

OUR LADY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL



Continuous Professional Development Policy for Teaching Staff

Title: Continuous Professional Development Policy

Scope: This policy is applicable to all DES members of staff within Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney.

School Mission Statement

"Our Lady's is a holistic centre of development and learning where each person is special and treasured as such. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, co-operation and challenge. Christian community is our heritage and goal. The Good News of the Gospel is our story."

School Details

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST. The school is Co-Educational and currently has approximately 750 students and 60 teachers as well as range of ancillary and support staff. The school has a Board of Management comprised of Trustees, teachers and parents. The day to day running of the school is delegated to the Principal by the Board of Management. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and parental choice in relation to enrolment. In supporting these principles it also recognizes the rights of the Patron, the trustee body CEIST, the Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy and the funding and resources available.

Relationship:

The Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School is committed to encouraging and supporting members of the staff to engage in continuous professional development which will assist them in their teaching and broader contributions to the life of the school. This commitment emanates from the Teaching Council Guidelines which outline the importance of continuous professional development and lifelong learning. It also stems from the vision put forward in the CEIST Charter which encourages that schools do not exist primarily for the service of the economy but for the service of the human person who is called to live in solidarity with other persons in search of the common good. Similarly this vision extends towards empowering and enabling young people reach their potential while assisting teachers to inspire their students to meet the challenges that await them. The Board is also aware of its responsibilities outlined in Section 9 of the Education Act (1998), "to use its available resources to ensure that the needs of personnel involved in management functions and staff development needs generally in the school are identified and provided for."

Rationale:

1. Teaching Council; Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education.
2. Education Act 1998, Section 9.
3. Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, June 2012.
4. Teaching Council Act, 2001, Section 7 (2)(b).

Goals: The following are the key goals of this policy:

- To foster a culture of learning, reflection and professional development among the staff.
- To provide professional development opportunities for all staff.
- To support and encourage staff to avail of professional development opportunities.
- To foster an atmosphere of sharing, collaboration and collegiality among the staff.
- To encourage an openness and willingness to engage in professional development.

- To have in place an accessible and transparent Board of Management financial support structure for teachers wishing to undertake professional development.
- To have in place comprehensive Continuous Professional Development opportunities which support the highest quality of teaching and learning for the benefit of all students.

Provision for Staff Continuous Professional Development:

Department of Education and Skills

The Department of Education and Skills through the Professional Development Service for Teachers provides continuous professional development for second level teachers in a number of ways.

Where subject or programme specifications are changing the PDST provide comprehensive DES funded In-service. Cover is provided by the DES and staff are released to attend by the Principal who ensures minimum disruption to Learning & Teaching. Teachers are required to furnish the Principal with a Certificate of Attendance following these sessions. Similar arrangements apply for attendance at Programme In-service for updating or inducting teachers new to the programme.

In certain instances the PDST, in consultation with the Principal, will visit the school and provide in school In-service.

The PDST also provide CPD opportunities for teachers in the evenings and at weekends. Teachers are encouraged to avail of these opportunities.

School.

The Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School values all aspects of CPD for the staff of the school and supports the Principal in providing opportunities wherever possible.

The teaching staff of Our Lady's has a vast wealth of expertise, experience and knowledge. School Management encourages and supports the harnessing of these talents in a number of ways:

- A comprehensive induction programme for teachers joining the staff of Our Lady's.
- Provision of workshops on current and relevant topics facilitated by staff member(s).
- Presentations by staff member(s) at Staff Meetings and Faculty Meetings.
- Sharing of information through the various platforms available within the school.

When relevant and appropriate School Management will engage the services and expertise of external providers for Whole Staff or more specific CPD.

Curriculum Planning is an integral part of CPD in Our Lady's and is facilitated by School Management on an ongoing basis. These meetings facilitate discussion, reflection and transmission of best practice in relation to teaching and learning.

Teachers are encouraged to join their relevant subject associations and to participate in activities organised by them.

Peer observation is encouraged and supported by school management. A culture of peer observation has been nurtured in the school. Teachers are provided with cover, if necessary, to observe a colleague's class. Peer observation has been established on a cross-curricular basis.

Our Lady's is an active and leading member of the County Monaghan Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century (TL21) initiative sponsored by NUIM. This has facilitated a number of staff in engaging in active research. It has also been a catalyst in developing a culture of reflective practice among staff.

