

Pastoral Care

The agreed principles which underpin the pastoral care programme of Ennis National School include recognition that:

- Each person is a unique person of God and worthy of respect.
- Pastoral care is for all in the school and not just for those with particular problems
- Each member of the school community – pupil, teacher, parent, special needs assistant, secretary, caretaker and chaplain – has the responsibility for the caring life of the school.
- Pastoral care permeates the whole life of the school, including the curriculum and is not confined to set periods.
- It avails of the support and expertise provided by statutory and voluntary bodies in the wider community.
- Appropriate resources and training are essential to implement any pastoral care programme within the school.

Our understanding of pastoral care reflects a sense of justice and forgiveness and respect for the needs and rights of pupils, parents, teachers and all other staff. It requires the promotion and practice of positive behaviour by all members of the school community. The quality of pastoral care influences the ethos and tone of the whole school and creates an atmosphere in which the children feel safe, and are encouraged and supported in their learning, growth and social and spiritual development. Our approach to discipline is fundamental to pastoral care. Discipline is leading, guiding, encouraging and instructing children within a framework of rights, rules, responsibility, routine and consequences.

Pastoral Care Framework

Pupils

1. The Class Teacher takes the major responsibility for the pastoral care of children. The focus of the class teacher is on the whole child and their balanced growth and development. Each staff member meets the Principal regularly throughout the year to share information on children's progress.
2. The Special Education Team, including the Special Needs Assistants, are involved in ensuring that children who have behavioural or learning difficulties are enabled through group or individual intervention to develop to their full potential.
3. The Principal and Deputy Principal are kept informed of potential difficulties and act to either prevent or remediate difficulties.
4. The School is fortunate in that so many teachers trained in providing the Rainbow Programme. The Rainbows programme is provided annually to offer assistance to pupils affected by bereavement or separation.
5. Financial assistance is sought on an annual basis from the Family Support Agency to assist in the provision of creative therapy to individual children who are deemed to need additional

help. These therapies are provided on a one to one basis by certified therapists. In addition, the Principal/Special Education Needs leader refers children experiencing other difficulties to the relevant HSE service.

6. Pupil Leadership: Pupil Leadership is encouraged through the work of the 'Minder' who assist with the care of younger children.
7. Child Protection: The Board of Management has approved the "Children First" Child Protection Policy for the school. Any issues in this area are reported to the Designated Liaison Person who will take appropriate action.
8. Pupil Health: Specific pupil health concerns are brought to the staff's attention. Appropriate staff in-service training will be carried out to provide information and support to enable staff to deal with individual pupils.
9. Discipline: Ennis National School is well known for the high standard of behaviour of its pupils. We usually avoid discipline problems by valuing pupils' achievements, giving encouragement and praise for effort and developing good self-esteem among our pupils. We have merit and reward systems where all pupils are praised for the good they do. Awards are gained for hard work and good behaviour so as to impress upon the pupils that their best efforts are valued. Respect is expected from children for all adults and other children in the classroom and outside and this is promoted throughout school life.

Staff

1. Newly appointed staff are supported through induction meetings with senior staff to familiarise them with the school, its Mission Statement, Ethos and the School Policies and Procedures.
2. Professional and Staff Development: The staff is provided with ongoing professional development. School based professional development is part of regular in-school and out of school staff meetings.
3. Staff Support: The Principal and School Chaplain are always available to staff. The Social Committee organise regular social outings for staff.
4. The DES Employee Assistance scheme operated through the VHI is a confidential counselling service available to Teachers and their families 24 hours a day. They can be contacted at 1800 411 057
5. Anti-harassment Policy: As a Catholic school community we uphold the intrinsic dignity of all people and promote behaviour reflective of that dignity. Harassment is any form of behaviour that is not wanted and not asked for which offends, humiliates or intimidates a person. For behaviour to constitute harassment it must be unwanted and uninvited.

Parents

1. The School will support parents by communicating to them about their child's progress and development. We will also assist parents by informing them of how best they can help their child academically.
2. If parents are experiencing family problems the school can offer support through assisting the children come to terms with those difficulties.

3. If necessary the school will ask the NEPS psychologist to speak to parents who seek assistance.
4. Parental Education on a variety of topics will be organised by the school and the Parents' Association.
5. The School Chaplain provides confidential counselling, advice or a listening ear to parents. The Chaplain is always available.
6. The school has a close working relationship with Springboard, who provide a range of supports for families living within the RAPID area of Ennis.
7. The school will actively support and encourage the Parents Association.