

# **Pastoral Care Policy at Mercy College, Woodford**

## Draft document

The principles that guide the Pastoral Care policy at Mercy College are clearly rooted in the vision and mission statements of our school and of CEIST. These seek to provide a holistic education for our students and promote a just and compassionate society for all. Our pastoral care policy endeavours to value and develop each member of the school community and seeks to foster an atmosphere of care, concern and respect within the school.

### **Rationale for this policy**

To comply with current legislation.

To promote CEIST values.

To ensure each member of the school community is valued.

To provide a structure for the delivery of pastoral care in our school.

### **Policy Goals**

-to foster a happy school community.

-to acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community.

-to create an atmosphere of care in which all members of the school community feel valued, cared for and respected.

-to maintain a caring observance, that will be sensitive to underlying problems individuals may have and offer appropriate support.

-to enable students to develop and learn effectively in a secure and caring environment.

-to build and maintain strong home-school links.

-to encourage parents to inform school staff of any difficulty that may impinge on a student's life.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of:**

### **\* The Board of Management**

- to ensure that the pastoral care policy is developed, ratified and implemented.
- to ensure that all members of the school community –staff, students, and parents- are involved in the consultation process during the development and approval of the policy.
- to ensure that the policy is regularly monitored and reviewed.

### **\* The Principal and Deputy Principal**

- to ensure that this policy is implemented
- to provide leadership in building a caring school community
- to create an awareness of pastoral care among all members of the school community
- to ensure that specific staff members are appointed to positions that deliver pastoral care
- to provide support for the induction and monitoring of new, trainee and substitute teachers/assistants/staff and new students
- to encourage and, where possible, provide as wide a range of curricular and extracurricular activities as possible
- to make extra provision where possible, for students with special needs
- to acknowledge and, where appropriate, reward effort and achievement

### **\* Year Heads**

- to build a positive and inclusive atmosphere within the year group
- to contribute to the induction of new students
- to demonstrate care and concern for the individual student within the year group
- to meet students who have been referred by another staff member
- to meet the year group regularly and facilitate individual consultation as required
- to liaise with Principal and Deputy Principal, staff and with parents regarding the pastoral care of students in his/her year group
- to encourage students' participation in academic and extra-curricular activities
- when necessary to contact parents/guardians

**\* Subject teachers**

- to be familiar with and support the pastoral care policy
- to demonstrate concern for the holistic development of each individual
- to create a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment
- to support the Pastoral Care team
- to report concerns regarding students to Year Head/Pastoral Care Team/School Guidance Counsellor

**\* Special Needs Co-ordinator**

- to liaise with parents/guardians of students with special needs
- to liaise with parents/guardians of students with learning difficulties
- to liaise with relevant parties regarding an individual educational plan, if appropriate

**\* Special Needs Assistants**

- to be familiar with and support the pastoral care policy
- to support the Pastoral Care team
- to report concerns regarding students to Special Needs Co-ordinator/Year Head/Pastoral Care Team

**\* Prefects and Student Council**

The Prefects and Student Council will support and implement the Pastoral Care policy through their dealings with fellow students.

**\* The School Chaplain**

The School Chaplain will be available to help the Pastoral Care team and to meet with students and teachers to help support and implement the policy.

**\* The Guidance Counsellor**

- to respond to Guidance Counsellor referrals from any of the partners in Education (within time constraints)
- to support students' needs within the Guidance Counsellor's remit
- to meet every second year student on an individual basis
- to refer students onwards, where appropriate
- to maintain a contact list of help agencies
- to liaise with the Pastoral Care team where student needs require a Pastoral Care team approach
- to liaise with all staff groups, parents and students

- to provide support, where necessary to the above groups eg during school crisis or regarding individual students
- to inform the Pastoral Care team of Guidance Counselling developments eg training for crisis counselling or bereavement facilitating

**\* The Pastoral Care team (See Appendix1)**

- to promote pastoral care of the individual within our school
- to review how the school is caring for individuals
- to provide a forum and support for Care Personnel in the school
- to make proposals for action in agreed areas
- the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator ensures the team meets regularly and liaises with Principal/Deputy

**\* Parents/Guardians**

- to support the value system inherent in this policy
- to inform relevant staff of issues affecting their sons/daughters
- to attend parent-teacher meetings or meetings requested by management/staff
- to support their son(s)/daughter(s) academic progress through support for The Homework policy, The Code of Behaviour policy, The Anti-Bullying policy and related policies.

**Policy Content**

Pastoral Care is central to and permeates every aspect of school life – academic, social, physical, moral and religious and is not confined to set periods. It establishes a network of supportive relationships which is based on mutual trust, love and respect. It seeks to create an environment where all feel safe and valued and where students are empowered to participate in the life of the school. The Pastoral Care Policy recognises that:

- Each person in the school community is a unique creation of God and worthy of respect.
- Pastoral care is for all members of the school community, irrespective of religion.
- Each member of the school community – pupil, teacher, special needs assistant, ancillary staff and parent – has a responsibility for the caring life of the school.
- Pastoral Care is not imposed but is a loving response to discerned needs.
- It takes account of special needs.
- It promotes a caring attitude towards the environment.
- It requires the promotion and practice of positive, respectful and self-disciplined behaviour.

## **Policy Implementation**

- Pastoral activities include induction of new teachers and students, student assemblies, sporting activities, retreats, guest speakers and outings.
- Our Student Council ensures the student body has a forum for voicing students' issues and for contributing to or initiating change to school policy.
- Prefects in supervisory and caring roles contribute to pastoral care in our school
- Timetabled classes in Religion and in the Social, Personal and Health Education programme are designed to promote aspects of spiritual, personal and social development.
- Care for the individual and those most at risk is ensured by having -
  - A Year Head structure
  - Counselling services
  - Pastoral Care team meetings
  - Resource classes for students with learning challenges, where possible
  - Contact with parents/guardians
  - Anti-bullying policy
  - Critical Incident policy
  - Implementation of Child Protection policy
- Community building activities are promoted in a variety of ways -
  - Celebration of Opening of School Year Mass
  - Participation in celebration of Graduation Mass & Liturgical Year events
  - Team sports and competitions
  - Recognition of Achievements in academic and extracurricular activities
  - Participation in drama/musical events
  - Participation in Group projects and Charitable Events
  - Retreats & outings for year/class groups
  - Staff meetings, outings and celebrations
  - Management acknowledge and nurture teacher contribution to school life
- Students at risk are referred to outside agencies if the necessary/appropriate support is not available in the school. This is done either by Management or Home/School liaison teacher or Guidance Counsellor or Special Needs Co-ordinator.
- There is a special induction day for First Years at the start of the new school year.

- Students with special needs are given special timetables to cater for individual needs.
- Staff Development days are held and management promotes the professional development of teachers
- Efforts, achievements and contributions to school life are recognised through the Public Relations Teacher and at an end of year Awards Celebration.
- Contact with parents is promoted and maintained through -  
Reports to parents  
Parent-teacher meetings  
Home/school Liaison Teacher, School Counsellor & Year Head contact  
Parent Association  
Newsletter

### **Performance Criteria**

The policy will be deemed as fulfilling its brief if the following criteria are evident -

- Pastoral Care is high on the agenda of each staff member
- Students are generally happy and feel safe and secure in school
- Individuals know they can seek and get support in times of need
- Students develop spiritually, morally and socially
- Students and staff attend school regularly
- Students progress academically
- Disciplinary problems are lessened and suspensions are rare

### **Monitoring and Implementation**

The Pastoral Care team together with school Management will ensure this policy is implemented and monitored on an on-going basis.

### **Reviewing**

The policy is reviewed annually.

Last reviewed: September 1<sup>st</sup> 2017

## **Appendix1**

**1. The Pastoral Care team** is a resource to the school community and seeks to demonstrate how the school is caring for the holistic needs of its individuals. This team brings together all the support services of the school in order to review how the school community is responding to overall needs of each member of the school community, in particular the student and even more specifically the student with particular challenges. It provides a forum for Care Personnel to share information, consider issues and provide support for each other.

Present Pastoral Care Team:

Principal or Deputy Principal

Ms Paula Martin- Special Needs Co-ordinator & Resource teacher

Mrs Yvonne Earls-SPHE Teacher

Mr. Alan O’Loinsigh – Guidance Counsellor

Mr. Victor Hume – subject teacher

Mrs. Ann Fahy – Special Needs Assistant