

# Pastoral Care Policy



St Joseph's Secondary School  
Spanish Point,  
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V95 NW01

[www.stjosephsspanishpoint.com](http://www.stjosephsspanishpoint.com)

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Chairperson:

Principal:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

**Date For Review: December 2028**

## **1.0 : Link to Mission Statement**

St. Joseph's is a Catholic school, based on Gospel Values and in the Mercy tradition under the trusteeship of CEIST. It is characterised by the following: Reverence and Respect, Care and Compassion, Responsibility, Tolerance and Inclusion, Justice and Hospitality. Our mission is to:

- Develop and promote the personal, academic and spiritual potential of each student in a caring and disciplined environment.
- Foster a sense of self-esteem, honesty and respect among all members of the school community.
- Assist students in developing appropriate life skills and social awareness.
- Offer direction and leadership in the educational field in the local community.

We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with parents/guardians, staff, students, patrons and the local community.

## **2.0 : Introduction by the Board of Management**

This policy was devised in consultation with all the teaching staff in our school. It was submitted to the Board of Management, and Parents Association and the Students' Council.

In devising this policy, we have considered the democratic student centered principles of this school. The establishment of a sound learning environment at school and classroom level is critical to effective learning and teaching. The Board of Management will ensure that there is a pastoral care policy in place and that it is implemented.

- Ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Support pastoral care initiatives in the school.

## **3.0 : The Curriculum:**

The school provides a wide curriculum that has breadth, depth and academic rigour. It facilitates and supports the students' search for truth and meaning. It encourages them to strive for excellence in all areas of human growth. It provides a range of learning opportunities including curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that helps students to explore their talents and to achieve their potential. It students for active participation in society and for living fully in all areas of life including the world of work. It encourages them to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and decision-making.

#### **4.0 : Pastoral Care Aims**

The pastoral care aspect of the school community is a whole-school responsibility concerning students, staff and parents. It is a requirement of the 1998 Education Act that schools “promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students”.

- We aim to promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, emotional and academic development of its students.
- It aims to create a community where students are imbued with values of respect, justice and integrity.
- We aim to support students in making informed choices about their lives and follow through on those choices.
- We aim to encourage students to become involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities where possible to ensure that all students reach their true full potential.
- We seek to provide a safe and secure environment to maximise learning.
- We define learning as the academic development and personal growth of the student to their full potential. For such learning and development to occur an effective Pastoral Care structure must exist in the school.

#### **5.0 : Pastoral Roles: Definitions and Responsibilities**

At the centre of our pastoral framework are the pastoral roles, each of which contributes enormously to the pastoral care nature of the school community. While every staff member has a pastoral dimension to his/her role, we recognise that certain people fulfil key roles in this area.

These include the following:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Student Support Team
- Year Heads
- Class Tutors
- Guidance Counsellor
- Additional Educational Needs Co-Ordinators
- School Chaplain
- SNA's

## **5.1 : Staff (General)**

All teachers have responsibility for the pastoral care of students in the school. Through the planned curricular programme. They will amongst other things:

- ✓ Build up students' self-esteem.
- ✓ Encourage students to be assertive where appropriate.
- ✓ Help students to make informed decisions
- ✓ Be responsible for subject-related matters concerning each student.
- ✓ Provide a holistic environment conducive to fostering the full human development of each student.
- ✓ Promote the well-being of all students.

### ***5.1.1: The Role of the Senior Leadership Team:***

- ✓ The Principal and Deputy Principal will work to ensure that our school is primarily a caring community.
- ✓ The Senior Leadership Team is committed to supporting all those involved in the pastoral care programme at St Joseph's.
- ✓ There are regular meetings with Year Heads (SLT members) giving them the opportunity to share information about students in their year year group.
- ✓ The Senior Leadership Team also makes time available to meet with parents, other staff, and students in a supportive atmosphere.
- ✓ On behalf of the Board of Management, the Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral care needs of students are met.

### ***5.1.2: The Principal***

- ✓ Appoints a Student Support Team (from among the teaching staff) and works closely with this group.
- ✓ Keeps the Year-Head informed regarding issues of relevance.
- ✓ Keeps the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance.

### ***5.1.3: Student Support Team***

St Joseph's Secondary School has a Student Support Team in place that deals with students whose need for support might exceed those of other students in the school.

