

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Mentoring Policy for Students on School Placement
<b>Description:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students whose grades on school placement fall on or below 49% are supported to meet the professional and academic requirements of their course
<b>Author (Position):</b>	Dean of Education: Policy and Practice
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# Mentoring Policy for Students on School Placement

## 1 Context

- 1.1 School Placement is a mandatory component of the Bachelor in Education (Primary) and Professional Master of Education (Primary) courses. The Teaching Council (2017) requires students to spend 30 weeks on school placement on the Bachelor in Education (Primary) course and 24 weeks on the Professional Master in Education (Primary) course.
- 1.2 Students are assessed in the areas of Planning & Preparation and Teaching & Learning.
- 1.3 It is compulsory for students whose school placement marks for the previous year fall on or below 49% in Planning & Preparation and/or Teaching & Learning to engage with the Mentoring Programme.

## 2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students whose grades on school placement fall on or below 49% are supported to meet the professional and academic requirements of their course.

## 3 Benefits

- 3.1 To support identified students in a range of basic teaching skills which would enable students to deliver more effective teaching.
- 3.2 To provide the student with an opportunity, through the mentoring support system, to reflect on the basic teaching skills.
- 3.3 To provide an opportunity for the practice of these basic skills and to provide feedback through discussion with mentor.
- 3.4 To encourage the student to reflect on the teaching/learning process as a complex activity.
- 3.5 To provide support by elaboration, explanation and ‘demonstration’ of these basic skills

## 4 Scope

School Placement is a mandatory component of initial teacher education courses.

Mentoring is available to all students who seek support; however, it is obligatory that students who experience difficulty and who attain a mark of 49% or lower engage with structured mentoring support provided by MIE.

## 5 Principles

5.1 There is no such thing as the ideal teaching personality.

5.2 Teaching has its repertoire of skills

5.3 It is possible to isolate, describe and demonstrate some of these skills.

5.4 It is possible through study, practice and evaluation to acquire, improve and refine some of these skills

## 6 Definitions

6.1 A glossary of definitions relating to school placement is provided by The [Teaching Council](#) (2013, pp. 6-7).

### 6.2 Teaching Skills Include:

6.2.1 An acknowledgement that knowledge is a fundamental component of teacher education and that practice in school is underpinned by a knowledge and understanding of the primary school curriculum content and learning principles; that the student can demonstrate appropriate pedagogical, subject and linguistic (English and Irish) knowledge

6.2.2 Observation Skills e.g. a capacity to observe and reflect 'in-task' on: the children's learning styles and rates of learning; the class teacher's teaching and learning approaches and classroom management approaches; the complexities of classroom management and the impact of decision making at critical junctures; and to enable them to identify the appropriate teaching and learning processes for various age groups.

- 6.2.3 Practice Skills e.g. use of appropriate language register, basics of effective teaching strategies, etc.
- 6.2.4 Evaluation Skills e.g. how to be more analytical, were the approaches taken and content delivered age appropriate? Were instructions clear and relevant? Were children engaged and active participants?
- 6.2.5 Refining Skills e.g. be able to ‘name’ specific skills and discuss incremental steps towards refinement
- 6.2.6 Self-efficacy on the part of the student teacher e.g. maximising the student’s participation in both the Mentoring Programme and school placement.

**6.3 Specific Skills Addressed Include:**

- 6.3.1 Non-Verbal and Extra-Verbal Communication:
  - i. Teacher Liveliness;
  - ii. Teacher Movement;
  - iii. Eye Contact;
  - iv. Teacher Voice;
  - v. Stimulus Variation;
  - vi. Teacher Silence.
- 6.3.2 Introduction and Closure
  - i. Be able to describe in adequate detail the skills of introduction and conclusion;
  - ii. Evaluate and provide feedback.
- 6.3.3 Explanations and Explaining
  - i. To discuss various aspects of explanations and explaining;
  - ii. To describe key aspects of ‘good’ explanations;
  - iii. To focus on an explanation of a concept/topic of student’s choice, present, discuss and evaluate.