Other

From time to time Staff Professional Development may be provided by other bodies (Microsoft, CEIST, JMB, ASTI). The Principal will make every effort to accommodate and facilitate these requests while ensuring minimum disruption to Learning & Teaching.

Board of Management's financial support for Staff Professional Development:

Eligibility to Apply:

- A member of staff must have completed at least one year's full time employment in the School.
- The applicant will have received confirmation of an offer of a place on the course in advance of applying for financial support.
- Where courses extend to more than one academic year the applicant must reapply for funding for each year.
- The applicant must have investigated other sources of funding e.g. Teacher Fee Refund Scheme – See Circular 81/04.

Policy Administration:

- All applications for support must be made to the Board of Management on the attached application form.
- The board will decide and publish on an annual basis, as part of the budgetary process, the total fund available for Staff Professional Development.
- The board will decide and publish, annually, a closing date for receipt of applications for Staff Professional Development.
- A decision on each application will be conveyed to the applicant within a week of the next Board of Management meeting.

- Applications will be forwarded 50% of the approved grant on registration and the remaining 50 % on the successful completion of the phase of the course in a given academic year.
- Applicants will be expected to give a clear indication of the steps they have taken to apply for support from other sources e.g. Department of Education and Science Teacher Fee Refund Scheme (See Circular 81/04).
- Successful applicants will receive up to a maximum of 50% of the course fee or €1000, whichever is the lower. The exact amount will depend on the number of applicants.

Criteria for Decisions by the Board on the Applications:

Where the number and amounts requested exceeds the available funds, priority will be given as follows:

- i. Applicants who haven't received funding within the previous three years.
- ii. Applicants who intend to pursue courses that have direct relevance to subjects being taught by the applicant.
- iii. Applicants who intend to pursue courses that have direct relevance to a pastoral, including spiritual role, which the applicant is undertaking in the school.
- iv. Applicants who intend to pursue courses that have direct relevance to administrative and/or extra-curricular involvement of the staff member in the school.
- v. On completion of the course, applicants must serve out a minimum of two years in the school. Beneficiaries who fail to meet this requirement must reimburse the school as follows:
 - Departure during/after year of receipt - 100%
 - Departure after 1 year following year of receipt - 66⅔%
 - Departure after 2 years following year of receipt - 33⅓%

Roles and Responsibilities:

- The Board of Management will ensure that this policy and application form is made available to the staff. The Principal will inform staff each school year of the availability of funding from the Board of Management for Continuous Professional Development and how staff can apply for the funding and the Board's policy in relation to the funding.
- The Board will agree a total amount available for Staff Professional Development for the following school year as part of the annual budget process.
- The Board will at its first meeting each school year agree a closing date for applications.
- It will be the responsibility of staff members to ensure that application forms are fully completed and submitted to the Board in advance of the closing date.
- Successful applicants are expected to share knowledge, skills and expertise gained on programmes supported by the school with their colleagues.

Success Criteria:

- The policy will be considered a success when there is an awareness and interest among members of the staff in undertaking professional development courses.
- The Board will be in a position to allocate the total funding budgeted for Staff Professional Development on an annual basis.

- The growth in the learning and development culture is recognised and encouraged within the school. Active engagement and practical use of the learning will be invited and this positive impact on the school will be documented and promoted.
- The success of this policy may also be considered in the context of:
 - Student attainment
 - Improved teaching and learning
 - Increased pupil enthusiasm and engagement
 - Increased evidence of reflective practice
 - New ideas and practice embedded in subject plans.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Management

Ratified and adopted by Board of Management on:

Signed:

Chairperson:

Application Form for Professional Development Support

School year: _____

Name: _____

Subjects and Levels Taught:

Roles/Responsibilities in the School:

Number of Years Employed in the School: _____

Course Title: _____

Title of Course Provider: _____

Brief Details of the Course:

Award, if any, available on Completion of Course: _____

Duration of Course: _____

Dates of the Course: _____

Details of Course Fee: _____

Benefit to Staff Member:

Benefit to School:

Other Sources of Funding Pursued e.g. Teacher Fee Refund Scheme (Circular 81/04?)

Details, including dates, of Any Previous Financial Support Awarded to you by the Board for Professional Development:

I agree to share knowledge gained with my colleagues as requested by school management.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Principal's signature: _____

Applications Forms are to be addressed to: ***The Secretary, Board of Management, Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney.***