

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed

One-to-One Policy – Counselling and Teaching

May 2020



Mission Statement

School Mission statement: At Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed we aspire to develop a caring and inclusive learning community that encourages the potential of each person. The mission is realised through our core values of Respect, Effort, Honesty and Co-operation.

Rath as Saothar – Success through effort.

Rationale

This policy is to establish correct protocols around the provision of One-to-one counseling or teaching for students.

It is the policy of this school that one-to – one counselling and teaching is often in the best interest of the student. Where one-to one sessions occur, this will take place in an open environment i.e. staff member and pupil visible through a glass panelled door.

One-to-One counselling (Guidance Counsellor) Procedure

General

The guidance counsellors are fully qualified guidance counsellors and members of the Teaching Council and Garda Vetted.

The guidance counsellors are full members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and are available to attend five sessions of Supervision through the IGC each academic year. The counsellors will have sensible regard for the student's beliefs and values. They will work in ways to promote the students' personal autonomy, freedom of choice and self-direction. The counsellors record a list of students detailing who they meet on a one-to-one basis and relevant notes regarding the sessions.

All one-to-one meetings with students take place in the counselling/guidance office where possible. Any concerns (Child Protection) that the counsellor has regarding the safety of a student is discussed with the Principal (DLP) as a matter of urgency. If the principal is unavailable, the issue will be discussed with the Deputy Principal (DDLDP).

Responsibilities and Duties of the Counsellor:

Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by the Student Support Team, Year Head, SEN team or can self-refer. In the sessions the counsellor should always be mindful of

- their role and explain the boundaries within the counsellor/student relationship
- their qualifications, areas of expertise and relevant limitations
- the nature of counselling activities involved and the reasons for undertaking them and the benefits to the student in the case of counselling
- any referral options which may benefit the student where any presenting issue is beyond the external counsellors current level of competency
- confidentiality in the counselling process and the limits of confidentiality
- the students right to engage in and withdraw from involvement in the process at any stage and take all reasonable steps to ensure that clients give valid consent to proposed interventions (consent of parents/guardians may also be required if the client is a minor; established policy of the school/workplace may also be relevant).
- In obtaining informed consent, provide as much information as a reasonable person would want to know before consenting, and ensure that the information is conveyed in language which the client understands (see also Clause 4.3.1).
- keeping all written records in a locked filing cabinet in the guidance counselling/Principal's office. When making or keeping records, care should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation and opinion and, to include only such information as is required for the purpose of professional involvement with the student. Where a decision is made, the basis for the decision is noted. Statutory and data protection responsibility with regard to records applies to all media, whether written hardcopy, electronic or digitally recorded.
- Reveal information about clients only with their consent, but with certain exceptions, which include: where concealment would result in danger to the client or others; when required by law or designated guidelines; or for purposes of professional consultation or supervision.
- If after an initial meetings the guidance counsellor suggests a programme of intervention is necessary then consent of parents/guardians may be required if the client is a minor, (in line with Informed Consent and Freedom of Consent section 1.3.1 ICG Code of Ethics)

One-to-One Meeting/Teaching with Students

One-to-one teaching

PROVIDED IT IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE for an individual one-to-one teaching may be provided. It is our preference to use small groups as this alleviates any child protection issues. Colaiste Mhuire will weigh up the benefits of this against the possible disadvantages in relation to a child protection issue. Every effort should be made to ensure the protection of children and staff. It is crucial that clear boundaries are put in place and most one to one teaching will take place in the open area.

IF A CHILD NEEDS learning or other support (eg therapeutic support) in a one-to-one basis parents will be advised of arrangements in place. This will be overseen by the learning support coordinator or the teacher in charge of the ASD class as applicable. Where there is a need to see a child in a one-to-one situation e.g. learning support, special examination centres, tutor/year head interventions etc, the teacher must be visible at all times through an open door or a clear glass panel. Work carried out by Special Needs Assistants will also be completed in an open environment as per the care plan.

Staff members will not detain a student alone in a classroom or in an area of the school where they may not be visible to others.

All one-to-one **meetings** with students take place in an open environment with a glass panelled door. One to one **teaching may** occur between students and Special Education teachers.

From time to time outside professionals may be required to meet with/assess students in a one to one setting. This includes visits from external agencies for example, NCSE, NEPS, SEC, TUSLA etc. All personnel in such cases, working with children on a one to one basis, present identification, must be Garda Vetted and parental permission must be given in advance.

Responsibilities and Duties of Teachers

Teachers have a **responsibility to inform students of the extent and limitations of confidentiality** with respect to the schools policies and safeguarding of the wellbeing of the student. Students should be informed of the limits of confidentiality where information about them may need to be shared. If issues of safety override those of confidentiality and a concern around child protection arises the concern will be discussed with the DLP as a matter of urgency. DLP/Principal will inform parents of any child protection related issues in line with Child Protection procedures.

Record Keeping and Access to Records

All written records are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the teacher's office and/or recorded on School IT based reporting system. When making or keeping records, care should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation and opinion and, to include only such information as is required for the purpose of professional involvement with the student. Where a decision is made, the basis for the decision is noted. Statutory and data protection responsibility with regard to records applies to all media, whether written, hardcopy, electronic or digitally recorded. For SEN students all student support files recorded and stored in accordance with the SEN Policy.

The Board of Management adopted this policy at a meeting on 14/5/20 and the policy is available on the school website.