



North Dublin Muslim National School

Ratoath Road

Dublin 7

**Droichead Policy**

June 2019

*“To ask for support is a sign of strength”*

*National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT)*

### **Introductory Statement**

This policy was formulated in January 2019 by the whole teaching staff of the North Dublin Muslim National School (NDMNS) to inform newly qualified teachers and teaching staff of the Droichead process for the induction and mentoring of newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The staff and the Co-Managers trust that by so doing, NQTs will be supported in the transition from the initial teacher education programme to working as a teacher in the North Dublin Muslim National School. This policy also aims to support teachers who have recently completed probation at the school and teachers who begin working at the school having already completed probation/ the Droichead process elsewhere.

### **Rationale**

This policy endeavours to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school:

- To support the new teacher in an open and transparent manner consistent with the ethos of the school and legislative requirements
- To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between a new teacher and the school community

### **Aims**

The policy aims:

- To provide professional support and advice to new teachers
- To build on the knowledge, skills and competences developed during the initial teacher education stage
- To support the new teacher in becoming a valuable member of staff with an important contribution to make
- To ensure new staff members become familiar with their surroundings and the day-to-day running of the school in order that they may carry out their work successfully
- To ensure new teachers are informed of the Islamic ethos of the school and how it impacts on both teaching and learning

### **Droichead: An Introduction**

Initial Teacher Induction is carried out in NDNMS through engagement with Droichead - an integrated induction framework for newly qualified teachers. Droichead builds on the learning which has taken place during initial teacher education, in particular, the extended school placement. At the same time, it

recognises that induction is a distinct phase on the continuum of teacher education, a socialisation process into the teaching profession. The integrated framework includes both school based and additional professional learning activities to address the needs of teachers as they begin their careers.

### **The Droichead Process**

- There are two key strands of the Droichead process for newly qualified teachers.
  - The first strand is a school-based induction (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:
    - (a) attendance at NQT cluster meetings in local education centres, and
    - (b) one other professional learning activity, related to the needs of the NQT
- This process includes a period of supported professional practice in the classroom, school-based professional learning activities, as well as other additional professional learning activities to meet the needs of teachers as they begin their careers.
- 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 in the next phase of their career.
- Following the Droichead process, a declaration is made by the NQT that they are 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 with the Council when all registration conditions (e.g. Irish Language Requirement, qualification shortfall conditions) have been deemed by the Teaching Council to have been met.
- When an NQT is employed in a school for the minimum period of professional practice, they register for the Droichead process with Limerick Education Centre using the DR1 form. An email confirmation is issued to the NQT from Limerick Education Centre confirming that they have registered for the Droichead process. This record should be retained, to be submitted with a completed Form D.

### **Settings in which the Droichead Process can take place**

Newly qualified teachers can take part in the Droichead process where they are employed in a permanent, temporary or substitute capacity so long as they meet the minimum time requirement. This can as a mainstream, support or special education teacher. Where possible, when an NQT is a member of the SET (Special Education Team), they will be given the opportunity to teach Irish in a mainstream setting.

## **Duration of Professional Practice Required**

Teachers must complete a block of at least 60 consecutive school days from the date on which they were first appointed to a post. The teacher must register for the Droichead process with the Limerick Education Centre using the DR1 form.

It should be noted that these are the absolute minimum periods of practice. Given that Droichead is an induction framework and 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, that the extra time be used to support the Droichead process.

### **School- Based Strand (Strand A)**

#### **Professional Support Team (PST)**

- Droichead is fundamentally about the NQT's 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.
- The professional support team (PST) in NDMNS is a team of experienced and fully registered teachers, ideally with a minimum of 5 years teaching experience who work collaboratively to support the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey.
- The roles and responsibilities of each PST member and the principal may vary from year to year according to the needs of the school and the NQT(s). Roles and responsibilities will be discussed and decided at an initial PST meeting before the Droichead process commences in a given school year.
- The PST completes Droichead professional development, provided by the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), and is assisted in its work through the provision of a range of supports and resources including:
  - NIPT initial training for all members of the PST
  - Release time with substitute cover to allow each member of the PST to attend training
  - Release time to support the school-based elements of Droichead
  - Telephone and email support from the NIPT, through its network of associates and permanent staff
  - A comprehensive mentor guide, including a range of sample templates.
- The PST will meet when necessary to discuss issues and challenges as they arise, to offer the NQT supports to address challenges and learn from them, and to support the NQT with planning, preparation and meetings/observations with other teachers.

## **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.

## **PST and NQT Meetings**

The Droichead process is an individual professional journey for each NQT with each NQT identifying their own needs for support and professional development. The PST will endeavour to arrange professional conversations and opportunities for professional development depending on the needs of each individual NQT.

## **Taisce: Portfolio-Based Learning**

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.

### **Observations of Teaching and Learning**

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. The first observation should be by the NQT of an experienced teacher.

#### *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.

### **Additional Professional Learning Activities (Strand B)**

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 meeting 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, for example, Féilte, etc.

### **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. 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.

Indicators of good practice and school context examples are described in a separate document which is given to the NQT early in the process and discussed throughout the year at meetings with the mentor and other members of the PST.

### **Maintaining Records of 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.

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 for at least a year after the NQT has completed the process.

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. These will be stored on Google Drive to be accessed by NQT concerned and 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.

### **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 Limerick Education Centre confirming they have registered for the Droichead process.
- When Form D has been fully completed and signed by the NQT and the members of the PST 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.

### **Consistency and Quality Assurance**

A number of mechanisms are in place to assure the quality and consistency of the Droichead process nationally:

(a) NIPT provide support to Droichead schools who employ an NQT.

(b) Droichead Quality Assurance (DQA) panels, comprising an independent chairperson, a practising teacher from the relevant sector and a person with expertise in the support and/or evaluation of teaching and learning at school level, are established by the Teaching Council. The DQA panel visits a sample of schools where the Droichead process has taken place and discusses the process with the PST and the NQT. Such visits are pre-arranged and take place in a spirit of collegiality and collaboration. Following its review, the DQA panel submits an anonymised report to the Teaching Council setting out its findings and recommendations in relation to the process. The report is considered by the Council and, following ratification, is published on the Council's website and circulated to the NIPT and the Inspectorate.

(c) As a leader of learning in the school, the principal fosters a learning culture in which Droichead can flourish, and supports the PST in facilitating a quality induction process. While no 'surprise' visits will be conducted, the principal may visit any classroom in the school, including that of an NQT, on an informal basis to interact with teachers and pupils.

(d) Professional development, including cluster meetings, for PST members, include discussions regarding the standards and indicators of good practice which guide and support the Droichead process.

(e) A review process is in place where NQTs or the PST wish to raise concerns about aspects of the Droichead process. This process includes an informal stage, at school level, and a more formal stage at NIPT level. It also allows for unresolved issues to be escalated to the Teaching Council, via its Droichead Quality Assurance Panel.

(f) The Council will engage with the DES and its agencies regarding the implementation of Droichead, and to ensure its consistency with the overall policies as may be determined by the Minister from time to time. This will include the development of guidance for the transition to the new Droichead policy.

**Roles and responsibility of the policy**

This policy will be supported and implemented by the Co-Managers, the principal and the teaching staff in the North Dublin Muslim National School.

This policy will be implemented from September 2019.

**Timetable for Review**

The operation of the policy will be reviewed and amended in 2023, or sooner if deemed necessary

**Ratification and Communication**

This policy was formally ratified on \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of the policy is available on the school’s shared drive and is available from the office upon request.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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