

F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody



Participation Policy

STATEMENT

The school encourages the full participation of all students in all aspects of school life and aims to maximise their personal development, good citizenship and academic progress. This is achieved through various programmes in the school.

CURRICULUM

The school offers a wide range and variety of subjects at Junior and Senior level. The school also offers a Transition year programme as well as the Leaving Cert Vocational Programme. Career guidance and counselling are also available in the school as is resource teaching. These programmes provide scope for personal development as well as preparing students for their participation in society.

METHODOLOGIES

In the teaching of these programmes the teachers endeavour to use a variety of methodologies, which encourage and facilitate the participation of all students. The school management provides and supports the professional development of the teachers by permitting them to attend in-service courses / workshops and by offering staff training days.

CO-CURRICULAR

The school's programme of co-curricular / extra-curricular activities caters for a wide range of activities in order to maximise student participation. Activities range from sports, music, drama, visits, exchanges, charity awareness, competitions, monthly newsletter, retreats, mock interviews and field trips.

PASTORAL CARE

The school's pastoral care structures and class organisation arrangements enable all students to participate in the life of the school in a way that promotes their social development.

Form teacher

The caring atmosphere nurtured by the Form teacher / Dean structure also encourages full participation in all areas of school life. The form teacher also instils a good class spirit to promote friendship and learning. This structure also provides a medium through which parents / guardians can contact and meet with the teachers. Participation is encouraged at an early stage by the provision of information and meetings, which facilitate the transition from primary to secondary school for both parents and students.

Meitheal

This group provides support for first year students making their transition from primary school to secondary as easy as possible. The group helps students to build a sense of belonging and friendship.

Student Council – students form a students' council, which organises various activities during the school year to encourage students to participate in the full life of the school.

Rainbows - The school offers a Rainbows programme to assist students who have experienced a loss in their lives through separation or death.

Provision of lunch

The school also provides lunches for students in need of such.

Parents Participation - Parents participation is greatly encouraged through the various openings available to them e.g. participation on the Board of Management, Parents' Council, P.T. meetings and the various information meetings held during the year.

FUTURE PLANNING

- a scheme to encourage students to come fully equipped to participate in their learning
- a scheme to award attendance and to promote the importance of full attendance
- a better system for communicating information about school events to first year students
- a strategy to encourage parent participation
- a merit system which would see students being awarded for individual pieces of work

PROPOSALS

For students to participate fully in their education it is of the utmost importance that they come to school fully equipped. The group identified the students inability to organise themselves as the key reason why they often forgot books, equipment etc. With this in mind the group proposes that:

- during the first weeks of term time should be spent teaching first years these organisational skills. Form teachers along with individual class teachers who would clearly explain to students what books and equipment were required on certain days would conduct this. This training could also be provided during the induction days for first year students.
- Teachers should be provided with a memo, which would outline to students some good tips on how to be organised. The memo would include the following;
 - (a) correct use of the journal
 - (b) the importance of writing in subjects the night before and using this as a cross check to ensure that all the correct books and equipment had been packed.
 - (c) Where two or more textbooks existed students to note in their journal which book was required and when.

Form teachers should also be encouraged to check journals, especially in the early days to ensure that journals are being correctly used.

The group also proposed that the previous scheme whereby students were required to ring home when missing equipment should once again be introduced for 3, 4, 5 and 6 year students. All staff members should revisit the scheme in September so that the scheme can be clarified. It would be of the utmost importance that the scheme is implemented and adhered to by all members of staff.

WEIGHT OF SCHOOL BAGS

The group also felt that the weight of bags might also be a contributory factor to students forgetting books. Two members of the group volunteered to investigate the range and prices of school bags available. This should be presented to parents during their induction night in May.

PART-TIME WORK

It is felt that this is an issue, which in itself might also contribute to poor participation of students. The group suggests that parents and students be made aware of the legal position with regard to this issue.

EVALUATION

To evaluate the “Ring Home” Scheme it should be discussed at the first available staff meeting. A clear record would need to be kept in the office of those students who were required to ring home. This record could then be used to ascertain if the student had improved or not. Form teachers to keep an eye on journals