



# Induction and Mentoring Policy – New Staff, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and Student Teachers

**St. Caimin's Community School**



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## **Section 1: Introduction**

St. Caimin's Community School, in accordance with its mission statement and best practice in the educational community as set out by The Department of Education and Skills; The Teaching Council; The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and teaching colleges, the Board of Management of St Caimin's Community School has developed the following policy in relation to new teaching staff in the school including Student Teachers, NQTs, and newly appointed staff. It is designed to promote a positive school culture and climate which is based on inclusivity and respectful relationships across the school community.

The overall aim of this policy is to develop a whole-school practice that involves new teachers, student teachers and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in the school and to ensure a wide-ranging structure of support for all.

- Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT): Refers to all newly qualified teachers who are required to complete an induction period supported by the Professional Support Team (PST) in the school. St Caimin's Community School is a Droichead school.
- Student Teachers: Refers to all staff completing concurrent or continuous degrees or Masters in Education.
- Newly Appointed Staff refers to any teacher appointed for the first time to St Caimin's Community School who doesn't fall into the category of NQT or student teacher.
- PST Mentor and also cooperating teacher-mentors refers to PST trained mentors who facilitate the Droichead programme for NQTs and cooperating teacher-mentors who link in with PMEs.

## **Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures that are in place to fully integrate new staff into St. Caimin's Community School in a timely and appropriate manner and provide NQTs with an induction programme that satisfies the requirements of the Teaching Council and the Droichead Programme.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to new staff (full time or part time) to St Caimin's Community School that

- recently joined the staff,
- might have transferred/been redeployed or undertaken a substantive secondment,
- are newly qualified teachers (NQTs) or
- student teachers completing concurrent or continuous degrees or master's in education

This policy was devised and formulated by the school community at St Caimin's Community School, inclusive of all stakeholders, staff, parents, students and the Board of Management.

## **Legal Framework**

This Induction Policy has been informed by the following:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education (Welfare) Act 200
- The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2nd Edition) 2012
- Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework 2017

- Teaching Council’s Transitional Arrangements Post-Qualification Professional Practice Conditions 2018 – 2019
- Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria 2018 – 2019
- Children First Act 2015 and DES Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools 2017
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Looking at our School 2016
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

### **Related Policies and Documents**

- Children First National Guidance 2017
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers published by the Teaching Council.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To help the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher to feel that they are a valuable member of staff with an important contribution to make, no matter how long or short their stay in the school.
- To build an atmosphere of cooperation and support within the school
- Provide essential background information to assist the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher with their work in the school.
- Ensure the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher is aware of policies and procedures, where to access them and their responsibilities in relation to these policies and procedures.
- Assist the NQT in completing the induction phase of their registration with the Teaching Council by providing the appropriate experience.
- To support the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student 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 the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher and the school community
- To provide a continuum of support and guidance for all new teachers, especially those in their first year of teaching.
- To work effectively and consistently with outside agencies and organisation to facilitate induction programmes.
- To build on the knowledge, skills and competences developed during the initial teacher education stage.
- To ensure the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher becomes familiar with their surroundings and the day-to-day running of the school in order to carry out their work successfully.
- Assist the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher in becoming effective in their position.
- To enable a controlled exchange of teaching methodologies and skills.

## **Section 2: Mentoring**

### **Induction and Mentoring**

This professional development of teachers is a lifelong process. All efforts will be made to ensure that all newly appointed teachers/NQTs/student teachers receive sufficient and effective support and guidance in St Caimin's Community School. Induction processes within St Caimin's Community School take many different formats. The different forms of induction include:

- Induction day/initial induction activities
- Department lead induction
- Cooperating teacher-mentor support
- Professional Support Team support for NQTs (Droichead).

### **Mentoring Team**

The mentor team at St Caimin's Community School will be composed of:

- Cooperating teachers-mentors who self-appoint from within subject departments.
- PST Mentors
- Members of the Professional Support Team (PST) (Droichead).
- A member of senior management (Principal/Deputy Principal).

