



Student Teacher Placement Policy Skerries Community College

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Ratified by Board of Management on:	09-06-2026.
Next Review Date:	June 2029.

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School Philosophy

Skerries Community College promotes the development of the whole person within a Christian context. In partnership with parents and guardians, we seek to develop responsible, reflective and active citizens who contribute positively to society.

Students, irrespective of economic circumstance, gender, family status, religious belief, philosophical outlook, race, ethnicity, ability or social background, are welcomed into our learning community and supported in the pursuit of personal excellence.

Our ethos is founded upon personal responsibility, mutual respect, integrity, interdependence and care for others. We strive to foster academic achievement, personal growth, wellbeing, creativity and lifelong learning. We value our culture, traditions and heritage and seek to nurture a caring, compassionate and inclusive school community where justice, dignity and truth are central values.

These values underpin all aspects of school life, including our commitment to supporting Initial Teacher Education and the professional formation of future teachers.

Rationale

Skerries Community College recognises school placement as a central component of Initial Teacher Education and an important stage within the continuum of teacher education encompassing Initial Teacher Education, Droichead and Cosán.

In accordance with *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education* and the Teaching Council *Guidelines on School Placement*, the school is committed to supporting high-quality professional learning experiences that promote collaboration, reflective practice, professional dialogue and the development of teacher identity.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support high-quality school placement experiences.
- Provide clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of all participants.
- Promote consistency in the management of student teacher placements.
- Ensure alignment with Céim and Teaching Council guidance.
- Support the professional learning of student teachers and staff.
- Safeguard the educational welfare of students.
- Promote reflective practice, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- Student Teachers undertaking school placement.
- Co-operating Teachers.
- School Leadership.
- Teaching Staff.
- Board of Management.
- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- Any other personnel involved in facilitating school placement activities.

Definitions

- **Student Teacher**
 - A student enrolled in an accredited Initial Teacher Education programme who is undertaking a school placement as part of programme requirements.
- **Co-operating Teacher**
 - A registered teacher who voluntarily agrees to support, guide and facilitate the professional learning of a student teacher during school placement.
- **School Placement**

- The supervised professional practice component of an accredited Initial Teacher Education programme.
- **Higher Education Institution (HEI)**
- A recognised provider of accredited Initial Teacher Education programmes.
- **Route 5 Registration**
- Conditional registration granted by the Teaching Council to eligible student teachers in accordance with the Teaching Council Registration Regulations.

Introduction

The Board of Management recognises the central role of school placement in Initial Teacher Education.

The school acknowledges the vision articulated within **Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education**, namely that school placement is a collaborative professional learning partnership involving student teachers, co-operating teachers, school leadership, Higher Education Institutions and the wider school community.

The Board further recognises that:

- Positive placement experiences are critical to the development of competent and reflective teachers.
- Professional conversations, mentoring and reflective practice are central to teacher learning.
- School placement contributes significantly to the continuum of teacher education encompassing Initial Teacher Education, Droichead and Cosán.
- Hosting student teachers enriches learning and teaching throughout the school community.
- Schools benefit from engagement with contemporary educational research, innovative pedagogical approaches and strengthened relationships with Higher Education Institutions.
- Co-operating Teachers play an important leadership role in supporting the next generation of teachers.

The school recognises that some student teachers may hold Teaching Council registration under Route 5 and may be eligible to undertake substitute teaching in accordance with current Teaching Council and Department of Education requirements.

COMMITMENT TO CÉIM AND SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Skerries Community College is committed to the principles and aspirations outlined in Céim and the Teaching Council Guidelines on School Placement.

The school recognises school placement as:

- A professional learning partnership.
- A collaborative educational endeavour.
- A shared responsibility between schools and Higher Education Institutions.
- An opportunity for reciprocal learning.
- A key stage within the continuum of teacher education.

The school is committed to fostering:

- Professional trust.
- Mutual respect.
- Reflective practice.
- Professional dialogue.
- Research-informed practice.
- Inclusion and wellbeing.
- Continuous professional growth.

HOSTING OF STUDENT TEACHERS

Skerries Community College welcomes opportunities to host student teachers from recognised Higher Education Institutions.

The school will endeavour to provide high-quality placement experiences that enable student teachers to:

- Observe teaching and learning.
- Engage in collaborative planning.
- Develop classroom practice.
- Participate in assessment processes.
- Engage in professional reflection.
- Experience the broader life of the school.

The number of placements facilitated in any academic year shall be determined by the school's capacity to provide a quality placement experience.

CO-OPERATING TEACHERS

The school recognises the essential contribution of Co-operating Teachers to Initial Teacher Education.

Consistent with the collaborative ethos of Céim, the role of Co-operating Teacher is recognised as a significant professional leadership and mentoring role.

Voluntary Participation

Participation as a Co-operating Teacher shall be voluntary.

No teacher shall be required to act as a Co-operating Teacher unless they have indicated their willingness to undertake the role.

Teachers considering participation should reflect upon:

- Professional capacity.
- Workload commitments.
- Teaching allocation.
- Willingness to engage in mentoring.
- Readiness to participate in reflective professional dialogue.

A Co-operating Teacher Readiness Checklist is provided in Appendix 1.

Allocation of Student Teachers

The allocation of student teachers shall be undertaken by the Principal, Deputy Principal or delegated member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Allocations shall take account of:

- Teacher willingness.
- Subject expertise.
- Placement requirements.
- Student learning needs.
- School capacity.
- The developmental stage of the student teacher.
- Céim principles and Teaching Council guidance.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CO-OPERATING TEACHER

The Co-operating Teacher plays a central role in supporting the professional learning and development of the student teacher while maintaining responsibility for the educational welfare, safety and progress of students.

In accordance with the principles of *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*, the role is founded on professional collaboration, partnership, mentoring, reflective practice and reciprocal learning.

The Co-operating Teacher will:

- Welcome the student teacher as a professional colleague and member of the school community.
- Facilitate opportunities for classroom observation, participation, teaching and professional learning.
- Support the development of the student teacher's professional competence, confidence and reflective practice.

- Engage in regular professional conversations regarding planning, teaching, learning, assessment, classroom management and professional growth.
- Provide constructive, supportive and developmental feedback throughout the placement period.
- Encourage reflective practice, professional enquiry and engagement with evidence-informed teaching and learning.
- Support the gradual assumption of teaching responsibilities appropriate to the stage of the placement and the student teacher's professional development.
- Retain overall responsibility for the class, the educational programme being delivered, and the welfare, safety, learning and progress of students throughout the placement period.
- Student teachers are undertaking a supervised placement as part of an accredited Initial Teacher Education programme and are not yet fully qualified teachers. Accordingly, responsibility for the class, student welfare, curriculum delivery, assessment, reporting and communication with parents remains with the Co-operating Teacher and the school.
- Maintain appropriate oversight and supervision of all classes assigned to the student teacher and ensure that the student teacher is supported in accordance with the requirements of the placement programme.
- Meet regularly with the student teacher to discuss planning, teaching, learning, assessment, classroom management and student progress.
- Monitor progress through the relevant curriculum, subject specification and agreed scheme of work and support the student teacher in ensuring continuity of learning and appropriate progression for students.
- Maintain oversight of lesson planning and curriculum delivery to ensure appropriate progression of learning and alignment with departmental planning, subject department agreements and agreed schemes of work.
- Retain responsibility for assessment and reporting, including the completion and submission of formal school reports, unless alternative arrangements have been approved by school management.

- Retain responsibility for formal communication with parents and guardians regarding student progress, attainment, behaviour, attendance or welfare concerns in accordance with school procedures.
- Attend Parent-Teacher Meetings and other formal school meetings relating to classes assigned to the student teacher unless alternative arrangements have been approved by school management.
- Facilitate opportunities, where appropriate, for the student teacher to observe and learn from reporting procedures, parent communication processes and Parent-Teacher Meetings.
- Ensure that student teachers are not placed in a position where they are expected to assume sole responsibility for a class or for the educational, pastoral, supervisory or administrative responsibilities associated with that class.
- Recognise that a student teacher on placement is not a substitute for the Co-operating Teacher's presence or professional responsibility. Where a class is timetabled to a Co-operating Teacher, that teacher remains responsible for the class and shall be present in the school during the timetabled period unless otherwise authorised by the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Communicate any concerns relating to professional practice, student welfare or the placement experience promptly to school management and, where appropriate, to the relevant Higher Education Institution.

Except where a student teacher is separately employed by the school as a registered substitute teacher under Route 5 registration and is carrying out substitute teaching duties in that distinct capacity, a student teacher on placement shall not be regarded as a member of the teaching staff for supervision, substitution or staffing purposes.

STUDENT TEACHERS AND ROUTE 5 REGISTRATION

The school acknowledges the provisions of the Teaching Council Registration Regulations relating to Route 5 – Student Teacher Registration.

The school recognises that certain student teachers may be eligible to register under Route 5 following successful completion of the required stage of an accredited Initial Teacher Education programme.

Where a student teacher holds valid Route 5 registration, the school may employ that student teacher on a substitute teaching basis subject to:

- Current Teaching Council registration.
- Compliance with all registration conditions.
- Compliance with Department of Education requirements.
- School operational needs.
- The welfare and best interests of students.

Substitute teaching undertaken by a student teacher shall constitute separate employment and shall be clearly distinguished from supervised placement activities.

Participation in substitute teaching shall not compromise:

- Placement requirements.
- Supervised professional practice.
- Higher Education Institution requirements.
- Student wellbeing and learning.

The school reserves the right to determine the suitability of any substitute teaching arrangement and does not guarantee substitute teaching opportunities.

Student teachers employed as substitute teachers shall be subject to the same professional standards, policies and procedures as all teaching staff.

Any future amendments to Teaching Council Registration Regulations, Department of Education Circulars or statutory requirements shall take precedence over this section.

INDUCTION OF STUDENT TEACHERS

Prior to commencing placement, student teachers will receive an induction programme which may include:

- School ethos and values.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures.
- Health and Safety Procedures.
- Student Code of Behaviour.
- Relevant school policies.
- GDPR requirements.
- Confidentiality obligations.
- Student support systems.
- Communication procedures.
- Digital learning platforms.
- Professional expectations.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Consistent with Céim, Skerries Community College recognises school placement as a professional learning opportunity for all participants.

Professional conversations should promote:

- Reflective practice.
- Critical thinking.
- Professional enquiry.
- Evidence-informed practice.
- Innovation in teaching and learning.
- Commitment to student wellbeing and achievement.

The school recognises that such conversations contribute significantly to the development of professional competence, confidence and identity.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Student teachers are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct throughout their placement and to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values, ethos and expectations of Skerries Community College, *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education* and the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.

Student teachers shall:

- Respect the ethos, values, policies and procedures of the school.
- Demonstrate professionalism, integrity, reliability and respect in all interactions with students, staff, parents and members of the wider school community.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
- Respect the dignity, wellbeing and rights of all members of the school community.
- Engage positively in professional dialogue, reflective practice and professional learning opportunities.
- Prepare appropriately for lessons and professional activities associated with the placement.
- Maintain confidentiality in relation to students, staff and school matters, except where disclosure is required in accordance with safeguarding procedures or legal obligations.
- Comply with all Child Protection and Safeguarding requirements, school procedures and relevant statutory obligations.
- Follow school procedures regarding attendance, communication, assessment, reporting, use of digital technologies and professional conduct.
- Seek guidance and support from the Co-operating Teacher, school management and Higher Education Institution personnel where required.

Student teachers are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and, where appropriate, may be afforded opportunities to engage in activities such as co-curricular

programmes, staff meetings, professional learning activities, reporting processes and Parent-Teacher Meetings as part of their professional learning experience.

However, student teachers remain under the guidance and supervision of the Co-operating Teacher and/or school management and shall not assume sole responsibility for:

- The supervision duties and responsibilities assigned to registered teachers by the school.
- Formal communication with parents or guardians.
- The completion or submission of formal school reports.
- Parent-Teacher Meetings.
- Student welfare, disciplinary or safeguarding processes.
- Any other statutory, contractual or professional responsibilities assigned to registered teachers.

