



St. Munchin's College

Pastoral Care Policy

Pastoral Care should permeate all areas of school life.

In St. Munchin's College we hope to develop and implement an effective Pastoral Care Programme to promote the personal, social, spiritual, moral, educational and vocational needs of all but especially to the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

In our school community we foster relationships based on our 3 R's Respect, Responsibility and Relationships. We engender a sense of belonging to our school community where each individual is valued and her/his uniqueness is recognised. We promote a school community that is caring and positive. This work will be carried out in an environment that is both safe and secure for all members of our school community. We here in St. Munchin's College 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, Vision and Aims of St. Munchin's College. We value all in the school community and endeavour to develop each member of the school community.

Rationale for policy:

Pastoral Care is an integral part of our mission in St. Munchin's College and as such it needs a formal structure to ensure its effectiveness in our school community on a day- by-day basis and particularly at critical times. In St. Munchin's College we believe Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life.

Goals of the Policy:

This Pastoral Care Policy is aware of and is informed by the legislative requirements of:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)

That each member of the school community will

- Feel valued and cared for
- Be developed to his/her full potential – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially, personally and aesthetically
- Have a sense of belonging to our school community

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Pastoral Care Support 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 founding partners are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

-Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principals will work to ensure that our school is primarily a caring community. The management is committed to supporting all those involved in the pastoral care programme in St. Munchin's College. The management makes time available to meet parents, staff and students in a supportive atmosphere.

The 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.

-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.

-Chaplain

The School Chaplain is in a unique position to assist the pastoral care system within our school. The Chaplain will work with the staff in providing spiritual and pastoral care to the whole school community and will communicate at all times with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads, Tutors and Parents on all relevant matters relating to the students.

-Class Teacher

Teachers conduct classes in a structured and ordered environment. The relationship fostered in the class is based on mutual respect. The classroom teacher deals with situations that arise in class and in more serious situations s/he refers the student to a Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, (Counsellor or Chaplain) as outlined in our school Code of Behaviour.

-Critical Incident Team

The Critical Incident Team is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor and members of staff. The Team will meet on a regular basis.

-Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Department provides a wide range of services including Vocational/Educational Guidance, Personal Development/Counselling, Aptitude/Interest Inventory testing. The Guidance Counsellor 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.

-Parents Association

As a partner in St. Munchin's College the Parents Association contributes significantly to policy making. Through their involvement in the association parents show their commitment to student welfare and development. The Parents Association contributes to various programmes in the school.

-Religious Education (RE) Teachers

The RE teachers deliver the RE Programme to all students in the school.
Refer to policy.

-The Student Council and Student Council Liason Teacher

The Student Council is a representative structure for all the students in the school. It provides students with the opportunity to become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents. It should always work for the benefit of the school and its students. The Student Council will always work in consultation with the school management.

The Student Council has responsibility for:

- Working with the staff, Board of Management and Parents' Association in the school
- 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
- Managing and accounting to the Student Council and Board of Management, for any funds raised by the Council.

-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 enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfillment and living in communities
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

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

-Learning Support/Resource Teachers

The learning support teachers support students academically as well as socially and personally to facilitate their holistic education. The work is carried out in conjunction with the mainstream teachers and in collaboration with home and external agencies.

-Special Needs Assistants

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

-Student Attendance Liaison Co-Ordinator

The Student Attendance Liaison Co-Ordinator will facilitate students in full attendance at school and will pay particular attention to those students who are at risk of dropping out.

-Students

Relationships in the school will be based on our 3 R's Model Respect, Responsibility and Relationships. 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.

-Tutors

The Class Tutor takes particular care of one class group. S/he engenders 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.

-Year Heads

Year Heads play a major role in the care and support of our students. They are responsible for holding year group assemblies, and tutor team meetings. They have constant contact with parents and guardians on the progress and performance of the students. They also communicate with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain and Learning Support teachers on issues relating to their year group.

Pastoral Care Programmes:

The following policies/programmes will contribute to the Pastoral Care Programme in a positive and caring manner.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The purpose of our Anti Bullying policy is:

- To raise the awareness of bullying and
- To have procedures in place to deal with incidents of bullying.

Refer to policy.

Care of new students who join during the school year – Year Heads, Tutors, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor

The relevant Year Head and Tutor will provide advice and assistance to new students who join St. Munchin's College during the academic year. The Year Head and Tutor will monitor the performance and integration of the relevant students in St. Munchin's College, over the initial 4-6 weeks period, by consulting with the student's teachers. During this period the Year Head and/or Tutor will meet with the relevant students and enquire how they are settling in at the College 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.

Refer to Code of Behaviour.

Critical Incident Policy

The Critical Incident Policy is in place to specify procedures that will be place should a critical incident occur in addition to naming the personnel taking responsibility for different roles.

Extra-Curricular Activities - Teachers

A wide range of activities including sporting, cultural, dramatic and artistic events facilitate the personal development of students, assists the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

Health and Safety

Refer to policy.

Homework Policy

To promote in the student body the value of homework and study in the learning process and to promote independent learning and creativity.

Refer to policy.

Induction Programme for First Year students – Principal, Deputy Principal, Relevant Year Head, Tutors, Guidance Counsellor and Chaplain

An induction programme for incoming first year students is held at the beginning of the academic year. The Year Head and Tutors advise the first year students of the Code of Behaviour expected in St. Munchin's college. Timetables and maps of the school building are distributed to the new students and the Tutors conduct an orientation session with their individual classes and inform them of all aspects of school life. This may be achieved by Year Heads in Assemblies and by Tutors in tutor classes.

We also use a text book "**Stepping Up**" which is an induction programme that uses the principle's from the NBSS Moving Across Programme (MAP). The following points itemize the main aspects of our Transition from Primary to Post Primary Induction Programme:

- ✓ ***Transition from Primary to Post Primary Programme***– *New pupils and their parents are supported by a comprehensive Transition Programme. Students are met regularly by their class tutors and by members of the Pastoral Care Team. The Programme Includes:*
- ✓ ***Formal Visits to Primary Schools:*** *As a school we coordinate formal visits to the feeder schools and have an open day for parents, students and the staff of the feeder schools. This ensures that parents know how to best relay information about the child to the school – e.g. the individual to whom they should talk to – and assure them that such communication is welcome.*
- ✓ ***Parents:*** *Parents are invited in on the first day (in the afternoon) to assist their First Year child with his books for his locker. While this may seem insignificant it is extremely instrumental in building relationships between the school community and parents. This we feel is important because First Year parents can often be apprehensive themselves about secondary school so any activity that can alleviate that apprehension is a positive. This partnership between parents and the school community is underpinned by sections 26 and 27 of the **Education Act 1998**, which place an onus on the School's Board of Management to promote parent and student involvement in the school. We believe that parental involvement in all aspects of school life should be promoted and encouraged. Involvement leads to parents viewing the school positively, which in turn leads to their children having a positive attitude towards school and thus a greater respect for our policies and procedures including attendance. Maintaining regular contact with parents and involving them in all aspects of school life is essential to the building of trust and good relationships.*
- ✓ ***Testing:*** *Our comprehensive testing of first year students is undertaken to ensure that teachers have a clear picture of the student's ability in various subject areas. This ensures that teachers are informed of a student's areas of strength and weakness and can differentiate accordingly. Such testing is carried out in the months prior to September (March, April and May). In this way the students have become familiar with the school*

building prior to their first day in September. This is significant in that it eliminates all of the nervousness and tension invested in that “First Day at Secondary School”. By the time the first year student attends the school officially on his first day, he will have visited the school for the open night and well as attending the school on 3 further occasions to complete assessments. This familiarity is important for all students but particularly for students with ASD who need to know what their new environment will look like.

