

Drumshanbo Vocational School

Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB



Mission Statement

Drumshanbo Vocational School incorporating students, teachers, parents and community, seek to provide for the intellectual/curricular, physical, social and personal education of the student.

The school aims to establish, develop and nurture attitudes, values and behaviour which will enable the whole school community to reach its full potential.

All students are encouraged to find their own strengths in order to grow into self-confident and responsible adults. Within a firmly established program of pastoral care, we seek to enhance the spiritual aspects of our students' lives.

Pastoral Care Policy

The Pastoral Care Policy of Drumshanbo Vocational School (DVS) encompasses the whole school community and will be central to all other school policies. Pastoral care is the responsibility of the entire school community.

At DVS, relationships in our school community are to be underpinned by respect for each other and for all members of society at large. We nurture a sense of belonging to our school community where every individual is valued and his/her unique attributes and talents are recognised. We aim to have a school community that is caring, positive and safe.

Relationship to Mission Statement/Rationale

By the implementation of this policy, we will enact the Mission, Vision and Aims of Drumshanbo Vocational School. DVS is dedicated to the holistic development of students in a caring, safe environment where tolerance and respect are nurtured and valued.

Pastoral Goals

- That each member of the school community will have a sense of belonging, feel safe valued, listened to, cared for and be developed to his/her full potential
- That vulnerable students will be identified and supported appropriately
- That, in the implementation of all school policies, everybody will be treated with respect and fairness.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal & Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal will endeavour to ensure that our school is a caring community and a safe environment for all. The Principal and Deputy Principal will regularly attend meetings of the Pastoral Care and Student Support Team and will be key members of that team. The management makes time available to meet parents, students and staff. Principal and/or Deputy Principal attends Parent/Teacher meetings and school events such as the end of year school mass.

Management fully supports continuous professional development of staff, particularly when such courses will have a direct positive influence on student learning and/or promotes the good mental health of the teacher.

All school staff

All staff in the school will exercise due care and respect in their dealings with all members of the school community and visitors to the school. In particular, they will be aware of their responsibilities regarding Child Protection, Health and Safety and will keep informed of relevant policies and procedures in those areas. All staff will be exercise vigilance of bullying.

Class Teacher

Teachers conduct classes in an ordered and structured environment. The teacher fosters a relationship with the student that is based on mutual respect. The class teacher deals with any discipline issues that may arise using the agreed procedures of the school (See Code of Behaviour – Discipline Policy). The Class Teacher seeks help and advice when necessary.

Religion Teachers

Have a responsibility for the spiritual development of all students doing Religion and have an important role in the delivery of the RSE programme

Students

Relationships with each other and with school staff will be based on tolerance, respect and courtesy.

Pastoral Care and Student Support Team

Pastoral Care Co-coordinator, Principal, Deputy Principal, Learning Support Coordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads, SPHE Coordinator, Attendance Officer & other members as may be co-opted from time to time.

Role of the Pastoral Care and Student Support Team (also referred to as the Pastoral Care Team)

The PCSST is the coordinating body for of the support services of the school to ensure that the school community is responding appropriately to the overall needs of each student and in particular to identify and respond to the needs of the vulnerable students and those students with particular challenges. The PCSST is there as a resource for the whole school community and develops strategies for the promotion of student and staff welfare and mental health. The PCSST has a key role in the prevention and investigation of alleged bullying among students (First to Fifth Year). The PCSST has a responsibility to draft and review this policy and the Critical Incident Policy in consultation with all stakeholders. It also has a responsibility to contribute to the review of other school policies to ensure that the pastoral care approach is central to those policies.

