

Guidelines on School Placement

Revised edition 2021





Foreword to the 2021 edition of the School Placement Guidelines

On behalf of the Teaching Council, we are pleased to present these updated Guidelines on School Placement as an addendum to the Council's revised standards for programmes of initial teacher education (ITE), *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*. These Guidelines have been updated to reflect the language and terminology used in *Céim*.

They mark the culmination of a partnership process which commenced in early 2012, when the Council invited national stakeholders to participate in a working group to look at this critical component of ITE. The overarching aim of the work was to ensure greater consistency in the school placement experience for all student teachers, given the centrality of that experience to the formation of the teachers of the future. It was also intended to facilitate enhanced collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and schools. This approach was consistent with the call in the accreditation criteria for “new and innovative school placement models ... using a partnership approach, whereby HEIs and schools actively collaborate in the organisation of the school placement”.

The publication of these guidelines marks another step forward in the articulation of the continuum of teacher education. The guidelines provide a clear blueprint for all involved in facilitating quality school placement experiences, and we hope that schools and HEIs will see how existing good practice in this area can be harnessed and developed incrementally for the benefit of all partners, especially student teachers and pupils.

School placement is considered to be the fulcrum of teacher education. It includes teachers from all phases of the continuum – experienced teachers who support and guide the student teacher, and who learn from the process themselves; student teachers who are learning about being teachers; and placement tutors.

Since the guidelines were originally published, much work has taken place in the space of school placement. As part of the *Teacher Supply Action Plan*, the Department of Education requested the Teaching Council to review the implementation of school placement guidelines, with a particular focus on school/HEI partnerships, and to make recommendations.

A Working Group was convened to consider how greater alignment could be obtained between the policy on school placement and its enactment.

The School Placement Working Group created a report and action plan which included a shared vision for school placement into the future.

‘School placement is a central feature of initial teacher education, where student teachers are welcomed and supported by HEI tutors, school principals, class teachers and the school community. Student teachers’ rich contribution to pupil learning and school life is recognised and celebrated.’ See *Céim* for full shared vision text.

We would like to thank the members of the group, listed in Appendix 2, for bringing the guidelines to fruition. Their commitment to the task and their willingness to share their expertise so generously is much appreciated.

These guidelines tell a good story about this stage in an individual’s journey to becoming a teacher, and we should not be shy in telling it to all those who stand to benefit– student teachers, HEIs, whole school communities and, ultimately, future generations of pupils and students in our schools. We in the Council believe that we should make the most of opportunities such as those afforded by these guidelines to embrace new understandings of professionalism and collective professional confidence. We look forward to continue working with the profession and all the partners in education in this endeavour.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sean McMahon'.

Sean McMahon
Chairperson



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tomás Ó Ruairc'.

Tomás Ó Ruairc
Director

Glossary

Centre for Education

A Centre for Education is as provided for in Section 10 (4) of the Education Act, 1998.

Collaboration

This occurs when those involved in school placement work together as partners to achieve the shared goal of developing the knowledge, skills and competencies which student teachers need while ensuring the best outcomes for pupils during the process. This is underpinned by the sharing of knowledge and learning, the building of consensus and the improvement of skills critical to the success of school placement.

Continuum of teacher education

This refers to the formal and informal learning in which teachers engage as life-long learners during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, *Droichead* (the integrated professional induction framework), and Cosán (teachers' learning).

Education and Training Boards, (ETBs)

ETBs provide education and training programmes at local and community level across Ireland.

Higher Education Institution (HEI)

HEI or Higher Education Institution denotes those colleges, universities and other third level bodies providing one or more accredited programmes of initial teacher education.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

ITE refers to the initial phase of learning to be a teacher when student teachers are engaged in a recognised teacher education programme.

Mentoring

Mentoring encompasses all those means by which the student teacher on placement is supported, advised and encouraged and their practice and thinking is affirmed and challenged, as appropriate. It is acknowledged that the process of mentoring student teachers is distinct from the process of mentoring newly qualified teachers.

Parent

The term "parent" denotes parents and legal guardians.

Partnership

Partnership refers to the processes, structures and arrangements that enable the partners involved in school placement to work and learn collaboratively in teacher education.

Principal (teacher)

As the leader of learning, the principal provides leadership to teachers, other staff and learners. In collaboration with colleagues, the principal is responsible for the creation of a school environment which is supportive of learning for all pupils and teachers in the school community.

Pupils

The term "pupils" denotes students at primary and post-primary.

Recognised School

A recognised school is a school which is recognised in accordance with Section 10 of the Education Act, 1998.

School Management Authority

This is the Board of Management and/or the ETB, as appropriate. The school management authority manages the school on behalf of the Patron in accordance with Section 15 of the Education Act, 1998. It provides, or arranges the provision of, an appropriate education for pupils and will have a responsibility for ensuring that the school placement policy is in place and adhered to.

School Placement

The term school placement refers to that part of the programme which takes place in school settings and which is designed to give the student teacher an opportunity to integrate educational theory and practice in a variety of teaching situations and school contexts. The school placement experience encompasses a range of teaching and non-teaching activities and affords the student teacher opportunities to participate in school life in a way that is structured and supported.

