

# **Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School Pastoral Care Policy**

## **1 Statement of Core Values**

Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School provides an environment of excellence and care for each member of its school community. We demonstrate our valuing of each person through respect, truth, compassion and challenge. We foster excellence through the highest standards in our teaching, learning and pastoral structures and programmes. Each contributes to and benefits from our community of excellence and care.

## **2 Pastoral approach in our school**

Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School realises its core aims and goals through a variety of means, none more important than our pastoral care approach. We understand 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, Monahan 1998 IAPCE). This approach animates the nature of our pastoral care provision. Each member of the school community has access to the relevant pastoral structures and procedures; each is also invited to play their part in contributing to the pastoral ethos of this school community. More than anything else we seek to nurture positive relationships as the core resource in developing a pastoral approach. This policy endeavours to put in place the framework necessary to underpin and support this approach. The policy will address the following areas:

- ❖ Pastoral role: definitions and responsibilities
- ❖ Pastoral programmes
- ❖ Pastoral procedures
- ❖ Linking with guidance counselling and learning support
- ❖ Linking with Social, Personal and Health Education
- ❖ Resources and professional development
- ❖ Implementation plan
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluation

## **3. Pastoral roles: definitions and responsibilities**

We recognise that each staff member contributes to the pastoral nature of the school community. At the centre of our pastoral framework are the pastoral roles of Class Tutor, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor. We also recognise that other key roles in the school carry significant pastoral dimensions and responsibilities – such as the Principal, Deputy Principal, Learning Support and Resource teachers. In this section we deal with the roles of Tutor and Year Head. It is the policy of this school that in relation to each of these roles:

- ❖ A consultative process will be employed to draw up the role description of Class Tutor and Year Head.
- ❖ While the staff members at the core of this process, consultations with parents and students will be held.

- ❖ The role descriptions will be approved by staff and ratified as part of this policy by the Board of Management.
- ❖ As with other policy areas the Board of Management has the right to initiate, contribute, amend and finally approve this policy.
- ❖ The role descriptions will be reviewed at least once per year.

The following considerations will be taken into account in relation to each role:

**Class Tutor:**

- ❖ Where possible that the Tutor teach the class for which they have responsibility
- ❖ A dedicated Tutor time where the tutor will meet with the class will occur during the last week of each month.
- ❖ A Tutor programme will be introduced on a phased basis to assist Tutors with their Tutor class.
- ❖ Class Tutors have a limited sanction-imposing role.
- ❖ The Class Tutor has access to the relevant information on the students in their class
- ❖ No major sanction will be imposed on a student without the relevant Class Tutor being notified
- ❖ Class Tutors will meet as a group with their Year Head on the first Tuesday of each month at 11.00am.
- ❖ Class Tutors are given opportunities for professional development in their role

**Year Head**

- ❖ A clear role in the Behaviour Code is designated.
- ❖ There is clear access to relevant information on the students in the year group
- ❖ A regular meeting usually once a fortnight occurs of the members of the pastoral team. (The Pastoral team will consist of the three Year heads, the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, the Guidance Counsellor, the Learning Support teacher and the Deputy Principal)
- ❖ Year Heads have strategies to recognise and acknowledge excellence, effort and contributing to year spirit
- ❖ Year Heads meet with their team of tutors usually twice a term or every three weeks.
- ❖ Year Heads are given opportunities for professional development
- ❖ Organise at least two assemblies of the year group each term
- ❖ Have access to appropriate administrative support

**The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Team**

- ❖ The Co-ordinator has been appointed.
- ❖ The Pastoral Team will be made up usually of the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, the guidance counsellor, Year Heads, the Learning Support teacher, and the deputy principal. Other members may be co-opted at any time.
- ❖ The team will meet at least every two weeks

- ❖ They will have responsibility for supporting Class Tutors and Year Heads; co-ordination the pastoral programme; reviewing students with particular difficulties; advising relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues

#### **4. Pastoral Programme**

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a core area of school life and its link to pastoral care is clear. This school has a commitment to SPHE and demonstrates this in its provision on the curriculum, which adheres to the official Department guidelines. In addition we recognise SPHE as a whole school concern, and therefore ensure that opportunities for on-going professional development for staff are facilitated. In addition to and in concert with the SPHE curricular programme, this school will have its own pastoral programme that is facilitated by the Pastoral Team in conjunction with the Class Tutors and Year Heads.

This school's pastoral programme will deal with such areas as: *induction to the school and its ethos; class and year group spirit; study skills and approaches; justice and voluntary projects; school procedures*. The programme is reviewed annually.

#### **5. Pastoral procedures**

This school has a number of procedures with pastoral implications. In the area of information we are committed to respectfully and sensitively dealing with how information is received, shared, stored and accessed.

Another area of relevance is the relationship of the school to the parent. Our policy commitment in this area is to constantly in partnership work with parents to achieve the optimum quality of relationship – this will require respect, listening, patience, and willingness to reach consensus, creativity, cooperation, and generosity.

Dealing with sensitive issues such as sudden death or suicide requires careful consideration. This school's Crisis Response Policy addresses the pertinent issues. The Crisis Response Team consists of the Principal, Vice-Principal, Guidance Counsellor, the relevant Year Head and the relevant Class Tutor. The effectiveness of this team will be reviewed once a year.

#### **6. Resources and professional development**

The school is committed to providing the necessary resources to underpin this pastoral policy. In particular we are committed to providing where possible tailored professional development programmes for Class Tutors and Year Heads.

#### **7. Implementation Plan**

The implementation of this policy will be rolling in nature and will need to be reviewed from time to time. Below is given the outline implementation plan for a number of key areas:

- ❖ By the end of November 2007 the consultative process will have been concluded in respect of the role of Class Tutor and Year Head. All staff will discuss the role descriptions on December 7<sup>th</sup>, and a final document approved for presentation to the Board of Management on December 13<sup>th</sup> 2007.
- ❖ Professional Development will be facilitated as it arises for those in key pastoral roles.
- ❖ The Pastoral Team will be constituted by January 2008 and will meet fortnightly. The Pastoral Team will consist of The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, the three Year Heads, the Learning Support teacher and the Deputy Principal.
- ❖ The Pastoral Programme will be phased in on a year by year basis.
- ❖ Meetings of Class Tutors and their Year Head will occur on the first Tuesday of each month, starting in January 2008.
- ❖ The Student Council, when up and running, will have at least one meeting with the Pastoral Care team each year.

## **8. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation**

Effective policy requires constant monitoring and evaluation to ensure successful implementation and to review what adjustments may be necessary from time to time. In order that the tasks of monitoring and evaluation are effective consideration of the following may be helpful:

### ***8.1 Monitoring:***

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will monitor policy implementation. The terms of reference are as follows: The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will prepare a short report for the Board of Management and staff on the implementation of the policy. At the reporting stage the Board and in its turn the staff should discuss any reactions, concerns, suggestions that may arise during the course of implementation. The Pastoral Team will follow up on feedback from the Board of Management and staff.

### ***8.2 Evaluation:***

At specified times during the life of the policy an evaluation of its effectiveness is required. The review will have the following elements:

- The Pastoral Care Team are charged with leading the evaluation of the Pastoral Care Policy
- Reviewing the feedback gathered during the life of the policy.
- Surveying staff, students and parents as to its effectiveness in meeting its stated aims
- Examining feedback, consult with management, and report to the Board of Management and staff any recommendations for further development

- Aiming to articulate and implement new developments in the pastoral care area with particular reference to the Pastoral Care policy.

Such a review would be appropriate at least every two years.