



Work Experience Policy

Our Lady's Secondary School values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities.

Our school seeks to
Promote Spiritual and Human Development
Achieve Quality in Teaching and Learning
Show Respect for Every Person
Create Community
Be Just and Responsible

Work Experience Policy

Reviewed	Ratified by the Board of Management	Review Date
2022-2023	May 2023	

1. Introduction

The curriculum at Our Lady's provides opportunity for students to engage in a variety of learning experiences. These experiences now extend well beyond the classroom walls and dovetail into all areas of community life.

This Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, and other legislation protecting Students, Teachers, Parents/Guardian, Employers and Employees. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, and with parents/guardians and students.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Catholic co-educational voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust).

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for upholding the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

As a CEIST school, Our Lady's Secondary School values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities. Our school seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the CEIST Charter. These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools.

- *Promoting Spiritual and Human Development*
- *Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning*
- *Showing Respect for Every Person*
- *Creating Community*
- *Being Just and Responsible*

In Our Lady's Secondary School, the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God is acknowledged and affirmed. The Catholic school is an inclusive community, ideally built on love and formed by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the Board of Management. Catholic schools are also outward looking. They are connected to their local parish and Diocese and other local organisations which enrich the life of the school. Our school draws on the rich resources of the local community and, in turn, contributes to the life of the local community.

Mission Statement

Our Lady's is a Catholic co-educational secondary school committed to embracing Gospel values. As a school community we nurture the moral, spiritual, social and academic development of each student. We are dedicated to the pursuit of academic excellence and to quality in teaching and learning. Through the academic, pastoral care and extra-curricular programmes we strive to create a love of learning, enhance student wellbeing and build resilience. We foster a culture of respect for all and we support our students in becoming independent and successful learners.

The school adopts a student-centred approach which nurtures the talents and potential of all, in a positive, safe and inclusive environment. Students are inspired to become just and responsible citizens who will care for and protect the environment. Our hope is that this mission will be fulfilled in a spirit of partnership with students, staff, parents/guardians and the wider community.

The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

3. Work Experience Programme

The Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes offers opportunities to vary the learning environment and dispels the notion that learning is something that happens only within the classroom. One of the ways of doing this and of providing an orientation towards the world of work is work experience. These programmes provide modules which integrate the overall objectives of the programmes to provide an experience in the world of work. These programmes provide students with the opportunity to participate in work experience placements during the year.

The responsibility to secure work placement lies with the individual student to acquire their own placement. Applications should be made as early as possible to secure placements. Students having difficulty in sourcing a placement are supported by the school.

4. Duration:

- Transition Year – Friday for the 33 school weeks
- LCA – Wednesday for the 33 school weeks
- LCVP – 3 days (Dates to be allocated by school based on school calendar)

Where possible, students are encouraged to find placements in work related to the career in which they have a special interest. It is the responsibility of each student to make their own application and to find their own work experience placement as this is an essential element of preparation for the

world of work. Students are not paid for work experience. Suggested of hours of work are 9am to 5pm but can be altered with the agreement of student, parents/guardians, and work experience provider. The hours must be agreed before work experience commences. The Protection of Young Persons Working Act 1996 is the legislation which governs this area.

5. Attendance & Punctuality

Students must attend work experience on each designated day. If unable to attend, the student must notify the employer as soon as possible and present a written explanation to the school for the absence as per the school's Attendance and Participation Policy. Students should be punctual for their work experience; this means that students should arrive five minutes before the appointed time.

6. Monitoring:

Students are monitored by the school and assessed by the employer. After each day of work experience students are required to get their work experience attendance form signed. On completion of their work the provider will complete an evaluation form. All these documents will be returned to the school to allow for feedback and reflection. It is imperative that this is accurately and diligently completed as it is the mechanism which assesses what students have learned from their work experience. Personnel from the school may visit the student or contact their employer while on work experience placement.

7. Block Work Placements:

In the Transition Year Programme there may limited instances where employers are only able to offer a block week of work experience. Where these placements are of a high value to the student's career choices the student must apply to the school for permission to be released for this week. This application must be submitted to the TY Co-ordinator, in writing two weeks in advance of the proposed commencement date of the placement A decision to allow a student to complete a block placement will be made in conjunction with the Principal.

8. Insurance:

While on work placement it will be important the employer knows that each student is covered by Our Lady's insurance policy. A copy of the insurance policy indemnity is given to each student. The student should present this to their employer. A copy can also be emailed to the employer if necessary. Should an employer request a specific letter of insurance in which their organisation is personally named, these are available on application to the TY/LCVP/LCA Co-ordinators. Two weeks' notice is required to ensure insurance letters are received in good time. It is advisable that all students avail of the optional student personal insurance policy available in the school.

9. Health and Safety

While Our Lady's Secondary School continues to have responsibility for students on work experience, the Employer has responsibility under their Health, Safety and Welfare Plan while on

work experience. Parents/Guardian's must give full consent for the work placement and be satisfied that these placements are appropriate and safe for their son/daughter.

10. Code of Behaviour

All students on work placement are subject to the School's Code of Positive Behaviour. Any reported breaches of this code will be viewed in a very serious manner by the school.

11. SEN Students

Employers will be made aware in advance of any student with a special educational need if the school and/or the Parent/Guardian deems this necessary. All reasonable provisions will be made by the school to support a student with a special educational need in a work placement.

12. Vetting

Students who work with vulnerable adults, children will need to be Garda vetted. Students cannot be vetted until they reach the age of 16. Any student who required vetting will be guided through the process by the relevant school.

13. Confidentiality

Students must respect confidentiality in relation to all aspects and observations while in a workplace

14: Grievance

Where a grievance arises between an employer and student/parent/guardian around a placement, the school will follow school policy and procedures to attempt to find a resolution. The school reserves the right to terminate a placement if the objectives of the placement cannot be achieved.