



Student Teacher Placement Policy

Introduction

- The Board of Management of Loreto Community School acknowledges the following regarding initial teacher education and the role of school placement in this process.
- Positive school placement experiences are critical to ensuring appropriate initial teacher education for all student teachers.
- Close collaboration between schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is essential to positive and meaningful school placement experiences for student teachers.
- Schools should host student teachers for placement and, in doing so, provide student teachers with the opportunity to observe teaching and to teach classes independently, in collaboration with suitably qualified practicing teachers. School Placement provides a real context for the student teacher's studies and enhances the capacity of the student to link theory and practice.
- In the course of school placement, student teachers require the support of the whole-school community in their journey towards professional competence.
- Hosting student teachers on placement is enriching for the learners in a school, student teachers, cooperating teachers, the wider school community and HEIs. In particular, learners benefit from a greater variety of teaching, learning and co-curricular experiences through the structured participation of student teachers in the school. Furthermore, the school gains access to a variety of newer approaches to teaching and learning through its engagement with student teachers and HEI staff.

Development of the Policy

- This policy was developed by the Board of Management following consultations with all members of the school community – school management, teachers and other relevant staff, parents, students and the school patron.
- This policy was formulated having regard to the increasing number of requests from HEIs and from individuals to provide opportunities for student teacher placements in Loreto Community School.
- It is expected that implementation of this policy will ensure continuity of routine, teaching and learning within the classroom setting, and will also limit disruption to regular school routines.
- The policy will provide for an equitable and fair allocation of opportunities for student teacher placements throughout the school and should ensure that excessive demands are not placed on any individual class or teacher.

Aims

- To provide an opportunity for student teachers to work with students on a professional level in a structured environment.
- To enable a controlled exchange of teaching methodologies and skills.
- To enable students to be exposed to alternative teaching strategies.
- To support student teachers in their studies.

Commitment

Loreto Community School is committed to hosting student teachers for school placement and, in this context, adopts, without modification, as part of this school placement policy, the guidelines on school placement developed by the Teaching Council in consultation with all relevant education partners.

Implications for the school hosting student teachers on placement

Hosting a student teacher on placement will involve the student teacher observing classes being taught by members of the school's teaching staff. It will also involve student teachers teaching classes, in the first instance, while being observed and supported by the teacher with primary responsibility for the welfare and educational progress of the class (the cooperating teacher). Then, as the student teacher's competence develops, the student teacher will move to teaching classes independently in line with HEI requirements and the student teacher's particular stage of development on the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme.

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 2 weeks of the school year.
- A request for a placement will only be considered following a written request from a HIE or from an individual to the principal.
- The principal will discuss the possibility of having a student teacher in a given class with the class teacher.
- Non-probated teachers will not normally have a student teacher in their class.
- A maximum of six student teachers will be accommodated in any one school year. Only one student teacher per class per year will normally be accommodated.
- The student teachers will rotate amongst the staff, whenever feasible, to ensure that no one teacher may be asked to accommodate a student teacher placement year after year.
- Class teachers will be made aware of the impending arrival of the student teachers at least two weeks in advance.
- The time frame for each individual placement and the protocol involved will be agreed upon prior to the student teacher taking up a placement.
- Student teachers will secure placements on a first-come, first-served basis. We will endeavour to give a fair distribution to each HEI seeking placements.

- Ideally, past-pupil applicants should have left the school for a minimum period of three years before undertaking placement or professional practice activities within the school. However, where the course being pursued does not include a fourth-year teaching practice component, consideration may be given to applications on a case-by-case basis.
- Student teachers must follow the agreed scheme of work and timetable as discussed with the class teacher. The class teacher may be involved in teaching for a specific part of the day, even when a student teacher is required to teach for the full day.
- During placement, the students may be asked to help out with Visual Arts work, P.E., computers and administrative work. It is envisaged that the student will act as a resource for the teacher, thus making the experience mutually beneficial.
- Placement time allows the student to observe teaching and learning in the classroom and to engage with pupils and teachers.
- Student teachers are asked to follow the guidelines laid down by the school with regard to photocopying and printing.
- Student teachers are not permitted to remove or retain original samples of students' work from the school. In certain circumstances, and only with the explicit permission of both the cooperating teacher and the student concerned, student teachers may retain copies or photographs of students' work for their studies, professional reflection, or assessment requirements. Any such material must be treated confidentially and used in accordance with school policies and GDPR/data protection requirements.
- Student teachers are encouraged to collaborate with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team to develop an awareness and understanding of students' individual learning needs and the appropriate supports required within the classroom setting. This collaboration will help student teachers to implement inclusive teaching practices and support positive learning experiences for all students.
- Where appropriate, student teachers may also have opportunities to observe and participate in support teaching, under the guidance of the cooperating teacher

and SEN team, to further develop their understanding of inclusive education and differentiated teaching strategies.

