

## **PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

### Introduction

The pastoral Care system in Dominican College exists primarily to enable students to develop their full potential. Its kernel is that it is inextricably linked with the academic, moral and spiritual life of the school. It involves every pupil and every teacher and permeates every class and every school activity.

The key to our pastoral systems lies in a phrase which has inspired Dominican educators over the years, “only in the measure that we elicit the co-operation of our pupils is our work a real success”

Essentially we seek to build up a school community permeated by a spirit of love, trust and forgiveness. This involves fostering good relationships between staff, pupils and parents. It also involves encouraging and acknowledging responsibility and respect not only for self but also for others. Our pastoral care systems aim to build self-esteem and a sense of freedom in each student. We aim to educate our students to be people of integrity and responsibility, whose potential has begun to be realised and who will use their gifts to contribute to a more just society. We recognise that it is only in an atmosphere of positive relationships and mutual respect that effective learning can take place.

The need for effective pastoral care in school is recognised in the challenging climate of growing up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We acknowledge the many difficulties which can face the family unit – marital breakdown, single parent families, social and economic deprivation. We fully accept the right of all students to our care, whatever their background or circumstances.

The school seeks to be aware of the dangers of child abuse in its various guises and to be a stable, supportive and positive influence on the lives of its pupils in an age of changing attitudes to sexual relationships, drug abuse, morality and the sanctity of life. There is a strong emphasis therefore on recognising, developing and celebrating the positive – positive ethos, positive behaviour and positive relationships are all encouraged through this policy.

### **Extract from CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

*"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them..... When adults or organisations make decisions which affect children, they must always think first about what would be best for the child".*

*Extract from United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)*

The welfare of the pupils in our care is paramount. Dominican College's Child Protection Policy, which was ratified by the Board of Governors in September 1998,

is designed to help protect all pupils in our care from harm. When abuse is suspected or when a pupil makes an allegation that he or she is suffering, or has suffered abuse, the school has a statutory obligation, under the Children (N.I.) Order 1995 and in line with the requirements of the Department of Education circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care: Child Protection, to make a referral either to the social services of the local Health and Social Services Trust, or to the Police.

A Designated teacher and Deputy, with responsibility for Child Protection have been appointed and all members of staff have been made fully aware of the necessary procedures to be followed.

**Designated Teacher:** Dr. Cummings

**Deputy Designated Teacher:** Ms Ronan

### **Implementation**

Each pupil in Dominican has a form teacher who has daily contact with the pupil and responsibility for that pupil. The form teachers are supported by the pastoral care co-ordinators and the head of pastoral care. Where necessary, additional support for pupils exists through the NEELB referral and counselling service. In year 8 pupils follow an extensive induction programme which begins with the transfer pupils evening in June, two induction days at the end of August and a taught form period fortnightly throughout year 8. This is designed to establish the ethos, forge positive relationships and develop independent learning skills. Years 13 and 14 also follow an induction programme based on two days at the end of August and continuing into form periods during the first term. All other year groups follow a one day induction programme at the beginning of September to review the work of the previous year and set targets for the coming year.

The implementation of this policy is documented in the following policies and programmes;

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Action against Bullying
- Homework Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Year 8 Pastoral Care Programme
- Education For Love Programme
- Drugs Education Programme
- Induction Programmes
- Record of Achievement

Complementary to the more formal implementation of this policy is the essential range of activities and experiences outside the classroom which promote confidence, self-esteem and responsibility. Some of these include,

- Choir membership
- Education for Mutual Understanding activities such as the seven schools project
- Fund raising for charity
- Prefects
- Year 11 monitors
- School shows and concerts
- School trips
- Sporting activities
- Work experience
- School links, local and European
- Visiting speakers
- Celebration of achievement
- School Magazine

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will, in practice, be constantly reviewed by the Pastoral Care committee and Senior Management team. It is a responsive policy, changing as new demands are placed on the school and the relationships within it.