Where a student teacher is separately employed by the school as a registered substitute teacher under Route 5 registration, the responsibilities associated with that employment shall be distinct from and additional to those arising from school placement.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

Skerries Community College recognises that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance and permeates all aspects of school life, including school placement activities.

All student teachers undertaking placement in the school shall be required to:

- Familiarise themselves with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.
- Adhere to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures.
- Comply with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

- Follow all directions provided by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) and school management regarding safeguarding matters.
- Always maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Immediately bring any child protection or welfare concern to the attention of the DLP, DDL, Co-operating Teacher or school management.

The Board of Management confirms that this policy shall be implemented in conjunction with:

- The school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.
- Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025.
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- Relevant Department of Education Circulars and guidance documents.

Where any safeguarding concern arises, Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 and associated statutory requirements shall take precedence over any provision contained within this policy.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Board of Management recognises the importance of ongoing professional learning for staff involved in supporting Initial Teacher Education.

Where practicable, staff shall be supported in accessing professional learning opportunities relating to:

- Mentoring.
- Coaching.
- Initial Teacher Education.
- Reflective practice.
- Professional leadership.

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The implementation of this policy shall be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The policy shall be reviewed every two years or sooner where required by:

- Legislative change.
- Teaching Council requirements.
- Amendments to Céim.
- Revisions to School Placement Guidelines.
- School evaluation findings.

Feedback from student teachers, Co-operating Teachers, school leadership and Higher Education Institutions may inform future review

REFERENCES

This policy has been developed with reference to the following legislation, regulations, standards and guidance documents:

Teaching Council and Initial Teacher Education

1. Teaching Council Acts 2001–2015.
2. Teaching Council Registration Regulations (Current Edition).
<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie>
3. Route 5 – Student Teacher Registration
<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/i-am-applying-to-register/qualified-in-ireland/register-as-a-student-teacher/>
4. Teaching Council Registration Handbook (Current Edition)
https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2025/05/00.-Final-Version_-The-Teaching-Council-Registration-Handbook-2025-2026_English.pdf
5. Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education
<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/professional-learning/initial-teacher-education/>
6. Teaching Council Guidelines on School Placement (Current Edition)
<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/professional-learning/initial-teacher-education/>
7. Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/fitness-to-teach/updated-code-of-professional-conduct/>

Child Protection and Safeguarding

8. Children First Act 2015.
9. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Current Edition).
https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf
10. Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/policy-information/child-protection-procedures-in-schools/>
11. Circular 0041/2025 – Publication of Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/publication-of-child-protection-procedures-for-schools-2025/>
12. Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections – Department of Education.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/child-protection-and-safeguarding-inspections/>

Department of Education

13. Relevant Department of Education Circulars, Guidance Documents and Statutory Requirements as amended from time to time.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-education/>

ETB Governance

14. Relevant Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board policies, procedures and governance requirements.

<https://www.ddletb.ie>

Appendix 1

Considerations for Teachers Contemplating the Role of Co-operating Teacher

The role of Co-operating Teacher is an important professional contribution to Initial Teacher Education. Teachers considering undertaking this role may wish to reflect on the following:

- Am I professionally and personally well placed at this point in my career to support the learning and development of a student teacher?
- Do I have the capacity to engage meaningfully in the role, including providing guidance, professional dialogue and constructive feedback?
- Am I comfortable sharing aspects of my classroom practice and professional experience in an open and reflective manner?
- Do I feel sufficiently confident in my current professional practice to support and guide a student teacher in a constructive and supportive manner?
- Have I considered the impact of my current teaching allocation, including examination classes, programme commitments and other responsibilities?
- Can I realistically dedicate the time and attention necessary to ensure a positive and supportive placement experience?
- Am I willing to engage in the collaborative and reciprocal professional learning that underpins school placement within the framework of *Céim*?
- Will undertaking this role support my own professional learning and contribute positively to my professional experience at this stage of my career?
- Is taking on this role compatible with maintaining an appropriate balance between my professional responsibilities and personal wellbeing?

Teachers are encouraged to exercise their professional judgement when considering the role. The school recognises that there may be periods during a teacher's career when they feel particularly well placed to undertake this responsibility and other times when competing professional or personal commitments may make participation less appropriate. Both decisions are respected and valued.