- ✓ ***Communication with Primary School:** We have liaised with feeder primary schools and have **gathered relevant, up-to-date information** from the appropriate partners to facilitate the application for suitable resources as early as possible. Resources do not automatically transfer and it important to note that parental consent is required to access and use professional reports that may be needed for such applications. The need for this kind of communication and consultation is noted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in its *Guidelines for the Teaching of Students with General Learning Disabilities*.*
- ✓ ***Information Packs/ Leaflets/ Induction Booklets for Parents;** The school has provided **information packs and information booklets** which provide details on subject curricula, extra-curricular activities, resources, school procedures a version for both students and parents. Such information packs provide information on the various professional roles to the primary school staff, parents and students, along with any relevant procedures – for example, the roles of the year head, class tutor, SEN coordinator, special needs assistant, etc. We find that this is extremely important as all schools vary so it is essential that personnel in our feeder schools are familiar with our procedures here in the College. This creates a more effective platform on which our transition programme can be built.*
- ✓ ***Induction Activities:** We have developed specific **induction activities** during the first week after enrolment which is covered during class at tutor time. We have also introduced a new induction booklet “**Stepping Up**” for students to fill out daily so as to improve their understanding of what it is to be a post primary student.*
- ✓ ***Mentoring:** Over the last few years the school has introduced a **mentoring system** whereby for example older students from Transition Year take some responsibility for first years within the induction week and for the school year.*
- ✓ ***Name Badges:** All first year students have **name badges** as well as **name badges for teachers**. This is useful for first year students in the first few weeks to familiarize themselves with the teachers and vice versa.*
- ✓ ***Special Educational Needs:** Our **SEN Team Provide opportunities for subject teachers to learn about specific needs and establish a formalized system (one note) for the dissemination of appropriate information to teachers at the start of the year and during the school year.** In school CPD days are set aside for our SEN team to update our staff on new teaching techniques and methodologies that come on stream to enhance the teaching experiences of students with specific learning difficulties. This ensures an inclusive classroom for all.*
- ✓ ***SPHE:** As part of the SPHE programme a module on Induction to Secondary school clearly explains both school and class organisation (e.g. We explain how to read timetables; Explain and model how to record homework in a journal; Explain about the use of lockers, canteen and other such day-to-day organizational issues)*
- ✓ ***Colour Coding;** We have introduced **colour coding** of timetables and books to help in assisting the students with organisational skills.*
- ✓ ***Mass:** The school celebrates **an Opening of the Year Mass**, which focuses on the positives of being in a new school and welcomes the first years to our school community while welcoming back the existing members of our community.*

- ✓ **Relevant Curriculum:** *The school offers ‘taster’ subjects to be offered during first year (September to Christmas). A parent information evening is held to explain the main concepts involved in each subject and also to identify to parents the specific skill set required to study specific subjects.*
- ✓ **Empathetic Personnel:** *If a difficulty persists, the above school personnel meet with parents and a strategy/strategies, pertinent to the needs of the individual child, is/are agreed and implemented.*

An **induction information booklet** is sent to parents of incoming first year students in the month of June. This booklet outlines for parents important information pertinent to 1st years. For example the structure of the school day, break times, homework completion, study time guidelines etc. This booklet is directed at parents as opposed to students as very often parents feel that they are isolated from their child’s secondary school education due to the fact that secondary school has changed so much since they attended themselves. The booklet therefore is designed to explain in detail all aspects of school life and to alleviate any stresses or concerns that parents may have. Our philosophy here in St. Munchin’s college is such that-if parents feel comfortable and happy with the school community that their child is entering this facilitates hugely the transition process.

Information Evening for Parents of incoming First Year students – Relevant Year Head, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor

The parents of the incoming First Year students are invited to the school in September for an information evening. The aim of the evening is to help the parents and the incoming students with a smooth transition from primary to post-primary school.

Induction Policy for New Staff

An induction meeting 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 new teachers of various working policies and procedures operating within the school.
Refer to policy.

Induction Programme for Parents of Transition Year students – Transition Year Co-Ordinator

The Transition Year Co-Ordinators invite the parents of prospective transition year students to an information evening in March of the preceding academic year.

Parent information Evenings for all other Year Groups (2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Years)

Parent Information Evenings are held in the month of September for the parents of all year groups. The information delivered at such meetings is pertinent to students in that particular year. Such meetings provide an opportunity for parents to come into the school and ask any questions that they may have regarding their son’s progress etc. We as a school find such information evenings to be hugely successful.

Mentoring Programme – Droichead

- A Mentoring Programme referred to as Droichead is in place in St. Munchin’s College for all Newly Qualified Teacher’s (NQT’s). The induction programme enables staff to integrate into the school community and work effectively individually and as part of a team.
- To make new staff aware of the school philosophy, aims and objectives.
- To develop knowledge and skills of new staff to provide job satisfaction, motivation and a quality learning experiences for all students.

- To provide opportunities for new staff to be informed of school procedures and educational developments.
- To enable new teachers to recognise issues pertinent to them and to be able to share experiences and ideas.
- To enable new staff to be confident in asking for and receiving help.
- To build confidence and expertise in the classroom and in other areas of responsibility.

Droichead is fundamentally about the NQT's professional journey and the process of induction. A key part of this process is the NQT's engagement with more experienced colleagues, and reflection on the professional conversations that take place their own professional learning and practice

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.

#Soundeffects.

One positive aspect of school life that we are looking to share is the **#Soundeffects programme**. The idea for **#Soundeffects** has been launched by **Bressie** and his mental health awareness campaign "**Lust for life**". We are adapting it to fit in to our school context here at St. Munchin's. We are fortunate in this school to have so many well behaved respectful, mannerly and courteous young men and equally fortunate to have over the years built up a culture of respect between teacher and student and vice versa. While we do recognise, acknowledge and appraise a lot of this good behaviour we feel that we could be doing more to accentuate all of the good behaviour that goes on. This is where **#Soundeffects** comes in!!

In a world that can often amplify fear and negativity we believe deep down that most people and the majority of our students are in fact "Sound". The word sound is a word that is often used both by ourselves and by the students. It is a slang word. To be sound is a state of existence. It usually refers to someone who willingly does a favour, asked or not, although usually unexpected. Also "sound" can be used as an adjective to describe a genuine nice person. Someone who is decent and kind and an overall good human being.

In the context of an alarming increase in mental ill health in Ireland and an urgency around how we are going to tackle the real pain faced by many people including some of our own students, we need to focus our energies on "**Being Sound**" and promoting overall well being which is at the core of positive mental health.

Teachers are asked to record any instances of sound actions that you come across. Write down the action that you observed a student carrying out that in your opinion was a "sound" action. This can be written on the specially printed #Soundeffects Card. Completed cards can be submitted into the box outside the Deputy Principal's office door, labelled "**The Little Box of Sound**". Once you log and submit your experience of a sound action, this piece of paper will be posted up on our sound effects display cabinet located inside the front door. It is up to the teacher as to how they reward the student it could be verbal praise or a small bar of chocolate. This would be done not in front of the class but rather a quiet word of praise. In a staff of nearly 50 people it would be fantastic if even once a week every member of staff wrote some sound action on a post it and then put it in the box outside my office. **#Soundeffects** is about sharing something sound that someone else did for you. It can be a very small gesture (a student staying back to push in your chairs after class, a student that is always mannerly and respectful or a student that has helped one of his peers in some way that you are aware of).

At the end of the year we hope to have a series of sound actions posted up in the #Soundeffects display cabinet. We are also hoping to have a 2 page spread in the Torch magazine of sound actions that have been witnessed by staff.

Awards

An Awards Ceremony is organised by the Principal, Deputy Principal and Relevant Year Head and held at both Christmas and the end of each academic year. Awards are given for:

- Academic Achievement
- Contribution to School Life

Each subject teacher nominates a student from his/her class based on performance, improvement and effort made throughout the year.

Potentially Life Threatening and Chronic Illness

Refer to policy.

Prefects System – Year Head and Chaplain

A Prefects System for selected students from sixth year is in operation in the school. The aim of this programme is to help the selected students to develop leadership skills, to liaise with First Year students assisting with their transition from primary to secondary school and to perform other duties within the school as may be required.

Refer to programme.

Religious Education

Refer to the policy.

Role of Year Heads and Tutors

To monitor attendance, academic performance and personal development

To implement a study skills programme (in conjunction with Study Skills Co-Ordinator) for all students.

Guidelines on the role of the Year Head and on the role of the Tutor are issued to all teachers at the beginning of the school year.

Sports Awards Evening – Games Master

A sports awards evening is organised in May at the end of the academic year. All teachers and the students involved in sporting activities and their parents are invited. The teachers involved in the various sporting activities outline the achievements of the students throughout the year. A 'special guest of honour' usually presents the students with the trophies and medals won during the year in a wide range of national, county and local competitions. Special awards are presented for 'the player of the year' and 'the most improved player' for each activity.

Substance Misuse Policy

Refer to the policy.

Supervised Study – After School and Evening Study

A supervised study facility is available in the school (on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.) This facility is open to all students and for students who may struggle with the payment of study the College will offer to sponsor that student to ensure that they do not miss out.

Pastoral Procedures:

- Key Pastoral Care personnel meeting -
- Year Group Assembly
- Tutor Class – Tutor Time for 10 minutes daily
- Meeting – Relevant Year Head and Tutors (Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support invited if necessary)
- Meeting – Relevant Year Head, Tutor, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support/Resource if necessary
- Critical Incident Procedure
- Individual Counselling
- Chaplain – Individual Meetings
- Year Head- Individual Meetings
- Deputy Principal-Individual Meetings
- Principal- Individual Meetings
- Special Occasions – Bereavement
Allegations of violence, bullying, abuse
Suspicion of violence, bullying, abuse, pregnancy, suicide tendencies, self-harm, cult involvement, occult involvement
Disclosure – where mandatory and when appropriate

Performance Criteria

The Pastoral Care Programmes are being implemented effectively.

The Pastoral Care procedures are effective.

The Goals of the policy that each member of the school community will

- Feel valued and cared for
- Be developed to his/her full potential – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially, personally and aesthetically in line with our Mission Statement
- Have a sense of belonging to our school community.

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.

- Tutors/Year Heads/Guidance Counsellor will meet with class group/Year Group regularly to monitor the Pastoral Care Programme.
- Year Head meeting with Principal and Deputy Principals will monitor Pastoral Care on a regular basis. The Pastoral care Support Team will be

invited to attend such meetings once per month. A Pastoral Care List will also be devised for each year group to ensure that all students are met but that those with immediate needs are met in a timely fashion.

- Teachers will discuss academic and pastoral development of each student at Parent/Teacher Meetings.
- The Pastoral Care Team (Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Well Being Coordinator and other members of staff) will meet regularly to monitor the Policy.

Reporting of Monitoring and Implementation of the Policy

The Pastoral Care Team will monitor the implementation of the policy on a regular basis and report to the Pastoral Care Support Team (Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Well Being Coordinator and SEN Coordinator) once a year.

The Pastoral Care Task Team will report to the Board of Management and the educational partners after each meeting via the Principal.

Review and Evaluation

This Policy will be ratified by the Board of Management on its first convening following the Summer Break 2020.

Signed:

Mr. David Quilter
Principal

Mr. Philip McAuliffe
Chairperson Board of Management
