

St. Mary's College Dundalk



Pastoral Care Policy

Approved by the BOM 28th November 2016

Mission Statement

St Mary's College is a Catholic secondary school under the patronage of the Marist Fathers. The primary aim of the College, through its spiritual and humanistic endeavours, is to promote and develop a sense of community where those entrusted to its care can be brought to the fullness of their human potential in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel.

The College, through its academic, pastoral and spiritual undertakings strives to provide for the holistic development and welfare of each of the students in its care.

Statement of Core Values

St Mary's College aims to provide an environment of excellence and care for each member of its College community, based on Christian values. We value an ethos of pastoral care whereby students feel that they can approach staff and that staff will respond to such students in a caring Christian manner. More than anything else we seek to nurture positive relationships as the core resource in developing a pastoral care approach. We demonstrate our valuing of each person through respect, truth, compassion and challenge. We foster excellence through the highest standards in our teaching, learning, pastoral structures and programmes. Each contributes to and benefits from our community of excellence and care.

Pastoral Care Roles:

At the centre of our Pastoral Care Framework are the pastoral care roles. We recognise that each contributes to the pastoral nature of the College community – Student Support Teams, Year Heads, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellors. We also recognise that other key roles in the College carry significant pastoral dimensions and responsibilities – such as the Principal, Deputy Principal, Learning Support Co-ordinator, Resource Teachers and Special Needs Assistants. In this section we deal with the roles of Student Support Teams and Year Heads

Student Support Teams

Year Heads and Academic Monitors and Attendance Officers form part of the Student Support Teams

- Academic Monitors have a limited sanction-imposing role – see Code of Behaviour & Discipline.
- Student Support Teams has access to the relevant information on students in their Form Class.
- Student Support Teams will consider appropriate rewards to encourage positive attitudes and build student / class relationships.
- Student Support Teams nominate students for internal awards and Prize Night where appropriate.
- Student Support Teams meet as a group weekly
- Student Support Teams are given opportunities for professional development in their role.

Year Heads

- Year Head have clear access to relevant information on all students in the year group.
- Year Head have a regular meeting weekly with Principal, Deputy Principal and other Year Heads.
- Year Heads have strategies to recognise and acknowledge excellence, and effort in the College.
- Year Heads meet with their Student Support Teams weekly.
- Year Heads are given opportunities for professional development.
- Year Heads organise assemblies for their year groups.
- Year Heads report to staff in relation to the year group and from time to time meet with subject teachers.
- Year Heads liaise with Parents / Guardians as required.
- Year Heads have a limited sanction-imposing role – see Code of Behaviour & Discipline.
- Year Heads have access to appropriate administrative support.
- Year Heads liaise with College Management and Student Support services.

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator

- The position of Pastoral Care Co-ordinator should be a designated post of responsibility.

- The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator links in with the various Student Support Services. The Student Support Services available include College Management, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Year Heads, Academic Monitors and Learning Support Co-ordinator.
- Student Support Team and Year Heads; co-ordinate the pastoral care programmes; reviews students with particular difficulties and advises relevant groups within the College on pastoral care issues.
- The Paroral Care Co-Ordinator submits an annual report to the Board of Management

Pastoral Care Programme and initiatives

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a core area of the College curriculum and its link to pastoral care is clear. The College is committed to the promotion of well-being at all levels. At present the College makes provision for SPHE in Junior Cycle. In addition to SPHE the College has other programmes including

- School Completion and Continuation Programme
- Spectrum Programmes
- First Year Mentoring (Buddy system)
- Well-being
- Peer Youth Education programme (First Years)
- Friends for life Programme
- Sky Sports for Living programme

The College also offer the following initiatives which enhance the pastoral care system within the College. These include:

- Student Council
- Student leadership
- Student Volunteerism
- College Ethos projects
- Extra-Curricular activities and clubs.
- Student mentorship / Academic Monitoring
- Prize Giving
- Positive student reporting

Pastoral Care Procedures

The College 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 College to Parents / Guardians. Our commitment in this area is to work in partnership work with Parents / Guardians to achieve the optimum quality of relationship – this will require: respect, listening, patience, and a willingness to reach consensus, creativity, cooperation and generosity. Dealing with sensitive or critical incidents requires careful consideration. The College’s ‘Responding to Critical Incidents Policy’ addresses the pertinent issues. In particular the creation of a Critical Incident Management Team is essential. The effectiveness of this team will be reviewed as necessary - see ‘Responding to Critical Incidents Policy’.

Resources and CPD

The College is committed to providing the necessary resources to underpin this Pastoral Care Policy. This includes releasing teachers for professional development programmes.

Policy Evaluation

When required the Pastoral Care Policy will be reviewed.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management, St. Mary’s College

Dated: _____