

ST. PATRICK'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

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St Patrick's Classical School

‘Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh sí’

‘Pastoral care is that which the student experiences in their school life. It is the spirit, the culture, the heart of the school. It is the recognition, respect and support which each can claim as a right and as a responsibility within the learning community’ Collins,U.,&Mc Niff,J. (1999)

In St Patrick's Classical school we have a core Pastoral Care Co-Ordination Team which consists of Principal/Deputy Principal, Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, SPHE Programme Co-Ordinator Rainbow Programme Co-Ordinator and Learning Support Teacher.

The Pastoral Care Policy encompasses the whole school community

School Pastoral Care should permeate all areas of school life. In St Patrick's Classical School we facilitate the development of all members of our school community. In our school community we foster relationships based on respect. We engender a sense of belonging to our school community where each individual is valued and their uniqueness is recognised. We promote a school community that is caring and positive. This work will be carried out in an environment that is both safe and secure for all in our school community. We believe Pastoral Care is the responsibility of the entire school community.

Relationship to school ethos/mission

Through the implementation of this Policy we strive to enact the stated Mission, Vision and Aims of St Patrick's Classical School. We value all in the school community and endeavour to develop each member of the school community.

Rationale for policy

Pastoral Care is an integral part of our mission in St Patrick's Classical School and as such it needs a formal structure to ensure its effectiveness in our school community on a day by-day basis and particularly at critical times. In St Patrick's Classical School we believe Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life.

Goals of the Policy

That each member of the school community will

- ☐ Feel valued and cared for
- ☐ Be developed to their full potential – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically,

Socially and personally

- Have a sense of belonging to our school community

Roles and Responsibilities

The Pastoral Care Team drafted this Policy in consultation with the staff, students, parents and management of the school. The Policy was then presented to the staff, to the Student Council, to the Parent's Association and to the Board of Management.

Modifications may be made following consultation and an annual review thereafter.

Implementation of Policy

□ Board of Management

The BOM will ensure that the ethos and values of St. Patrick's Classical School and those of all stakeholders are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

□ Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal's will work to ensure that our school is primarily a caring community. The management is committed to supporting all those involved in the pastoral care programme in St Patrick's Classical School. The management makes time available to meet parents, staff and students in a supportive atmosphere. The management facilitates in house staff development and encourages participation in external associations, programmes and courses particularly when those programmes/courses have a direct influence on student learning.

□ All School Staff

Due care, confidentiality and respect will form the basis of all dealings the staff may have with all members of the school community and visitors to the school.

□ Chaplain

The School Chaplain assists the pastoral care system within our school. The Chaplain will work to provide spiritual and pastoral care to the whole school community. The Chaplain will communicate at all times with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, Year Head, Class Tutors and all Care Team members. The Chaplain will communicate with parents on all relevant matters relating to the students.

□ Class Teacher

Teachers conduct classes in a structured and ordered environment. The relationship fostered in the class is based on mutual respect. The classroom teacher deals with situations that arise in class and in more serious situations he/she refers the student to a Class Tutor or Year Head.

□ Critical Incident Team

The Critical Incident Team is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator, Parent Representative and School Secretary. Refer to Critical Incident Policy.

□ Guidance Counsellors

The Guidance Department aim to facilitate all students' career needs and assure them of continuous support and counselling.

□ Parents Association

As a partner in St Patrick's Classical School the Parents Association contributes significantly to policy making. Through their involvement in the association parents show their commitment to student welfare and development.

Refer to policy.

□ The Student Council

The Student Council is a representative structure for all the students in the school. It provides students with the opportunity to become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents. It should always work for the benefit of the school and its students. The Student Council will always work in consultation with the School Management.

The Student Council has responsibility for:-

- Working with the staff, Board of Management and Parents' Association in the school.
- Communicating and consulting with all of the students in the school.
- Involving as many students as possible in the activities of the Council.

- Planning and managing the Council's programme of activities for the year.
- Managing and accounting to the Student Council and Board of Management, for any funds raised by the Council.

□ SPHE Co-Ordinator and Teachers Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme

SPHE teachers deliver the SPHE Programme (one class period per week) to the junior cycle students. The aims of the SPHE programme are:-

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

In the SPHE programme a wide range of issues are addressed in ten modules. The ten modules are:-

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management: A sense of purpose
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendships
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substances Misuse
- Personal Safety

□ Learning Support/Resource Teachers

The learning support teachers support students academically as well as socially and personally to facilitate their holistic education. The work is carried out in conjunction with the mainstream teachers and in collaboration with home and external agencies.

□ Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants provide care and assistance to the students allocated to their care.

☐ Rainbow Programme Co-Ordinator

The Rainbow Programme Co-Ordinator facilitates regular meetings of the Rainbow peer support groups to assist students who are grieving a death, separation or other painful transition in their family.

☐ Student

Relationships in the school will be based on respect and courtesy. Students should at all times be supportive to all in the school community. Students should respect school property and the environment and take responsibility for keeping it in good order.

☐ Class Tutors

The Class Tutor takes particular care of one class group. He/She engenders a supportive, positive atmosphere in which success and achievement are highlighted and valued. He/She liaises with class teachers, parents and Year Heads on a regular basis. The Class Tutor also communicates with the Pastoral Care Team Co-Ordinator.

☐ Year Heads

Year Heads play a major role in the care and support of our students. They are responsible for holding year group assemblies and tutor team meetings. They have constant contact with parents and guardians on the attendance, progress and performance of the students. They also communicate with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Learning Support Teachers and Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator on issues relating to the year group.

Pastoral Care Programmes

The following policies/programmes will contribute to the Pastoral Care Programme in a positive and caring manner:-

☐ Anti-Bullying Policy:

Refer to policy.

□ Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour is in place to facilitate learning and teaching in a positive, safe and secure atmosphere. The Code has been developed in partnership with the staff, Students Parents and Management. Refer to Code of Behaviour.

□ Extra-Curricular Activities

A wide range of activities including sporting, cultural, dramatic and artistic events facilitate the personal development of students, assists the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

□ Health and Safety Policy

Everybody in the school including management, staff and students, has a responsibility to ensure a safe working and learning environment. All members of the school community are made aware of all school procedures and policies with regard to fire evacuation, use of school equipment, supervision on corridors, classes and extra-curricular events, use of school grounds.

□ Homework Policy

To promote in the student body the value of homework and study in the learning process and to promote independent learning and creativity. Refer to policy.

□ Induction programme for incoming first year students

An induction programme for incoming First Year Students is held in May when they are in Sixth Class. The Principal, Deputy Principal, relevant Year Head and Pastoral Care Team advise the First Year Students of the code of behaviour expected in St Patrick's Classical School. Care Team information and maps of the school building are distributed to the new students and the Student Council and the Prefects conduct an orientation session with groups of students and inform them of all aspects of school life.

Induction Programme for Parents of incoming First Year students – Relevant Year Head,

The parents of the incoming First Year students where feasible will be invited to the school for an information evening. The aim of the evening is to facilitate a smooth transition from primary to post-primary school.

Induction Programme for Parents of Transition Year students

The Transition Year Co-Ordinator where feasible will invite the parents of prospective transition year students to an information evening in the preceding academic year.

Prize Giving

An Awards Ceremony is organised by the prize giving coordinator and is held at the end of each academic year. Awards are given for:

- **Achievement in each subject class:** - Each subject teacher nominates 3 students from his/her class based on performance, improvement and effort made throughout the year.
- **The 'Student of the Term' Awards:**- Helpfulness, courtesy, politeness and positive actions that would otherwise go unnoticed are among the targeted behaviours in the reward system.
- **The 'Student of the Year':**- is awarded only in Sixth Year at the end of year graduation ceremony. The selection of the 'Student of the Year' is based on performance, participation, co-operation and effort made during the year. Sports, Academic and Merit Awards are also awarded at this ceremony.
- **Positive Affirmation:**- Every teacher may give a student a positive comment, in the their student journal to recognise good organisation, participation, performance, effort etc.
- **Prefects System** :- A Prefects System for selected students from Sixth Year is in operation in the school. The aim of this programme is to help the selected students to develop leadership skills, to liaise with First Year Students assisting with their transition from primary to secondary school and to perform other duties within the school as may be required.

Role of Year Heads and Tutors

Guidelines on the role of the Year Head and on the role of the Tutor are issued to all teachers at the beginning of the school year.

Substance Misuse Policy

Refer to the policy.

Supervised Study

A supervised study facility is available in the school each day after school. Students study in a quiet supervised atmosphere.

Internal –Staff Referral Procedures

When a staff member meets a student who presents with a pastoral care issue or who they feel may need pastoral support the following procedure is used:-

□ Step 1

There will be a Pastoral Care Referral Form in the staffroom located on the wall beside the post-boxes. This form is completed and returned to the Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator. It is vital that all referrals are presented in writing in order to comply with the regulations and professional standards of record keepings.

□ Step 2

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will meet with the staff member to discuss the issue in detail.

□ Step 3

The Pastoral Care Team will then decide on the appropriate course of action.

□ Step 4

The Pastoral Care Team will update relevant stakeholders. Sensitive information may not be disclosed without the consent of the student as information revealed during personal counselling is confidential (except where the student is at risk or other students may be at risk)

External Referral

The Principal as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) may refer to outside agencies such as the HSE and the NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service Agency). Such referrals are made in consultation with parents/guardians.

Counselling

Personal Counselling in relation to serious Pastoral Care issues must only be carried out by the Guidance Counsellor and Chaplain.

Pastoral Procedures

□ Key Pastoral Care personnel meeting

All members of the Care Team are timetabled to meet once a week to monitor pastoral care in the school. Respect, courtesy and confidentiality are adhered to at this meeting.

- The relevant Year Head , the Principal, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support Teacher and the Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator hold a meeting once a week, which is not timetabled. The Substitution and Supervision system is used to accommodate these meetings. Respect, courtesy and confidentiality are adhered to at this meeting.

Record Keeping

- Minutes of the above meetings are filed in a secure location.
- All records will be kept in accordance with the 'Freedom of Information Act' and the 'Data Protection Act'
- Appropriate coding of information will take place to protect clients. Recording information that could lead to misinterpretation and misuse should be avoided as well as any form of conjecture. The Principal will be made aware of the location of sensitive and confidential files.

Confidentiality

Counselling relationships themselves and information that is disclosed in counselling relationships are kept confidential. However, if the situation arises where the school feel a student is at risk, the Principal or Counsellor consults the Student, School Management, Parents/Guardians and relevant agencies, if necessary.

Performance Criteria

The Goals of the policy are that each member of the school community feels valued and cared for and that each student is developed to his potential-spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially and personally. Each student has a sense of belonging to our school community.

Monitoring the Implementation of this Policy

- The monitoring and implementation of this policy will keep in mind that Pastoral Care should permeate all areas of school life.
- Teachers will discuss academic and pastoral development of each student at Parent/Teacher Meetings.

Reporting of Monitoring and Implementation of the Policy

A meeting every six weeks will be held between Year Heads, the Principal, the Chaplain, the Guidance Counsellor, the Learning Support Teacher and the Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator to monitor Pastoral Care in each year group and the policy.

The Pastoral Care Team will monitor the implementation of the policy. The Team will continue to evaluate and develop our pastoral care system on a regular basis, making improvements where necessary and continue to build upon the sense of direction already established and report to the Principal and Deputy Principal.

'The Pastoral infusion of the whole curriculum is not a frill or option; it is the oxygen essential for the learning process to occur' (McGuinness 1989)

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal /Deputy Principal and the Pastoral Care Team.

The effectiveness of this policy will be determined by the quality of care within and beyond the classroom and the effectiveness of the support arrangements for all members of the school community

This Policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 10-11-2025.

The Board of Management approved and ratified the School Policy on the 10-11-2025.

Signed:



Signed:



Fr. Gerry Stuart

Chairperson of Board of Management

Mr. Harry Mc Garry

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 10-11-2025.

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