### **Induction day/initial induction for ALL new staff**

All new teachers are invited to the school before the official return to school involving all staff. This allows the new staff members to become acquainted to the new surroundings, as well as providing an opportunity for such individuals to meet with management and key figures within the school. This meeting is a group meeting involving the Principal, Deputy Principals and PST Mentor or cooperating teacher-mentor. Our induction programme includes the following:

1. The PST Mentor/s or cooperating teacher-mentor is introduced to new teachers and explains:
  - a. the staff handbook and student journal.
  - b. the procedures followed for discipline i.e., class tutor, year heads – give list of year heads/class tutors.
  - c. absenteeism procedures – demonstration of VSWare (username and password are given to each new teacher for VSWare facility).
2. The newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher will be taken around the school - and shown relevant classrooms, lunch area/canteen, photocopying and library (password for the photocopying machine is given).
3. Examination and assessment procedures are explained and the entering of results on VSWare is demonstrated.
4. Explanation of staff notice board and staff TEAMS (school calendar, computer room booking, SEN register and health conditions etc.)
5. Child protection guidelines are outlined to teachers by principal.
6. Introduction of school polices.

## **Professional Conduct**

All teaching staff in St Caimin's Community School are expected to:

- Be professionally presented in terms of attire and appearance in the classroom.
- Be punctual
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all members of the school community
- Show interest and enthusiasm in the preparation and teaching of lessons
- Show interest and enthusiasm in all the work done by the students
- Provide vetting and safeguarding documentation to principal.

St Caimin's Community School is a vibrant and positive school environment, and all staff are expected to reflect this ethos and support the mission statement in all their dealings with staff and pupils.

## **Section 3: Student Teachers**

### **Guidelines for Student Teachers**

- A request for a placement will only be considered following a written request from a HEI or from an individual to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- A register of accepted student teachers will be drawn up and monitored by the Principal/Deputy Principal or staff member to whom this task is delegated.
- The Principal/ Deputy Principal will discuss the possibility of having a student teacher in each subject department with the head of department (ideally subject departments should know at the beginning of the academic year if they are facilitating a student teacher).
- NQT teachers will not normally have a student teacher in their class.
- The student teachers will rotate amongst the staff, whenever feasible, to ensure that no one teacher may be asked to accommodate a student teacher placement year after year.
- During placement any classroom management issues experienced by student teachers should be reported to and dealt with by their cooperating teachers.
- Should a student teacher be unable to attend school they must notify their cooperating teacher(s) and deputy principal with responsibility for supervision and substitution by at least 8 a.m. on the morning of the absence.
- In allocating student placements, we will endeavour to give a fair distribution to each Higher Education Institution (HEI) seeking placements.
- It is important that student teachers should follow the agreed scheme of work and timetable as discussed with the class teacher.
- Student teachers must report on a weekly basis to their cooperating teacher and make them aware of how they are progressing and discuss any issue or problem that they may have e.g., teaching and learning or student issues.
- During placement, the students may be asked to help with non-timetabled school activities and extra-curricular activities.
- Placement time gives the student the opportunity to observe teaching and learning in the classroom and to engage with pupils and teacher.

- The teachers' workroom is a place for quiet work and is required especially for teachers who do not have a classroom. When space is limited in the workroom, there are workspaces available in the staff room, which student teachers may avail of.
- Student teachers are advised to use their own laptops. Wireless printing facilities are available.
- Student teachers should be sensitive to and adhere to staff-room routines and to any health & safety requirements and policies of the school.
- The Student Teacher's mobile phone usage should be in line with the Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Student Teacher's files and 'student observation' notes must avoid reference to students' full names. Students should only be referred to by their initials.
- The student teacher must consult with the class teacher as regards access to any school resources.
- Appropriate work attire should be worn.
- At every stage during the placement, student teachers should be receptive to advice from the class teacher, Principal and Deputy Principal on any aspect of their professional development. (Please note that St Caimin's Community School reserves the right to contact the HEI to discuss the progress and the (dis)continuation of the placement of the student teacher).

*Role and responsibilities of cooperating teacher-mentors:*

- 1) Guide student teacher on curriculum content to be covered, department plans, learning outcomes and assessment procedures.
- 2) Be available for weekly review with student teacher.
- 3) Assist and provide guidance with classroom management.
- 4) Provide guidance regarding planning, assessment and resources available.
- 5) Collaborate on development of subject content knowledge of student teacher.
- 6) Be available for observation of lessons and provide support relating to classroom management.

*Scheduling of student teachers on placement:*

Department Heads will liaise to allocate student teachers to co-operating teacher-mentors and classes, having regard for:

- the stage the student teacher is at in his/her initial teacher education programme.
- the needs of the learners in a class.
- the requirement for the student teacher to experience an appropriate range of placement contexts.
- any special circumstances of which the co-operating teacher has an awareness.

