

# Merlin Woods

**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*Roll no: 20350P*

*Merlin Woods Primary School*

*Doughiska Road*

*Galway*

*Phone No 091-761676*

## **Policy for Student Placements/Trainee Teachers/ SNAs/TYs & Others on Work Experience In Merlin Woods Primary School**

### **1. Introduction:**

The Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School acknowledges the following with the role of school placement and its process:

- Merlin Woods Primary School is very open to hosting student placements and SNAs looking for experience in a school setting and, in doing so, we provide student teachers and SNAs with the opportunity to observe excellent teaching and procedures/techniques for special needs children in their care.
- Positive school placement experiences are critical to ensuring appropriate initial teacher education for all student placements and SNAs.
- Close collaboration between schools and HEIs is essential to provide positive and meaningful school placement experiences for student placements and SNAs.
- Hosting students on work experience or on placement is enriching for the learners in a school, student teachers, SNAs, co-operating teachers, the wider school community and HEIs. In particular, learners benefit from a greater variety of teaching, learning and cross-curricular experiences through the structured participation of students in the school. Furthermore, the school gains access to a variety of newer approaches to teaching and learning through its engagement with student teachers, SNAs and HEI staff.
- HEI placement tutors benefit from good 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 management of Merlin Woods Primary School. It was formulated having regard to the increasing number of requests from HEIs and from individuals to provide opportunities for student placements in Merlin Woods Primary School. It is expected that the 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 and adult 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 or individual gaining experience in the school.

## **3. Aims of this policy:**

- To support student teachers, SNAs, college placements and second level students on school placement in their professional development.
- To provide an opportunity for student teachers to work with children on a professional level in a structured environment.
- To provide an opportunity for student SNAs to work with special needs children and to learn from the SNA under the child's care in the school.
- 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.

## **4. Commitment to hosting student teachers and other placements**

Merlin Woods Primary School is committed to hosting student teachers/SNAs 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 students on placement**

Hosting a student teacher/SNA on placement will involve the student teacher observing classes being taught by teaching staff/SNAs within the school. It will also involve student teachers teaching classes while being observed and supported by the main classroom 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

syllabus. It is a requirement in our school that the class teacher or SNA is always in the room with the student on placement.

## 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 two weeks of the school year.
- A request for a placement will only be considered following a written request from a HEI or from an individual to the principal. All requests for placement will then be referred to the school's student teacher placement coordinator.
- It is up to the class teacher in the school to decide if he/she will take on a student teacher/SNA and they will then inform the school principal.
- The principal/student teacher placement coordinator will discuss the possibility of having a student teacher in a given class with the class teacher.
- Non-probated teachers will not have a student teacher in their class.
- A maximum of four blocks of teaching practice will be facilitated in any one school year.
- Class teachers will be made aware of the impending arrival of the student teachers at least two weeks in advance.
- All applicants for school placement will be considered on a first come first served basis. If we have too many students requesting placements it will not be possible to take them all on. It also depends on whether a class teacher has requested a student/SNA for their class. A full list of application criteria is outlined in Appendix A.
- 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 are asked to be mindful of our green school in relation to photocopying and printing.
- Student teachers/SNAs should be sensitive to, and adhere to staffroom routines and conventions and to any health & safety requirements and policies of the school.
- Student teachers/SNAs are required to read and fill out the questionnaire on page 13 of the Covid response plan with regard to Covid 19.
- The student teacher's mobile phone should be turned off 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.
- At every stage during the placement, student teachers should be receptive to advice from the class teacher and/or principal on any aspect of their professional development.

***Please note that in exceptional circumstances Merlin Woods Primary School 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 and student SNAs to co-operating teachers and classes, having regard for: the stage the student is at in his/her 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.

## **8. Induction of student teachers on placement**

Student teachers, SNAs or other placement students 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. Professional Conduct**

Student teachers/SNA/placements are expected to:

- Be punctual and neatly dressed. The school day begins at 8:40 and finishes at 2:20. It is advisable to come few minutes earlier to discuss any details about the school day. If you are going to be late, contact the school.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all members of the school community. Please do not discuss in any detail individual children outside of school – refer requests for information to the class teacher.
- Show interest and enthusiasm in the preparation and teaching of lessons.
- Praise all children equally for their work efforts.
- Be Garda Vetted.

Merlin Woods Primary School prides itself on being a vibrant and positive school and all student teachers/SNAs on placement are expected to reflect this ethos in all their dealings with staff and pupils.

## **10. 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 the class.

- Quality of learning by the student teacher/placement student.

#### **11. Ratification & Communication:**

This policy was reviewed in March 2021.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Signed: **Fr Martin Glynn, Chairperson**

Signed: **Paula O'Connor, Principal**

#### **12. Implementation and Review**

The implementation of this policy will commence in September 2021. It will be reviewed in the school year 2024/2025.

### **Appendix A**

#### **Application Criteria for Student Teacher /Placement**

Applications for Student Teacher Placement in Merlin Woods Primary School will be considered if they include the following:

- Cover letter with date noted
- 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