

ST. FINTINA'S POST PRIMARY SCHOOL

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Our school seeks to provide a supportive and nurturing environment where each individual feels cherished and respected and where the uniqueness and identity of each member of the community is valued. The school is committed to providing a holistic education for its students and acknowledges the link between the student's sense of self worth, emotional, and social well-being and the learning process.

SCOPE

Pastoral Care is the responsibility of each member of the school community.

RELATIONSHIP TO MISSION STATEMENT

The policy has evolved from our mission statement which encourages students to strive for excellence and achieve his/her full potential in a caring and supportive learning environment where mutual respect, truth and compassion are encouraged and fostered.

RATIONALE

This policy is necessary to formalise the school's response to the increasing challenge to provide support for students at every level and to outline the procedures whereby this essential assistance can be provided.

The school also recognises that Pastoral Care fosters self esteem and self discipline and consequently is an integral part of the learning process.

AIM/OBJECTIVES

- To create an environment where students feel safe and secure.
- To respond in a sympathetic way to the fears, concerns and worries of our students.
- To enhance the teaching and learning provided at the school.
- To develop student confidence and self esteem.
- To provide an environment that meets student needs.

- To provide students with coping strategies that will enable them derive full benefit from their schooling.
- To encourage students to value one another and to respect the views of other members of the school community.
- To provide clarity of roles and responsibilities for each member of the school community.
- To foster good relationships amongst all members of the school community.

PASTORAL APPROACH

The school understands Pastoral Care “as an approach to education which endeavours to value and develop each member of the school community. It promotes learning at every level of the student”. (The Year Head, Monaghan 1998 IAPCE). Each member of the school community has access to the relevant pastoral structures and procedures and each is invited to play his/her part in contributing to the pastoral ethos of this school community.

PASTORAL ROLES

Each member of the school has a role to play in the pastoral framework of the school. However certain personnel play a more significant role than others in the pastoral process.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

- To ensure that all members of the school community are familiar with the pastoral procedures of the school.
- To discuss roles and responsibilities with students, staff and parents.
- To provide a link with outside professional agencies and individuals.
- To ensure that the Pastoral Policy is reviewed regularly and updated.
- To provide support help and training for people in key roles within the pastoral framework.

PASTORAL CARE CO-ORDINATOR

The school has a senior pastoral care co-ordinator and at junior level an SPHE co-ordinator.

- Co-ordinate the pastoral programme.
- Review students with particular difficulties.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality.

- Support the class tutors in their role.
- Advise relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues.
- Convene a meeting of the Pastoral Team on a monthly basis.
- Prepare agenda for these meetings in consultation with principal.
- Record the minutes of these meetings.
- Refer students to the guidance counsellor.
- Present an annual report on Pastoral life of the school to staff.
- Identify training needs and consult with principal on ways to address these needs.
- Brief the Parents Association and Board of Management once a year on pastoral affairs.
- Arrange meeting of class tutors once per term.
- Network with Pastoral Co-ordinators in other school.
- Identify organisations/associations that may assist in developing the pastoral programme.
- Oversee the mentoring programme.
- Organise study skill sessions for students.
- Keep and oversee records concerning students.

GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR

- Provides a confidential referral service for all students.
- Works with these students individually to provide them with coping skills to overcome personal difficulties.
- Arranges appointments with students who may approach with a concern or difficulty.
- Supports 1st years and other new entrants in their transition period.
- Advises these students on subject choice.
- Oversees the administration of the assessment of these students and give them feedback on results.
- Administers Differential Aptitude Tests to students.
- Organises career talks for senior students.
- Advises 3rd year students on subject choices.
- Talks to students about further education and career paths.
- Assists students with CAO forms.
- Arranges visits to career conferences and college open days for senior students.
- Presents a report to the principal at the end of each term.
- Liaises with NEPS, HSE and other agencies which provide advice and support for students.

THE PASTORAL CARE TEAM

The pastoral team consists of senior management, pastoral co-ordinator, SPHE co-ordinator, guidance counsellor, the chaplain, representative of the class tutors, resource co-ordinator, HSCL co-ordinator and the SCP co-ordinator.

The team meets on a monthly basis.

They will have responsibility for supporting class tutors, co-ordinating the pastoral programme, reviewing students with particular difficulties, advising relevant groups within the school on pastoral issues.

An annual report on the pastoral life of the school will be presented to staff and the Board of Management.

CLASS TUTOR

- Builds a relationship with each student in his/her tutor group.
- Explains school policies to the group.
- Monitors attendance and punctuality.
- Is the first to be contacted by a subject teacher if there is a problem.
- Consults privately with students in difficult and advises them how to behave.
- Consults with the SPHE/Pastoral co-ordinators when the need arises.
- Gets to know as much as possible about students in his/her group and becomes their confidant.
- Imposes sanctions such as detention when warranted.
- Contacts parents in relation to positive and negative behaviour of students.
- Checks student journals and signs them each week.
- Advises students to have books and equipment for classes.
- Monitors student homework record and examination results.
- Meets with tutor group once a month to discuss pastoral issues.
- Organise one event per year to build strong tutor/class relationships.
- Keep a watching brief over the academic progress of students and monitor their success or otherwise in coping with their lives while attending the school.

LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER

- Offers additional tuition to students who have been identified with learning needs.
- Drafts Individual Education Plans for these students based on recommendations outlined in their psychological reports.
- Identifies students who may be in need of reasonable accommodation in State Examinations.

PARENTS

- Aim to be familiar with school policies and procedures.
- Monitor homework and check the journal at least once per week.

- Attend parent-teacher meetings and come in to meet with tutor or management staff when invited.
- Become involved in the school by attending Parent Association meetings or otherwise.
- Encourage students to be punctual and frequent in attendance and to achieve full potential while at school.
- Contact the school if there are issues or difficulties at home that might impinge on the student's learning.
- Encourage students to achieve the highest standard of education possible.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNITY LIAISON CO-ORDINATOR

- To establish close links between home, school and community which will facilitate the development of a learning environment for the students which promotes the development of the whole person.
- To encourage the participation of parents in their children's education including homework support.
- To promote parents' education, development, growth and involvement.
- Support parents in the education of their children.
- Encourage parents to have a more positive attitude towards school.
- To empower and affirm parents so that they in turn can support other parents.
- To set up a local committee to identify school related issues at community level that impinge on learning and to seek to address these issues in conjunction with other interest groups.

SCHOOL COMPLETION PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR

- Co-ordinate and implement the SCP plan as drawn up by the management committee.
- Provide direct support to the targeted young people towards the prevention of educational disadvantage.
- Organise in-school, out-of-school, after school and holiday time supports for the targeted young people.
- Establish and maintain strong links with all relevant agencies to tackle early school leaving.
- To help improve the quality of participation and educational attainment of young people in the educational process.

CHAPLAIN

- Caters for the spiritual well being of all members of the school community.
- Liaises with parents and outside agencies.

- Offers support to members of the school community experiencing a bereavement or loss.
- Is a member of the Care Team and Crisis Response Team in the school.
- Is proactively involved in all supports for students.

STUDENTS

- Familiarise themselves with the content of the Pastoral Policy and the procedures outlined therein.
- Make appropriate and responsible use of the services provided.
- Inform members of the Care Team in good time about circumstances which might impact on their emotional well being and their academic performance.
- Support fellow students who might be experiencing difficulty.
- Encourage these students to seek help from the Care Team in the school.

PASTORAL CARE STRUCTURE

The school operates a tier approach with regard to pastoral and discipline matters.

Class Tutor

Each class group is assigned a class tutor in first year. This tutor remains with that class throughout its time in school. In that way the tutor builds up a profile of each student in the group and a good relationship develops between the tutor and the class.

- The tutor is the first point of contact if a class teacher has concerns about a student or there are emotional or behavioural problems.
- A written report outlining the concern/difficulty is given to the tutor.
- The tutor meets with the student and discusses the content of the report and, in the course of this meeting, attempts to unearth the root of the difficulty.
- If it is a pastoral issue and the tutor feels confident in dealing with it then s/he will offer advice and support to the student.
- In the case of a discipline matter the tutor will take whatever action s/he feels appropriate under the circumstances.
- Depending on the seriousness of the matter the tutor may consult with the Pastoral/SPHE co-ordinators and/or senior management.

The tutor meets the group for 10 minutes on three mornings a week where the following are dealt with:

- a) Journals are checked and signed.
- b) School policies are explained.
- c) Events taking place in the school are highlighted.
- d) Minor pastoral issues are taken care of.

- e) Issues on discipline, attendance, punctuality, books, materials for classes, uniform, rewards, trips, bullying etc. may be discussed during this period.
- f) Informational material may be distributed.
- g) Issues may also be raised by the group during this period.

The tutor also has once class period on a bi-monthly basis with the group where pastoral issues may be discussed on a wider basis.

PASTORAL CO-ORDINATOR

The pastoral care co-ordinator is the next tier above the class tutor in the pastoral structure.

- S/he accepts referrals from the class tutors of more complex or on going concerns.
- The pastoral care co-ordinator meets with the student referred and takes what ever action s/he deems appropriate.
- The co-ordinator may ask the student to meet with the guidance counsellor.
- S/he may also liaise with the school management for advice and support as well as the guidance counsellor.
- Following consultation with senior management parents/guardians are contacted by the co-ordinator and may be requested to come into the school for a meeting.
- The co-ordinator keeps a record of all cases and of meetings with parents.
- These records will be stored in a secure place.
- A report on all referrals and outcomes will be presented to the care team by the co-ordinators at the next meeting.

THE PASTORAL CARE TEAM

The team is responsible for overseeing the pastoral programme in the school. The pastoral team is at the pinnacle of the pastoral structure in the school. The team adjudicates on acute individual cases and decides on what response is most appropriate.

The team may consider that the guidance counsellor deals with a particular case or that the school psychologist is consulted or other specialists.

The team meets every month but may meet more frequently to discuss emergency cases.

PASTORAL PROGRAMME

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a core area of school like and its link to pastoral care is clear. All junior classes have one class period per week where the SPHE programme is taught in adherence to the official Department guidelines. All staff working with the SPHE programme are given the opportunity to attend in-service in this area.

In addition resources to assist in delivering the programme are located centrally within the school for the convenience of all teachers engaged with the programme.

In addition to and in concert with the SPHE curricular programme, this school has its own pastoral programme for senior students. Each senior class is assigned one pastoral class during the week where this pastoral programme is delivered. The programme is reviewed annually.

RESOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The school is committed to providing the necessary resources to underpin this pastoral policy. We will identify and source whatever resources that are required to successfully implement this programme. Members engaged in the pastoral programme will be provided with ongoing professional development.

MONITORING

The pastoral care co-ordinators will monitor the implementation of the policy. They will prepare a brief report for staff and the Board of Management towards the end of the academic year. At the subsequent meeting of the Care Team any concerns, reaction and suggestions will be discussed and amendments made to the programme if required.

EVALUATION

The pastoral team has responsibility for evaluating the pastoral care policy. The pastoral co-ordinators will be charged with surveying staff, students and parents as to the effectiveness of the policy and the pastoral programme in meeting its stated aims. All responses will be collated and presented to the pastoral team.

REVIEW

A review of the programme will take place on an annual basis.

Policy drafted in 2006

Presented to staff:

1st December 2006.

Parents consulted on:

Students consulted on:

Ratified by B.O.M. on:

Ratified by VEC on:

This became official school policy on:

