in a wide range of activities outside the classroom.
- To allow students to be exposed to a broad and balanced range of teaching methodologies and strategies

Implementation Procedures

- In the normal course of events a Student Teacher will not be accepted during the first two weeks of the school year or during the last two weeks of the school year, except where it is a yearlong placement.
- A request for a placement will only be considered after a written request to the Principal.

- Priority will be given to past pupils subject to availability.
- The Principal will consult with a potential cooperating teacher before agreeing the placement.
- A maximum of five Student Teachers will be accommodated in any one school year. Only one student per class per year will normally be accommodated. Student Teachers will only be assigned 3rd Year or 6th Year exam classes in exceptional circumstances.
- The teacher responsible for the induction of new staff will liaise with the relevant subject areas in organising the placement.
- The Student Teacher will meet formally with the class teacher to discuss schemes of work, material to be covered with classes etc
- The Student Teacher will meet formally with the staff member responsible for new teacher induction prior to the commencement of their placement.
- The staff member responsible for new teacher induction will familiarise the Student Teacher with ePortal.
- The staff member responsible for new teacher induction will furnish Student Teachers with relevant material including
 - Timetable.
 - Map of the school.
 - Staff Induction Book.
 - Names of Year Heads and relevant room numbers.
 - Child Protection Guidelines and Policy.
 - Relevant policies- Homework, SS Policy, Attendance Policy, Substance Abuse Policy, Health & Safety Statement, School Tours Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying, Dignity in the Workplace, Data Protection Policy etc.

- Relevant Procedures- Financial procedures, changing class, absence for school activity, booking school facilities, procedure for certified / self-certified sick leave, procedure for referring students to the Year Head/ Student Support Team, procedures for supervising exams, Games Procedures etc.
 - Substitute Teachers-“Guidelines for Substitute Teachers, & Code of Behaviour, map of the school, names of Year Heads & relevant room number.
 - All Student Teachers will be advised with regard to confidentiality and Data Protection policy.
 - All Student Teachers will be given guidance regarding appropriate dress.
- All Student Teachers must be Garda Vetted as per circular 0031/ 2016
 - All Student Teachers will be provided with a copy of the Child Protection Procedures for Post Primary Schools
 - The timeframe for each individual placement and the protocol involved will be agreed upon prior to the Student Teacher taking up placement.
 - At every stage during the school placement the Student Teacher should be receptive to the advice of the class teacher, Cooperating Teacher, Deputy Principals and Principal on any aspect of their professional development. Please note that Our Lady’s Secondary School reserves the right to contact the relevant Higher Educational Institution to discuss the progress and, in exceptional circumstances, the discontinuation of the placement of the Student Teacher.
 - The Co-operating Teacher must remain on the school premises when a Student Teacher is in his/her classes unless otherwise agreed with Principal.
 - A co-operating teacher is defined as a teacher in the placement school who supports and guides the Student Teacher and who acts as a point of contact between the Higher Education Institute (HEI) and the school. In a post-primary setting, a Student Teacher may be placed in a number of different classes and may, therefore, have a number of different co-operating teachers across a number of subject areas. In such

circumstances, one teacher may take on a liaison role as lead Cooperating Teacher, seeking feedback from other co-operating teachers and acting as the point of contact for the principal and HEI placement tutor. The Cooperating Teacher should ideally be a teacher in one of the Student Teachers' subject areas.

- The Co-operating Teacher should introduce the Student Teacher to the class and outline the plan of work for the class. He/she should ensure that the Student Teacher is familiar with class rules/ procedures/ePortal etc.
- The Co -operating Teacher should remain in room for initial classes.
- The Co -operating Teacher should afford the Student Teacher opportunities to observe his/her teaching and should observe the Student Teacher's teaching and give feedback to him/her. Feedback should be;
 - based on observed practice
 - appropriate to the requirements and expectations of the particular placement
 - provided in a timely fashion
 - clear, fair and honest
 - communicated in a manner appropriate to a discussion on teaching and learning
 - provided in an encouraging and sensitive manner. The observer should seek to engage the Student Teacher in critical reflection on his/her practice, so as to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and possible strategies for improving practice.
- The Co-operating Teacher should work collaboratively with the Student Teacher, the college/university placement Tutor and the school Principal. Where serious concerns are identified in relation to a Student Teacher's practice or professional conduct, the co-operating teacher should advise the school Principal at the earliest possible opportunity. In such circumstances, the Principal should notify the HEI and facilitate appropriate interventions. These may include timely additional supports being put in place for the Student Teacher.
- The Co-operating Teacher should furnish a report(s) to 3rd level institutions on

request.

- The Co-operating Teacher retains primary responsibility for the progress of the pupils. He/she should be available to meet with parents in relation to a child's progress.

Role of the Student Teacher

- Student Teachers are expected to take a proactive approach to their own learning and to participate constructively in a broad range of placement experiences.
- Student Teachers are expected to engage fully in school life and seek and avail of opportunities to observe and work alongside other teachers. The school community expects that the Student Teacher will engage with it in a respectful and courteous manner having due regard for the values and standards set out in the various school policies.
- Activities a Student Teacher may participate in while on placement in schools as well as direct teaching to a designated class, include the following activities;
 - planning for teaching, learning and assessment (assigned classes)
 - assessment of, and for, learning (assigned classes)
 - structured observation and feedback
 - school-based orientation programmes
 - professional conversations with experienced teachers
 - critical reflection on practice, both individually and with colleagues, and
 - structured and supported participation in school life.

The school-based element may also include some or all of the following:

- learning support and resource teaching
- attendance at staff meetings

- school-based research, relevant to the placement
 - supported engagement with other professionals and with parents, and
 - engagement with school-based continuing professional development and/or school development planning.
- Student Teachers should be presented professionally in terms of attire and appearance in the classroom as advised at their initial induction.
 - Student Teachers should respect the privacy and confidentiality of all members of the school community as advised at their initial induction.
 - Our Lady's Secondary School is a vibrant and positive school and all Student Teachers are expected to reflect this ethos and support our mission statement in all their dealings with staff, pupils, parents and members of the wider school community.

Supports for the Student Teacher

The school community is committed to supporting positively and sensitively the Student Teacher in accordance with the Guidelines on School Placement developed by the Teaching Council in consultation with all relevant education partners. Furthermore, the school is committed to allocating the Student Teacher to (an) appropriate co-operating teacher(s) and to the classes essential to him/ her undertaking his/her school placement successfully. The school will also provide the Student Teacher with the teaching facilities and resources necessary to his/her work during the placement.

Continuing professional development for staff involved in supporting/ facilitating Student Teacher placement

The school management authority and the school's senior management are committed to promoting and facilitating the participation of school staff in continuing professional development programmes essential to ensuring the successful operation of Student Teacher placement in the school.

Communication of school placement policy to school community

A copy of the school placement policy is made available to school personnel and the parents association and the policy is readily accessible to parents on request. In particular, a copy of the policy shall be published on the school website (where applicable) and a copy is made available to parents/guardians of all learners enrolling in the school and all new teachers at the point of their employment, either electronically or in hard copy.

Success Criteria re: Placement

- Positive and constructive feedback from supervision visits, cooperating teachers, students and parents.
- Relevant evaluation forms and documentation to be completed by the Principal / Cooperating teacher and returned to the relevant Higher Education Institution on completion of the placement.
- Positive integration and communication with all school staff.
- Quality learning by the pupils in class
- Quality learning by the Student Teacher
- Participation by the Student Teacher in activities outside the classroom

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Signed: Gary Carville (Chairperson, B.O.M.) _____

Date: _____

Review Date: _____