*Induction of Student Teachers:*

- 1) Department Head(s) share electronic folder of resources with student teacher.
- 2) The Deputy Principal will go through induction pack and planning toolkit with student teacher.
- 3) The Deputy Principal will link students with cooperating teachers.
- 4) The Deputy Principal, cooperating teacher -mentors will link with student teacher during their placement.
- 5) The Deputy Principal will complete and sign the checklist.
- 6) The Deputy Principal and cooperating teacher-mentors will complete a review with the Student Teacher at the end of placement (checklist, attendance, activities involved in and general feedback on experience.)

## **Section 4: Droichead in St Caimin's Community School**

### **Droichead (NQTs)**

The Droichead process is an integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers. It recognises that induction is a distinct phase of the continuum of teacher education, a socialisation process into the teaching profession. It recognises the effectiveness of initial teacher education, and particularly the extended school placement, in the professional preparation of student teachers. It builds on that phase, taking as its starting point the areas for further learning that have been identified by the NQT in collaboration with the HEI as part of the school placement experience.

When the NQT has completed the Droichead Process, the Teaching Council then removes the Droichead condition from the teacher's registration. The teacher will be fully registered by the Council when all registration conditions have been deemed by the Teaching Council to have been met. When an NQT is employed in a participating school in an eligible setting (see Policy 1.1.2) and for the minimum period of professional practice (see Policy 1.1.3), they apply for the Droichead process via the 'My Registration' portal on [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie). An email confirmation is issued to the NQT from the Teaching Council confirming that they have applied for the Droichead process. This record should be retained, to be submitted with a completed Form D.

For the full Droichead Policy and relevant accompanying documentation, please refer to [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie)

### **Objectives**

The main objective of the Droichead process is to support the professional learning of NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying 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 Teaching Council has set out the following standards to support the Droichead process, in guiding the NQT, with the Professional Support Team (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 demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students.
3. Have demonstrated an ability to engage in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively.

### **Protocols**

This policy adheres to the protocols identified in *Droichead – The Integrated Induction Framework, Teaching Council, March 2017*. This policy is specifically supported by the following sections:

- Professional conversations: p. 5
- Observation: p. 5
- Maintaining records of the Droichead process: p. 6
- Concluding the Droichead process: p. 7

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 (accompanied by our customised Indicators and Examples of School Context).
- PST Roles and Responsibilities.
- Droichead Outline drafted by the PST and finalised with NQT input.
- Needs Analysis/Induction Plan – updated regularly in collaboration with NQT.

### **Observations**

Observations are a key feature of Droichead. This includes observations by the NQT of more experienced teachers' practice, as well as observation of the NQT's practice by the PST. Both types of observations are arranged in advance and provide NQTs with opportunities to learn from their fellow professionals.

Observation may occur in the following ways:

- NQT observes PST Mentor teaching
- PST Mentor/member observes NQT
- NQT observes teacher within Subject Department
- NQT observes teacher outside Subject Department
- NQT observes large class
- NQT observes small group with Special Education Needs
- NQT observes a non-teaching activity e.g., break-time
- NQT observes one student within a teaching group.

Observations by the PST of the NQT's practice should focus on areas where the NQT feels that they need advice, help and support. The NQT should therefore be encouraged to teach in an area where they feel their learning need is greatest. This can then provide the basis for a subsequent professional conversation. It is recommended that there would be at least two of each type of classroom observation (observations by the NQT, and observations of the NQT's practice), and that the exact number, and the classes observed, should be based on discussions between the NQT and the PST.

### **Role and Responsibilities**

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

The PST is a team of fully registered teachers, ideally with five years' experience, which may include the principal/deputy principal, who work collaboratively to support and mentor the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey. All PST Mentors/members at St Caimin's Community School have completed a programme of professional learning with NIPT, including mentor skill development. St Caimin's Community School may form a school PST or an inter-school PST or may invite one external PST member to join the internal school staff.

Supporting a newly qualified teacher during Droichead is always a collaborative process and the roles and responsibilities of PST members are agreed between the NQT and the PST before the Droichead process commences. 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.

