

# **Pastoral Care Policy of Catholic University School**

## **Mission Statement**

### **Marists in Education**

The role of CUS as a Catholic educational community is particularly important at this time of increasing secularisation and individualism. Fr. Colin, the founder of the Society of Mary, described the work of education as a formation of heart, mind, character and virtue. In general the philosophy of the school addresses the challenge of forming our pupils into gentlemen who display courtesy and sensitivity to all and who can act with integrity and a sense of responsibility.

CUS has always been known for the kindness and humanity with which it treats the pupils and for the high value it places on the quality of relationships. As educators, we in CUS recognize our responsibility to develop the full potential of the boys, something that will be different for each and every one of them and to foster excellence in everything we do and everything we ask of the boys.

Our responsibility is to engage the whole person and to remember that the overall objective is for the boys of CUS to become rounded, responsible adults who can make their own way in the world. In this regard we are also conscious that the school is more than an academic institution.

CUS as a school endeavours to endow the boys with an awareness of how fortunate they are. It strives to evoke in them a gratitude for what they have received that will in turn impel them to be generous towards those in society who have been less fortunate. Our aim is to educate them to recognize and accept their responsibility in playing their part to create a more just and Christian society.

### **Aims of Catholic University School**

In the context of an increasingly fragmenting secularising and individualising society and culture, the school aims:

- to provide a Catholic education that runs counter to the prevailing culture, while remaining faithful to its Marist and Catholic traditions
- to place the pupils at the centre of all that we say and do
- to be faithful to the *raison d'être* of the school, that is to be a Catholic educational community
- to inform our pupils with courtesy, sensitivity, modesty and a sense of responsibility and we aim to do this by treating them in that manner
- to evoke in our pupils those virtues and to develop each of them to their different but full potential
- that the students become rounded responsible adults when they leave CUS
- to create a school that is rounded and responsible in all of its actions and interactions so that this is evoked in the pupils and in providing this environment we aim ultimately to evoke in them a gratitude for what they have received so that that they too will become Marist educators and formators in their lives ahead.

### **Pastoral Care in CUS**

*We understand Pastoral Care as the enactment of our valuing of the minding of the children entrusted to us that prioritises the cultivating of empathy as the best means of creating*

*mutual respect and of the valuing of each individual in the school. This minding permeates all dimensions of the school and all aspects of the pupil's education.*

This policy will address the following areas:

- The roles, procedures and the interrelatedness of those roles involved in the pastoral care of pupils
- The various structures and meetings in the course of a year that are organised to ensure the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of pastoral care.

### **Pastoral roles: definitions and responsibilities**

We believe that every member of staff has a responsibility to ensure that their highest value as an educator, as part of this educational community, is to mind the children in our care and each person in their respective roles, Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, administrative staff, Special Needs Co-Ordinator and teachers, be it in their various roles as Deans, class heads or primarily as subject teachers, all have a responsibility to care for the pupils.

#### **The Class Head:**

- The class head is the primary structure used in CUS for liaising with pupils and with parents in regard to their pupils. We refer you to the policy document defining the role of the class head. This policy is reviewed on an on-going basis. Class heads meet once a term as a group or, as necessary, meet in their particular year groups. The Principal and/or Deputy Principal attend all such meetings.

#### **The Teaching Staff:**

- In the roles that various members of the teaching staff have, we see no distinction between care and discipline. We consider that the application of the Code of Conduct and the ensuring that pupils internalise appropriate boundaries and discipline is an aspect of care. The class heads in their roles are responsible for the monitoring of the minding of pupils in all aspects.

#### **Principal & Deputy Principal:**

- The enactment of this, in the interactions with pupils, staff and parents happens on a daily basis and in order to ensure this happens it is the practice of the school that the Principal or Deputy Principal attend meetings with parents with the class head.

#### **MEA / Ethos Team:**

- The relationships in CUS are shaped and informed by the Marist Ethos of the school and the pastoral care of pupils has its particular character arising out of this. Regular in-services are arranged by the Marist Education Authority to cultivate an understanding of the Marist Ethos and to envisage how it is to be enacted in the school. An Ethos team within the school is responsible at a local level for the cultivation of that ethos in explicit ways in the school.

