

St. Patrick's National School Work Experience 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 placement.

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's NS acknowledges the importance of providing opportunities to those who wish to experience the day-to-day life of a Primary School.

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.

The purpose of this policy is to make all parties – the school community, the students and the secondary schools and trainee Special Needs Assistants – aware of our respective roles during the periods of their Work Experience.

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 which 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.
- 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 with preference given to past pupils.

(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.
- As directed by our Patron, Bishop Paul Connell, all students over 16 years old, must have completed successful Garda Vetting procedures prior to commencement. There is no exception to this. Therefore we can only permit applicants aged 16 and older to partake in the TY programme in St. Patrick's NS.
- Application must be made to the school principal.
- Transition Year students must furnish the school with appropriate documentation from the secondary school which they attend (letter requesting a placement for the student and evidence of insurance for the student.)
- Secondary schools should be informed of the foregoing and its responsibility to inform its students in advance.
- Candidates will be accepted on a "first come, first served" basis.
- Only one candidate can be facilitated at a time.

(iii) Others

- From time to time, other people who do not fit into these categories 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.
- These placements will only be granted after categories (i) – (ii) have been considered.

Vetting

Under the terms of the school's Child Safety Statement, it is imperative that the candidate's secondary school recognise the following that St. Patrick's NS will;

'adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect'.

Therefore, all prospective Work Experience candidates must present the school with a completed vetting letter prior to the start of their programme here.

[For the Transition Year students, the provision of the vetting forms is a matter for the student and their secondary school].

Any candidate without such a form will not be allowed enter the school until the form has been fully processed and completed.

Each candidate who successfully applies to the school will be directed to the Child Safeguard Statement on the school website and it will be discussed on the first morning.

The students will be notified of the Designated Liaison Officer – Mrs Kate Crossan and the Deputy Designated Liaison Officer – Ms. Fiona Boyle and will be reminded that should any issues arise to immediately make them aware of it without hesitation.

Insurance

For Transition year students, a copy of the student's insurance form must be provided to the school prior to the start of their programme here. Failure to do so may delay the beginning of their programme or lead to full cancellation of their period here.

The provision of the insurance forms is a matter for the student and their secondary school.

Mobile Phone Use

- Mobile phones may not be used in the school building or on the school yard by Work Experience candidates.
- The phone should be turned off during the school day.

Dress Code

- Students on Teaching Practice must dress appropriately.
- Work Experience students: are expected to dress neatly.

Refusal/Termination of work placement Request of 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.

Work placement may be terminated if;

- The supervising teacher(s) or the Principal are not satisfied that the appointee is contributing adequately to the life and work of the school, or is creating friction among staff or pupils. This will be communicated to the student, by the Principal.
- Inappropriate behaviour, especially towards children.
- The Principal/Board becomes concerned about the suitability of the appointee.
- If someone on work experience is dismissed, both the person themselves and their sponsoring organisation (if applicable) will be informed of the reason(s) for the dismissal.
- Principles of natural justice will be followed at all times

Confidentiality

Anyone who is engaged in work experience in our school is required to observe the following 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 (except in neutral terms such as class lists, etc.)

- All written reports about the school, completed by people on work experience, should in the first instance be shown to the Principal.

In-school arrangements

The allocation of students to classrooms is at the discretion of the school and will be altered from day-to-day or week-to-week. Insofar as possible, the student will experience all four grades of the school during their spell in the school. However, students will not be placed in the same room as a sibling, where possible.

Students will be made aware of their daily plan on the morning they arrive. The following is the standard split of the day for the work experience student;

- A) 9.20am – Meeting with Principal
- B) 9.20-10.50am – Classroom experience
- C) 10.50-11.00am – Break in Staff Room
- D) 11.00-11.10am – Yard Break**
- E) 11.10-12.10pm – Classroom experience
- F) 12.10-12.30pm – Lunch in Staff Room
- G) 12.30-1.00pm – Yard Break**
- H) 1.00-3.00pm – Classroom experience

**yard breaks duties will be given by the teacher on yard that day.

The students will inform the secretary/Principal of any issues such as illnesses, reasons for early departure etc. during the course of the day.

Discipline and Child Protection

- 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 DLP.

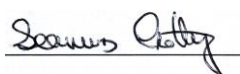
Monitoring the Implementation of the Policy

The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the Principal, staff and the Board of Management

Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated from time to time. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines and feedback from staff, various secondary schools and others.

Signed:



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: Ratified: 03/12/2025