



## **Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles**



### **PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

**February 2024**

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, Care, Equality, Community and Respect***

***Rath as Saothar – Success through effort.***

### **Rationale**

We understand Pastoral Care ***‘as an approach to education which endeavours to value and develop each member of the school community. It promotes learning at every level of the student.’*** (The Year Head, Monahan 1998 IAPCE). This approach animates the nature of our pastoral care provision. All members of the school community – students, staff and parents/guardians have a role in implementing pastoral care in line with our mission statement and the Education Act 1998. Each member of the school community has access to the relevant pastoral structures and procedures. We seek to nurture positive relationships as the core resource in developing a pastoral approach. This policy endeavors to put in place the framework necessary to underpin and support this approach. The policy will address the following areas:

- Pastoral role: definitions and responsibilities
- Pastoral programmes
- Pastoral procedures
- Resources and professional development
- Monitoring and evaluation

### **Aims:**

The pastoral care aims of the school have clearly taken into account the importance attached to the pastoral care of all its students.

The aims are as follows:

- To respond in a sympathetic and understanding way to the concerns, fears and worries of all students.
- To encourage the students to value one another and to respect the views of other members of their community.
- To develop the students self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline.
- To give students the skill and abilities to overcome challenges they may face as part of growing up.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion enabling students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
- To provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all students.

- To prepare the students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

This policy is underpinned by our values of respect, care, community, equality and excellence in education. It is implemented in accordance with other school policies such as:

- Code of Behaviour
- One to One counseling and teaching
- Wellbeing Policy
- SPHE/RSE Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Student Support Team Policy

## **Pastoral Roles**

### **Board of Management**

**The Board of Management will:**

- Ensure that there is a pastoral care policy in place and that it is implemented.
- Ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Support pastoral care initiatives in the school.
- Provide appropriate resources to implement the pastoral care system in the school.

### **Principal**

On behalf of the Board of Management the Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral care needs of students are met.

The Principal will:

- Work with the pastoral care team to ensure that the pastoral care needs of the students are being met
- Keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance.

### **Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principal works with the Principal, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, subject coordinators and teachers and makes interventions where necessary. Meeting the academic and pastoral care needs of the student body is an important part of the Deputy Principal's role.

### **Year Head**

- Monitor Academic Progress
- Monitor Attendance
- Oversee in conjunction with Class Tutor – student lates and absences

- Get a copy of results of all exams and discuss with students where appropriate
- Sign reports going home and put in a comment
- Contact with Parents/Guardians – letter, phone and meetings
- Role in Implementing the Behaviour Code
- Involved in Positive Discipline
- Assemblies of year group important – motivation, reward system
- Track persistent offenders
- Time must be given to recognising the good student
- Monitor uniform and deal with offenders
- Year Head highlight issues in relation to year group to all staff
- Facilitating regular meetings of the team of tutors to review and plan
- Co-ordinating all information given to and received from year heads and tutors, and checking action has been taken
- Reporting to and liaising with, the Principal, Deputy Principal and student support team regarding the year group
- Keeping and overseeing records concerning students
- Liaising with student representatives in the Year Group
- Explains the school behaviour code on a regular basis

### **Class Tutor**

A Class Tutor is the teacher who, on behalf of the school community, undertakes the role of caring for a class group in order to promote learning at every level of the person.

- Builds a relationship with each student
- Encourages regular attendance and punctuality
- Has access to information on students
- ~~Looks out for~~ Notes medical issues
- Encourages support of, and participation, in the ethos of the school
- Encourages development of study skills
- Promotes class spirit and cohesion
- Encourages exam preparation
- Plays a part in first year induction days or with new students
- Distributes school information to parents/guardians as necessary
- Collects funds and information from parents/guardians as necessary
- Passes information to subject teachers when necessary

### **Guidance Counsellor**

The role of the Guidance Counsellor (as set out more comprehensively in the One-to-One Teaching and Guidance policy) is to help students with decision making, problem solving and behavioural change in relation to their personal, social and career development. This includes classroom guidance activities and

one-to-one meetings with students. The Guidance Counsellor is also available to meet parents/guardians if required.

### **Student Support Team**

The Student Support team meets on a weekly basis to review students who have care needs and put in place a programme of care for these students. The role of the student support team is set out comprehensively in the Student Support Team policy. Year Heads will complete a form to refer students to the Student Support Team. Any staff who have concerns about students should refer them to the relevant Year Head. The Student Support team discuss student's issues and may refer students to internal school personnel – Guidance Counsellor, Teachers with Guidance hours, Behaviour for Learning Teacher, SEN Supports, SCP or Home School Liaison Teacher. In some cases, students are referred to outside agencies such as the H.S.E.

Members of the Student Support team are also members of the Critical Incident Team and have a role in ensuring a process is in place to bring the school through a crisis situation and in the event of a crisis, to coordinate the process. The role of the Critical Incident Team is set out comprehensively in the Critical Incident Team policy.

### **Le Chéile**

Le Chéile are a group of senior students selected every year to Mentor the first-year students. The Le Chéile team are invited to apply for the role. The core duty of the Le Chéile Team is to make the transition from Primary to Post Primary school as easy as possible. This is carried out by arranging a Le Chéile member to oversee a small group of first years. Le Chéile members then help the first years by getting to know them, help them with any issues that arise by guiding them towards help and they monitor bullying. The first-year year head coordinates the Le Chéile programme.

### **Pastoral Programmes**

#### **SPHE**

The SPHE policy should be referred to for the content and implementation of the SPHE Programme.

#### **Religion**

Each class group from first year to fifth year has an allocation of one class period of religious education per week. An experiential approach to religious education is promoted. The aim is to develop the spiritual dimension of the individual.

#### **Parents Association**

Parents have a major influence on the environment in which the young person lives. Parents have an important part to play in helping to identify the priorities of the school Pastoral Care Programme and in supporting the programme.

Parents can also participate in pastoral care by: Communicating and consulting with the Pastoral Care Coordinator on any initiatives they might be interested in running. Organising guest speakers for parents to help support their children. Attendance at relevant information meetings and other meetings at school. Encourage their children to become self-confident, responsible, caring and independent young men and women who are prepared to take on the challenge of school and adult life. Provide support and care for their children.

## **Pastoral Procedures**

### **Record Keeping**

A file is kept on all students. This contains information on the students – personal details, Psychological Reports, Discipline Reports, Doctors notes, Attendance, etc. The Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal have access to this file. Year Heads also have details on student's achievements in examinations. Special Needs information is stored by the Special Needs coordinator in a confidential file and relevant information is made available to teachers as necessary. Parents/Guardians may request access to information held in the school on their child.

### **Linking with parents/guardians**

The Year Head is the formal link between the school and parents/guardians. Parents/guardians may contact the Year Head in relation to any issues concerning their child. The school journal and the school information system are used as a link between home and school. Parents/guardians and staff should use the relevant pages in the journal and the sections on the school information system for two-way communication. Parents/guardians are welcome to contact the school to discuss with school personnel issues in relation to their child.

The Board of Management adopted this policy at a meeting on 7 February 2024 and the policy is available on the school website.