



Droichead Policy (March 2022)

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Droichead Policy

1. Introduction

Droichead, a period of supported professional practice for induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), has been adopted by Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together National School. Following satisfactory completion of the *Droichead* process, NQTs will be confirmed by fellow professionals as having met certain criteria, resulting in the removal of the *Droichead* condition from their registration.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

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

3. Professional Support Team: Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Professional Support Team (PST)

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 the 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 PST is a team of fully registered teachers, ideally with five years' experience, who work collaboratively to support and mentor the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey. All PST members will have completed a programme of professional learning with NIPT, including mentor skill development. Schools may form a school PST or an inter-school PST or they may invite one external PST member to join the internal school staff. See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of current PST members and NQTs engaging with the process.

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.

3.2 PST Roles

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, 1.1.1.3

3.3 PST Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the PST are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and will be reviewed on a needs basis. Responsibilities directly relating to support and mentoring relate to all team members while other responsibilities are designated to a named team member. We recognise the importance of sharing these responsibilities with the NQT at the earliest opportunity.

Responsibilities for all PST members include:

- ensuring that relevant Droichead materials are agreed on before engaging in the process (see [Appendix 2](#) for sample Droichead standards)
- agreeing and completing *Droichead* Outline with each NQT (see [Appendix 3](#) for sample *Droichead* Outline)
- enabling the NQT to be proactive when identifying emerging professional needs and supports required
- working with the NQT to complete the emerging Needs Analysis/Induction Plan
- organising *Droichead* Release Time for induction activities (see [Appendix 4](#) for sample release day timetable)
- providing professional and pedagogical support for the NQT
- liaising with other staff members in relation to opportunities for the NQT to visit/observe in classrooms (see [Appendix 5](#) for sample observation sheets)
- keeping relevant records
- forming a consensus in relation to the joint declaration and sign Form D, if appropriate
- reviewing the process when it is concluded with an NQT

Suggested responsibilities that may be assigned to a named PST member:

- Co-ordinating the overall Droichead process in collaboration with the PST members and the NQT including communicating meeting schedules and agendas and the co-ordination of Droichead Release Time
- Brief school staff and Board of Management on the nature and purpose of the school's involvement in Droichead
- Arrange and lead the initial meeting with NQT
- Attend Droichead professional development (one person invited from every school)
- Liaise with Droichead associate
- Liaise with other school/s to support induction activities if required

In support of a NQT's *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

4. 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:

- (a) Professional conversations: p. 5
- (b) Observation: p. 5
- (c) Additional Professional Learning Activities

- (d) Maintaining records of the *Droichead* process: p. 6
- (e) Concluding the *Droichead* process: p. 7

4.a. Professional Conversations

During the course of the *Droichead* process, an NQT will have a number of interactions with the experienced colleagues who are supporting the process, called “professional conversations”. These conversations provide opportunities to exchange informal feedback on a one-to-one basis, and discuss issues arising in the course of the NQT’s professional learning and practice and offer guidance to the NQT. Alternatively, it may take the form of an arranged meeting between the NQT and some or all of the members of the PST.

The first professional conversation will be for the purposes of welcoming the NQT, discussing their areas of professional learning following initial teacher education, and agreeing an outline plan for the *Droichead* process.

Other professional conversations will follow observations of the NQT’s practice and allow the NQT and members of the PST, either individually or collectively, to share feedback in relation to the teaching and learning that was observed. In recognition of the collegial nature of teaching, the practice of discussing emerging classroom challenges with colleagues (including members of the PST) is a very positive one.

Therefore, the fact that an NQT seeks guidance or support with regard to a professional practice issue, as part of a professional conversation, should be viewed in a positive light and encouraged by members of the PST. PSTs offer a range of supports that enable the NQT to address challenges and learn from them. Additional support, advice and guidance is also available from the NIPT via its school support service, and some additional time to facilitate this may be of value.

4.b. Observations

Observations are also a key feature of *Droichead*. They are part of a multi-faceted process of induction as they provide the NQTs with opportunities to learn from their fellow professionals. They also provide grounding for the PST members’ advice and support throughout the school-based induction. Observations are arranged in advance.

Observations by the NQT of Experienced Teachers’ Practice:

- It is recommended that there would be at least 2 classroom observations carried out by the NQT. The exact number, and the classes observed, should be based on discussions between the NQT and the PST members.

Observations by the PST of the NQTs’ Practice:

- Observations by PST members of the NQTs’ practice should focus on areas where the NQT feels that they need particular advice, help and support.

In this light, while all observations are arranged in advance, the NQT should be encouraged to teach in an area where they feel their learning is greatest. This can then provide the basis for a subsequent professional conversation. It is recommended that there would be at least 2 classroom observations carried out by the PST. The PST will be best placed to determine, on a case-by-case basis, how many observations may be necessary, and to co-ordinate these within the overall outline plan for the *Droichead* process.

