

# *Coláiste Toghnaí*



## DRAFT PASTORAL CARE POLICY

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## 1. Statement of Core Values

The vision of Coláiste Iognáid for its graduates is given practical expression in its mission statement and requires a coherent, structured pastoral approach if it is to become a reality.

*“We seek to foster each pupil’s unique talents and qualities as people of competence, confidence, conscience and compassion.”* (Mission Statement).

Coláiste Iognáid, as part of the network of Jesuit schools worldwide, is animated by the **Characteristics of Jesuit Education**. These characteristics prioritise the following;

- *‘the total, holistic formation of each individual’*
- *‘a religious dimension that permeates the entire education.’*
- *‘dialogue between faith and culture.’*
- *‘individual care and concern for each person.’*
- *‘a realistic knowledge, love and acceptance of self ...and of the world in which we live.’*
- *‘Christ as the model of human life.’ and ‘faith that does justice.’*
- *‘adequate pastoral care’ and the celebration of ‘...faith in personal and community prayer, worship and service.’*
- *‘education as an ‘apostolic instrument...preparing students for active participation in the church and local community, for the service of others.’*

## 2. Pastoral Approach in Coláiste Iognáid

A pastoral framework of education and discipline is necessary if schools are to carry out the functions outlined in the 1998 Education Act (Section 9). Due weight must be given to the many influences and pressures that affect the lives of students if they are to be cared for properly and are to achieve their best in their educational endeavours. With all the pressures, we must not lose sight of the fact that, in essence, the school is about life-enhancement; developing the potential of all the individuals through a spectrum of educational experiences which affect pupils’ spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical development. A sensitive pastoral structure is required to meet the complex needs of adolescents in this period of profound economic, social, cultural and religious change.

School Pastoral Care implies caring for the quality of relationships between all the various ‘partners’ in the school community. It involves the engagement of all the school policies, processes and programmes in the development of the appropriate systemic structures, roles and resources to support the development of the emerging adult (Monahan, 1996, p. 5). For Christians this pastoral<sup>1</sup> care is centered on Christ, present in the Christian community. Students encounter the person of Christ as friend and guide; they come to know him through Scripture, sacraments, personal and communal prayer, in play and work, in other persons; they are led to the service of

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘pastoral’ is rooted in biblical imagery where the metaphor of Christ as the Good Shepherd (Jn 10: 1-2, Luke 15: 1-8) draws on the Old Testament image of God as the pastor for his flock (Isaiah 49:11, Ezek 34:16).

others in imitation of Christ the “person for others”<sup>2</sup>.

*Cura Personalis*<sup>3</sup>, personalised care and concern, lies at the core of the mission of Coláiste Iognáid and, according to O’ Connor<sup>4</sup> is taken to mean that every teacher is deeply involved in developing the intellectual, social and spiritual growth of each student. However, the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education*<sup>5</sup> goes further in stating that *cura personalis* “is not limited to the relationship between teacher and student; it affects the curriculum and the entire life of the institution.” The core values of Coláiste Iognáid outlined in the mission statement permeate its structures and policies and the entire school community realises its responsibility in ensuring that these pastoral values are upheld in the daily life of the school.

Pastoral care is a dimension of *Cura Personalis* that enables the seeds of religious faith and religious commitment to grow in each individual by enabling each one to recognize and respond to the message of divine love: seeing God at work in his or her life, in the lives of others, and in all of creation; then responding to this discovery through a commitment to service within the community. A Jesuit school makes adequate pastoral care available to all members of the educational community in order to awaken and strengthen this personal faith commitment<sup>6</sup>. Drawing on the work of Diego Ledesma, one of the first Jesuit educational theorists in the sixteenth century, Padberg<sup>7</sup> outlines the following goals for Jesuit education:

1. Jesuit schools want to educate men and women for productive and satisfying careers and the personal freedom that comes with such careers;
2. for social and political responsibility which are impossible without justice; for the learning in the humanities and sciences that helps to develop the fully human person;
3. and, finally, for a particular perspective on the ultimate nature and destiny of the human person, for a destiny that goes beyond simply the human. For Jesuits this destiny, beyond simply the human, is unabashedly the destiny to be known and loved by, and in turn to know and love, God.

