



Coláiste Muire

College Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Pastoral Care Policy

Mission Statement

Colaiste Muire is committed to developing a dynamic Christian school community which fosters spiritual and personal development. We are a voluntary Catholic school. Our distinctive Mercy ethos attempts to generate within the school a community climate that is permeated by the gospel values of freedom, love, mercy and justice.

Introduction

Since 1860 our school has been a centre of innovation in education and excellence in learning and teaching. Today we are a modern vibrant school catering for girls in Ennis and the surrounding area.

Following in the Mercy tradition our students receive a balanced, holistic education, developing spiritually, personally and academically. In Colaiste Muire school life is balanced, we succeed in combining academic excellence with an outstanding range of opportunities and extra-curricular activities. Our students achieve academic excellence in a caring supportive environment. Colaiste Muire is a caring community with a positive, open relationship between staff, students and parents. Life long friendships are forged in Colaiste, students and staff leave but the spirit of Colaiste remains with them forever.

Our wish for our students is that each one reaches her full potential and has a happy, fulfilling school life.

It is hoped that while attending Colaiste Muire each student will experience happiness, friendship and success in her studies. All the services, programmes and activities within Colaiste Muire are aimed at helping students achieve an understanding of themselves and their potential.

A support structure to meet the needs of those students who may experience difficulties in any aspect of their lives underlies the caring commitment of Colaiste Muire to all its students.

Through its pastoral care arrangements and provision, Colaiste Muire demonstrates its continuing concern for the personal and social development of all its students, regardless of their age or ability, as individuals and as secure, successful and fully participating members of the school and its wider community.

Pastoral care is at its most effective when it is all-pervasive and fully integrated into the school's daily routines, its curriculum and its extra-curriculum activities. This approach has been adopted by the staff of Colaiste Muire.

For the purpose of this document Pastoral Care is defined as:

- The integration of the academic, social and religious dimensions of a school's energy so that an atmosphere of care prevails within the school community.
- Being essential to the daily life of the school. It involves not only the pastoral care team but in various ways all members of staff.
- Recognising the individuality of each person in the school community and the special needs that can arise from time to time.

Rationale

The pastoral care aspect of the school community is a whole-school responsibility concerning students, staff and parents. It is a requirement of the 1998 Education Act that schools 'promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students'. Colaiste Muire aims to promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development of its students. It aims to create an atmosphere of positive co-operation, promoting values of respect, fairness, courtesy and tolerance of others.

Colaiste Muire seeks to provide a safe and secure environment to maximise learning. We define

learning as the academic development and personal growth of the student to his full potential. For such learning and development to occur an effective Pastoral Care structure must exist in the school.

The ethos of the school is reflected in the moral, intellectual, spiritual, personal and social development of our students. This is supported in a coherent manner and an effective pastoral care structure contributes significantly to this endeavour.

Aims and Objectives

The 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 offer students and staff an experience of life in a school community founded on Gospel values, where the Christian principles, which underpin our Mission Statement, find expression in all school policies and in the daily routine.
- To provide access for all students to spiritual, intellectual, social, moral, cultural, creative and aesthetic education.
- To target disadvantage and to show a particular concern for those with special needs in the allocation of the school's resources.
- To become a centre of learning where the pursuit of excellence is encouraged in accord with the gospel exhortation to seek perfection in all aspects of life.
- To enable the student to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others.
- To promote gender equity and to develop leadership skills through encouragement, delegation, consultation and collaboration.
- To challenge self-centred competition and other consumerist values, while emphasising the principles of justice and collaboration.
- To promote sport and leisure pursuits which encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- To work in collaboration with other agencies, in the wider community, promoting the well-being of children, involving parents, educational bodies and industry in the work of the school.
- To reach out as a CEIST school, into the immediate neighbourhood and also across national and international boundaries promoting ideals of compassion, mutual understanding and peace.

Set out below is the structure, which provides for the effective implementation of pastoral care within the school community of Coláiste Muire.

Roles and Responsibilities

Every member of staff contributes to student pastoral care in Colaiste Muire. There are key roles, however, which carry significant support dimensions and responsibilities.

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:

- Appoint a pastoral care team (from among the teaching staff) and work closely with this group.
- Keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance.

Pastoral Care Team

- Attend a time-tabled meeting every week (Monday 11.30 – 12.30)
- Has responsibility for reviewing students with particular difficulties.
- Advised relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues/Year Heads etc. and liaises with N.E.P.S. Psychologist once a month.

Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor will

- Participate in and co-ordinate the school guidance and counselling service categorised under three integrated areas of activity:
 - Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling
 - Educational Guidance and Counselling
 - Career Guidance and Counselling (see Guidance Plan)
- Participate in the Pastoral Care Team and the Critical Incident Management Team
- Attend Year Head Meetings
- Co-ordinates Peer Helpers
- Co-ordinates Introduction to 2nd Level Days/Transition Programme in to 2nd Level School.

Staff (General)

All teachers have responsibility for the pastoral care of students in the school. Through the planned curricular programme they will amongst other things:

- Build up students' esteem.
- Encourage students to be assertive where appropriate.
- Help students to make informed decisions about issues in terms of 'right' or 'wrong'.
- Be responsible for subject-related matters concerning each student.
- Provide an environment conducive to the full human development of each student.

SPHE Co-ordinator

Through the implementation of the SPHE programme the SPHE Co-ordinator and the SPHE team will:

- Provide the students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competencies to learn about themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

Religious Education Co-ordinator

Through the implementation of the RE programme, the RE co-ordinator and the RE team will:

- Promote in each pupil a knowledge of their faith and its practice in everyday life, while adhering to the school ethos.
- Ensure high standards and effective delivery of Religious Education within the school.
- Implement the pastoral care initiatives which help students experience an affinity with the school. (Mission Week)
- Cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.

Student Representative Council

The student council has a very important role to play in the area of pastoral care. The council will:

- Provide a support network for the students where they can contribute their ideas on ways to enhance student lives.
- Encourage students to become self-confident, responsible, caring and independent young men who are prepared to take on the challenge of adult life.
- Liaise with other partners within the school community.

Parents' Association

The Parents' Council offers valued support to the school community in a number of ways. The Parents'

Council will:

- Act in an advisory capacity in promoting the educational and Christian ethos of the school and the general welfare of its students.
- Host annual seminars for parents on adolescent well-being.
- Support the school in programmes/events.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The Special Needs Co-ordinator will:

- Establish a list of students in need of resource hours.
- Refer students to the school Psychologist for learning support/resource testing.
- Carrying out testing
- Allocate resource hours to students in consultation with learning support teacher, guidance counsellor and resource teachers. (See Special Needs Policy)

Year Heads/Co-ordinators

- To liaise with the Pastoral Care Team
- To attend weekly Year Head Meetings (Thursday 11.10 - 11.50)
- Have overall responsibility for the year group.

Class Directors

- To keep contact with parents through students' journals.
- To monitor students' behaviour in classes.
- To monitor students' homework records.

Pastoral Care Team 2023 - 2024

Jean Pound, Geraldine Lydon, Ray Maher, Niamh Ní Mhuirí, Joanne Casey, Ailish Egan, Richie Hayes, Dara Reynolds.

Signed: Dr. Joe O'Connell
Chairperson, Board of Management