

Ardcoil Mhuire



Pastoral Care Policy

“A caring which may happen is not as valuable as a caring which must happen because a structure and a programme exists in the school”.

In Ardcoil Mhuire we strive to ensure the development of all members of our school community and foster and promote relationships based on respect. We wish to create a sense of belonging to our school community where each individual is valued and their uniqueness is recognised. We promote a school community that is caring and positive and where work will be carried out in an environment that is both safe and secure for all. We believe Pastoral Care is the responsibility of the entire school community.

Relationship to school ethos/mission

Through the implementation of this Policy we strive to enact the stated mission and vision of Ardcoil Mhuire.

‘In this school we aim to provide a Christian environment where each person is valued and assisted to reach full potential.’

Rationale

Pastoral Care is an integral part of our mission in Ardcoil Mhuire and as such it requires a formal structure to ensure its effectiveness in our school community on a day to day basis and particularly at critical times. In Ardcoil Mhuire we believe Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life.

Aims

That each member of the school community will:

- Feel valued and cared for.
- Be assisted in developing to her full potential – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially and personally.
- Have a sense of belonging to our school community.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Care Team has the responsibility to draft this Policy in consultation with the staff, students, parents and management of the school. The Draft Policy will then be presented to the staff, Student Council, Parents Association and the Board of Management. Modifications

may be made following consultation. The Pastoral Care policy will then be taken to the Board of Management for formal ratification.

Implementation of Policy

Board of Management

The BOM will ensure that the ethos and values of the CEIST trustees are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

Principal and Deputy Principals

The Principal and Deputy Principal provide leadership in the provision of pastoral care for the whole school community. The Principal and Deputy Principal will work to ensure that our school is primarily a caring community and are committed to supporting all those involved in the Pastoral Care programme in Ardscoil Mhuire. Senior management are members of the CARE Team, Critical Incident Team while they also meet parents, staff and students in an open and supportive manner. School management facilitates in-house staff development and encourages participation in external associations, programmes and courses particularly when those programmes/courses have a direct influence on student learning.

Year Heads

The Year Head plays a very important role in a student's life. The Year Head has the responsibility for supporting staff in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The Year Head also plays a very significant role in pastoral care. S/He will have daily contact with each student in their Year Group and is dedicated to making their educational experience a positive one. The Year Head works in conjunction with class teachers so that students are cared for and know that there are people looking out for them all the time. Year Heads are in regular contact with the home and are available to meet with parents. They will offer support and guidance to parents as their child passes through the school. Uniquely, Year Heads stay with their year group all the way from first year to sixth year providing consistency of support and ensuring that relationships and partnerships are well established between the student, the home and the school.

Class Teacher

The Class Teacher takes particular care of one class group. S/He will contribute to the creation of a supportive, positive atmosphere in which success and achievement are highlighted and valued. S/he liaises with class teachers, parents and Year Heads on a regular basis.

Subject Teachers

Teachers are an integral part of this pastoral care system and are vital to its implementation on a daily basis. Teachers support and encourage students to develop positive attitudes towards learning, eliciting their co-operation and supporting the needs and gifts of each individual in order to achieve their full potential. The relationship fostered in the class is based on mutual respect. The classroom teacher deals restoratively with situations that arise in class and in more serious situations s/he refers the student to the Year Head or Senior Management.

Students

Relationships in the school are based on respect and courtesy. Students should at all times be supportive to all in the school community. Students should respect school property and the

environment and take responsibility for keeping it in good order. See Code of Behaviour (Courtesy Code)

All School Staff

Due care and respect will form the basis of all dealings the staff may have with all members of the school community and visitors to the school. See Code of Professional Conduct

CARE Team

A Pastoral Care Team (Maeve McGill (HSLC), Collette McGrath (Principal), Anne Fogarty (Guidance Counsellor), Grace O'Brien (NBSS Co-ordinator), Brid Herbert (Deputy Principal) and Sr. Patricia Lee (Chaplain)) meets on a weekly basis to review issues relating to the welfare of students.

Chaplain

The School Chaplain (Sr. Patricia Lee) is in a unique position to assist the Pastoral Care System within our school. The Chaplain assists in a voluntary capacity and her duties include:

- Informal meetings with students are arranged, on a one to one basis.
- Assisting with school liturgies, prayer services.
- Supporting both staff and students who are bereaved, distressed.

Critical Incident Team

The Critical Incident Team is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, BFL, HSCL and a member of staff. The Team meet on a regular basis.

Guidance Counsellor

Within the pastoral care system the guidance counsellor, Anne Fogarty, facilitates the social, personal, vocational and educational development of the student. She liaises with staff, parents/guardians and outside agencies as necessary. The Guidance Counsellor participates in the weekly Care Team meeting. She is available to meet students in class groups and for individual consultation with students and/or parents on matters relating to career advice and possible personal difficulties. See Whole School Guidance Plan.