From a Higher Education Institution (HEI) perspective, school placement also encompasses activities such as micro teaching, preparatory workshops for the placement, and collective de-brief/reflective sessions which are directly related to the school placement. It is recognised that some of these may not happen within a school context.

School Placement Tutor

A School Placement Tutor is a person engaged by a HEI to support and mentor student teachers and evaluate their practice while on placement.

Student teacher

A student teacher is a student who is engaged in a programme of initial teacher education.

Taisce

Taisce refers to the process of *portfolio-based learning* which is engaged in by student teachers to enable them to reflect on their professional learning and practice, as appropriate to their stage of learning and to identify and plan for areas in which they may need support or guidance. The process of portfolio-based learning also facilitates students to become more conscious of the theories and assumptions that guide their practice, and provides a basis for professional conversations about teaching with HEI tutors and school-based stakeholders alike. Student teachers, in collaboration with the HEI as part of the school placement experience, will identify areas for further learning in the *Droichead* induction phase of the continuum. Portfolio-based learning will continue to be an important process to support the newly-qualified teacher in engaging in the professional conversations, which are central to the *Droichead* process.

Teacher

The term “teacher” denotes a teacher registered with the Teaching Council.

Teachers’ Learning

Professional learning describes all the learning which teachers engage in to support their professional practice and to address the needs of all pupils in their care. The teacher as a reflective professional is able to draw on an integrated knowledge base to improve practice through inquiry.

Team Teaching

Team teaching involves a group of two or more teachers working together to plan, conduct and evaluate the learning activities for the same group of pupils. It generally involves teachers teaching the same pupils at the same time, although this is not always the case.

Treoraí

The term *Treoraí*, the Irish word for guide, replaces the term *Co-operating Teacher* and more accurately reflects the nature of the role of a teacher who supports and guides the student teacher during his/her school placement experience. In a post-primary setting, a student teacher may be placed in a number of different classes and may, therefore, collaborate with a number of different *Treoraithe* across a number of subject areas.



Introduction

The primary role of the school is to facilitate pupils reaching their full potential, therefore the best interests of pupils must be central to national policy on teacher education and, in particular, to the school placement experience.

These guidelines are underpinned by three key assumptions about the benefits of reconceptualising the school placement experience:

- it will enhance the school placement experience for student teachers
- it will enrich learning outcomes for both current and future pupils and
- it will deepen the professional satisfaction and improve the status of teachers.

For these reasons, it is vital that teacher education programmes and, in particular, the placement experience are actively resourced and supported by all the education partners in pursuit of their shared objectives.

School placement is a critical part of initial teacher education (ITE) and is designed to give the student teacher an opportunity to learn about teaching and learning, to gain practice in teaching and to apply theory in a variety of teaching situations and school contexts.

As part of their placement, the student teacher undertakes and observes a wide range of teaching and non-teaching activities, thereby developing an appreciation of the complexity of teaching and the variety of roles undertaken by teachers.

School placement facilitates the development of the student teacher's capacity for self-reflection, sometimes in dialogue with Treoraithe and School Placement Tutors and affords the student teacher valuable opportunities to seek and receive advice in a way that is structured and supported.

Significantly, the placement allows the student teacher to develop a range of knowledge, skills, competences and professional dispositions which are critical to their professional identity as a teacher. It also allows for a parallel growth in their personal identity, as they navigate their way through the learning-to-teach process and all that it entails.

School placement shall provide opportunities for student teachers to engage in research on their own practice that demonstrates the connection between the sites of practice (HEI and school). The student teacher shall discuss their research plans with the Treoraí, as they have overall responsibility for the class.

Building on good practice

School placement has been based on a tradition of goodwill. In line with the standards set out in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*, teachers work with student teachers in the interests of sharing, developing and supporting good practice and many school communities give generously of their time and experience. They provide student teachers with an appropriate environment in which a meaningful placement can take place.

These guidelines are designed to build on existing good practice while encouraging new and innovative models of school placement, using a partnership approach, without placing an undue burden on schools.

Towards a more structured approach to identifying and supporting host schools

Host schools are encouraged to be communities of good professional practice and to engage of their own accord with ITE. It is recognised, however, that it may not always be easy for HEIs and/or student teachers to identify a suitable host school, having regard to the extended duration of school placement and the fact that the system operates on a goodwill basis. For that reason, it is recommended that a more structured approach to the identification, involvement and support of host schools should be put in place, following consultation with all stakeholders. Such a structured approach would bring greater coherence to, and address issues of imbalance and capacity in, the placement of student teachers across schools nationally.

Review of these Guidelines

Schools are dynamic and complex environments and, for that reason, the publication of these guidelines and the reconceptualisation of the school placement experience do not represent the end of a journey but, rather, the start of one. The guidelines provide a roadmap for that journey. They will guide schools and HEIs in the way existing good practice in school placement can be harnessed and developed incrementally for the benefit of all partners, especially student teachers and pupils. They will be subject to review and change, as informed by national and international research on ITE, and the voices of all partners, particularly that of the student teacher.

