



Student Teacher Placement Policy

1. Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Mary's B.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 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is essential to positive and meaningful school placement experiences for student teachers.
- School Placement provides a real context for the student teacher's studies and enhances the capacity of the student to link theory and practice.
- 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 staff and Board of Management following consultations with relevant members of the school community. This policy was formulated having regard to the increasing number of requests from HEIs and from individuals to provide opportunities for student teacher placements in St. Mary's B.N.S.. It is expected that implementation of this Policy will ensure continuity of routine, teaching and learning within the classroom setting, and will also limit disruption to regular school routines. The Policy will provide for an equitable and fair allocation of opportunities for student teacher placements throughout the school and should ensure that excessive demands are not placed on any individual class or teacher. It recognises that every member of staff has a responsibility to contribute to the positive professional development of the student teacher.

3. Aims

- To provide an opportunity for student teachers to work with children on a professional level in a structured environment.
- To enable a controlled exchange of teaching methodologies and skills between students and co-operating teachers.
- To enable children to be exposed to alternative teaching strategies.
- To support student teachers in their professional development.

4. Commitment to hosting student teachers

St. Mary's B.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.

(See: <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Guidelines-for-School-Placement-.pdf>).

5. 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 co-operating teacher who has primary responsibility for the welfare and educational progress of the class. 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 Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme.

6. Implementation Procedures

- In the normal course of events a student teacher will not be accepted during the first two weeks of the school year or during the last 2 weeks of the school year. Student teachers may be refused placement if it is a busy or unsuitable time of the year.
- A request for a placement will only be considered following a written request from a HEI or from an individual to the Student Teacher Placement Co-ordinator. All requests for placement will then be discussed with the school Principal.
- The Principal/Student Teacher Placement Co-ordinator will discuss the possibility of having a student teacher in a given class with the class teacher. A classroom teacher may indicate at the start of the year if he/she is in a position to take a student teacher. Teachers reserve the right to decline participation in work experience schemes if it is deemed unsuitable for his/her class at that particular time.
- All student teachers must be garda vetted prior to the commencement of their placement. It is the student's responsibility to secure garda vetting prior to placement in the school and to provide this evidence to the school prior to commencing their placement.
- Non-probated teachers will not have a student teacher in their class.

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- A maximum of 2 student teacher placements for teaching practice will be facilitated in any one school year.
- Only one student teacher per class per year will be accommodated.
- 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.
- A class will only have a student teacher twice in their primary school career and not in consecutive years i.e. a class can't have a student teacher in 2nd class and then again in 3rd class.
- Class teachers will be made aware of the impending arrival of the student teachers at least 2 weeks in advance.
- The timeframe for each individual placement and the protocol involved will be agreed upon prior to the student teacher taking up a placement.
- All applicants for school placement will be considered on merit alone. A full list of application criteria is outlined in Appendix A. It is also available on the school's website www.ferrybankbns.ie. If all of these criteria are not met, the application will not be considered.
- It is important that student teachers should follow the agreed scheme of work and timetable as discussed with the class teacher. The class teacher may be involved in teaching for a specific part of the day, even when a student teacher is required to teach for the full day.
- During placement the students may be asked to help out with Visual Arts work, P.E., Computers and administrative work. It is envisaged that the student will act as a resource for the teacher, thus making the experience mutually beneficial.
- Placement time gives the student the opportunity to observe teaching and learning in the classroom and to engage with pupils and teacher.
- Student teachers need to be aware that we are a 'Green School' and should be mindful of this when it comes to photocopying and printing.
- Student teachers should be sensitive to, and adhere to, staffroom routines and conventions and to any health & safety requirements and policies of the school. A separate area may be set up for student teachers to have lunch as space may be limited in the staffroom.
- 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 pupils' full names. Pupils may be referred to by their initials.
- The student teacher must consult with the class teacher as regards access to any school resources e.g. Visual Arts materials, P.E. equipment, ICT equipment.
- All supervisors of work experience students who visit our school will be expected to adopt a positive and respectful attitude towards their students, in keeping with the school ethos of providing a positive learning and working environment.
- Any absences must be notified in advance to the school principal/student teacher placement co-ordinator.
- Any breaches of discipline observed among the pupils must be reported to a member of the teaching staff.

- The pupils and staff will be expected to treat students on work experience programmes with respect at all times.

Please note that in exceptional circumstances St. Mary's B.N.S. reserves the right to contact the HEI to discuss the progress and the (dis)continuation of the placement of the student teacher.

7. Scheduling of student teachers on placement

The Principal in collaboration with the Student Teacher Placement Co-ordinator, 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
- 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 information regarding key school policies, in particular the school's Code of Behaviour, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Homework and Student Teacher Placement Policies.

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 do his/her work during the placement.

10. Professional Conduct

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 the entire day.
- 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 children and to praise all children equally.

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- be receptive to advice from the class teacher and/or Principal on any aspect of their professional development. Any breach of this requirement will be seen as a serious matter and the placement may be terminated.
- co-operate with the general rules, procedures and organisational policies of the school.
- be respectful of all members of staff, Board of Management, parents and pupils - their actions and language while in the school must be exemplary and of a professional nature at all times.

St. Mary's B.N.S. prides itself on being a vibrant and positive school and all student teachers are expected to reflect this ethos in all their dealings with staff and pupils.

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

The school's Board of Management seeks to promote and facilitate the participation of school staff in continuing professional development programmes essential to ensuring the successful operation of student teacher placement in the school.

12. Success Criteria

A student teacher placement will be deemed successful if there is:

- positive and constructive feedback from teachers, pupils and parents.
- integration and communication with permanent staff members.
- a perceived contribution to the learning environment of the school.
- quality of learning by pupils in class.
- quality of learning by student teacher.

13. Communication of the Student Teacher Placement Policy to the school community

A copy of the Student Teacher Placement Policy is made available to school personnel and to the Parents' Association. The policy is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of the Policy is also published on the school website (www.ferrybankbnsbns.ie).

14. Timeframe for implementation

This policy will be implemented upon ratification by the Board of Management of St. Mary's B.N.S.

15. Timeframe for Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

16. Responsibility for Review:

Principal and staff

17. Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's B.N.S. on 1st October 2019.

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Signed: _____
Chairperson Board of Management

Date: _____

Appendix A

Application Criteria for Student Teacher Placement

Applications for Student Teacher Placement in St. Mary's B.N.S. will **only** be considered if they include the following:

- Cover letter with date noted
- Curriculum Vitae (max 2 pages) including phone numbers of referees
- Contact details (address, phone number and e-mail address)
- Exact dates of observations/placements where possible
- Class preference
- Focus of observation as outlined by the College

Hard copies of the above must be sent to:

*Mrs. Aoife Grant,
Student Teacher Placement Co-ordinator,
St. Mary's Boys' National School,
Ferrybank,
Waterford.*

Or if submitting by email, send to admin@ferrybankbns.ie