

## **Shimna Integrated College**

### **Pastoral Policy**

The pastoral policy of Shimna is encapsulated in our integrated status, and in the college motto "Learning from Each Other". Within a diverse community, our pastoral care is for each other: students; staff; governors; parents/carers. Pastoral care extends to our relationships with the local community, local and global links, and our mission to embed integration in all aspects of college life.

We share our integrated ethos with as many of our feeder primary schools as possible through a range of curricular and extra-curricular links. Our admissions process includes the opportunity for families to provide personal information in relation to our admissions criteria. As part of our transition/induction program, all new year 8 students are invited to the family barbecue each June organised by our Parent Council.

Pastoral care comprises our pastoral frameworks, policies and practices and also our inclusive ethos within which we all lead our daily lives in school.

At the centre of the pastoral framework are the principal and vice-principal, who operate an open door policy to all students. The principal and vice-principal also teach within the LLW programme so that they know the students in a learning context. The principal leads the programme of assemblies.

The relationship between the form teacher and the form class is key. The form teacher remains with the form class throughout key stages 3 and 4. The form teacher has responsibility for the pastoral and academic wellbeing of each student in the class. S/he is aware of all records received from a student's previous school(s), keeps abreast of any concerns which arise, encourages and enthuses students, meets students every morning and sets the tone for the day's learning, deals with attendance, uniform, learning to live with each other etc. The form teacher alerts parent/carer(s) to any pattern of concerns, and also to patterns of achievement. The form teacher works closely with Roberta, our attendance manager, to address attendance issues promptly and support students to be in school every day. The electronic form diary is the form teacher's record of interactions and interventions for each individual student.

Each Key Stage has a member of staff who supports the work of the form teacher to ensure that processes work with continuity.

Documents which support the pastoral programme include: the student planner/diary; emails to and from teaching staff and form teachers; the electronic form diary; the SchoolComms system; the notices on the student noticeboard; the website; Shimna Facebook; Shimna Twitter.

For each student there is an annual consultation evening. If a parent/carer is unable to attend, they are invited to contact the school and arrange a suitable time to speak to staff.

Our pastoral framework rests upon the pastoral ethos which includes every member of the college community. Every student is encouraged to remember that, should they be in any difficulty, they can go straight to their form teacher as the first port of call. However, within a diverse community, students also know that they can go to anyone with whom they feel comfortable. Teaching and non-teaching staff are supported in this role through training opportunities: Listening Ear; ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training); SafeTALK training, Self-Harm Awareness training, Hidden Harm Awareness training and Relationships and Sexuality Education Training (RSE). Lists of trained staff are displayed throughout the school. The principal operates an open door policy and all staff are available to students. We have a highly experienced counsellor from FamilyWorks funded by DE, who is with us for one day each week. We avail of the support, when required, of our Ardmore House outreach teacher to work with individual KS3 students. We have a close working relationship with our careers officer and our Educational Welfare Officers.

Danella Goodman, our office manager is also our pastoral manager and key contact with the school counsellor. She manages communications with external agencies, in particular local suicide prevention services, social services, PSNI, the EWO, Ardmore Outreach and EOTAS centres. Danella is ASIST and SafeTalk trained and is a member of the safeguarding team and manages the Listening Ear Service in school.

Aine Harrison is our child protection training manager. She trains staff, students and governors and is a CEOP Ambassador. She also trains our Listening Ear team of staff and students.

We have a dynamic Student Council, which meets with the principal each term. The Student Council consults with students and liaises with the principal, and also organises autonomous events, for example, anti-bullying week, Sports' Day lunchtime events, Shimna's Got Talent and our summer term walk in the woods.

We have an alternative chaplaincy, run by our IEF funded alternative chaplain. She supports in particular our GayStraightAlliance and Umbrella group (all faiths and none) through a weekly club on Fridays and outings throughout the year to, for example, outdoor pursuit centres and Corrymeela,

Our extracurricular programme is varied and extensive with most staff offering or participating in a club or seasonal activity. A weekly extra-curricular calendar is sent to staff and parent/carer(s) and clubs are advertised in Extra! our annual extra-curricular brochure. We value and celebrate the successes of our extra-curricular provision which brings together staff and students in activities beyond the classroom.

We have important links with community groups which use our premises including Newcastle Football Club; the Mourne Marathon, First Mourne Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, Newcastle Junior Athletics Club; Shimna Stars Basketball Club; Shimna meditation group; Donard Players; Shimna Stars Special Olympics Club; Newcastle Football Club and U8s squad; Rodgers School of Irish Dance; Shimna Shooters and Shimna Junior Shooters netball clubs.

Integration means that: we each bring our own experiences and views with us; we celebrate and challenge our own beliefs and opinions, and celebrate and challenge those of our friends.

### **Pastoral Policy and Staff**

As well as supporting our staff to best support our students, supporting our staff pastorally is central to our pastoral policy. We support staff in their working conditions, accommodation and timetabling arrangements which promote a healthy work life balance as far as possible. We aim to be family friendly, within the Department of Education's regulations for paid and unpaid leave and also avoid causing additional cover responsibilities to colleagues.

The principal operates the same open door policy to staff as to students and parent/carer(s), and any staff concern can be raised directly with him.

We operate an annual consultation with staff, and also consult all departments about timetabling arrangements.

The college pays a subscription to Carecall 0808 800 0002, an independent counselling service.

In organising consultation evenings with parent/carer(s), we take account of the needs of staff, particularly those living at a distance, alongside the needs of parent/carer(s) to come to school outside working hours. We provide a sandwich meal for staff on consultation evenings, and tea and biscuits are provided for staff, parent/carer(s) and students.

We provide Fair Trade tea, coffee and sugar to the staffroom, and biscuits on training days.

The staff is kept abreast of issues, for example Area Based Planning, school budgets etc. The Staff Social Fund also regularly organises social and celebratory events for staff.

The Board of Governors takes very seriously the welfare of staff. The Board of Governors takes an active interest in the work of staff, and frequently invites a staff member to address a committee on an aspect of their work.