A Shared Vision for School Placement

School placement is a central feature of initial teacher education, where student teachers are welcomed and supported by HEI tutors, school principals, class teachers and the school community. Student teachers' rich contribution to pupil learning and school life is recognised and celebrated. Student teachers must successfully complete this element of the programme. It provides student teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their identity as teachers, to develop it and become socialised into the profession. It is underpinned by a shared professional understanding that collaborative engagement with school placement provides professional learning opportunities for all involved.

School-HEI partnerships

- Support professional collaboration
- Foster innovation in pedagogical practice for all teachers
- Support engagement with and in research by all teachers
- Are focused on the learning needs of all pupils, and of all teachers.

Student teachers experience a supportive model of placement which facilitates professional conversational engagement between all partners. Such supports shall include structures at the national level to facilitate quality and collaborative engagement in school placement. Student teachers identify further professional learning for *Droichead*, the induction phase of the continuum.

The benefits of a well-managed school placement

A well-managed school placement is mutually enriching for pupils, student teachers, Treoraithe, the wider school community and HEIs.

Student teachers

Student teachers can observe experienced teachers teaching and develop their knowledge, skills, competences and professional dispositions.

Schools

Schools can develop as learning communities through the sharing of knowledge and skills and through interaction with student teachers and HEIs.

Treoraithe

Treoraithe are afforded the opportunity to share their professional expertise and to observe and be informed about a variety of approaches to teaching and learning through engagement with student teachers and HEIs.

Pupils

Pupils can benefit from a variety of enriching experiences through the structured participation of student teachers in schools. This is enhanced by the collaboration of the student teachers with Treoraithe, the wider school staff and the School Placement Tutors.

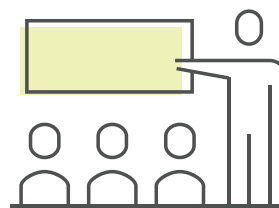
HEIs

HEIs can remain up-to-date with the changing contexts and realities within schools.

School placement offers many possibilities for reciprocity between HEIs and schools. When established within a framework of partnership and learning, adequately resourced and supported, and facilitated in a context of committed leadership at school and HEI level, it can present opportunities for sharing ideas and new methodologies. It can foster open dialogue on teaching and learning and offer a variety of opportunities for real engagement and learning among teachers throughout their careers.

It presents student teachers, and HEI personnel with the opportunity to better integrate theory and practice through reflective and collaborative professional practice and enquiry based learning, in line with national policy on teacher education as a continuum.

Significantly, school placement provides opportunities for HEIs to identify student teachers who are suited to and competent in teaching. It also allows HEIs to identify those who may not be suited to or competent in teaching.



School placement provides opportunities for HEIs to identify student teachers who are suited to and competent in teaching.

Characteristics of effective school placement

School placement is a fundamental part of initial teacher education (ITE) and connects with the career entry phase on the continuum of teacher education. Effective school placement takes place in line with the tenets of the Council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* and embodies the following characteristics.

Whole-school focus on learning

It is vital that the placement should afford the student teacher appropriate and varied learning and development opportunities, with due regard for the stage they are at on the ITE programme.

At the heart of these guidelines is the principle that the school is a learning organisation, promoting the learning of student teachers, teachers, school placement tutors and pupils on a continual and reciprocal basis. Therefore, a whole-school approach to school placement, under the guidance of principals as school leaders, is of vital importance.

HEIs are also learning organisations. As they continue to develop their own knowledge and expertise in relation to school placement, they will have a significant part to play in fostering the learning of Treoraithe, principals and other teachers in the school. The provision of continuing professional development (CPD) for schools by HEIs provides a means of sharing professional expertise and knowledge between HEIs and schools and represents an acknowledgement of teachers' work in supporting their colleagues who will soon join the profession, and thus in facilitating effective placement.

Relationships built on core values of respect, trust and inclusion

Relationships based on mutual respect, trust and inclusion are paramount to the success of the placement. In that context, it is important that student teachers are included and supported by all partners during their school placement. In turn, student teachers must recognise and respect the role of school personnel and have due regard for the policies, protocols and characteristic spirit that underpin the day-to-day life of the school.

Partnership

School placement is based on a partnership approach that is mutually enriching for school communities, HEIs and student teachers. The goodwill of teachers and other partners and the voluntary nature of their participation is recognised. HEIs and schools will continue to support each other as they engage in the placement process.

Professional engagement and ownership

Teaching is a self-regulating profession and, therefore, the development of school placement is based on the premise that the teaching profession is committed to engaging in the process of teacher education, in partnership with the HEIs. Teachers and schools should be appropriately supported by all education partners to fulfil expectations in that regard. The student teacher in turn will take due responsibility for maximising the learning opportunities which their placement experience offers.



The three 'I's

The school placement should be based on the three pillars of innovation, integration and improvement that underpin all stages of the continuum of teacher education in the Council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*.

Relationships and communications

The fostering of relationships, based on mutual respect, trust and inclusion, is vitally important for effective school placement.

Clear and open communication between all partners is essential. In particular, effective communication with parents is critical. They should be made aware of the school's commitment to hosting student teachers on placement and of its policy in respect of such placements.

In all communications, student teachers, Treoraithe, principals, school placement tutors and all partners in the school placement process should respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information gained in the course of school placement.

