



COLÁISTE MUIRE CO-ED, THURLES



SCHOOL PLACEMENT POLICY

January 2022

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Mission Statement

School Mission statement: At Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed we aspire to develop a caring and inclusive learning community that encourages the potential of each person. The mission is realised through our core values of Academic Excellence, Respect, Care, Community and Equality.

Rath as Saothar – Success through effort.

1. Rationale

This policy was drawn up by Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed to ensure that all student teachers, co-operating teachers and mentor teachers have a clear and transparent view of their roles and responsibilities once a student teacher joins our staff. This policy is underpinned by our core values of academic excellence, care, equality, community and respect.

The aim of this policy is:

- To help formally structure the school placement experience for all stakeholders.
- To ensure an enhanced learning experience for learners in classrooms.
- To ensure greater transparency for all stakeholders in relation to school placement.
- To enhance teaching and learning in the school/further enrich school culture.

2. Commitment of all School Placement stakeholders to learners in the school

All School Placement stakeholders (school management, cooperating teachers, student teachers and university tutors) will prioritise at all times the personal safety, the moral welfare, and the intellectual progress of learners in the school.

3. Commitment to hosting student teachers

In an effort to efficiently manage school placement allocations, direct communication between the school placement office of the relevant HEI (Higher Education Institutes) and school management is preferable. Therefore, it is expected that all student teachers must request the school placement office, of the relevant HEI, to officially approach school management so as to formally confirm their allocation.

The school explicitly prioritises the allocation of student teachers to the following HEIs: University of Limerick; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and Thurles, and Art students from Tus and MTU.

Consultation with subject departments in relation to how many students each subject is willing to support and at what time of the academic year is carried out by Senior Management in the interest of transparency. Some subject departments feel that they can only facilitate a student teacher every second or third year. This information is communicated to partner universities at the time of

request. Additionally, student teachers are allocated classes in a manner that ensures a balanced and fair timetable.

4. Commitment of Higher Education Institution (HEI) to prepare student teachers:

Student teachers will be prepared for the professional responsibilities of being a teacher by the HEI and actively encouraged by the HEI to engage in extra-curricular activities. Student teachers will be explicitly informed of the need to familiarise themselves with the school's code of professional conduct and prioritise the needs of the learners within the school. Confidentiality and professional demeanor are deemed to be of the utmost importance when student teachers are carrying out duties in the school.

It is expected that all student teachers are garda vetted by their HEI and that this is brought along to the first meeting at Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed.

It is expected that a point of contact at the HEI for each student teacher will be given.

The HEI will give the school sufficient notification of all dates pertaining to placement and of the criteria required during the placement (for example number of periods required to teach, pertaining to specific subjects, what level that some of the periods should be taught at).

5. Commitment of school stakeholders to student teachers:

5 a) School Management

- Student teachers must meet with the cooperating teachers and the Principal and/or Deputy Principal prior to being accepted for a teaching practice placement.
- The student teacher will be made aware at this meeting that Senior Management in this school is there to help and support them.
- A fair and balanced timetable in line with the requirements of the HEI will be devised by the school.
- The student teacher will be given a copy of our student journal. The student teacher will be advised to familiarise themselves with all school policies but in particular, Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Health and Safety. The various initiatives and procedures that are taken by the school will also be discussed at this meeting. Familiarity with the new framework for JCT is a must for all student teachers.
- Student teachers will be given the document "Support for New Teachers" and will be expected to be fully au fait with its content.
- A discussion will take place on the professionalism that is expected from the student teacher while on placement: appropriate teaching attire, preparation for class, taking class registration, conversations with students etc. It is essential that the student teacher has a clear picture as to what is expected of them while on placement at Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed.

- The student teacher will be assigned a cooperating teacher (teacher within the Department they will be teaching in).

The student teacher will be given the following information at this meeting:

- Details of PC log on and Compass log on details (personalised and devised prior to the meeting)
- A tour of the building

The student teacher will be introduced to the following if the placement is longer than 4 weeks:

- The caretaker who will sign out keys to them
- The ICT coordinator who will set up email and photocopy access

5 b) Co-operating Teachers:

- Co-operating teachers will meet with student teachers in advance of their placement to share information in relation to the classes the student teacher will teach. This will include information pertaining to the learning and well-being needs as well as issues of health and safety.
- Co-operating teachers will invite student teachers to observe their teaching. It is important to note that it is the cooperating teacher who has ultimate responsibility for the welfare of their classes.
- This aforementioned observation of classes will be followed by each co-operating teacher observing the student teacher classes for their initial teaching week. The aim of this approach is to offer support, guidance, and constructive feedback to student teachers in the early stages of their placement.
- From the number of teachers linked with the student teacher, one will act as the primary mentor teacher. This mentor teacher will liaise with the student teacher on a regular basis and will continuously support, advise, and guide them throughout their school placement.
- Where possible, the co-operating teacher will be available to the student teacher throughout placement to advise in relation to any issues that may arise.
- The cooperating teacher will explain our DEIS plan and any teaching and learning initiatives that are in place.

Where possible, the HEI will attempt to receive feedback from co-operating teachers as to the development of school placement within the school.

5 c) Commitment of student teachers to school:

Student Teacher

- Student teachers should discuss the classes and topics they will teach before they start their placement with the Co-operating teachers.
- Student teachers should actively observe a number of classes before they start teaching and should continue to observe classes (at the discretion of other teachers) during their placement.

- Student teachers must keep schemes of work and lesson plans up to date before, and during their placement.
- Student teachers should plan lessons that actively engage their students, include assessment for learning and differentiation practices. Any issues that the student teacher may experience here can be discussed with their mentor teacher.
- Student teachers should have their lesson plan available on the day of a lesson to show to their cooperating teacher, the deputy principal or principal.
- Cooperating teachers may observe a student teacher's lesson and give feedback on the lesson.
- Student teachers should deal with disciplinary issues as they arise in their classes using the disciplinary procedures that exist in the school. If there is an on-going disciplinary issue with a class, student teachers should consult with the cooperating teacher for that class. The cooperating teacher may then observe a class to give some guidance on how to deal with the issue. If necessary, the cooperating teacher may deem it necessary to implement the school disciplinary procedures, if the code of behaviour has been breached.
- In the event of an unexpected absence from school, student teachers should inform the **Deputy Principal**, who will inform the mentor teacher, and the cooperating teachers.
- Student teachers must inform the mentor teacher, their cooperating teacher(s) and the Deputy Principal if they are not available to teach a class for any reason.

Communication of school placement policy to school community:

This will be disseminated to all parties that will need to be made aware of it.

The Board of Management adopted this policy at a meeting in January 2022 and the policy is available on the school website.

Student Teachers - School Placement (Summary)

Over the course of each academic year the school and cooperating teachers support the learning of student teachers while on school placement.

All school placement stakeholders (school management, cooperating teachers, student teachers and university tutors) should prioritise at all times the personal safety, the moral welfare, and the intellectual progress of students in the school.

All student teachers are interviewed by school management before any offer is made of a placement at the school. It is expected that student teachers are aware of, and will meaningfully engage with, the ethos, procedures, and policies of the school. Student teachers are explicitly informed of the need to familiarise themselves with the school's code of professional conduct and prioritise the needs of the students within the school. **Confidentiality and professional demeanour are deemed to be of the utmost importance when student teachers are carrying out duties in the school.** Student teachers are actively encouraged to engage in extra-curricular activities.

Cooperating teachers should meet with student teachers in advance of placement to share information in relation to the classes the student teacher will teach. This should include information pertaining to the learning and well-being needs of students in their classes as well as issues of health and safety. Cooperating teachers should invite student teachers to observe their teaching (this usually takes place for at least the first week of the placement). This is then followed by at least one week of full-time observation by the cooperating teacher of the student teacher. **It is important to note that it is the cooperating teacher who has ultimate responsibility for the welfare of their classes.** The cooperating teacher is entitled to observe / guide any or all classes over the course of the placement - there is no need for the cooperating teacher to give any advance notice of such observation / guidance.

In any event the cooperating teacher should aim to observe at least one full class per week. Cooperating teachers and student teachers should engage in professional conversations around teaching and learning. School management will observe each student teacher across a number of classes over the course of their school placement.

Concerns regarding any student teacher should be brought to the attention of school