



Blackrock Educate Together Secondary School

Droichead and School Induction Policy

As an Educate Together second-level school, Blackrock Educate Together Secondary School will be guided by the four core principles as laid down in the Educate Together Charter (1990):

- 1) They will be **equality based** in character, ensuring that children and young people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds have equal access to and rights within the school.
- 2) They will be **co-educational**, thereby encouraging children and young people to learn and live together.
- 3) They will be **child-centred**, respecting individual students' abilities to learn in unique ways.
- 4) Finally, Educate Together schools will be run on a **democratic** basis, encouraging active participation by parents and students in the daily life of the school whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers.

Mission

Blackrock ETSS is a student-centred, democratic school community that celebrates difference and creativity in a dynamic and vibrant learning environment defined by equality, integrity, and respect.

Vision

Educate Together is working towards an Ireland in which all people have access to an excellent education that is inclusive of all, irrespective of belief system, race, ethnicity, class, culture, gender, language, lifestyle and ability.

Values & Commitments

Educate Together is committed to:

- Placing the child and young person at the centre of the educational process;
- Respecting and celebrating the different and unique identities of all;
- An educational philosophy that promotes the values of justice, equality and human rights for all children and young people, and challenges injustice and unfair discrimination;
- Providing children and young people with the knowledge, skills, dispositions and attitudes that they need, enabling them to make informed moral decisions and preparing them to become caring members of society;
- Empowering children and young people to take an active role in society and in the stewardship of the environment;
- Working in a democratic way that embraces the input from children, parents, teachers and supporters to enable the highest level of partnership and participation;
- Working together and with other educational partners in a consultative and collaborative way;
- Building school communities which engage with, and work meaningfully with, the local community;
- Ensuring that this type of education is provided by the State and available to all families who wish to access it.

These commitments are reflected in the following mottoes: “Learn Together to Live Together”, “No Child an Outsider”.

Blackrock Educate Together Secondary School seeks to educate the whole person as a responsible member of society, confident of personal worth. Blackrock Educate Together Secondary School implements policies and practices which further the development of self-discipline and enable students to take progressive responsibility for their own lives and actions. It is within this framework that the Droichead and School Induction Policy is enacted by the stakeholders.



Blueprint for Educate Together Second-level Schools: Key Areas

Curriculum, Teaching & Learning ▼ An Educate Together second-level school will provide a curriculum and learning environment that equips students for the challenging world of the 21st century. The school will ensure that students are supported to take responsibility for their own learning, their physical, personal and social wellbeing, their relationships with others and their role in their local, national and global communities. ▼ By integrating 21st century teaching and learning strategies comprehensively and purposefully into the curriculum, and by assessing not only what students learn but how they learn, schools will nurture critical thinkers, problem solvers, effective communicators, creators and innovators.	The Ethical Curriculum ▼ An Educate Together second-level school will provide an ethical curriculum that focuses on the ethical, moral and social development of young people. It will provide the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that young people need to enable them to make informed moral decisions and prepare them for life in a pluralist society which embraces diversity. ▼ The ethical curriculum will be part of the daily life of the school, part of every subject, visible in curriculum resources and woven into the very fabric of all school processes, policies and practices.
Leadership, Management & Structure ▼ In an Educate Together second-level school the inclusive and democratic principle will extend to the various sets of relationships in the school. Schools will promote collective responsibility for the development of a shared vision and purpose. Underlying every decision taken in the school will be the need to provide the best learning environment, where all students can achieve and become enthusiastic, independent lifelong learners. ▼ The fullest participation by parents, students and teachers in decision-making processes will be developed. The management of the school will reflect the belief that leaders come from many places in an organisation.	The Built Environment ▼ An Educate Together second-level school community will consider how the built environment influences students' academic performance and well-being in school. The learning environment will express the Educate Together ethos and the physical setting will enhance and support the way students learn, teachers teach and the wider school community interacts. ▼ The Educate Together ethos and principles in school building design will address such issues as efficiency and sustainability, functionality and flexibility, building in context, accessibility, democratised spaces and aesthetic quality.

Purpose

- To guide the whole school implementation of Droichead to support the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs).
- To identify the roles and clarify the responsibilities across the school community in support of the Droichead process.
- To identify the protocols underpinning the Droichead process in the school.
- To identify the documents in support of the process.

Rationale

In line with the Teaching Council's policy on *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework*, March 2017, Blackrock ETSS is a school offering Droichead for newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

Scope

This Induction Policy applies to all NQTs partaking in Droichead at Blackrock ETSS. It also applies to management and members of the Professional Support Team (PST). This policy was devised and formulated by the school community at Blackrock ETSS, inclusive of all stakeholders, staff, parents, students and the Board of Management.