The fostering of relationships, based on mutual respect, trust and inclusion, is vitally important for effective school placement.

Duration, structure and timing of school placement



A well-managed school placement is mutually enriching for pupils, student teachers, Treoraithe, the wider school community and HEIs.

The Teaching Council has determined that 25% of student time over the four years of concurrent programmes and 40% of student time over the two years of consecutive programmes should be allocated to school placement.

School placement encompasses a school-based element (direct teaching and other school-based activities in a recognised school) and a range of HEI-directed activities, as set out in Figure 1. It is expected that the greater part of the school placement will be school-based.

¹ The direct teaching time at primary level should involve teaching a designated class across the range of subjects in the primary curriculum. At post-primary level, it should involve the teaching of one or more approved subjects from the post-primary curriculum to a designated class.

School-based activities

Over the full programme, the school-based element should incorporate direct teaching experience of a minimum of 200 hours, which may include some team teaching experience. Student teachers in post-primary should not be timetabled for classes separate from the classes to which they have been assigned for the purposes of the placement.

Extended periods of school placement shall be scheduled for the second half of the programme with at least one of the later placements being for a minimum of 10 weeks, or its equivalent, with a minimum of 3 days per week spent in schools.

Non-teaching hours in schools should be well structured so as to facilitate greater emphasis on classroom observation, collaborative work with experienced staff, and greater engagement with the life of the school.

Schools and HEIs should ensure that the student teacher is afforded an appropriate blend of the types of activities which are suggested in Figure 1, having regard to the stage they are at on a programme of ITE.

With regard to the timing of the placement, sensitivity to the needs of student teachers and of the host schools is required.

Subject to the above, HEIs will have flexibility in determining the duration, structure and timing of the school-based element and will provide schools with detailed information in relation to same, to facilitate school planning.

HEI-directed activities

As well as the school-based element, it is recognised that many other learning activities facilitated by HEIs are intrinsically related to the placement. These may include micro teaching, preparatory workshops and collective reflection sessions following the placement. They may also include alternative placement experiences in educational settings which are not recognised schools. A non-exhaustive list of HEI-directed activities which may be considered to be integral to the placement is set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Elements of school placement

As well as direct teaching to a designated class, the school-based element should include the following activities:
Opportunity for the student teacher to engage in research on their own practice that demonstrates the connection between the sites of practice (HEI and school).
During every module of school placement, through the use of their <i>Taisce</i> , the student teacher shall demonstrate an understanding of inclusive education as applicable to that context and demonstrate an understanding of working with parents.
Planning for teaching, learning and assessment (assigned classes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment for learning (assigned classes) ○ Structured observation of classroom practice ○ Participation by student teachers in school-based orientation programmes
Professional conversations with experienced teachers
Structured feedback from HEI school placement tutors and Treoraithe on practice observed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Critical reflection on practice, both individually and with colleagues ○ Structured and supported participation in school life, as appropriate to the school placement

The school-based element may also include, as deemed appropriate by the HEI and the host school, some or all of the following activities:

Learning support and resource teaching

Attendance at staff meetings

Supported engagement with other professionals

Engagement with school-based continuing professional development and/or school development planning

HEI-directed placement activities may include:

Micro teaching or equivalent

Preparation for the placement

School placement reflection workshops

- On-line discussion fora
- Development of a reflective journal / professional portfolio
- Alternative placement experiences in educational settings other than recognised schools, including, inter alia, Centres for Education.





Identifying appropriate settings

School placement shall comprise a minimum of two placement settings incorporating a variety of teaching situations, class levels and school contexts, including Irish medium schools.

HEIs have overall responsibility for the placement of student teachers and may choose to delegate responsibility to student teachers for identifying host schools. Every effort should be made to ensure that student teachers gain teaching experience in a variety of school contexts to reflect the socio-economic and cultural mix of society.

Where appropriate and practicable, elements of the placement should be located in special schools or settings, in settings where the curriculum is taught through Irish and in other atypical settings. To facilitate this, it is desirable that all recognised schools will be open to hosting student teachers on placement, though it is acknowledged that this may not always be feasible or appropriate.

When a host school has been agreed for a particular student teacher, the school principal, or a member of staff to whom this task is delegated, will facilitate the placement in accordance with the relevant HEI's guidelines.

Over the course of all their placements, a student teacher at primary level should be exposed to a range of class levels and to multiclass teaching situations. At post-primary level, a student teacher should be exposed to both junior and senior cycles, to mixed ability teaching and, where appropriate, to examination classes.

In planning for this, HEIs and schools should have regard to a range of variables, e.g., the timing of the placement in the school calendar, and the stage the student teacher is at on the initial teacher education (ITE) programme.

Experience of cross-sectoral linkages may also be considered, provided they comply with the Teaching Council's *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*. For example, student teachers at primary level might gain some placement experience in a pre-school and/or a post-primary school. Similarly, student teachers at post-primary level might gain some placement experience in a primary school.

Alternative placement experiences, including North/South and Erasmus placements and placements in Centres for Education and other educational settings which are not recognised schools, may also provide valuable teaching and learning experiences for the student teacher, and may be arranged as part of the HEI directed activities summarised in Figure 1.

