



Video on Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo

Frame 1. Hello and welcome to the Jesus and Mary Secondary School, here in the North West of Ireland. It is situated on the shores of Killala Bay overlooking the Atlantic. It was founded in 1941 initially as a girls school but became co-educational in 1967 and today has equal numbers of boys and girls. Enniscrone is a small town in a rural area where families make their living from farming, tourism, construction and retail. They are mostly lower middle income families with some depending on social welfare. In many families both parents are working in order to run their households.

Frame 2. The school has a population of 425 students and 32 teachers with students from ages 12 to 18. There is also an Adult section which caters for 80+ students.

Students participate in 2 major programmes: Junior and Leaving Certificates and there is an optional Transition year programme mid-way through their time in the school. Students are ambitious and motivated and want to progress on to further education. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

Frame 3. In keeping with the ethos of St. Claudine Thevenet the school is a community with a family spirit where positive relationships are encouraged and respect is the cornerstone of the discipline policy. As well as the academic programme students are also encouraged to participate in sport and extra and co-curricular programmes. They also participate in the liturgical life of the year with many spiritual events.

Frame 4. Our students are like all modern teenagers, they want to do well in school, they also want an active social life. They work part-time so as to fund this social life, their clothes and their mobile phones. They come under the same pressures of alcohol and substance misuse and the need to belong and not be different. They have the normal ups and downs of broken friendships and relationships.

Frame 5. A number of students can suffer from anxiety, school refusal, poor attendance, poor motivation, family breakdown, financial worries, bullying, mental health issues, worries about belonging and acceptance, gender issues, identity concerns.

Frame 6. How does the school help? It is a two-way approach: First on a whole school level and then in response to the specific needs of particular students. It is important that our students know they are cared for, that teachers know their names, that they greet them and are interested in them and in their lives. They know they can approach a teacher if they have concerns.

Frame 7. We have a class tutor system, where each class group has a tutor from first year up to sixth year. This teacher is their go-to person if they have concerns. They meet for 10 minutes each day. The tutor encourages class spirit and pride and a loyalty to one another. The Tutor raises concerns with other staff and management if they feel a student is struggling.





Frame 8. All students participate in Social Personal and Health education class weekly in small groups of 12 where they can discuss the social, personal and health matters and bring up any concerns they might have. In these classes they can speak about friendships, relationships, bullying, sexuality, gender issues. Here they have a voice in a very caring and confidential setting. There are 400 hours of wellbeing experiences provided for students at junior cycle level.

Frame 8. Our discipline policy is written in a positive way expressing the desired behaviour we expect from our students and inviting their input into the drawing up of the policy. Each Tutor draws up with their class the desired way of being together for the year and how they can be respectful towards one another. Like Claudine we focus on prevention rather than punishment and when students misbehave then we use a restorative approach, where students are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and what their thinking was then and now and how they can make amends for it. Its focus is to restore the relationships that have been broken. It underlies the principle that there is no such thing as a bad child just negative and positive behaviours.

Frame 9. We encourage the voice of students and their parents when choosing their subjects for studying. They receive an open menu of subjects from which they choose their 4 preferences and from these the subject bands are created. This is catering for student interest and student voice. The new junior cycle programme allows students to engage in interest based projects and class based assessments focussed on their own particular area of interest.

Frame 10: In particular situations when students are experiencing bullying, poor attendance, poor motivation or anxiety then we take very specific approaches. We have the service of a guidance counsellor who can meet with students to discuss and help students with their concerns. We have a Home Youth Liaison officer, who is a trained social care worker and who comes to the school once a week and is there for students and parents who may wish to speak to her about any difficulties.

Frame 11. The school has a strong anti-bullying policy which is available to parents and students. We have zero tolerance for bullying and we hold regular surveys with students so as to monitor if there are instances of bullying. Students are encouraged to report any bullying events they witness and they know they will be treated in confidence. Teachers use role play or social stories to raise awareness among students about bullying behaviour and how to deal with it.

Frame 12. The school has a welfare committee composed of Principal, Deputy Principal and Guidance counsellor who meet once a week and discuss concerns that might have been reported by students by tutors or teachers. An action plan may drawn up to link with parents and external services that can help the student.

Frame 13. Those students who require learning support or other support we have dedicated teachers in this area who provide extra help for students and 3 SNA's who can assist students with their needs. In the area of poor attendance, the teacher with responsibility for this area meets with the students, contacts the parents and works on a plan to encourage increased attendance. On a whole school level attendance is monitored throughout the year and rewards are given for good attendance.





Frame 14. In the Jesus and Mary school we value our students and the partnership with parents who are on our parents council and have reps on the Board of Management. Our teachers model good behaviour and are respectful and fair to students so that they see they are cared for and will be safe, successful and happy with us.

