

**St. Cuan's College,
Castleblakney
Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.**



Pastoral Care Policy

Adopted and Ratified by St. Cuan's College Board of Management: _____ 2018.

Signed: _____
Justin Harkin
Chairperson

Signed: _____
Collette Kennedy Walsh
Principal

Mission Statement

St. Cuan College is a Catholic Diocesan Co-Educational College.

St. Cuan's College is dedicated to the academic, social, cultural and spiritual growth of its students. In this pursuit, we are devoted to achieving the highest attainable level of education and promoting the development of young men and women of strong moral character consistent with the school's Christian tradition.

We endeavour to create a stimulating, respectful and supportive environment for staff, students and families in which all are valued and encouraged to develop and share their unique talents. St Cuan's College promotes further education beyond Leaving Certificate, inviting the local community to join us in our pursuit of personal development - mind, body and spirit.

Introduction

For the purpose of this policy *Pastoral Care* is defined as the integration of the intellectual, moral, spiritual, personal and social dimensions of St. Cuan's College's mission statement such that an atmosphere of genuine care favourable to student learning and on-going holistic development prevails within our school community.

Through the pastoral care arrangements and provision outlined below St. Cuan's College demonstrates its continuing concern for the holistic wellbeing and development of all students, mindful of the call of the Gospel and of the requirement of the 1998 Education Act, that the college promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of [all our] students.

The college recognises that our pastoral care provision is at its most effective when fully integrated into our school's daily curriculum, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. This is the longstanding practice promoted by the Board of Management, School Management Team, Teaching and Ancillary Staff of St. Cuan's College.

Through this policy we also recognise the individuality of each person in our school community and acknowledge that some members may need extra support during difficult times.

Policy Rationale

St. Cuan's College recognises the importance of its pastoral approach as evidenced in all its policies and practices. Pastoral Care has long been a core dimension of school life and as such is recognised as an ongoing crucial expression of the characteristic spirit of the college.

Policy Objectives

The objectives are fourfold:

1. To elucidate the pastoral aims of St. Cuan's College
2. to present the pastoral approach adopted in St. Cuan's College
3. to give definition to the roles and responsibilities entailed in this approach, and
4. to illuminate the programmes and procedures which together serve the pastoral aims of St. Cuan's College.

Pastoral Aims

- To respond in a sympathetic and understanding way to the concerns, fears and worries of all students.
- To encourage the students to value one another and to respect the views of other members of St. Cuan's school community.
- To develop the students self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline.
- To give students the skill and abilities to overcome challenges they may face as part of growing up.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion enabling students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
- To provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all students
- To prepare the students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- To acknowledge and support each member of the school community as they go about their work / fulfil their responsibilities
- To promote an environment conducive to student learning and to meeting all their other needs
- To give priority to the nurturing of teaching and learning relationships
- To recognise and celebrate the talents and abilities of students and staff
- To offer (staff) strong collaborative leadership in support of the holistic education and development of all our students
- To monitor (staff) the progression of all our students and to provide them with an engaging curriculum both in term of content and teaching-learning methodologies
- To give expression to the values inherent in the above aims in an encouraging way such that they continue to animate the characteristic spirit of St. Cuan's College.

Pastoral Approach to our School

St Cuan's College supports its students academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Our approach to pastoral care is evident in all policies, with particular detail given in the policies such as on Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Alcohol and Drug Use and Special Educational Needs.

The following are a number of school practices in which the aims of pastoral care are actualised.

1st year Induction Programme:

Incoming First Years are given a day at the start of the school year to meet their Year Heads and learn basic information and school policy. The programme includes a tour of the school, a review of school's discipline and Code of Behaviour policy and meeting their Student Prefects.

In conjunction with the Induction team, the First Years are given time to get to know one another and air any anxieties or problems they might have upon beginning secondary school. This programme begins the first day of school and is run on a weekly basis for the first month of school.

Parent's Night:

A Parent's Night is held on a yearly basis to deal with issues which arise during the school year.

Prefect System:

Senior Prefects are chosen and trained to act as representatives and mentors to junior students. The prefects are under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff and meet with that teacher and the Deputy Principal on the first Friday of every month.

Student Council:

A Student Council operates in the school. Students are nominated and elected by their peers. The Council meets under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff. They are given an opportunity to air views and suggestions in relation to school activities and policies.

Year Heads

Each year has two designated Form Teachers. The Form Teachers, or Year Heads, deal with a variety of issues that directly affect students. Students are encouraged to go to their Form Teachers in the event of either social or academic difficulties.

Study Skills:

Study skill programmes are made available on a yearly basis to all years. This is to help students learn basic study techniques.

Folk Group, School Musical, Get Fit and Sports:

Students are encouraged to take part in non-curricular activities which give them opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents. Matches and performances are held during the academic year.

Awards, 2nd and 5th year Academic Programmes:

Students are recognised for achieving academically and socially. The school presents certificates, merits, medals and trophies.

Academic Monitor:

Post holders perform tasks in relation to academic monitoring. As such any student who is perceived by a teacher as having difficulty can be referred to their Academic Monitor. The Monitor will investigate and find means of addressing the situation. While the monitoring is academic in nature, the school recognises that emotional difficulties most often manifest in a change in academic performance.

Guidance Counselling and Special Educational Needs (including learning support):

These areas are approached with our school's pastoral aims (as outlined above)

in mind. Further information may be found in the Guidance and SEN policies themselves.

Religious Education (RE) & Chaplaincy:

RE is offered for every academic year and from September 2018 our pastoral care provision will be complemented by a part-time school chaplaincy service. Detail of provision in both areas can be seen in our RE and Chaplaincy plans.

Priest Chaplains are available to Catholic students and the college, subject to parental / guardian approval is open to facilitating students meet with persons in recognised leadership roles within their denominational / faith communities.

SPHE:

Social, Personal and Health Education is offered from First to Third Year.

Transition Year:

Transition Year is offered by the school and is structured around the development of the student in a manner in keeping with our pastoral aims.

Pastoral Roles: Responsibilities

St Cuan's College recognises that school staff perform key pastoral duties by virtue of positive and attentive daily interactions with students both in and outside the classroom. As a result, all teachers are responsible for ensuring the aims of our school's pastoral approach are met.

Individual teachers are encouraged to help any student within their position as a Class Teacher or Yard Supervisor. They may do this in a variety of ways, such as speaking with the student, airing concerns to parents at scheduled parent/teacher meetings, making notes in the student's journal.

However, the school recognises that a pastoral concern may require more attention than that of one individual teacher. Any teacher or member of staff with a pastoral concern for a student may bring the situation directly to the attention of the following:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Prefects
- Academic Monitor
- School Chaplain
- Guidance counsellor
- Board of Management

1. The role of the Principal and Deputy Principal in relation to Pastoral Care:

The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the duties pertaining to this role are detailed in the school's Child Protection Policy. The Deputy

Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is the Deputy Principal.

2. The role of the Year Heads in relation to Pastoral Care:

The Year Heads are the first adult point of contact for many students. In addition to helping students settle in, Year Heads provide students with an opportunity to bring concerns to an adult directly. Year Heads may deal with a student's concerns in a number of ways including; advising the student, contacting parents, contacting a subject teacher, facilitating reasonable changes within the school environment which may provide the concerned student with reassurance.

If the concern brought to the Year Head is beyond the assistance that teacher is able to provide, then the Year Head is obliged to notify the Principal or Deputy Principal of the issue concerned.

3. The role of the Prefects in relation to Pastoral Care:

St. Cuan's Prefect System allows students to go to older students in order to report a problem or solicit advice. The Prefects facilitate students who may feel uncomfortable going to an adult. The Prefects may take a student's concern and act on those concerns within the social network of the school. They may, for example, act as a liaison between students who are having a disagreement, or in cases where a party feels aggrieved. The school provides the Prefects with training in this area.

If the concern brought to the Prefect is beyond the assistance that student is able to provide, then the Prefect is obliged to notify the Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal of the issue concerned.

4. The role of the Academic Monitor in relation to Pastoral Care:

Although the Academic Monitors are specific to a student's performance in class, the school recognises that very poor academic performance, or a profound change in terms of performance, are strong indicators of a student's mental health. When a Subject Teacher recognises either of these indicators, they are to report their concerns to the assigned Monitor.

The Monitor will then collate academic information from a number of the student's teachers in order to get an over-all picture of the student's performance in school. The Monitor will then talk with the student concerned and evaluate the issues that arise. The Monitor will give a report of the investigation with recommendations to the Principal.

5. The role of the School Chaplain in relation to Pastoral Care:

The role of the School Chaplain and of priest chaplains is dealt with specifically in the Chaplaincy plan.

6. The role of the Guidance Counsellor in relation to Pastoral Care:

The role of the Guidance Counsellor is dealt with specifically in the Career Guidance Policy. Please refer to this policy for details.

7. The role of the Board of Management in relation to Pastoral Care:

The Board of Management must ensure that every student issue is dealt with in light of this policy as well as the legislation set out in the Child Protection Policy and the relevant sections of the 1998 Education Act. In relation to staff issues the Board must also ensure that every issue is dealt with in light of the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000–2015.

The Board will ratify and review all school policies on the basis that the Pastoral Care objectives of the school are supported in the practice of those policies.

Pastoral Care Policy: criteria for success

The success of a school's attitude towards the pastoral care of its students can be identified by the holistic atmosphere in the school itself. Indicators that the policy is successful can also be gauged by the number of school discipline breaches, drop-out/school transfer rates, the general academic achievement of the students, the take-up of the Transition Year programme and participation in non-curricular events.

Student questionnaires are circulated at the end of each academic year and allow students to give feedback on a wide range of their school experiences.

These indicators will be tracked by the Principal and Deputy Principal and will be analysed in light of pastoral care issues.

Responsibility for dissemination

The Principal is responsible for informing all staff of the policy and ensuring it is adhered to, revised and relevant.

Pastoral Care Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed as pertinent issues arise and is annually reviewed at staff and Board of Management meetings.