

Curragh Post Primary School

Introduction and Scope of this Policy:

This document sets out the policy of Curragh Post Primary School in relation to the pastoral care provided to our students and staff. As a school, we try to create an atmosphere of care and concern within which each student is cared for and feels cared for and where each student can feel safe and valued as he / she grows to maturity.

Relationship to school's Mission / Vision / Aims:

Curragh Post Primary School's Mission Statement is as follows:

Mission Statement

Our School values the gifts and talents of students and staff in their development in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. Can we achieve this? Yes, we can. Is Féidir Linn.

Ráiteas Misin

Luachanna ár scoil ná na buanna, taillainne agus fireann na scoile i bhfobairt san atmaisféar cothromais, comhbhách agus coimhease. An féidir linn é a dhéanamh? Is Féidir Lin seo a dhéanamh.

Définition de notre mission

Notre établissement a pour vocation de valoriser les capacités et les talents de ses étudiants et de son personnel dans leur évolution, dans un esprit d'équité, de sollicitude et de respect mutuel. Pouvons-nous accomplir cela? Oui, nous le pouvons.

This Pastoral Care Policy is another important framework within which “the development of whole people, empowered to lead effective lives in the wider society” is enhanced in our school. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent / guardian is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy.

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us to preparing all students for the challenges of adolescent and adult life and to respecting the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community. The school's role in the development of young people supports and is enriched by the active participation of teachers and parents / guardians in many aspects of students' lives.

Rationale:

This Pastoral Care Policy aims to ensure that appropriate opportunities and procedures are in place to enable the school

- to offer a quality and holistic education to our students;
- to ensure that the education programme is supported by the pastoral care experiences of all students;
- to ensure that the students are supported in their efforts to live positively;
- to build an atmosphere of trust;
- to respond in an appropriate way to the concerns, fears and worries of our students and
- to ensure that parents / guardians are as fully informed as possible about the pastoral care and support offered by the school.

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Goals:

The school shall have in place appropriate means and processes;

- to help students with decision making;
- to prepare them for educational choices;
- to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion enabling students to develop a framework for responsible decision making;
- to enhance their personal lives;
- to encourage respect for person and property;
- to involve parents / guardians in the pastoral care of their children; and, ultimately,
- to support the role of parents / guardians as the primary educators.

Role of School Staff:

During their second level education, students experience significant milestones of growth and change – often transferring from small national schools to a large second level school; adolescence and all of its challenges and opportunities; new subjects; new relationships with peers, with school staff and within the family structure. School staff are available to guide, encourage and support students throughout their time in Curragh Post Primary School and every effort is made to ensure that the uniqueness and dignity of each person is respected and responded to.

Class teachers – Students spend 28 hours per week in class, and, thus, the classroom teacher is a critical adult contact person for our students. Each teacher is expected and encouraged to respond to and behave positively towards students on the corridors, in classrooms and throughout the school. Each teacher is expected to work to ensure that each pupil is enabled to derive the maximum benefit from the classes, develop good homework and study routines and reach the highest standard of attainment that each student is capable of.

Year Head – Each year group has been assigned a member of the senior management team who, as Year Head, plays a valuable role in leading, encouraging, advising and inspiring the students in his / her designated year group. Year Heads, also, monitor student attendance, behaviour and progress as well as the welfare of each individual student and the group as a collective unit. Each Year Head has is supported by both the Deputy Principal and Principal who works with him / her in this challenging but important role.

Chaplain – The Chaplain, as a faith presence, accompanies each person on the journey through life. The Chaplain animates the spiritual life of the school community, supports the religion faculty of the school, facilitates the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation, is a resource and spiritual support to the staff, maintains a close link with the local church community.

Guidance Counsellor – The school's Guidance Counsellor responds to the needs of students under three distinct but integrated areas of activity:

- Personal and social guidance and counselling;
- Educational guidance and counselling and
- Career guidance and counselling.

At times, young people need help in meeting their own personal as well as society's challenges.

The Guidance Counsellor is available to meet with students (usually by appointment) to help them deal with issues relating to low self-esteem, relationships, grief and substance abuse, etc.

The approach in counselling is to encourage students to reflect on their thoughts and actions and to empower them to take control and to deal with situations that they encounter.

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Students can attend for counselling by self-referral, by parents'/guardians' request and by the Year Head suggesting that they meet the Guidance Counsellor. Where referrals come from other sources, e.g. friends and subject teachers, the Guidance Counsellor will usually consult with the Year Head and possibly with the Deputy Principal / Principal. The Guidance Counsellor will always contact parents/guardians to inform them that their child is attending counselling in the school.

It is the parents' / guardians' right to stop their child attending counselling, and it is the student's choice as to whether he/she continues meeting the Guidance Counsellor.

In personal counselling, the confidentiality role is followed. Records of personal counselling sessions are kept and are usually written up as soon as possible after the sessions.

Summary reference records of personal counselling sessions are also produced at the end of every month.

Counselling cases are presented at counselling. With the support of school management, external "supervision sessions" are attended on a regular basis by the school's Guidance Counsellor. This is an invaluable source of advice and support for the Guidance Counsellor.

Guidance Department Reporting Procedures

In both personal counselling and in careers / vocational guidance interviews, the confidentiality rule is followed i.e., as appropriate, school management, class teacher(s), Year Head(s), and / or parents / guardians are informed if it is felt that the student is a danger to him / herself and / or to others or it is a legal requirement. The student is informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of a session. If it is felt it is in the student's best interests to inform a teacher / parent / guardian of a particular difficulty, this is normally done with the knowledge and, hopefully, the agreement of the student.

