



Our Lady's College, Galway

PASTORAL CARE / WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE POLICY

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LINK TO MISSION STATEMENT

In co-operation with parents we aim to foster a caring school community in which we strive to develop each dimension of all pupils.

SCOPE

All Stakeholders within the School Community:

- Students
- Staff (Both teaching and non-teaching staff)
- Management
- Board of Management
- Parents

RATIONALE

Pastoral Care is a core dimension of school life as it is such a crucial expression of the characteristic spirit of the school. It will be a key aspect as parents and others assess the school. It is the actualization of the Mission Statement.

Goals

- To create an atmosphere of care in which all members of the school community feel valued, cared for and respected.
- To enable students to develop and learn effectively in a secure and caring environment.
- To offer a Pastoral Care structure which will enable students to receive help, support, advice and encouragement.
- To build and maintain strong Home School Links and to support parents.
- To support students through specific programmes in times of special needs e.g bereavement.
- To maintain a caring observance that will detect any underlining problems a child may have and offer appropriate support and help.
- To encourage parents to work with school in the interest of the students and to inform the school of any difficulty which may be affecting the student's life



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CONTENT

Pastoral Roles

At the centre of our pastoral framework are the pastoral roles – we recognise that each contributes to the pastoral nature of the school community – of the class tutor, year head, home-school liaison and guidance counsellors. We also recognise that other key roles in the school carry significant pastoral dimensions and responsibilities – such as the principal, deputy principal, class teacher, learning support, resource teachers and special needs assistants.

Personal attention given to value and develop every student

- (a) Positive student contact with the class teachers and management team.
- (b) Use of Tutor and Year Head systems already in operation.
 - It is recommended that appropriate time be given to the tutors to meet in order that they might plan and evaluate.
 - The In-service for Academic Monitor and Year Head roles which is already in operation should be availed of by the relevant school personnel.

All incoming First Years to feel welcome before they arrive into the school

- (a) Transfer Programme – School personnel to contact the relevant feeder schools.
- (b) Open Day – Hospitality, personal approach by teachers, focused and fun.
- (c) Induction Day – 2 day specialised programme geared towards relationship building and fun based.

Acknowledgement of and support for each Stakeholder role within the school community

- (a) This is based upon the fundamental value of RESPECT.
 - Teacher – Teacher
 - Student - Student
 - Teacher - Student
 - Student - Teacher
 - Management - Staff
 - Staff - Management
 - Management/Staff - Parent
 - Parent – Staff/Management
- (b) Particular supports to be put in place at crisis moments in any student's life through:
 - Year Head System
 - Management System
 - CISD Team – Critical Incident – NEPS



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(c) Staff Development:

- An annual plan of Staff Development implemented and reviewed by the Staff Development Co-ordinator
- The role of the Staff Social Committee should be examined and formalised.

A sense of ownership and responsibility for the life of the school community and the critical role that the students play in the process to be developed within the school body:

- (a) Student Council
- (b) Big Sister Programme/Meitheal
- (c) Role of NBSS
- (d) Friends for Life

Students should be encouraged to organise and participate in Lunchtime Leisure Activity Clubs

The Holistic wellbeing of the student to be supported and developed through the following school programmes

- (a) 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 demonstrated this in its provision on the curriculum which adhere to the official Department guidelines.
- (b) All subjects that develop the creative, artistic, spiritual, interpersonal, motivational, investigative and collaborative dimension of the student.

The Board of Management should feel acknowledged and supported in its role by the School Community.

- (a) Acknowledgements at the Board meetings should be expressed through the Secretary or Staff Representatives.
How do we mark the Old Traditions/New Day?

The parents should feel welcomed and invited to participate in a shared sense of purpose in order that they might support the life of the school.

- (a) Parents' Council
- (b) Board of Management



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- (c) Parents to be invited to accompany their First Year Daughter to the school on her first day in September.
- Parents to be invited to the Parents Room and welcomed by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Home-School Liaison and Career Guidance
 - Short presentation regarding Secondary School Expectations, Students Learning Charter and the School Mission Statement
 - HSCL expectations of parents regarding information evenings and courses
 - Attempt to break down barriers etc.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

To ensure policy is drawn up, developed and evaluated from time to time.

To approve policy and support its implementation

To receive reports on its implementation.

Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals:

To monitor the implementation of policy

Staff: To develop and implement policy.

Parents: To be aware of the policy and support their roles in its implementation.

Students: To be aware of the support systems that is in place.

To participate fully in all aspects of school life

Content

Pastoral Care Structure

Pastoral Care involves the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Class Tutors, Student Council, Class Prefects, Career Guidance, Pastoral Care Personnel, , HSCL Teacher, Learning Support Teacher and S.P.H.E Teachers. The Pastoral Care Structure for students consists of a Prefect, a Class Tutor and a Year Head.

Students

An introduction Day for first years is held in September. Appropriate care and attention is giving to new students who enrol in the middle of the school year. Students with special needs follow individualised timetables (IEP) catering for their specific needs. Students who experience difficulties in their personal lives are offered confidential and sensitive care and support. If a student is considered to be at risk, the school with parental permission will be referred to outside agencies if the necessary appropriate support is not available in the school. Every effort is made to cater for students with physical disability. The school works closely with the HSE in relation to students/families at risk. HSCL Teacher links with primary schools in order to be aware of students at risk.



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Staff

Induction/care of newcomers to staff is a priority. Teachers are encouraged to pursue training in pastoral care programmes e.g the 'Substance Abuse Prevention Programme' and the 'Social, Personal and Health Programme'.

Staff Development Days are held each year.

Home-School Links

The Parents' Association provides an opportunity for developing strong links with the parent body. The school endeavours to strengthen home/school links and HSLC Teacher encourages parents to make the school aware of any difficulties the student might be experiencing.

Performance Criteria

The Pastoral Care Policy will be deemed to be effective if

- Pastoral care is high on the agenda of each staff member.
- Students are happy and fulfilled and feel safe and secure.
- Students develop spiritually, morally and socially.
- Students attend school regular and punctually.
- Students progress academically.
- Serious Behavioural problems are lessened and there are rarely any suspensions.
- All students have equal access to the curriculum and are afforded the opportunity to take Higher Level Papers if they wish to do so.
- Students continue in school until Leaving Certificate.

When students leave school that they have the confidence to undertake a further course of study or apprenticeship or find fulfilling and meaningful employment.

RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT: 23/5/16
REVIEW DATE: MAY 2017