Structured support for the student teacher



The provision of structured support for the student teacher is a key element of school placement. The school placement tutor has primary responsibility for the provision of such support and is also responsible for assessment for grading purposes. Treoraithe and school principals will also provide structured support to student teachers, having regard to capacity. The role of the Treoraí in providing structured support and guidance to student teachers is pivotal, though it is not evaluative, in terms of assessing the student teacher's work on behalf of the HEI.



All student teachers on placement should be assigned a suitable Treoraí who is committed to working with and supporting them.

Additional support may also be provided by other HEI staff, the school community and other student teachers. It is acknowledged that the whole school community provides important informal support to student teachers, for example, by the welcome it extends to them and by the efforts it makes to include student teachers in general school life experiences, as well as by making school facilities available to them.

All student teachers on placement should be assigned a suitable Treoraí who is committed to working with and supporting them. In a post-primary setting, student teachers may have a number of Treoraithe. It is envisaged that, over the course of a school placement on an ITE programme, the student teacher will move gradually from a strongly supported experience in the classroom to teaching independently. While student teachers are teaching independently, Treoraithe will have discretionary time and this will facilitate them engaging with student teachers at other times.

Structured support may include the provision of advice and guidance, sharing ideas and approaches, co-planning, team teaching, opportunities for student teachers to observe teachers teaching, and opportunities for the student teacher to have their teaching observed. Research evidence indicates that observation and feedback are the two most valued elements of structured support.

Guidance on observation of the student teacher's practice will be issued to schools and placement tutors by HEIs. This guidance will address the following:

- the expectations and requirements of the particular placement
- conducting observation and providing feedback
- engaging with the school placement tutor
- the role of the student teacher as active agent in their own development.

HEIs should support placement tutors and Treoraithe to ensure the guidance is implemented in a consistent manner. As a matter of professional courtesy, the school placement tutor and Treoraí should collaborate, as appropriate, in relation to any recommendations made or advice given to student teachers.

Feedback to a student teacher (by the school placement tutor, Treoraí school principal, etc.) should be provided in a timely fashion. It should be based on evidence gleaned in the course of observation and be appropriate to the requirements and expectations of the particular placement. The content of feedback messages should be clear, fair and honest; be communicated in language that is appropriate to a dialogue on teaching and learning, and be provided in an encouraging and sensitive manner. The observer should seek to engage the student teacher in critical reflection on their practice, so as to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and possible strategies for improving practice.

Supporting students experiencing professional difficulties

Support for the student teacher who may be experiencing difficulty in classroom practice is particularly important and should be given at the earliest possible opportunity during the placement. It should be designed to enable them fulfil the requirements of the placement. While the HEI is primarily responsible for supporting student teachers experiencing difficulties, a collaborative approach to such support is important and is in the best interests of pupils.

Where serious concerns are identified in relation to a student teacher's practice or professional conduct, the Treoraí should advise the school principal at the earliest possible opportunity. In such circumstances, the principal should notify the HEI and facilitate appropriate interventions. These may include timely additional supports being put in place for the student teacher.

Students who fail a module of school placement shall be offered teaching enrichment and mentoring support being afforded not more than one opportunity to repeat that placement, with due regard to the institution's fitness to practice code.



Roles and responsibilities of partners

Many partners have an important role to play in supporting the student teacher while on placement and ensuring that the experience is an appropriate, meaningful and enriching one. Figure 2 below sets out the main partners at school and HEI level, and highlights the interdependency between all of these, as well as the centrality of the student teacher in the process. It also highlights the important role of the Teaching Council and the Department of Education in supporting a quality school placement and in establishing the policy framework within which the placement takes place.

Good relationships between all of these partners and a commitment to a partnership approach are vital to effective school placement. Relationship-building can be facilitated where all partners have clarity in relation to their respective roles and responsibilities. Figure 3 overleaf summarises the roles of each partner with specific reference to the school placement. As well as the partners identified in figure 2, it is recognised that other stakeholders may also have important roles to play in supporting schools and HEIs in the provision of the placement experience.

