

Our Lady of Mercy College



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

approved by the Board of Management in December 2017

1. Mission Statement:

The core value of Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont is respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential academically, spiritually and culturally as a member of the school and wider community and in the spirit of the Mercy Ethos.

2. Rationale

The ethos of the school is characterised by the quality of relationships within the school. Individuals are cherished and their contribution to the life of the school community is valued and appreciated. Rights and responsibilities are exercised in a spirit of respect. Pastoral care is recognised as central. The values of forgiveness and reconciliation, justice and tolerance are promoted within and beyond the school community. The drawing up of a Pastoral care Policy is to complement our school mission statement.

Our Lady of Mercy College is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Our school is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and the wider community.

3. Scope

School pastoral care is a systematic approach to education, which seeks to cherish, support, respect, nurture and encourage every member of the school community.

4. Aims

Through our pastoral care policy we aim:

1. To ensure that all aspects of school life are firmly rooted in Christian principles.
2. To create and maintain an atmosphere where all members of the school community feel that they are known safe, valued, respected and happy.
3. To support the ideals enshrined in the school mission statement.
4. To implement our Code of Behaviour which show due consideration for all members of the school community.
5. To maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning.
6. To build an atmosphere of trust.
7. To respond in a sympathetic way to the concerns and fears, worries of our students.
8. To promote the students' physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing through the teaching of Social, Personal and Health Education and other subjects.
9. To promote the students' spiritual and moral development through Religious Education and Faith Formation.
10. To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion thus enabling students to develop a framework for responsible decision making.

5. Ethos

The ethos of the school will be reflected in the moral, intellectual, spiritual, personal and social development of our students. It does not happen by chance. To this end the

principal, senior management team and staff will promote an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school community (CEIST Charter).

6. Relationships

A good relationship between students and staff is paramount to generating a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels valued and cared for at all times. Good relationships will be nurtured between:

- Staff and students
- Students and their peers
- Members of Staff
- Senior management team and staff
- School and the surrounding community.

Students will also be encouraged to develop and value a respect for themselves.

7. Values

Christian living is central to the ethos of the school. Catholic Education is one aspect of our school and defines what we do. We support and nourish those who are part of our school. Wellbeing permeates all subjects.

8. Wellbeing

Wellbeing a pre-requisite for successful learning: a young person who has a high degree of self-worth, a sense of security and a positive self image will be more predisposed to school life and to the variety of learning situations it offers. Central to wellbeing are six indicators which the school holds as important for student wellbeing i.e. being - Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware.

Wellbeing is at the core of our school. This encompasses social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental and physical wellbeing:

Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community. (Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA 2017)

9. Child Protection

We will encourage students to be responsible for their own personal safety and help them to acquire skills to be able to do this so that they will be able to make the correct decisions and know where to get help if or when they are confronted with danger. Students are encouraged to speak with the class tutor if they need help or are concerned. Students will also be aware of the teacher responsible for first aid and what procedures are for dealing with students who need first aid.

The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person and the Deputy Principal is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection issues.

10. Care Team

A Care Team is in place consisting of Guidance Counsellor plus 2 teachers who will liaise with Year Heads, Class Tutors, Teachers and Special Needs Assistants as necessary.

11. Guidance Counselling

The Guidance Counsellor has a pivotal role to play in the school. She/He aims to facilitate all students' career needs and assure them of continuous support and counselling. In the course of their lives people are faced with the need to make

significant decisions that affect both themselves and those around them. For second level students these choices are focussed on three key areas:

- Personal and Social
- Educational
- Career

The Guidance Counsellor facilitates students' access to the following services:

(a) Personal development programmes: Assisting students in their personal and social development, decision making and planning; providing counselling, including bereavement counselling; liaison with outside agencies, including Department of Education and Science Psychologists and Health Boards.

(b) Educational Development Programmes: providing knowledge and skills relating to studying, exams and choices of subjects and subject levels.

(c) Career Information: Providing factual information relating to 3rd level study and other career options, while helping students to make informed career decisions by the use of aptitude, career-interest and other tests. Parents are also invited to participate with the Guidance Counsellor in the guidance process through consultation and attendance at relevant information evenings relating to subject and career choices.

It is in this regard, care for the total well-being of the student that guidance and counselling form an integral part of what pastoral care is.

12. Special Education Needs (SEN)

Our pastoral care policy copper fastens the schools special needs policy which ensures that all students have access to, participate in and gains positive outcomes from schooling, with a view to providing the foundations of a quality life. The special needs policy states that the staff in co-operation with parents and external professionals will cater for students who may experience difficulty in any subject area or who because of special needs may need extra tuition or special arrangements at state exams.

