

# RATHMORE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## PASTORAL CARE POLICY

### Value Statement

The Pastoral Care Policy has been amended by the Board of Governors to reflect amendments which had been made, following consultation with pupils, parents and staff, to other school policies which flow from it. Through it the school underlines the primacy it gives to the pastoral care of pupils, in keeping with its Mission Statement and in particular its commitment to 'creating a caring and vibrant learning atmosphere where pupils are cherished and their spiritual, moral, social, cultural, intellectual and physical development is fostered'.

### Aims of the Policy

- to promote the physical, academic, social, moral and spiritual development of all pupils;
- to provide a sense of belonging to the tutor group, the year group and the school community;
- to create an environment that will enable each pupil to develop self-esteem;
- to prepare pupils to make informed and responsible choices in all areas of life;
- to encourage self-discipline through guidance and example;
- to encourage pupils to make a positive contribution to the school and to the wider community;
- to promote positive relationships and effective communication with parents.

### Links to Other School Policies

The Pastoral Care Policy is an overarching policy from which flow the school's Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Positive Behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Inclusion policies.

### Definition of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care deals with the overall development of pupils – physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually. It requires a caring commitment by all teachers to guide and advise pupils and enable them to take responsibility for their own development. It permeates all aspects of school life and contributes to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in the school for both teachers and pupils.

### Roles and Responsibilities

A vice-principal coordinates pastoral care throughout the school, working closely with the member of Senior Leadership Team responsible for coordinating the Pupil Voice, coordinator of counselling, the special educational needs coordinator and Year Heads. Year heads are responsible for pupils in a specific year group and coordinate the work of the tutors in that group. Each tutor has responsibility for a small number of pupils. The school has a designated Child Protection teacher and two deputies who will take the necessary action in respect to any reported incidents in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

Tutors are at the heart of the pastoral care system and liaise closely with Year Heads, Heads of Department, subject teachers and parents. Parents are encouraged to contact the tutor or year head if they have concerns about their child's welfare or progress in school. Likewise, tutors or year heads will contact parents if they have concerns about the pupils in their care.

### **Tutor Periods and Assemblies**

Each year group is divided into tutor groups of about twenty pupils and each group is placed under the care of a tutor who seeks to build up a detailed knowledge of the needs, emotional development, progress and academic attainment of each pupil in the group.

Tutors meet their groups for fifteen minutes at the beginning of each school day, four times a week for a tutor period and once a week for an Assembly of the year group taken by the Year Head. One of the four Tutor Periods is extended - lasting 45 minutes. The Tutor Period begins with prayer and is used to register pupils, collect absentee notes, relay information and deliver a pastoral care programme which is designed to meet the needs of the particular year group. During Tutor Period the tutor encourages discussion of relevant issues and seeks to promote group identity and close relationships within the group.

### **Counselling**

A Senior Teacher coordinates a counselling service in school. It is provided by a team of qualified and experienced teacher counsellors and a counsellor from Independent Counselling Services for Schools – Familyworks (who is present in school at least one day each week). Counselling is available to pupils at their own or at their parents' request and on the recommendation of Year Heads. When demand is high, pupils will be offered counselling from an Independent Counsellor provided by the school.

### **Links with Outside Agencies**

To support the holistic development of our pupils the Pastoral Team fosters links with various outside agencies. These include: Educational Psychologist, Educational Welfare Officer, CAMHS, Love for Life, Mental Health Support Agencies, School Nurse, Alcohol and Drug Awareness groups and Internet Safety Agencies.

## **Living out our Mission Statement**

The pupils are encouraged to embrace our motto of living life to the full. They are provided with a range of opportunities to live out our Mission Statement and are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community. Such opportunities include: Awareness Campaigns (Trocaire, Catholic Caring and local Cancer Charity ), Spiritual Retreats, Eucharistic Adoration, Liturgies, School Masses, Pope John Paul 11 Award, availing of the school chaplain, leadership roles for sixth form pupils (Prefects, Buddies and Communication Officers for School Council), peer mentoring, assist at homework club and lunch time clubs, assistant invigilators and supervisors for the GL Assessment, guides on Open Day and helping out at whole school events.

## **Monitoring and Review of Policy**

The Board of Governors will keep this policy under review and monitor its implementation.