

Pastoral Care Policy of St Ailbe's School

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1 Statement of Core Values

St Ailbe's 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

St Ailbe's realises its core aims and goals through a variety of means, none more important than our pastoral care approach. We understand Pastoral Care as caring for each member of the school community and promoting learning at every stage of a students' development.

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, home school community liaison, chaplaincy, learning support.
- ❖ Linking with Social, Personal and Health Education
- ❖ Resources and professional development
- ❖ Implementation plan
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluation

3. Pastoral roles: definitions and responsibilities

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 Class Tutor, Year Head, chaplain, Home-school Liaison, 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, resource teachers, special needs assistants. 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 staff are 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 have 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 of at least 30minutes with the class occur
- ❖ A Tutor programme is prepared to assist Tutors with their Tutor class
- ❖ Class Tutors have a limited sanction imposing role – no greater than internal detention.
- ❖ The Class Tutor has access to the relevant information on the students in their class
- ❖ Provision is made for at least one class outing/event to build strong Tutor/class relationships
- ❖ Class Tutors will meet as a group with their Year Head at least twice a term and also that members of the wider Pastoral Team be invited to this meeting where possible
- ❖ Class Tutors are given opportunities for professional development in their role

Year Head

- ❖ An agreed time for role allocation is assigned to each Year Head – at least the equivalent of three periods a week
- ❖ A clear role in the Behaviour Code is designated – up to a recommendation for suspension
- ❖ There is clear access to relevant information on the students in the year group
- ❖ A regular meeting usually once a week occurs of the Year Head team with the principal and deputy with, when possible, members of the pastoral team
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Year Heads are given opportunities for professional development
- ❖ Overseeing at least one major social justice/fundraising project for the year group
- ❖ Organise at least two assemblies of the year group each term
- ❖ Ensure significant participation of the year group in key ethos days of the school
- ❖ Report to staff in relation to the year group and from time to time meet with subject teachers
- ❖ Liaise with parents according to agreed procedures particular in respect of the annual parent-teacher meeting, individual conferences with parents, collaboration with parent groups in the school

- ❖ Liaise with student representatives in the year group with a formal meeting at least twice a term
- ❖ Have access to appropriate administrative support

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Team

- ❖ The Co-ordinator will be appointed from among the pastoral team.
- ❖ The Pastoral Team will be made up usually of the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, the guidance counsellor, the chaplain, one Year Head, one Class Tutor, the Learning Support teacher, the Home School Community Liaison, the SPHE co-ordinator and the deputy principal. Other members may be co-opted at any time.
- ❖ They will have responsibility for supporting Class Tutors and Year Heads; co-ordinating the pastoral programme; reviewing students with particular difficulties; advising relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues
- ❖ They will present an annual report on the pastoral life of the school to the staff and the Board of Management

Other key pastoral roles will have their role descriptions outlined in the School Handbook

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 adhere to the official Department guidelines. In addition we recognise SPHE as a whole school concern and therefore ensure that there are opportunities for whole staff consideration of the SPHE in the school, review with parents and management regarding the effectiveness of the programme, on-going professional development for staff is prioritised in this area. In addition to and in concert with the SPHE curricular programme, this school has its own pastoral programme that is facilitated by the Pastoral Team in conjunction with the Class Tutors and Year Heads.

It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Team and the SPHE co-ordinator to review the inter-relationship and provide for the optimum experience for the student. This school's pastoral programme deals 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 in May, teachers have an opportunity to prepare for the following year in terms of gathering resources and undergoing relevant training.

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. For a more detailed treatment of issues around information refer to the Record Keeping Policy.

Another area of relevance is the relationship of the school to the parent. Our Home-school policy addresses this area in detail. 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, willingness to reach consensus, creativity, cooperation, generosity. The Pastoral Team will review this relationship at least once a year with the particular support of the Home-school liaison Co-ordinator.

Dealing with sensitive issues such as sudden death or suicide require careful consideration. This school's Crisis Response Policy addresses the pertinent issues. In particular the creation of a Crisis Response Team is essential. The effectiveness of this team will be reviewed once a year and be part of the annual Pastoral Review made to the Board of Management.

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. There will also be annual opportunities for the full staff to review the effectiveness of these roles and other pastoral issues.

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:

- ❖ The consultative process will need to be concluded in respect of the role of Class Tutor and Year Head. The role descriptions will be discussed by all staff and a final document approved for presentation to the Board of Management.
- ❖ Professional Development will be arranged for those in key pastoral roles by the end of the school year – the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will liaise with the principal in relation to this.
- ❖ The Pastoral Team will be constituted.
- ❖ The Pastoral Programme will be prepared – the principal will appoint a task group to undertake this.
- ❖ Meetings of Class Tutors and their Year Head will occur twice a term at dates agreed at the beginning of each school year
- ❖ The Year Heads will meet once a fortnight with timetabling provision in place

- ❖ The Pastoral Care Team will present an annual report to the staff and Board of Management in May of each year.
- ❖ The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will meet with the Parents Council at least once a year to take part in a discussion on pastoral care – the date will be set before mid term in the first term.
- ❖ The Students Council will have at least one meeting with the Pastoral Care team each year – the date will be set before mid term in the first term.
- ❖ A budget for Pastoral Care will be proposed by the Pastoral Care Team by mid May of each year. The Team will have been given guidelines on realistic budgetary guidelines before Easter.

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: prepare a short written report for the Board of Management and staff on the implementation of the policy at key stages – in addition be prepared to give an oral report. The report should examine the meeting of specific targets and timelines, it should also gather some qualitative reactions to the policy during implementation. 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. A procedure for follow up on reactions to the interim reports needs to be established – one form may be that the Pastoral Care Team with school management will set time aside to discuss the feedback and propose any adjustments required. Apart from the usual on-going informal monitoring that would occur with every area of policy, formal monitoring would be appropriate at least twice in the first year and at least once during each subsequent year.

8.2 Evaluation:

At a 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 monitoring reports that were gathered during the life of the policy.
- Surveying staff, students and parents as to its effectiveness in meeting its stated aims

- Collating these responses and presenting, following consultations with school management, a report to Board and staff with recommendations for further phases of the Pastoral Care policy.
- Leading a process 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.