#### **Composition Student Support Team**

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Guidance Counsellor
- Two SET representatives
- Year Head representatives
- School Chaplain
- Religious Education representative
- SNA

## Responsibilities

- ✓ The Student Support Team meets regularly and reviews the needs of all the students who receive extra support in the school.
- ✓ A Star System has been established and will be used by the DLP (the Principal), the DDLP (the Deputy Principal) and Guidance Counsellor to categorise and prioritise students who need help according to the deemed level of risk.
- ✓ The Principal, Deputy Principal and the Guidance Counsellor will be responsible for updating this live document as the need arises.
- ✓ A consensus approach is used for determining which students are included on the list, how they are risk/needs assessed, and, how and when they are removed from the list.
- ✓ The Student Support Team having reviewed the needs of the individual student may decide to link in with the student in school but may also decide to seek extra support outside of the school.
- ✓ Year Heads, Class Tutors and Subject Teachers may raise their concerns regarding students and may refer students to the Student Support Team.
- ✓ Members of the Student Support Team act as link people for different students who have individual needs. They check in with these individuals on a regular basis to monitor their needs and to ensure the appropriate supports are in place.
- ✓ The Student Support Team also reviews best practice, reviews school policies from a pastoral perspective and plans care needs of the students.
- ✓ In the event of a critical incident in the school the Student Support Team links in with the Critical Incident Team with responsibility for managing the school's response to the incident and for managing the pastoral needs of the school community.
- ✓ The Student Support Team has the responsibility for advising on Child Protection issues with the Designated Liaison Person (the Principal) being a member of the team.
- ✓ All staff will have access to this password protected document.

STAR SYSTEM	RISK	LOOKS LIKE	ACTION
★ ★ ★	SEVERE RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ At risk to themselves &amp; others</li> <li>✓ Out of control behaviour</li> <li>✓ Physical or emotional outbursts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do not react</li> <li>✓ Speak calmly</li> <li>✓ Try to diffuse</li> <li>✓ Alert Principal, Deputy Principal or Guidance Counsellor</li> <li>✓ Contact Home</li> <li>✓ Record all actions on TYRO notes section</li> </ul>
★ ★	HIGH RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Physical, emotional, social behaviour changes</li> <li>✓ Stress, high anxiety</li> <li>✓ Panic attacks</li> <li>✓ Impacting others learning</li> <li>✓ Unable to go to class</li> <li>✓ School refusal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Alert Principal, Deputy Principal or Guidance Counsellor</li> <li>✓ Contact Home</li> <li>✓ Record all actions on TYRO notes section</li> </ul>
★	AT RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Behavioural &amp; emotional changes</li> <li>✓ Stressed about class tests</li> <li>✓ Friendship issues</li> <li>✓ Withdrawn</li> <li>✓ Recurring behavioural issues in class</li> <li>✓ Patterns of behaviour (eg) homework not completed</li> <li>✓ Wanting to go home early</li> <li>✓ Avoidance of certain classes or tests</li> <li>✓ Attendance</li> <li>✓ Punctuality</li> <li>✓ Low behaviour issues but recurring</li> <li>✓ One off incidents</li> <li>✓ Family bereavements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Contact Year Head</li> <li>✓ Contact Home</li> <li>✓ Observation</li> <li>✓ Record/ Monitor on TYRO</li> <li>✓ Work with Class Teacher</li> <li>✓ Work with Class Tutor</li> <li>✓ Liaise with Year Head re: behaviour/attendance</li> <li>✓ TLC may be needed</li> <li>✓ Informal chats with Guidance Counsellor</li> </ul>

#### ***5.1.4: Year Heads / Co-Ordinators***

- ✓ Will liaise with the Student Support Team.
- ✓ Will attend regular year head meetings.
- ✓ Will promote positive behaviour and recognise with monthly Positive Behaviour Certs.
- ✓ Will have overall responsibility for the year group.

#### ***5.1.5: Class Tutor***

- ✓ Will take a special interest in his/her tutor class and in the welfare of each of its individual students. For this reason, wherever possible, Class Tutors are assigned on the basis that they have regular contact with the class group.
- ✓ Will have access to relevant information on the students in their class.
- ✓ Likewise, the Class Tutor will share information, as appropriate, with relevant members of the staff.
- ✓ Will work closely with the Year Head in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.
- ✓ Will ensure that each student in the class properly maintains the Student Journal.
- ✓ Will foster a supportive, positive atmosphere in which success and achievements are highlighted and valued. He/she will liaise with class teachers, parents, and Year Heads on a regular basis.

