

St. Joseph's Secondary School

Newfoundwell, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Pastoral Care Policy



Staff		Reviewed
Parents' Council		Reviewed
Student Council		Reviewed
Board Of Management		Ratified

- School Details:** St. Joseph's Secondary School is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a co-educational school.
- School Management:** The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Secondary School is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement

St. Joseph's Secondary school recognises that each pupil who enrolls in our school is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils will leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and which may contribute to the betterment of society.

We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential.

We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment with a Christian community characterised by care and justice.

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to enact the stated mission and vision of St. Joseph's Secondary School. We value all in the school community and endeavour to develop each member of the school community.

Philosophy and Context of this Policy

This policy encompasses the whole school community. Pastoral care should permeate all areas of school life. In St. Joseph's we facilitate the development of all members of our school community. In our school community each student 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.

As an Edmund Rice School, St Joseph's Secondary School seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

1. Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
2. Promoting partnership in the school community
3. Excelling in teaching and learning
4. Creating a caring school community
5. Inspiring transformational leadership.

These elements carry the philosophy of the school and allude to the development of the full potential of the individual as central to the work of the school. This commitment to the pastoral care of the school community is implicit in the school's admission policy, in the commitment to promoting the spiritual and human development of each individual as outlined in the ERST charter.

Rationale for policy

Pastoral Care is a core dimension of life in St. Joseph's. It is defined as the system of roles, resources, structures, policies, programmes and processes employed to support the development of young adults. Pastoral Care is an integral part of our approach to a holistic education, which puts the educational, emotional and social development of the student at the centre of its learning values. This policy sets a formal structure for pastoral care, setting out clear and defined roles and expectations to ensure that every member of our school community has access to relevant pastoral structures and procedures.

Pastoral Goals

Priority is given to the nurturing of teaching & learning relationships.

1. To provide a safe, caring and supportive school environment for students.
2. To ensure that every student will be developed to their full potential – spiritually, morally, emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially and personally.
3. To care for and support each member of the school community.

Aims of a Pastoral Care Structure

- To clarify roles, responsibilities, tasks and procedures.
- To create links between all areas of the Pastoral Care Programme.
- To promote an environment which meet the needs of each student.
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community.
- To nurture teaching and learning relationships.
- To recognise talents and abilities.
- To monitor progress at every level for the student.
- To act as an early warning system for the early detection of "at risk" students.
- To help the young person to make their own decisions through greater self-awareness and independence.
- To promote clear values that animates our school.
- To support an engaging curriculum, through related policies.
- To involve all partners in the life of the school.

Identifying Students of Concern

Students of concern are primarily identified through the *Student Support Team structure*. The Student Support Team is a visible representation of the school's understanding and valuing of each student as an individual. Students who experience severe difficulties in life will find it difficult to have cognitive space for learning. Therefore, the rationale of the team is to strive to care in a genuine way to improve the lives of students and thereby ensure access to the curriculum and learning. The team for each year group meets weekly. This working group consists of the Principal and Deputy Principals, the Guidance Counsellor, the specific Year Head and AEN coordinator. These meetings take place at 10.05am daily and are scheduled timetabled meetings. This is an important forum where the Year Head and indeed the rest of the team can raise any concerns which they may have for individual student welfare and wellbeing. Class tutors or subject teachers inform the Year Head if they have any concerns about the wellbeing of a student.

Aims

1. To share information in a confidential setting
2. To coordinate a multi-disciplinary, transparent response to the care needs of a student
3. To be action focused.
4. To review and monitor the students with care needs

Student Support Team Issues

- Attendance and Retention
- Behaviour
- Academic Achievement
- Pastoral Care
- Supports
- Health and Welfare
- Family Issues
- Mental Health
- Child Protection
- Critical Incident supports
- Staff Support / Development

Confidentiality

An essential element of the Student Support Team is maintaining clarity around the boundaries of confidentiality. It is essential for all members of the team, as well as all staff and students, to understand the concept of confidentiality with regard to child protection guidelines.

