

Friends' School Lisburn



Staff Development Policy

1. Rationale

Staff development is defined as professional learning which aims to increase the effectiveness of all staff (teaching and non-teaching) as individuals and as team members. All members of staff at Friends' School are expected to engage in professional learning and to continue to develop their practice throughout their careers.

Staff development is in keeping with the school's mission statement and is aligned with the priorities of the School Development Plan. For teaching staff, it is set in the context of Performance Review and Staff Development Policy (PRSD). It enables staff to contribute to the school's vision and goals and to fulfil its guiding principles and should be of mutual benefit for everyone in the school community.

2. Aims and objectives

Staff development will:

- contribute to improving and developing the overall effectiveness of the school, raising pupil achievement and meeting the needs of pupils, parents and the wider community;
- engender a sense of job satisfaction, personal achievement, individual and team effort;
- improve and develop learning and teaching, pastoral care leadership and other work-related skills in the context of a changing educational landscape;
- enhance cooperation between staff;
- ensure that all staff are valued and recognised as the school's most important asset.

3. Guidelines for teaching staff

All staff development is planned in the context of the school's aims and values.

Financial and other resources for staff development are allocated in accordance with school priorities for professional learning and continuing professional development. Financial assistance for individual teachers studying for qualifications such as Masters degrees is determined according to the guidelines attached to this policy.

Staff are supported in determining their own development needs. School will assist in the meeting of those needs, with priority given to requests which target improvement in teaching and learning.

Team leaders (Heads of Department and Pastoral Leaders) have a responsibility to secure appropriate development for their team members. They are also expected to keep a record of all staff development within their department.

Staff development is provided through a wide range of activities including a staff library, online resources and attendance at internal and external training and courses. Working groups will also provide opportunities for colleagues to work together on a specific project and share what has been learned with others.

Staff are encouraged to share expertise in order to develop others and also to enhance their own skills. Staff who attend courses are expected that the knowledge and skills gained would be passed on to appropriate colleagues.

All staff development activity is monitored and evaluated to assess its contribution to school improvement and raising pupil achievement. To facilitate this, all staff should complete a brief written report, a copy of which should be given to the team leader and to the Vice-Principal in charge of staff development. Records of staff training will be held on SIMS.

Appendix 1: Policy for Induction and Early Professional Development

Context

The aim of an integrated approach to teacher education is to encourage beginning professionals to develop their critical, reflective practice in order to improve their teaching and the quality of pupils' learning. The partnership approach to teacher education builds on good practice by giving increased structure and coherence and by giving schools responsibility for assessing the Beginning Teachers' progress and the competences they acquire. (Ref. 1.1 Teacher Education Partnership handbook.)

Principles

- 1 The first year of teaching is not only demanding but also of considerable significance in the professional development of the new teacher. It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team and Heads of Department at Friends' School to plan and facilitate the Induction of Beginning Teachers.
- 2 The Induction and Early Professional Development (EPD) stages of Teacher Education are a continuum of ongoing professional development for a Beginning Teacher. Friends' School is committed to this process.
- 3 Beginning Teachers will receive the best possible in-school support throughout their Induction and/or Early Professional Development Years, in keeping with our commitment to the professional development of all members of staff, as prioritised in the School Development Plan. Their progress will be overseen by the Learning Coordinator/ Teacher Tutor, who will provide guidance and support.

Purposes

- 1 The Beginning Teacher will develop increased confidence and will progress from learning how to teach to thinking about teaching and learning.
- 2 The promotion of continuing professional development of all Beginning Teachers through critical, reflective practice underpins Staff Development and supports the School Development Plan.
- 3 The continuation of an integrated approach to teacher education promotes lifelong learning and career development.

Practices

Beginning Teachers will be given access to an Induction Programme which will commence upon appointment and continue until the successful completion of EPD.