#### ***5.1.6: Subject Teachers***

- ✓ Are familiar with, and are in support of the Pastoral Care Policy.
- ✓ Promote a positive teaching and learning environment within the classroom and report concerns to appropriate persons.
- ✓ Year Heads are available to subject teachers to support them in their work.

#### ***5.1.7: The Role of the Guidance Counsellor in Pastoral Care Provision***

- ✓ The Guidance Counsellor helps students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviour or effect changes in their lives.
- ✓ Counselling is offered on an individual or small group basis. The focus of counselling may be on personal, educational and career issues, individually or in combination.
- ✓ The Guidance Counsellor engages in a two way process of consultation with parents, teachers, school management and referral agencies.
- ✓ The Guidance Counsellor will put behavioural support plans in place if deemed necessary, and have regular follow up meetings with students to review progress.
- ✓ The Guidance Counsellor will record a short summary of the meeting with students referred to them in the TYRO notes function.

The following are the key elements of referral and counselling:

- ✓ School management, teachers and parents may refer students to the Guidance Counsellor. Students may raise a concern for themselves or for others and seek the help of the Guidance Counsellor.
- ✓ The voluntary participation in counselling of the referred student must be respected by all concerned.
- ✓ The Guidance Counsellor may recognise that an individual student needs assistance from other qualified helpers outside of school and organises the provision of such assistance following agreed procedures with the school, parents, and local agencies.
- ✓ Recommendations are made about appropriate agencies. Parents may be encouraged to refer a student to their G.P.
- ✓ The DLP and Guidance Counsellor will make referrals if deemed necessary.
- ✓ Care is taken to involve all interested in the student's welfare and information will be shared as appropriate on a need-to-know basis.
- ✓ Where a referral is made, a detailed referral document is prepared and forwarded to the appropriate agency. The Guidance Counsellor liaises with the individual psychologist/psychiatrist and provides subsequent support for the student.
- ✓ The Guidance Counsellor attends meetings with The Principal/ Deputy Principal, & Student Support Team.

#### ***5.1.8: Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinators***

- ✓ Establish a list of students in need of support hours.
- ✓ In conjunction with the Deputy Principal/ Guidance Counsellor may refer students to the learning support / resource testing.
- ✓ Allocate support hours to students in consultation with learning support teachers, resource teachers or teachers with mentoring hours to complete.

#### ***5.1.9: SPHE Department***

Through the implementation of the SPHE programme, the SPHE Co-ordinator and the SPHE team will provide the students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competencies to learn about themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their physical health, personal lives and social development.



#### ***5.1.10: Learning Support/Resource Teachers***

- ✓ The Learning Support Teachers support students academically as well as socially and personally to facilitate their holistic education. Their work is carried out in small groups and in mainstream classes and also as Team Teachers withers with the subject teacher.
- ✓ Teachers who are not part of the Class Tutor System have 11/22 hours mentoring to complete in the year for students who require extra support.
- ✓ Teachers may identify a student within their own class that requires extra tuition or the Additional Needs Co-Ordinator may allocate.

#### ***5.1.11: School Chaplain***

Will provide care and assistance to students allocated in their care.

#### ***5.1.12: Special Needs Assistants***

The Special Needs Assistants provide care and assistance to students allocated in their care.

#### ***5.1.13: The Students Council***

The Students' Council has a very important role to play in pastoral care.

It endeavours to:

- ✓ provide a support network for the students where they can contribute their ideas on ways to enhance student lives.
- ✓ encourage students to become self-confident, responsible, caring, and independent young people who are prepared to take on the challenge of adult life.
- ✓ liaise with other partners within the school community.

#### ***5.1.14: Parents' Association***

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

- ✓ act in an advisory capacity in promoting the educational and Christian ethos of the school and the general welfare of its students.

## **6.0 : Pastoral Programmes**

There are several programmes with a strong link to the Pastoral Care Programme of the school.

### ***6.1: The SPHE Programme***

Social, Personal and Health Education supports the personal development, health and well-being of students and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships. The aims of this 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 well-being.

All Junior Cycle students receive one period per week of SPHE. Teachers of this subject plan the programme together and all attend relevant inservice training. As of September 2024, all TY students receive one period of SPHE per week. From September 2025, all 5th and 6th year students will receive one period a week of SPHE.

