

P O L I C Y S T A T E M E N T

SCHOOL SUPPORT/PASTORAL CARE

Mission Statement:

- St. Joseph's is a Catholic school in the trusteeship of CEIST, and thus its ethos is shaped on the vision of CEIST.
- It is committed to providing a holistic education, which recognises respects and develops the potential of each student, and does this in the context of the whole school community.
- Opportunities for developing partnership links with the parent body are welcome and encouraged.
- The personal and professional development of staff is an important element of school policy.
- Access to school facilities is available to the local community.

School Aims:

- To provide for religious formation in the context of the Catholic ethos of the school
- To endeavour to develop a sense of moral responsibility in students
- To assist students in developing appropriate life skills and social awareness
- To strive to ensure that each student will achieve her/his full educational potential
- To facilitate each student to achieve exam success in accordance with her/his ability
- To respect individual rights subject to the rights of the whole school community
- To respect the rights of staff in the performance of their professional duties
- To facilitate the holistic development of staff as educators
- To maximise links with the education partners for the benefit of the whole school community
- To offer direction and leadership in the educational field to the local community

In keeping with the school's Mission Statement and Aims the aim of this policy is to provide support for the school community on an ongoing basis and in the event of any crisis.

There is a School Support Team working to the NEPS and Tusla guidelines. School Support Team is made up of the Principal and staff members – details of the members of the Team are to be found in the Staff Handbook. The School Support Team meets at least once per term or as the need arises. The School Support Policy Statement in the next page supports the team in its work.

The roles are defined in the School Support folder and all relevant documentation, responding to Critical Incidents Guidelines, Responding to Critical Incidents Advice and Information pack and Responding to Critical Incidents Resource materials is held by the School Support Team. One set of documentation is held in the Principal's office directly inside the door, for easy access. Members of the Team have taken part in relevant training and will continue to do so.

P O L I C Y S T A T E M E N T

SCHOOL SUPPORT/PASTORAL CARE

AIMS

The School Support/Pastoral Care Policy aims to:

1. Endeavour to promote the well being of the individual in an atmosphere of mutual respect and responsible freedom, while at the same time creating a well ordered learning and teaching environment.
2. Create in students a social awareness of each other's needs, a sense of responsibility for their own actions, and respect for others.
3. Make available to students a teacher/tutor, who is non-judgmental, is not cast in the role of disciplinarian and to whom they can turn in confidence in times of crisis, worry etc.
4. Encourage/develop leadership qualities in students through facilitating the operation of the Student Representative Council.
5. Recognise the early signs where students might be at risk and bring this information to the attention of the Principal and staff in a confidential manner.
6. Facilitate counselling/referral of students at risk in consultation with Guidance Counsellor.
7. Identify training needs of staff in the area of Pastoral Care and advise Principal of such needs.
8. Be aware of and recognise the achievements of students who have had to overcome "difficulties" when student awards are made.
9. Regularly update staff on Pastoral Care activities during the school year via staff input at staff meetings. Any feed back, positive or negative is taken on board.
10. Reward outstanding student achievements by presenting Merit Card Awards at an annual, end of school year event to Junior Cycle students.
11. Endeavour to make the introduction to this school a positive experience, a student mentoring system is in place. A 5th year student is assigned to a 1st year student. Both students meet on a regular basis during the first few weeks of term to help ease new students in their transition.
12. Enable new members of staff to settle in and feel welcome, mentoring takes place.
13. Enable students to be free from risk or ridicule during the school day, an Anti-Bullying programme is run with each First Year group. In Second Year, a refresher programme is run as a follow up in an attempt to prevent bullying from taking place.
14. Form a Student Representative Council with elected representatives from each class ensuring a gender balance. The Council functions as a relay for information from students to management and vice versa.

School Support Team

- 1. Fr. Anthony Mc Mahon**
- 2. Mary Crawford**
- 3. Paul Reidy**
- 4. Tom Dillon**
- 5. Catriona Flanagan**
- 6. Lyz Ann King**
- 7. Fidelma Markham**
- 8. Paul Dillon**
- 9. Joe Coughlan**
- 10. Karen Healy/Lourda Conway/Tracy Clancy/Kenneth O'Boyle/Paul Hickey**
- 11. James Kiely**
- 12. Lourda Talty**
- 13. Sr. Martina Fox**
- 14. Pamela Moloney**
- 15. Fergal Hehir**
- 16. Maura Whelan**
- 17. Marianne O'Doherty**
- 18. Sean O'Brien**
- 19. Michael O'Donoghue**
- 20. Fiona Lafferty**
- 21. Ciara Normoyle**
- 22. John O'Neill**

Bereavement Policy

1. In the event of the death of a pupil or a pupil's parent/guardian, the pupil's class would attend the funeral along with a representative group of staff (on receipt of parental/guardian permission).
2. In the event of the death of a family member of one of the staff, a representative group from the staff would attend. In addition, a group of pupils wishing to attend the funeral because of a particular bond they had with a staff member, perhaps as a result of sporting/cultural activities within the school, may also attend.
3. In the event of a pupil or staff related death occurring during a school holiday period, every effort would be made to contact all staff members to inform them.

SELF HARM POLICY

1. Policy

In St Joseph's secondary school we understand self-harm to mean harming oneself without suicidal intent. Self-harm includes, amongst others self- injury, anorexia, bulimia, alcohol misuse. Self-injury includes cutting oneself, for instance on arms or legs, striking oneself, or banging one's head repeatedly. Self-injury is a coping mechanism. It is a deliberate behaviour that inflicts physical harm on your body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. Self –injury may be used to attract attention and express a dire need to be heard. Issues such as family breakdown, bullying and school pressures can lead to a need to be listened to.

Although neither Children First nor the Child Protection guidelines for Post- Primary schools refer to self-harm, the spirit of these documents our policy. It is our policy to inform parents/guardians of an incident of self-harm if it comes to our attention. If there is extreme concern for the welfare of the child the HSE will be informed and the relevant welfare authorities, duty social workers etc.

In St Joseph's Secondary School we endeavour to respond to students who self-harm in a compassionate and non- judgemental manner. Through the school support team we also endeavour to help the student make the choice not to self-harm.

2. Procedure

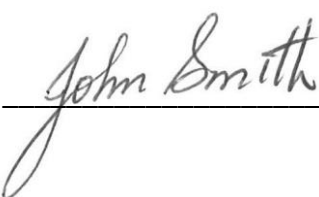
If a student discloses self-harm to a member of staff, or a member of staff sees evidence of self-harm, the staff member should refer the student to a member of the School Support team e.g. The Principal, Deputy Principal or Guidance Counsellor. If the student is deemed to require medical attention, the student will be referred to the local Dr Billy O'Connell / Dr Maura O' Meara.

If a student reports that another student may be self-harming the staff member should immediately inform the member of School Support Team Principal, Vice Principal, Guidance Counsellor.

Subsequent to meeting with the student concerned, the Principal or Deputy Principal will decide, in the best interest of the student the manner in which parents/guardians and possible other persons will be informed. The criterion for informing possible other persons will follow 'best practice' norms outlined in Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools. The school may also refer students to an outside agency.

Policy Ratified: 5th March 2018

Review Date: 2020

Signed:  _____