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The following policies were discussed, agreed and ratified by the Craobh Niall Ó Cathasaigh Coiste on 18th June 2024. These policies are intended to support all members of the Branch including teachers, students and volunteers while engaging in all Branch activities.

1. Codes of Conduct for Teachers/Volunteers, Students, Parents/Guardians

The following codes of conduct apply during all Branch activities.

1.1 & 1.2 Code of Conduct for Teachers/Volunteers

1.1 Teachers/volunteers are entitled to the following:

- 1.1.1 They should know that they are part of a team and feel supported in their work as part of the team.
- 1.1.2 They should feel safe and be safe when engaging in branch activities.
- 1.1.3 They should be treated with respect by colleagues, parent/guardians and students.
- 1.1.4 They should be listened to when they make their concerns known and have these concerns dealt with appropriately.

1.2 Teachers/volunteers are expected to adhere to the following:

- 1.2.1 Teachers/volunteers should abide by the Branch policies and procedures as outlined in this document.
- 1.2.2 All children attending Branch activities must be treated with dignity, sensitivity, respect and kindness at all times.
- 1.2.3 Every child attending Branch activities must be treated equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- 1.2.4 Teachers should be positive and encouraging of all students to create a supportive learning environment where children leave each lesson with a sense of achievement.
- 1.2.5 Teachers should recognise the different development needs of all students and strive to encourage students to reach their musical potential.
- 1.2.6 The performance goals set for students should be realistic and appropriate for the age and stage of students while at the same time providing appropriate challenge to ensure that students are motivated to learn.
- 1.2.7 Student effort and commitment should be praised and reinforced and feedback to students should be positive, constructive and helpful.
- 1.2.8 All interactions between teachers/branch officers internally and with students/parents/guardians should be appropriate, professional, courteous and respectful.

- 1.2.9 In certain circumstances it may be necessary and appropriate for teachers to work with individual students. Teachers must be sensitive to the risks involved in interacting with children in a one-to-one setting and the door to the classroom should be left open.
- 1.2.10 Teachers should avoid all unnecessary physical contact when assisting students to perform a technique in music.
- 1.2.11 Teachers/volunteers should not knowingly communicate individually through text/multimedia with children and young people. All communication, by email or text, should be with parents/guardians only. Teachers/Volunteers should not have the mobile phone numbers or personal email address of students under 18 in the Branch.
- 1.2.12 Teachers/volunteers should lead by example in the Branch as positive role models for young people in their behaviour and attitudes.
- 1.2.13 It is branch policy that all teachers working within the branch should have a TTCT qualification.
- 1.2.14 All trainee teachers should attend the TTCT preparatory course before commencing any teaching or substitute cover.
- 1.2.15 All trainee teachers are expected to complete and qualify as teachers under the TTCT system as soon as they are eligible to apply.
- 1.2.16 Teachers are responsible for students for the duration of the class time.
- 1.2.17 Teachers should arrive at least 5 mins prior to commencement of class. If a teacher is running late Caroline, Marie or another member of staff should be made aware so that the students are not left unsupervised during a scheduled class time.
- 1.2.18 Teachers should be prepared for class and have all appropriate materials ready to go for each class.
- 1.2.19 Teachers should never leave students unsupervised in a classroom.
- 1.2.20 Caroline, Marie and the Branch Runaí must be notified of teachers' schedule/timetable and list of students at start of each academic year and be informed of any changes to same in the 2nd term.
- 1.2.21 Teachers should ensure that when they send text messages with essential information acknowledgement from parent/guardian is requested.
- 1.2.22 Teachers should direct parents enquires re music classes to the website. Teachers should not allocate places to prospective students or arrange classes for new students. All student allocation is centrally managed by the branch.
- 1.2.23 Requests for individual tuition should not be facilitated by the branch teacher it must be referred to the branch officers.
- 1.2.24 Teachers should not offer paid private lessons to any students who were/are enrolled for any classes in the branch.
- 1.2.25 Teachers are required to keep a class attendance record and to email completed records to the branch Secretary at the end of each term for branch records.
- 1.2.26 Teachers are required to attend all planning meetings (usually 1-2 per academic year) and other meetings if deemed necessary.
- 1.2.27 All teachers are expected to attend training/upskilling courses as necessary and indicated by the branch.
- 1.2.28 Any recordings must be under the direction of teachers and recorded material should not contain identifying features of students. Recordings cannot be shared on social media.

