

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

The pastoral care policy encompasses the whole school community

Pastoral Care should permeate all areas of school life.

In Portmarnock Community School we facilitate the development of all members of our school community. In our school community we foster relationships based on respect. We engender a sense of belonging to our school community where each individual is valued and her/his 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.

Relationship to school ethos/mission

Through the implementation of this Policy we strive to enact the stated Mission, Vision and Aims of Portmarnock Community School. We value all in the school community and endeavour to develop each member of the school community.

Rationale for policy

Pastoral Care is an integral part of our mission in Portmarnock Community School and as such it needs a formal structure to ensure its effectiveness in our school community on a day-by-day basis and particularly at critical times. In Portmarnock Community School we believe Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life.

Goals of the Policy

That each member of the school community will

- Feel valued and cared for
- Be developed to his/her full potential – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially, personally and aesthetically
- Have a sense of belonging to our school community

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Pastoral Care Task Team has the responsibility to draft this Policy in consultation with the staff, students, parents and management of the school. The Draft Policy will then be presented to the staff, Student Council, Parents Association and the Board of Management. Modifications may be made following consultation. The Pastoral Care policy will then be taken to the Board of Management for formal ratification.

Implementation of Policy

-Board of Management

The BOM 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 and Deputy Principals will work to ensure that our school is primarily a caring community. The management is committed to supporting all those involved in the pastoral care programme in Portmarnock Community School. The management makes time available to meet parents, staff and students in a supportive atmosphere.

The management facilitates in-house staff development and encourages participation in external associations, programmes and courses particularly when those programmes/courses have a direct influence on student learning.

-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.

-Chaplain

The School Chaplain is in a unique position to assist the pastoral care system within our school. The Chaplain will work with the staff in providing spiritual and pastoral care to the whole school community and will communicate at all times with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Year Head, Tutor and Parents on all relevant matters relating to the students.

-Class Teacher

Teachers conduct classes in a structured and ordered environment. 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 a Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal(s), (Counsellor or Chaplain) as in the teacher information guidelines.

-Critical Incident Team

The Critical Incident Team is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor(s) and members of staff. The Team will meet on a regular basis.

-Guidance Counsellor(s)

The Guidance Department provides a wide range of services including Vocational/Educational Guidance, Personal Development/Counselling, Aptitude/Interest Inventory testing. The Guidance Counsellors are available to meet students in class groups and for individual consultation with students and/or parents on matters relating to career advice and possible personal difficulties.

-Parents Association

As a partner in Portmarnock Community School the Parents Association contributes significantly to policy making. Through their involvement in the association parents show their commitment to student welfare and development. The Parents Association contributes to various programmes in the school.

-Religious Education (RE) Teachers

The RE teachers deliver the RE Programme to all students in the school. Refer to 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. 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 the staff, Board of Management and Parents' Association in the school
- Communicating and consulting with all of the 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 Student Council and Board of Management, for any funds raised by the Council.

-Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme – SPHE Co-Ordinator and Teachers

SPHE teachers deliver the SPHE Programme (one class period per week) to the junior cycle students. The aims of the SPHE programme are:

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

In the SPHE programme a wide range of issues are addressed in ten modules. The ten modules are:

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management: A sense of purpose
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendships
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substances Use
- Personal Safety

-Learning Support/Resource Teachers

The learning support teachers support students academically as well as socially and personally to facilitate their holistic education. The work is carried out in conjunction with the 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.

-Student Attendance Liaison Co-Ordinator

The Student Attendance Liaison Co-Ordinator will facilitate students in full attendance at school and will pay particular attention to those students who are at risk of dropping out.

-Students

Relationships in the school will be based on respect and courtesy. Students should at all times be supportive to all in the school community. Students should respect school property and the environment and take responsibility for keeping it in good order.

-Tutors

The Class Tutor takes particular care of one class group. S/he engenders a supportive, positive atmosphere in which success and achievement are highlighted and valued. S/he liaises with class teachers, parents and Year Heads on a regular basis.

-Year Heads

Year Heads play a major role in the care and support of our students. They are responsible for holding year group assemblies, counsellor and tutor team meetings. They have constant contact with parents and guardians on the progress and performance of the students. They also communicate with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain and Learning Support teachers on issues relating to the year group.

Pastoral Care Programmes

The following policies/programmes will contribute to the Pastoral Care Programme in a positive and caring manner.

Anti-Bullying Policy – ‘Cool School’ Programme

The purpose of the ‘Cool School’ programme is:

- To raise the awareness of bullying and
- To have procedures in place to deal with incidents of bullying.

Refer to policy.

Care of new students who join during the school year – Year Heads, Tutors, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor(s)

The relevant Year Head and Tutor will provide advice and assistance to new students who join Portmarnock Community School during the academic year. The Year Head and Tutor will monitor the performance and integration of the relevant students in Portmarnock Community School, over the initial 4-6 weeks period, by consulting with the student’s teachers. During this period the Year Head and/or Tutor will meet with the relevant students and enquire how they are settling in at Portmarnock Community School and offer support as required.

Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour is in place to facilitate learning and teaching in a positive, safe and secure atmosphere. The Code has been developed in partnership with the staff, students, parents and management.

Refer to Code of Behaviour.

Critical Incident Policy

The Critical Incident policy is currently being drafted.

Extra-Curricular Activities - Teachers

A wide range of activities including sporting, cultural, dramatic and artistic events facilitate the personal development of students, assists the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

Refer to policy.

Health and Safety Policy

Refer to policy.

Homework Policy

To promote in the student body the value of homework and study in the learning process and to promote independent learning and creativity.

Refer to policy.

