



Work Experience Policy for

Athea National School

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by the staff and Board of Management of Athea National School in order to clarify our school's position on the provision of temporary work experience to those who may be seeking an unpaid work placement.

Rationale

As an increasing number of secondary and third-level students, including adult students engaging in FETAC training have been asking us if they may do work experience in our school, we felt it was important that we would establish:

- Who we would consider eligible for work experience
- How long we would consider the work experience to last for
- How many trainees/students we are prepared to take on in a standard school year.

Aims and objectives

- To provide student teachers and others who may be interested in working in a school environment with meaningful and hands-on work experience
- To minimise disruption to the teaching and learning process which is the core activity of our school.

Allocation of work experience

(i) Teaching Practice

- The school will applications for student teachers pursuing a course in a recognised College of Education during a single academic year on a case by case basis.
- No more than one placement will be considered in each classroom for each schoolyear. This is to minimize disruption to pupils and teachers.
- Students must present a Garda Vetting Certificate and an appropriate introductory letter from the Teaching Practice Department of the college that he/she is attending.

- A Statutory Declaration must be completed and furnished by the work experience candidate.
- Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis with preference given to past pupils.

(ii) Transition Year Work Experience

- The school will consider applications for placements from secondary school students seeking work experience as part of the Transition Year programme on a case by case basis, with preference given to past pupils.
- Application must be made to the school principal.
- Transition Year students must furnish the school with appropriate documentation from the secondary school which they attend (letter requesting a placement for the student and evidence of insurance for the student.)
- All students must have completed successful Garda Vetting procedures and Statutory Declaration prior to commencement. There is no exception to this.
- Secondary schools should be informed of the foregoing and its responsibility to inform its students in advance.

(iii) Others

- From time to time, other people who do not fit into these categories may seek observation time or work experience in the school. Their request for observation/experience may be granted by the Principal after consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, if it is felt that such a placement would not be disruptive to the life of the school.
- These placements will only be granted after categories (i) – (iii) have been considered.

Mobile Phone Use

- Mobile phones may not be used in the school building or on the school yard by Work Experience candidates.
- The phone should either be turned off or given to the School Principal.

Dress Code

- Students on Teaching Practice must dress appropriately. No jeans are permitted.
- Work Experience students: are expected to dress neatly.

Refusal/Termination of work placement

Request of work experience may be refused if 3

- In the view of the principal sufficient placements have already been granted for the year.
- The Board do not feel that the work placement will be of benefit to the school.
- Evidence comes to light of child protection concerns regarding the applicant.

Work placement may be terminated if

- The supervising teacher(s) or the Principal are not satisfied that the appointee is contributing adequately to the life and work of the school, or is creating friction among staff or pupils.
- Inappropriate behaviour, especially towards children.
- The Principal/Board becomes concerned about the suitability of the appointee.
- If someone on work experience is dismissed, both the person themselves and their sponsoring organisation (if applicable) will be informed of the reason(s) for the dismissal.
- Principles of natural justice will be followed at all times

Confidentiality

Anyone who is engaged in work experience in our school is required to observe the following requirements of confidentiality:

- Confidential or private documents should not be read. No-one doing work experience may remove any documents or copies of same, from the school, unless with the consent of the Principal.
- School business and procedures should not be discussed outside of school by people engaged in work experience. It is particularly important to respect the confidentiality rights of children, parents, teachers and other school staff.
- If a written report must be compiled as part of work experience, nothing in it should indicate the names of individual pupils or teachers (except in neutral terms such as class lists, etc.)
- All written reports on the school done by people on work experience should in the first instance be shown to the Principal.

Breaks

All people on work experience shall be entitled to a 10 minute break from 11.00 – 11.10 a.m. and a 30 minute break from 12.30 – 1.00 p.m. If the work experience pupil wishes to leave the school at “big break”, he / she must first furnish a note requesting same from his / her parents if under the age of 18.

Transition Year students may use the Staff Room before / after the teachers / SNAs have finished their lunch break.

Discipline and Child Protection

- The teaching staff are responsible for discipline in the school. People on work experience may not discipline children of the school (although students on teaching practice may call the class or individual children to order while they are teaching.) If people on work experience have a concern regarding behaviour, they must report it to a member of the teaching staff.
- If people on work experience have any concerns regarding child protection, they should report it to the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy DLP.

Roles and Responsibilities/Implementation

All stakeholders have a role to play in the implementation of this policy from pupils, parents, staff and the Board of Management.

Ratification/Communication

The policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in 2021.

Signed: *Marie Gleeson*

Date: 18/05/21

(Chairperson B.o.M)