Legal Framework

This Induction Policy has been informed by the following:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2nd Edition) 2012
- *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework 2017*
- Teaching Council's Post-qualification Professional Practice Conditions Transitional Arrangements (see www.teachingcouncil.ie for current publication)
- Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria (see www.teachingcouncil.ie for current publication)

- Children First Act 2015 and DoE Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Looking at our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

Introduction

The Droichead process is an integrated professional induction framework for NQTs. It recognises the effectiveness of the reconceptualised programmes of initial teacher education (ITE) and particularly the extended school placement, in the professional preparation of student teachers. It builds on that phase, taking as its starting point the areas for further learning that have been identified by the NQT in collaboration with the Higher Education Institution (HEI) as part of the school placement experience. At the same time, it recognises that induction is a distinct phase of the continuum of teacher education, a socialisation process into the teaching profession.

This integrated framework includes both school-based and additional professional learning activities to address the needs of teachers as they begin their careers.

The main objective of the Droichead process is to support the professional learning of the NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career.

Following the Droichead process, a declaration is made by the NQT that they are ready to move to the next phase on the continuum of teacher education. A joint declaration is made by the teacher and experienced colleagues, following collective reflection, that through their engagement in Droichead, they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process. The Teaching Council then removes the Droichead condition from the teacher's registration. The teacher will be fully registered by the Council when all registration conditions (e.g., Irish Language Requirement, qualifications shortfall conditions) have been deemed by the Teaching Council to have been met.

When an NQT is employed in a participating school in an eligible setting (see Policy 1.1.2) and for the minimum period of professional practice (see Policy 1.1.3), they apply for the Droichead process via the 'My Registration' portal on www.teachingcouncil.ie. An email confirmation is issued to the NQT from the Teaching Council confirming that they have applied for the Droichead process. This record should be retained.

There are two key strands of the Droichead process as an integrated induction framework for newly qualified teachers. The first strand is a school-based induction one (Strand A), through which the NQT is supported by experienced colleagues. The second strand is made up of additional professional learning activities (Strand B), which involves attendance at NQT cluster meetings, and one other professional learning activity, related to the needs of the NQT. Typical learning activities might be, for example, participation in a workshop, a meeting of a Teacher Professional Network/subject association, an online/blended learning activity, attendance at a conference, Féilte, etc.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, March 2017.

For the full Droichead Policy and relevant accompanying documentation, please refer to www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Objectives

The Droichead process is an integrated professional induction framework for NQTs.

The main objective of the Droichead process is to support the professional learning of NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017,
p.3

The Teaching Council has set out the following standards to support the Droichead process, in guiding the NQT, with the PST, in relation to their professional learning and practice. Indicators of good practice in different the context of Blackrock ETSS are included. Through their engagement in the Droichead process, the NQT will:

1. Have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities.
2. Have demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students.
3. Have demonstrated an ability to engage in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017, Appendix 1.

Protocols

This Induction policy of Blackrock ETSS adheres to *Droichead – The Integrated Induction Framework*, Teaching Council, March 2017. This policy is specifically supported by the following sections:

- Professional conversations: p. 5
- Observation: p. 5
- Maintaining records of the Droichead process: p. 6
- Concluding the Droichead process: p. 7

This policy is part of a suite of documents to support Droichead in the school. These documents include:

- *Droichead: The Integrated Induction Framework*, Teaching Council, March 2017.
- Teaching Council Standards (accompanied by our customised Indicators and Examples of School Context).
- PST Roles and responsibilities.
- Droichead Outline Plan drafted by the PST and finalised with NQT input.
- Needs Analysis/Induction Plan – updated regularly in collaboration with the NQT.

Settings in which the Droichead process can take place

A post-primary teacher will normally undertake the Droichead process when employed in a recognised post-primary school. As a rule, paid employment in a permanent, temporary or substitute capacity is eligible, so long as such employment will afford the teacher the opportunity to meet the minimum duration requirements set out in the Droichead, March 2017 policy.

A post-primary teacher may also complete the Droichead process where they are employed in one of the following roles:

- a) a special school where a proportion of the pupils attending the school are of post-primary age, and where the teacher is teaching a post-primary curricular subject(s) to such pupils, or
- b) a Centre for Education where a post-primary curricular subject(s) is being taught.

