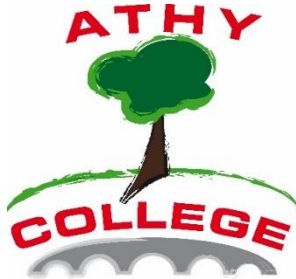


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Athy College Kildare

Droichead Policy

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Approval Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Approval Date: _____

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MISSION STATEMENT

In a caring school we are dedicated to fostering educational excellence empowering all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, we openly respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of each individual’.

ETHOS

Athy College is a caring school. The staff are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and earnestly endeavour to empower all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, the staff of Athy College respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of everyone.

Athy College defines education as the on-going development of all students so that they may realise their true and best selves. The college motto is “Fas agus Foghlaim” (Lifelong Learning). From the outset students are taught they are partners in their own education. The school aims to prepare students for public examinations, in an age when academic qualifications are indispensable for admission to further education and entry into employment. The school recognises that its students are of varying cultural and social backgrounds and have a wide variety of aspirations and abilities.

The school embraces the vital role that parents, and guardians play in the overall education for their children. The school also recognises the importance of the community in which the student lives. For this reason, every effort is made to ensure that the student is aware of his/her role in the community and is encouraged to be positively involved in the wider community.

RATIONALE

In line with the Teaching Council’s policy on *Droichead*: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, March 2017, Athy College is a school offering *Droichead* as a route of induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and has developed this policy to reflect the same.

PURPOSE

- To guide the whole school implementation of *Droichead* to support the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs)
- To identify the roles and clarify the responsibilities across the school community in support of *Droichead*
- To identify the protocols underpinning the *Droichead* process in the school
- To identify the documents in support of the process

SCOPE

This Induction Policy applies to all Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) partaking in *Droichead* at Athy College. It also applies to management and members of the Professional Support Team (PST). This policy was devised and formulated by the school community at Athy College, inclusive of all stakeholders, staff, parents, students and the Board of Management.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This Induction Policy has been informed by the following:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2nd Edition) 2012
- *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* 2017
- Teaching Council's Transitional Arrangements Post-Qualification Professional Practice Conditions 2022/2023
- Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria 2022/2023
- Children First Act 2015 and DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Looking at our School 2022
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

INTRODUCTION

The *Droichead* process is an integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers. It recognises the effectiveness of the reconceptualised programmes of initial teacher education and particularly the extended school placement, in the professional preparation of student teachers. It builds on that phase, taking as its starting point the areas for further learning that have been identified by the NQT in

collaboration with the HEI as part of the school placement experience. At the same time, it recognises that induction is a distinct phase of the continuum of teacher education, a socialisation process into the teaching profession. This integrated framework includes both school-based and additional professional learning activities to address the needs of teachers as they begin their careers.

The main objective of the Droichead process is to support the professional learning of the NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career. Following the Droichead process, a declaration is made by the NQT that he or she is ready to move to the next phase on the continuum of teacher education. A joint declaration is made by the teacher and experienced colleagues, following collective reflection, that through their engagement in Droichead, they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process.

The Teaching Council then removes the Droichead condition from the teacher's registration. The teacher will be fully registered by the Council when all registration conditions (e.g Irish Language Requirement, qualifications shortfall conditions) have been deemed by the Teaching Council to have been met. When an NQT is employed in a participating school in an eligible setting (see Policy 1.1.2) and for the minimum period of professional practice (see Policy 1.1.3), they apply for the Droichead process via the 'My Registration' portal on www.teachingcouncil.ie. An email confirmation is issued to the NQT from the Teaching Council confirming that they have applied for the Droichead process. This record should be retained, to be submitted with a completed Form D.

There are two key strands of the Droichead process as an integrated induction framework for newly qualified teachers. The first strand is a school-based induction one (Strand A), through which the NQT is supported by experienced colleagues. The second strand is made up of additional professional learning activities (Strand B), which involves attendance at NQT cluster meetings in local education centres, and one other professional learning activity, related to the needs of the NQT. Typical learning activities might be, for example, participation in a workshop, a meeting of a Teacher Professional Network/subject association, an online/blended learning activity, attendance at a conference, Féilte, etc.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, March 2017. For the full Droichead Policy and relevant accompanying documentation, please refer to www.teachingcouncil.ie

OBJECTIVES

The *Droichead* process is an integrated professional induction framework for NQTs. The main objective of the *Droichead* process is to support the professional learning of NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017, p.3

The Teaching Council has set out the following standards to support the *Droichead* process, in guiding the NQT, with the PST, in relation to their professional learning and practice. Indicators of good practice differ in the context of Athy College and are included. Through their engagement in the *Droichead* process, the NQT will:

- Have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities
- Have demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students
- Have demonstrated an ability to engage in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017, Appendix 1.

