**Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ**

**Pastoral Care Policy**

**Pastoral Care Policy/P.2**

**1. Core Values:**

These are stated clearly and well in our **Philosophy of Education,** **“Companionship is central to the FCJ Philosophy of Education. It is particularly expressed through faithfulness, gentleness and respect. In the spirit of the FCJ Foundress, Marie Madeleine d’Houet, the school seeks to create a caring atmosphere where all can find a place and feel valued. The uniqueness of each person is respected and all are invited to use their gifts for the service of others, for the transformation of society and the coming of the reign of God”.**

These aspirations are achieved and made real by each member of the school Community, contributing to the best of her ability and in particular through the care (pastoral and other) we show for one another.

**2. Pastoral Approach :**

We make real our aspirations through a variety of means, teaching, learning, participating, sharing and especially in our caring. We agree with the definition of Pastoral Care given by Luke Monaghan “…an approach to education which endeavours to value and develop each member of the School Community. It promotes learning at every level of the student (Lapce.1998). Because we identify “caring” as a right and responsibility of each member of the School Community, no one person or group is more important than any other.

However, we do recognise that the following people have a stronger association with caring and may by the nature of their role within the school, be in a position to affect care for the students in a more immediate and/or deliberate way:

**Principal**

**Deputy Principal**

**Subject Teachers**

**Chaplain**

**Year Head**

**Guidance Counsellor**

**Religion Teachers**

**Office Staff } Ancillary Staff see students outside**

**Caretaker } Classroom settings and spot issues which**

**Supervisors } they bring to us.**

The duties and work of each of these people is detailed elsewhere in the school plan and it is not deemed appropriate to prescribe duties for them in this Pastoral Care document, however, we have documented what is happening at present and how these people affect a Pastoral Care Policy. (See Enrolment Procedure, Guidance Plan, S.E.N. Plan)

**The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Team :**

* **Co-ordination is done by Deputy Principal**
* **The Pastoral Team is made up of the Guidance Counsellor, the Chaplain, Year Heads, Principal and Deputy Principal.**
* **The Team meet weekly.**
* **They support the Pastoral Programme; students with particular difficulties; advising relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues.**

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

the following may be useful outlines in relation to some of these.

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**Learning Support Team:**

**The L.S. team is made up of L.S., Resource Teachers, Guidance Counsellor and Deputy Principal. The team will meet first Wednesday of every month.**

The team, having studied assessment tests, offer extra tuition to the students in various subjects, to help them cope with the syllabus. This tuition is carried out with a very small group which should greatly benefit the students.

**Guidance Counsellor :**

* The Guidance Counsellor cares for the student in an all-encompassing holistic manner in keeping with the ethos of the school. Striving to increase the student’s self-esteem, confidence and achievement in all areas of school life, is the philosophy on which their work is based.
* The Guidance Counsellor is available to meet students and parents on a one-to-one to discuss individual cases. Presentations are made to year group, class basis group and individual pupils regarding their senior cycle choices.
* During Careers Classes at Senior Level, a programme of talks by experts in various fields is organised by the Guidance Counsellor and students go on a number of open days.
* There is openness and commitment to accept all students and a warm invitation is extended to any parent to talk and work with the Guidance Department for the well-being and healthy development of the student.

**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 will ensure that there are opportunities for whole staff consideration of SPHE in the school review with parents and management regarding the effectiveness of the programme. On-going professional development for staff is facilitated in this area.

In addition to and in concert with the SPHE curricular programme, this school has its own pastoral input that is facilitated by the Pastoral Team in conjunction with the Class Teachers and Year Heads, e.g. smoking and drugs.

It is envisaged when SPHE and Pastoral Care co-ordinating posts are regularised that the inter-relationship between them will provide for review and evaluation.

**Recommendations :**

* That co-ordinators for Pastoral Care, SPHE and SEN be timetabled for meetings.
* Issues surrounding Tutor System be revisited i.e. training, allocation, programmes etc.
* The Students Council will have at least one meeting with the Pastoral Care team each year.

**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.

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**Monitoring :**

The pastoral care co-ordinator will monitor policy implementation.

The Board and in its turn the staff, should discuss any reactions, concerns, suggestions that may arise during the course of implementation. The Pastoral Care Team with School Management, will set 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 once a year.

**Evaluation :**

At a specified time 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.
* 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 2 years.