



# Oatlands College

## Policy on Placement of Student Teachers

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines for management, teachers and student teachers in relation to teaching practice and work experience placements to maintain the high standards of teaching and learning during all student teacher placements and to provide a quality learning experience for student teachers on placement in the school.

The Board of Management of Oatlands College 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.
- During 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. 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.

## **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/guardians and students.

### **Commitment to hosting student teachers**

Oatlands College 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.

### **Implications for the school hosting student teachers on placement**

Hosting a student teacher on placement will 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.

### **Scheduling of student teachers on placement**

The principal will allocate student teachers to co-operating teachers and classes, having regard for:

- The stage the student teacher is at in their initial teacher education programme.
- The needs of the learners in a particular class.
- The requirement for the student teacher to experience an appropriate range of placement contexts.
- Any special circumstances of which the co-operating teacher has an awareness.

### **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, Anti-bullying and Student Teacher Placement Policies. There is an AP post holder with responsibility for delivering this induction to new student teachers.

### **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 them undertaking their school placement successfully. The school will also provide the student teacher with the teaching facilities and resources necessary to their work during the placement.

### **Implementation Procedures**

#### **Application:**

- A request for a placement will only be considered following a written request from a Higher Education Institute or from an individual to the Principal.
- Individual requests must be accompanied by a C.V.
- No student will be accepted for teaching practice without being interviewed by the Principal, Deputy and/or head of the relevant subject department.
- No student teacher will be accepted in the last term of the school year to minimise disruption.

#### **Timetabling:**

- The timeframe for each individual placement and the protocol involved will be agreed upon prior to the student teacher taking up a placement.
- The Principal will discuss the possibility of having a student teacher in each class with the proposed cooperating teacher.
- Cooperating teachers will be made aware of the impending arrival of the student teacher at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Teachers will not be allocated a student teacher while taking part in the Droichead programme.
- Newly Qualified Teachers will not be allocated a student teacher during their first year.
- The school will endeavour to accommodate student teachers in different subject areas on a rotational basis to ensure that no teacher or group of teachers are inconvenienced disproportionately.
- The student teachers will rotate amongst the staff, whenever feasible, to ensure that no one teacher may be asked to accommodate a student teacher placement year after year.

- Each student teacher will have one dedicated cooperating teacher/mentor whilst on their placement. While a student teacher may work with several cooperating teachers for each of their class groups it can be important for one of them to be designated as a main point of contact. This will be decided in advance of the placement beginning in consultation with the Principal.

### **Placement Guidelines:**

1. Cooperating teachers will meet (in person or remotely) with the student teacher in advance of the commencement of their placement to discuss details of the class, schemes of work, timetables, resources, learner needs of the students in the class group and structure a programme for the year.
2. It is important that student teachers should follow the agreed scheme of work and timetable as discussed with the class teacher.
3. It is recommended that the student teacher observes the cooperating teacher for at least 2 weeks and then engage in team teaching before taking over the full teaching of the class group fully. This is at the discretion of the student teacher and cooperating teacher, for a student on block placement or in the second year of their training this may not be necessary.
4. The cooperating teacher and student teacher on placement will meet at least once per term to discuss how the placement is going.
5. The cooperating teacher should observe the student teacher for 2 weeks after they have fully taken over the class period and at least once per term to provide feedback and guidance.
6. The student teacher will attend and conduct Parent Teacher Meetings where appropriate as this is a valuable learning experience. The cooperating teacher will assist with the preparation for this event.
7. Assessment, correction of exams and completion of reports will be agreed between student teacher and cooperating teacher. All assessment results should be uploaded to the school's academic tracking software and sent to the cooperating teacher. It is recommended that the student teacher should do at least one of the two main exams. The cooperating teacher will provide assistance regarding layout and structure of exams, marking schemes and completion of reports.
8. At the end of each placement, the cooperating teacher is asked to provide feedback to the Principal who will meet with the student teacher to discuss their placement.
9. If a student teacher is due to be absent from school for any planned reason (e.g.: university exams etc.) they must inform their cooperating teacher and the Deputy Principal/Principal in advance of this absence. The cooperating teacher will teach the class during this absence.
10. If a student teacher is sick or has an unplanned absence they should inform the Deputy Principal/Principal as per our Teacher Absences Policy, the Deputy can then inform the cooperating teacher who will teach the class during this absence.

11. Oatlands College encourages its student teachers to gain valuable insight into all areas of school life by:
  - a. Engaging in peer observation. Our student teachers and all staff are actively encouraged to observe classes in all subject areas to share best practice in teaching and learning.
  - b. Engage with our Additional Educational Needs department and class SNAs to deepen their knowledge of learner needs.
  - c. Get involved with extra-curricular activities, sports etc.
12. Oatlands College is a welcoming and inclusive school and considers our student teachers to be an integral part of the school community. All student teachers are invited and encouraged to attend all staff meetings, CPD events, social events, school functions etc. during their time in the school.
13. Student teachers who are on placement for a full academic year will teach their allocated timetable for the duration of the academic year.

### **Professional Conduct**

Oatlands College prides itself on being a vibrant and positive school community and all student teachers are expected to reflect this ethos in all their dealings with staff, students and parents/guardians.

### **Student teachers are expected to:**

- Be professionally presented in terms of attire, appearance and deportment in the classroom.
- Be punctual and remain with the assigned class for their timetabled periods.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all members of the school community.
- Show interest and enthusiasm in the preparation and teaching of lessons.
- Show interest and enthusiasm in all the work done by the students.
- During placement the students may be asked to assist with extra-curricular activities. It is envisaged that the student teacher will benefit from getting a well-rounded experience of school life.
- During placement student teachers may be asked to supervise classes and provide substitutions, cover detentions etc. This extra supervision will be paid in accordance with the Department of Education rates. This supervision is essential to the smooth running of the school and is also a valuable opportunity for the student teacher to gain experience particularly in classroom management. The student teacher should make their availability known to the Deputy Principal at the onset of their placement.
- Familiarise themselves with all our school policies and adhere to same. These policies are on the school website and will be sent to incoming student teachers prior to their placement.
- Be mindful of our policy in relation to photocopying and printing.
- The student teacher's mobile phone should be turned off/silent throughout the school day.
- Student teachers' files and observation notes must avoid reference to students' full names. Students may be referred to by their initials.

- At every stage during the placement, student teachers should be receptive to advice from the cooperating teacher, subject department colleagues and/or Principal on any aspect of their professional development.
- Any concerns the student teacher may have with their classes, pedagogy or any aspect of school life should be reported to and discussed with their cooperating teacher, subject department coordinator, year head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

*Note that in exceptional circumstances Oatlands College reserves the right to contact the Higher Education Institute to discuss the progress and the (dis)continuation of the placement of the student teacher.*

### **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.

### **Communication of school placement policy to school community**

This policy will be sent to all student teachers prior to the commencement of their placement.  
This policy is sent to all new teachers at the beginning of their employment.  
This policy is made available to all staff at the beginning of each school year.  
A copy of the policy shall be published on the school website.

### **Policy reviews**

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board of Management.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024.