In striving for excellence in Coláiste Iognáid, we aim to create an environment of care for each member of the school community. We understand Pastoral Care ***‘as an approach to education which endeavours to value and develop each member of the school community.’***<sup>8</sup> It is within this context that our Pastoral Care approach is shaped and implemented. Each member of the school community has a significant role to play in creating and protecting the pastoral ethos of the school and as an individual has access to the pastoral structures and procedures in place. We strive to place mutual respect, understanding and care of the individual at the heart of all that we do in the Jes, as the strength of relationships within the school community is the

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<sup>2</sup> Characteristics of Jesuit Education, 1987, no. 63.

<sup>3</sup> The Latin phrase, *cura personalis*, captures the Jesuit principle which emphasizes the formation of the unique person in his or her entirety. It involves seeing each person as someone who is personally known, called and loved by God. It entails a deep, attentive listening to the presence and action of God in the person’s character, relationships, actions, and life history.

<sup>4</sup> O’Connor, J. (1999) *A Taste of Jesuit Education*. Dublin: Jesuit Education Office, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> Characteristics of Jesuit Education, 1987, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Characteristics of Jesuit Education, 1987, no. 62.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in: John J. Callahan, S.J., *Jesuits and Jesuit Education*, p.4;

[http://academic.regis.edu/tleining/pdfs/Jesuit\\_Education.pdf](http://academic.regis.edu/tleining/pdfs/Jesuit_Education.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Luke Monahan, *The Year Head*, 1998, IAPCE.

core resource that supports our pastoral approach. This policy aims to outline the framework upon which our pastoral approach is built.

### **3. Pastoral Roles; Definitions and Responsibilities**

The pastoral framework within Coláiste Iognáid is centred on the key pastoral roles within the college. These roles include subject teacher, Class Tutor, Chaplain, Year Head, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor and Pastoral Care Team. In addition, other key roles within the college carry significant pastoral dimensions and responsibilities such as Principal, Deputy Principal, Learning Support staff, Special Educational Needs personnel, and secretarial staff.

#### **3.1 Pastoral Care Coordinator**

##### **3.1.1 Role Purpose:**

The Headmaster delegates to the Pastoral Care Coordinator responsibility for the day-to-day Pastoral Care of the College community. The role of the Pastoral Care Coordinator is one of an animator, someone who will enthuse, support and manage the work of all those involved in Pastoral Care in the College. The Pastoral Care Coordinator must be somebody who is passionate, organised and supportive, and whose leadership will empower those involved in Pastoral Care to be creative and dynamic.

##### **3.1.2 Role Responsibility:**

As the educational and administrative leaders of the College the Principal and Deputy Principal are responsible to the Board of Management (BOM). The Pastoral Care Coordinator works closely with them in the development of Pastoral Care and Religious Education in the College. The Pastoral Care Coordinator is a key leader on the School Pastoral Team and acts as the link between the Jesuit Order and the teaching staff of the college. This is done with the full support of the BOM and the Jesuit Rector.

The Pastoral Care Coordinator<sup>9</sup> will have responsibility for coordinating and supporting the work of the following areas:

- Religious Education Department
- SPHE Department
- Chaplaincy
- Retreats
- Liturgy
- Parents' Programme
- Staff Induction Programme
- Ignatian Identity Group (IIG)
- Province Links (Pastoral Care Meetings/ Initiatives)

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<sup>9</sup> The Job Description for the Pastoral Care Coordinator is outlined in a separate document.

The Pastoral Care Coordinator is awarded a time allowance and a certain job flexibility consistent with the importance of this role within a Jesuit school. The appointment of the Pastoral Care Coordinator is for a fixed term of three years and is reviewed at the end of each academic year with the Principal, particularly in regard to time allocation, administrative demands and agreed targets for the following year. The Pastoral Care Coordinator will have the use of an office sufficiently large to convene meetings in the new building.

