



COLÁISTE MUIRE CO-ED, THURLES



ONE-TO-ONE POLICY – COUNSELLING AND TEACHING

Policy Area	Schools
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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 Excellence in Education, Respect, Care, Community and Equality.

Rath as Saothar – Success through effort.

Rationale

This policy is to establish correct protocols around the provision of One-to-one counselling 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, members of the Teaching Council, and Garda Vetted.

The guidance counsellors are full members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and are facilitated to attend five sessions of Supervision through the IGC each academic year.

The counsellors will have a sensible regard for the students' 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 or as deemed appropriate by the facilitator. At the guidance counsellor's discretion, they may decide to use alternative indoor or outdoor spaces. Any concerns (Child Protection) that the counsellor has regarding the safety of a student are discussed with the Principal (Designated Liaison Person (DLP)) as a matter of urgency. If the principal is unavailable, the issue will be discussed with the Deputy Principal (Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL)).

Responsibilities and Duties of the Counsellor

Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by teachers, the Student Support Team, Year Head, SEN team, parents or students 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 counsellor's current level of competency or would serve in the best interest and welfare of the student.
- confidentiality in the counselling process and the limits of confidentiality (i.e., if the student's safety or the safety of someone else is at risk it is discussed with the DLP).
- the students' right to engage in and withdraw from involvement in the process at any stage and take all reasonable steps to ensure that students give valid consent to proposed interventions
- consent for students to avail of counselling is sought from parents as part of the new parent induction form
- consent of the parent/ guardian is not always looked for or required. However, the Guidance Department will encourage students to open up dialogue with parents and guardians and to inform them they have linked in with the guidance counselling department. Parents and guardians are contacted by the guidance counselling department if issues of concern arise that warrant parental involvement, and this is flagged with students per the guidance department protocols.
- 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 hard copy, electronic or digitally recorded.
- to reveal information about students 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 meeting 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. Coláiste Mhuire Co Ed. 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 (e.g., therapeutic support) on 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, National Council for Special Education, National Educational Psychological Service, State Examinations Commission, TUSLA - Child and Family Agency etc. All personnel in such cases, working with children on a one-to-one basis, will be required to present identification upon entry to the school, must be Garda Vetted and parental permission must be given in advance of such visits.

Responsibilities and Duties of Teachers

Teachers have a **responsibility to inform students of the extent and limitations of confidentiality** with respect to the school's 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, hard copy, electronic or digitally recorded. For SEN students all student support files are recorded and stored in accordance with the SEN Policy.

The Board of Management adopted this policy at a meeting in **December 2023** and the policy is available on the school website.