

# PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL, CLONMEL

## PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Ratified 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

**Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel is committed to offering our students a holistic Catholic Education in a caring environment conducive to learning and development.**

**DATE : 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2006**

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## Pastoral Care Policy of Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel

### **RATIONALE**

A Presentation School is open and welcoming. Remaining true to the founding intention of the first Presentation school, it attempts to bring light where there has been darkness and empower the powerless. It does not discriminate or exclude by its enrolment procedures but accepts all who apply (given its capacity) and has a particular care and concern for the weaker and more disadvantaged student. Entrance examinations are not used as a means of selection. Pastoral care is not an added extra to the school curriculum; it is the energy of concern which gives credibility, direction and meaning to teaching and learning.

In our care for the student as a whole person, we are aware of the danger of treating a person's problem as if it were the schools alone. The school will need at times to call on the expertise and resources of outside agencies, such as psychological services, counsellors, social services, health boards, voluntary organisations, parish communities, liaison officers and Gardai. All these help the school to situate itself in the context of the wider community.

#### **1 Statement of Core Values**

Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel attempts to provide an environment of excellence and care for each member of its school community. We demonstrate our valuing of each person through respect, truth, compassion and challenge. We foster care through the highest standards in our teaching, learning, pastoral structures and programmes.

#### **2 Pastoral Approach in our school**

Presentation Secondary School realises its core aims and goals through a variety of means including pastoral care. Pastoral Care is an approach to education which endeavours to value and develop each member of the school community. We seek to nurture positive relationships as the core resource in developing a pastoral approach. This takes place through access to the relevant pastoral structures and procedures. This policy aims to put in place the framework necessary to underpin and support this approach. The policy will address the following areas:

- ❖ Pastoral role: definitions and responsibilities
- ❖ Pastoral programmes
- ❖ Pastoral procedures
- ❖ Linking with guidance counselling, student counsellor, home-school community co-ordinator, religion teachers, learning support teacher, Social, Personal and Health Education Co-ordinator and Team.
- ❖ Resources and professional development
- ❖ Implementation plan
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluation

### **3. Pastoral roles: Definitions and responsibilities**

We recognise that each of the following roles contributes to the Pastoral Care system in our school: Class Teacher, Class Monitor, Mentor, Year Administrator, Year Head, Religion teachers, Home-school Community Liaison, Student Counsellors, Guidance Counsellors. We also recognise that other key roles in the school carry significant pastoral dimensions and responsibilities – such as the Principal, Deputy Principal, Programme Co-ordinators(LCA, TY & JSCP Teams) Learning Support teacher(s), Class teachers and Special Needs Assistants. In this section the roles of Class Monitor, Mentor and Year Head are explained. It is the policy of this school that in relation to each of these roles:

- ❖ A consultative process will be employed to draw up the role description of Class Teacher, Class Monitor and Year Head.
- ❖ While the staff are at the core of this process, consultations with parents and students will be also held.
- ❖ The role descriptions will be approved by staff and ratified as part of this policy by the Board of Management.
- ❖ As with other policy areas the Board of Management have the right to initiate, contribute, amend and finally approve this policy.
- ❖ The role descriptions will be reviewed at least once per year.

The following considerations will be taken into account in relation to each role:

#### **Class Monitor:**

- ❖ The Monitor, where possible, will teach the class
- ❖ A Monitor Programme will be prepared to assist the monitor with their class.
- ❖ A Monitor has the responsibility to direct students who have concerns to appropriate staff member.
- ❖ Class Monitors will be given opportunities for professional development in their role

#### **Mentor:**

- ❖ A Teacher, who in a voluntary role, assists the Year Head in monitoring a student.

#### **Year Head:**

- ❖ An agreed time for role allocation is assigned to each Year Head – at least the equivalent of four periods a week, including a Pastoral Care Meeting
- ❖ The Year Head is accessible to both students and staff within their time allocation. The Year Head may refer a student to the Student counsellor or Guidance counsellor.
- ❖ The Pastoral Care Team, of which the Year Head is a member, meets once a week.
- ❖ The role for the Year Head is clearly defined in the Code of Behaviour.
- ❖ The Year Head may intercede on behalf of a student with any person in authority within the school.