RSE is currently provided through SPHE to Junior Cycle Students and for Senior Cycle students, through Religion.

### ***6.2: First Year Induction Programme***

- To help 1st Years in the transition from Primary to Secondary School.

Initiatives Included but not exhaustive of

- Open Night October prior to commencing First Year
- Parents Evening March prior to commencing First Year
- Community Link with Parish Priest
- Opening Morning/School Tour Week prior to commencing First Year
- Induction days
- Split Lunches
- Cairdeas Programme

#### ***6.2.1 The Cairdeas Mentoring Programme***

A group of 5<sup>th</sup> Year students work with the 1st Year students as part of the school's mentoring programme. Each mentor is allocated a small group of 1st year students (approx. 3/4 pupils) to care for throughout the year. Here at St Joseph's we believe that each 1st year should feel comfortable with their mentor. If any pupil is unhappy in their group, they can easily be changed. The rationale behind the mentoring programme is that 1st year students will have a peer to confide in. In addition we have found that 1st Years enjoy knowing a familiar face in the senior end of the school. The Mentoring Programme forges strong bonds between the 1st Year students and their assigned Mentors. The Mentors carry out a wide range of activities with their groups which build on the students' self-esteem and confidence.

The aims of this programme are:

- To help 1st Years in the transition from Primary to Secondary School.
- To enable them to get to know each other better and extend their range of friendships.
- To provide an additional network of support for First Years.
- To help them settle into school life by discussing any minor difficulties or issues they may be experiencing in school.

### ***6.3: Anti-Bullying Programme/ /Bí Cineálta Week***

The Anti-Bullying Programme reflects the school's total opposition to bullying and its commitment to deal swiftly with any bullying incidents that arise. During the school year there is an Anti-Bullying Week/Bí Cineálta Week.

The aims of this programme are:

- To raise awareness about bullying and related issues among the student body
- To remind students of the policy and procedures for dealing with bullying incidents
- To provide coping strategies for students
- To enhance students' self esteem

St Joseph's adopts an active whole-school approach to bullying. The full range of activities aimed at preventing bullying and the procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying are outlined in the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### ***6.4: Informal Pastoral Care in St Joseph's***

Pastoral Care often happens informally through the countless conversations and interactions between pupils and staff, whether during formal activities or extracurricular events (eg) sports, music and drama. The quality of this care is frequently enhanced by the strength of the relationships between teachers and their pupils.

### **7.0: Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ following consultation with all stakeholders.

### **8.0: Appendix - Sample Induction**



# ST. JOSEPH'S SPANISH POINT 1ST YEAR INDUCTION

## PROGRAMME

### Appendix 1

#### 1. OPEN NIGHT

Students get a taste of school life. Activities set up for student engagement and participation within subjects.

October

#### 2. PARENTS EVENING

Parents are invited to a meet & greet presentation. Parents are set up on Tyro. Opportunity for parents to discuss subject choices etc. Students partake in CAT 4 testing to help identify if additional supports/provisions that are required in Sept

March

#### 3. CAIRDEAS

Cairdeas plays a vital role in helping students to settle into school life in St Joseph's. This mentoring programme has many initiatives running throughout the year. It starts as early as May prior to the students starting

May - May

#### 4. COMMUNITY LINK

The school links in with Fr Donagh who delivers a pastoral care session with 6th class students transitioning from primary to post-primary. Deputy Principal along with Cairdeas members attend Q&A session

May

#### 5. OPEN MORNING

In August, on the week prior to 1st years beginning, students are invited in to collect books, have a tour of the school and enjoy refreshments.

August

#### 6. INDUCTION DAYS

A designated two day induction takes place with planned information and activity sessions. This is geared towards students feeling comfortable in their new environment. This initiative is led by their Year Head, 1st Year Tutors & Cairdeas Mentors

Aug/Sept

#### 7. SPLIT LUNCHES

1st Years have a split lunch to enable students that extra space to settle into school life at St Joseph's.

Sept

#### 8. PASTORAL CARE

St Joseph's Spanish Point Pastoral Care team are acutely aware of the difficulties that exist for many students transitioning from Primary to Post Primary. Active involvement from Year Head and Class Tutors enables rapport to be built up quickly. Check ins happen daily throughout the year

Aug - May