- 1.2.29 Any photographs or audio/visual recordings of any minor taken by a CCÉ Volunteer must be taken in the presence of the parent/ guardian and/or with the understood consent of the parent/guardian.
- 1.2.30 Mobile phones should not be used in class by teachers or students except when directed by the teacher for specific teaching purposes.
- 1.2.31 As part of the repertoire taught to students, teachers are required to teach all the agreed repertoire for each year to all students so that all students feel they can participate in all branch activities. Teachers are expected to attend the End of Year Concert and Annual Branch Celebration event.
- 1.2.32 Teachers should tidy classrooms at the end of lessons (including closing windows and turning off lights) and ensure that the classroom is left as it was found.
- 1.2.33 Teachers are responsible for ensuring that their Garda Vetting is up to date, and ensuring that the branch runaí and branch DLP have up to date copies of documentation confirming same
- 1.2.34 In relation to music students attending CCE classes in primary schools, teachers should move students on to Comhaltas music classes in Coláiste Choilm as soon as possible.
- 1.2.35 If a suspected child protection issue arises it must be dealt with in accordance with the Comhaltas Child Protection Polic (see Appendix 1)
- 1.2.36 If a case of suspected bullying or harassment arises it should be dealt with in accordance with the Comhaltas Bullying and Harassment Policy (see Appendix 2)

1.3 & 1.4 Code of Conduct for Students

1.3 Children and young people involved in traditional music classes in the branch are entitled to:

- 1.3.1 Be safe and feel safe.
- 1.3.2 Be treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity, and kindness.
- 1.3.3 Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- 1.3.4 Have fun and experience a sense of joy and fulfilment while engaging in branch activities.
- 1.3.5 Be supported and encouraged in their learning.
- 1.3.6 Participate in sessions, concerts, competitions, and any other activities the branch may be involved in at a level where they feel comfortable and that suits their experience.
- 1.3.7 Be listened to when they make their concerns known and have these concerns dealt with in an appropriate manner.

1.4 Children and young people involved in traditional music classes in the branch should always:

- 1.4.1 Do their best and enjoy themselves.
- 1.4.2 Attend all lessons. Full attendance is required. A pattern of inattendance may result in the student losing their place in the branch.
- 1.4.3 Make sure they are prepared for each lesson (e.g. instrument, folder, notes etc.)
- 1.4.4 Make every effort to attend ensemble classes provided by the branch.
- 1.4.5 Make every effort to attend and participate in Branch Activities, including End of Year Concert and Annual Branch Celebration.

- 1.4.6 Respect all other members of the branch regardless of ability, ethnic origin, cultural background, or religion.
- 1.4.7 Respect all teachers and volunteers.
- 1.4.8 Respect the school building, school property and grounds. Students should not use the lift only in a very small number of special circumstances (e.g. heavy instrument) and they have specific permission to do so from the branch/teacher. Students are not permitted to enter/use the Staffroom.
- 1.4.9 Behave in an appropriate manner in the school. **They should never run, play, or climb in the corridors and car park or engage in any activity between lessons that may cause harm to themselves or others.**
- 1.4.10 Be honest and truthful when reporting concerns, events, or incidents.
- 1.4.11 Enter the classroom only when the teacher is present.
- 1.4.12 Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour.
- 1.4.13 Follow the direction of the teacher when using their mobile phone to record tunes. **Mobile phones must NOT be used during class time unless directed by the teacher.**
- 1.4.14 Respect the privacy of their peers and avoid inappropriate use of social media while engaging in branch activities.