- ❖ It is the responsibility of the Year Head to co-ordinate referrals with the Pastoral Care Team and to continue to monitor the progress of students through the Pastoral Care System.
- ❖ Year Heads will have access to relevant information on the students in the year group
- ❖ Year Heads are given opportunities for professional development
- ❖ Year Heads will oversee at least one major social/fun event for the year group
- ❖ Year Heads will be facilitated to attend assemblies when required.
- ❖ Year Heads will encourage significant participation of the year group in key ethos days of the school
- ❖ YearHead will also report to staff in relation to the year group and from time to time meet with subject teachers
- ❖ Liaise with Principal/Deputy-Principal/Year Administrators/Co-coordinators/Teachers/Parents according to agreed procedures in respect of the Code of Behaviour/Pastoral Care policy.
- ❖ Liaise with relevant student representatives (Student Leaders, Student Council members) during the school year
- ❖ Have access to appropriate administrative support.

#### **The Pastoral Care Teams**

- ❖ There are two Pastoral Care Teams (Senior and Junior). The Junior Team is facilitated by the Deputy-Principal and the Senior Team by the Principal.
- ❖ The Pastoral Team will be made up usually of Principal, Deputy-Principal, 1st – 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Heads (Junior Team), 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Year Heads (Senior Team), the Guidance Counsellor(s), the Learning Support teacher, the Home-school Community Coordinator, the SPHE Coordinator (Junior Team) and the student counsellor.

**See Appendix 2(orange paper) regarding the roles of the different members of the Pastoral Care Teams.** Other members may be co-opted at any time.

- ❖ The teams will meet at least once a week.
- ❖ They will have responsibility for supporting Class Monitors, Mentors and Year Heads; reviewing students with particular difficulties; advising relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues.
- ❖ A report of the meetings will be placed in inner staffroom at the end of every month.
- ❖ The Senior Management Team will introduce and support a Pastoral Care Programme in the school.
- ❖ The Pastoral Care Team will present an annual report on the pastoral life of the school to the staff and the Board of Management.

#### **4. Social, Personal, Health, Education Programme in the Pastoral care system**

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 of the curriculum, which adheres to the official Department guidelines. SPHE is recognized as a whole school concern and school will ensure that there are opportunities for whole staff consideration of the SPHE programme and with all the school partners, review the effectiveness of the programme. There will be on-going professional development for staff. **(Role of SPHE Coordinator-Appendix 2-Orange Paper).**

##### **Pastoral Care Programme.**

It is the responsibility of the Pastoral care team and the SPHE Co-Coordinator to review their interrelationship in order to provide an integrated approach to Pastoral Care for the school.

A staff sub-committee at Junior and Senior level will be formed from at the start of the year to set-up a pastoral programme for the relevant years.

This school's pastoral programme deals with such areas as: *induction to the school: the ethos of the school; class and year group spirit; study skills and approaches; justice and voluntary projects; school procedures etc.* The programme is reviewed annually in May so that teachers have an opportunity to prepare for the following year in terms of gathering resources and undergoing relevant training.

#### **5. Pastoral procedures**

##### **A Reporting system is outlined in Appendix One (Green Pages) for Teachers/Class Monitors.**

This school has a number of procedures with pastoral implications. In the area of information, we are committed to deal respectfully and sensitively with how information is received, shared, stored and accessed. All information will be filed by the respective Year Head/Administrator in the Year Head/Administrator office. It can only be accessed by the Year Head.

Another area of relevance is the relationship of the school to the parent. Our Home-school policy addresses this area in detail. Our policy commitment in this area is to work constantly work in partnership with parents to achieve the optimum quality of relationship – this will require: respect, listening, patience, willingness to reach consensus, creativity, cooperation and generosity. The Pastoral Team will review this relationship at least once a year, with the particular support of the Home School Community liaison Coordinator.

Dealing with sensitive issues such as sudden death or suicide requires careful consideration. This school's Crisis Management Policy (see Appendix 3) addresses the pertinent issues. In particular the creation of a Critical Incident Team is essential. The

effectiveness of this team will be reviewed once a year and be part of the annual Pastoral Review made to the Board of Management.