**6.4 Questions and Questioning:**

- 6.4.1 Teachers and Questioning
- 6.4.2 Open/Closed Questions and Responses to Open/Closed Questions
- 6.4.3 Questioning Techniques

- 6.4.4 Questioning and Eye Contact
- 6.4.5 Distribution of Questions
- 6.4.6 Questioning: Vocabulary, Clarity and Fluency
- 6.4.7 Questioning and Timing

## 6.5 Classroom Climate, the Effective Class Lesson

- 6.5.1 To discuss various factors which contribute to an effective class lesson
- 6.5.2 To describe various aspects of the appropriate use of positive and negative reinforcement
- 6.5.3 To discuss the need for variation in the pace of delivery of a lesson
- 6.5.4 To articulate role of humour in a class context
- 6.5.5 To discuss the responsibilities of the teacher in the context of mixed ability teaching
- 6.5.6 To prepare and execute a lesson on a topic of student's choice
- 6.5.7 To explore classroom management issues

## 6.6 Clarifying Roles: Placement Tutor<sup>1</sup> & Mentor<sup>2</sup>

- 6.6.1 Placement tutors visit, provide formative feedback, and assess the student. Sole responsibility for assessment and grading resides exclusively with the placement tutor(s).
- 6.6.2 The two roles are separate and different.
- 6.6.3 The mentor plays no role in assessing the student's preparation or performance on the practice.
- 6.6.4 Mentors can access a student's school placement file to gain information on areas of difficulty being experienced by the student to help focus their forthcoming work.
- 6.6.5 The mentor and student do not comment upon or discuss the school placement assessment form.

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<sup>1</sup>[Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

<sup>2</sup>[Mentoring Policy for Students on School Placement](#)

6.6.6 The mentor liaises and coordinates the schedule of visits with the Placement tutor.

## 7 Policy

7.1 The School Placement Office will issue letters electronically to all identified students in advance of the placement period via the students' MIE email accounts.

7.2 Students will be invited to meet with members of the School Placement team in advance of school placement. It is compulsory that students selected for the mentoring programme meet on a one-to-one basis with their designated mentor in advance of school placement. Mentors are required to maintain confidentiality in line with [Data Protection Legislation, 2018](#).

7.3 Students bring a completed Initial Self-Assessment Profile form to this meeting to enable the mentor and student to agree a small number of areas of particular concern which will be the focus of mentoring visits.

7.4 . The School Placement Office will contact the school principal prior to preparation week to explain that certain students may receive two supportive, non-assessed visits in addition to their two assessed visits and to request that confidentiality be maintained in line with [Data Protection Legislation, 2018](#).

The purpose of the additional visits is to ensure that students are supported to meet the professional and academic requirements of their course.

7.5 The mentor will spend a maximum of two hours on a mentoring visit. This will be divided between observation and feedback at the mentor's discretion, based on the individual needs of each student.

7.6 The mentor will complete the mentoring duplicate form at the end of each visit and the student will get a copy of this form.

7.7 At the end of the second visit, the mentor will give the student the blank Tuairisc Chomhairleora Form<sup>3</sup>. This blank form is also accessible to students via their MIE

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<sup>3</sup> The Tuairisc Chomhairleora Form is accessible to registered users of MIE's Moodle platform.

Moodle accounts. The student will complete their section of the form before the final meeting with the mentor.

7.8 During the first week after school placement the mentor and student will have a brief compulsory review meeting. The date for this meeting will be decided at the end of the second mentored visit. At this meeting the other sections of the Tuairisc Chomhairleora Form<sup>4</sup> will be completed in consultation with the student.

7.9 Following the mentoring process students are invited to complete a short questionnaire designed to gather data which will improve the programme for future years.

## **8 Responsibility**

The overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Dean of Education: Policy and Practice.

## **9 Related Documents**

9.1 The Teaching Council [Guidelines on School Placement](#) (2013)

9.2 The Teaching Council [Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers](#) (2017)

9.3 [Consent to Disclose and Share Disability Information](#)

9.3 [Tutor System Policy](#)

9.4 [Tutor System Procedure](#)

9.5 [Mentoring Policy for Students on School Placement](#)

9.6 Tuairisc Chomhairleora Form<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Tuairisc Chomhairleora Form is accessible to registered users of MIE's Moodle platform.