4.c. Additional Professional Learning Activities

To complement the school-based induction strand outlined above, NQTs also engage in additional professional learning activities as part of the *Droichead* process, as follows:

NQT CLUSTER MEETINGS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

NQTs should engage in one cluster meeting per term, in a local education centre. The meetings are facilitated by the NIPT and in collaboration with the group of NQTs. The agenda is developed in collaboration with the NQTs and may include key elements of Droichead such as the observation process, professional conversations, Taisce, etc.

NQTS should also engage in one other professional learning activity, identified by themselves in accordance with their professional learning needs, in consultation with the PST. Typical learning activities might be, for example, participation in a workshop, a meeting of a Teacher Professional Network (subject associations), an online/blended learning activity, attendance at a conference, Féilte, etc.

4.d. Maintaining records on the Droichead Process

A Droichead outline plan is created by the PST, in consultation with the NQT. Ideally the NQT will undertake the Droichead process for a period longer than the minimum stipulated period, when their period of employment so allows.

Templates for the Droichead outline plan and the observation process are provided by the NIPT (see Appendices 3-5). To facilitate the Council's quality assurance process, schools are asked to retain records which they have created to support the Droichead process in line with their data protection policy. Such documents should include records of observations of the NQTs practice and records of professional conversations with the NQT. Ideally, such records should be maintained electronically, for ease of retrieval, and also for sharing with fellow PST members.

A template for observations, and recording the outcomes of these observations will be provided to all members of the PST. Routines for record-keeping and sharing of documents should be discussed and agreed upon at an initial PST meeting. In maintaining records, PST members should respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information garnered during the course of the process. They should also be mindful of ethical and data protection considerations, anonymising data where appropriate and taking any measure necessary to restrict access to sensitive information. Where an NQT who has completed some or all of the Droichead process leaves a school, they should be given a copy of the relevant records which the school holds in relation to that process.

4.e. Concluding the Droichead Process

When an NQT is nearing the conclusion of the Droichead process, as per the indicative timeframe agreed at the start of the process, a professional conversation takes place between the NQT and the PST members. This conversation will also involve the NQT identifying areas of further professional learning (to be included on Form D).

When the NQT and PST have concluded the Droichead process (school-based induction and additional professional learning activities) they complete Form D. It is the responsibility of the NQT to submit this with a copy of the email from LEC confirming they have registered for the Droichead process.

When Form D has been fully completed and submitted to the Teaching Council, the Council will remove the Droichead condition from the teacher's registration and issue a revised confirmation or registration letter. All conditions must be met for the teacher to be fully registered.

5. Settings in which the Droichead process may take place

Teachers will normally undertake the Droichead process when employed as a mainstream class teacher. As a general rule, paid employment in a permanent, temporary or substitute capacity is eligible, where the teacher is teaching all areas of the Primary School Curriculum, including Irish, to a mainstream class of pupils (single or multigrade) for the entire school day, and where the teacher's tenure at the school will afford him or her the opportunity to meet the minimum duration requirements set out in Section 4 below.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, the school should deploy NQTs in a mainstream setting. In certain circumstances, where he or she is the most appropriate teacher to support the needs of pupils, a newly qualified teacher may complete the Droichead process within Malahide Portmarnock ETNS in the following role:

(a) Special Education Teacher

In the above cases, the period of employment must involve teaching the same cohort of pupils. As part of the Droichead process, Malahide Portmarnock ETNS will also endeavour to ensure that there are opportunities for the newly qualified teacher to teach in a mainstream setting, which would include the teaching and learning of Gaeilge in a mainstream class, in collaboration with the class teacher.

6. Duration of Professional Practice Required

Professional practice requirements for engaging in the Droichead process includes

- (i) extended school placement (10 weeks) during initial teacher education and
- (ii) post-qualification practice.

Teachers must complete a block of 60 consecutive school days in an eligible setting from the date on which they were first appointed to a post recognised for Droichead purposes. The teacher must register online for the Droichead process with the Teaching Council at (teachingcouncil.ie). It should be noted that these are the 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 in Section 3 above, that the extra time be used to support the Droichead process.

7. Standards to Guide and Support the Droichead Process

The Council has established standards to support the Droichead process, in guiding the NQT, with the PST, in relation to their professional learning and practice. (Appendix 2)

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 shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils
3. have engaged in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively. (see 7.a. Taisce)

7.a. Taisce

Portfolio-based learning is an important process to support the NQT in engaging in these conversations in a way that is effective and helpful. Therefore, as a self-directed learner, and to support reflective practice, NQTs will maintain a Taisce.

