POLICY ON SCHOOL AWARDS

ÉACHT NA SCOLÁIRÍ

Date of ratification by BOM: 29/01/2019

Mission Statement

Kinsale Community School is committed to:

- Enabling all students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential
- Fostering the development of personal responsibility
- Engendering a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect among students, staff, management, parents, and the wider community
- Facilitating the professional development of staff

...in a safe and caring environment.

Introduction

Kinsale Community School has had in place an awards night since 1997 – known as Éacht na Scoláirí. The philosophy and rationale behind the awards night is the recognition of those students in the school community who have contributed to the life of the school and to the ethos and stated mission of the school. Having in place an awards night brings with it a number of challenges and forces the school community to think about what it is trying to achieve and what it wishes to recognise in having an awards night. This is an on-going activity which means that since the introduction of the awards there have been a number of suggestions, modifications and changes to the school awards.

Award Categories

In compiling a programme for awards night the school focused on a number of areas. Firstly there are year awards for each year group. A number of students are nominated from each year and there is an overall winner from each group of nominees. There are

junior sports awards and senior sports awards with an overall junior sports winner and senior sports winner. There are memorial awards for Music and the Arts, for German, for GAA and for Maths/Science. There is an award for civic virtue. There are a number of academic awards including an overall senior and junior academic award, aswell as an LCA and 5th year academic award.

Awards Night

The awards are usually presented in October and recognise the students of the previous academic year. Family members of those nominated are invited and staff attend. Local dignitaries, Board of Management members, local clergy, Principals of the feeder primary schools, Parents' Association members and other guests attend. A guest of honour is invited to present the awards and to address the audience. Past guests of honours have included Miriam O'Callaghan (RTE), Brian McGraith (DCU), Sean O'Driscoll (Glen Dimplex), Pat Cox, (Former President of the European Parliament), Mary Davis, Micheal Martin when he was the Minister for Education, Adi Roche, John Nagle, Gerard Wrixon President of UCC, Pat Kelleher Past President of CIT and Paul Reynolds. There is a musical interlude and a musical finale on the night and a reception hosted by the Parents' Association follows the ceremony.

DETERMINATION OF NOMINEES FOR THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES

Year Awards

In the early years of the awards when it came to the selection of students for year awards the year head and class teachers decided upon who should be nominated, however following consultation and consideration a new system of nomination was proposed. This system aimed to be transparent and accountable. It also aimed to achieve the greatest possible consensus when determining who should be nominated. In order to achieve this, criteria were drawn up and agreed upon by staff against which students were deemed eligible to be nominated. Four essential criteria were decided upon which students had to fulfil in order to be nominated and they also had to meet at least one of another eight additional criteria. All staff and all senior students are entitled to nominate a student for a year award. A list is then compiled and this is circulated to staff. If a staff member has an objection to any student they can put this objection in writing and give it to the awards co-ordinator who will consider it in consultation with the Principal and the

Deputy Principals. Teachers can nominate up to three students from any class that they teach. Anyone that receives one vote from a teacher is deemed to be on the long list of nominees and the ten students with the highest votes get on the short list and will be invited to the awards evening. The overall winner is the student with the highest number of votes and the remaining nine nominees on the night comprises of those students immediately behind the overall winner. If there is a tie between students then the winner is determined by who has the most number of three points and if this fails to provide a winner then the Year Head in consultation with other staff will decide the overall winner. However the Principal, Deputy Principals and Awards Co-ordinator meet to review and asses the overall configuration of the Year Awards and if they have reason to amend some of the results by the inclusion of students then they will exercise this right in consultation with whomever they deem necessary or appropriate to consult. The Year Head and Awards Coordinator announce at Year Assembly all those who were nominated and those who were nominated to attend on awards night.

Sports Awards

Those staff members who are involved in training and coaching various school teams meet with the PE department to decide upon the nominees in the sports category. There is a Senior and Junior sports category as well as a special achievement in sport category. Students are nominated on the basis of their contribution in their chosen area. Qualities such as leadership, dedication, effort, sportsmanship and excellence are acknowledged in the nominations for a sports award.

Academic Awards

The school wishes to recognise the academic achievements of its students in the State Examinations. The Junior Academic Award is presented to the student who achieves the greatest number of A grades in Higher Level papers in the Junior Certificate. The Senior Academic Award goes to the student with the greatest number of points. There are also academic awards for the highest grade achieved in each Leaving Certificate subject that is taught in the school. The issue of rechecks is not facilitated unfortunately, due to timing. The LCA Award recognises the student that received the highest grade in LCA. In 2018 a new academic award was added to recognise the highest points from the summer exams in 5th year.

Memorial Awards

There are a number of memorial awards presented on the night. There are memorial awards for the Arts (Kilian Ryan Award), for German(Catherine O'Byrne Award), for GAA (Joe McGrath Award), and for Maths/Science or 5th year Academic (Don O'Shea Award) . The recipients of these awards are decided upon by the relevant teachers and the criteria employed include effort, contribution and enthusiasm.

Special Awards

If a student or group of students have achieved something at either local or national level then the school will honour this achievement by the inclusion of those students on awards night. Past special awards have included Young Scientist Competition, Junior Science Olympiad, Essay writing and the Young Engineer Competition. Staff are invited to nominate students to be included in this category and there are criteria for such inclusion.

Civic Virtue Award

This award goes to the student who is considered by the staff to have best exemplified those values which the school wishes to inculcate in its students – concern for others, dedication, consideration for others, involvement in and contribution to the school community, respect, leadership and imitative. This award usually goes to a Sixth Year and nominees are decided upon by staff. If there is more than one nominee then a vote is taken by staff after the merits of each nominee have been outlined to the staff.

CONCLUSION

The school community reviews its awards policy on a regular basis – such reviews involve the principal, the deputy principal, the awards co-ordinator, year heads, students and staff. The school continuously attempts to ensure that the school awards are as transparent, fair, equitable and accountable as possible given the varying factors involved.