Continuous Professional Learning Development Policy

Introduction

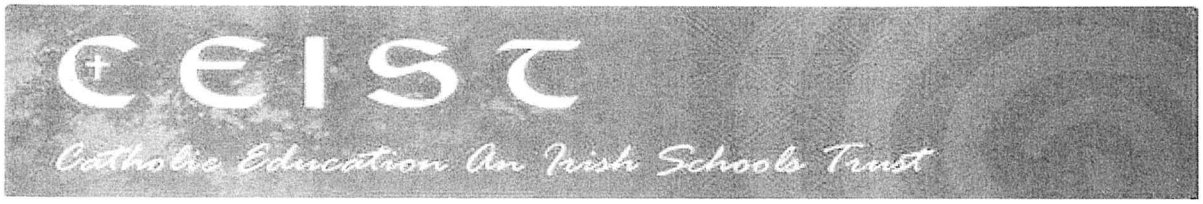
Our Lady of Mercy College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school, under the trusteeship of CEIST, which caters for students of all backgrounds and abilities. We aim to provide our students with an education that equips them for life and living in the modern world. We aim to challenge students to share with us the Christian vision of life. We have drawn up a Mission Statement that describes the kind of school we wish to be. We hope that every member of the school community will attempt to live by it and we intend that all of our decisions are informed by it and our school development plans based on it. In this policy the term 'Parent' is taken to include the term 'Guardian'.

Mission Statement

The core values of Our Lady of Mercy College are respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential, academically, spiritually, and culturally, as a member of the school community and in the spirit of Mercy Ethos.

The Mercy Ethos

Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Pupils, Parents and the wider community. Our school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1957 and became part of CEIST in 2007. Our current student population is approx 400



CEIST (Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust) was established by five Catholic Religious Congregations – Daughters of Charity, Presentation Sisters, Sisters of the Christian Retreat, Sisters of Mercy, and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – to provide a sustainable moral and legal trustee framework for post-primary Catholic education in Ireland. Rooted in the founding vision of its Congregations, CEIST emphasises the dignity and rights of individuals, empowers the vulnerable, and prepares young people to be agents of social transformation. The Trust is dedicated to fostering inclusive, hospitable, excellent, and compassionate learning environments inspired by Gospel values and the wisdom of its Founders. CEIST promotes collaborative school faith communities, supports staff in their essential roles, and addresses the evolving needs of youth. Engaging in ecumenical dialogue, CEIST values its Catholic identity while working with other Christian traditions and all people of goodwill to advocate for the poor, justice, and environmental stewardship, respecting diversity.

➢ Promoting spiritual and human development.
➢ Achieving quality in teaching and learning.
➢ Showing respect for every person.
➢ Creating community.
➢ Being just and responsible

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley,Our Lady of Mercy College provides the conditions and experiences which will promote the development of the full potential of each person including the spiritual, moral, physical, social, aesthetic, intellectual and vocational development.
We strive to ensure that every member of the school community is held in very high regard and their dignity, worth and individuality is respected. We aim to build a sense of community based on Christian values.

Rationale

It is the responsibility of each staff member to maintain and enhance their professional skills and competence. The school values professional excellence and supports staff development for several key reasons:

- To ensure teaching staff remain current with developments in their subject areas and pedagogical approaches.
- To improve educational outcomes for students.
- To support staff in adapting to curriculum changes and educational innovations.
- To promote career development and job satisfaction among teaching staff.
- To build capacity within the school community.

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Create awareness of professional development opportunities available to staff
- Encourage and support all staff to engage actively in professional development
- Promote the school as a learning community
- Provide a transparent framework for the allocation of CPD funding per year.
- Ensure CPD activities align with school priorities and student needs

Types of Supported Professional Development

The school will support the following categories of CPD:

Priority Areas:

1. **Curriculum Implementation**: In-service training for new syllabi, courses, or educational initiatives
2. **School-Identified Needs**: Training specifically requested by the school to address identified needs
3. **Subject-Specific Development**: Courses that enhance subject knowledge and teaching methodologies
4. **Leadership and Management**: Training for current or aspiring leaders within the school

Additional Areas:

- Professional qualifications relevant to teaching role
- Cross-curricular skills development
- Pastoral care and student support training
- Technology integration in education
- Inclusive education and special needs support
- Assessment and evaluation methodologies

- Visiting Speakers

Financial Support Framework

Annual Budget

The Board of Management will allocate an annual CPD fund, the amount of which will be determined during the budgetary process each year based on the needs of the school. This will be allocated as per application.