Religious Education (RE) Teachers

The RE teachers deliver the RE Programme to all students in the school. This aim of this programme is to help young people to develop healthy attitudes and values in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme – SPHE Co-Ordinator and Teachers

SPHE teachers deliver the SPHE Programme (one class period per week) to the junior cycle students. The aims of the SPHE programme are:

- To promote student's personal development and well-being.
- To develop student's care and respect for themselves and others.
- To promote awareness of healthy living.
- To enable the student to make informed decisions and choices.
- To enable the student to respect human diversity.
- To develop student's understanding and knowledge of social skills.

Learning Support/Resource Teachers

The Learning Support Department provides assistance to students by supporting and encouraging their academic and personal development. The Learning Support teachers liaise with other staff, parents and outside agencies as appropriate. Information about students with specific learning needs can be obtained from the Learning Support teacher(s).

Parents Association

As a partner in Ardscoil Mhuire the Parents Council contributes significantly to policy making. Through their involvement in the council parents show their commitment to student welfare and development.

The Student Council - Student Supports Team

The school has a Students' Council. The Council consists of students democratically elected from each year in the school. The chairperson of the Students' Council is the Head Girl. The coordinator of the Student Council is a member of the staff. The Students' Council provides a forum through which the students can play a part in the development of the school. The Student Council has responsibility for:

- Reviewing School Policies
- Communicating and consulting with all of the students in the school
- Involving as many students as possible in the activities of the Council
- Planning and managing the Council's programme of activities for the year
- Fundraising for local charities and raising awareness in the school of school issues.

Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants provide care and assistance to the students allocated to their care.

Home School Community Liaison

The HSCL coordinator addresses:

- The development of the parent-teacher relationship in collaboration with the local community in order to enhance the nurturing of the whole child- this implies noting personal and leisure needs, the curricular and learning needs of parents so as to promote their self-worth and self-confidence.
- The development of staff and teacher attitudes and behaviour so that the school becomes a place where all young people can reach potential.

Pastoral Care Programmes

The following policies/programmes will contribute to the creation of a positive and caring school environment:

The Anti-Bullying Programme and Anti Bullying Week (See Anti Bullying Policy)

The aim is to provide a support service and implement the Department guidelines on countering Bullying in Post Primary Schools.

An anti-bullying awareness week takes place each year. During this week:

- Posters highlighting the seriousness of bullying are displayed.
- Class teachers teach an anti-bullying cross curriculum.
- Students are made aware of the procedures for reporting bullying and the steps that will be taken to find a solution.

- Updating focus on Restorative Practice guidelines and implementation
- Guest Speakers

Care of new students who join during the school year

The Principal/Deputy Principal and relevant Year Head will provide advice and assistance to new students who join Ardscoil Mhuire during the academic year. They will monitor the performance and integration of the relevant students over the initial settling in period, by consulting with the student's teachers. During this period they will meet with the relevant students and enquire how they are settling into school and offer support as required.

Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour is in place to facilitate learning and teaching in a positive, safe and secure atmosphere. The Code has been developed in partnership with the staff, students, parents and management. See to Code of Behaviour.

Critical Incident Policy

Recognising that the key of managing critical incidents is planning, Ardscoil Mhuire has developed this Critical Incident Management Policy and accompanying plan. Our hope is that, in the event of an incident, these will help staff to react quickly and effectively so as to ensure the maintenance of a sense of control. These procedures should also help the school to return to normality as soon as possible and ensure that the effect on both students and staff will be limited. See Critical Incident Policy

Extra-Curricular Activities - Teachers

A wide range of activities including sporting, cultural, dramatic and artistic events facilitate the personal development of student and assists in the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. See Extra-Curricular Activities Policy

Health and Safety Policy

The safety of our workforce and students is of primary importance to Ardscoil Mhuire. The school is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment as a prerequisite to our activities. To this end Ardscoil Mhuire is committed to the protection of employees and property. Accidents can be controlled/avoided by good management in combination with active employee involvement. Prevention is the direct responsibility of all students, employees, supervisor/teachers, management and visitors alike. See Health and Safety Policy

Homework Policy

To promote in the student body the value of homework and study in the learning process and to encourage independent learning and creativity (A ways to Learn Week)

Induction Programme for First Year students

An induction programme for incoming first year students called the MAP programme is held at the beginning of the academic year. The Year Head, HSCL and BFL carry out this programme with each class in 1st Year over a three day period. An outline of the Map Programme is attached.

Induction Programme for New Staff

An induction programme for new staff is held at the beginning of the academic year. The

Principal and Deputy Principal welcome the new staff, provide information on the ethos and philosophy of the school and inform them of various working policies and procedures operating within the school.