Figure 2: Key partners

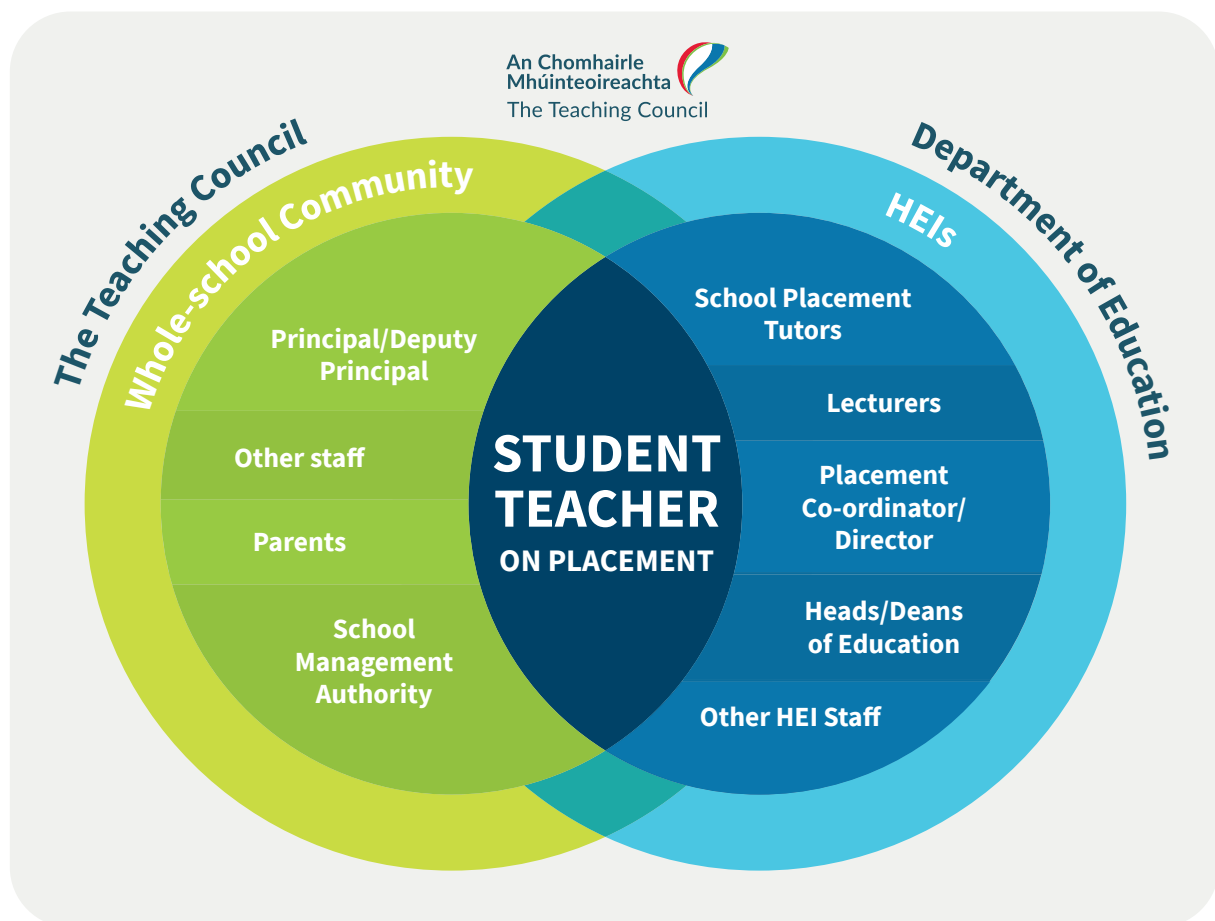


Figure 3: Roles & Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

The Department of Education

- Ensures appropriate resources are made available at HEI and school level to support the placement.
- Ensures that the design of school buildings takes account of the professional collaboration needs of the school as envisaged in the new models of school placement.
- Takes account of the new partnership-based models of school placement in the formulation of education policy.
- Facilitates Education Centres, support services and other relevant agencies in taking on appropriate roles in supporting the new models of school placement.

The Teaching Council

- Promotes teaching as a profession.
- Reviews and, as appropriate, accredits programmes of initial teacher education. Such accreditation may be subject to requirements, some of which may relate to the placement component.
- As part of the review process, the Council may visit placement schools and seek feedback from relevant stakeholders.
- Coordinates the development and review of national guidelines on school placement, in consultation with the partners in education.
- Develop a national framework which will underpin some of the professional development commitments included in these guidelines.

Higher Education Institutions

- Design, implement and oversee school placement in a spirit of partnership and collaboration with host schools having regard to the Teaching Council standards and current national and international research on ITE.
- Develop guidelines for the identification of appropriate placement settings.
- Provide information, guidance and structured support to host schools and host teachers on all aspects of school placement, including the structure and duration of the placement, school placement activities, and their expectations for the student teacher while on placement.
- Ensure that the student teacher has whole-school experiences appropriate to each placement period.

School Placement Tutors

- Ensure that the student teacher is appropriately supported in all matters pertaining to the placement.
- Observe the student teacher teaching and engage them in a dialogue when giving constructive feedback.
- Assess the student teacher's practice in accordance with the HEI's requirements.
- Reinforce with the student teacher key considerations regarding teaching and learning in accordance with the HEI policy.
- Encourage the student teacher to engage fully in the life of the school.
- Discuss with the Treoraí good practice in class planning and the use of teaching and learning resources.
- Support the Treoraí and student teacher in engaging in reflective dialogue.
- Collaborate with the Treoraí/Treoraithe and acknowledge their role in supporting the student teacher.
- Discuss the student teacher's practice and experience with the Treoraí, as appropriate.
- Are open to learning from the principal, Treoraí/Treoraithe and other staff within the school.
- Engage with the principal in relation to the student teacher's practice and experience, as appropriate.
- Acknowledge the role, work and commitment of the host school and Treoraithe in supporting student teachers on placement.
- Are cognisant and respectful of the characteristic spirit (ethos) of the school, school policies, the school timetable and any special school-based arrangements.
- Ensure that the student teacher is supported and assessed by two or more school placement tutors, at least one of whom has relevant curricular/subject expertise.
- It is a requirement that all student teachers are supported and assessed by two or more Placement Tutors
- From May 2022, at least 50% of all School Placement Tutors shall be registered as teachers with the Teaching Council in accordance with the Routes of Registration as outlined in the Teaching Council Registration Regulations (2016). Prior to qualification, a student teacher shall be summatively assessed at least once by a registered teacher, during their programme of initial teacher education.
- Offer additional supports to student teachers experiencing difficulties while on school placement.
- Provide guidance and advice to the student teacher regarding their suitability to be a teacher.

Student Teachers

- Engage constructively and collaboratively in a broad range of professional experiences as part of the school placement process.
- Meet with the principal and Treoraí/ Treoraithe to plan the placement having regard to the breadth of activities set out in Figure 1.
- Recognise their stage in the learning-to-teach process and how this should inform their interactions with the school community.
- In collaboration with the Treoraí and other teachers in the school as appropriate, seek and avail of opportunities to observe and work alongside other teachers.
- Take a proactive approach to their own learning and seek and avail of support as a collaborative practitioner.
- Prepare and deliver lessons to a standard commensurate with their stage of development and in line with HEI requirements and the policies of the host school (in particular homework, assessment and other relevant teaching and learning policies).
- Be familiar with the school's Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy and other relevant policies.
- Always be conscious that pupil needs are paramount and that a duty of care pertains.
- Engage with constructive feedback from school placement tutors, Treoraithe and principals.
- Engage with other student teachers in the context of peer learning, insofar as practicable.
- Work towards becoming critically reflective practitioners.
- Engage with all in the school community in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Recognise that they have much to contribute to the school community.
- Support the characteristic spirit (ethos) of the school.
- Have due regard for the ethical values and professional standards which are set out in the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*.
- Respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information gained while on placement.
- Participate fully in each placement to develop their teaching skills and meet the placement requirements of their HEI.

Treoraithe

- Introduce the student teacher to: the pupils, the classroom, the teacher's plan of work for that class, class rules and procedures, and the roles of other staff directly involved with the pupils in the class.
- Afford the student teacher opportunities to observe their teaching (and that of their colleagues).
- Inform the student teacher regarding pupils needs and attainments.
- Assign the teaching of areas of the curriculum to the student teacher while retaining the primary responsibility for the progress of the pupils.
- Discuss the student teacher's planning and resources with them as appropriate.
- Observe the student teacher's practice and provide oral or written feedback to the student teacher in an encouraging and sensitive manner.
- Encourage, support and facilitate the student teacher in: critical reflection on their practice, the use of a variety of teaching methodologies and in engaging with and responding appropriately to feedback from pupils.
- Encourage the student teacher to seek advice and support where necessary.
- Allow student teachers to teach independently, as their competence develops (in line with HEI requirements for the particular placement), and as deemed appropriate by Treoraí and the principal.
- Work collaboratively with the student teacher, the school placement tutor and the school principal.
- Advise the principal of any serious concerns regarding a student teacher's practice or professional conduct.
- Have discretionary time while student teachers teach independently to facilitate engagement with the student teachers at other times.

School Principals

- Lead a whole-school approach to school placement in accordance with the policy formulated by the School Management Authority
- Facilitate student placement, in consultation with appropriate staff and having regard to school capacity
- Work collaboratively with HEIs and placement tutors to support the school placement.
- Assign student teachers to Treoraithe as appropriate.
- Provide a school orientation to the student teacher at the outset of the placement.
- Afford the student teacher opportunities to work alongside other teachers.
- Encourage the student teacher to seek advice and support when needed.
- Are available to student teachers for professional support and advice.
- Advise HEIs in a timely manner of any serious concerns relating to a student teacher's practice or conduct.
- Facilitate HEI staff wishing to update their teaching experience, where feasible.
- Facilitate Treoraithe availing of discretionary time while student teachers are teaching more independently
- Will, where appropriate, delegate the above functions to the deputy principal or other members of staff.

School Management Authority

- Initiate and develop a policy on school placement, in consultation with the whole-school community.
- Ensure that the whole-school community (staff, parents and students) is aware of the school placement policy.
- Ensure that the relevant HEIs are aware of the school's placement policy.
- Review and monitor the implementation of the placement policy.

Whole-school Communities

- Recognise the importance of school placement in the personal and professional development of the student teacher and engage in the development and implementation of policy on school placement.
- Recognise the challenges faced by student teachers and support them in meeting those challenges.
- Value the school placement experience and how student teachers can benefit from engagement with Treoraithe and the school community.
- Recognise that the student teacher can bring new and innovative practices to the classroom which may benefit the school and its community.
- Recognise the particular roles and responsibilities of all within the school community in relation to school placement.

Parents

- Contribute to the development of a school policy on school placement.
- Recognise the importance of and support the school's commitment to hosting student teachers on placement.
- Receive communication in relation to the school's policy on school placement in a manner which enables them to be supportive of the student teachers while on placement.

As well as the stakeholders identified above, it is recognised that other stakeholders may also have important roles to play in supporting schools and HEIs in the provision of the placement experience. It is intended that further consultation will take place with these bodies with a view to more clearly defining their roles.

Relationship between the HEI and the school

HEIs will provide detailed information for schools in relation to the duration, structure and timing of the school-based element and will support schools in hosting the student teacher.

