



St. Mary's Secondary School

Policy on Student Teacher Placement



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Student Teacher Placement Policy

1. Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School recognises the value of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the vital role that structured, supportive school placements play in developing future educators. This policy sets out the school's approach to hosting student teachers in accordance with the Teaching Council's Guidelines on School Placement, and incorporates school-specific practices to ensure an enriching experience for all involved.

2. Development of Policy

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, the Board of Management, parents, students, and the school's patron. It will be reviewed periodically.

3. Commitment to Hosting Student Teachers

St. Mary's Secondary School welcomes the opportunity to support the professional learning of student teachers and adopts the Guidelines on School Placement developed by the Teaching Council. In line with our commitment to fostering strong community ties and supporting our alumni, St. Mary's Secondary School will give priority to applications for student teaching placements from past pupils, where all other criteria are met. The school recognises that school placement provides student teachers with critical real-world teaching experience and enriches the school community through collaboration, reflection, and the introduction of fresh perspectives and practices. School placement allows the student teacher to see first-hand the complexity of teaching and the variety of roles undertaken by teachers. The school acknowledges the goodwill of teachers and other staff members, and the way they voluntarily and generously support student teachers with their time and expertise.

4. Orientation and Integration

- Student teachers must attend school induction sessions and other relevant training sessions.
- The school will provide an information pack outlining policies such as Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, etc. Student teachers must familiarise themselves with school policies and procedures.
- Student teachers must provide their Child Protection Training Certificate to the principal.
- Student teachers must be vetted by the school and must submit completed 'Form of Undertaking' and 'Statutory Declaration' to the principal.



- Student teachers begin with classroom observation, progressing to co-teaching and independent teaching as their competence grows.
- Student teachers are encouraged to observe teaching in various contexts and subjects to gain insights into different teaching methods and approaches.
- The cooperating teacher and Staff Mentor will provide support, including familiarisation with platforms such as Microsoft Teams, OneNote, Compass, and OneDrive.

5. Scheduling and Supervision

- The principal or their delegate assigns student teachers to classes and co-operating teachers based on programme stage, pupil needs, and staff availability. Every effort will be made to spread student teachers across different subject departments and different co-operating teachers each year.
- The student teacher will be gradually scaffolded into full teaching responsibilities, with co-operating teachers retaining overall responsibility for pupil progress.

6. Role of the Student Teacher

Student teachers are expected to:

- Attend school induction sessions and other relevant training sessions.
- Maintain punctuality, dress professionally, and demonstrate respect for the school's ethos.
- Attend the full school day in so far as possible in order to participate fully in school life.
- Respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information gained in the course of their placement, unless a legal imperative requires disclosure or there is a legitimate concern for the wellbeing of an individual.
- Ensure that any communication with pupils/ students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate.
- Ensure that their social media accounts are set to private and should refrain from engaging with students or parents on social media.
- Observe teaching in various contexts and subjects to gain insights into different teaching methods and approaches.
- Observe and actively participate in all aspects of school life, including extracurricular and staff events fostering their integration into the school community.
- Engage fully in the life of the school and seek and avail of opportunities to observe and work alongside other teachers.
- Plan and teach lessons aligned with the school's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Procedures. In doing so, they should always be conscious that pupils'/students' needs are paramount and that a duty of care obtains.
- Adhere to teaching the areas of the curriculum assigned by the co-operating teacher being mindful of timelines laid down in the subject plan/units of learning.



- Use inclusive strategies to support all learners, especially those with Additional Educational Needs.
- Seek and avail of support, and to engage with constructive feedback from their placement tutors, co-operating teachers and principals.
- Engage respectfully with students, staff, and parents, modelling professional conduct at all times having due regard for the values and standards set out in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and for the school's code of behaviour, child protection policy and other relevant policies.
- Follow school policies on behaviour, digital use, and child safeguarding.

