



Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles



Student Support Team Policy

Policy Area	Schools
Document Reference number	CMCE/ST.SUP/041/4
Version	1
Document Drafted by	Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles
Date previous version: Ratified by BOM Noted by TETB	7 December 2023 30 January 2024
Date Reviewed/Amended by School	January 2026
Date Reviewed / Ratified by BOM	5 March 2026
Date Noted / to be Noted by TETB	26 March 2026
Policy Review Date	Every two years
Date of Withdrawal of Obsolete Document	5 March 2026 Document Ref. No. CMCE/ST.SUP/041/3 Version No. 1

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 wellbeing 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 wellbeing. 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 school's 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. <https://assets.gov.ie/25105/b32a40105ca541688f3ab73d9687cccb.pdf>.

This policy is also guided by Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools <https://assets.gov.ie/40693/a844644845444034bb6a33b2e90cb2f2.pdf>.

This policy is underpinned by the school's core values of Excellence, Respect, Care, Equality and Community.

3. Introduction to a Student Support Team

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed's Student Support Team (SST) operates in line with advice and recommendations from the Department of Education and Youth and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). Much of the operational structures of our team comes from the 2021 Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools guidelines. Our Student Support Team is a foundational structure designed to coordinate our response to student welfare. It serves as the primary mechanism for identifying, planning and reviewing support for students experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties.

Rather than operating in isolation, the SST anchors the school's Continuum of Support, ensuring that interventions range appropriately from whole-school preventative measures ("Support for All") to targeted assistance for specific groups ("Support for Some") and intensive individualized care ("Support for a Few").

The team typically consists of core staff members, including the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors, and the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Coordinator, the SPHE coordinator, the Wellbeing coordinator and the Home School Community Liaison officer. By meeting weekly, the SST ensures that information is shared safely and that vulnerable students are not overlooked. The team facilitates a unified approach, linking internal school supports with external agencies when necessary. Ultimately, the SST transforms individual teacher concern into a collective, organised strategy, fostering a school culture where student wellbeing is systematically managed rather than reactively addressed.

4. Aim of Student Support Team

- To ensure students presenting with particular care needs are identified and supported so that they 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 extracurricular opportunities being offered in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, enabling them to achieve their full potential.
- Support students with higher care needs so that they may have positive experiences in CMCO.
- To assist staff to support students effectively.

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

- Support Team Coordinator
- Additional Educational Needs Coordinator
- Guidance Counsellor
- Home-School-Community Liaison Coordinator
- School Completion Programme Coordinator
- Behaviour for Learning Teacher
- SPHE Coordinator
- Student Voice Coordinator
- Senior Leadership Team
- Note that each Year Head has a link person on the SST who conveys information to them and brings any concerns to the SST

6. 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 securely in accordance with the Department of Education guidelines.

7. 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 the link person for the student.
- To highlight the 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/student wellbeing and support issues through the curriculum and in-service.
- To inform staff of students who need care.
- To be available to and responsive to the voice of our students
- To facilitate links to the community and other non-school support services
- To streamline our response protocols, we have merged the responsibilities of the SST and the Critical Incident Team. The SST will follow the Critical Incident policy and fulfil specific Critical Incident roles whenever the need arises.

8. Referrals

Referrals are made to the Student Support team by completing a **Referral Form**. All referrals are discussed at the Student Support Meeting. Verbal referrals cannot be made.

9. Solution focused approach

Once a referral is made, it is discussed at the Student Support meeting and a solution focused approach is adopted.

A solution-focused approach provides a way of implementing a short-term intervention because it:

- 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 National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist, if requested, could be involved.

10. 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 On
- 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 Workshops
- 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
- One to one and small group work with SCP

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

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. There is a poster in the main assembly area and a section in students' diaries to support this.
- Teachers and Staff must clearly be aware of their responses and of the support available to them when a problem is brought to their attention. Staff are briefed on the role of the SST through staff meetings, digital communication and through the staff hub.
- 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.
- The Principal, Deputy Principals and Parents/Guardians must be made aware of students who need additional support and the steps being taken to assist the student. The main link person on the SST for students will communicate this information.

- If a foreign trip is planned the organiser is required to present the list of students who will be travelling to the group to determine who might need extra support on the trip.
- Following an initial settling period the First Year Year Head works with the Student Support team to discuss any students who are having difficulty with the transition.

Record Keeping

The school's response to a student who needs additional support must be documented and reviewed until the matter has been resolved satisfactorily or passed to an outside agency.

12. 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 and keep records of the same.
 - ✓ Speak with any Student Support Team member in a confidential manner and perhaps deal with the problem following consultation.
 - ✓ If the situation is serious, or requires additional support beyond the classroom, it should be referred to the Student Support Team using the designated referral form.
 - ✓ 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 Principals and the student's parents/guardians if necessary.

Appendix 1

Student Support Team

- Additional Educational Needs Coordinator – Ms Julie Delaney
- Guidance Counsellor – Ms Lorna Byrne, Ms Patricia Hickey
- Home-School-Community Liaison Coordinator – Ms Mary C Ryan
- School Completion Programme – Ms Anna O’Toole
- 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, Ms Annmarie Bergin