Mentoring Programme – Mentors

A Mentor (senior subject department members/Subject Co-Ordinator) is assigned to each new staff member when they begin teaching in Ardscoil Mhuire:

The aims of the mentoring programme are to promote:

- The care and well-being of new teachers
- The development and acquisition of new teaching skills
- A collaborative teaching culture in our school.

Initiatives which promote Positive Behaviour:

Many initiatives have been introduced to promote positive behaviour in the school. The aim of these initiatives is to use incentives such as motivation, encouragement, praise and reward to improve behaviour and performance. Initiatives include:

- Career Guidance
- HSCL
- BFL
- School Chaplin
- Support Services such as Childrens Grief Project, CAMHS
- Restorative Practice – Staff in-service given by Ingrid Colvin on the use of the Restorative Questions, and Restorative Circles.
- CARE Team
- Bluebox – Art Therapy
- Speech Language and Communication classes
- In-school suspension
- Anti Bullying Week
- Academic Awards Night
- Academic Interviews
- Academic Progress Reports
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Attendance Awards
- Friends for Life
- ASSIST In-service for teachers
- MAP programme for 1st Years
- School Meals Programme
- Regular contact with home
- Supervision on corridors
- Merit System
- Peer mentoring
- School Christmas Dinner
- Morning Assemblies
- Talent Show
- Ceolchoirm
- Sports Day

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring was introduced to the school eight years ago. The benefits are manifold both to the mentors and mentees. Mentees get a helping hand in settling into school life and making the transition to secondary school. Mentors are well placed to assist in this transition as they have themselves recently experienced this change. Mentors undergo school-based training and are introduced to their groups during the MAP Transfer Programme. They run various activities during the year.

Religious Education (RE)

Refer to the policy.

SPHE Programme

In the SPHE programme a wide range of issues are addressed in ten modules. The ten modules are:

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management: A sense of purpose
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendships
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substances Use
- Personal Safety

Year Heads

The following is a list but not exhaustive of the duties of a Year Head in Ardscoil Mhuire.

- Monitor attendance and punctuality and follow up as necessary.
- Monitor behaviour and implement school policy.
- Deal with students referred by teachers and keep records.
- Liaise with Class Teachers regarding academic performance.
- Hold Academic Interviews with their Year Group.
- Hold assemblies of Year Group.
- Discipline Committee (One Year Head together with the Principal/Deputy Principal forms this Committee)
- Liaise with parents.
- Report to weekly meetings of Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Acknowledges students
- Supports students at risk.
- In the Academic Year 2014/15 it is envisaged that a Year Heads report will be given at staff meetings.

Year Heads will receive support from the Principal and Deputy Principal to assist them in carrying out their role. A weekly meeting of Year Heads is held that gives the opportunity to highlight issues that need to be addressed and identify students who may need specific support.

Class Teacher

The duties of the Class Teacher include:

- Journal
 1. Check journal once a week (spot check) to ensure that homework is being recorded.
 2. To ensure parent are signing the school journal
 3. Report missing journal to Year Head
- Fortnightly class teacher meetings.
- Monitor uniform in class and on corridors.
- Vigilance in the area of bullying and dealing with these issues.
- Provide emotional and personal support to students.
- Relationship and confidence building.
- Outline and regularly remind students of general school rules and policies.
- Feedback on memos when required by students.
- Meeting with Year Heads to monitor academic progress, student behaviour and teacher concerns.
- To provide information to the Year Head to coincide with class teacher meetings.
- Devise rotas for the cleaning of base rooms.
- Election of students council
- Report issues relating to the personal hygiene of students to Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Listen to and take on board student concerns.

Supervised Study – Evening Study Co-Ordinator

A supervised study facility is available in the school (on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evening after school) in which priority is given to those undertaking state examinations. Students study in a quiet supervised atmosphere.

Pastoral Procedures

- CARE Team Meeting
- Year Group Assembly
- Class Teacher Meetings
- Critical Incident Procedure
- Individual Counselling
- Chaplain – Individual Meetings
- SEN Committee Meetings

Monitoring the Implementation of this Policy

The monitoring and implementation of this policy will keep in mind that Pastoral Care should permeate all areas of school life.

- Class Teachers and Year Heads will meet with Class Group/Year Group regularly to monitor the Pastoral Care Programme.
- Year Head meetings with Principal and Deputy Principals will monitor Pastoral Care on a regular basis.
- Teachers will discuss academic and pastoral development of each student at Parent/Teacher Meetings.
- The CARE Team meet regularly and will monitor the Policy.

Reporting of Monitoring and Implementation of the Policy

- The CARE Team will monitor the implementation of the policy on a regular basis.
- The CARE Team will report to the Board of Management and the educational partners after each meeting via the Principal.

Review and Evaluation

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____ and will be reviewed every two years.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____