Learning Support Staff – The school welcomes students with special educational needs. Such students are cared for in additional ways by learning support teachers, resource teachers and, where appropriate, Special Needs Assistants, who have a responsibility to encourage and guide students in their activities in the school.

Non teaching staff – the school's non teaching staff are expected and encouraged to respond to and behave positively towards students on the corridors and throughout the school.

Pastoral Care & Student Support Team:

The school's Pastoral Care / Student Support Team has the following members: the Principal, Deputy Principal, a nominated teacher, School Completion Coordinator, Home School Liaison Officer and the Guidance Counsellor. The Pastoral Care / Student Support Team meet at least once every week. Meetings are chaired by the Principal and a single written record is prepared. The Student Support Team is joined by other staff members, especially Year Heads, as appropriate.

Availability of the Pastoral Care / Student Support Team:

- The Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team are available to help or provide assistance to students, staff and parents / guardians, needing individual, personal, social and spiritual guidance.
- The Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team meet formally about individual students with each other and with other members of staff when necessary.

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- Year Heads, teachers, parents / guardians and Learning Support teachers can refer students to the Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team.
- Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team can, also, refer students to each other and students may self refer.
- The Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team actively keep an “eye out” on vulnerable students.

- Where appropriate, the Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team, under the direction of the Principal, avails of the support of local clergy, doctors, Gardai, social workers, education welfare officers, psychologists and visiting teachers for traveller students.

- At least two of the Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team visit homes at times of bereavements, critical incidents, etc.

- If there is a serious concern for a student, the Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team follow the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines and report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person – the Principal.

The Pastoral Care Staff / Student Support Team strive to promote a spirit of concern for others within and beyond the school community.

Within the School Community:

- *Leadership Group:* This is a group of students who works to make the school a more caring environment, especially for the First Year Students. The group works in close contact with the School Completion Coordinator.

Activities organized by the group may include:

- Welcome day for the First Year students;
- Soccer and basketball leagues;
- Halloween and Fancy Dress party for First Year Students;
- Dance classes and
- Movie afternoon.

- *Student Council:* This assists students to become involved in school matters by encouraging them to become involved appropriately in part of the organisation of school life; by developing leadership skills and attributes in its members and by deepening the relationship between students, staff, Parents’ Council and the school Board of Management.

Emergency Medical Care:

- At least three members of staff are trained in First Aid.
- Each classroom has a fully stocked First Aid kit.

Areas for Future Development:

- Rainbows Programme;
- Anger-management courses for students;
- Self-esteem courses for students and
- Art / Music Therapy for students.

Education:

Students, through the school’s curriculum, will be educated about taking care of themselves, each other and the world around them.

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In particular, sections of the courses taught in Home Economics, Religious Education, Civic, Social and Political Education (C.S.P.E.), Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) and Science, as well as other subjects, will deal in a broad way with physical, mental, moral, intellectual, sexual and social growth and development, as well as personal and collective responsibility. For example, in S.P.H.E., the following modules will be taught in each year of the junior cycle: Belonging and Integrating, Self Management: a Sense of Purpose, Communication Skills, Physical Health, Friendship, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use and Personal Safety.

What can Parents / Guardians do?

The school is a supportive organisation in respect of the primary educators – parents / guardians. Our efforts to provide holistic education, in its various forms, are most meaningful and effective when parents / guardians both understand and support our aims and activities.

Parents / guardians should work with the school to ensure that students get the best advice, support, direction and encouragement in all areas of their lives.

Parents / guardians should feel free to contact the school office and staff about any matter that gives rise to concerns about their children's welfare. Such concerns will be dealt with appropriately and supportively.

All Parents / guardians are encouraged to either join and / or support the work of the Parents' Council: Organising parent nights; Organising study skills days for students; Providing financial support to teachers in various subject areas; Catering for school functions; Organising and assisting with the school book scheme.

Pastoral Care of School Staff

As stated above, the school is a supportive organisation in respect of the primary educators – parents / guardians. It is, also, committed to creating a school climate where all members of staff are supported and valued in their work. As part of that commitment, the Board and K.W.E.T.B. recognises the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of the school's staff and, at all times, the Board is keen to play its part in supporting staff morale, collegiality and welfare.

The Board and K.W.E.T.B. has adopted the "Dignity in the Workplace Charter", as well as creating, reviewing and amending, as appropriate, school policies relevant to student and staff well being.

As appropriate and within the limits of its authority and resources, the Board will support all members of the school's staff in their work.

Review Procedures:

This policy will be reviewed regularly and by the Board of Management every four years. Any staff member who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The Parents' Council and / or the Students' Council may request a formal review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible by the Board of Management.

Adopted by Board of Management: December 16th 2013

Review Date:

November 2017

Strictly Confidential
Referral / Report Form

Date of Initial Observation / Referral / Report: _____

Name of Student: _____

Nature of Concern

Perceived Level of Urgency:

- **Extremely Urgent**
- **Very Urgent**
- **Moderately Urgent**
- **Minor Urgency**

Name of Care Team Member this Report was given to: _____

Signature of Initial Reporting Staff Member: _____

Date Received by Care Team: _____

Follow Up Action taken by Care Team:

Signed: _____

Date: _____