### PST Responsibilities:

The responsibilities agreed by the PST at St Caimin's Community School are identified in the Appendix 1 of this policy. The PST's responsibilities are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and will be reviewed in light of experience. Responsibilities directly relating to support and mentoring relate to all team members, while other responsibilities are designated to a named team member. The PST at St Caimin's Community School recognise that it is also important that these agreed responsibilities are communicated to the NQT at the earliest opportunity. 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.

The PST at St Caimin's Community School will share its role and agreed responsibilities with the NQT at their initial meeting.

### NQT Role:

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.

Through their engagement in the Droichead process at St Caimin's, the NQT will have:

- 1) Engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities.
- 2) Shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students.
- 3) Engaged in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively.

Based on above, the NQT will sign a joint declaration with the PST, that they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process.

### NQT Responsibilities:

To guide the NQT in their role at St Caimin's Community School, some suggested responsibilities are identified in Appendix 2 of this policy.

### **Self-Evaluation**

The PST are constantly monitoring and reviewing the supports they provide to NQTs at St Caimin's Community School. A needs analysis takes place at the beginning of the year/at the beginning of the NQT's Droichead process. A sample Needs Analysis is available in Appendix 3 of this policy. This helps to inform the NQT's Droichead Outline Plan and is reviewed regularly. Regular consultation takes place between the participants throughout the year and a review of the Droichead process takes place at the end of the year. The PST annually review the supports on offer, the progress made on goals set previously and any outstanding areas are discussed.

## **Section 5: Conclusion**

### **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

The school will support the continuing professional development of the newly appointed teacher/NQT/student teacher by:

- Providing opportunities for CPD within the school.
- Providing time for teachers to engage in local and national CPD activities & events.
- Supporting their membership of professional bodies and associations that contribute to skills enhancement.

### **Data Protection**

All data will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Policy of St Caimin's Community School.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be subject to regular review in the light of ongoing experiences. The review will be led by the principal in collaboration with members of teacher mentor team and the PST. This policy will be reviewed every two years, unless a need arises at an earlier time.

### **Ratification**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022

The policy will come into effect from:

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Once ratified this policy will be shared on the school website and Staff Teams.

## **APPENDIX 1: Responsibilities of the PST at St Caimin's Community School**

**Note:** The list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and is open to customisation by the school. While responsibilities relating to support and mentoring relate to all team members, a PST may designate some of the other responsibilities to identified individuals within the team.

- To liaise with the PST members regarding inputs to staff on the Droichead process.
- To engage in action planning with the NQT in relation to Droichead standards.
- To co-ordinate the induction plan and activities.
- To organise Droichead Release Time for induction activities
- To brief school staff, parents and Board of Management on the nature and purpose of the school's involvement in Droichead.
- To ensure the Droichead Outline is current for each NQT.
- To provide professional and pedagogical support for the NQT.
- To support the PST members and NQT/s.
- To outline the PST's role at the initial meeting.
- To liaise with other staff members in relation to opportunities for the NQT to visit/observe in their classrooms and work alongside them.
- To enable and empower the NQT to seek/source answers to questions.
- To brief the NQT on the nature and purpose of the Droichead process within the school.
- To provide support for planning and preparation for teaching and learning by NQTs.
- To establish clear boundaries for the PST/NQT relationship.
- To clarify school policies and procedures for the NQT.
- To invite teachers to be a member of the school PST.
- To attend Droichead professional development.
- To work in partnership with the NQT in the classroom e.g., observation and discussion.
- To liaise with the NIPT Associate/RDO.
- Where practical, to liaise with other schools in the area for the purposes of observing and sharing practice.
- To accept and give feedback in a constructive, open and professional manner.
- To co-ordinate 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.
- To keep records including copies of timetables and substitution records as well as induction plans, as part of the Droichead process.
- To form a consensus in relation to the joint declaration and sign Form D, if appropriate.
- To co-ordinate the conclusion of the Droichead process with the NQT and other PST members.
- To ensure that the Droichead process is carried out appropriately in the school and to develop, monitor and review a whole-school policy on induction.

## **APPENDIX 2: Responsibilities of the NQT in St Caimin's Community School**

The list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and is open to customisation by the school. The PST will share its roles and agreed responsibilities with the NQT at their initial meeting.

