



Coláiste Pobail Acla

Pastoral Care Policy

Coláiste Pobail Acla,
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1. Introduction

This Pastoral Care policy was created in accordance with the Mission Statement of Coláiste Pobail Acla.

We strive to motivate our school community to realise its full potential academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally in a safe, supportive environment.

Our pastoral care policy encompasses all aspects of school life and all members of our school community. Pastoral care permeates all areas of school life in Coláiste Pobail Acla. We value all members of the school community and endeavour to develop the full potential of all individuals.

2. Rationale for Policy

Pastoral Care is an integral part of school life and is a fundamental element of our mission in Coláiste Pobail Acla. It is defined as the systems, roles, resources, structures, policies, programmes and processes employed to support the development of all students in our school community. Pastoral Care is an integral part of our approach to a holistic education, which puts the educational, emotional and social development of the student at the centre of its learning values. This policy sets a formal structure for pastoral care in Coláiste Pobail Acla; setting out clear and defined roles and expectations to ensure that each student in our school community has access to relevant pastoral care supports. It defines our pastoral structures and procedures and ensures they can be effectively utilised both on a day to day basis and crucially, at critical times.

3. Pastoral Goals

That each member of our school community will:

- Feel valued, supported and cared for in a safe and secure environment.
- Develop their full potential; spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, personally and physically.
- Have a sense of belonging to our school community.

4. Aims of Pastoral Care Structures

- To clarify roles, responsibilities, tasks and procedures.
- To create links between all areas of the Pastoral Care Programme in Coláiste Pobail Acla.
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community.
- To promote an environment which meets the needs of each student.
- To nurture teaching and learning relationships.
- To recognise talents and abilities.

- To monitor progress at every level for each student.
- To act as an early identification system for the detection of ‘at risk’ students.
- To promote self-efficacy to enable students to make their own decisions through greater self-awareness, confidence and independence.
- To promote clear values that are true to the vision and mission statement in Coláiste Pobail Acla.
- To support an engaging curriculum through related policies. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies. Attention should be given to Child Protection, Anti-bullying, Guidance, Substance Use, Code of Behaviour, Critical Incident, Admission, ICT Acceptable Use, SEN Policy, RSE and SPHE policies.
- To involve all partners in the life of our school.

5. Pastoral Care Personnel

All members of the school community in Coláiste Pobail Acla have a role to play in delivering an effective Pastoral Care Programme. However, there are defined roles that are assigned to individuals with specific duties necessary to ensure the effectiveness of our Pastoral Care Programme. These include:

- Board of Management
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Pastoral Care Team
- Tutors
- Critical Incident Team
- Chaplain
- Guidance Counsellor
- Home School Community Liaison Officer
- SEN Coordinator
- School Completion Workers
- SPHE Coordinator
- DEIS Coordinator
- Attendance Coordinator
- Subject Teachers
- Special Needs Assistants
- Students

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. Board of Management

The Board of Management will ensure that the ethos and values of all partners are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

6.2. Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal will work to ensure that our school is a caring and supportive community for all its members. The Principal will work with the Board of Management, Staff and Students in the developments of the policy and in ensuring that the proper structures and resources are put in place for its effective operation. The Principal and Deputy Principal will oversee the implementation of the policy, provide from available resources the necessary structures to implement the policy, contact and liaise with parents and with outside agencies as necessary and will remain available to meet students, staff and parents in a supportive environment. In their role as Designated Liaison person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person the Principal and Deputy Principal will contact relevant agencies in accordance with Child Protection Procedures.

6.3. Pastoral Care (PC) Team

The Pastoral Care Team is a visible representation of CPA's understanding and valuing of each student as an individual. People who experience severe difficulties in life find it difficult to have cognitive space for learning. The rationale of the PC Team is to strive to care in a genuine way to improve the lives of students and thereby ensure access to the curriculum and learning. In parallel, and weighted equally, is the enabling of students to identify, articulate and address future issues themselves if they arise. Self-awareness and self-advocacy are key skills to deal with adversity that will present throughout life. Members of the care team work hard to identify students who may need extra supports. PC Meetings are scheduled weekly on a formal basis. Informal meetings occur regularly as issues arise. Each case can be self-referred, by a PC team member or referred from any other member of the school community. Each case is treated confidentially on an individual basis, depending on the needs of the student.

The Pastoral Care Team is made up of the following staff:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Chaplain
- Home School Community Liaison Officer
- Guidance Counsellor
- SEN Coordinator
- SCP Worker

Variation of the Team members may occur where changes in staff personnel deem changes in the PC Team appropriate. Any core team alterations will be coordinated by the Principal.

Aims:

1. To share information in a confidential setting.
2. To coordinate a single transparent response to the care needs of students where possible.
3. To be action focused.
4. To regularly review and monitor students with care needs.

Care Team Issues:

- Mental Health
- Attendance and Retention
- Behaviour
- Health and Welfare
- Family Issues
- Supports
- Academic Achievement
- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection
- Critical Incident Supports
- Staff Support and Development

Confidentiality:

While all issues presented to the PC Team will be dealt with sensitively and discretely it is important that all staff, students and Parents/Guardians are aware of the limitations of the confidentiality that can be offered under Child Protection Guidelines.

Communication:

Any member of staff can refer a student to any member of the PC Team and is encouraged to do so where concerns have arisen. It is important that the person referring a student understands that they do not need to know the details of any outcomes to that situation subsequently. They can be assured that the student will be dealt with compassionately and appropriately.

Key Features of PC Team:

- Advocacy platform for student body, student centred
- Professional and confidential
- Non-judgemental
- Solution focused, not problem focused.
- Supported by staff, management and BOM
- Optimistic, hopeful and positive in demeanour
- Effective use of time and resources
- Information shared with others where appropriate

Evaluation:

Reflection and evaluation is completed yearly to reflect on the Pastoral Care Programme in its entirety.

6.4. Tutors

Each base class is assigned a tutor. The tutor, through meeting students on a regular basis, will identify any challenging areas for students in their group and liaise with management, class teachers, Parents/Guardians and members of the pastoral care team as necessary. The tutor will support the work of management personnel in supervising, overseeing and monitoring student journals and attendance.

6.5. Critical Incident Team

A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school.

Coláiste Pobail Acla has a Critical Incident Plan that aims to cope effectively in the aftermath of an incident. This enables the school community to react quickly and effectively in a co-ordinated way that supports all members of the school community that may have been impacted by the incident.

6.6. Chaplain

The role of the Chaplain in Coláiste Pobail Acla is that of a supportive faith-lead presence within our school. The Chaplain responds to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the school community under his/her care; students, their families and school staff. The Chaplain strives to be available in a supportive role to those who find themselves at notable junctions in their life journey. Building supportive relationships is at the core of the Chaplain's pastoral responsibilities, celebrating times of joy and offering support at times of struggle or sadness. The Chaplain is the chairperson of Pastoral Care Team weekly meetings. Where feasible, the Chaplain is timetabled to have weekly contact with all teaching groups in the school.

6.7. Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor provides for the needs of the students under three integrated areas; personal/social guidance and counselling, educational and career guidance. The Guidance Counsellor is timetabled with senior students in class groups and is available for individual consultation with all students and/or Parents/Guardians on matters pertinent to his/her role. He/she liaises with the Principal, Deputy Principal and other staff members and members of the Pastoral Care team in his/her provision of this support and guidance.

6.8. Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)

The underlying principle of the HSCL Scheme is one that seeks to promote partnership between Parents/Guardians and the school. The purpose of this partnership is to enhance the learning opportunities of students and to promote their retention in the education system. In addition, the HSCL Scheme places great emphasis on collaboration with the local community. The HSCL Scheme is pioneering in its objective of involving the school in the life of the community and involving the community and its agencies in the life of the school. The HSCL is an integral part of the Pastoral Care Team and works closely with team members and the wider school community to improve student outcomes.

6.9. Special Educational Needs Coordinator

The SEN Coordinator is responsible and accountable for developing and coordinating a system of learning supports that enables all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school and to

manage their respective curricula. This may be done by addressing barriers to learning, enhancing engagement, student advocacy, and re-engaging disconnected students. The Coordinator will liaise with class teachers and others in support of the development of the student. The role includes liaising and communicating with students, management, class teachers, support staff, Parents/Guardians and outside agencies. The SEN Coordinator is part of the Pastoral Care Team that meets weekly and also meets weekly with their SETs.

6.10. School Completion Programme Workers

SCP is a school support service Coláiste Pobail Acla receives as part of our DEIS status. Being a DEIS school, Coláiste Pobail Acla avails of SCP supports aimed at targeting and supporting students identified as most at risk of early school leaving. School completion workers work closely with identified students and staff in our school. They sit on our Pastoral Care Team and offer some of the following supports to our school community; one-on-one support work with students, homework club, transition programmes, afterschool supports, liaising with outside agencies, family support and funding for initiatives that improve student outcomes. This list is not exhaustive, and SCP is a fundamental link in our Pastoral Care Programme.

6.11. SPHE Coordinator

“Social, Personal and Health Education, as part of the curriculum, supports the personal development, health and well-being of young people and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships” (SPHE PDST support services). The SPHE Coordinator ensures that all students receive this curriculum in a planned, supportive and non-judgemental atmosphere. The SPHE Coordinator will organise guest speakers, workshops and activities that support the delivery of this programme in consultation with management.

6.12. Class Teacher and School Support Staff

Class teachers, or subject teachers, meet with students regularly and as such will often be the first to be advised by students of pastoral issues as they arise. The class teacher may often be able to assist the student in resolving straightforward issues as they arise. Information and issues that require further attention will be passed to any member of the Pastoral Care Team, depending on the nature of the concern. Subject teachers strive to emulate our mission statement in each class; creating a positive learning environment that encompasses the development of the whole person.

Non-teaching staff in the school (i.e. Administration staff, Librarian and Caretaking staff) can observe or become aware of concerns or issues around pastoral care and play a role in supporting and assisting the delivery of pastoral care in our school community.

6.13. Special Needs Assistants

SNAs assist in the care needs of students with special educational needs in an educational context. SNAs liaise with all members of the school community in supporting the development of the students in their care.

6.14. Students

Relationships in the school are based on mutual respect and courtesy. Students should be supportive to all members of the school community. They should be respectful of each other, staff, and any member of the public they meet through school activities or otherwise. Students are made aware of the Pastoral Care Supports in our school before they enrol in 1st year. They are reminded of these throughout the year and in subsequent years also. Students are encouraged to discuss any issues that

are impacting on their happiness and/or ability to participate fully in school, home or community life. Students are encouraged to talk to a member of school staff if they have concerns regarding another student's welfare.

7. Structures Supporting the Pastoral Care System

The following structures and programmes support the success of the pastoral care systems in Coláiste Pobail Acla. This is not an exhaustive list and other school activities and school policies are all underpinned by the desire in Coláiste Pobail Acla to help students reach their full potential in a safe and encouraging environment.

Wellbeing Programme (part of new Junior Cycle): this will complement the Pastoral Care supports already in the school.

Code of Behaviour: The Code of Behaviour has been developed in partnership with the Board of Management, staff, students, Parents/Guardians and the wider school community. It facilitates teaching and learning in a safe, positive and respectful environment. See Code of Behaviour.

Health and Safety Policy: Our Health and Safety Policy prioritises the health and safety of all members of our school community. It underpins all teaching and learning that happens in Coláiste Pobail Acla. See Health and Safety Policy.

ICT Policy: Our ICT Policy, encompassing acceptable use of on-line facilities, outlines what is appropriate behaviour for all users in Coláiste Pobail Acla. See ICT Policy.

Anti-Bullying Policy: Our Anti-Bullying Policy explains what actions are defined as bullying behaviour, how accusations of bullying will be investigated, the repercussions for those involved and the restorative processes that will be implemented to help all parties involved in incidents of bullying. See Anti-Bullying Policy.

Awards Ceremony: The achievements of all students, for example; academic, sporting, community and musical, are celebrated through our annual awards day in May.

Student Induction Programmes: Incoming first years have an induction day, facilitated by SCP, in September. First year students have a team building day to encourage the development of friendships in September of first year. Transition Year students and 5th year students have team building trips scheduled for early in the school year to facilitate students gaining familiarity with new classmates and forge developing friendships.

Staff Induction Programmes: All new teachers to Coláiste Pobail Acla participate in an induction programme facilitated by management. The Principal and Deputy Principal welcome all new staff to our school and provide information on the school ethos and values, school policies and procedures within our school. New staff will be supported by an established member of staff as they navigate their new work environment.

Transition Programmes: Coláiste Pobail Acla has a comprehensive Transition Programme in place for 6th class students in preparation for their transfer to secondary school. The Principal and Deputy Principal visit all national schools in our catchment area and speak to all students and staff. The HSCLO visits each school and collates pertinent information to assist students' move to post-primary school. All 6th class students are invited to a Taster Day in the year preceding their transition where new subjects can be sampled. Students and their Parents/Guardians are invited to an Open Night following the Taster Day where subject choices are discussed, and any concerns can be addressed. Students attend an aptitude test on a subsequent day in Coláiste Pobail Acla where they gain further insight into school life. Induction programmes at the beginning of first year and close monitoring by tutors and the pastoral care team further monitor student adjustment to life in Coláiste Pobail Acla.

Students transferring from outside the school into other year groups meet with Principal and Deputy Principal prior to enrolment. Their transfer is assisted by a buddy system with student(s) in their class group, meetings with members of the pastoral care team and close monitoring by their assigned tutor.

Extra-Curricular Activities: A wide variety of extra-curricular activities including football, table tennis, debating, drama, choir and Gaisce, strive to identify and celebrate the wide variety of student talent in Coláiste Pobail Acla. All students are encouraged to participate in activities outside of their academic work to develop aspects of themselves and reach their full potential.

Big Brother Big Sister: The pairing of 5th year students with incoming 1st years gives new students assistance in adjusting to secondary school life. Weekly formal meetings, activities and outings further consolidate the relationship between these junior and senior students.

Anti-Bullying Survey: An Anti-bullying survey is conducted by the school chaplain each term. This is powerful in identifying any issues students themselves are experiencing or feel their peers are struggling with. The results of the survey are discussed at pastoral care meetings and with school management. Any issues arising from these surveys are dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. See Anti-Bullying Policy.

Mind Yourself Week: A week of focus on all aspects of personal well-being runs annually in Coláiste Pobail Acla. Events run daily, organised primarily by our chaplain and HSCLO. Guest speakers, workshops, positive engagement with others, and healthy self-image are just some of the activities enjoyed by the school community during this week.

Student Council: Two elected students from each year group, facilitated by a staff member, meet regularly to discuss issues pertinent to our students. They are the voice of our student body and meet with management to bring their opinions, suggestions and potential solutions to matters arising.

8. Pastoral Care Policy Evaluation

Areas to be evaluated:

- Are programmes being implemented effectively?
- Are Pastoral Care procedures working effectively?
- Are the aims of the Pastoral Care policy being met?

9. Declaration

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, Parents/Guardians and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management. It was adopted by the Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla on:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Mr. Pat Kilbane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Mr. Paul Fahy

Board Secretary & School Principal (Acting)

10. Appendices

10.1. Appendix 1 - Abbreviations and Acronyms

Below is a list of abbreviations and acronyms used in this policy.

BOM	Board of Management
CPA	Coláiste Pobail Acla
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Education in Schools
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
HSCLO	Home School Community Liaison Officer
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
PC	Pastoral Care
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SCP	School Completion Programme
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SET	Special Education Teacher
SETS	Special Education Teacher Support
SMS	Short Message Service
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education