

Student Teacher Placement and Trainee SNA Placement Policy



Introduction and Rationale

Scoil Pól recognises the importance of supporting initial teacher education and Special Needs Assistant training. School placement is a critical component of professional education, providing opportunities to experience teaching and learning in a real environment, apply educational theory in practice, and participate in school life in a structured and supported manner.

This policy outlines procedures to ensure placements benefit student teachers, trainee SNAs, students, staff and the wider school community.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Student teachers undertaking Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes
- Trainee Special Needs Assistants undertaking QQI Level 5/6 qualifications or other recognised SNA training programmes

PART A: STUDENT TEACHER PLACEMENT

Role and Expectations of Student Teachers

Student teachers are expected to:

- Take a proactive approach to their own learning
- Participate constructively in a broad range of placement experiences
- Engage fully in school life and observe a variety of teaching approaches
- Work alongside and learn from experienced teachers
- Engage respectfully and courteously with the school community
- Adhere to all school policies, values and standards
- Always maintain professional conduct
- Respect student confidentiality
- Never contact or meet with parents/guardians without discussing and agreeing with SMT/cooperating teacher
- Take instruction from the cooperating teacher, member of SMT, coordinator of teacher induction/PME placement

Alumni Restriction

- Former students may not undertake student teacher placement at Scoil Pól until a minimum of **three years** have elapsed since their graduation from the school.
- This restriction ensures appropriate professional boundaries and allows for maturity in the student-teacher relationship.
- Principal may consider exceptions in exceptional circumstances, subject to Board of Management approval

Placement Application and Approval Process

Initial Request:

- Third-level institutions submit formal placement requests to the principal
- Individual student teachers must seek sanction from the principal
- Principal consults with the Deputy Principal and coordinator of teacher induction/PME placement regarding feasibility

Class Allocation:

- Deputy Principal allocates classes in consultation with cooperating teachers
- Student teachers are not allocated to 3rd or 6th year examination classes (excluding non-examination subjects). However, they may support team-teaching duties.
- Allocation considers subject expertise, timetable suitability and learning needs

Pre-Placement Procedures

Orientation Meetings:

- Principal/ Deputy Principal and the Coordinator of teacher induction/PME placement meet with student teacher(s) prior to placement commencement
- Cooperating teacher(s) organise formal meetings with student teacher before first class
- Principal briefs student teacher re: *Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 and Bí Cineálta*, *Staff AUP*, *Code of Professional conduct and Confidentiality*
- Deputy Principal familiarises student teacher with school management system VSware
- The IT coordinator advises re: logins/passwords for School network, MSTeams, etc.

Access and Resources:

- Student teacher given access to school Learning Platform (Microsoft 365) for internal communication only

Coordinator of Teacher Induction/PME Placement provides:

- Timetable
- School map
- Staff Induction Book/Operational Procedures/ Dress code, etc.
- Class teacher names and room numbers
- Child Protection Guidelines and Policy
- Relevant school policies (such as but not limited to Code of Behaviour, Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour, AUP, Assessment, Data Protection)
- School procedures and protocols

During Placement: Cooperating Teacher Responsibilities

The cooperating teacher must:

- Introduce student teacher to classes and outline work plans
- Ensure student teacher is familiar with class rules, procedures and VSware
- Remain in classroom for initial classes
- Remain on school premises when student teacher teaches their classes (unless otherwise agreed with Principal)
- Provide opportunities for student teacher to observe their teaching
- Observe student teacher's teaching and provide constructive feedback
- Work collaboratively with student teacher, Coordinator of Teacher Induction/PME Placement and Principal
- Report concerns regarding practice or professional conduct to Principal immediately
- Furnish reports to third-level institutions on request
- Retain primary responsibility for student progress
- Remain available to meet parents/guardians regarding student progress

Student Teacher Supervision and Support

- The Scoil Pól Coordinator of Teacher Induction and PME Placement monitors placement progress and is responsible for liaising with and maintaining communication with the PME student's third-level supervisor
- Regular check-ins scheduled between student teacher and cooperating teacher
- Senior Management available for consultation
- Concerns regarding student welfare, safeguarding or professional conduct addressed immediately through Principal