## **6. Resources and professional development**

The school is committed to providing the necessary resources to underpin this pastoral policy. In particular we are committed to providing, where possible, tailored professional development programmes for Teachers, Mentors, Class Monitors, Year Heads and all other members of the Pastoral Care Team. All members of the teaching staff are encouraged to identify suitable training programme and staff will be consulted as regards their training needs. There will also be annual opportunities for the full staff to review the effectiveness of the policy.

## **7. Implementation Plan**

The implementation of this policy will be rolling in nature and will need to be reviewed from time to time. Below is given the outline implementation plan for a number of key areas:

- ❖ Professional Development will be arranged for those in key pastoral roles by the end of the school year –
- ❖ Meetings of Class Monitors and their Year Head will be held at the beginning of each school year to outline procedures. This will be followed by a meeting each term.
- ❖ The Pastoral Care Team will present an annual report to the staff and Board of Management in May of each year.
- ❖ Two members of the Pastoral Care Team will meet with the Parents Council at least once a year to take part in a discussion on pastoral care – the date will be set before mid term in the first term.
- ❖ The Students Council will have at least one meeting with two members of the Pastoral Care team each year – the date will be set before mid term in the first term.

## **8. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation**

An 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:

### ***8.1 Monitoring:***

The Pastoral Care Teams will monitor policy implementation. The terms of reference are as follows:

- Prepare a short written report for the Board of Management and staff on the implementation of the policy at key stages – in addition be prepared to give an oral report.
- examine the meeting of specific targets and gather qualitative reactions to the policy during implementation.
- At the reporting stage the Board and in its turn the staff should discuss any reactions, concerns and suggestions that may arise during the course of implementation. A procedure for follow up on reactions to the annual review needs to be established – one form may be that the Pastoral Care Team with school management will set time aside to discuss feedback and propose any adjustments required.

### ***8.2 Evaluation:***

At a specified times during the life of the policy an evaluation of its effectiveness is required. The Pastoral Care Teams are charged with leading the evaluation of the Pastoral Care Policy. The Evaluation process will comprise the following elements:

- 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
- Collating these responses and presenting, following consultations with school management, a report to Board and staff with recommendations for further development of the Pastoral Care policy.
- 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 two years.

**APPENDIX 1**

**GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS FOR REPORTING ON CONCERNS REGARDS**

➤ **GROUP 1:EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

➤ **GROUP 2:BEHAVIOURAL CONCERNS-NON DISCIPLINE**

➤ **GROUP 3:SERIOUS ISSUES**

➤ **GROUP 4: CHILD ABUSE**

**There are four specific groups outlined:**

**GROUP 1:**

Students who have educational needs.

Examples : Dyslexia, Literacy and Numeracy difficulties, Exceptional High-achievers.

Referral to the Learning Support Teacher. (A report sheet is available from the Learning Support teacher.)

**GROUP 2:**

Students for a various number of reasons need monitoring.

Examples are as follows: Absence-continued, withdrawal, anxiety, underachievement, health problems, mood swings, depression, and substance misuse, out of character behaviour.

This will be done by Year Heads and sometimes by volunteer teachers called Mentors.

The following steps may be taken:

Counselling where necessary.

Outside referral where necessary.

**GROUP 3**

Students with serious issues, counselling or referral to outside agencies will be arranged as soon as possible.

Examples are :Self-Harm, Domestic Violence, Drug Addiction.Suicidal

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY A TEACHER IF ONE HAS A CONCERN**

**Regarding Groups 1,2,3**

If a member of staff has a concern about a student, the teacher is asked to report the concern to the Year Head.( A Report sheet will be available for the teacher).

Examples of areas of concern are as follows;

Absence-continued, withdrawal, anxiety, underachievement, health problems, mood swings, depression, substance misuse, out of character behaviour.

Please note that the Year head does not have a discipline function until Stage 5 of the Code of Behaviour but will monitor the student if appropriate.

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY TEACHER IF APPROACHED BY A STUDENT**

**Regarding Groups 1,2,3**

At times, Teachers might have one to one contact meetings with students where the students confide in them. It is important for students to feel listened to and know they can seek help.

