

Why student teacher placement policies and handbooks are needed

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*Student teacher placement policies and handbooks are needed because they create **clarity**, **consistency**, and **protection** for everyone involved - the student teacher, supervising teacher, school, centre, and the training institution. The advantages of having the documentation in place is underlined accordingly.*

Setting clear expectations

A handbook or policy explains helps to explain key issues including -

- the purpose of the placement
- roles and responsibilities of each person
- professional conduct requirements
- attendance, punctuality, and communication expectations
- assessment and reporting processes

This helps student teachers understand what is expected before they begin and reinforces the essential elements listed that will play a vital role in their professional lives moving forward.

Support consistency

Different schools, centres and mentors may work in different ways. Policies help ensure that all student teachers are treated fairly and assessed against the same standards, regardless of where they are placed. This consistency is vital – and suitable frameworks ensure this.

Protecting students, schools, and higher education providers

Placement policies (in particular) often cover key elements including -

- child safety
- confidentiality and privacy
- duty of care
- workplace behaviour
- complaints and incident procedures

These safeguards (in the form of policies) reduce risk and make sure legal and ethical responsibilities are understood and followed as required. The development of a placement ethics policy and guidelines augments the handbook/policies.

Guiding professional learning

A good handbook does more than list rules. It helps student teachers learn how to behave as professionals in a school setting. Placement Handbooks often include advice on matters such as -

- lesson planning
- classroom observation
- feedback cycles
- reflection
- collaboration with staff

This assists with turning placement into a structured learning experience rather than just time spent in a classroom. The habits and learnings in turn inform students as they move into their professional careers.

Clarifying assessment and progression

Student teachers need to know and number things including

- how they will be evaluated
- what standards they must meet
- what happens if concerns arise
- how to get support if they are struggling

Without this guidance, assessment can often feel unclear or worse - unfair. So, clarification is critical.

Helping resolve problems

If issues arise during the placement - such as absence, underperformance, professional misconduct, or conflict - policies provide an essential process for responding. This helps everyone act fairly and consistently.

Strengthening partnerships

Placements involve cooperation between higher education providers and schools/centres. Policies and handbooks create a 'shared framework' so both parties can work together effectively and support the student teacher. In so many ways – this is the really critical issue.

Student teacher placement policies and handbooks are needed to ensure placements are safe, fair, well-organised, educationally meaningful, and professionally accountable.

Also worth reading -

Key considerations for tertiary students doing placement in schools and early childhood centres - [6113ad_9540d2dc2be641c38b040066f2d651f0.pdf](#)

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