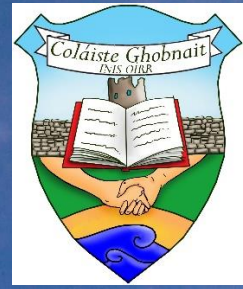


Coláiste Ghobnait

Inis Oírr



Pastoral Care Policy

2023/2024

Adopted by the Board of Management on 11/05/2023

Approved by Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) on
??/??/20??

This policy has been prepared in consultation with Parents, Students, Staff, The Board of
Management and GRETB

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

Pupils, School Staff, Parents, the school's Board of Management as well as Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at Coláiste Ghobnait is to encourage the educational, intellectual, physical and cultural development of the school's students in a pleasant and healthy environment that prioritises the self-esteem, independence and development of all members of the school community.

SCHOOL VISION

"Growing and learning together diligently through the medium of Irish, in which balance, respect for well-being and integrity are given priority, with the spirit of co-operation among the whole school community."

ETHOS

Rationale

It is a core principle in Coláiste Ghobnait that all members of the school's community support each other in an environment of mutual respect. This principle applies to all students and all staff members. The aim of this policy is to promote effective and caring leadership and partnership amongst all members of the school's community. Through this partnership approach strong relationships based on respect, understanding and common goals can be created, as in a cohesive school community, so as to allow all members of that community to feel they can achieve their full potential. Our pastoral care policy underpins our holistic approach to the educational experiences of the young people in our care. The policy tries to ensure continuous support is available for the young people in our care.

Legislative Framework

The policy is underpinned by the relevant education legislation and appropriate educational research. This includes:

- The Education Act 1998
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs 2004
- Equal Status Act 2004
- The Disability Act 2005
- Children First 2011
- Child Protection Procedures
- Anti-Bullying Procedures 2013
- Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools 2013
- Education and Training Boards Act 2013

The Pastoral Care Team

The Pastoral Care Team consists of:

Principal

Deputy Principal

SPHE Teacher – Rebecca Ní Chríocháin

Guidance Counsellor - Cormac Ó Cadhain

Special Needs Co-Ordinator – Cathal Ó Conghaile

Aims

Through our pastoral care policy, we aim to:

- Create and maintain an atmosphere where all members of the school community feel that they are known and feel happy, safe, valued and respected
- Implement our Code of Behaviour, which considers the views of all members of the school community
- Maintain the highest standards of training and learning
- Develop an atmosphere of trust
- Respond sympathetically to student questions, fears and concerns
- Promote the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of the students through the teaching of 'Social, Personal and Health Education' and other subjects
- Create an environment where difference is respected and effort is recognized, where equality and understanding is evident and people feel valued
- Give students the necessary skills and abilities to overcome the challenges they may face growing up
- Provide all students with access to a broad and balanced curriculum

- Prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and skills of adult life.

A good relationship between pupils and staff is important so as to create a positive atmosphere within the school community where every person can feel respected and cared for at all times. Good relationships will be created between:

- Staff and Students
- Students and their Fellow Pupils
- Staff Members
- School staff and Parents

Pastoral Responsibilities and Roles

Coláiste Ghobnait believes that a holistic approach to pastoral care is the most effective way of ensuring that the needs of all members of the school community are addressed, managed and respected. All members of the community have an important role in this and in the following matters. This is a brief description of the main responsibilities associated with each role:

Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring:

- That Coláiste Ghobnait have a Pastoral Care Policy
- That the policy is reviewed regularly
- All pastoral care projects within the school are supported
- That the members input is included in developing the policy
- That the policy is made available to all members of the school community.

Role of the Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal must have the main role in the pastoral care of students. Their main responsibility is ensuring the wellbeing of the pupils in the school. The school's senior management undertake this function in a number of ways:

- By ensuring the programmes and curriculum offered to the students suits their needs and allows them to develop to their full potential
- By ensuring structures are in place to support the pastoral needs of the students
- By creating and promoting an atmosphere and culture of respect amongst all members of the school community which allows students to develop to their full potential
- By supporting the ongoing professional development of staff so as to manage the needs of the students in our care
- By supporting staff in their response to the needs of the students
- By co-ordinating the whole school approach to pastoral care
- By working on pastoral care for all of the students and responding also to the needs of students requiring additional supports
- By supporting Parents/Guardians with the holistic development of their children
- By facilitating input from external agencies in relation to the development of the students in their care
- By updating The Board of Management on relevant matters.