However, it is also important that they know staff cannot give them full confidentiality and that teacher must make them aware of the school procedures of dealing with a concern regards a student.

It is necessary to inform the student that you will have to pass the information on to the Year Head/Deputy-Principal/Principal.

## **GROUP 4**

### **Child Abuse:**

Child Abuse can be categorized into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical and sexual abuse.

### **Reporting of Concerns and Action to be taken by school personnel**

If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person (Principal) in our school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person. The need for confidentiality at all times should be borne in mind. The support of the school should continue to be available to the student.

### **All procedures regarding child protection are outlined in the handbook “Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary schools”.**

Chapter 1: Introduction and legal framework.

Chapter 2: Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse.

Chapter 3: Responsibilities of all School Personnel.

Chapter 4: Reporting of Concerns and Role of Health Boards.

Chapter 5: Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse by School Employees.

Chapter 6: Peer Abuse and Bullying.

**Appendix 2**

**The Role of Learning Support Teacher in the Pastoral Care System.**

**The Role of the Student Counsellor in the Pastoral Care System**

**The Role of the Guidance Counsellors in the Pastoral Care System.**

**The Role of the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator in the Pastoral Care System.**

**The Role of the S.P.H.E Co-ordinator in the Pastoral Care System.**

## **Role of Learning Support Teacher in the Pastoral Care System.**

### **1. Diagnostic.**

The Learning Support (LS) teacher organises the assessment of incoming students and identifies students who may need learning support. Further assessments may be necessary, particularly of students with suspected specific learning difficulties or following referrals from subject teachers.

The LS teacher may recommend to the School Principal that a student be assessed by a NEPS psychologist.

### **2. Pastoral.**

The LS teacher is a member of both the Senior and Junior Pastoral Care Teams in the school, attending the weekly meeting of both teams. The LS teacher may liaise with the student counsellors where learning difficulties affect students at risk.

### **3. Staff Support**

The LS teacher is available to advise and furnish staff with information on dealing with students who have learning difficulties. The LS teacher may work in a team teaching situation with individual teachers who request support.

### **4. Special Needs Assistants**

The LS teacher liaises with the School Principal when drawing up timetables for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). The LS teacher supervises the work programmes of students with SNAs and works with the SNA to implement the student's individual education plan (IEP).

## **5. Student Support**

In cases where a number of students present with learning difficulties, the School Principal may timetable a Foundation Level class which will be taught by the LS teacher if this is possible.

The LS teacher will allocate prioritized students for learning support in individual or small group situations and advise the teacher on suitable programmes of work.

The LS teacher may withdraw students on an individual or small group basis for resource teaching or learning support.

The LS teacher may advise students on subject or programme choice in consultation with the school's career guidance counsellors.

The priorities of learning support will always be firstly the acquisition of key skills in the area of literacy and numeracy, and secondly to facilitate the passing of the State Examinations.

## **6. Individual Education Plans**

The LS teacher will collate IEPs from subject teachers to facilitate the student's overall IEP and initiate the annual review of the IEP.

## **8. State Examinations**

The LS teacher processes applications for reasonable accommodations for the Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations.

## **9. Liaison with parents/guardians**

The LS teacher may contact parents/guardians following discussions with the Home School Liaison Teacher and/or the student's Year Head.

## **10. Liaison with other professionals**

The LS teacher may liaise with the Home School Liaison teacher, Visiting Teacher for Hearing Impaired, Visiting Teacher for Visually Impaired, Visiting Teacher for Traveller Education, HSE Occupational Therapist, Community Care Psychologists, NEPS Psychologists, primary teachers in feeder schools and other professionals who may be in a position to offer assistance.

## **Role of the Student Counsellor in the Pastoral Care System.**

### **What is Counselling?**

Counselling is a specialist service offering a safe, confidential environment in which to explore and discuss any personal issues, worries or concerns. A student who attends counselling is usually seen for a class period on a weekly or fortnightly basis with parental consent (under 18). The counsellor undertakes to listen carefully in a non-judgemental manner and will ask clarifying questions.

The aim of counselling is to empower the student to bring about desired positive changes in order to reach her full potential through better self-understanding. The student is encouraged to identify her own strengths and resources so as to resolve her difficulties. At its best counselling is a respectful, encouraging, optimistic and empowering collaboration. Counselling is therefore a creative process of learning during the difficult times in all our lives.

### **Is it really confidential?**

The counselling service is fully confidential except in agreed circumstances dictated by the IACP Code of Ethics which inform and bind the work of recognised counsellors.

## **The Student Counsellor in the Pastoral Care System**

It is envisaged that the student counselling service will ardently seek to support the much valued pastoral care work at Presentation Convent by encouraging students in their efforts to negotiate the challenges of modern living. The general aim of the counselling service will be to contribute positively to students overall wellbeing since good coping mechanisms contribute to good mental health.

The Student Counsellor is a member of the pastoral care team in the school attending meetings and contributing as appropriate. The student counsellor has a key function in the provision of encouraging, respectful counselling support to students. Having regard to confidentiality the counsellor consults with staff /parents where necessary in order to play an effective role within the school and to contribute positively to the school community. The service is offered to students individually or in groups on a withdrawal basis through an agreed referral system.

## **The Role of the Guidance Counsellors in the Pastoral Care System**

### **The guidance counsellors provide a support service for students.**

The guidance counsellors will take referrals from the Principal, Deputy Principal, from teachers or from an individual student.

A guidance counsellor is allocated to a weekly care team meeting and will take referrals from these meetings.

The purpose of a referral is to listen, in a non- judgemental way, to any concerns raised. The Guidance counsellor will assess the situation and may refer to an outside agency or to the school counsellor. The guidance counsellor will provide on going support or undertake counselling where possible. Students and their parents are consulted and take an active part in making decisions about what kind of support they wish to receive.

The guidance counsellor cannot offer absolute confidentiality to students. Information given by students who are considered to be at risk to themselves or others has to be reported to the Principal or Deputy principal.

The guidance counsellors will also liaise with relevant staff members .i.e. (Religion /S.P.H.E. teachers) to encourage positive classroom activities at each year level.

The guidance counsellors will ensure there is continuity of support from Junior to Senior Level.

The guidance counsellors work closely with both the Learning support Teacher and the Home School Liaison Service to ensure that students receive appropriate guidance and support.

There is particular focus within the pastoral care system on students whose families may not have a tradition of participating in education. Information is made available on Access (providing support and entry to third level for students who do not have a tradition of entry), Grants and other supports available for school leavers.

Students identified by Learning Support as having specific Learning difficulties receive support from the Guidance counsellor to identify appropriate career choices.

The guidance counsellors are part of the C.I.S.M.( Critical Incident Strategy Management) group and are available to deal with serious incidents.

## **The Role of the HSCL Co-ordinator**

The HSCL co-ordinator works with parents, teachers and community agencies in order to build a working partnership.

This partnership is achieved through many activities that allow parents, teachers and agency representatives to work together and support each other so that school becomes a place where all young people can reach their potential.

The co-ordinator works in particular with families who do not have a history of participation in education, supporting them to participate fully in all of school life.

### **Home Visitation**

Through home visitation the co-ordinator reaches out to families in order to get to know parents/guardians, give information, listen to their views and concerns and build a rapport. The co-ordinator sets out to visit all first year students' homes and keeps in touch with other families in order to continue the relationship already built by supporting them on a regular basis.

### **Transfer from Primary to Secondary School**

The co-ordinator organises transfer programmes with some of our feeder primary schools. These programmes involve working with the students on practical transfer issues, meeting their parents and their class teachers.

### **Teachers and Pastoral Care Team**

The HSCL co-ordinator liaises with teachers and the pastoral care team in order to keep informed about students and their needs.

As a member of the team the HSCL co-ordinator will attend the meetings and be part of the plan of action decided on for students who are brought to the attention of the team.

This action would involve identifying the student's needs, sharing relevant information, linking with the family through home visits and or local agencies where appropriate.

The HSCL co-ordinator will visit or contact families when requested by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor or Learning Support teacher to help and support parents, to prevent student/school issues building into major difficulties.