PROTOCOLS

This policy adheres to the protocols identified in the *Droichead – The Integrated Induction Framework*, Teaching Council, March 2017. This policy is specifically supported by the following sections:

- Professional conversations: p. 5
- Observation: p. 5
- Maintaining records of the *Droichead* process: p. 6
- Concluding the *Droichead* process: p. 7

This policy is part of a suite of documents to support *Droichead* in the school. These documents include:

- *Droichead: The Integrated Induction Framework*, Teaching Council, March 2017
- Teaching Council Standards (accompanied by our customised Indicators and examples of School Context)
- PST Roles and responsibilities

- *Droichead* Outline drafted by the PST and finalised with NQT input
- Needs Analysis/Induction Plan – updated regularly in collaboration with NQT

DURATION OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REQUIRED

Professional practice includes school placement (10 weeks) during initial teacher education and (ii) post-qualification practice. The *Droichead* process which fulfils the post-qualification professional practice requirement, has been modified to take into account the extended school placement during initial teacher education.

A post-primary teacher must complete 200 hours' teaching employment in an eligible setting to include the teaching of a post-primary curricular subject(s) to a designated class on the school's timetable, or employment in a learning support, special needs or language support position.

The teacher must apply for the *Droichead* process via the 'My Registration' portal on www.teachingcouncil.ie. It should be noted that these are absolute minimum periods of practice. Given that *Droichead* as an induction framework is designed to provide the maximum degree of support, guidance and advice, it is recommended, where an NQT has additional time in his or her school over and above the minimum requirements set out above, that extra time be used to support the *Droichead* process.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017, p. 4-5.

OBSERVATIONS

Observations are also a key feature of *Droichead*. This includes observations by the NQT of more experienced teachers' practice, as well as observation of the NQTs practice by the PST. Both types of observations are arranged in advance and provide NQTs with opportunities to learn from their fellow professionals. Observations by the PST of the NQTs practice should focus on areas where the NQT feels that they need particular advice, help and support. The NQT should therefore be encouraged to teach in an area where they feel their learning need is greatest. This can then provide the basis for a subsequent professional conversation.

It is recommended that there would be at least two of each type of classroom observation (observations by the NQT, and observations of the NQTs practice), and that the exact number, and the classes observed, should be based on discussions between the NQT and the PST. Athy College PST members encourage teachers in subject departments to be a link teacher to the NQT in their department in offering additional support.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017, p. 5

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TAISCE – PORTFOLIO-BASED LEARNING

Portfolio-based learning is an important process to support the NQT in engaging in these professional conversations. The Council uses the term Taisce, (Irish for treasure trove) to refer to this process of portfolio-based learning. Engaging in the process of portfolio-based learning enables the NQT to reflect on their professional learning in a way that suits them and identify and plan for areas in which they may need further support or guidance.

Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017, p. 5

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TEAM (PST) ROLE:

The PST is a team of fully registered teachers, ideally with five years' experience, which may include the Principal/Deputy Principal, who work collaboratively to support and mentor the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey. All PST members at Athy College have completed a programme of professional learning with NIPT, including mentor skill development. Supporting a newly qualified teacher during *Droichead* is always a collaborative process, although the roles and responsibilities of PST members may vary in different school contexts, and are therefore agreed before the *Droichead* process commences at Athy College.

The dual role of the PST is to:

- guide and advise the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey.
- form a joint declaration with the NQT that they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process.

Droichead Policy Teaching Council, March 2017, p.3

PST RESPONSIBILITIES:

The responsibilities agreed by the PST at Athy College are identified in the Appendix 1 of this policy. The PST's responsibilities are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and will be reviewed considering experience.

Responsibilities directly relating to support and mentoring relate to all team members while other responsibilities are designated to a named team member. The PST at Athy College recognises that it is also important that these agreed responsibilities are communicated to the NQT at the earliest opportunity.

In support of a NQTs *Droichead* process, the PST will invite the wider school staff to provide opportunities for -

- Co-planning
- Co-teaching
- Sharing of resources
- Engaging in professional conversations
- Facilitating class observation

The PST at Athy College will share its role and agreed responsibilities with the NQT at their initial meeting.

NQT ROLE:

Supporting an NQT through *Droichead* at Athy College is always a collaborative process. *Droichead* is fundamentally about the NQTs professional journey and the process of their induction. A key part of this process is an NQTs engagement with more experienced colleagues, and reflection on the professional conversations that take place on their own professional learning and practice.

Through their engagement in the *Droichead* process at Athy College, the NQT will:

- have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities.
- have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students.
- have engaged in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively

Based on the above, the NQT will sign a joint declaration with the PST, that they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process.

Droichead Policy Teaching Council, March 2017.