1.5 & 1.6 Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians

1.5 Parent/Guardians have the right to:

- 1.5.1 Know their child is safe.
- 1.5.2 Be informed of issues or concerns relating to their child.
- 1.5.3 Be informed if their child is unwell or injured.
- 1.5.4 Be informed about branch activities and timelines.
- 1.5.5 Speak to a teacher and/or Branch Officer if they have a concern about an issue.

1.6 Parent/Guardians are expected to:

- 1.6.1 Complete branch registration processes including payments in a timely manner as outlined in enrolment policy.
- 1.6.2 Respect branch policy in relation to requests for individual tuition which should not be made to Branch teachers.
- 1.6.3 **Understand that it is entirely the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are brought to the room where their lesson is taking place and collected from this room at the end of class/rehearsal.**
- 1.6.4 **Understand that they, and NOT branch teachers, must be entirely responsible for the supervision of their child while on the school premises outside of their scheduled lesson/rehearsal time.**
- 1.6.5 Ensure that their child has vacated the school no more than 5 minutes after their lesson/rehearsal has finished. In the case where a parent is waiting with their child to collect a sibling or friend, **they must ensure that their child is properly supervised at all times.**

- 1.6.6 Detail any health or other concerns to the teacher as appropriate.
- 1.6.7 Inform the teacher if their child cannot attend a lesson/rehearsal.
- 1.6.8 Inform the teacher if the child is discontinuing lessons.
- 1.6.9 Reply to messages from the teacher to acknowledge receipt.
- 1.6.10 Ensure that their child is punctual and prepared for every lesson/rehearsal.
- 1.6.11 Encourage their children and support their practice at home as directed by the teacher.
- 1.6.12 Facilitate their children's participation in branch activities as appropriate.
- 1.6.13 Engage in a respectful and courteous way with teachers and branch volunteers.

2 Class Scheduling and Substitution Policy

- 2.1 The teacher should organise a substitute teacher for all lessons they will miss. If possible, the substitute teacher should be taken from the panel of available teachers in the branch in the instrument they teach. Teachers should only substitute for another teacher if they are available and not teaching themselves in the time slot requested. There should be no cancellation or rescheduling of lessons. Substitute cover is required.
- 2.2 If a teacher is unavailable to teach scheduled classes, they should inform Marie (Gaelscoil) and Caroline (Gaelcholáiste) and copy email to the Branch Secretary runai@ballincolligcomhaltas.ie. **They should outline which classes they will be missing** [e.g. if they are only missing part of a Thursday evening rather than the full night] **and which teacher will be covering the classes.**
- 2.3 If a teacher is unavailable to teach a class in Scoil Eoin/Farran NS, they should email the Branch Secretary directly. The principals of the Gaelscoil, Scoil Eoin and Farran NS as applicable will be told the name of the substitute teacher and the number of classes being covered.
- 2.4 Substitute teachers should be paid promptly by teacher after lesson cover. Substitute teachers should be paid for the number of students in the class and not the number who turn up to the class on the day. Substitute teachers should be paid immediately even if fees have not been paid by branch to teacher.
- 2.5 All classes should take place within the branch calendar year as per agreed dates.
- 2.6 Term dates for year should be set at the start of the academic year. Bank Holidays that fall on class days should be considered when scheduling the terms to ensure correct number of weekly classes are provided to students on their given day.
- 2.7 At start of each academic year, teachers should email their timetable and class lists to Caroline (Gaelcholáiste) and to Marie (Gaelscoil) and cc to the Branch Secretary for branch records. Any changes to same in the 2nd term should also be emailed.
- 2.8 Substitute teachers should be provided with students' names and work for them to do with the students. Attendance should be taken as usual.
- 2.9 Parents should understand that, with a view to maximising accessibility of classes for beginning primary school students, students attending music classes in the various Primary Schools are encouraged, in consultation with their teachers, to move on to Comhaltas music classes in Coláiste Choilm as soon as possible.

3 Enrolment Policy

- 3.1 Fees for new students are payable once place is allocated and MUST be paid before first class.
- 3.2 For returning students:
 - a) Term One fees must be paid by 1st August to guarantee place in class
 - b) Fees for Term two must be paid by the third week of term.
- 3.3 Failure to pay fees in good time may result in the forfeiture of place.
- 3.4 Fees will not be refunded if a student cancels lessons during the term.
- 3.5 Fees must be paid via the online payment system on the Branch Website:
www.ballincolligcomhantas.ie/music-classes
- 3.6 Copy of receipt issued should be sent to relevant teacher. Teachers' payment from branch is based on receipts issued.
- 3.7 Parents/guardians should go to Easy Payments Plus Terms & Conditions and Privacy Policy and ensure that they agree with these terms and conditions before they proceed to payment.
- 3.8 In paying the fee parents/guardians are automatically paying for membership of Craobh Niall O Cathasaigh and per Comhaltas constitution can only be a member of one Comhaltas branch
- 3.9 Payment of fees will be taken as agreement with these terms and conditions.

4 Instrument Rental Policy

- 4.1 Instruments are only provided for one 'class year' (i.e. 2 terms). Instruments must be returned at the end of year concert or on completion of SCT exams for the year (whichever is later).
- 4.2 Instruments cannot be held by members for summer holidays.
- 4.3 The instrument on loan must be treated with the utmost care and returned in the same condition as when it was taken out on loan.
- 4.4 No repairs / alterations should be carried out without the prior approval of branch
- 4.5 Any damage to instrument, case or other equipment must be paid for by the branch member.

5 Communication Policy

- 5.1 Any queries relating to music classes should be directed to the branch via the message option and application process on the branch website.
- 5.2 Should an issue, dispute or complaint arise between teachers/volunteers, they should discuss the matter with a colleague or branch officer. A teacher/volunteer can ask a colleague or branch officer to be present at meetings to resolve the issue. If necessary and appropriate the issue will then be dealt with in referring to the Comhaltas Bullying and Harassment Policy (see Appendix 2).
- 5.3 If a parent/guardian wishes to raise an issue or complaint about a teacher, it should in the first instance be raised with the teacher concerned. A teacher can ask a colleague or branch officer to be present at meetings with parents

- 5.4 If a teacher wishes to raise an issue or complaint about a parent/guardian, it should in the first instance be raised with the parent/guardian concerned. A teacher can ask a colleague or branch officer to be present at meetings with parents/guardians
- 5.5 If a teacher wishes to raise an issue or concern about a child in their class to the parent/guardian this should be done via a phone call or face to face meeting only. A teacher can ask a colleague or branch officer to be present at meetings to resolve the issue.

6 Examinations Policy

- 6.1 It is branch policy that members be prepared by teachers for Comhaltas SCT Examinations only
- 6.2 Members are encouraged to participate annually in the SCT exams.

7 Competitions Policy

- 7.1 It is branch policy that junior members attending classes with the branch should only compete at Comhaltas competitions with CCÉ Cr. Niall Ó Cathasaigh.
- 7.2 It is branch policy that Duets, Trios, Ceilí Bands and Grúpaí Ceoil would be filled centrally and collectively in conjunction with the Oifigeach Ceoil and relevant teachers.
- 7.3 To prepare for the Fleadh Cheoil, Duets, Trios, Ceilí Bands and Grúpaí Ceoil will be allocated by branch to teachers in consultation with Oifigeach Ceoil.
- 7.4 Branch members involved in Grúpaí Ceoil and Céilí Bands must adhere to conditions and rehearsal schedule as outlined when places are offered.
- 7.5 Branch members involved in Grúpaí Ceoil and Céilí Bands must adhere to dress code for competitions as outlined by branch.
- 7.6 We encourage students to compete in their own age group in the Fleadh Cheoil competition.

Appendix 1: Child Protection Policy

Available at this link: https://comhaltas.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/child_protection_policy_2021.pdf

Appendix 2: Bullying and Harassment Policy

Available at this link: [Bullying & Harassment Prevention \(comhaltas.ie\)](https://comhaltas.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Bullying_Harassment_Prevention_Policy_2021.pdf)