



FIRHOUSE

EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Student Teacher Placement Policy

(Adapted from the Teaching Council Policy Template)

Firhouse ETSS offers the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and, justice and equality for all. In our school, every student will be invited to learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each student to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.

Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement

1. Introduction

The Board of Management of Firhouse ETSS 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. As such, student teachers are welcome to be involved in all aspects of school life including co-curricular, cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities, as well as team meetings, and Board of Management meetings by invitation.
- Close collaboration between schools and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) is essential to positive and meaningful school placement experiences for student teachers.
- It is desirable that schools 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 practising teachers.
- 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, students 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. The sharing of practice and resources is actively encouraged in our school (e.g., at TeachMeets or through Teams).
- HEI placement tutors benefit from partnership experiences with schools and from being in the actual setting of a school during visits to student teachers.

2. Development of Policy

This policy was developed by the Board of Management following consultation with all members of the school community – school leadership, teachers and other relevant staff team members, parents/guardians, students and the school patron.

3. Commitment to hosting student teachers

Firhouse ETSS 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.

4. Implications for the school hosting student teachers on placement

Hosting a student teacher on placement involves the student teacher observing classes being taught by members of the school's teaching team. It also involves 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 ITE programme. There will be a gradual release of responsibility from the cooperating teacher to the student teacher with ultimately shared responsibility between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher for the welfare and educational progress of the class being the goal.

5. Scheduling of student teachers on placement

The principal, or staff team 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 their 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. Final year PME students may be given their own class group should it be for the whole year depending on circumstances.

6. Induction of student teachers on placement

Student teachers will, prior to 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 that will include details of key school policies, in particular the school's *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice*, *Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Policy*, *Health and Safety Policy*, and *Student Teacher Placement Policy*.

7. Supports for the student teacher

1. The Student Teacher Mentor

- The member of the leadership team with responsibilities for coaching, induction and mentoring will meet weekly with all PME students and act as the principal point of contact for all whole-school matters.

2. The Subject Mentor

- For each individual subject that a PME student finds themselves teaching, they will be allocated someone who will act as the principal point of contact for all subject specific related matters. Every effort will be made to ensure as much crossover between this team member and the individual cooperating teachers (see point 3 below).

3. The Individual Cooperating Teachers

- A PME student will likely work with a number of different cooperating teachers and each of these relationships is important and unique. For PME 1 students, this partnership is much more active in a co-teaching sense, and for PME 2 students, this partnership evolves to that of mentorship in the subject. Should a teacher have a PME student taking one of their classes for a given time, they must remain on school grounds should support be requested from the PME student.

8. Technology

As a school that uses technology to support learning, the student teacher will:

- be assigned a school email address and added to the Team Hub
- be added to the relevant class group Teams by their cooperating teacher(s).

The student teacher is expected to have their own laptop to use as part of their placement practice.

9. Professional Learning

The Board of Management and the school's senior leadership are committed to promoting and facilitating the participation of staff team members in continuing professional learning programmes essential to ensuring the successful operation of student teacher placement in the school.

10. Communication of school placement policy to school community

A copy of the *Student Teacher Placement Policy* is available on policies page on the website and is available in hardcopy on request through the main office.

11. Policy reviews

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management periodically.

12. Date of policy adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12/05/2026.

Signed: 

Date: 12/05/2026

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: 

Date: 12/05/2026

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management