It should be noted that where NQTs are employed in the above settings via voluntary (unpaid) service or internship schemes, although similar such schemes that may be commenced in the future, is not deemed acceptable by the Teaching Council as being suitable for Droichead.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017,
p. 4

Duration of professional practice required

Professional practice includes school placement (10 weeks) during initial teacher education and (ii) post-qualification practice. The Droichead process which fulfils the post-qualification professional practice requirement, has been modified to consider the extended school placement during initial teacher education. A post-primary teacher must complete 200 hours' teaching employment in an eligible setting to include the teaching of a post-primary curricular subject(s) to a designated class on the school's timetable, or employment in a learning support, special needs or language support position. The teacher must apply for the Droichead process via the 'My Registration' portal on www.teachingcouncil.ie. It should be noted that these are absolute minimum periods of practice. Given that Droichead as an induction framework is designed to provide the maximum degree of support, guidance and advice, it is recommended, where an NQT has additional time in their school over and above the minimum requirements set out above, that extra time be used to support the Droichead process.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017,
p. 4-5.

Observations

Observations are also a key feature of Droichead. This includes observations by the NQT of more experienced teachers' practice, as well as observation of the NQT's practice by the PST. Both types of observations are arranged in advance and provide NQTs with opportunities to learn from their fellow professionals. Observations by the PST of the NQT's practice should focus on areas where the NQT feels that they need advice, help and support. The NQT should therefore be encouraged to teach in an area where they feel their learning need is greatest. This can then provide the basis for a subsequent professional conversation. It is recommended that there would be at least two of each type of classroom observation (observations by the NQT, and observations of the NQT's practice), and that the exact number, and the classes observed, should be based on discussions between the NQT and the PST.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017,
p. 5

Taisce: Portfolio-based learning

Portfolio-based learning is an important process to support the NQT in engaging in these professional conversations. The Council uses the term Taisce, (Irish for treasure trove) to refer to this process of portfolio-based learning. Engaging in the process of portfolio-based learning enables the NQT to reflect on their professional learning in a way that suits them and identify and plan for areas in which they may need further support or guidance.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017,
p. 5

Role and Responsibilities

Professional Support Team (PST) Role:

The PST is a team of fully registered teachers, ideally with five years or more teaching experience, which may include the principal, who work collaboratively to support and mentor the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey. All PST members at Blackrock ETSS have completed a programme of professional learning with the Droichead Induction Division, including mentor skill development. Blackrock ETSS may form a school PST or an inter-school PST or may invite one external PST member to join the internal school staff.

Supporting a newly qualified teacher during Droichead is always a collaborative process, although the roles and responsibilities of PST members may vary in different school contexts and are therefore agreed before the Droichead process commences at Blackrock ETSS.

The dual role of the PST is to:

- guide and advise the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey
- form a joint declaration with the NQT that they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017,
p.3

PST Responsibilities:

The responsibilities agreed by the PST at Blackrock ETSS are identified in **Appendix 1** of this policy. The PST's responsibilities are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and will be reviewed considering experience. Responsibilities directly relating to support and mentoring relate to all team members while other responsibilities are designated to a named team member. The PST at Blackrock ETSS recognise that it is also important that these agreed responsibilities are communicated to the NQT at the earliest opportunity.

In support of a NQT's Droichead process, the PST will invite the wider school staff to provide opportunities for...

- Co-planning
- Co-teaching
- Sharing of resources
- Engaging in professional conversations
- Facilitating class observation

The PST at Blackrock ETSS will share its role and agreed responsibilities with the NQT(s) at their initial meeting.

NQT Role:

Supporting an NQT through Droichead at Blackrock ETSS is always a collaborative process. Droichead is fundamentally about the NQT's professional journey and the process of their induction. A key part of this process is an NQT's engagement with more experienced colleagues, and reflection on the professional conversations that take place on their own professional learning and practice.

Through their engagement in the Droichead process at Blackrock ETSS, the NQT will:

1. have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities,
2. have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students,
3. have engaged in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively

Based on above, the NQT will sign a joint declaration with the PST, that they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017

NQT Responsibilities:

To guide the NQT in their role at Blackrock ETSS, some suggested responsibilities are identified in **Appendix 2** of this policy. The PST at Blackrock ETSS will share its roles and agreed responsibilities with the NQT at their initial meeting.

Self-Evaluation

The PST are constantly monitoring and reviewing the supports they provide to NQTs at Blackrock ETSS. The PST ensure to align SSE targets at Blackrock ETSS with the support on offer to NQTs. A needs analysis takes place at the beginning of the year/at the beginning of the NQT's Droichead process. This helps to inform the NQT's Droichead Outline Plan and is reviewed regularly. Regular consultation takes place between the participants throughout the year and a review of the Droichead process takes place at the end of the year. The PST annually review the supports on offer, the progress made on goals set previously and any outstanding areas are discussed.

Data Protection

All data will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Policy of Blackrock ETSS.