Funding Criteria

Applications will be considered based on:

- Relevance to current teaching role and school priorities
- Potential benefit to students and the school community
- Professional development needs of the individual
- Course provider credibility and recognition
- Cost-effectiveness of the training
- Equitable distribution of funding among staff

Funding Limits

- Maximum individual allocation: 50% of annual CPD budget or 50% of course fees, whichever is lower.
- Priority given to staff who have not received major funding in the previous three years.
- All applicants must seek funding from other sources (e.g., DES Fee Refund Scheme) before school funding.

- Government Organisations https://gov.ie/en/department-of-education/services/fee-refund-scheme-for-teachers/.

- Department of Education- https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/teacher-fee-refund-scheme-2024/

- PME Fee Refund Scheme https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/professional-master-of-education-pme-fee-refund-scheme/

- General Fee Refund Service Information Clare Education Centre (Scheme Administrator) Application Processing Center. Direct contact: Clare Education Centre, Government Buildings, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare. V95 F782 https://www.clareed.ie/teacher-fee-refund-scheme-application-ireland.html

- Teacher Union Organisations ASTI/TUIhttps://www.asti.ie/news-campaigns/latest-news/teacher-fee-refund-scheme-2024/

- https://www.tui.ie/news/teacher-fee-refund-scheme-.13416.htm

Funding Conditions

- Financial support paid upon successful completion of course
- Submission of completion certificates and fee receipts required

- Recipients must share learning outcomes with colleagues when appropriate
- Commitment to remain in the school for minimum period 2 years following course completion (where applicable)

Application Process

Timeline

- Applications for the following academic year must be submitted by the previous May.
- The Board of Management will review applications at its meeting following the deadline
- Applicants will be notified of decisions by the BOM via a letter from the principal.

Application Requirements

- Completed application form (see Appendix)
- Course details and provider information
- Clear rationale for undertaking the course
- Evidence of relevance to role and school needs
- Confirmation of other funding sources explored

Emergency Applications

Applications outside the normal cycle may be considered for:

- Urgent school needs
- Time-sensitive opportunities
- Statutory requirements

Monitoring and Evaluation

Staff Responsibilities

- Log all CPD activities with the Principal
- Maintain personal CPD records
- Share learning outcomes with colleagues as appropriate
- Apply new learning in their professional practice

School Responsibilities

- Track CPD participation across the school
- Report on CPD provision to the Board of Management
- Evaluate the impact of CPD on learning and teaching.
- Support staff in implementing new learning

Time Allocation

- Staff engaging in approved CPD may offset up to three hours against additional duties (by prior arrangement with Principal)
- Time offset must be directly related to teaching duties
- Retrospective time offset not permitted

Quality Assurance

Course Provider Recognition

Approved providers typically include:

- Recognized third-level institutions
- Education Centers and Support Services
- Department of Education and Skills
- Professional bodies and subject associations
- Other recognized educational organizations

Course Validation

The school will consider:

- Provider credentials and reputation
- Course content and learning outcomes
- Assessment and certification processes
- Relevance to Irish educational context

Induction for New Staff

All new teaching staff will participate in a comprehensive induction program covering:

- School ethos, vision, and values
- School policies and procedures
- Curriculum and assessment requirements
- Pastoral care systems

- Health and safety requirements
- Professional standards and expectations

Professional Learning Communities

The school encourages:

- Active participation in subject associations
- Collaborative professional learning within the school
- Peer observation and feedback
- Action research projects
- Professional reading and reflection

Review and Evaluation

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Management, or sooner if required by:

- Changes in legislation or Teaching Council requirements
- Significant changes in school circumstances
- Evaluation findings indicating need for revision

Annual Evaluation

The Principal will provide an annual report to the Board of Management on:

- CPD participation rates and activities
- Budget expenditure and allocation
- Impact on teaching and learning
- Recommendations for improvement

Ratification

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on 10th September 2025.

Signed: Geary Lambe **Date:** 10/9/25
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Maura Guiry **Date:** 10/09/25
Principal

Appendix A: Application Form

Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont] - CPD Financial Support Application

Personal Details:

- Name: _____
- Position: _____
- Years of service: _____
- Current subjects/levels taught: _____

Course Details:

- Course title: _____
- Provider: _____
- Duration: _____
- Dates: _____
- Location: _____
- Total fee: _____
- Award/certification: _____

Rationale:

- Reason for undertaking course: _____
- Relevance to current role: _____
- Benefits for students: _____
- Benefits for school: _____

Funding:

- Other funding sources explored: _____
- Amount requested from school: _____
- Previous school funding received (last 3 years): _____

Commitment: I agree to:

- Complete the course successfully
- Share relevant learning with colleagues
- Submit completion certificates and receipts
- Apply new learning in my professional practice

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

For Office Use:

- Application received: _____
- Board decision: _____
- Amount approved: _____
- Conditions attached: _____