

# PASTORAL CARE POLICY



**Ardscoil Rís,  
North Circular Road,  
Limerick**

Ardscoil Rís is an Edmund Rice School under the Trusteeship of the  
Edmund Rice Schools Trust

## **1. Mission Statement:**

Ardcoil Rís aims to promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development of its students. It aims to create a community where students are imbued with Christian values of respect, justice and integrity. It encourages, students to become involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities to ensure that all students achieve their true full potential. Life skills are reinforced through participation in such activities as music, drama, concerts, charitable fundraising and Gaisce.

## **2. School Ethos:**

There has never been any confusion about the aims of Ardcoil Rís. The same mixture of high ideals and practical goals that guided the school when it was first opened has continued up to the present day.

Inspired by the vision of Edmund Rice, our School:

- Gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world as he was.
- Has a special concern for the poor and under-privileged.
- Is challenged to develop a curriculum, which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.

The quality of the education received at Ardcoil Rís has been, for generations of pupils, a stepping-stone to success in their careers. For over half a century the school has had an unrivalled record in the placement of pupils in university and third colleges and in careers in the public service, commerce and industry. This success is evidenced by the outstanding achievement of past pupils in the professional and business spheres.

The pursuit of excellence is a core objective and the school seeks to maximise the development of each pupil's capabilities in academic and co-curricular areas.

While learning is central to all we do, the classroom is only one component of a complex learning culture.

In the classroom, active participation as opposed to passive reception is welcomed and encouraged.

Pupils are assisted by teachers, tutors and year heads to carefully organise their private study time.

Great care is taken to identify and encourage the direction most suited to each one's personal development.

Two Career Guidance Counsellors help to identify each pupil's potential and to advise on further education and career opportunities available to pupils on leaving school. Emphasis on Guidance Counselling is now an integral part of the Junior Programme.

A qualified Learning Support Teacher and Resource teacher assists pupils with learning difficulties. Special emphasis is placed on the pupil's ability to express himself orally and to write in a clear and logical manner.

### **3. Introduction:**

Through its pastoral care arrangements and provision, Ardscoil Rís demonstrates its continuing concern for the personal and social development of all its pupils, regardless of their age or ability, as individuals and as secure, successful and fully participating members of the school and its wider community.

Pastoral care is, perhaps, at its most effective when it is all-pervasive and fully integrated into the school's daily routines, its curriculum and its extra-curriculum activities. This approach has been adopted by the staff of Ardscoil Rís.

For the purpose of this document Pastoral Care is defined as:

- The integration of the academic, social and religious dimensions of a school's energy so that an atmosphere of care prevails within the school community.
- Being essential to the daily life of the school. It involves not only the pastoral care team but in various ways all members of staff.
- Recognising the individuality of each person in the school community and the special needs that can arise from time to time.

#### **4. Rationale:**

- The pastoral care aspect of the school community is a whole-school responsibility concerning students, staff and parents. It is a requirement of the 1998 Education Act that schools “promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students.” Ardscoil Rís aims to promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development of its students. It aims to create a community where students are imbued with Christian values of respect, justice and integrity. It encourages students to become involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities to ensure that all students achieve their true full potential
- Ardscoil Rís seeks to provide a safe and secure environment to maximise learning. We define learning as the academic development and personal growth of the student to his full potential. For such learning and development to occur an effective Pastoral Care structure must exist in the school.
- The ethos of the school is reflected in the moral, intellectual, spiritual, personal and social development of our students. This must be supported in a coherent manner and an effective pastoral care structure contributes significantly to this endeavour.

#### **4. Aims:**

The aims of the school have clearly taken into account the importance attached to the pastoral care of all its students. The aims are as follows:

- To maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning within the school environment.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students; addressing their needs and enabling them to experience both personal and academic success.
- To encourage the students to value one another and to respect the views of other members of their community
- To develop the students self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline.

- To prepare the students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- To respond in a sympathetic and understanding way to the concerns, fears and worries of all students.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion enabling students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.

**Set out below is the structure, which provides for the effective implementation of pastoral care within the school community of Ardscoil Rís.**

### **5. Roles and Responsibilities:**

Every member of staff contributes to student pastoral care in Ardscoil Rís. There are key roles, however, which carry significant support dimensions and responsibilities.

#### **5.1 Board of Management**

The Board of Management will:

- Ensure that there is a pastoral care policy in place and that it is implemented.
- Ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Support pastoral care initiatives in the school.
- Provide appropriate resources to implement the pastoral care system in the school.

#### **5.2 Principal**

On behalf of the Board of Management the Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral care needs of students are met. The Principal will:

- Appoint a pastoral care team (from among the teaching staff) and work closely with this group.
- Keep the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance.

### 5.3 Pastoral Care Team

- Has responsibility for reviewing students with particular difficulties.
- Attends a timetabled meeting every week.
- Advises relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues.

### 5.4 Guidance Counsellors

The Career Guidance Counsellors will:

- Participate in and co-ordinate the school guidance and counselling service categorised under three integrated areas of activity:
  - Personal / Social Guidance and Counselling
  - Educational Guidance and Counselling
  - Career Guidance and Counselling
- Participate in the Pastoral Care Team and the Critical Incident Management Team.
- Attend weekly Year Head meetings and SPHE meetings.

### 5.5 Staff (General)

All teachers have responsibility for the pastoral care of students in the school. Through the planned curricular programme they will amongst other things:

- Build up students' esteem.
- Encourage students to be assertive where appropriate.
- Help students to make informed decisions about issues in terms of 'right' or 'wrong'.
- Be responsible for subject-related matters concerning each student.
- Provide an environment conducive to the full human development of each student.

### 5.6 SPHE Co-ordinator

Through the implementation of the SPHE programme the SPHE Co-ordinator and the SPHE team will:

- Provide the students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competencies to learn about themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

### 5.7 Religious Education Co-ordinator

Through the implementation of the RE programme, the RE Co-ordinator and the RE team will:

- Promote in each pupil a knowledge of their faith and its practice in everyday life, while adhering to the school ethos.
- Ensure high standards and effective delivery of Religious Education within the school.
- Implement the pastoral care initiatives, which help students experience an affinity with the school.
- Cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.

### 5.8 Students' Council

The student council has a very important role to play in the area of pastoral care. The council will:

- Provide a support network for the students where they can contribute their ideas on ways to enhance student lives.
- Encourage students to become self-confident, responsible, caring and independent young men who are prepared to take on the challenge of adult life.
- Liaise with other partners within the school community.

### 5.9 Parents' Association

The Parents' Council offers valued support to the school community in a number of ways. The Parents' Council will:

- Act in an advisory capacity in promoting the educational and Christian ethos of the school and the general welfare of its students.
- Host annual seminars for parents on adolescent well-being.

#### 5.10 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The Special Needs Co-ordinator will:

- Establish a list of students in need of resource hours.
- Refer students to the school Psychologist for learning support / resource testing.
- Allocate resource hours to students in consultation with learning support teacher, guidance counsellors and resource teachers.

#### 5.11 Year Heads / Co-ordinators

- To liaise with the Pastoral Care team.
- To attend weekly year head meetings.
- Have overall responsibility for the year group.

#### 5.12 Class Tutors

- To keep contact with parents through students' journals.
- To monitor students' behaviour in classes.
- To monitor students' homework records

#### 5.13 Chaplain

A Faith presence in Ardscoil Rís

Four strands:

- **Personal contact**: Meet students on a one to one basis if referred by management, year heads or tutors or as necessary as various situations arise.
- **Class contact**: Work in close contact with RE teachers and if necessary visit classes as requested.
- **Worship**: Provide liturgical celebrations reflecting the seasonal calendar of the church.
- **Links**: Be a member of the Pastoral care team, link with year heads and liaise with the guidance counsellors in Árdcoil Rís.

#### **Pastoral Care Team 2010-2011**

Bríd de Brún, Nodlaig O'Grady, Pdraig Doyle, Enda Gavigan, Michael Gleeson, Maria Goodwin, Pat Walsh

## APPENDIX

### Roles and responsibilities of the relevant teaching staff:

Principal	Ms. Bríd de Brún
Deputy Principal	Ms. Nodlaig O'Grady
Year Head for First Years	Ms Catherine Casey
Year head Second Years	Mr. Bill Burke
Year head 3 <sup>rd</sup> Years / Co-ordinator	Ms. Rita Hayes & Mr. Derek Larkin
Year head T.Y / Co-ordinators	Ms Elaine O'Leary & Ms. Nicola Cunningham.
Year head 5 <sup>th</sup> Years / Co-ordinator	Mr. Liam Kennedy & Ms. Mairead Nic Chárthaigh
Year heads 6 <sup>th</sup> Years	Mr Pat Walsh
Guidance Counsellors	Mr. Michael Gleeson & Ms Maria Goodwin
Co-ordinator of Religious Education	Mr Victor Leydon
School Chaplain	Mr Pat Walsh
Co-ordinator of Special Educational Needs	Ms. Patricia Heuston
Coordinating Teacher Students Council	Mr Niall Crowe
SPHE Co-Ordinator	Ms. Eva Burke

Nov 2010