Related Policies

The following is a non-exhaustive list of policies which also relate or contribute to the Droichead and School Induction Policy.

- Anti-Bullying for Staff Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Review

This policy was adopted by the Blackrock ETSS Board of Management on June 3rd, 2026. The policy is scheduled for review for the academic year of 2030/31.

Declaration

Date developed:	21 May 2026
Developed by: PST, NQT & whole staff	PST & Policy Development Committee
Date approved:	3/6/26
Ratified by:	Board of Management, Blackrock ETSS
Date effective from:	1/9/26
Review date:	Academic Year 2030/31

Appendix 1

PST Responsibilities at Blackrock ETSS:

Note: This is a **sample list** which is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and is open to customisation by the school.

To guide a PST in its role, some suggested responsibilities are identified below. While responsibilities relating to support and mentoring relate to all team members, a PST may designate some of the other responsibilities to identified individuals within the team.

- To liaise with the PST members regarding inputs to staff on the Droichead process.
- To engage in action planning with the NQT in relation to Droichead standards.
- To co-ordinate the induction plan and activities.
- To organise Droichead Release Time for induction activities.
- To brief school staff, parents and Board of Management on the nature and purpose of the school's involvement in Droichead.
- To ensure the Droichead Outline Plan is current for each NQT.
- To provide professional and pedagogical support for the NQT.
- To support the PST members and NQT/s.
- To outline the PST's role at the initial meeting.
- To liaise with other staff members in relation to opportunities for the NQT to visit/observe in their classrooms and work alongside them.
- To enable and empower the NQT to seek/source answers to questions.
- To brief the NQT on the nature and purpose of the Droichead process within the school.
- To provide support for planning and preparation for teaching and learning by NQTs.
- To establish clear boundaries for the PST/NQT relationship.
- To clarify school policies and procedures for the NQT.
- To invite teachers to be a member of the school PST.
- To attend Droichead professional development.
- To work in partnership with the NQT in the classroom e.g., observation and discussion.

- To liaise with the Droichead Induction Division Associate/Professional Learning Leader (PLL).
- Where practical, to liaise with other schools in the area for the purposes of observing and sharing practice.
- To accept and give feedback in a constructive, open and professional manner.
- To co-ordinate the overall Droichead process in collaboration with the PST members and the NQT, including communicating meeting schedules and agendas and the co-ordination of Droichead Release Time.
- To keep records including copies of timetables and substitution records as well as induction plans, as part of the Droichead process.
- To form a consensus in relation to the joint declaration and sign Form D, if appropriate
- To co-ordinate the conclusion of the Droichead process with the NQT and other PST members.
- To ensure that the Droichead process is carried out appropriately in the school and to develop, monitor and review a whole-school policy on induction.

Appendix 2

NQT Suggested Responsibilities at Blackrock ETSS:

Note: This is a **sample list** which is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and is open to customisation by the school.

To guide the NQT in their role, some suggested responsibilities are identified below.

- To apply for Droichead via the 'My Registration' portal on www.teachingcouncil.ie, retain the confirmation email and forward a copy to PST.
- To attend two cluster meeting, one in person, one online as per the indicative timeframe agreed with the PST.
- To ensure Form D is fully completed before sending to the Teaching Council.
- To reflect on and evaluate practice regarding the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct.
- To be aware of the continuum of professional development and their own responsibilities therein.
- To participate fully in the school's induction programme and to undertake the elements of the programme.
- To work in partnership as part of a school team.
- To be aware of all school policies and procedures, particularly the Child Safeguarding Statement, the Code of Behaviour, the SEN policy, the Bí Cineálta policy.
- To observe more experienced teachers' practice and be observed by the PST.
- To learn from the established good practice of teachers in the school and/or elsewhere.
- To consider the professional feedback of the Principal, PST and other staff who advise about teaching and learning.
- To accept and give feedback in a constructive, open and professional manner.
- To be thoroughly prepared for all lessons and to have long and short-term planning available and up to date.

- To develop a reflective professional portfolio, Taisce, which will provide a focus for professional conversations central to Droichead and allow the NQT to identify areas in which they may need support or guidance. It may be created as a hard copy or electronic document which supports the process of reflection begun at HEI level.
- To engage in Action Planning in collaboration with the PST.
- To collaborate with the PST to identify area(s) of interest for future professional learning (Cosán).
- To attend professional development sessions and contribute to group learning by participating fully.
- To be fully cognisant of the duty of care to all students in the school.
- To accept responsibility for seeking help and advice.
- To maintain the school's professional ethos in terms of appearance and conduct.
- To reflect with the PST, participate in a quality teaching and learning process and sign a joint declaration (Section 2 - Form D), as appropriate.