The MEA has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Marist ethos is embodied in the pastoral care of the school and to that end has conducted an evaluation of same in 2011.

## **Pastoral Programme and Procedures**

### **(a) Induction to the school and its ethos**

- Teachers are the critical personnel in the implementation of the pastoral care ethos in the school on a daily basis. To that end on initially coming to the school all teachers receive induction into the policies and practices of the school by the Principal and Deputy Principal and senior staff. They are also met on a regular basis in the course of their initial years to monitor and support their development in this regard.
- In-coming parents and pupils are inducted initially at Open Days when the particular approach of the school is laid out before them in some detail. They are then interviewed in order to tease out the fit between their approach as parents and the schools approach to ensure that these are coordinated initially. On acceptance a meeting is then arranged with all parents as a group to further outline the approach of the school and a number of days are arranged for pupils to ensure that they form initial friendships prior to coming to the school.
- On first coming the pupils are met by the Deputy Principal in their class groups and the school's expectation in terms of their behaviour towards each other is outlined to them. The ways and means of expressing any concerns they have are also brought to their attention. They are then met at regular intervals met as a group in what we call 'circle time', an innovative and sophisticated approach to developing their empathy towards each other and their ability to converse with each other about their inter-relationships.
- The school's Anti Bullying Policy is explained to all pupils and parents and is regularly reviewed.
- A meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> year parents takes place after several months in the school to review their experience of the school and to evaluate whether or not what was outlined on the Open Day is being delivered and to take account of any concerns parents may have.

### **(b) Pastoral Care and Academic Provision**

Central to our approach to pastoral care is our communication with the parents about their child's progress.

- This is done primarily through a monthly reporting system, a unique tool that is available in Marist schools.
- We also provide two parent/teacher meetings for each group in the course of the year and there are regular meetings with parents of any pupil, either about whom the school or the parents may have a concern.
- In preparation for such meetings it is our practice to obtain a progress report from all teachers and this may be done verbally or in writing.

Where necessary on meeting parents, pupils and parents may be referred for a further intervention, be it a psychological education assessment, therapy or another intervention. It is our opinion that everything that happens to the child both inside and outside the school has an effect on their development within the school and we consider that it is in our interest and that it is our responsibility to concern ourselves with all aspects of the child's development. It is therefore our practice to feedback information to parents about any aspect of the child's development or behaviour that comes to our attention.

### **(c) SPHE**

Social Personal and Health Education is timetabled for all pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> year and is conducted as part of the religious education programme in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year. A range of teachers from different subject areas are timetabled for this and all are provided with training in this area.

### **Resources and Professional Development**

At present the school has two career guidance counsellors, a special needs co-ordinator, a Chaplain and a range of links with counselling centres, occupational therapists, educational psychologists and other professionals of whom it avails in assisting us in the pastoral care of pupils. The school also avails of in-service provision where appropriate in regard to the above areas.

### **Child Protection**

The school places the highest value on the minding of children in our care. With that in mind, it has a Child Protection Policy. The Principal is the designated liaison person and a senior member of staff is the deputy designated liaison person in this area.

### **Sport**

Sport is regarded as an integral and essential part of the development of pupils and the same values that inform the academic and disciplinary sides of the school inform the sport. CUS regards sports as part of the education of pupils and employs trained staff in every area to develop excellence. However, it also ensures that teaching staff and senior management are involved in those sports so that the ethos of the school is enacted in how that coaching takes place, in what is expected of pupils and how they engage with others.

### **Matters to be Addressed:**

The following policies require development in the school.

- A Crisis Response Policy, and an SPHE policy. A regular review of all other policies that feed into and support pastoral care needs to take place.
- The development of the work of the ethos committee and the identification and inclusion of parents who have through many years of experience of their children being in the school internalised and developed an appreciation of the ethos of the school needs to occur.
- The role of the Students Council in supporting and developing the pastoral care of pupils also needs further development.
- This pastoral care policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal, Deputy Principal and the present members of the committee who drew up the draft of the policy.