

Woodbrook College Bray, Co. Wicklow



Secondment Policy 2016/2017

This policy was drafted in consultation with the education partners at Woodbrook College, Bray, Co. Wicklow having taken into account relevant DES Circulars and best educational practice. This policy was ratified on September 21st, 2015.

Introduction

The Board of Management of Woodbrook College, Bray has engaged with the relevant stakeholders involved in the education of our pupils in the formation of the school's policy on Secondment. In doing so, the Board of Management has made every effort to balance the legitimate expectations of teachers with the over-riding needs of pupils.

In order to achieve this balance the Board will consider all applications for secondment taking into account its statutory obligations as outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Circulars 107/2006 and the Education Act 1998. In particular, the Board recognises that in drawing up this policy **the welfare and educational needs of the pupils shall take precedence over all other considerations.**

Overview of Secondment Scheme

- Secondment provides a process for an external organisation to meet a short term specialised human resource requirement, where that need cannot be effectively met through the normal appointment process.
- This scheme is designed to facilitate the temporary assignment of a teacher to a vacant position in an external organisation where the work to be carried out by the seconded teacher is of clear benefit to the educational system and/or is in the public interest.
- Teachers in Voluntary Secondary schools are eligible for secondment provided they are employed on a permanent basis or under a contract of indefinite duration and who have successfully completed their probationary and, where required, induction periods.
- A secondment must be based on mutual agreement between the teacher, the school authority and the host organisation.
- A secondment arrangement must
 - (a) be demonstrated to be of clear benefit to the educational system and/or is in the public interest
 - (b) specify the exact duration of the secondment and
 - (c) specify that the seconded staff member will return to the school authority at the end of the fixed term.
- A secondment shall be initiated by the school authority by completing an application form prescribed by the Department of Education and Science from time to time. The school authority shall forward by 1st May in any year the prescribed application form to the Department of Education and Skills as appropriate together with:
 - (a) the written agreement of the secondee to the secondment and, where appropriate, to the release by the paying agent of details of his/her salary to the host organisation.
 - (b) the written undertaking and guarantee set out in section 13 below.
 - (c) the written approval of the Board of Management of the secondee's school.
 - (d) a detailed description of the work to be carried out by the teacher, sufficient to allow the Department to determine clearly the benefit to accrue to the educational system and/or how the public interest is to be served by the secondment.
- The approval of the Department will be dependent on it being satisfied that the content of the work involved is of clear benefit to the educational system and/or is in the public interest and that no additional costs will accrue to the Department as a result. The school authority and the host organisation will be notified in writing of the decision.
- Applications for an extension of a secondment shall be made by the school authority by

completing the prescribed application form in sufficient time to forward it to the Department by 1st May.

- Further specific information can be sourced in relevant DES Circulars relating to:
 - Participation in the S and S scheme while on secondment
 - Pension Scheme
 - Leave of Absence
 - Sick Leave
 - PRSI
 - Reimbursement of monies to the DES

Duration of Secondment Arrangement

- To avoid disruption to the work of the school, the minimum period for which a secondment may be granted shall normally be one school year commencing on 1st September and ending on the following 31st August. In exceptional cases, where a secondment commences after 1st September, the period of secondment shall end on the following 31 August.
- Where the services of the secondee are required for a period longer than one school year the period may be extended in increments of one full year. In such cases approval shall be subject to the following maxima being adhered to:
 - (a) A maximum period of ten school years for secondments to Department-approved national programmes;
 - (b) A maximum period of nine school years for secondments to European Schools subject to terms and conditions of appointment to those schools;
 - (c) A maximum period of five school years for all secondments in other cases.
- In the case of a secondment to a Department-approved national programme, the full period of the secondment may be agreed between the secondee, the school authority, the host organisation and the Department of Education and Skills at the start of the secondment arrangement.
- Notwithstanding the above, the school authority, having given reasonable notice to the host organisation and the secondee, has the right to terminate a secondment to ensure that the educational needs of the school are given priority.
- Where a secondee continues in the employment of the host organisation beyond the limits set out in this policy, s/he shall be regarded as having resigned from his/her teaching post.

Operating the scheme

- A decision by the school authority to refuse a secondment request shall be final.
- The school authority shall retain the right to terminate a secondment should it encounter difficulties in filling the vacant teaching post at a later date or where the needs of the school authority otherwise require.
- The school authority must ensure, where appropriate, that a qualified replacement teacher can be obtained.
- In the exceptional case of the secondment of a Principal where it is not possible to source an Acting Principal from within the school authority, an Acting Principal may be sourced through normal selection procedures and seconded from another school to act as Principal for the duration of the absence of the incumbent Principal.
- The school will only sanction a secondment request if the Department of Education and Skills sanctions the filling of the vacated post by a fully qualified teacher for the duration of the

secondment.

- A secondee who is due to go on the re-deployment panel may defer his/her panel rights in order to participate in a secondment arrangement. The maximum period for which a teacher on secondment can defer his/her panel rights is five school years.

Posts of Responsibility

- A secondee's seniority in his/her school shall not be affected by participation in a secondment arrangement and the secondee shall be notified by the managerial authority of any post of responsibility that may become vacant in the school in the course of the secondment.
- Where the secondee is appointed to a vacant post of responsibility in the course of the secondment,
 - a) the appropriate post of responsibility allowance will not be paid to this teacher until s/he returns to his/her teaching post in the school;
 - b) the vacant post of responsibility may be filled on a temporary basis for the duration of the secondment subject any moratorium on appointments which may be in place.
- A post of responsibility vacated by a secondee, and which is within the school's quota, shall be filled on a temporary basis for the duration of the secondment subject to any moratorium on appointments which may be in place.

Eligibility

The following are the eligibility requirements for those wishing to apply for career breaks, job-sharing or secondment positions:

- Permanent, CID, TWT, RPT (with duration not extending beyond the date of termination of a fixed term contract) up to compulsory retirement age
- Registered with the Teaching Council
- Satisfactorily completed at least 12 months of continuous service with the school

Board of Management Considerations

The Board of Management recognises the benefits of the Department of Education and Skills schemes for teachers in relation to secondment. These schemes provide teachers with the opportunities to further their professional and personal development through the acquisition of professional skills, academic qualifications, and alternative experiences, which may directly benefit the pupils they teach in our school.

When considering applications for secondment positions, the Board of Management shall carefully consider how the granting of such arrangements might affect the standards and continuity in particular subject departments and subject provision within the overall curriculum. The granting of secondments will be determined in accordance with Circular Letter 107/ 2006 **and** by the criteria outlined below.

- (1) The total number of teachers who are not in the school on a full-time basis. This should not exceed 10% of the total number of whole-time equivalent teachers as defined on the schools allocation of staff rounded up to nearest whole number. The number may be varied from year to year, depending on the number of applications and the specific requirements.

Reason

The Board of Management must seek to strike a balance between the needs of teachers and

pupils and the long-term good of the school as a stable educational environment and work place. Such a balanced approach will prevent the tendency towards the casualisation of the school's teaching team and will provide the best learning environment for pupils

- (2) The effect on particular subject departments by granting secondments which would result in creating an imbalance in any subject department.

Reason

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that particular subject departments are not weakened by granting secondment arrangements which would result in creating an imbalance in any subject department, leading to the undermining of the stability of a subject department or otherwise weakening that department.

- (3) The effect any such arrangements would have on the balance between the number of long-serving members of staff and those who may be inexperienced or novice teachers.

Reason

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that all students benefit from the availability of a mix of experienced teachers and teachers who are new to the profession or to the school

- (4) The need for the school to maintain continuity of teaching for students affected by such arrangements.

Reason

Since replacement teachers will always be appointed as temporary, if ongoing replacements are required the school may have to substitute further replacements in the event that the temporary teachers seek more permanent employment elsewhere.

- (5) The effect any such arrangements might have on the ability of the school to replace the teachers availing of such schemes.

Reason

The moratorium on Posts of Responsibility in place since 2009 means that the Board of Management cannot temporarily replace an absent post holder. The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that there is an effective and adequate middle management structure in the school.

- (6) The likely availability of a suitably qualified replacement teacher to take up duty on the applicant's departure.

Reason

From time to time and for various reasons, certain subject disciplines are difficult to replace and could leave the school in a situation where they are unable to find a suitable replacement.

The Board of Management will endeavour to consider favourably applications for secondment bearing in mind that the welfare and educational needs of the pupils will take precedence over all other considerations. In the event that some applications will have to be declined, the Board will take all of the above into account in addition to:

- The case made for the teacher's application.
- The balance between the individual needs of the teacher applicants, and the number of applications received.
- The anticipated benefit to be gained by the teacher and, consequently the students taught by that teacher.
- Practicalities of facilitating teachers seeking secondments through school timetable

arrangements. Resultant time-tables should not impact negatively on the timetables of students or on time-tables for other teachers. However, within these constraints, teachers seeking secondments should be facilitated insofar as is possible.

- The amount of leave previously granted to applicant teachers.

Resumption of duties

In relation to the resumption of duty following secondment, Section 10 of CL 10/2011 will be adhered to.