



Sacred Heart School
Petone

Pastoral Care Handbook

Definition of Pastoral Care

In defining pastoral care we have chosen to use the definition developed by Kevin Treston, a prominent writer in the field.

Pastoral care is the integration of the academic, social and religious dimensions of a school's energy so that an atmosphere of care prevails within the school community. Each person of the school community- administrators, parents, students and teachers, cleaners, is invited to become more fully human. Pastoral care is developing empathetic relationships so that the people in the school community are nurtured into wholesome maturity. Pastoral Care is an expression of the philosophy and vision of the school

(Pastoral Care for Schools, P5)

Theology of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care in a Catholic school is based upon the conviction that we are loved by God and that we are called to love one another – “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Jesus, in his relationship with God and the people he met in his ministry, gives us the inspiration and energy to establish a school community in which all members may feel loved and empowered to realise their potential – “ I have come that you may have life and have it to the fullest” (John 10:10).

Jesus, as he is portrayed in the Gospels, exemplifies many images of pastoral care such as liberator, healer, reconciler, compassionate person, teacher of wisdom and most especially as good shepherd. It is this image of the shepherd which provides the name “pastoral care”.

Several main themes of pastoral care can be drawn from the image of the good shepherd. Pastoral care is about non-competitive relationships between people who are valued for themselves rather than just for what they are able to produce. As a result it is empowering and transforming for all. Pastoral care is compassionate and merciful especially towards those in difficulty. It involves imagination and risk-taking to leave the ninety-nine and search for the one who has strayed. Pastoral care assumes hope for the future and involves constant reflection and evaluation.

Pastoral Care of Students

- The teaching of social and co-operative skills will be included in delivery of the curriculum at Sacred Heart School. There will also be an emphasis on the informal teaching of these skills in the playground, at sports and other activities outside of the classroom.
- Good systems of playground supervision will be maintained. We believe well monitored playgrounds are an essential element of the Pastoral Care of students.
- We are committed to providing a wide range of recreational activities for children at play and lunch times.
- We believe that the availability of teachers for informal contact with children is important in creating an atmosphere for continuous pastoral care. We believe that teachers being in classrooms from 8.30am is an essential element of this availability.
- Children should be given regular opportunities to confidentially report on such pastoral care matters as bullying, harassment and other concerns.
- The staff will continue to monitor individual students with pastoral care concerns on a regular basis and communicate this to other staff members at weekly briefing meetings.
- Sacred Heart has a well-developed system for checking on the attendance of children. We see this as an essential element of Pastoral Care and we are committed to maintaining this service.
- Students transferring from other schools can sometimes be vulnerable in a new environment. Staff will closely monitor these students and will seek to communicate closely with the student's parents/caregivers.
- All behaviour management plans will be underpinned by our RISE values and all children will be treated with equity, dignity and respect.

Pastoral Care of Families

- All types of family structures are valued at Sacred Heart. The school in its communications and curriculum delivery will be sensitive to the many types of family structures our students come from.
- The school is often the first agency a family will approach in times of stress. In such instances the most effective role for the school may be to direct the family to the appropriate support agency. It is therefore important that the school maintains close relationships with family support agencies.
- Sacred Heart School has a history of high levels of family involvement in the school. The school is committed to maintaining and further developing this involvement.
- The school will continue to maintain a sensitive approach to collection of money for school activities. This will include publicising regularly that the Principal is available to discuss any financial concerns parents may have in relation to school finances.
- Sacred Heart School expects all members of the school community to treat one another with respect.

Pastoral Care of Staff

- Staff are both recipients and administrators of pastoral care.
- Pastoral Care programmes at Sacred Heart will include all teaching and support staff.
- Sacred Heart School Board of Trustees is committed to being a good employer.

The BOT is committed to:

1. Being mindful of the health and safety of staff
 2. Having realistic expectations regarding demands on staff members' time
 3. Treating staff members with equity
 4. Maintaining a good physical environment for staff
- It is acknowledged that all staff require affirmation for the work they do at Sacred Heart
 - Problems and communication difficulties between staff need to be dealt with in a prompt and responsible manner.

- Pastoral Care programmes will be included in Professional Development for all staff

Support Agencies

Sacred Heart School has a professional relationship with the following agencies in the support of Pastoral Care of our students, families and staff.

- Sacred Heart Parish (Lay Pastoral Leader, Priests, Pastoral Area team and Parish Staff)
- Resource Teacher's Learning and Behaviour (RTLB)
- Group Special Education (GSE)
- Catholic Social Services
- Petone Community Constable, Police Youth Aid
- Children Young Person's and their Families (CYFS)
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Catholic Ethnic Chaplaincies
- Challenge 2000
- Archdiocesan Family Life Office
- Open Home Foundation
- Child and Adolescent Service
- Petone Medical Centre
- District Truancy Service
- Public Health Nurse
- Refugee and Migrant Service
- Guidance Counsellors at the secondary schools Sacred Heart contributes to.
- St Vincent de Paul

Links to other School Documents

Policies & Procedures

- Special Character Policy
- Safe School Policy (Bullying)
- Behaviour Management Procedures and Programme
- Charter and Strategic Plan

Teacher Organisation Folder

- Student absence
- Duty and Playground Supervision
- Confidentiality
- Notes to file
- Dealing with concerns
- Behaviour Management

Implementation of Sacred Heart Pastoral Care Programme

1. Publicise Pastoral Care agencies among our Staff and Community.
2. Publicise Pastoral Care handbook in prospectus and on Website
3. Send a copy of the handbook home to each family
4. Review the Pastoral Care programmes in the school on a triennial basis.