At a minimum, this support will include guidance and documentation so that the Treoraí is clear about the HEI's expectations of the student teacher. This may include reference to:

- the focus of the particular placement
- the curricular focus
- planning and preparation
- the amount of direct teaching
- reflection on practice
- the evaluative system used by school placement tutors for specific placements
- guidance on observation of student teachers' teaching
- guidance on providing feedback
- guidance on non-teaching activities
- The use of *Taisce* in the particular placement
- Research in school placement

There should be regular professional dialogue between HEI and school staff regarding the school placement. Good practice should be recognised and when difficulties occur, they should be dealt with in a timely manner.

Where a student teacher is experiencing difficulty, this should be addressed in a professional and sensitive manner.

As the relationship between a HEI and a placement school develops, further opportunities for collaboration may present themselves. For example, HEIs may offer continuing professional development for Treoraithe or other teachers and accreditation of same. Similarly, schools may facilitate HEI personnel wishing to update their teaching experience.



As the relationship between a HEI and a placement school develops, further opportunities for collaboration may present themselves.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Template School Policy on Placement
of Student Teachers

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Appendix 2 Working Group Members
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Appendix 1

Template School Policy on Placement of Student Teachers

The school's policy on school placement should inform the understanding of the whole-school community (management, staff, parents and pupils) regarding the school's engagement with the initial teacher education (ITE) programmes – especially the school placement component of those programmes.

Below is a template to assist school management authorities in developing a school placement policy. It is important to note, however, that the contents of this template are not in any sense intended to be prescriptive. It is the responsibility of each school management authority (in consultation with teachers, parents and pupils) to devise a policy appropriate to their school's own particular circumstances, in the context of schools and the teaching profession engaging in the process of teacher education, in partnership with the HEIs.

[School Name] Student Teacher Placement Policy

1 Introduction

The Board of Management of [school name] 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.
- Close collaboration between schools and 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 pupils in a school, student teachers, Treoraithe, the wider school community and HEIs. In particular, pupils 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.
- School placement tutors benefit from partnership experiences with schools and from being in the setting of a school during visits to student teachers.

2 Development of Policy

This policy was developed by the Board of Management following consultations with all members of the school community – school management, teachers and other relevant staff, parents, pupils and the school patron.

3 Commitment to hosting student teachers

[School name] 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 will, inter alia, involve the student teacher observing classes being taught by members of the school's teaching staff. It will also involve 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 Treoraí). 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.

5 Scheduling of student teachers on placement

The principal, or staff members to whom this task is delegated, will allocate student teachers to Treoraithe and classes, having regard for: the stage the student teacher is at in his/her initial teacher education programme: the particular needs of the pupils 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 Treoraí has an awareness.

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 an information pack that will include details of key school policies, in particular the school's Student Code of Behaviour, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Homework and Student Teacher Placement Policies.

7 Supports for the student teacher

The school community is committed to supporting positively and sensitively the student teacher in accordance with the *Guidelines on School Placement* developed by the Teaching Council in consultation with all relevant education partners. Furthermore, the school is committed to allocating the student teacher to (an) appropriate Treoraí/Treoraithe and to the classes essential to them undertaking his/her school placement successfully. The school will also provide the student teacher with the teaching facilities and resources necessary to their work during the placement.

8 Continuing professional development for staff involved in supporting/ facilitating student teacher placement

The school management authority and the school's senior management are committed to promoting and facilitating the participation of school staff in continuing professional development programmes essential to ensuring the successful operation of student teacher placement in the school.

9 Communication of school placement policy to school community

A copy of the school placement policy is made available to school personnel and the parents association and the policy is readily accessible to parents on request. In particular, a copy of the policy shall be published on the school website (where applicable) and a copy is made available to parents/guardians of all pupils enrolling in the school and all new teachers at the point of their employment, either electronically or in hard copy.

10 Policy reviews

This policy will be reviewed by the school management authority periodically.

11 Date of policy adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date]

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 2

Working Group Members

Council Members:

Eileen Salmon	Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)
Moira Leydon	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI)
Eddie Ward	Department of Education and Skills (DES)
Noreen Flynn	Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)
Virginia O'Mahony	Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)
Pat O'Mahony	Education and Training Boards, Ireland (ETBI)
Michael Redmond	Joint Managerial Body (JMB)
Patricia Slevin	Marino Institute of Education (MIE)
Neil Ó Conaill	Mary Immaculate College (MIC)
Breda Corr	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE)
Tim Geraghty	National Association of Principals & Deputy Principals (NAPD)
Billy Redmond	National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT)
Tommy Walshe (replaced by Julie Kilroy)	National Parents Council (Post-Primary) (NPC-PP)
Áine Lynch	National Parents Council (Primary) (NPC-P)
Sonya Coffey	St Angela's College
Bernadette Ní Áingléis	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Bernie Ruane (replaced by Bernie Judge)	Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI)
Judith Harford	University College, Dublin (UCD)
Geraldine Mooney Simmie	University of Limerick (UL)
Brendan O'Dea	Teaching Council (Chairperson of the Working Group)
Carmel Kearns	Teaching Council (Secretary to the Working Group)

Notes

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