Communication

Clear communication is essential. Any member of staff can refer a student to any member of the team, however, it is important that there is an understanding that a

person who refers a student does not need to know the details of what has been discussed in relation to the student, but they need to be assured that the student is being cared for and of the relevant actions in relation to their classroom. Teachers are notified via email and a shared google drive document weekly regarding students on the Student Support Team list. We use a 'lean in', 'lean out' and 'keep an eye' system in this method of communication and all teachers have been briefed on system at a staff meeting in September 2020. A specific set of referral forms have also been developed to aid transparency in this process: AEN, Guidance & Year Head (see appendix i)

Essential Elements of the Student Support Team

- Child centred/ advocate for the student
- Professionalism and Confidentiality
- Non-judgmental
- Solution focused as opposed to problem focused.
- Supported by staff, senior management and Board Of Management
- Optimistic and hopeful
- Effective use of time and resources
- Information sharing with wider staff
- Accountable through record keeping

We also endeavour to have a weekly Additional Education Needs (AEN) meeting which helps to highlight students of concern. Issues may also come to light in the small group or one to one setting in which learning support classes occur.

Where concerns are raised about a student in these or other settings, appropriate steps are taken to provide support . This may involve contact with parents, input of AEN support, reporting structure with Year Head, talking with the Guidance Counsellor, a referral to other counselling or outside agencies or other actions which may be deemed necessary, supportive or protective.

If a member of staff has a concern about child protection, they report this to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) as per our Child Protection Policy.

Implementation of Policy

Board of Management

The Board of Management will ensure that the ethos and values of the founding partners are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

Principal and Deputy Principals

The Principal will work with the Board of Management, Staff and students in the development of the policy and ensuring that the proper structures and resources are put in place for its effective operation. The Principal / Deputy Principals will oversee the implementation of the policy, provide from available resources the necessary structures to implement the policy, contact and liaise with parents and with outside agencies as necessary and will remain available to meet students, staff and parents in a supportive environment. In their role as Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison

Person, the Principal and Deputy Principal will contact relevant agencies in accordance with Child Protection Procedures.

Year Heads

Year Heads play a major role in the care and support of our students. They meet on a weekly basis with the Principal and Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors and AEN coordinator in the care team setting. Each year group will have one assigned Year Head which, where possible, will remain with the group during their time in school. The Year Heads will have the responsibility for the pastoral, educational and disciplinary care of the year group. They will meet the group on a regular basis and keep them apprised on school policies. The Year Head will attend all relevant assemblies & meetings of the Year Group and will have access to information on students in that year. The Year Head will have a caring interest in each student of that year and will be aware in so far as is possible of the reality of the students' lives. Where necessary, they will intervene to help students who are encountering difficulty with particular areas of school policy and provide necessary supports for the students. They have regular contact with parents/guardians on the progress and performance of the students.

All School Staff

Due care 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.

Chaplaincy

The role of the Chaplaincy team is to assist the pastoral care system within our school. The chaplains will work with staff in providing spiritual and pastoral care to the whole school community and will communicate at all times with the Principal, Deputy Principals, the Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads, Tutors and parents/guardians on all relevant matters relating to the students. Chaplains meet with the Student Support teams once a month for each specific year group and provide support to specific students which are identified within the care team meetings.

Class Teacher

The Subject Teachers will have regular contact with the class and will deal with simple issues as they arise. Classes are conducted in a structured, ordered and engaging environment and the teacher will create a positive learning environment in the classroom which encompasses the development of the whole person. 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 s/he refers the student to the Year Head, and the Deputy Principal in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. They will normally be the first to be approached by pupils. Relevant information and issues that require further attention will be passed to any member of the Student Support Team, depending upon the nature of the concern.

Critical Incident Team

St. Joseph's Secondary School has developed a Critical Incident Management Plan to cope more effectively in the aftermath of an incident. This enables the school community to reach quickly and effectively and to maintain a sense of control. The school is proactive in creating a coping, supportive and caring ethos in the school.

'A critical incident is any incident or sequence of events which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school.'

The Critical Incident Team is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor and members of staff.

Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor provides for the needs of the students under 3 integrated areas: personal/social guidance and counselling, educational and career guidance. The Guidance Counsellor is available to meet students in class groups and for individual consultation with students and/or parents on matters related to career advice and possible personal difficulties. She liaises with the Principal, Deputy Principal and other staff members and members of the Student Support team regularly, in providing this support and guidance.

AEN Coordinator

The AEN Coordinator plays a central role in the implementation of this policy. They meet daily within the Student Support Team setting as the link person for our AEN students in that setting. They liaise daily with senior management, guidance counsellors and year heads in putting provisions in place for students. Teachers also can refer directly to the AEN coordinator regarding concerns or queries. They continuously liaise directly with the AEN team of teachers & SNAs and coordinate IEPs, short term programmes for students and reports for parents. The AEN coordinator also communicates with staff in a formal setting (staff meeting/CPD) regarding the specific strengths and needs of the students on the AEN register. They also coordinate and organise inputs and CPD from outside agencies to support students and staff.

Parents Council

As a partner in St. Joseph's Secondary School the Parents Council contributes significantly to policy making. Through their involvement with the Council parents/guardians show their commitment to student welfare and development. The Parents Council fundraise annually which contributes to several programmes in the school including the Breakfast Club, Homework club & Evening Study which are vital supports to all of our students.

Religious Education (RE) Teachers

The RE teachers deliver the RE Programme to all students in the school. Refer to the RE policy.

The Student Council – Student Council Liaison Teacher

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/guardians. 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 staff, Board of Management and Parents Council in the school
- Communicating and consulting with all 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 Board of Management for any funds raised by the Council.

The Wellbeing Team:

A core Wellbeing Team meets regularly. This team comprises staff from the departments of Physical Education, CSPE, SPHE, Guidance as well as other relevant subject departments. The school has developed a Wellbeing Programme which is being delivered to all Junior Cycle, TY & Senior Cycle students. The programme content has been informed by research carried out as part of our School Improvement Plan. The program is based on the six key indicators of learning as set out in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (NCCA). These indicators are as follows:

1. Active
2. Responsible
3. Connected
4. Resilient
5. Respected
6. Aware

The Wellbeing Team helps to foster an awareness that the promotion of Wellbeing is a whole school and cross-curricular responsibility. This supports the pastoral care of students as it affords the development of a teaching and learning relationship in a non-exam setting. Wellbeing class content allows for discussion of topics of concern and interest to adolescents. The active and enriching content and methodology of the programme affords the Wellbeing teachers the opportunity to get to know their group better and to build a strong relationship with them.

Form Tutors

The Form Tutor takes particular care of one class group. They are teachers who meet the class regularly within the context of their timetable and where possible we aim to keep the Form Tutor with the class for the three years of the Junior Cycle and two years of Senior Cycle to help promote the development of relationships. They engender a supportive, positive, open atmosphere in which success and achievement are highlighted and valued. The form tutor liaises with class teachers, parents/guardians and Year Heads on a regular basis. They are an advocate for students and are a support to the Year Heads in working with large year groups.

There is a meeting with Year Heads and Form Tutors three times within the academic year, starting in September 2020. This will feed into the Student Support team meetings and will support the Form Tutors in their role.

Learning Support/Resource Teachers

These teachers support students academically as well as socially and personally and facilitate their holistic education. The work is carried out in conjunction with 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, paying particular attention to the students' wellbeing.

Students

Relationships in the school are based on mutual respect and courtesy. Students should, at all times, be supportive of all in the school community. Students should also respect school property and the environment and take responsibility for keeping it clean and tidy.

School Policies Informed by Pastoral Care

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Internet Acceptable Usage Policy for students and staff
- First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medications Policy
- External Sports Coaches Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Pastoral Care Programmes

The following Programmes contribute to the Pastoral Care Policy in the school.

Anti-Bullying Policy – Programme

The purpose of the programme is to raise awareness of bullying and to have transparent procedures in place to deal with incidents of bullying. These incidents are handled and dealt with through the 'Restorative Justice' approach. Refer to the policy.