7. Role of the Co-operating Teacher

- Welcome and introduce student teachers to the students. In addition, the co-operating teacher will make student teachers aware of the needs of students in their class, the classroom layout including seating plan, class rules, plans of work, and teaching protocols, & the roles of other members of staff directly involved with the students in their class.
- The cooperating teacher will provide support, including familiarisation with platforms such as Microsoft Teams, OneNote, Compass, and OneDrive.
- Afford the student teacher opportunities to observe their teaching (and that of their colleagues)
- Assign the teaching of areas of the curriculum to the student teacher while retaining the primary responsibility for the progress of the pupils.
- Observe the student teacher's practice and provide oral or written feedback to the student teacher in an encouraging and sensitive manner. Feedback should be timely, honest, and growth-oriented.
- Encourage, support and facilitate the student teacher in: critical reflection on their practice, the use of a variety of teaching methodologies and in engaging with and responding appropriately to feedback from pupils.
- Encourage the student teacher to seek advice and support where necessary.
- Allow student teachers to teach independently, as their competence develops (in line with Higher Education Institution (HEI) requirements for the particular placement), and as deemed appropriate by co-operating teacher and the principal.
- Work collaboratively with the student teacher, the school placement tutor and the school principal.
- Advise the principal of any serious concerns regarding a student teacher's practice or professional conduct.
- Model professionalism, including restorative practices, and encourage critical reflection.
- Have discretionary time while student teachers teach independently to facilitate engagement with the student teachers at other times.



8. Role of the School Principal

- Lead a whole-school approach to placement, grounded in policy and collaboration.
- Facilitate the assignment of co-operating teachers and classes having regard to school capacity
- Be available to support student teachers and respond to professional concerns.
- Liaise with HEIs as needed and notify them promptly of any serious issues or concerns regarding a student teacher.
- Provide school induction to the student teacher at the outset of the placement.
- Afford the student teacher opportunities to work alongside other teachers.
- Encourage the student teacher to seek advice and support when needed.
- Facilitate co-operating availing of discretionary time while student teachers are teaching more independently
- Will, where appropriate, delegate the above functions to the deputy principal or other members of staff.
- Ensure that parents are informed of the school's placement policy and support student teacher engagement.

9. Role of the Board of Management

- Initiate and develop a policy on school placement, in consultation with the whole-school community.
- Ensure that the whole-school community (staff, parents and students) is aware of the school placement policy.
- Ensure that the relevant HEIs are aware of the school's placement policy.
- Review and monitor the implementation of the placement policy.

10. Role of the Whole School Community

- Support student teacher integration into the school community.
- Promote a culture of collegiality and mutual respect.
- Recognise the importance of school placement in the personal and professional development of the student teacher and engage in the development and implementation of policy on school placement.
- Recognise the challenges faced by student teachers and support them in meeting those challenges.
- Value the school placement experience and how student teachers can benefit from engagement with cooperating teachers and the school community.
- Recognise that the student teacher may bring new and innovative practices to the classroom which may benefit the school and its community.
- Recognise the particular roles and responsibilities of all within the school community in relation to school placement.



11. Role of Parents

- Contribute to the development of a school policy on school placement.
- Recognise the importance of and support the school's commitment to hosting student teachers on placement.
- Receive communication in relation to the school's policy on school placement in a manner which enables them to be supportive of the student teachers while on placement.

12. Professionalism and Conduct

- Student teachers must maintain punctuality, dress professionally, and demonstrate respect for the school's ethos.
- The school will support the development of these professional habits through feedback and modelling by staff.

13. Observation and Feedback

- Observation by co-operating teachers and placement tutors is central to learning.
- Feedback will be:
 - Constructive and clear
 - Based on observed practice
 - Delivered in a timely and encouraging manner
- Student teachers are encouraged to engage in reflective dialogue about their teaching and professional development.

14. Restorative Approach

- Student teachers will be introduced to and supported in using a restorative approach in managing relationships and behaviour.
- Co-operating teachers will model restorative practices and provide guidance on implementation.



15. End-of-Placement Reporting

- Trainees will complete a report for the co-operating teacher covering detailing topics covered, assessments given, results of students' assessments and any other relevant information.

16. Supports and Resources

- The school provides appropriate teaching spaces, access to technology, and opportunities to engage with school development activities.
- All student teachers will have an assigned co-operating teacher and may also work with additional co-operating staff.
- The Board of Management and senior leadership will support staff in accessing CPD opportunities that enhance their capacity to support student teachers.

17. Communication of Policy

- This policy will be made available to staff, student teachers, and parents on request.

18. Review of Policy Procedure

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management regularly.

Ratification:

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: **April 22nd 2026**

Signed: Fionnuala King
Chairperson of BoM

Signed: David O'Reilly
Secretary of BoM