

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

Student Teacher Placement Policy

1. Introduction

This policy was devised by the staff and Board of Management (B.O.M.) of St. Joseph's N.S, in September 2016. It was reviewed in December 2018. Changes to education courses in Higher Education Institutes (HEI) resulting in student teachers requiring a teaching placement of 10 weeks, teaching two classes, together with single stream classes in this school, have put extra demand on the school.

The B.O.M. of St. Joseph's N.S. 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 practicing 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, co-operating teachers, the wider school community and HEIs. In particular, learners 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.
- HEI placement tutors benefit from partnership experiences with schools and from being in the actual setting of a school during visits to student teachers.

The BOM require that all Student Teachers are vetted through their HEI's and a copy of this vetting is provided to the school, prior to commencement of placement. Student Teachers not vetted will not be facilitated in the school.

2. Rationale

St. Joseph's National School is a centre of learning. With this in mind the interest and wellbeing of the pupils enrolled in the school will be at the centre of all decisions regarding the facilitation of student teacher placement. This policy formally documents the procedures which have been in place for many years to facilitate student teachers. Documenting these procedures will provide clarity and transparency for all student teachers requesting teaching placement in this school.

3. School

Currently there are eight mainstream classes in the school, two Special Education Teachers (SET) based in the school and two visiting SET/ support teachers.

4. Facilitation/ Applications for teaching placement

The number of student teachers the school can accommodate each year will depend on a number of factors such as: -

- Teachers choice
- Number of substitute teachers working in the school
- Teachers on leave/ going on leave (of any type)
- Other school factors
- Current, valid Vetting of the student through their HEI.
- Number of applicants. Only one student teacher per class per academic year can be facilitated in this school.

Student Teachers will be facilitated for placement on a first come bases.

If a number of requests are made at the same time for the same dates/ classes, priority will be given to past pupils of the school.

Only one student teacher can be facilitated in any class or SEN setting during the course of an academic year.

Substitute teachers may facilitate a student teacher provided they have been probated, have at least three years of teaching experience and will be working in this school for a minimum of 26 weeks.

Student teachers are asked to telephone the school and talk to the principal teacher regarding teaching placement. Student teachers are asked to provide details of the dates of the placement and the class level required. Student teachers are reminded that it may not be possible to facilitate placement in a specific class as school factors (listed above) and availability will be taken into account.

The principal will consult with teachers and get back to the student teacher as soon as possible, within 21 days of request.

Student teachers can apply at any time for placement within 12 calendar months.

Regarding request for teaching placement for the following academic year, the principal will only be in a position to give the facilitating teacher's name in late June.

Should any placement dates or class level requirements change, the school must be notified immediately as there is a possibility that the school would no longer be in a position to facilitate the student teacher.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a facilitating teacher having to take unexpected, short term sick leave, the school may have to cancel teaching placement. This decision will not be taken lightly. The student teacher and respective HEI will be contacted by the principal. The unforeseen circumstance will be outlined, when and where possible.

5. Commitment to hosting student teachers

St. Joseph's N.S. 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.

6. 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 co-operating 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.

7. Scheduling of student teachers on placement

The principal, or staff members to whom this task is delegated, will allocate student teachers to co-operating teachers and classes, having regard for: the stage the student teacher is at in his/her 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 co-operating teacher has an awareness.

8. 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 Safeguarding and Risk Assessment, Health and Safety, Homework and Student Teacher Placement Policy.

9. 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 co-operating teacher(s) and to the classes essential to him/ her undertaking his/her school placement successfully. The school will also provide the student teacher with the teaching facilities and resources necessary to his/her work during the placement.

10. 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.

11. 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 and a copy is made available (electronically via the school website) to parents/guardians of all learners enrolling in the school and all new teachers at the point of their employment.

12. Policy reviews and ratification

This policy will be reviewed by the school management authority periodically. This policy was last ratified by the Board of Management in January 2019 and has immediate effect.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____