Role of Pastoral Care Coordinator

- To coordinate all the Pastoral Care elements within the school and to ensure that the PCSST is carrying out its' role in regard to this policy
- To liaise with the key personnel, parents and outside agencies, as appropriate to address the needs of vulnerable students
- To convene and chair meetings of Pastoral Care and Student Support Team and to keep minutes of those meetings
- To oversee the implementation of the Pastoral Care and Student Support Team's decisions.
- To work with Year Heads & Guidance Counsellor in the drawing up and implementation of the First Year Induction day
- To facilitate the review, from time to time, of the Pastoral Care Policy Document.
- Act as resource for Tutors, Year Heads and other teachers in relation to Pastoral Care matters
- To relay appropriate information to teachers and Special Needs Assistants
- To act as a link between PCSST and Year Heads and Tutors
- To keep the Principal informed of all Pastoral Care developments

Role of Learning Support Co-coordinator

- Access appropriate supports for all students to cater for their learning needs – this involves liaising with all relevant agencies (eg: NEPS, HSE etc.)
- Liaise with the Guidance Counsellor in assisting students to apply for the Disability Access Route to further education (DARE)
- Apply for reasonable accommodations for students for State Exams
- To co-ordinate learning and EAL support for students
- To liaise with the SNAs
- To liaise with the primary schools and schools from which our students are transferring to get appropriate information

- To foster respect for all of our learners and an appreciation of the different ways that people learn
- To liaise with and support the teachers and in particular the coordinator teacher in the ADH Unit
- To liaise with the Guidance Counsellor, Principal, teachers and student in decisions regarding an appropriate choice and provision of subjects/levels/courses for the student
- To notify the Principal when s/he becomes aware of any students that may be exempt from the study of Irish

Role of the Guidance Counsellor

- Careers and educational guidance including advice on study skills
- Preparation of students for interview
- Provision (where required) and analysis of psychometric tests and aptitude tests
- To liaise with the principal in setting options on the timetable
- To liaise with the Learning Support Coordinator, Principal, teachers and student in decisions regarding an appropriate choice and provision of subjects/levels/courses for the student
- To provide appropriate information to parents and students
- To guide students in their applications to third level and further study
- To advise and meet students when the Leaving Cert results are released
- To work with Year Heads & Pastoral Care Coordinator in the drawing up and implementation of the First Year Induction day
- Counselling on emotional issues or referral if appropriate
- Liaison with other agencies (eg:NEPS and the HSE) as appropriate and staff for the promotion of good mental health

Role of the Year Head

The primary role of the Year Head is a pastoral one and as such s/he is a member of the Pastoral Care and Student Support Team. S/He attends regular meetings with the PCSST where possible. S/he is available to students to advise and to refer them to somebody that can help. Year Heads work closely with Class Tutors, Dean of Discipline, School Attendance Officer, teachers, parents, students and the Pastoral Care Team in such areas as:

- Addressing the needs of vulnerable students
- Collaborate with the Class Tutor and others to promote a good atmosphere in the year group
- Implementing the Anti-bullying Policy
- Ensuring that all students in his/her year group comply with the school uniform policy
- Implementing the Code of Behaviour
- Induction of new students to the Year group
- Reporting on academic and other progress of pupils in the year group. This includes writing up Year Head comments section on reports to parents
- Absenteeism and punctuality

- Liaison between the school and the home – The Year Head will be the contact person for the parents for students in his/her year group
- Development of strategies to recognise and acknowledge excellence and effort

Role of the Class Tutor

Each class has a Class Tutor. The Class tutor has an important pastoral role. As part of this role, the Class Tutor will:

- Help to generate and encourage a good class spirit (This could include sending a card to a student in hospital, organising a class trip etc.)
- Encourage students to become involved in all aspects of school life
- Check and sign Student Journals during Assembly every week
- Assist the Year Head in communicating the Discipline Policy to the students and ensure that the Agreement to the Code of Behaviour has been signed in each Journal
- Assist the Year Head and Attendance Monitor in the implementation of the Attendance Policy (i.e. collect and file absence notes etc.)
- Liaise with the Year Head on any concerns that they may have regarding students in their class grouping and be vigilant of bullying behaviour
- Act a contact person for parents where necessary
- Relay appropriate information to his/her Tutor Class

Role of the SPHE Coordinator

The co-ordinator of Social, Personal and Health Education undertakes responsibility for delivery of the programme and implementation of SPHE & RSE school policies in agreement with the Principal. S/he facilitates regular planning and evaluation meetings of SPHE teachers. The SPHE co-ordinator endeavours to promote good physical and mental health. S/he uses a variety of means to do this, including:

- Organising guest speakers with expertise in relevant areas to address the students and/or parents.
- S/he arranges evening meetings/workshops for parents on areas of concern.
- S/he facilitates and encourages students and colleagues to participate in national and local initiatives to promote good health (eg; Mental Health Debating, anti-smoking campaign, active schools etc..)
- S/he has an important role in the development and implementation of school policies on smoking, substance misuse and anti-bullying
- S/he liaises with other teachers and meets regularly with the Pastoral Care Coordinator. S/he is a member of the Pastoral Care Team
- She avails of any SPHE support services provided by the DES and keeps relevant staff and Principal informed of developments in the area
- Liaises with the HSE in their vaccination programme and in the case of incidents of notifiable diseases
- Liaises discretely with the home where there are incidents of head lice or contagious conditions

Role of the Attendance Officer

- To oversee the implementation of the Attendance Policy *
- To complete the NEWB returns (information re absences provided by Year Heads)
- To liaise with the principal and parents regarding notification of concerns to NEWB where absences may be 20 days or more
- To follow up on and deal appropriately with incidents of truancy, unexplained and long term absences
- To consult with relevant Year Head, parents and the Pastoral Care Team, regarding students who are displaying at risk behaviours with regard to attendance and punctuality
- To develop positive strategies for encouraging full attendance and participation
- The Attendance Officer will be a member of the Pastoral Care and Student Support Team

** This also involves checking regularly that attendance is recorded accurately and consistently and that students are being signed out in accordance with school policy. In the initial setting up of the computerised admin system, the Attendance officer will assist the Secretarial staff in ensuring that all class groups are recorded accurately. During the school year, it may be necessary to contact the VShare Support Desk where there are technical issues with the system. H/she will also assist in organising any necessary training for teachers new to the system.*

Pastoral Care Programmes & other Policies

The following programmes & policies in particular will contribute in a positive way to the pastoral care plan of the school:

Anti-bullying Policy
Child Protection Policy
Critical Incident Policy
RSE Policy
SPHE Plan
Managing chronic Health Conditions Policy
Code of Behaviour
Health & Safety Policy
Homework Policy
Supervised Evening Study Programme
Mentoring Programme
Lunch time activities club
Extra-curricular activities programme
Induction Programme for First Years
School Masses
End of Year Awards Ceremony

Procedures

- Pastoral Care and Student Support Team meets once weekly- The core group that meets weekly comprises: Pastoral Care Coordinator, Principal and/or Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, SPHE Coordinator & Learning Support Co-coordinator
- PCSST meets regularly after General Staff Meetings
- Report from Pastoral Care Coordinator and Year Heads at regular Staff Meetings
- Class Assemblies every Monday with Class Tutors
- Discipline procedures and referrals – See Policy
- Parents’ meetings with Principal/Deputy Principal /Year Head
- Parent Teacher Meetings at least once per year per year group
- Reporting to DLP/DDLP – See Child Protection Policy
- Meetings with Guidance Counsellor

Performance Criteria

The Pastoral Care Policy is being implemented effectively if the goals of the policy are being met.

Monitoring the implementation of this policy

- The PCSST will review and effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis
- Surveys/interviews will be used to evaluate effectiveness of this policy as part of the School Self Evaluation Plan. This will be overseen by the School Principal and findings will be reported to the Board of Management before the Review date.

Pastoral Care Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on November 21st 2013 and will be reviewed again two years from this date or sooner if the need arises.

Signed: _____ Chairperson of DVS Board of Management

Signed: _____ Principal/Deputy Principal

Signed: _____ CEO of Mayo Sligo & Leitrim ETB

Signed: _____ Chairperson of Mayo Sligo & Leitrim ETB