The HSCL co-ordinator liaises with teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to support students who are unable to attend school through illness or family circumstances. In some cases the co-ordinator helps the family to apply for Home Tuition from the Department of Education and Science and get in touch with teachers to give this tuition.

### **Courses and Classes**

Courses and classes are organised for parents as a means of learning new skills, meeting other parents, providing educational opportunity and support.

### **Literacy and Numeracy**

The school draws on the help of parents both in school and at home to provide new and fun ways of presenting maths, reading and writing skills to all young people but especially to those with special needs. Help for parents with their children's homework is provided through coordinating the provision of homework clubs and classes for parents.

### **Networking**

The co-ordinator works as a member of a team with the HSCL co-ordinators of local primary and post-primary schools attending weekly meetings, sharing good practice and planning some events together.

Networking with and seeking the help of other agencies for school, parents and young people is undertaken by the HSCL co-ordinator also. The Local Committee examines the issues in the local community that impact on children's education and undertakes practical projects to address these issues.

**Role of the S.P.H.E Co-ordinator in the Pastoral Care System.**

Co-ordinating the SPHE syllabus and resources.

Co-ordinating meetings of the SPHE team.

Drawing up policy documents in consultations with all the partners.

Organising inservice.

Liaising with all school partners and whole school community.

**APPENDIX 3**

**RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

## **AIMS**

**The purpose of a Critical Incident Management Team is to manage any major critical incident which should happen to a member of the school community such as a fatal accident ,a suicide or sudden death.**

**Following an incident the Principal will implement a critical incident management plan.The members of the C.I.T. will include Principal, Deputy-Principal, Student Counsellor, Guidance Counselors ,Year Head (relevant to the particular year affected, Religion Teacher, Home/school Liaison, Course Co-ordinator and NEPS Psychologist.**

**Others members of the school community maybe co-opted to the team at any time,e.g, other members of the Teaching staff,a member of the Board of Management, a member of the Parents Council.**

**All members will receive the appropriate training to deal with an critical incident.**

## Critical Incident Plan (Suicide/Sudden Death)

1. Principal confirms death has occurred and obtains as much factual information as is possible.
2. Principal mobilises Critical Incident Team immediately to implement a management plan.  
Time is given to discuss plan:  
Prepare statements for release to staff/students/parents/media  
Identify contact person to offer support to the bereaved family (Principal and one staff initially)  
Identify a contact person (and one back up ) to interact with the media on behalf of the school. All media contact is via this designated person  
Identify person to collect any personal belongings of the deceased and store them safely  
Identify a contact person to link with the students' parents. Plan a response to requests for information.
3. Additional personnel /staff may be called to assist with the incident.
4. Arrange staff meeting for information and support. Possibly use two sessions and include non teaching staff.
5. Identify support for students –place for distressed students to go, times procedures involved. Principal/Class teacher inform close friends and related students privately. Two staff (principal /class teacher) inform the class of the deceased. Provide necessary support for classmates from within the school or outside agencies as appropriate. Use South Tipperary contacts list. Inform other classes via teachers-possibly using a written statement.
6. Arrange support for staff perhaps an outside mental health consultant.
7. Notify Board of Management.
8. Liaise with other agencies for support
  
9. Principal and other staff member visit bereaved family at home.
10. Inform parents/guardians of the death if they have not been already informed.
11. Be aware of vulnerable students e.g. close friends ,relatives students with a history of self harm ,people bereaved by suicide and advise staff to refer for support.
12. arrange for a school mass/prayer service at a suitable time.
- 13 Avoid holding large school assemblies and public announcements about suicide.
14. Write and post condolence letter to deceased students' family
15. Maintain frequent contact between Critical Incident Team and staff during the day to discuss issues and responses.
16. Decide on arrangements for the participation of students in church services and family wishes in this matter
- 17 Allow some means to express grief such as letter writing, donations to organisations or whatever students may wish where appropriate.

**18.** Assemble school staff at the end of the day to review events of the day, identify vulnerable students, plan for funeral in consultation with the bereaved parents and for the following day at school.

**19** Follow up students not in school.

**20.** Limit times of counselling /support sessions.

**21.** Restore school to regular routine as soon as practicable while continuing to inform and support staff, students and parents,

**22.** Regular staff contact over the following days and weeks is necessary to assess how things are going with staff and students. Be aware of and accommodate students experiencing difficulties.

**23.** Critical incident team review how the school responded to the suicide at a suitable time following the suicide /sudden death- six months /one year. Identify what worked well in the response and identify gaps in the school response.

**Long term effects and follow up:** The aftermath of a suicide can be one of the most stressful and painful events a school will ever experience. The intense phase of the incident may last only a few days or weeks, but some effects are ongoing for a year or more. Be aware of how special events, the inquest and the anniversary of the suicide may reawaken distress.

**Memorials :** Schools will need to provide guidelines within a policy that takes commemorative activities into account.

## **Action Plan on Bereavement**

### **ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A STUDENT**

The Principal will gather as much as correct information as possible.  
Inform the Critical Incident Team, which may include some of the following, Year Head, co-ordinator, monitor, chaplain, religion teacher, counsellor.

The school chaplain(if available), the counsellor and other support teachers will be available to individuals or small groups of students.

During the day the Prayer room will be available as a quiet space for either students or teachers.

### **DAY ONE**

#### **9.00 AM**

Give as much information as possible to all members of staff. Call all classes together as units groups. Monitors to take first class. Other members of staff to fill in for absent monitors. Monitor to inform class of what has occurred as calmly as possible. Following announcement, class will be invited to pray for the deceased student, her family friends. Monitors are asked to watch for students who are particularly upset or may be related to the deceased.

#### **9.40 AM**

With the exception of the year group of the deceased student, all other classes will continue as per timetable. At the beginning of class, teachers are invited to acknowledge the situation, say a prayer and go on as appropriate.

Monitors will stay with unit classes of the concerned year group.

Tea/Coffee will be available in the Assembly Hall for the year group from 9.45 am.

Through the class prefect students will be invited to offer practical help, should they wish. e.g.. Food preparation, choir(select and prepare appropriate songs for a liturgy),prayers of the faithful.

#### **11.15 AM**

Class as per timetable for all students.

#### **12.00-1.00PM**

School Prayer Service for the Whole School Community.

### **Afternoon**

Organise for removal of remains in accordance with families wishes.

### **REMOVAL OF REMAINS**

School will act on families wishes. Guard of honour at church-students in full uniform. Invite Year Group to form Guard of Honour. Monitors and Year Head to co-ordinate with interested students. Country Funeral-arrange appropriate transport (YH).be aware of local facilities-size of group attending removal and funeral may need to be curtailed-Assembly point for transport-School.

### **FUNERAL MASS**

School will work in consultation with family and celebrant.

Music teacher(s) to organise choir practice. Hymns and music chosen in consultation with family and celebrant.

Prayers of the faithful –religion Teachers consulting with celebrant in drawing up the prayers.

Offertory procession-religion teachers in consultation with celebrant.

Guard of honour-monitors and year head to organise same.

### **TOWN FUNERAL**

Guard of honour to continue walking with hearse to the end of Parnell st or other appropriate point.

### **SCHOOL CLOSURE**

School will be closed on the day of the funeral of a member of staff or a student

### **DEATH OF A CLOSE RELATIVE OF A STUDENT**

#### **DAY 1 (ON HEARING OF THE DEATH)**

(A) Notice in staff room.

(B) Inform Year Head, Monitor, Chaplin.

(C) Inform class group (Monitor),Year group (Year Head/Deputy-Principal or Principal).

(D) Announcement to school (Intercom mid-class) with appropriate prayer/reflection.

\*Suitable prayers/reflection available from Religion Teachers.

(E) Visit to home e.g. (Monitor, Co-Ordinator, Year Head/Deputy-Principal, Principal).Maximum of two staff members.

(f) Flowers or donation and Mass Card from Year Group.

## **DAY OF FUNERAL**

Students may attend funeral with usual permission from parents. Students must show note to teacher as they leave the classroom and follow the signing out procedures.

Country Funeral-arrangements may be made to take a group of students to the funeral.