- To apply for Droichead via the 'My Registration' portal on [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie), retain the confirmation email and forward a copy to PST.
- To attend one cluster meeting per term as per the indicative timeframe agreed with the PST.
- To ensure Form D is stamped at cluster meetings and fully completed before sending to the Teaching Council.
- To reflect on and evaluate practice with regard to the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct.
- To be aware of the continuum of professional development and his/her own responsibilities therein.
- To participate fully in the school's induction programme and to undertake the elements of the programme.
- To work in partnership as part of a school team.
- To be aware of all school policies and procedures.
- To observe more experienced teachers' practice and be observed by the PST.
- To learn from the established good practice of teachers in the school and/or elsewhere.
- To consider the professional feedback of the Principal, PST and other staff who advise about teaching and learning.
- To accept and give feedback in a constructive, open and professional manner.
- To be thoroughly prepared for all lessons and to have long and short-term planning available and up to date.
- To develop a reflective professional portfolio, Taisce, which will provide a focus for professional conversations central to Droichead and allow the NQT to identify areas in which he or she may need support or guidance. It may be created as a hard copy or electronic document which supports the process of reflection begun at HEI level.
- To engage in Action Planning in collaboration with the PST.
- To collaborate with the PST to identify area(s) of interest for future professional learning (Cosán).
- To attend professional development sessions and contribute to group learning by participating fully.
- To be fully cognisant of the duty of care to all students in the school.
- To accept responsibility for seeking help and advice.
- To maintain the school's professional ethos in terms of appearance and conduct.
- To reflect with the PST, participate in a quality teaching and learning process and sign a joint declaration (Section 2 - Form D), as appropriate.

### APPENDIX 3: Sample Needs Analysis template

In discussions with the NQT, are there any of the following areas that they would like to target for development over the year? The 5-4-3-2-1 frame following this can be used to develop each area more in conversation.

Area	Ranking by NQT	Additional Notes
Planning		
Classroom management		
Working with students		
Working with parents		
Working with colleagues		
Teaching strategies		
Curriculum issues		
Resources		
Communication		
Organisational skills		
Adjusting to the role of teacher		
Adjusting to the school		
Managing expectations		
School policies- understanding of/discussion of targeted areas		
Time management		
Marking students' work		
Work-life balance/Wellbeing		
Others		

Adapted from (Brock and Grady, 2006, p. 18)

#### APPENDIX 4: Checklist for Student Teachers and NQTs

<b><i>Before commencing teaching, practice have you:</i></b>	
Secured a timetable and submitted it to the deputy principal	
Liaised with your cooperating teachers on their subject plan and agreed content to be covered with cooperating teacher	
Stored the contact details for your cooperating teachers and deputy principal	
Observed classes prior to commencement of teaching practice	
Accessed the PME/student teacher Teams page	
Downloaded and familiarised yourself with the seating plans for each of the classes you are teaching	
Downloaded the VSware App and logged in	
Linked with the Deputy Principal regarding slots for supervision/substitution	
Discussed with your cooperating teacher the accepted procedures for this school e.g., classroom practices, photocopying, use of staff room/workroom, use of Teams etc.	
Participated in induction meeting with Deputy Principal	
Familiarised yourself with the map of the school and located the rooms in which you will be teaching.	
Familiarised yourself with the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire/fire drill	
Read and familiarised yourself with the guidelines form student teachers outlined in this booklet	
Familiarised yourself with school policies which you can access on our website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Policy</li> <li>• Child Protection – Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Child Protection – Safeguarding Statement</li> <li>• Code of Behaviour Policy</li> <li>• Countering Bullying Behaviour</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Dignity at Work Policy</li> <li>• Homework Policy</li> <li>• Internet Acceptable Usage Policy</li> <li>• Mobile Phone Policy</li> <li>• School Self Evaluation Reports</li> <li>• Special Educational Needs Policy</li> <li>• Student Code of Behaviour</li> <li>• Substance Use Policy</li> </ul>	
Familiarised yourself with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children First National Guidance 2017</li> <li>• The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers published by the Teaching Council</li> </ul>	
Completed a review of your experience in St. Caimin’s Community School	

**SIGNED (PME):** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNED (DP):** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 5: Feedback and Review**

*Please select the process that has concluded for you:*

<b>Teacher Placement</b>	
<b>Droichead</b>	

<b>What aspects of your experience that went well/did you enjoy?</b>	
<b>Aspects of your experience that you found challenging?</b>	
<b>Are there any additional supports that the school could have offered?</b>	