Students who fall within the Special Needs Category include:

- Students with learning difficulties
- Students with physical and sensory disabilities
- Students with emotional and behavioural disorders
- Students with other special Needs.
- Gifted students.

An extension program exists for students who are identified as exceptionally able. The school has links with outside agencies to support what we do in school.

13. The Student Voice

The student council has a very important role to play in the area of pastoral care. The council gives students a significant voice in the development of policy and affords students the opportunity to play an active, formative and positive part in the life of the school. The council is designed to encourage students to become more self-confident, responsible, caring and independent young women who are prepared to take the challenge of adult life. As a representative body the student council liaises with other partners within the school community. All students are offered opportunities to play an active role in the school.

14. The Parents Voice.

The Parents Association offers valued support to the school community in a number of ways:

- Organising parent nights
- Catering for school functions
- Organising fund raising for the school.

Every parent has an opportunity to offer feedback and are consulted through the Parents Association.

15. The Student Prefect System

Prefects are appointed from sixth year in the school. They have an important leadership role within the school. They assist year heads and class teachers with classes and have other duties which help in the running of the school. They often provide a direct link to students in the school. They play a valuable mentoring role within the school.

16. The Class Tutor/Year Head

The Class Tutor and Year Head promote positive relationships leading to the holistic development of the student in a supportive and nurturing environment. The role of the class tutor will be to:

- (i) Promote wellbeing
- (ii) Promote and encourage positive behaviour
- (iii) Promote good learning strategies
- (iv) Support students to overcome personal difficulties which may arise.

All students have daily contact with their Tutor as well as dedicated tutor classes on a regular basis (see appendix).

17. Board of Management:

The Board of management will have the responsibility for the care and wellbeing of all students.

18. Implementation

The Board of Management will have the overall responsibility for the School Development Plan including monitoring the safety of each person in the school. The senior management team will ensure that pastoral care is given a high profile in the school curriculum. The Principal will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the pastoral care policy. They will work with all staff and ensure that they are properly trained. They will make sure that non-teaching staff are familiar with the pastoral care policy and give help when needed. Each member of staff will work to build up the students self esteem and encourage them to be assertive and to resist negative peer pressure. They will help the students to celebrate success and develop the ability to make moral decisions and to know the difference between right and wrong.

19. Resources

Resources required to maintain and update the pastoral care policy will be updated as necessary.

20. Supervision

Students will be supervised from 8:35am, during break times 10:50am -11:05am, 1:05 - 1:50pm daily and 3:50pm - 4:00pm Mon – Thurs. Full supervision also continues during all extra curricular activities such as football training, school trips,

tours, retreats, liturgies and related activities. No student may enter the specialist rooms without adult supervision.

21. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years (or when appropriate) by the principal, staff members, parents and students. The effectiveness of this policy will be determined by the quality of care within and beyond the classroom and the effectiveness of the support arrangements for all members of the school community.

22. Related Policies

Child Protection Policy, Special Education Needs Policy, Exceptionally Able Student Policy, Code of Behaviour, Guidance & Counselling Policy,

Ratified December 5th 2017

Appendix

Role of Class Tutor

The class tutor is the teacher who takes on the task of special care to one class group.

They do this by getting to know the students on an individual basis and being aware of pastoral care issues. They liaise with Year Head as appropriate.

The class tutor is responsible for:

- Collecting Entry Renewal forms.
- Recording daily attendance & collecting notes.

S/he will have particular concern for each person in the class and is the first “port of call” in matters of student welfare.

- (a) The class tutor has a responsibility to closely monitor the progress of his/her students in every area of school life.
- (b) The class tutor works in close co-operation with Year Heads and other parts of the pastoral care structure to ensure the best solution is found to any difficulties that may arise.
- (c) The relationship established between the student and the class tutor will be of particular benefit when difficulties need to be faced; that is why the class tutor is normally the first point of reference when problems arise. Also, the class tutor would where practicable, remain with the class right throughout their time in the school.

All information of a personal nature is confidential. The class tutor will liaise with the Year Head, Counsellor and or Deputy Principal and Principal. Where it is appropriate the class tutor would alert subject teachers to information of relevance to them in carrying out their tasks in the best interest of their classes and of individual students.

Beginning of year

Give out timetables, each students’ name is on one. Check that each is in correct uniform, no piercings etc...

Remind students about school rules.

Use of Journal particularly first years. Check that homework is recorded, notes are signed etc..

Collect Entry & Renewal Form-Form 5 and keep. Make sure you get this from each student. Remind students re other forms to be returned to the office.

Over the first week check addresses & phone numbers (print out in your folder) and give copy of changes to Linda. Let her know if no changes.

Daily roll call, record absence notes.

Tutor classes, plan topics in conjunction with year head/guidance counsellor.