The Pastoral Care Coordinator will meet regularly with school management (Principal and Deputy Principal) to update them on progress with initiatives, ongoing programmes and issues that need to be addressed. Three working days in advance of the meeting the Pastoral Care Coordinator will provide a written summary of issues to be discussed and decisions that need to be made which should include alternatives and likely consequences. The Pastoral Care Coordinator will make a full report to the Board of Management annually.

The post of Pastoral Care Coordinator will be reviewed annually (normally in March).

### **3.1.3 Role Accountability**

#### **3.1.3.1 As a Spiritual leader the Pastoral Care Coordinator will assist the Principal and Deputy Principal to:**

- Promote, develop and protect the Ignatian vision, ethos and educational tradition in every aspect of College life
- Ensure the provision of quality Religious Education programmes for students
- Give priority to faith formation and its expression in prayer and liturgy
- Ensure that the College's liturgical life clearly demonstrates its Catholic character through well prepared liturgies that reflect the school community's shared participation in Christ's mission in today's world
- Develop and maintain the College's capacity and willingness to respond to those in need
- Support the work of those involved in developing and leading effective social justice programmes which enable students to serve people in need thoughtfully and reflectively within a religious context. This reflection, which will always include a liturgical aspect, will be grounded firmly in Ignatian Spirituality
- Liaise with the Jesuit Centre of Spirituality in Galway to integrate this expertise in school programmes & retreats
- Promote a sense of collaboration with and belonging to both the local and international Church
- Liaise with the Jesuit Education Delegate to develop and promote programmes in collaboration with other Jesuit colleges in Ireland and abroad
- Promote the development of iconography in the college that nurtures the student's appreciation of their heritage as Catholic, Christian young men attending a Jesuit College

**3.1.3.2. As the delegated Religious Education leader the Pastoral Care Coordinator will:**

- Ensure that the activities of all those involved in Religious Education, SPHE and Pastoral Care support the Ignatian character of the school in policy and in practice
- Provide ongoing curriculum development in Religious Education, SPHE and Pastoral Care to ensure that the programmes and curriculum are formative, stimulating and thought provoking
- Develop a model of self-review for the ongoing evaluation of all learning programmes related to Religious Education, SPHE and Pastoral Care. This should include student input as part of Assessment for Learning
- Provide for professional development and support of all Religious Education staff and chaplains

**3.1.3.3. As the delegated Administrative Leader the Pastoral Care Coordinator will:**

- Develop, implement and monitor the Pastoral Care Policy which outlines the best possible procedures and practices for student care, development and management in the College
- Develop, implement and monitor a Religious Education Policy that is consistent with the Ignatian ethos
- Develop, implement and monitor a SPHE Policy, which includes RSE, that is consistent with the Ignatian ethos
- Work in collaboration with the Finance Administrator to ensure that the physical resources for teaching and learning in Religious Education are developed and maintained to the highest possible standard at all times
- Manage the pastoral care budget to ensure the most effective deployment of financial resources in securing the best provision of facilities for retreats, prayer, and chaplaincy
- Develop, implement and monitor a Chaplaincy Policy that is consistent with the Ignatian ethos
- Implement appropriate processes for the careful selection, induction, training, appraisal and development of Chaplaincy staff in consultation with the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Headmaster
- Ensure appropriate delegation of tasks, duties and responsibilities within the R.E. team and chaplains
- Coordinate the Induction Programme for newly appointed staff
- Liaise with the Parents' Association to ensure the provision of a Parents' Programme that supports and challenges the parent body as the primary educators
- Ensure effective support procedures are in place in the event of a critical incident (See Critical Incident Policy)
- Contribute to Jesuit Identity by leading in implementation of policies and initiatives.
- Establish and maintain effective procedures for:
  - ⇒ The day-to-day operation of the R.E. and Pastoral Care Policy, in conjunction with the Deputy Principal and Year Heads.

- ⇒ Communication of school expectations and procedures, particularly in relation to Assessment, Recording and Reporting in Religious Education
- ⇒ Convening regular (once per half term) meetings with Religious Education teachers and the Chaplain to develop policies and fine tune their implementation
- ⇒ Liaison with the Ignatian Identity Group and their programmes
- ⇒ Liaison with other Jesuit works in the development and maintenance of social justice initiatives e.g. Slí Eile & JRS
- ⇒ Health and safety of College staff and students on all R.E. programmes remains a top priority
- ⇒ Liaison with colleagues involved with social justice co-curricular programmes & Rector to ensure there are opportunities for reflection on these experiences as part of the faith development programme.
- ⇒ The integration of the roles of chaplain, Tutor and Year Head by having clear procedures for referral and a system that is clear to all concerned ( as outlined in the Pastoral Care Policy)
- ⇒ Ensuring a consistent approach between Careers, S.E.N. Class Tutors and other staff directly involved in Pastoral Care.
- ⇒ Communicating the programme of activities to the school as a whole, including the parent body. This includes promoting material for the website, notices, Newsletter and regular notices
- ⇒ Devising self review criteria and procedures, drawn from material available for subject inspection, the Jesuit Education Delegate and guidelines from the Diocese and abroad which relate to the inspection of Catholic Schools

### **3.1.4 Pastoral Care Team**

The Pastoral Care Coordinator will establish a steering group or Pastoral Care Team (PCT). The Pastoral Care Coordinator leads the team in agreeing procedures, deciding the policy and managing the Pastoral Care Budget, including consultation in the preparation of the budget and plan. It will consist of a number of people who volunteer to serve on the steering group for a fixed period of time. Structured meetings between the members of the Pastoral Care Team will be timetabled to take place once per week.

The members of the Pastoral Care Team are:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Chaplain (convener)
- Career guidance coordinator
- Special Needs Coordinator
- Assistant Chaplain
- Guidance counsellor

The role of the Pastoral Care Team is to:

- Support the Pastoral Care Coordinator



- Ensure ongoing curriculum development in Religious Education and SPHE
- Strategise and plan the work and development of the Pastoral Care Department
- Ensure ongoing review of the work being done in Pastoral Care as part of strategic planning

### **3.2 Subject Teacher**

Each subject teacher has a pastoral responsibility to the students in their care and as such is called upon to create an atmosphere of respect within their classroom and to nurture positive relationships both among students and between students and staff members. While monitoring and guiding a student's academic progress, the subject teacher is also a key resource in the observation of the how the student relates with his peers and to what extent he appears settled and happy in the school context. Subject teachers are encouraged to inform Year Heads and Class Tutors of any concerns they may have about a student's demeanour, relations with other students and attitude to school so that the relevant supports can be put in place for the student. Subject teachers may also be approached by a student who wishes to discuss a particular concern or issue that is on his mind and as such may be the significant adult for that student in school. This can happen outside of the Class Tutor relationship and is a vital part of the structure of pastoral support available to a student.

### **3.3 Class Tutor**

The Class tutor has a key role in the pastoral support for Jes students. Traditionally, this role was viewed as the 'eyes and ears' of the classroom and a source whereby students could approach individually or collectively a supportive adult to discuss issues of grievance or upset. Thus the primary pastoral responsibility of a Jes class tutor is to cultivate a relationship of care, both individually and collectively with their allocated class. The instinct of the class tutor should be that of a parent or concerned mentor – challenging them significantly in the private forum and their greatest supporters in the public one. The committed tutor is in a privileged position to play an essential role within the pastoral care structure.

In a review of the class tutor role and with a view to enhancing its standing in the school community Coláiste Iognáid will ensure that there are meetings between class tutor and Year Heads, that on certain days within the term all classes will have a tutor period whereby the tutor will have a formal meeting with the class to review school issues, review class issues and listen to any concerns that the pupils in the class may have. The practice of the class tutor bringing his/her group on an outing or trip will be both facilitated and encouraged. The tutor structure will seek to incarnate the Coláiste's desire that each student in known, cared for the brought to his/her full potential in the many dimensions of their being

### **3.4 Chaplain**

Chaplaincy is a vital part of the support structures in place for our students in terms of their personal, social and spiritual development during their time in Coláiste Iognáid.

In a school community, which embraces a holistic vision of education, chaplaincy plays a pivotal role. The Education Act 1998 Section 9(d) notes the obligation placed on schools to "*promote the moral, spiritual and personal development of students in consultation with parents having regard to the charismatic spirit of the school*". While the chaplaincy is primarily concerned with moral and spiritual development of students it also plays an important role in integrating these with other dimensions of education, social, personal, academic and physical.

***'The chaplain, as a faith presence, committed to the values of Christ, accompanies each person on the journey through life.'*<sup>10</sup>**

The most relevant analogy of the role of Chaplain is that of the Road to Emmaus story, the accompaniment story for all Christians. Like Jesus, the Chaplain meets people in their present situation, walks with them, acknowledges their fears/needs/hopes and supports them in their spiritual development. The Chaplain is in the privileged position of facilitating a student's personal reflection on their lives and their relationship with God, in a context of respect, understanding and friendship.

Time is given to the individual to support them in articulating who they are and what is going on in their lives at present. They engage in a conversation with themselves in the presence of someone else and in the process become more self-aware. Students are challenged to think about their own self-image, how they relate with others and most importantly they are listened to as they reflect upon their present realities and the challenges they are facing in life. The student's development of a positive self-image is a key aim for the Chaplain in their individual meeting with them.

The Chaplain is also there to support them spiritually by helping them grow in their understanding of what gives meaning to their lives and what role God plays within their lives. The Chaplain tries to provide the student with the tools to articulate how their lives reflect their spiritual beliefs. It is the spiritual dimension of Chaplaincy that characterises them as different from the Class Tutors, in the support they give to students during the academic year, though both the Class Tutor and Chaplain provided guidance to the student on difficulties they may be experiencing such as fitting in to school, managing time, relating with fellow students and teachers and how to make the most of their years in Coláiste Iognáid.

### **3.5 Year Head**

Year Heads have both a pastoral and disciplinary role. Year Heads have access to information on all students in their year groups. They survey reports and track academic progress. They attempt to mentor all students in groups and meet any students in difficulty individually. Year Heads will inform Class Tutors of major disciplinary sanctions against students in their classes.

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<sup>10</sup> 'The Chaplain: A Faith Presence in the School Community', Monahan and Renehan, 1998.

## **4. Pastoral Care Programme in Coláiste Iognáid**

### **4.1. Induction of New Teachers**

All new members of the teaching staff receive in-house professional development in the Characteristics of Jesuit Education and in the Ignatian Pedagogy. Their role as subject teacher, including the pastoral dimension of this role, is explored, as is the nature of the key pastoral roles outlined above. New teachers are invited and encouraged to become involved in co-curricular activities within the school, a vital way in which they can develop a positive relationship with their students outside of the classroom. New teachers are also encouraged to enrich Coláiste Iognáid with their own ideas and experiences of pastoral care systems in other schools and are themselves supported in making the transition by having access to a mentor during their first year in the school.

### **4.2. Induction of New Students**

The induction programme for first year students takes place in the week before the rest of the school community begin the new academic year and is a vital element of the support new students receive in their first year in Coláiste Iognáid. Students experience a variety of activities designed to create a strong spirit within the class and year group. They are also made aware of the support structures available to them in Coláiste Iognáid and meet those with key pastoral roles within their year (Class Tutors, Year Head and Sixth Year Mentors). The induction concludes with a celebration of the Eucharist for the students.

When students join the college in years after first year, they are assigned another student, or two, who will help them settle in. The Class Tutor plays a key role in helping them settle in and meets with them formally in the first month to review their transition.

### **4.3. Parent Programme**

The Parents Council is active in supporting parents of students throughout their six years in Coláiste Iognáid. This support takes the form of information evenings, social events, liaising with school management and representation on the Board of Management. Parents of first year students are invited into Coláiste Iognáid to meet one another, to learn more about the operation of the school and also to share in the celebration of the Eucharist. Parents are also supported in the growth and development of their own spirituality through the annual Retreat in Daily Life (for staff and parents), Spiritual Exercises, liturgical celebrations and Ignatian Vision Evenings, arranged by the IIG.

### **4.4. Guidance Department**

The Guidance Counsellors play a key role in the provision of pastoral care and support for our students. The work of the department includes preparation of our students for their decisions regarding career path, aptitude and interest testing, individual counselling, support for students receiving Leaving Certificate

results/viewing scripts, liaising with the SEN Department among other things. The Guidance Counsellor and the Pastoral Co-ordinator meet once per term with an agreed agenda to discuss issues related to Pastoral Care in the College. The Guidance Counsellor is a member of the Pastoral Care Team.

#### **4.5. Support for Students with Special Educational Needs**

There is a constant flow of communication between the Special Educational Needs Department in Coláiste Iognáid and those in key pastoral positions within the school so as to ensure the best possible supports are in place for individual students. In particular, Class Tutors and Year Heads are pro-active in monitoring the academic and personal development of students with special needs. Members of the SEN Dept. liaise regularly with subject teachers on how best to support individual students in their subject area.

#### **4.6. The Context for a Pastoral Curriculum**

According to Marland (1980, p. 153), “*the art of the pastoral system is to help all the individuals without always giving individual help*”.<sup>11</sup> Best (1995) refers to three separate but related distinctions of pastoral care in education as reactive, proactive and developmental. Firstly, in reactive pastoral care the partners of pastoral care respond to those pupils who portray problems. Secondly, in proactive pastoral care pupils are presented with the tools to deal with “predictable critical incidents”. This takes the form of presentations or activities undertaken in tutor periods and assemblies, which anticipate ‘critical incidents’ in children’s lives and are aimed at pre-empting the need for a reactive approach. According to Gurney (2000, p.1), proactive pastoral care of students “*is necessary if pastoral care is to be a positive process, as opposed to a trouble-shooting or mopping-up function*”.<sup>12</sup> Thirdly, in developmental pastoral care a pastoral curriculum is taught to ensure the social, personal, emotional, moral and spiritual needs of pupils are fulfilled. Attention to the cognitive and spiritual dimensions has been a strong feature of our system, but more attention is now being placed on the affective, social, aesthetic, and physical, in the context of a greater awareness of multiple intelligences<sup>13</sup>.

##### **4.6.1 SPHE**

The work of Salovey and Mayer and Reuven Bar-On, Goleman (1998) lists five basic emotional and social competencies as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), and Relationships and Sexuality Education as a subset of SPHE, offers students training on these social competencies. This is achieved through a structured, cyclical programme in accordance with the D.E.S. guidelines and the characteristic spirit of the school.

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<sup>11</sup> Marland, M. (1980) *The Pastoral Curriculum*. In: Best, R., Jarvis, C. & Ribbins, P. (eds.) *Perspectives on Pastoral Care*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

<sup>12</sup> Gurney, M. (2000) *Pastoral Education: A Handbook of Materials for Social Learning*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes Ltd.

<sup>13</sup> Goleman, D. (1998) *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

Students are given the opportunity for reflection and discussion around physical, mental, emotional and sexual health. They are afforded a safe environment to reflect on their self image and self worth and to explore a framework for responsible decision making. The provision of SPHE within Coláiste Iognáid is outlined in detail in the subject planning document.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) which is located in the overall framework of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), has as its specific aims:

- To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships.
- To promote an understanding of sexuality.
- To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction.
- To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework.

The RSE policy provides a detailed description of the RSE programme and of the distinctly Catholic ethos that guides the delivery of the programme.

#### **4.6.2 Religious Education**

The Religious Education, social justice and the retreat programmes in Coláiste Iognáid aim at encouraging and supporting students in developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that animates their daily living.

The aim of the Religious Education department is to support our students in reflecting on their religious and spiritual development and to provide them with the time, space and stimulation to develop a lived relationship with Jesus Christ. The celebration of class, year and school liturgies plays a vital part in building a strong sense of community within the college. The outline of the religious education programme is provided in the subject policy document.

The retreat programme in Coláiste Iognáid aims to provide students with an opportunity, annually, to reflect upon themselves, their relationships and on their spiritual journey. Each student participates in a retreat of at least one day's duration that raises issues that are age appropriate to the student. The majority of retreats are led by the Chaplain along with members of the teaching staff (though not exclusively members of the Religious Education Department). For the student, the retreat day/days provides the space, and the appropriate environment to take stock of their lives, to support one another and to develop a strong sense of community within the class.

Social Justice is a very significant aspect of life within Coláiste Iognáid as all members of the school community are encouraged to become 'persons for others' in the 'pursuit of a just world'. With this in mind, a variety of social justice initiatives have been instigated by members of the staff/student body and continue to be supported by the school community. These include the TY Sleep Out, the Trocaire fast, Sixth Year Mentoring and the Social Outreach placements in Transition Year.

#### **4.7. Chaplaincy Programme**

The chaplaincy system in Coláiste Iognáid provides students with a safe and confidential forum to discuss their own personal development and experiences. It is the aim of the school that all students will be seen at least once during the academic year by an adult that is not their Year Head or Class Tutor. The Chaplain liaises closely with the Year Head, Class Tutor and Guidance Counsellors and has particular responsibility for supporting the spiritual development of students.

#### **4.8. Co-curricular Activities**

Co-curricular activities within Coláiste Iognáid are an integral part of the pastoral structures of the school as it is while students are involved in activities outside of the classroom that much of their personal development takes place. Like subject teachers, those who lead co-curricular activities have the opportunity to build positive relationships with students and to enable them to develop, not only in their relationships with others but also in their understanding of themselves and the contribution they have to make as an individual. The teamwork required for shows, concerts, sports, drama, debating etc. is one of the most important skills co-curricular activities teach our students and this has a noticeable ‘ripple effect’ on a student’s ability to work with others in the classroom environment, thereby making a very strong contribution to the pastoral ethos in the school.

#### **4.9. Positive Reinforcement of Students**

Recognising the importance of valuing the role individual students have to play in the school community, Coláiste Iognáid has a variety of methods of providing positive reinforcement to our students. Informally many subject teachers or co-curricular leaders communicate improvement and contribution by an individual student in some area of his involvement in school. In addition, school assemblies are a very valuable way in which the participation, contribution and achievements of students are given recognition. Finally, the school website and increasingly, the Province e-newsletter, AMDG Express, is a permanent record of the myriad of activities within the college and is hugely important in recognising the importance of each and every individual as a member of the school community.

#### **4.10. Peer Leadership and Support**

Student involvement in the pastoral care system in Coláiste Iognáid aims to ensure we provide the best possible support to our students.

The Student Council is a valuable resource for supporting students. They articulate issues of concern for students and suggest effective ways of addressing these concerns. The Student Council is consulted on changes in policy or provision of pastoral care.

The Sixth Year Mentors is a key element of the support given to our first year students and is also a vital source of leadership within the college, guiding students as

to the high standards we expect of them in the manner in which they relate with one another and with staff.

#### **4.11. Other Pastoral Activities**

In addition to what has been outlined above, students are also supported through the provision of study skills seminars to equip them with the techniques necessary to achieve their full potential. The *Code of Behaviour* of Coláiste Iognáid is centred on respect for all individuals within the college environment and is another source of guidance for staff and students on the pastoral ethos of the college.

### **5. Pastoral Care Procedures**

This school has a number of policies which outline procedures to support students. Please refer to Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, Critical Incident Management Policy, Internet User Policy, Guidance Policy, Substance Use Policy, SPHE Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy.

#### **5.1 Communication with Parents**

The Year Head is the key contact person for parents of students in Coláiste Iognáid. As he/she is an adult who generally knows the student best, they are in regular contact with parents/guardians to discuss any issues of concern arising during the academic year. Parents/guardians are also free to contact Year Heads to arrange appointments or to discuss their child's progress over the phone and this encourages a sense of partnership between school and home in supporting the individual student. Parent-teacher meetings give parents the opportunity to meet with their child's teachers to discuss their academic progress but are also a forum to learn more about how their son/daughter is progressing socially and personally within the school environment. The Principal and the Deputy Principal also meet with parents/guardians regarding issues of serious concern and are a source of guidance and support for parents with the common goal of achieving what is best for their son/daughter. Respect, patience and understanding are at the heart of our approach when communicating with the parents/guardians of our students.

In addition, parents have a key role to play in the shaping of policy within Coláiste Iognáid as they are represented on several levels including the Board of Management, Parent's Association and Ignatian Identity Group (IIG). This allows an opportunity for parents to add their voice to discussion and reflection on all aspects of life within Coláiste Iognáid and again contributes to a sense of partnership between home and school.

#### **5.2 Suicide Prevention Referral Procedure**

The intention to take one's own life or consideration of suicide is most likely to be revealed to a Class Tutor, Year Head, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor or Subject Teacher. Current theory now suggests that a student be asked the direct question "Are

you suicidal?” or some variation. If answered in the affirmative all issues of confidentiality are immediately suspended. While the person who has been confided in may seek advice from a colleague on how to approach the problem; it is ultimately accepted that the Principal would be informed without delay. They will in turn consult with the Pastoral Team and parents will be informed by one of this team. Staff members who become aware of a student at risk must share their concern with the Pastoral Coordinator/Chaplain. Staff involved in retreats need to be aware that students may be dealing with difficult situations and should monitor them carefully.

It may be decided that the student be referred to an outside agency or, once the immediate crisis has been averted, that the student would meet with personnel within the school for further counselling or personal reflection (Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, trusted person etc).

### **5.3 Critical Incident Policy**

Clear procedures are in place to guide management and staff on how best to deal with a critical incident within the school. Details of this can be found in the Critical Incident Policy.

## **6. Outside Support**

It is acknowledged that there are times when the support structures offered by the school are not sufficient to meet the needs of students in certain situations. In such circumstances, it is necessary to call on the expertise of outside agencies.

## **7. Resources and Professional Development**

The College is committed to providing the necessary resources to underpin this pastoral policy. This support comes in several forms, which include;

- time allocation to those in key pastoral roles
- timetabling provision for activities that are pastoral in nature
- sufficient budgetary allowances
- professional development of staff members
- recruitment of those with the necessary skills to undertake specific pastoral roles
- facilitating consultation of students and parents in planning, implementation and evaluation of policy and procedures.
- facilitation of meetings of those involved in key pastoral roles
- encouraging inter-departmental and inter-schools cooperation with the aim of improving pastoral care provision within Coláiste Iognáid

## **8. Implementation Plan**

It is the aim of the College that the following timetable will apply for the implementation of this policy:

- Ongoing professional development will be made available to all those in key pastoral roles on an annual basis.



- An agreed system of communication between the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and others in key roles (Class Tutors, Year Heads, Career Guidance, Chaplains, Deputy Principal and Principal) will be agreed upon by the end of this academic year. New procedures will be implemented during the '10/'11 academic year.
- Consultation of parents and students will also take place through the IIG, Parents' Council and the Student Council.
- The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will present an annual report to the Board of Management.
- The Student Council will have at least one meeting with the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator each academic year beginning October 2010.
- The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will meet with the Parents Council at least once a year to take part in discussion on pastoral care.

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

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will monitor policy implementation, reporting back to the Principal and Board of Management on the meeting of specific targets by the end of this academic year.

The policy will then be formally monitored by the Pastoral Care Team at least once more during the next academic year. This will involve an evaluation of its effectiveness in meeting its stated aims, by means of a survey to staff, students and parents. These responses will then be collated and following consultation with school management, a report will be prepared for the Board of Management with recommendations for further phases of the Pastoral Care Policy. Such a review will take place every two years.