As a school community we all have a central role in responding to the needs of young people in our care who may have general or particular learning difficulties. These needs are often complex and may extend beyond academic needs and include a wide range of interlinked social, emotional, behavioural and psychological needs. The Principal, Deputy Principal and all the teachers must ensure:

- That appropriate learning plans and strategies are in place as targeted interventions for addressing the needs of the students
- That they liaise with all staff members in relation to the students in their care
- That they liaise with the students' parents so as to respond to all their needs including pastoral needs
- The Principal/Deputy Principal tries to get to know the students in the school personally so that students feel comfortable approaching them to discuss matters. They ensure the structures and resources for pastoral care are available in the school and the policy is being implemented
- At staff meetings they pass on any necessary information, discreetly, to staff. They encourage students to participate in extracurricular events.

The Role of the Subject Teacher

All the teachers are responsible for the pastoral care of the students in the school. Through the various curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes they undertake the following, amongst other things:

- The Subject Teacher takes a special interest in their own class and in the wellbeing of each student within the class
- The Subject Teacher has access to relevant information about the students in their class. Similarly, the Class Teacher shares relevant information with relevant members of staff
- The Subject Teacher will work closely with other teachers, with the Vice Principal and Principal on the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. They will ensure each student in the class keeps their homework Diary in proper order
- The Subject Teacher will help promote compliance with the Code of Behaviour through positive affirmation. They will help develop students' confidence and self-esteem through the use of positive and helpful comments in the students' school diaries and on VS Ware
- The Subject teacher is in regular contact with each student and is therefore well placed to identify any pastoral needs students may have
- The Subject Teacher also has an important role modelling appropriate behaviour, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and fostering positive relationships. The Subject Teacher also has a valuable role in promoting self-esteem and fostering confidence
- The Subject Teacher plays an important role in instilling key values, and communicating what is expected of them to the students with regard to behaviour, work ethic and progress
- Promoting in each student a good class spirit, e.g. sending a card to someone who is sick etc.
- Encouraging a sense of collective responsibility in them as a class group
- Taking an interest in each individual student, particularly addressing the needs of vulnerable students
- Reviewing the academic progress and any other progress made by students
- Keeping to the Code of Behaviour
- Carrying out regular checks of school uniforms/school diaries
- Ensuring all new students settle in, especially in first few weeks
- Liaising with staff members
- Assisting students in making informed decisions about issues in terms of what is 'right' and 'wrong'
- Ensuring the classroom is kept clean
- Monitoring student progress
- Giving the class appropriate notices
- Recognising the good efforts of students. Record this on VS Ware
- Encouraging students to participate in school events
- Talking to the class about bullying
- Monitoring students who are regularly late or absent.

The Role of the Year Head (see Appendix 2)

All classes from Year 1 to Year 6 have Year Heads. An effort is made to ensure that the year head teaches this class so that the teacher gets an opportunity to get to know the class, develop a good relationship with the students and notice any problems. Follow the school's Communication System when a student has problems.

Cá dtéann tú, má tá fadhb/imní/ceist agat/Where do you go if you have a problem/you are worried/you have a question:

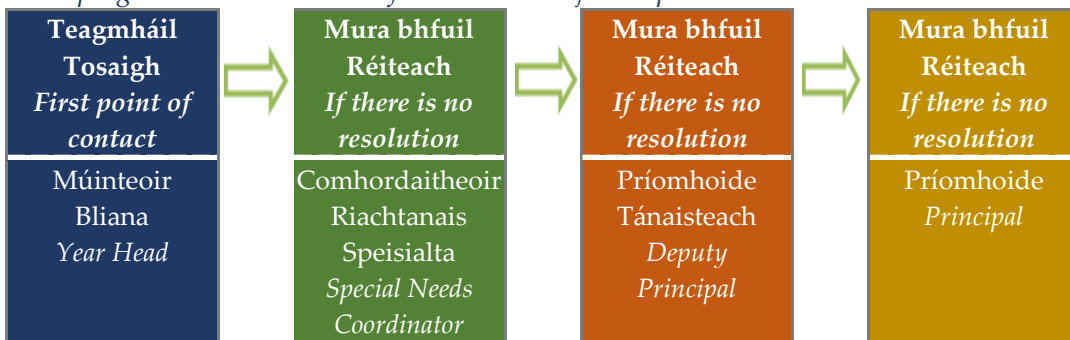
- Dul chun cinn **acadúil** in **ábhar áirithe** nó cur chuige teagaisc agus foghlama san ábhar sin/*Academic progression in certain subjects or the approach to teaching and learning in that subject:*

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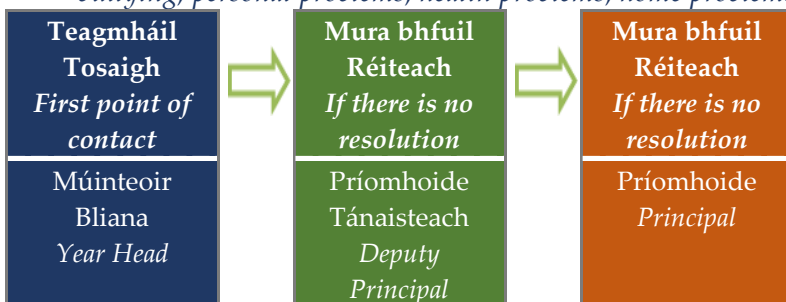
- Dul chun cinn **acadúil** in **ábhar áirithe** nó cur chuige teagaisc agus foghlama san ábhar sin/*Academic progression in certain subjects or the approach to teaching and learning in that subject:*



- Dul chun cinn **acadúil go ginearálta**, nach mbaineann le hábhair amháin ar leith/*General academic progression that is not confined to one subject in particular:*



- Dul chun cinn go ginearálta, maidir le gnéithe seachas gnéithe acadúla (sóisialta, bulaíocht, fadhb phearsanta, fadhb sláinte, fadhb bhaile)/*General progression regarding non-academic aspects (social, bullying, personal problems, health problems, home problems):*



The Role of the Special Needs Assistant (see Special Needs Policy)

Our school acknowledges the role of our SNA in responding to the pastoral needs of our students, especially students with additional educational needs. Our Special Needs Assistants:

- In our school the SNAs' manage the various complex needs of some of our students with special educational needs
- Co-operate with the teaching staff to ensure they are aware of any emerging needs
- Work in partnership with teachers to make sure student needs are addressed
- Support students in response to any emerging or ongoing needs
- Work with the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator and with the relevant Class Teacher in reviewing and managing the needs of the students
- Promote the well-being of students in their care.

Role of the Non-Teaching Staff

Our non-teaching staff have an important role in managing the pastoral needs of the students in our care during their daily interactions. They have a good chance of noticing anything that might disrupt the students' well-being. They promote the sense of community in the school and in doing so contribute to the general wellbeing of the school community. They inform the Pastoral Care Team of any concerns they have regarding student welfare.

The Role of the Parent

Coláiste Ghobnait recognises and welcomes a parent's role in responding to the needs of their children. Parents can have an active role in pastoral care within the school by:

- Taking an active interest in all aspects of their children's education, from their academic and intellectual development, to their social, physical, personal, moral and spiritual development
- Having regular communication with teachers, Special Needs Assistants and school management in relation to their children's progress and needs and especially through noting and monitoring comments in their children's school diaries
- Regularly attending Parent/Teacher meetings
- Supporting teachers and Special Needs Assistants in their response to the children's needs
- Encouraging their children to be involved, as much as possible, in all aspects of school life so their children develop into capable people and enjoy their time in school
- Attendance
- Comply with the policy
- Be familiar with the School's Communication System

The Student's Role

Our students of course have a very important role in their own pastoral development. This role consists of many various aspects:

- Respecting all other members of the school community, including the other students, teachers, Special Needs Assistants and staff
- Co-operating with staff who are looking to help address the student's pastoral needs
- Engaging in all aspects of school life so as to have a more meaningful and holistic educational experience
- Seeking out opportunities for their own development within the school
- Taking responsibility for their learning and development as young individuals
- Acknowledging the rights of all other students to learn in a positive environment where learning is valued and nurtured and acting accordingly by behaving responsibly
- Communicating any needs, they may have to the relevant staff member
- Supporting other students who may have particular needs

- Reporting any behaviour which may be harmful to themselves or other students including bullying or any other concerns relating to the health of their fellow students
- Students have a duty in the creation of a positive and safe environment which promotes the growth and development of learning and wellbeing.

The Role of the Student Council/Mentoring system (see Appendix 3)

The Student Council has an important role in pastoral care in the school:

- The Council actively seeks out opportunities to develop the school for the benefit of all members of the school community thereby meeting the needs of that community
- The Council acts as an advocate for students and ensures that the school community is responsive to the questions and concerns that impact directly on our students
- The Council provides a support network for all students so that each student's voice can be heard
- The Council works with school management on issues that impact on our students
- The Council models confident, positive behaviour and attitudes which empower other students to develop similarly
- The Student Council has a duty to notify a member of the teaching staff of any concerns about other students that has been brought to their attention.

Pastoral Supports

Coláiste Ghobnait has a number of pastoral supports in place to help ensure students have a healthy and fulfilling school life. Many of these are provided to all students while some are provided according to the particular needs of students.

Whole School Support

Morning Assembly: Morning Assembly takes place from 8.50–9.00a.m. where students are met by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Post Holders. This gives an opportunity to talk to all the students together in a group and also reassure them that support is available to them.

Year Head: The Year Head is a strong link in the area of pastoral support for our students.

Sport: Sport has an essential role in the school and is central to a holistic and fulfilling educational experience for our students. All students are provided with two classes per week. In Coláiste Ghobnait we support the promotion of well-being and sport in the island community, for example in the past we had Yoga as part of student well-being and mindfulness.

Well-Being:

- Well-being applies to all classes/subjects and each school year
- All teachers are required to ensure all students have a healthy environment in which to learn in all their subject's/school events. It is very important therefore that all teachers are aware of this policy and are implementing it
- In the Junior Cycle, wellbeing is mentioned as one of the eight main principles
- It applies specifically to classes in Physical Education, Civil, Social and Political Education and Social, Personal and Health Education and to learning statements 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13
- A weekly double class of games (80 minutes) is in place for every student in the school, CSPE classes for Year 1, 2 and 3, SPHE for Year 1, 2, 3 and one RSE class for years 4, 5 and 6.

SPHE: This subject deals directly with the pastoral needs of students through modules such as personal development, RSE and Staying Healthy. Coláiste Ghobnait seeks to provide an education programme that

meets the needs of each student. In Coláiste Ghobnait we seek to provide a wide range of subjects with as many choices as possible.

CSPE: The subject 'Civil, Social & Political Education' helps with the development of many different dimensions of the person and it prepares them for active and responsible citizenship in society. It addresses issues such as rights and responsibilities, as well as human dignity and community spirit, – all these values are linked with the pastoral development of students.

Induction: The school operates an Induction Programme for pupils starting out in first year to make the transition from primary school to Coláiste Ghobnait easier for them. They are invited to come and see the school and meet the teaching staff. All staff members are aware that this is a difficult time for students transitioning into a new school environment. School staff and Parents/Guardians are required to provide students with additional care and support in their first year and be available to them at all times.

All Year Heads carry out an induction with class groups at the beginning of each school year.

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures: The school has laid down anti-bullying procedures which fully comply with the General Procedures.

Extracurricular & Co-Curricular Activities: Coláiste Ghobnait offers all students opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities thus allowing them to develop in many different spheres.

Annual Prize Giving Awards: Giving recognition to the achievements of our students is done in a variety of ways by Coláiste Ghobnait and the school is aware of the importance of this in the pastoral development of the students. The Prize Giving includes awards for attendance, sporting achievements and contribution to the school environment.

Other Pastoral Provisions: The school also supports students through a number of other projects:

- 6th Year Mass
- GRETBA Awards for Students
- Charity Work
- Trip at the beginning and at the end of the year
- Signing in and out
- Homework Club
- Polytunnel
- Computer Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Homework Policy
- Induction Programme for New Staff members

Evaluation of the Plan

This policy will be reviewed regularly. Coláiste Ghobnait recognises the need for all stakeholders to be involved in the reviewing, formulating and development of pastoral care in our school.

Included in the review process will be advice from:

- School Staff

- Voice of Students
- The Board of Management
- Parents/Guardians
- External agencies when required.

The Guidance Counsellors

The Guidance Counsellor has a central role in the school. They seek to facilitate all of the students' career needs and reassure them of continuous support and advice. In the course of their lives people have to make significant decisions that affect both themselves and those around them. For second level students these choices focus on three key areas:

- Personal and Social
- Education
- Career

Along with the Career Guidance Counsellors parents are also invited to participate in the guidance process through consultation.

It is through this process of care for the total well-being of the student – that guidance and counselling forms an integral part of Pastoral Care.

- The Guidance Counsellor might recognize that an individual student needs assistance from other qualified people outside of the school and therefore organise this assistance according to agreed procedures with the school, parents and local agencies
- Recommendations are made about appropriate agencies. Parents may be asked to contact their family doctor to refer the student to an appropriate agency. Where a referral is made, a detailed referral document is prepared and forwarded to the appropriate agency. The Guidance Counsellor works with the relevant external agency and provides subsequent in-school support to the student.

APPENDIX 1

Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools

<https://assets.gov.ie/40693/a844644845444034bb6a33b2e90cb2f2.pdf>

APPENDIX 2

The Role of the Year Head

- Be a contact person for the year group
 - Communicate with parents (phone calls, e-mails, etc.)
 - Share information about year group with school staff and management.

Two methods of communication with parents in relation to the students' pastoral care and progress (a meeting with every student)

- Parent/Teacher meeting – discuss academic and general progress with each parent.

Academic Monitoring

- Set targets for exams in Week 10, 20 and 30
- Review the results and take the required action
- Study VS Ware reports
- Link with Special Needs Co-Ordinator – plan as necessary
- Link with Pastoral Committee.

Attendance (Attendance Policy)

- Attendance monitoring – pupil absent for a few days (see policy) – ring home.

School Diary

- To be checked at least once every second week and signed by class teacher.

Induction at the beginning of the year (See information sheet regarding induction)

Lockers to be checked once a term.

Book List

- Have Book List prepared before the beginning of May and forwarded to the School Secretary

Achievements/Competitions

- Provide Áine/Bríd/Diane with information on any competitions etc. in which the school's students are taking part, either within the school or outside of it.

The School's Code of Behaviour

- Implement the Code.

APPENDIX 3

Mentor's Duties/Responsibilities

1. Respect the rules and policies of the school and observe the School Rules at all times.
2. Speak Irish to everyone and steer them in the right direction.
3. Help those who are struggling with the Irish language.
4. Always wear your uniform.
5. Be in time for school, school events and meetings.
6. Be positive and enthusiastic and encourage fellow students.
7. If anyone in your group has a problem, you can speak to a Teacher/Principal/Vice-Principal - DO NOT DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM YOURSELF.
8. Be cooperative, helpful, well-mannered, trustworthy and responsible.
9. Look at ways to promote yourself.
10. Create a positive atmosphere around the school.
11. Show leadership qualities: confidence, initiative, problem solving.
12. Be willing to take on extra responsibilities.
13. Mentors will attend all school events and activities when required where possible and will be expected to help.
14. Mentors must be excellent ambassadors for the school, representing the school image positively.
15. Mentors will act as an additional pair of eyes at break/lunch times and report any serious misbehaviour to staff.
16. Mentors will act as a crutch for those who need support.

These are some of the things Mentors can do. If you have any ideas as to how to promote yourself/other students, school management are open to ideas, just ask the Principal/Deputy Principal first. The Mentor will receive a certificate at the end of the year.

Mentor's signature:

Parent's signature: