

# SACRED HEART GRAMMAR SCHOOL



## PASTORAL CARE

### INTRODUCTION

*Pastoral Care is not a frill or option; it is the oxygen essential for the learning process to occur.*

*McGuinness (1989)*

Parents are the primary educators of young people. The responsibility and impact of the home environment in the formative years is acknowledged as the most important influence on the development of the adult person.

However, there are numerous other influences which come from a wide range of other sources. Central to these influences is the role of schools, and more specifically teachers, who will have contact on a daily basis with children and young people from 4 to 18 years of age. It is paramount that those charged with the responsibility of educating young people must be aware of the crucial importance of their role. This document will provide the support that teachers within the SELB need to give direction to their work with young people.

To develop as a person is to develop in all five dimensions of life – physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually. However, it is widely recognised that our educational system to date has tended to neglect both the emotional and spiritual dimensions of our lives. In recognition of this we must adopt a proactive stance in taking a holistic approach to the development of our young people. This personal development approach is in keeping with the CCEA proposals for the revised curriculum.

Personal Development provides the means for our young people to clarify their values and attitudes. It assists young people in the development of personal skills which in turn leads them to an acceptance of responsibility for themselves and for their actions. Personal Development must be firmly rooted in the belief that all people have value in their own right, and that their feelings, opinions and actions are important, regardless if these correlate with those of others or not. In practice this means that we as teachers endeavour to communicate openly and honestly with our students and enter into genuine sharing relationships. Most significantly, it means that we must place confidence and trust in the ability of others to take responsibility for themselves, their

behaviour, their feelings, their attitudes and their learning. We must provide and allow for the development and awareness of self, and all that this entails.

Rogers purports the view that when individuals come in contact with, own, and accept their inner strength, a new way of living emerges for them. Pastoral Care provides the conditions in which the constructive power within can be released and used to its fullest advantage.

The mutually beneficial outcomes of developing an honest approach to Personal Development through Pastoral Care are :

- increased self awareness
- development of high internal self-esteem
- confidence and independence of thought
- sensitivity to the needs of others.

In addition, young people especially develop the necessary skills to cope with possible risks to their personal safety from a range of threats. They become empowered to meet the demands and challenges of adult and working life with confidence.

Having accepted this approach in its entirety the objective of this document is to:

- give specific guidance to educational establishments within the SELB on Pastoral Issues;
- highlight current legislation on the care and health of young people;
- support the implementation of the revised NI Curriculum;
- encourage continuous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of provision in the area of Pastoral Care;
- provide guidance on the handling of specific Pastoral issues including Substance Misuse/Drugs Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education; and
- promote the value of a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach to Pastoral issues.

## **Rationale**

We define Pastoral Care as the created ethos through which our students develop and learn to their optimum potential. It is an integral part of the curriculum for all students in Sacred Heart Grammar School and all teachers share in the responsibility for Pastoral Care.

## **Vision and Values**

We seek to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the students and aim to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of adult life.

Pastoral Care will be the setting where our young people will acquire values and standards on the basis of observing these at work at every level.

## **Ethos**

Our objectives are to transmit the spirit of St Francis and St Clare by fostering a friendly and caring atmosphere where each student feels safe and secure.

The Pastoral Care Programme is designed:-

- to develop an atmosphere of mutual respect and caring
- to create a sense of belonging amongst all strands of our school community
- to enable students to achieve their social, physical and psychological potential and to improve their self knowledge and self esteem
- to promote positive attitudes to health
- to enable students to acquire skills in decision making, in managing and handling situations of stress
- to monitor student progress and performance across the whole school
- to provide personal contact points for every student and her parents.

## **Pastoral Care Team**

While all teachers share in the responsibility for Pastoral Care some have accepted specific responsibilities in this area.

The Pastoral Care Programme is co-ordinated by Mrs O Brown. Mrs Quinn, Mrs K Dorins and Mrs K McMahon work with Years 8, 9 and 10, Mrs R McCreesh and Mrs L Fleming with Years 11 and 12, Mrs S McCaffery and Mrs A Lannon with Years 13 and 14.

The Co-ordinator and Year Heads meet regularly and the Year Heads hold meetings with groups of Form Teachers each month. Year Heads make regular contact with their Year Groups at Year Assemblies and with individual students – when necessary. They monitor the pastoral and academic needs of the students and may use the Referral System to do so. The Referral System is described in the Behaviour Management Policy.

Sr J McGoldrick, Principal and Mrs O Brown, Vice Principal have overall responsibility for the Pastoral Care of all students.

## **Structure**

Each Year Group is cared for by a team of Form Teachers who liaise with the relevant Year Head (for roles of Form Teachers and Year Heads see **Appendix G**)

Students meet their Form Teachers each morning from 9.00 am – 9.15 am for prayer, registration, announcements and sometimes advice or encouragement. In addition to this, students in Years 11 and 12 attend a Form Class each fortnight. During this they follow a specially designed Pastoral Care Programme.

Parents meet the Form Teacher at Parent/Teacher meetings. Those who cannot attend may contact the school to discuss alternative arrangements. They are also encouraged to telephone, write or contact the school at any time during the year if they are concerned about their daughter's progress or welfare.

## **Relationships**

### **ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL AND PREFECTS**

The Head Girl, School Council, Senior Prefects and Class Prefects play an important role in the development of the Pastoral Care Programme.

The Prefect System provides a two-way channel of communications between students and staff so that where concerns are expressed, suggestions are offered, advice and support are requested – an appropriate response from Staff or Principal may be made.

By involving students directly in the decision-making process and encouraging active participation in the life of the school through the Prefect System we aim to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate responsibility to act as positive role models for younger students and to develop a caring, concerned approach to the needs of others. (Duties of Prefects can be found in **Appendix H**)

### **Professional Counseling**

Sister Maureen, the school counsellor can offer immense support to a young person who needs help and guidance and is available to assist our young people to develop towards a more concise and definitive awareness of self.

All counsellors who assist in this extremely important area will be familiar with BAC or equivalent guidelines.

### **Outside agencies**

Teachers will endeavour to build effective, empathetic relationships with our students in order to provide advice and support whenever necessary. However we retain awareness of the need for other avenues of support: educational welfare officers, nurses etc.

### **Managing External Agencies (Ref Appendix A and B)**

We acknowledge the importance of ensuring that any external agencies used to support our work with young people adheres to the values and ethos particular to our school. Procedures are in place to ensure that this happens.

### **Training and Support**

In order to support staff our school recognizes the importance of training as a priority area in the establishment of a caring and pastoral environment.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

This school recognizes and accepts the importance of monitoring and evaluating all aspects of Pastoral Care at every level. To this end we follow the procedures for self evaluation as outlined in the DE document 'Together Towards improvement'.

## THE ROLE OF THE FORM TEACHER

The Form Teacher takes a personal interest in the welfare of each student in the form class. The responsibilities of the Form Teacher include:

- daily registration of the form class; dealing with matters arising from this such as attendance, punctuality, uniform, distributing circulars, collecting reply slips when relevant.
- the implementation of the Pastoral Care Programme during the timetabled Form Period (Years 1-5 only).
- training students in good manners and acceptable behaviour.
- reminding students of the requirements set down by the school rules.
- supervising the election of the class prefect and vice-prefect.
- appointing a Senior Prefect (where this applies).
- liaising with the members of the school council on issues relating to the form class.
- accompanying students to, and ensuring their good behaviour at General and Year Group Assemblies and at School Masses when available.
- anticipating difficulties and taking appropriate action when students show signs of distress or changes in behaviour.
- taking appropriate action when students in the form class are referred to them by colleagues.
- where possible, carrying out one-to-one interviews with each student in the form class to examine a variety of academic and pastoral issues.
- informing the relevant Year Head of any issues which may be a cause of concern.
- participating in the annual registration of students.
- reviewing and signing student reports before distribution to parents.
- helping the class to prepare for General Assembly when appropriate.

If the nature of a student's individual educational or pastoral needs is beyond the scope of the Form Teacher, the appropriate referral route should be employed.

**Form Teachers are expected to familiarise themselves with the relevant Departmental circulars on issues such as child abuse and misuse of drugs.**

# THE ROLE OF THE YEAR HEAD

## A. PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- Lead and support a team of Form Teachers
- Monitor the quality of Pastoral support by establishing effective systems to identify and meet the needs of students
- Keep abreast of current developments in the area of Pastoral Care and Personal Development and share information with Form Teachers
- Formulate, review, redraft, update and monitor the PSHE scheme of work for the relevant year group
- Liaise with the Health Education Co-ordinator
- Liaise with SENCO where appropriate
- Ensure that resources are sufficient and appropriately allocated
- Ensure the care of all equipment, text books and other resources used by Form Teachers □
- Hold regular team meetings with Form Teachers and present brief, typed minutes to the Principal (Vice Principal)
- Attend Year Head meetings
- Hold regular Year Group assemblies to the agreed timetable
- Keep comprehensive records related to students in the Year Group
- Check the reports of the year group for omissions and errors
- Monitor the attendance of the students in the year group and take appropriate action where necessary
- Ensure that students causing concern are dealt with using the referral procedure

## B. TEACHING AND LEARNING

The person appointed will:

- Ensure the effective delivery of the PSHE programme for the relevant year group
- Review, develop and implement strategies for sustaining high standards of teaching, learning and achievement across the full spectrum of ability
- Ensure that students have opportunities to develop their skills in the area of Personal Development
- Promote the use of ICT in relation to teaching and learning
- Raise awareness about the risks associated with using the Internet and other new technologies
- Empower students, through appropriate education programmes, with the knowledge and skills to manage the risks and become safer in their online environment
- Develop strategies to encourage self review
- Develop strategies to encourage independent learning

### C. STAFF ISSUES

- Keep staff informed about the procedures that exist to respond to concerns about students
- Make staff aware of difficulties experienced by students in their Year group
- Liaise with and support staff where necessary to ensure that students' needs are met
- Monitor and be responsible for their team of Form Teachers
- Promote and support the professional development of their team
- Undertake appropriate professional development to develop personal effectiveness as Year Head
- Operate a consultative and collegiate approach within the team which allows members of staff an opportunity to take part in planning and evaluation and to share responsibilities
- Plan for change and ensure that all team members have the skills necessary to meet change with confidence

### D. PASTORAL/WIDER SCHOOL ROLE

- Support and promote the school's aims, policies and school development plan
- Take responsibility for the general welfare and personal development (religious, moral, emotional, intellectual, social, physical) of students
- Participate in appropriate meetings with colleagues, parents and outside agencies relative to duties
- Contribute to whole school development planning
- Contribute to the wider life of the school
- Take a leading role in supporting students in their year group who are dealing with difficult issues (illness, bereavement, family problems, behavioural problems)

## Service Level Agreement for Use with External Agencies Working in Schools

I/We have read the school ethos and policies of \_\_\_\_\_  
and agree to formally adhere to their ethos and policies:

- in working with young people and
- in the delivery of the programmes outlined below:

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I/We am/are, willing to provide *full* details of material content to:

Senior Management, Teachers, Parents, Governors and other Appropriate Bodies

and agree to fully implement any changes deemed necessary by the above representatives.

I accept the right of the school to withdraw the invitation issued to support the school in the education of our Young people.

I/We formally accept the above terms of reference and in so doing I/We will acknowledge the agreement made.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ (External Agency)

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**Countersigned:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal/Board of Governors)

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**Checklist for use of Schools  
Designated Child Protection Officer to vet  
External Agencies working in schools**

- Accredited Body
- Copy of Mission Statement
- Personnel to be used: Police Check  
Official Qualification  
Key Person
- All statutory requirements fulfilled: i.e. Health and Safety Policy, etc.
- Sufficient Insurance
- Principal Informed and Approval Granted
- School Ethos read and understood
- Service Agreement completed and signed
- Evidence of current legislation
- Established format for feedback
- Evaluation process in place