Induction Programme for First Year students – Deputy Principal, Relevant Year Head, Tutors, Guidance Counsellor(s) and Chaplain

An induction programme for incoming first year students is held at the beginning of the academic year. The Year Head and Tutors advise the first year students of the code of behaviour expected in Portmarnock Community School. Timetables and maps of the school building are distributed to the new students and the Tutors conduct an orientation session with their individual classes and inform them of all aspects of school life. This may be achieved by Year Heads in Assemblies and by Tutors in tutor classes.

Induction Programme for New Staff

An induction programme for new staff is held at the beginning of the academic year. The Principal, Deputy Principal(s), Chaplain, Mrs. G. Kenny (Student Computer Records) and Ms C. Lyons welcome the new staff, provide information on the ethos and philosophy of the school and inform them of various working policies and procedures operating within the school.

Refer to programme.

Induction Programme for Parents of incoming First Year students – Relevant Year Head, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor

The parents of the incoming First Year students are invited to the school in March for an information evening. The aim of the evening is to help the parents and the incoming students with a smooth transition from primary to post-primary school.

Induction Programme for Parents of Transition Year students – Transition Year Co-Ordinator

The Transition Year Co-Ordinator invites the parents of prospective transition year students to an information evening in January/February of the preceding academic year.

Mentoring Programme – Mentors

A Mentor (senior subject department members/Subject Co-Ordinator) is assigned to each new staff member when they begin teaching in Portmarnock Community School.

The aims of the mentoring programme are to promote:

- The care and well-being of new teachers
- The development and acquisition of new teaching skills
- A collaborative teaching culture in our school.

Positive Behaviour Programme

A positive behaviour programme is in place for all students. The focus of positive behaviour is to use incentives such as motivation, encouragement, praise and reward to improve behaviour and performance. The aim of the programme is to foster team spirit in a class group and to improve class-work, homework and behaviour. The positive behaviour programme entails collaboration among Year Heads, Class Tutors, class teachers, students and parents.

An Awards Ceremony is organised by the Deputy Principal(s) and held at the end of each academic year. Awards are given for:

- Achievement in each subject class
- The ‘student of the year’ in each year group
- Junior and senior environmental awareness

Each subject teacher nominates a student from his/her class based on performance, improvement and effort made throughout the year. The selection of the ‘student of the year’ is based on performance, participation, co-operation and effort made during the year.

Every teacher may give a student a Comment, Letter of Commendation or Stamp in the student journal to recognise good organisation, participation, performance, effort etc in school activities.

Potentially Life Threatening and Chronic Illness Policy

Refer to policy.

Prefects System – Year Head and Chaplain

A Prefects System for selected students from sixth year is in operation in the school. The aim of this programme is to help the selected students to develop leadership skills, to liaise with First Year students assisting with their transition from primary to secondary school and to perform other duties within the school as may be required.

Refer to programme.

Religious Education (RE)

Refer to the policy.

Role of Year Heads and Tutors

To monitor attendance, academic performance and personal development

To implement a study skills programme (in conjunction with Study Skills Co-Ordinator) for all students.

Guidelines on the role of the Year Head and on the role of the Tutor are issued to all teachers at the beginning of the school year.

Sports Awards Evening – Co-Ordinator of Extra Curricular Activities

A sports awards evening is organised in May at the end of the academic year. All teachers and the students involved in sporting activities and their parents are invited. The teachers involved in the various sporting activities outline the achievements of the students throughout the year. A ‘special guest of honour’ usually presents the students with the trophies and medals won during the year in a wide range of national, county and local competitions. Special awards are presented for ‘the player of the year’ and ‘the most improved player’ for each activity.

Substance Misuse Policy

Refer to the policy.

Supervised Study – Evening Study Co-Ordinator

A supervised study facility is available in the school (on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evening after school) in which priority is given to those undertaking state examinations. Students study in a quiet supervised atmosphere.

Pastoral Procedures

- Key Pastoral Care personnel meeting -
- Year Group Assembly
- Tutor Class – First period on Monday
- Meeting – Relevant Year Head and Tutors (Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support invited if necessary)
- Meeting – Relevant Year Head, Tutor, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support/Resource if necessary
- Critical Incident Procedure – currently being reviewed
- Individual Counselling
- Chaplain – Individual Meetings
- Special Occasions – Bereavement
 - Allegations of violence, bullying, abuse
 - Suspicion of violence, bullying, abuse, pregnancy, suicide tendencies, self-harm, cult involvement, occult involvement
 - Disclosure – where mandatory and when appropriate

Performance Criteria

The Pastoral Care Programmes are being implemented effectively.

The Pastoral Care procedures are effective.

The Goals of the policy that each member of the school community will

- Feel valued and cared for
- Be developed to his/her full potential – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially, personally and aesthetically
- Have a sense of belonging to our school community

are being achieved.

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.

- Tutors/Year Heads/Guidance Counsellor(s) will meet with class group/Year Group regularly to monitor the Pastoral Care Programme.
- Year Head meeting 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.
- The Pastoral Care Team (Principal, Deputy Principal(s), Year Heads, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, SPHE Co-Ordinator and other members of staff) will meet regularly to monitor the Policy.

Reporting of Monitoring and Implementation of the Policy

The Pastoral Care Team will monitor the implementation of the policy on a regular basis and report to the Pastoral Care Task Team (Principal, Deputy Principal(s), Chaplain, Ms M Meade, Ms A Richardson and Mr B Core) once a year.

The Pastoral Care Task Team will report to the Board of Management and the educational partners after each meeting via the Principal.

Review and Evaluation

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 21 January 2008 and will be reviewed every five years and in conjunction with each whole school evaluation.