- Student teachers should be sensitive to, and adhere to, staff-room routines and conventions and to any health & safety requirements and policies of the school.
- The student teacher's mobile phone should be turned off/silent throughout the school day.
- Student teachers' files and 'pupil observation' notes must avoid reference to pupils' full names. Pupils may be referred to by their initials.
- The student teacher must consult with the class teacher as regards access to any school resources.
- During their placement, student teachers are encouraged to share their skills, interests, and expertise with the wider school community. They are also encouraged to build positive relationships with students by becoming involved, where possible, in one or more of the school's extracurricular and co-curricular activities. This may include supporting clubs, sports teams, school events, trips, or other student initiatives as appropriate during their placement.
- At every stage during the placement, student teachers should be receptive to advice from the class teacher, principal and/or the school placement link teacher on any aspect of their professional development. Please note that in exceptional circumstances Loreto Community School reserves the right to contact the HEI to discuss the progress and the (dis)continuation of the placement of the student teacher.

Scheduling of student teachers on placement

The principal, or staff members to whom this task is delegated, will allocate student teachers to cooperating teachers and classes, having regard for: the stage the student teacher is at in his/her initial teacher education programme; the particular needs of the learners in a particular class; the requirement for the student teacher to experience an appropriate range of placement contexts; and any special circumstances of which the cooperating teacher has an awareness.

Induction of student teachers on placement

Student teachers will, before commencing their placement, be provided with an orientation to the key personnel, ethos and work of the school. This orientation shall involve student teachers being provided with information regarding key school policies, in particular the school's Code of Behaviour, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Homework and Student Teacher Placement Policies. They will be introduced to the school placement link teacher and will continue to meet them throughout their placement.

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 cooperating 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 for his/her work during the placement and will be fully supported by the principal and the link teacher.

Professional Conduct:

Student teachers are expected to:

- Be professionally presented in terms of attire, appearance, and deportment in the classroom.
- Be punctual and remain with the assigned class for the entire lesson.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all members of the school community.
- Show interest and enthusiasm in preparing and teaching lessons.
- Show interest and enthusiasm in all work done by students, and praise all students equally.

- Loreto Community School is a vibrant and positive school environment, and all student teachers are expected to reflect this ethos and support the mission statement in all their dealings with staff and pupils.
- Exercise discretion and professionalism when using social media and ensure that no content is posted or shared that could compromise the privacy, dignity, or reputation of students, staff, or Loreto Community School.
- Respect the privacy, dignity, and confidentiality of all members of the school community.

Continuing professional development for staff involved in supporting student teacher placement

The school's Board of Management seeks to promote and facilitate the participation of school staff in continuing professional development programmes essential to ensuring the successful operation of student teacher placement in the school.

Success Criteria re: Placement

- Positive and constructive feedback from teachers, pupils and parents.
- HEI Evaluation Forms to be completed by the principal/class teacher and returned to the relevant HEI on completion of the placement.
- Integration and communication with permanent staff members.
- Perceived contribution to the learning environment of the school.
- Quality of learning by pupils in class.
- Quality of learning by the student teacher.

REVIEW AND AUDIT

- This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis to ensure its effectiveness and to comply with any changes in regulations or best practices. Updates or changes to the policy will be communicated to staff, students, and parents/guardians as necessary.
- The date from which the policy will apply is the date of adoption by the Board of Management.
- Implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Principal of the school.
- The revised or amended policy will be approved by the Board of Management.

The Board of Management agreed and ratified the policy.

Date: 24/06/26.

Proposed by: Donna McFadden

Seconded by: Andrew Kelly

Signed:

Margaret Bonner.

Margaret Bonner

Chairperson, Board of Management

Margaret O'Connor

Margaret O'Connor

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management