NQT RESPONSIBILITIES:

To guide the NQT in their role at Athy College, some suggested responsibilities are identified in **Appendix 2** of this policy. The PST at Athy College will share its roles and agreed responsibilities with the NQT at their initial meeting.

SELF-EVALUATION

The PST are constantly monitoring and reviewing the supports they provide to NQTs at Athy College. The PST ensures to align SSE targets at Athy College with the support on offer to NQTs. A needs analysis takes place at the beginning of the year/at the

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beginning of the NQTs *Droichead* process. This helps to inform the NQTs *Droichead* Outline Plan and is reviewed regularly. Regular consultation takes place between the participants throughout the year and a review of the *Droichead* process takes place at the end of the year. The PST annually reviews the support on offer, the progress made on goals set previously and any outstanding areas are discussed.

DATA PROTECTION

All data will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Policy of Athy College.

RELATED POLICIES

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Data Protection Policy

REVIEW

This policy will be subject to regular review in the light of ongoing experiences. The review will be led by the Principal in collaboration with members of the PST.

APPENDIX 1

PST RESPONSIBILITIES AT ATHY COLLEGE:

To guide a PST in its role, some suggested responsibilities are identified below. While responsibilities relating to support and mentoring relate to all team members, a PST may designate some of the other responsibilities to identified individuals within the team.

- To liaise with the PST members regarding inputs to staff on the *Droichead* process
- To engage in action planning with the NQT in relation to *Droichead* standards
- To co-ordinate the induction plan and activities
- To organise *Droichead* Release Time for induction activities
- To brief school staff, parents and Board of Management on the nature and purpose of the school's involvement in *Droichead*
- To ensure the *Droichead* Outline is current for each NQT
- To provide professional and pedagogical support for the NQT
- To support the PST members and NQT/s
- To outline the PST's role at the initial meeting
- To liaise with other staff members in relation to opportunities for the NQT to visit/observe in their classrooms and work alongside them
- To enable and empower the NQT to seek/source answers to questions
- To brief the NQT on the nature and purpose of the *Droichead* process within the school
- To provide support for planning and preparation for teaching and learning by NQTs
- To establish clear boundaries for the PST/NQT relationship
- To clarify school policies and procedures for the NQT
- To attend *Droichead* professional development

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- To work in partnership with the NQT in the classroom e.g. observation and Discussion
- To liaise with the NIPT Associate/RDO
- To accept and give feedback in a constructive, open and professional manner
- To co-ordinate the overall *Droichead* process in collaboration with the PST members and the NQT, including communicating meeting schedules and agendas and the coordination of *Droichead* Release Time
- To keep records including copies of timetables and substitution records as well as induction plans, as part of the *Droichead* process
- To form a consensus in relation to the joint declaration and sign Form D, if appropriate
- To co-ordinate the conclusion of the *Droichead* process with the NQT and other PST members
- To ensure that the *Droichead* process is carried out appropriately in the school and to develop, monitor and review a whole-school policy on induction.

APPENDIX 2

NQT SUGGESTED RESPONSIBILITIES AT ATHY COLLEGE:

To guide the NQT in their role, some suggested responsibilities are identified below. The PST will share its roles and agreed responsibilities with the NQT at their initial meeting.

- To apply for *Droichead* via the 'My Registration' portal on www.teachingcouncil.ie, retain the confirmation email and forward a copy to PST.
- To attend one cluster meeting per term as per the indicative time frame agreed with the PST
- To ensure Form D is completed online and fully completed before sending to the Teaching Council
- To reflect on and evaluate practice regarding the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct
- To be aware of the continuum of professional development and his/her own responsibilities therein
- To participate fully in the school's induction programme and to undertake the elements of the programme
- To work in partnership as part of a school team
- To be aware of all school policies and procedures
- To observe more experienced teachers practice and be observed by the PST
- To learn from the established good practice of teachers in the school
- To consider the professional feedback of the Principal, PST and other staff who advise about teaching and learning
- To accept and give feedback in a constructive, open and professional manner
- To be thoroughly prepared for all lessons and to have long and short term planning available and up-to-date

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- To develop a reflective professional portfolio, *Taisce*, which will provide a focus for professional conversations central to *Droichead*, and allow the NQT to identify areas in which he or she may need support or guidance. It may be created as a hard copy or electronic document which supports the process of reflection begun at HEI level
- To engage in Action Planning in collaboration with the PST
- To collaborate with the PST to identify area(s) of interest for future professional learning(*Cosán*)
- To attend professional development sessions and contribute to group learning by participating fully
- To be fully cognisant of the duty of care to all students in the school
- To accept responsibility for seeking help and advice
- To maintain the school's professional ethos in terms of appearance and conduct
- To reflect with the PST, participate in a quality teaching and learning process and sign a joint declaration (Section 2 - Form D), as appropriate