



Droichead – Teacher Induction Policy

2022

Ratified by the BOM on 25th January 2022

Mission Statement

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all of the school community can achieve their full potential.

RCS Vision: Respect, Community, Success

Mission Statement

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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

Rationale

In line with the Teaching Council's policy on *Droichead*: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, March 2017, Ramsgrange Community School is a school offering *Droichead* as a route of induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

Scope

This induction Policy applies to all Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) partaking in *Droichead* at Ramsgrange Community School. It also applies to management and members of the Professional Support Team (PST). This policy was devised and formulated by the school community at Ramsgrange Community School, 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 Arrangement Post-qualification Professional Practice Conditions 2020-2021
- Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria 2020-2021
- 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 2016
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

Introduction

The *Droichead* process is an integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers. It recognizes 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 at 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 recognizes that induction is a distinct phase of the continuum of teacher education, a socialization 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 of the next phase of their career.

Following *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), then 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, p3

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 in different the

context of Ramsgrange Community School and are included. Through their engagement in the *Droichead* process, the NQT will:

1. Have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities
2. Have demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students
3. 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 customized 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

Settings in which the Droichead Process can take place

A post-primary teacher will normally undertake the *Droichead* process when employed in a recognized post-primary school. As a general rule, paid employment in a permanent, temporary or substitute capacity is eligible, so long as such employment will afford the teacher the opportunity to meet the minimum duration requirements set out in the *Droichead*, March 2017 policy.

A post-primary teacher may also complete the *Droichead* process where they are employed in one of the following roles:

- a) a special school where a proportion of the pupils attending the school are of post-primary age, and where a teacher is teaching a post-primary circular subject(s) to such pupils, or
- b) a Centre for Education where a post-primary curricular subject(s) is being taught.

It should be noted that where NQTs are employed in the above settings via voluntary (unpaid) service or internship schemes such as JobBridge, and similar such schemes that may be commenced in the future, this is not deemed acceptable by the teaching Council as being suitable for *Droichead*.

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

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 NQT's 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 NQT's 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 that 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 NQT's practice), and that the exact number, and the classes observed, should be based on discussions between the NQT and the PST.

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

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

Roles and Responsibilities

Professional Support Team (PST) Role:

The PST is a team of fully registered teachers, ideally with five years' experience, which may include the 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 Ramsgrange Community School have completed a programme of professional learning with NIPT, including mentor skill development. Ramsgrange Community School may form a school PST or an inter-school PST or may invite one external PST member to join the internal school staff. Ramsgrange Community School. 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 Ramsgrange Community School.

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 Ramsgrange Community School are identified in the **Appendix 1** of this policy. The PST's responsibilities are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and will be reviewed in light of 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 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 Ramsgrange Community School will share its role and agreed responsibilities with the NQT at their initial meeting.

NQT Role:

Supporting an NQT through *Droichead* at Ramsgrange Community School 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 NQT's 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 Ramsgrange Community School, the NQT will:

- a) have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning and practice.
- b) have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students
- c) 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 Ramsgrange Community School some suggested responsibilities are identified in **Appendix 2** of this policy. The PST at Ramsgrange Community School 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 Ramsgrange Community School. The PST ensure to align SSE target at Ramsgrange Community School with the support on offer to NQTs. A needs analysis takes place at the beginning of the year/at the beginning of the NQT's *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 review the supports 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 Ramsgrange Community School

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.

Declaration

Date Developed: _____

Developed by: PST, NQT & Whole Staff: _____

Date Approved: _____

Ratified by: _____

Date Effective from: _____

Review Date: _____

Appendix 1

PST Responsibilities at Ramsgrange Community School

Note: The list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and is open to customization by the school.

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 organize *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 NQTs
- To outline the PST's role at the initial meeting
- To liaise with other staff members in relation to opportunities of 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 invite teachers to be a member of the school PST
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- To attend *Droichead* professional development
- To work in partnership with the NQT in the classroom e.g. observation and discussion
- To liaise with the NIPT Associate/RDO
- Where practical, to liaise with other schools in the area for the purposes of observing and sharing practice
- 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 communication meeting schedules and agendas and the co-ordination 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 carried out appropriately in the school and to develop, monitor and review a whole-school policy on induction

Appendix 2

NQT Suggested Responsibilities at Ramsgrange Community School

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 timeframe agreed with the PST
- To ensure Form D is stamped at cluster meetings and fully completed before sending to the Teaching Council
- To reflect on and evaluate practice with regard to 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 and/or elsewhere
- 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
- 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 cognizant 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