



## **COLÁISTE MUIRE CO-ED, THURLES**



## **SCHOOL PLACEMENT POLICY**

**December 2023**

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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 Excellence in Education, 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. The policy is informed by the relevant participating HEIs and the [Guidelines on School Placement](#), developed by the Teaching Council (updated 2022). 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.
- To enhance the school placement experience for student teachers
- To ensure student teachers know their responsibilities in the classroom and liaise with the co-operating teacher.

### **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**

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 the Senior Leadership Team so as to formally confirm their allocation.

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

Consultation with subject departments in relation to how many student teachers each subject is willing to support and at what time of the academic year is carried out by the Senior Leadership team in the interest of transparency. 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 CMCO's "Support for New Teachers" and school policies 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 evidence of 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 provided to the Senior Leadership team.

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 Leadership team**

- 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 Leadership team in this school is there to help and support them.
- In the interest of meeting the learner needs, the student teacher should follow the topics that need to be covered based on the overall scheme of work.
- 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 access to a copy of our student journal. The student teacher will be advised to familiarise themselves with all school policies including, 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.
- Student teachers will be given the document "Support for New Teachers" and will be expected to be fully au fait with its content and sign a contract within that document.

- A supportive conversation will take place on the professionalism that is expected from the student teacher while on placement: e.g., preparation for class, taking class registration, use of the school information system, conversations with students etc. Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed is committed to supporting student teachers so that they can optimize their potential in our school in line with our school mission statement.
- The student teacher will be assigned a cooperating 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
- Timetable
- A copy of the “Support for New Teachers” book which contains links to policies, school procedures etc.
- Access to the Department planning folder.

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) Cooperating Teachers:**

- Cooperating 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.
- Cooperating 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 cooperating teacher observing the student teacher classes for their initial teaching week and in one class per week thereafter. 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 co-operating teacher. This co-operating 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 cooperating 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.

- The cooperating teacher may stay in the class to support the teacher on teaching practice or they may visit the class from time to time.
- Where possible, the HEI will attempt to receive feedback from cooperating teachers as to the development of school placement within the school.
- Concerns regarding any student teacher should be brought to the Senior Leadership team.

#### **5 c) Commitment of student teachers to school:**

##### **Student Teacher**

- Student teachers should discuss the classes and planned learning before they start their placement with the cooperating teachers. Based on cooperating teacher requests, the student teacher should identify which topics they would like to teach based on cooperating teacher's scheme of work.
- 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 planning documentation up to date before, and during their placement. These should be shared with the cooperating teacher.
- Student teachers should plan lessons that actively engage their students, include formative assessment 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 School's Code of Behaviour that exists 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 cooperating teacher.
- Student teachers must inform 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 **December 2023** 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 demeanor 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 to support and develop their abilities before entering into the teaching profession.

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 may 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.