

# Réalt Na Mara National School

Dunmore East, County Waterford



## **Initial Teacher Education Placement Policy**

### **Introduction**

Réalt na Mara National School welcomes applications for Teaching Practice. In recent times there has been an increase in the number of applications for placements, so a policy has been put in place to ensure transparency and fairness for those applying while also catering for the impact that placements have on the pupils in our school.

### **Policy Development**

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 and students.

### **Tenets of the Teaching Council regarding Initial Teacher Induction**

The Board of Management of Réalt na Mara National School acknowledges the guidelines set out by the Teaching Council regarding initial teacher induction and notes importance of the following:

- Positive school placement experiences are critical to ensuring appropriate initial teacher education for all student teachers.
- Close collaboration between schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) 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.

## **Commitment to hosting student teachers**

Réalt na Mara National School is committed to hosting student teachers for school placement and, in this context, adopts, as part of this school placement policy, the 'Guidelines on School Placement' developed by the Teaching Council in consultation with all relevant education partners. These guidelines are available on the Teaching Council website [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie). However, the welfare and educational needs of the pupils will take precedence over all other considerations when the school is considering student teacher placement.

## **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 Initial Teacher Education programme.

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

1. Teachers will be asked to indicate their willingness to have a Student Teacher in their class in May/June when they are making their class choices.
2. When a Student Teacher expresses interest in Initial Teacher Education in Réalt na Mara National School, (by visiting the school or sending a letter) they will be asked to complete an Initial Teacher Education Request Form (see Appendix A). At this stage, teachers will be asked to reconfirm their willingness to facilitate a student in their class. The teachers' decision will be made in the best interests, both socially and educationally, of the pupils in each class. The Board of Management would envisage classes having no more than two Teaching Practice students during their lifetime in Réalt na Mara National School.
3. Once a teacher has confirmed that they are willing to facilitate a student teacher working with their class, the student will be informed 2 weeks from that date.
4. The principal 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 principal will preclude newly qualified teachers, substitute teachers and teachers who are job-sharing in the same class from facilitating Initial Teacher Education requests.

It should be noted that every request for Initial Teacher Education in our school will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

## **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 the Student Teacher Placement Policy.

### **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 for their school placement. The school will also provide the student teacher with the teaching facilities necessary to his/her work during the placement.

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

The Board of Management and the school's In-school Management Team 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**

A copy of the school placement policy is available to all school personnel electronically on Sharepoint. A hard copy has also been shared with the Parents Association. This policy is readily accessible on the school website.

### **Policy review**

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

### **Date of policy adoption**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Signed: Michael White  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Ciana McSweeney  
Principal

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Date of next review: Periodically

## Réalt Na Mara National School

Dunmore East, County Waterford



Appendix A

### Initial Teacher Education Request Form

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Email address	
Name of College	
Dates of Proposed Placement	
Classes/Role Desired	
Are you a past pupil?	
Are you a child/sibling of current staff member?	
Why have you chosen Réalt na Mara NS?	
Garda Vetting attached (please circle)	Yes No