

Coláiste Choilm Tullamore



Student Teacher Placement Policy

1. Introduction

School placement is a critical part of initial teacher education (ITE) and is designed to give the student teacher an opportunity to experience teaching and learning in a real environment, to apply educational theory in a variety of teaching and learning situations and school contexts, and to participate in school life in a way that is structured and supported. This policy outlines the procedures to be followed to ensure the process works for everyone's benefit.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Choilm 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 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 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.

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, students and the school patron.

3. Commitment to hosting student teachers

Coláiste Choilm 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 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.

5. Requests for placement

Requests from HEI should be sent to Principal. Further, sanction should be sought from the Principal by the student teacher.

Student Teachers will be offered places strictly in the following order:

- a) Applicants who are past pupils of Coláiste Choilm;
- b) Applicants who have a parent or family member, both teaching and nonteaching who are employed in the school or who have been employed in the school for at least one year;
- c) Applicants of the Roman Catholic faith within the catchment area as defined by the school transport office for the Tullamore area;
- d) Applicants who are living in the catchment area as defined by the school transport office for the Tullamore area;
- e) Other applicants.

Where there are fewer places remaining than applicants in a given category, applicants will be offered places based on a lottery. The lottery will be supervised by at least three of - A member of the Garda Síochána, the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Chairperson of the Board of Management, the Chairperson of the Parents' Council.

The Board of Management will accept no more than one Student Teacher in any subject area except in cases where the Student Teacher is observing or is in the school for a short block of time. Each year the Board of Management will decide in advance the number of Student Teachers for whom the school can provide an appropriate training, having regard to the facilities, personnel, plant and resources. The number of Student Teachers that can be accommodated in 2021/2022 is 5. The Board of Management reserve the right to change this number from year to year. All of the above will be subject to timetabling constraints and class teacher cooperation.

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. The Board of Management of Coláiste Choilm acknowledges the following regarding initial teacher education and the role of school placement in this process.

- Classes should be allocated to student teacher by Principal in consultation with the co-operating teacher.
- Student teachers should not be allocated 3rd or 6th Year classes (excluding non-exam classes).
- The Principal, Deputy Principal and Teacher Induction Mentor will meet with the student teacher(s) prior to the commencement of placement.
- In consultation with the Principal & relevant subject teachers the Teacher Induction Mentor will prepare a timetable for the Student Teacher and give a copy to the Principal, Deputy Principal & relevant teachers.
- The Student Teacher Mentor will organise a formal meeting with the Student teacher prior to commencement of placement.
- The cooperating teacher will organise a formal meeting with the Student teacher prior to commencement of placement.
- The Student Teacher Mentor and subject mentor will familiarise student teacher with VS Ware (see also Appendix A).

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 Code of Behaviour, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Homework and Student Teacher Placement Policies. The student teacher Mentor and the Student teacher will discuss expectations and agree a plan of work which will include tasks/activities to be completed.

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 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.

8. Responsibilities of the Student Teacher

Student Teachers are expected to take a proactive approach to their own learning and to participate constructively in a broad range of placement experiences. They are expected to engage

fully in school life and seek and avail of opportunities to observe and work alongside other teachers. The school community expects that the Student Teacher will engage with it in a respectful and courteous manner having due regard for the values and standards set out in the various school policies.

9. Responsibilities of the Co-operating teacher

- The Co-operating teacher should remain in the room for initial classes until the Co-operating teacher feels confident that the student teacher is accomplished to do so on his/her own.
- The Co-operating teacher must remain on school premises when student teacher is in his/her classes unless otherwise agreed with Principal.
- The Co-operating teacher should introduce the student teacher to the class and outline the plan of work for the class. S/he should ensure that the student teacher is familiar with class rules/procedures/VIS Ware etc.
- The Co-operating teacher should afford the student teacher opportunities to observe his/her teaching and should observe the student teacher's teaching and give feedback to him/her.
- The Co-operating teacher should work collaboratively with the student teacher, the college/university placement tutor, the Student Teacher Mentor and the school Deputy Principal and bring any concerns regarding the student teacher's practice or professional conduct to the attention of the Principal.
- The Co-operating teacher should furnish report to HEIs on request.
- Student teachers should never meet with parents on their own without prior approval of Principal.
- Student teachers should avail of any opportunity to partake in Parent-Teacher Meetings alongside the Subject Teacher.
- Co-operating teacher retains primary responsibility for the progress of the pupils. S/he should be available to meet with parents in relation to a child's progress.

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 to parents/guardians of all learners enrolling in the school and all new teachers at the point of their employment, either electronically or in hard copy.

Review

This policy is reviewed in compliance with the Board of Management's policy for the cyclical review of all school policies as set out in The School Plan.

Ratification of policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management 14th January 2021.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Appendix A

Student Teacher Confidentiality Agreement

Coláiste Choilm

In a school situation, there are many instances in which confidential information is discussed in order to better understand students and how we can help them. As a Student Teacher, you must agree that you will not repeat this outside of the school. This will ensure the protection of our students' interest and their families, thus creating a better environment for all.

The Subject Teacher Mentors and subject mentors will familiarise the student teacher with VS ware and emphasise the utmost importance of confidentiality when it comes to any sensitive information accessed or shared.

A Student Teacher should not discuss a child with any individual outside of the classroom teacher, deputy principal, or principal. The Student Teacher should not carry any written or verbal statements about a child outside of the school. If at any time these terms of confidentiality are violated, termination of your Student Teacher privileges may occur.

As a Student Teacher:

- I realise that I am subject to a code of ethics similar to that which binds the professionals in the field in which I work.
- I will keep confidential matters private.

By signing this agreement, I am stating that I will not divulge information about any student or family to any person outside the school setting.

Signature: _____

Date: _____