Induction Programme

A comprehensive induction programme is in operation for:

- First Year Students
- Parents of First Year Students
- Students joining any other year group
- Transition Year students
- LCA students
- New Staff

Group	Staff member responsible
Incoming First Year Students	Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Coordinator, Form Tutors, Chaplaincy, Guidance Counsellor, Cairdeas Mentors.
Parents of First Year Students	Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Head, Tutors, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Coordinator, Chaplaincy & subject teachers.
Students joining any other year groups	Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, Form Tutors, Student Council class rep.
Transition Year Students	Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Head/TY Coordinator, Form Tutors, Guidance Counsellor & Chaplaincy
Leaving Certificate Applied Students	LCA Coordinator, Principal and Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head and Form Tutors.
New Staff/PMES	Principal, Deputy Principals, New Staff Mentor, Chaplaincy, Department teachers, Droichead Mentors.

Links with Feeder Primary schools

The strong relationship that exists between St. Joseph's and our feeder Primary Schools enables a smooth transition for our students from 6th class into 1st year. The AEN Coordinator and Guidance Counsellor liaises with the Primary Schools to ensure that all relevant information is passed on which enables the establishment of appropriate supports and provisions for the students. Any relevant information is passed on confidentially to the Student Support team in advance of the student's transition.

Check and Connect Programme

This mentoring strategy connects students in need of support to a teacher that they know, trust and have a positive relationship with, in order to problem solve together around whatever issue may be of concern. It is done in an informal way where a teacher would speak with the student informally at first and if necessary, arrange a time for a chat.

The care team will identify students who would benefit from Check and Connect and will liaise with the relevant check & connect teacher. The intervention is arranged and a report to the Student Support team will be gathered after an agreed period.

Aims:

1. The primary aim for check and connect mentoring is to support students to have a **solution focused** approach to their issues.
2. This involves identifying the strengths and resources within a student to develop potential solutions to their issue/problem.
3. The focus is on finding a solution rather than on dwelling on the problem.

The Academic Support/Study Skills Programme

The Academic Support Programme offers a further layer of support to our care team system and Guidance Counselling service. This begins with the roll out of a study skills programme for our 6th year students in October which is delivered by the Deputy Principal, Year Head and Guidance Counsellor. The programme taps into our internal skill set and experience here in the school, so that all sixth year students are assigned a contact person who will be their Academic Mentor for the year. The students meet with their mentor on a one to one basis three to four times in the year, focussing on their performance in class tests, house exams and Mock exams. The Academic Mentor liaises with the student's teachers giving relevant feedback from these meetings.

Cara Programme

This programme has been set up in the school to help first years to settle into their new school environment. The Cairdeas team agree at the beginning of the year to help initiate our first years.

Each fifth year Cara Mentor is assigned approximately five students to look after. They meet each of their students on their first day in August and at regular intervals throughout the year particularly during the first term. The beginning of secondary school can be difficult for first years with so many new subjects and new faces to get used to.

The Cara team aim to help first years with any concerns they may have at this challenging time and indeed, throughout the year the Cara team are present in the school to assist with the needs of their assigned first year group if necessary.

Evening Study

Evening Study runs for two hours after school Monday – Thursday .Once again, this provides a warm, safe & quiet environment for the students where they can continue with homework or study in a structured setting.

Homework Club

Homework Club runs four evenings per week for forty minutes. In this setting students who have been identified through the input of the AEN coordinator in the care team meetings are catered for HW club. SNAs run this and support the students with their homework to ease any concerns or anxieties they may have with managing their homework.

Pastoral Procedures

- Student Support meetings - Principal, Deputy Principals, relevant Year Head, Guidance Counsellor & AEN Coordinator.
- Individual Counselling
- Parental support meetings
- Critical Incidents

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.

- Year Heads/Programme Coordinator will meet with class group/year group regularly to monitor the pastoral care needs of students.
- Student Support team meetings with Principal and Deputy Principals will monitor pastoral care on a regular basis.
- Teachers will discuss academic and pastoral development of each student at Parent-Teacher Meetings.
- Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Chaplaincy, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Coordinator, Wellbeing team and other members of staff will meet regularly to monitor implementation of the policy.

This policy was ratified on _____

Signature: Chairperson of the Board Of Management _____

Date: 20/4/20 _____

Signature: Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management _____

Date: 20/4/20 _____