This will include:

- a) Regular meetings with the Teacher Tutor to discuss key issues such as school policies, classroom management, differentiation, assessment, recording and reporting and effective and appropriate communication with pupils, students, colleagues and parents;
- b) Opportunities to reflect critically on her/his teaching and on the quality of pupils' learning;
- c) Opportunities to identify her/his professional development needs in the school and ensuring that these are addressed effectively;
- d) Opportunities to observe good classroom practice from experienced colleagues;
- e) Support and guidance from Principal, Teacher Tutor, HoD and the Year Teacher;
- f) Assistance in selecting an appropriate focus for both Action Plans for Induction, and both PDAs for EPD, drawing together all sources of evidence and completing reflective statements;
- g) Keeping the Board of Governors informed of the Induction and EPD arrangements in place for Beginning Teachers in the school;
- h) Supporting attendance at programmes for Beginning Teachers, Teacher Tutors and other key staff;
- i) Providing support for key staff involved in the development of the Beginning Teacher;
- j) Countersigning the interim review and summative reports and, if appropriate, recommending successful completion of Induction to the Board of Governors;
- k) Providing support and quality assurance of the successful completion of the EPD programme;
- l) Marking within the school successful completion of the Induction and EPD stages by Beginning Teachers.

If a teacher who is undertaking the Beginning Teachers or EPD programmes has concerns about the induction and support programme, these should be raised within the school in the first instance. Where the school does not resolve them, the ECT should raise concerns with the EA Officer responsible.

If a teacher encounters difficulties meeting the teaching competences, the following procedures will be put into place to support the teacher and allow weaknesses to be addressed:

- a) The nature of the problem will be recorded;
- b) Agreed, attainable targets for action will be agreed, with specific and practical steps outlined for securing an improvement;
- c) Opportunities will be offered to observe experienced colleagues modelling aspects of good practice;
- d) Early warning of the risk of failure will be given and the school's concerns communicated to the EA.

Appendix 2: Policy for Student Teachers

The support given to student teachers is an essential element of the partnership between School and the HEIs.

School will aim to provide a programme which includes:

- a. Arrangements to introduce the student teacher to the broad life and work of the school;
- b. The support of the Teacher Tutor to assist, advise and encourage the student teacher;
- c. A wide range of experiences (not confined solely to the classroom) during the periods of school-based work;
- d. Opportunities for the student teacher to observe a variety of teachers and a range of teaching styles;
- e. Opportunities for the student teacher to teach a range of classes appropriate to his/her phase and specialist area;
- f. Opportunities for the student teacher to develop and extend his/her achievement in the competences and qualities identified between school and HEI as relevant to the period of the school-based work;
- g. Access for the student teacher to normal school resources to support teaching and learning (e.g. books, audio-visual materials, reprographic facilities, education technology).

Heads of Department and class teachers will aim to:

- a. Support the student teacher in developing subject application, classroom teaching skills and an understanding of how pupils learn;
- b. Plan/teach lessons jointly with the student teacher;
- c. Observe lessons and other aspects of the student teacher's work, and give regular feedback designed to help the student identify strengths and development needs, and share these observations with HEI tutors;
- d. Liaise with the Teacher Tutor and the HEI tutor about the student teacher's progress;
- e. Use a lesson observation report form as a basis for discussion with the student teacher and the HEI tutor;
- f. Complete interim and end of placement reports as required by HEIs.

Appendix 3 : Criteria for the award of financial support for members of staff voluntarily undertaking additional relevant qualifications

Friends' School is committed to the principle of lifelong learning and therefore, within certain specified conditions, will look favourably on members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) who request financial support to assist them to undertake relevant courses.

Such requests, made on an annual basis, will be considered by the Principal and a recommendation brought to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Board of Governors and hence to the full Board. Decisions as to whether or not to offer financial support will be made in accordance with the following conditions:

- i. That the Principal is satisfied that the course, or relevant sections of the course, provide a benefit to the school and contribute towards the development of specific school responsibilities;
- ii. That the award of financial support will be subject to a financial limit as determined by the Board of Governors and revised annually;
- iii. That, when more requests are made than funds available within the total financial limit, awards are made according to the overall relevance of the qualification to the needs of the post of the applicant and the likely educational benefits to the school;
- iv. In the case of two or more requests being ranked equally according to criterion iii then the available funds will be distributed equally to the applicants;
- v. That individuals applying for such financial support and who are granted it for one qualification will not be entitled to further support in respect of any further qualification;
- vi. That the level of award granted by Friends' School should not exceed 50% of the course fees. The 50% maximum should be reserved for individuals applying to do research degrees in which the research topic is directly linked to an educational issue of immediate relevance and significant potential benefit to the school. Largely taught Masters courses will normally attract a 25% contribution from the School and other approved qualifications treated accordingly;
- vii. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the Principal in writing before 30 September in any school year.

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