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 allows for a large measure of flexibility in the creation of Taisce, with the format and contents decided and owned by the NQT. Ideally, it should include key learning moments and insights from the Droichead process, including school-based induction, i.e. records from observation of other teachers teaching, records of feedback following post-observation professional conversations with PST members, etc.

Key learning moments from additional professional learning activities, including insights from cluster meetings and/or other professional learning events/conversations, may also be included. Emphasis is on the quality, rather than on the quantity, of these learning opportunities.

It is also important to remember that the NQT chooses which moments to reflect on, and how they wish to capture that reflection. The NQT, in collaboration with the PST, selects relevant items from their Taisce as a focus for the professional conversations, which are central to the Droichead process. In maintaining their Taisce, NQTs should respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information garnered during the course of the process. They should also be mindful of ethical and data protection considerations, anonymising data where appropriate and ensuring that their Taisce is stored securely.

8. Supporting documentation

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

9. Review

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

10. Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the BOM on 9th March 2022.

Appendix 1: List of PST members and NQTs

PST members

Name	Role	Trained (year)
Deirdre McBride	PST member	2022
Denise Cunniffe	PST member	2021
Vera Shanahan (on leave)	PST member	2019
Riona Wise	PST member	2019

NQT/s in the current school year

Name	Class/es	Practice period	Assigned PST member <i>(if applicable)</i>
Clodagh-Mae Coll	4th	2021-2022	Denise Cunniffe & Riona Wise
Grainne Doherty	SET	2021-2022	Denise Cunniffe & Riona Wise
Ciara McGarry	1st	2021-2022	Denise Cunniffe & Riona Wise
Eadaoin McGinley	SET	2021-2022	Denise Cunniffe & Riona Wise
Melissa O'Brien	SET	2021-2022	Denise Cunniffe & Riona Wise

Appendix 2: Sample Droichead Standards

Droichead Standards & Induction Plan

{One plan for each individual Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)}

Explanatory Notes		
<i>Droichead Standards</i>	Indicators of Good Practice and School Context Examples	Emerging Needs and Induction Activities
<p>The Teaching Council established three standards to support the <i>Droichead</i> process, in guiding the Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), with the Professional Support Team (PST), in relation to their professional learning and practice.</p> <p>These three standards are fixed and support and guide the NQT and PST when making their declarations at the end of the process.</p>	<p>To complement the standards, suggested indicators of good practice and corresponding school context examples are further explored as part of professional development for the PST.</p> <p>Indicators of good practice explain the standards in greater detail and can be adapted by schools. Where a PST opts to use indicators and examples, it is advised that they be refined according to the unique school context.</p> <p>Suggested indicators of good practice and corresponding school context examples are identified below. Examples are neither exhaustive, nor prescriptive.</p>	<p>The three standards are central to all discussions between the NQT and PST about emerging needs and induction activities. _</p> <p>NQTs' needs are identified in real-time and related induction activities are subsequently identified in response to emerging needs. It is not envisaged that an NQT will present with emerging needs for each indicator. Only needs and supports relevant to an NQT's individual process are captured.</p> <p>Examples below are for illustrative purposes. Induction activities are supports which have been put in place to meet those needs. These are unique to each individual NQT's process and this document serves as a running record of the NQT's emerging needs.</p>

<p align="center"><u>Standards</u></p> <p>Through their engagement in the <i>Droichead</i> process, the NQT will:</p>	<p align="center"><u>Indicators of Good Practice</u></p> <p align="center">The NQT:</p>	<p align="center"><u>School Context</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Examples</u></p> <p>School specific initiatives, procedures, policies or practices. Include a link to your School Plan/Plan Scoile if available.</p>	<p align="center"><u>Emerging Needs</u></p> <p>NQT identifies emerging needs in consultation with PST members.</p>	<p align="center"><u>Induction Activities</u></p> <p>NQT & PST identify activities in response to emerging needs.</p>
<p>Standard 1:</p> <p>have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities</p>	<p>(a) participated constructively in a broad range of professional experiences</p>			
	<p>(b) worked well as part of a team and contributed to the professional conversations with the PST</p>			
	<p>(c) engaged fully in the life of the school commensurate with their stage on the continuum of teacher education</p>			
	<p>(d) sought and availed of opportunities to observe and work alongside other teachers, sought and availed of support from the PST and from other experienced teachers, engaged in constructive discussions through professional conversations and quarterly reviews, with the PST</p>			
<p>Standard 2:</p>	<p>(a) engaged long-term and short-term weekly preparation for teaching and learning (visible, invisible & recorded) and practised in line with school policies (in particular homework, assessment and other relevant teaching and learning policies) and the relevant national curriculum/syllabus or specification</p>			

