



**Saint Brendan's College, Belmullet, Co. Mayo**

**PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

<b>Date passed by BOM</b>	<b>2-12-15</b>
<b>Review date.</b>	<b>Dec. 2017</b>
<b>Signature Of Chairperson.</b>	
<b>Signature of BOM member.</b>	



## St. Brendan's College, Belmullet, Co. Mayo

### PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Our pastoral care policy encompasses the whole school community. It is our view that Pastoral Care should permeate all areas of school life.

In St. Brendan's College, we endeavour to facilitate the development of all members of our school community. In our school community we foster relationships based on respect. We engender a sense of belonging to our school community where each individual is valued and his/her 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 in our school community. We believe Pastoral Care is the responsibility of the entire school community and all its partners.

#### **Relationship to school ethos/mission**

Through the implementation of this Policy we strive to enact the stated mission, vision and aims of St. Brendan's College. We value all members of the school community and endeavour to develop the full potential of each member of the school community.

#### **Rationale for policy**

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

#### **Goals of the Policy**

That each member of the school community will:

- feel valued and cared for in a safe secure environment
- develop 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 Task Team (Principal Mr, Walshe, Assistant Principal Ms. Allen) have had 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 September 2015.



## **Implementation of Policy**

### **Board of Management**

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

### **Principal and Deputy Principal**

The Principal and Deputy Principal 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. Brendan's College. The management will make time available to meet parents, staff and students in a supportive atmosphere.

The management facilitates in-house staff development and encourages staff participation in external associations, programmes and courses particularly when these have a direct influence on student learning and well-being.

### **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.

### **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, Principal in accordance with our school's Code of Behaviour.

### **Critical Incident Team**

The Critical Incident Team is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, HSCL and members of staff (See Critical Incident Policy).

### **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 timetabled to meet all Year groups in Transition Year, 5<sup>th</sup> Year and 6<sup>th</sup> Year and may organise to meet students in class groups and for individual consultation with students and/or parents on matters relating to career advice and personal issues. Our school management, students and parents acknowledge the high level of support provided by our Guidance Counsellor Ms Padden to all students in St. Brendan's College. As St. Brendan's College is a DEIS school this level of support is crucial to our ethos of a caring school community.



### **Parents Association**

As a partner in St. Brendan'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 RE policy).

### **The Student Council - Student Council Liaison Teacher (Deputy Principal Mr Treacy)**

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 Constitution provides the framework for the duties of the council.

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 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-fulfilment 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, socially and personally to facilitate their holistic education. The work is carried out in collaboration with home and external agencies.

#### **Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)**

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

#### **Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)**

The underlying policy of the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme is one that seeks to promote partnership between parents and teachers. The purpose of this partnership is to enhance pupils' learning opportunities 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 the pioneer in involving the school in the life of the community and involving the community and its agencies in the life of the school.

#### **Students**

Relationships in the school will be based on respect and courtesy. Students should at all times be supportive to all in the school community. Students need to be respectful of each other, the staff of the school and any member of the public they may meet in the course of school activities. Students should respect school property and the environment and take responsibility for keeping it in good order.



## **Class Tutor and Year Head System**

### **Class Tutor**

Our school places great emphasis on its PASTORAL CARE system. The school community is most appreciative of the care, professionalism and time-input of all those who work as Class Tutors on a voluntary basis. At the start of each school year, a Class Tutor is assigned by the Principal to each class group.

The role of the Class Tutor is to take a pastoral interest in each student's welfare and progress in school. S/he will know students sufficiently well to carry out the following responsibilities:

- To sign the student's school journal on a weekly basis
- On becoming aware of any factors likely to adversely affect a student's school performance, to inform the Year Head/Deputy Principal/ Principal
- To be as supportive as possible to any students experiencing difficulties
- To refer any particularly serious matters affecting a student's welfare to the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head
- To deal initially with any reported instance of bullying- See Anti Bullying Policy
- To facilitate the election of a class representative to the student council
- To assist the Principal in various organisational matters as necessary e.g. the distribution of school letters or collection of money for school activity

### **Year Head**

The role of Year Head will be assigned by the Principal to a member of the senior management team of the school, and where at all possible, as part of a post holder's duties. The function of the Year Head is to take a pastoral interest in each student's welfare and progress in school for the year group for which he/she has responsibility. S/he will get to know students sufficiently well enough to carry out the following specific responsibilities:

- To call Registration for their Year Group every morning at 9.09 am and provide monthly attendance reports to the NEWB attendance officer
- To monitor a student's attendance in school through Roll Books and VSWARE
- To collect and collate any communication from parents through the school journal, e.g. explanation of absence notes, etc.
- To work in conjunction with the Attendance officer and HSCL on issues of poor attendance
- To be available to both class tutors and subject teachers and to assist in dealing with any serious disciplinary matters
- On becoming aware of any circumstances or issues likely to adversely affect a student's school performance or welfare, to inform subject teachers in a professional and appropriate manner
- To be as supportive as possible to any students experiencing difficulties which impact upon school life and performance
- To refer any particularly serious matters affecting a student's welfare to the Principal, Deputy Principal, they will inform Student Care- Team and Guidance Counsellor



### **Student Care Co-ordination Team (SCCT)**

To ensure that all students in the school receive the necessary support at difficult times in their lives, the Student Care Co-ordination Team (SCCT) meet at least every week to review particular cases and to allocate support. The SCCT will also address any general issues concerning the welfare of students. Its role is to support students who have needs which may be educational, emotional, psychological, medical or developmental in character. The idea of a team approach within the school is intended to bring all the available resources of the school together to address, in a strategic and co-ordinated manner, the complex needs of students. Interventions can also involve agencies and support personnel from outside.

Membership of the SCCT may include the following:

Principal or Deputy Principal (chair), Learning Support Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, SCP project worker, JCSP Co-ordinator, Teacher representatives x 1, HSCL

The SCCT liaises closely with the relevant Class Teachers and reports on its work at staff meetings.

### **Home School - Liaison Officer**

The HSCL Scheme supports, through education, a socially-inclusive society with equal opportunity for all. The HSCL Co-ordinator and the teaching staff, recognise that the parent is the primary educator of the child and endeavour to support and encourage parents in this role, so that their children can realise their full potential.

The core policy of the scheme is one that seeks to promote partnership between parents and teachers. The purpose of this partnership is to enhance pupils' learning opportunities and to promote their retention in the educational system. In addition, the HSCL Scheme places great emphasis on collaboration with the local community. The Local Committee of the HSCL Scheme is central to this process of involvement. Both parents and pupils are represented at Local Committee meetings, together with representatives from the various agencies in Erris.

In February 2009 under the DEIS Scheme, St. Brendan's College was granted a full-time HSCL Coordinator, Mrs. Margaret Heffron, a member of staff since 1994. In September 2014, Ms. Michelle Carolan was appointed as HSCL to St. Brendan's College and Mrs. Heffron returned to a full time-tabled teacher of Science.

The five goals of the H.S.C.L. Scheme focus on:

- Supporting marginalised pupils
- Promoting co-operation between home, school and community
- Empowering parents
- Retaining young people in the education system
- Disseminating best practice



Home Visitation is at the heart of the HSCL Scheme's focus on partnership. It promotes co-operation between the school and the home. It affirms the parents' role as the primary educators. In reaching out to families the HSCL coordinator represents the human face of the school and embodies a real expression of interest in the lives of the children entrusted to St. Brendan's College.

The role of the Coordinator is to:

- Instil confidence
- Provide support and reassurance
- Break down negative attitudes and fears
- Encourage active parenting
- Help parents to develop their own skills and potential through involvement in school-related activities

As part of HSCL, there is a Parents' Room in the school which provides an easy, warm and welcoming forum for parents in realising their role as the primary educators of their children. Tea and Coffee-making facilities are available. The parents meet the HSCL coordinator and other members of the school community; who provide a valuable source of friendship, support, encouragement, and reassurance. The HSCL Coordinator links with Year Heads regarding the welfare of students in the school and also links with the Rural Coordinators from the feeder schools in the area regarding incoming students.

The Parents' Room is also available to students who may wish to discuss struggles or challenges they may be experiencing in a confidential setting.

### **Pastoral Care Programmes**

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

#### **Anti-Bullying Policy – Anti Bullying Week (Refer to Anti Bullying Policy)**

The purpose of our Anti Bullying week is:

- To promote a respectful and inclusive culture throughout the whole school
- To raise the awareness of students regarding the causes and consequences of bullying
- To make students aware of the procedures in place to counteract incidents of bullying

#### **Care of new students who join during the school year – Year Heads, Tutors, HSCL, SCP project worker and Guidance Counsellor**

The school management and relevant Year Head and Tutor will provide advice and assistance to new students who join St. Brendan's College during the academic year. The Year Head and Tutor will monitor the performance and integration of the relevant students, 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 St. Brendan's College and offer support as required.





## **Mentoring Teams**

Mentors for students are appointed by HSCL in September. The HSCL matches each first year student up with a senior student. The purpose of this is to help the first year in getting to know the school and how it runs:

- The senior student will keep a watchful eye on the first year students for that student's first year in school.
- The senior student will act as a conveyor of information between the first year and Class Tutor/Principal/ Deputy Principal if required, especially in the early days, until the student is well settled in.
- HSCL explains the role of the mentor to both mentors and First Year students.
- Mentors also received training from Mayo Children's Initiative.

## **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 using NEWB guidelines and in partnership with the staff, students, parents and management (Refer to Code of Behaviour).

## **Extra-Curricular Activities - Teachers**

A wide range of activities including sporting, cultural, dramatic and artistic events facilitate the personal development of students and assist the development of inter-personal and intra-personal skills (Refer to Extra-curricular policy).

## **Health and Safety Policy**

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**

A summer camp is run for three days in July of every year for incoming first years. This is partially funded by North Mayo SCP and is coordinated by the SCP project worker. During these three days new students become familiar with life in a larger school building and learn their way around their new school whilst getting to know their new class mates.

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 Saint Brendan's College. Students receive their journals which also contains the Code of Behaviour. 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.

### **Induction Programme for New Staff**

An induction programme for new staff is held at the beginning of the academic year. The Principal and Deputy Principal welcome the new staff and provide information on the ethos and philosophy of the school, school policies and procedures operating within the school. All members of staff receive a new staff handbook at the beginning of the school year (Refer to programme).

### **Child protection**

Designated Liaison Person: Mr. Michael Walshe

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Mr. Howard Treacy

See Child protection Policy

### **Communication structures between home and school**

Home and school are the primary and secondary educators of students. As such, it is vital that communication between home and school is of a high standard. To ensure that this is the case, St. Brendan's College has the following structures in place:

- Each student is allocated a Class Tutor and Year Head. As well as monitoring attendance and behaviour, the Class Tutor also takes a pastoral interest in each student's welfare. It is vital that parents convey any relevant information to the Class Teacher/ Year Head. An appointment, if necessary, can be arranged with the Year Head by contacting the school.
- Parent-teacher meetings take place twice during the school year. These meetings provide teachers and parents with the opportunity to review each student's overall progress in school. Notice of such meetings is given at the start of each year and the school also sends out notification prior to the meeting.
- Subject teachers will meet parents on an appointment basis during the year should the need arise.
- The Principal, Mr. Michael Walshe, and the Deputy Principal, Mr. Howard Treacy, are available to meet parents on an appointment basis during the year. However, in case of emergency, they will endeavour to meet with parents at any time during the day.

### **Information Talks**

The school organises a number of Information Talks for parents each year in relation to the following matters:

- (a) New First year students
- (b) First year subject choices
- (c) Senior year subject choices
- (d) Transition Year



- The Guidance Counsellor and HSCL Officer are also available to meet parents by appointment.
- A comprehensive School Report is issued twice during the school year in respect of each student.
- An active twitter account shows details of activities and school news on the school's website – [www.stbrendanscollege.com](http://www.stbrendanscollege.com).
- With effect from September 2015, the school will operate a text message system for parents regarding attendance and any special announcements.

### **Awards Afternoon**

An awards afternoon is organised in May at the end of the academic year. All teachers and students are invited. The teachers involved in the various sporting activities outline the achievements of the students during the year. Students who have participated in a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as participation in literacy week, Seachtain na Gaelige, debating, etc. are presented with their awards. Awards for attendance, progression and students of the year are also presented. A 'special guest of honour' usually presents the students with the trophies and medals won during the year in a wide range of local, county and national competitions.

A separate awards evening is also held for Transition year students and their parents which provides the opportunity for celebration and reflection on this exciting and challenging year.

### **Supervised Study/Home work club**

A supervised study homework club facility is available in the school (on Monday and Wednesday evening after school) to students which is operated by the HSCL and the SCP project worker. This facility is operated free of charge to students.



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