



Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles



Student Support Team Policy

Policy Area	Schools
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Student Support Team Policy

1. Scope

This policy applies to the students attending and staff working in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed.

2. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to monitoring, encouraging, and promoting student well-being through the student support team. Our mission statement is: 'Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed aspires to provide an inclusive education for all its students in a caring and supportive environment. The school aims to maximise the potential of all students.' Reaching one's full potential is facilitated through active engagement in the curriculum which is facilitated by an overall sense of well-being. This policy provides for students within the school community who have a greater need for a higher level of intervention. This is of importance given the schools Deis status. These students fall into the spectrum of students comprehended by the categories "School Support for Some" and "School Support for Few" outlined in the DES publication Well-Being in Post Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention. This policy is underpinned by the school's core values of Respect, Care, Equality and Community.

3. Aim of Student Support Team

- To ensure students presenting with particular care needs have access to the curriculum and learning.
- To promote personal and social development.
- To improve the self-esteem of all students in the school, thereby encouraging them to avail of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities being offered in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, enabling them to achieve their full potential.
- To identify supports needed by students to access the full curriculum.
- Support students with higher care needs so that they may have positive experiences in CMCO.

4. Student Support team (see Appendix 1 for current names)

- Support Team Coordinator
- Learning Support Coordinator
- Guidance Counsellor
- Home-School-Community Liaison Coordinator
- School Completion Programme Coordinator
- Behaviour for Learning Teacher
- SPHE Coordinator
- Student Voice Coordinator
- Senior Leadership Team

5. Meetings

The team meets once a week for one class. Minutes are taken by the HSCL or BFL for each meeting and these are stored in a confidential file. These minutes are then kept in a secure location in accordance with the Department of Education guidelines.

6. The role of the Student Support Team

- Share information in a confidential setting.
- Discuss any issues/events that may have arisen over the week.
- To implement an induction programme.
- To identify student needs, devise an intervention and record actions to be taken.
- Identify link person for the student.
- To highlight need for home contact.
- To develop appropriate intervention strategies.
- To monitor and evaluate students' progress in Junior and Senior Cycle.
- To liaise with external agencies when appropriate.
- To raise awareness of pastoral issues through the curriculum and in-service.
- To inform staff of students who need care.

7. Referrals

Referrals are made to the Student Support team by completing a **Referral Form**. All referrals are discussed at the Student Support Meeting.

8. Solution focused approach

A solution-focused approach provides a way of implementing a short-term intervention.

- Emphasises short-term, goal focused interventions
- Focuses on constructing solutions, rather than analysing possible causes
- Seeks to have elements of the solution already present, i.e., start with an easily achieved target
- Explores how things will be different and what it will take to make this happen
- Develops an action plan
- Includes monitoring and reviewing the action plan

The school's NEPS psychologist, if requested, could be involved.

9. Student support team services

The Student Support Team are involved in the following support services in the school:

- Counselling
- Breakfast, Lunch and Homework/Study Clubs
- Senior Mentoring of First Years (Le Chéile)
- Speakers
- Friendship Week
- Whole School Wellbeing – ENERGY programme
- First year induction
- Student surveys for Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Purposes
- Workshops
- Extra-curricular activities
- Student Council
- Courses for Parents including Parent Enrichment Workshop
- Home Visits
- Drug Programme (e.g., Let's Talk about Drugs)
- Policy Formation
- Oversight of School Anti-Bullying Policy
- S.P.H.E.
- Personal Development Courses

10. The role of the Student Support Team is further developed by: -

(a) Co-ordinating a structured and proactive Student Support Service

A structured Student Support Service to provide the following supports to students and staff: -

Communication

- All students must be aware that a Student Support service is available to them if they are experiencing difficulties. They must feel confident in the service and know that it is confidential unless a student is at risk.
- Teachers and Staff must clearly be aware of their responses and of the supports available to them when a problem is brought to their attention.
- The Principal, Deputy Principal and Parent/Guardians must be made aware of such problems and the steps being taken to assist the student.

Record Keeping

The school's response to a student with a problem must be documented and reviewed until the problem is solved or until it is passed to an outside agency.

Meetings

A Student Support Team should meet on a regular basis to review the progress of the Student Support Programme.

11. Intervention Procedures

- Engage in all problems of a Student Support nature.
- Give teachers and other staff members a definite support mechanism for dealing with problems of a Student Support nature. They can either:
 - ✓ Deal with the matter themselves if it is minor and they feel confident to do so.
 - ✓ Speak with any Student Support Team member in a confidential manner and perhaps deal with the problem following consultation.
 - ✓ Refer the matter to the Student Support team if it is of a serious matter or if the teacher does not feel competent to deal with it.
- Open a file on the student concerned and ensure that the matter is updated regularly. This file should not be closed until the matter has been resolved satisfactorily or passed to an outside agency.
- Monitor the progress of the intervention and be prepared to assist where necessary.
- Inform the Principal, Deputy Principal and the student's parents/guardians if necessary.

12. Communication

The student support team makes the decision about how much information should be shared. Consultation with parents/guardians, the student, NEPS, or other professionals may help in making this decision.

Appendix 1

Student Support Team

- Student Support Team Coordinator – Ms. Julie Delaney
- Learning Support Coordinator – Ms. Julie Delaney
- Guidance Counsellor – Ms. Lorna Byrne, Ms. Patricia Hickey
- Home-School-Community Liaison Coordinator – Mr. Paddy Stapleton
- School Completion Programme – Ms. Emily O'Brien
- Behaviour for Learning Teacher - Ms. Annemarie Purtill
- SPHE Coordinator – Ms. Shelley Martin
- Student voice Coordinator – Ms. Margaret Smith
- Senior Leadership Team – Ms. Clare Wallace, Mr. Denis Quinn