

St. Patrick's N.S.

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Work Experience and Teaching Practice Policy

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by the staff and Board of Management of St. Patrick's NS in order to clarify our school's position on the provision of temporary work experience to those who may be seeking an unpaid work experience.

Rationale

As an increasing number of secondary and third-level students, including adult students engaging in FETAC training have been asking us if they may do work experience in our school, we felt it was important that we would establish:

- Who we would consider eligible for work experience
- How long we would consider the work experience to last for
- How many trainees/students we are prepared to take on in a standard school year.

All students must have completed successful Garda Vetting procedures and Statutory Declaration prior to commencement.

Students under 16 cannot be vetted and therefore cannot be accepted. There is no exception to this.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide student teachers and others who may be interested in working in a school environment with meaningful and hands-on work experience
- To minimise disruption to the teaching and learning process as this is the core activity of our school.

Allocation of Work Experience

(i) Teaching practice

- The school will consider applications for student teachers pursuing a course in a recognised College of Education during a single academic year on a case by case basis.
- Placement requests may not be considered further than 6 months in advance.
- No more than one placement will be considered in each classroom for each school year. This is to minimize disruption to pupils and teachers.
- Students must present a Garda Vetting Certificate and an appropriate introductory letter from the Teaching Practice Department of the college that he/she is attending.
- A Statutory Declaration must be completed and furnished by the work experience candidate.
- Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis however preference will be given to past pupils.
- In order to respect the privacy of all parents and children, parents of current pupils will not be granted placements

(ii) Transition Year Work Experience

- The school will consider applications for placements from secondary school students seeking work experience as part of the Transition Year programme on a case by case basis, with preference given to past pupils.
- Application must be made to the school principal.
- Daily work will be decided and allocated by the principal. It may not be possible for the student to be placed in a classroom for the entire duration of the placement. Other school related tasks and jobs may be allocated.
- Transition Year students must furnish the school with appropriate documentation from the secondary school they attend (letter requesting a placement for the student and evidence of insurance from the student).
- All students must have completed successful Garda Vetting procedures and Statutory Declaration prior to commencement. **Students under 16 cannot be vetted and therefore cannot be accepted. There is no exception to this.**
- Secondary schools have been informed of same and it is their responsibility to inform its students in advance.

(iii) Others e.g. SNA placement

- From time to time, other people may seek observation time or work experience in the school. Their request for observation/experience may be granted by the Principal after consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, if it is felt that such a placement would not be disruptive to the life of the school.
- Agreed dates for the placement will be agreed and must be adhered to. It is not acceptable to request alternative dates at short notice. Any such requests will not be granted.
- In order to respect the privacy of all parents and children, parents of current pupils will not be granted placements

Mobile Phone Use

- Mobile phones may only be used in the staff room. Phones are not permitted in the classrooms or school yard.

Dress Code

- Students on teaching practice must dress appropriately.
- Work Experience students are expected to dress neatly.

Refusal/Termination of work placement

Request for work experience may be refused if:

- In the view of the principal sufficient placements have already been granted for the year.
- The Board do not feel that the work placement will be of benefit to the school.
- Evidence comes to light of child protection concerns regarding the applicant.

Confidentiality

Anyone who is engaged in work experience in our school is required to observe the following strict requirements of confidentiality:

- Confidential or private documents should not be read. No-one doing work experience may remove any documents or copies of same, from the school, unless with the consent of the principal.
- School business and procedures should not be discussed outside of school by people engaged in work experience. **It is particularly important to respect the confidentiality rights of children, parents, teachers and other school staff.**

- If a written report must be compiled as part of work experience, nothing in it should indicate the names of individual pupils or teachers
- All written reports on the school done by people on work experience should in the first instance be shown to the principal.

Breaks

- All student teachers on TP placement will have break times in the staffroom with teachers at normal times.
- Transition Year students will have break time with the SNAs and school secretary, as they are required to do yard duty. When on yard duty at break-times, students should walk around, observe, and help children. Any problems/concerns should be reported to the teacher on duty.
- Break times shall be agreed with the Principal.

Behaviour and Child Protection

- Students must at all times be respectful of all members of staff, Board of Management, parents and pupils. They should also be willing to follow the instruction/guidance of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Secretary or whichever staff member has been designated to supervise their duties.
- Students are expected to co-operate with the general rules, procedures and organisational policies of the school; their actions and language while in the school must be exemplary and of a professional nature at all times.
- Supervisors of work experience students, including teaching practice supervisors, will be expected to adopt a positive and respectful attitude towards their student(s), in keeping with the school ethos of providing a positive learning and working environment.
- The teaching staff are responsible for discipline in the school. People on work experience may not discipline children of the school (although students on teaching practice may call the class or individual children to order while they are teaching). If people on work experience have a concern regarding behaviour, they must report it to a member of the teaching staff.
- If people on work experience have any concerns regarding child protection, they should report it to the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy D.L.P.

Review and ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on February 18th 2020 and will be reviewed in 2023/2024 or sooner if necessary.