Voluntary Contributions

Student teachers may be invited to:

- Assist with supervision duties (Before-school, break, lunch, after-school)
- Support extracurricular activities or school events
- Undertake voluntary work aligned with school ethos and community engagement
- Provide substitute supervision when timetabled classes are unavailable

Conditions:

- Such duties are voluntary and supplementary to core placement requirements
- Must not compromise learning objectives or placement quality
- Supervising staff remain responsible for student welfare
- Training institution/provider must approve if duties fall outside placement hours

PART B: TRAINEE SNA PLACEMENT

Role and Expectations of Trainee SNAs

Trainee SNAs are expected to:

- Work under direct supervision of qualified SNAs and Senior Management
- Maintain student dignity, privacy and confidentiality
- Engage respectfully with students, staff and school community
- Follow all care plans, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and risk assessments
- Adhere to school policies including but not limited to Child Safeguarding Statement, Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour, Staff AUP and Code of Behaviour
- Always maintain professional boundaries
- Never contact or meet with parents/guardians independently
- Report concerns to a member of SMT/ SENCO immediately

Trainee SNA Application and Approval Process

Initial Request:

- Training providers submit formal requests to Principal including:
- Trainee details and Garda vetting status
- Programme details and placement requirements
- Insurance confirmation
- Principal consults with SEN Coordinator and Senior Management
- Approval confirmed in writing

Pre-Placement Procedures for Trainee SNAs

Vetting and Compliance:

- Current Garda vetting confirmation required before commencement
- Training provider confirms appropriate insurance cover

Orientation:

- Principal/ Deputy Principal, SENCO meets trainee prior to placement
- Supervising SNA(s) identified and briefed

Trainee provided with:

- Child Protection Guidelines and Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- Health and Safety procedures
- Intimate care procedures (where applicable)

- Confidentiality requirements
- Overview of students' needs (appropriate to placement)
- Staff Induction Book/ Operational Procedures/ Dress code, etc.

During Placement: Supervising SNA Responsibilities

The supervising SNA must:

- Introduce trainee to students and staff
- Provide clear guidance on daily routines and procedures
- Model best practice in supporting students with additional needs
- Supervise trainee directly, particularly in personal care situations
- Ensure trainee understands and follows care plans and IEPs
- Provide regular feedback on performance
- Report concerns regarding practice or conduct to SENCO/Principal immediately
- Complete reports for training providers on request

Voluntary Contributions

Trainee SNA's may be invited to:

- Assist with supervision duties (break, lunch, after-school)
- Support extracurricular activities or school events
- Undertake voluntary work aligned with school ethos and community engagement
- Provide substitute supervision when timetabled classes are unavailable
- Undertake any other tasks assigned by SMT/ SENCO

Conditions:

- Such duties are voluntary and supplementary to core placement requirements
- Must not compromise learning objectives or placement quality
- Supervising staff remain responsible for student welfare

Student and Parent Considerations

Parental Notification:

- Parents/guardians informed when student teacher or trainee SNA placed in their child's class

Student Safeguarding:

- Student teachers and trainee SNAs never left unsupervised with students in one-to-one situations
- All child protection procedures apply fully
- Concerns reported immediately through Designated Liaison Person

Professional Conduct and Confidentiality

All placement students must:

- Sign confidentiality agreement before commencement
- Not photograph, video or audio record students
- Not share student information on social media or publicly
- Adhere to Data Protection requirements
- Use school email/platforms only for school communication
- Not accept friend requests or follow students on social media

Termination of Placement

Placements may be terminated immediately if:

- Child protection concerns arise
- Professional conduct breached
- School policies violated
- Student welfare compromised
- Training provider or Principal determines placement unsuitable

Insurance and Liability

- Placement students always work under supervision

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by Principal, Coordinator of Teaching and SEN Coordinator in consultation with Board of Management.

Approved by Board of Management on: **23rd June 2026**

Signed: 

Chairperson of BOM

Signed: 

Principal

Date: 23/06/2026

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