have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students	(b) used a range of appropriate teaching methodologies, resources and assessment techniques commensurate with their stage of development, as outlined in the “Overview Methodologies” page in the Toolkit for Planning on www.teacherinduction.ie			
Standard 2 (continued): have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students	(c) structured and paced lessons appropriately			
	(d) provided for differences in pupil/student abilities, backgrounds and learning styles			
	(e) covered an appropriate range of material, using the relevant national curriculum/syllabus or specification, using school policies, plans and initiatives			
	(f) demonstrated good communication skills			
	(g) demonstrated good classroom management skills, promoted good behaviour through appropriate management systems and in line with school Code of Behaviour			
	(h) engaged with the full school community, including parents/guardians, in a respectful and courteous manner, having due regard for the values and standards set out in the Teaching Council’s Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and for the school’s Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy and other relevant policies			
	(i) supported, guided and motivated pupils/students towards the achievement of quality learning outcomes, including written work, shared the learning outcomes with the pupil, gave pupils regular			

<p>Standard 2 (continued): have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students</p>	<p>feedback, both orally and through accurate marking and encouraged pupils to respond to the feedback</p>			
	<p>(j) demonstrated an ability to exercise professional judgement in dealing with a range of issues and situations, including the completion of accident/incident reports/Child Protection Disclosures where necessary</p>			
<p>Standard 3: have engaged in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively.</p>	<p>(a) took a proactive approach to his or her own learning and to reflection on his or her practice.</p>			
	<p>(b) actively engaged with colleague/s in pre- and post-observation discussions, actively engaged with colleagues in the context of the school as a professional learning community, and sought their guidance and support when necessary including regular professional conversations and quarterly reviews</p>			
	<p>(c) Created and maintained <i>Taisce</i>, as a self-directed learner to support reflective practice and engagement in professional conversations.</p>			

Appendix 3: Sample Droichead Outline

Phase	Timeframe	Process
Initial Phase	<i>January</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQT registers and receives confirmation Whole School Awareness PST local meeting - Planning and Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roles & Responsibilities; <i>Droichead</i> Standards; <i>Droichead</i> Outline; Welcome Pack Overview PST NQT initial meeting – Welcome Pack and Droichead Standards, Planning (weekly, lesson plan for observation)
Droichead Process	<i>February</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated PST Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Teacher Meetings NQT Observing - subject of choice
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated PST Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Ethos and Calendar of Events
	<i>March</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PST NQT Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check in meeting PST Observing - core subject PST Observing - lesson of choice
	<i>April</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated PST Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom Management NQT Observing - core subject
	<i>May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated PST Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports and Formal Assessments PST Observing - lesson of choice
Conclusion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PST Local Meeting in preparation for concluding the process PST NQT meeting to conclude the process At the end of the 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. If both declarations are made, Form D is completed, and the PST continues to provide induction support to the NQT.
<i>Ongoing</i>		<i>To complement the school-based induction, NQTs also engage in additional professional learning activities. NQTs should engage in one cluster meeting per term in a local education centre and one other professional learning activity, relevant to their needs as identified in consultation with the PST.</i>

Appendix 4: Sample Release Day Timetable

Context: NQT is teaching Senior Infants; Tenure is one year; This is the second release day organised by PST in collaboration with the NQT

1 NQT & 1 Substitute	
9.00 - 10.50	Substitute teacher in NQT's classroom
9:00 - 9:40	NQT co-teaches with experienced teacher 1
9.40 - 10.20	NQT supports group work with experienced teacher 2
10.20 - 10.50	NQT observes experienced teacher 3
10.50 - 11.00	Break
11:00 - 11:45	Substitute teacher in PST member's classroom
11:00 - 11.30	PST member observes NQT
11.30 - 11.45	PST member reflects on observation in preparation for the subsequent post-observation conversation
11:45 - 12:30	Substitute teacher in NQT's classroom
	NQT engages in other agreed induction activity based on identified need <i>e.g. researches and plans how to improve use of lower to higher order questioning</i>
12.30 - 1.00	Lunch
1:00 - 2:40	Substitute teacher in NQT's classroom
1:00 - 1:30	NQT co-teaches with experienced teacher 4
1:30 - 2:00	NQT observes experienced teacher 5
2:00 - 2:40	NQT meets with PST member



Observations with a Purpose

Teacher:	NQT as Observer
Date:	Focus:
Time:	
Subject:	
Class:	
Two aspects which I found interesting and might use/adapt for my own class	
1.	2.
One aspect that I would like to find out more about	



Observations with a Purpose

Post-Observation Record

NQT:	Date:
Class:	Venue:
PST Member:	Focus:
Strengths:	Area(s) for development:
Priorities / Recommendations:	Actions to be taken, by whom:
Support required:	Review, by whom and when:
Signatures	Date:
NQT:	

Observer: