



Pastoral Care Policy

Version 1.0

October 2008

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Mission Statement

Glenstal Abbey School is a school for boys within a monastic community characterised by moderation and mutual respect. It seeks to provide a balanced and disciplined environment which emphasises values such as integrity, kindness and respect and it seeks to maintain an inclusive climate of learning where each child can fulfil his own unique potential.

Core Values

Glenstal Abbey School forms an integral part of the wider community associated with the Benedictine Monastery at Glenstal. It reflects the values of the Benedictine tradition: the search for God in the community of others, guided by the Rule of St. Benedict, under the care of an Abbot. It exists in order to help young men grow in knowledge and grace. Grounded in the Catholic faith and the Benedictine intellectual tradition, the school seeks to foster:

- Reverence
- Respect
- Responsibility

1.1 Reverence

We believe that God is at the centre of the human search for meaning and that the perennial human questions – Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? How do I get there? – all find their answers in God. Accordingly, we seek to promote in the lives of our students a lifelong search for God. This spiritual education of the heart, soul and mind is the basis for the pastoral and academic work at Glenstal Abbey School. This is rooted in reverence for God and the human person.

1.2 Respect

The School seeks to develop the mind, heart and body through an integrated and ordered progression of learning in a structured environment. The core values of respect for self and others, for learning and order and for the environment underpin the life of our school.

1.3 Responsibility

Living the common life means learning to live with the talents and challenges presented by other individuals. The challenge is for each person to flourish and grow in unity. In Glenstal Abbey School what we seek to do above all is to encourage all to achieve the fullest potential that God has granted them, utilising all their talents to the full benefit of all – this is the responsibility of the whole staff and all the students. The efforts of all our staff are directed to this common good that “we may do now what will profit us forever” (RB Prol. 44)

Pastoral Goals for the school

- To actively promote the core values of the school
- To promote a sense of personal well being for all

- To ensure the protection of students and adults as required by law.
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (1990)
- Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005
- The Education Act (1998)
- Employment Equality Act (1998)
- Education welfare Act (2000)
- Equal Status Act (2000)
- To promote an environment which meets the pastoral needs of the school community
- To create an awareness in the school community of the resources that are available to an individual requiring help
- To actively promote and support pastoral awareness throughout the school
- To recognise talents and abilities
- To give acknowledgement of, and support for, each person's role in the school community

Range of personnel that care for the student within the School and monastic setting

1.4 Personnel

The parents/guardians are viewed as the primary carers of the student. The School is very aware of the trust placed in it by parents/guardians who chose Glenstal Abbey as the educator of their son(s) for a period of up to six years. During that time the student is cared for by a very wide range of people. The list is long and ranges from the umbrella of the monastery, through the Board of Management, to Headmaster and Deputy Principal, Housemasters, Chaplain, Nurses, Class Tutor, subject teachers, Games staff, Designated Liaison Person and Deputy for Child Protection issues, Career Guidance, Crisis Response Team, Pastoral Care Team, Learning Support Team, School Council through the class representatives, School Administrator, through to the care by the catering and housekeeping staff. All endeavour to ensure the safety, personal happiness and growth of each student in their care (see Appendix A Diagram 1).

The level of contact between the carers and the students varies with the role of the personnel and the needs of the student. Diagram 2 (Appendix A) illustrates the relationships based on the degree of contact. This diagram does not take into consideration the specific requirements of some students, as for example the vital connection that will occur should a student work with the learning Support Team or the Crisis Response Team etc.

1.5 Links to other policies

This policy is intended to link with a number of other policies that the Board of Management has approved. These include:

- Child Protection Policy

The school has a child protection policy based on guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Science. The school is committed to preventing the abuse of any student. Abuse may occur in four ways

1. Physically
2. Emotionally
3. Sexually
4. Due to neglect

Should a student feel that he has been the object of any of these forms of abuse, he must bring it to the attention of any member of staff or another student. This person must bring it to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Liaison Person, who will deal with the matter immediately. No member of staff can promise absolute confidentiality on hearing such matters. The school will deal with such matters in a way that will respect the rights of all parties. The guiding principle in these procedures shall be to vindicate and protect the welfare of the student.

- Crisis Response Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Smoke Free Workplace Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Dignity in the Workplace

Pastoral roles

1.6 Housemaster:

The Housemaster acts *in loco parentis* and plays a crucial role in the life of the student.

1.6.1 Pastoral responsibilities:

To promote and foster the Benedictine Ethos

To have a caring, supportive role in the formation and development of each student in his care

To be attentive to the spiritual, personal and physical development of each student in his house.

To encourage each student to strive for the best in himself in a disciplined and nurturing environment

To give a 24 hour availability to the student

To communicate matters of concern to relevant personnel

1.6.2 Communication:

With students:

Notice Board

Verbally at house meetings and at an individual level

Eats meals with the house

Maintaining a visible presence in the house.

With colleagues:

Verbal communication with colleagues, while maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality about difficulties being experienced by individual students

With parents:

Phone, e-mail, letter

Personal contact after Sunday Mass

By appointment

1.6.3 Resources required

Office and separate bedroom

Ongoing training

Mentoring of new housemaster staff by current staff.

1.6.4 Review

Annual review by the group of Housemasters and Headmaster.

1.7 Class Tutor:

The school has a policy that each year group is divided into two sets and each set has a class tutor assigned to it. The primary role of the Class Tutor is to support the student in his academic progress. It is essentially a caring role and the tutor takes an interest in each individual student with particular regard to their personal challenges.

1.7.1 Pastoral responsibilities:

To promote the Benedictine ethos of love of learning

To have weekly contact with each student or group during tutor time

To meet with the housemaster on a regular basis to discuss each student

To consult with relevant colleague(s) over issues of concern. This may be parent/guardian, housemaster, other teachers, Designated Liaison Person (or Deputy DLP), Learning Support Teacher, Chaplain, Nurse etc.

Enable the student to progress by putting in place systems to help the student

Encourage a student to widen his horizons with extracurricular activities or challenges

To investigate the reasons why a student is not achieving his potential

Liaise with the Learning Support team when necessary.

To help a student become a reflective learner and give advice on good study methods

Monitor progress through record keeping

Write constructive reports

Help with subject choice and level

1.7.2 Communication:

With students:

- Meeting at tutor time
- Card marks and reports
- Availability during the school day.

With Housemaster:

- Meeting with housemaster to discuss each student

With Teachers;

- Being an advocate for the student
- Communicating concerns from teacher to student in a non-disciplinary manner.
- Mediating between teacher and student in the event of a negative situation developing

With parents:

- Each parent should be given the name of the Class Tutor and a contact phone number and e-mail address
- By appointment

1.7.3 Resources required

- Meeting time with individual/group at the discretion of the Tutor
- Easy access to a private phonenumber where confidential calls can be made/taken.
- In-service training by IAPCE

1.7.4 Review

- Annual review by the group of tutors and Headmaster.

1.8 Chaplain:

The chaplain is a monk who is committed to supporting the faith development of all who are involved in the school. He brings the particular wisdom of the Benedictine tradition into the school context as he accompanies students and staff on their faith journey. His presence in the school is a sign of the school's commitment to the spiritual quest and is a reminder of this dimension in the ordinary life of the school community. The work can be defined under four headings:

- Ministry to the Students
- Ministry to the Students' Families
- Ministry to the Staff
- Ministry through the Liturgy

1.8.1 Pastoral responsibilities:

- To promote the Benedictine ethos of the school
- To promote Gospel values through interaction with the students and staff
- To counsel students in relation to issues of personal faith development

To help organise regular liturgies and other faith-based activities in the school

To highlight the turning of the liturgical year and its relevance for the Christian community

To provide spiritual care for students and teachers in the school community who suffer bereavement.

To work in close association with the RE departments in order to achieve an approach to RE that balances both the academic and faith-based aspects of the areas successfully

To provide resources for the spiritual development of all involved in the life of Glenstal Abbey School.

To organise penitential services

To organise the Mass at the opening of the school year, class masses for 1st and 2nd years, weekly masses with training for readers, the end of year mass for the Transitions year students and the end of year mass for the 6th years.

To organise a retreat for each year group and for teachers.

To develop a Prayer Experience for the students in a manner appropriate to their age.

1.8.2 Communication:

With students:

Chaplain's Notice Board

Sharing meals with students

Attendance at the Senior Social

The chaplain is available to meet students in his office on a drop-in basis or by appointment.

Maintaining a presence throughout the school.

With Housemaster:

Meeting informally with housemaster to discuss issues, while maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality about difficulties being experienced by individual students

With Teachers;

Availability in the Chaplain's Office

Notice Board in the staff room

Presence at Break in the staff room and at meals

With parents:

Sunday morning after mass

An article in the Raven

By appointment

With House staff:

Being available to be spoken to, should a person wish to consult the Chaplain.

1.8.3 Resources required

An attractively designed school oratory, that acts as a quiet, prayerful space for meditation.

A Chaplain's Office that is inviting for students to drop in for a chat, either as an individual or group.

1.8.4 Review

Annual review in consultation with the Headmaster.

1.9 Teacher:

By word and example, encouragement and correction, the teachers guide the students as they progress, adapting their strategies as necessary to the needs of each (RB 2). The teachers aim to act with prudence and consideration, aware of their own personal gifts and weaknesses. They strive to teach with discretion and moderation, bearing in mind the limitations of those who are weak, and the special talents of the strong (RB 64)

1.9.1 Pastoral responsibilities:

To promote the Benedictine ethos of love of learning

By observation, to be aware of each individual's emotional, and physical wellbeing and learning capabilities

Encourage a student with positive comments and point out clearly the way to improve

To consult with relevant colleague(s) over issues of concern. This may be tutor, housemaster, other teachers, Designated Liaison Person (or Deputy), Learning Support Teacher Nurse etc.

To investigate the reasons why a student is not achieving his potential and help the student to become overcome the difficulty

Liaise with the Learning Support team when necessary.

To help a student become a reflective learner and give advice on good study methods

Monitor progress through record keeping

Write constructive reports, pointing out where a student is achieving (the stars) and what can be done to improve (the wishes)

Help with subject choice and level

1.9.2 Communication:

With students:

During class time

By appointment

Through Card marks and reports

Availability during the school day.

With Headmaster and Deputy

Informal meetings at break time, etc

Formal meetings at Staff Forums

Formal meetings by appointment

With Housemaster:

Informal meetings at break, meal times

By appointment

With Tutor:

- Informally throughout the day
- Meeting more formally
- Through card mark discussion and reports

With parents:

- Contact with parents at the Parent/Teacher meeting
- Through the Tutor, or by agreement of the Tutor, directly with the parent.

1.9.3 Resources required

- An induction programme for new teachers
- A mentoring programme for newly qualified teachers
- General in-service training, with emphasis on issues that improve self-esteem and motivation in students and in teachers.

1.9.4 Review

- Annual review in consultation with the Headmaster.

1.10 School Council:

The School Council is convened by the School Captain. It consists of the School Captain, Vice Captain, and an elected representative from each year. Its purpose is

- To organise student activities and present student concerns to the school authorities.
- Discuss and discriminate school policies

1.10.1 Pastoral responsibilities:

- To foster the Benedictine ethos of the school
- To have a caring, supportive role to the pastoral needs of the students
- To be aware of and attentive to the difficulties encountered by students who are new to the school
- To bring to the notice of the relevant school authorities/personnel issues that it considers to be harmful to the holistic welfare of the student body.
- To encourage the Junior members to speak at meetings

1.10.2 Communication:

With students:

- Notice Board
- Published Report of Meetings

With Dean of Boarding/Headmaster:

- Minutes of meetings should be given
- Meeting with School Captain and Vice Captain to discuss any pastoral/other matters

1.10.3 Resources required

Training

Guidance

1.10.4 Review

Annual review on procedures and accomplishments.

1.11 Health Centre:

The nurses and staff of the Health Centre provide compassionate care and medical support to students and staff in a professional relationship. They contribute significantly to the well being of the student by being able to offer a friendly ear to the student who just needs to talk, as well as to heal the illness. They offer a valuable service in the maintenance of a happy person in the school, treating both the emotional and physical problems that may arise.

Times: as posted

1.11.1 Pastoral responsibilities:

To promote the Benedictine ethos.

By professional skills and observation, to be aware of each individual's emotional, and physical wellbeing

To consult with relevant colleague(s) over issues of concern. This may be Housemaster, Headmaster/Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Class Tutor, Designated Liaison Person (or Deputy DLP) where appropriate, and external medical advice when deemed necessary.

To keep accurate records of health matters for future reference.

To play a role in the management of events such bereavement.

1.11.2 Communication:

With students:

During Health Centre times and as required outside of that.

With Housemaster:

Notification to the Housemaster of any illness

Be informed by the housemaster of any occurrence of a pastoral/health nature that may have arisen while the Nurse was not on the premises.

With Teachers

Personal contact

Use of notice board in the Teachers' Common Room

Use of notes to teachers when a student is excused from class time.

With parents:

Contact with parents is of great importance, for all parties

Contact may be by telephone, e-mail, letter or in person.

1.11.3 Resources required

A Health Centre that offers all required equipment, as well as a being a pleasant location.

1.11.4 Review

Annual review with the Headmaster of the pastoral care given and future planning.

Pastoral procedure

Glenstal Abbey School wishes to put in place a series of procedures that will promote the pastoral goals of the school

1.12 At Whole School Level

There will be a **Pastoral Care Planning and Review Team** in place. The membership of this Team is suggested as follows: Headmaster, one Housemaster, one Tutor, the Head of SPHE and the Chaplain. This Team will meet a minimum of twice a year, in the first term to plan for the year and in the last term to review the year and report to the Board of Management.

The task for this group will be to:

Ensure the implementation of the Pastoral Care Policy of Glenstal Abbey School.

To review the operation of the Policy. The review to include a report on its strengths and weaknesses, and make suggestions to The Board of Management on any aspect(s) that would improve the Policy.

To actively promote Pastoral Care at a whole school level.

1.13 At Individual Student Level

Each Housemaster and Tutors of a year should meet for an hour session in each term to discuss each individual student. The object of such a meeting is to exchange information on aspects of every student's life that may not be readily available to one or other party. All information given and received will be on strictly confidential grounds.

A **Pastoral Care Team** may meet to review particular cases. This Team should consist of Headmaster, Housemaster of the student, Chaplain, Tutor of the student, and by invitation, or in consultation with, Parents, Medical Care Team, Special Needs Coordinator/Teacher, and Teachers. This team will attempt to be prescriptive in its approach and put in place whatever it feels is an appropriate attempt to solve a problem. This may include external help (with the permission of and at the cost of the parents/guardians)

1.14 At Teacher Level

Communication between the Headmaster and the Teaching Staff about events in the students' lives is considered very important. It means that the teachers can compliment students on positive developments in their lives outside of the immediate classroom, or be aware of an event that would allow for more sensitive handling of a student in the classroom.

For this a short Headmaster/Teacher meeting should be held each fortnight. The Headmaster can relate the successes of the previous week and aspects of student(s) lives to be aware of for the following week. This is a compulsory meeting for staff.

Pastoral Programmes

It will be the responsibility of the Pastoral Care Planning and Review Team to review existing provision and develop improved programmes / procedures to benefit students in areas where it perceives a need.

This policy adopted by the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Maiream Mc Ellyott." with a period at the end. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Signed:

Chairperson Board of Management

Date : 8th October 2008

Appendix A - Diagrams

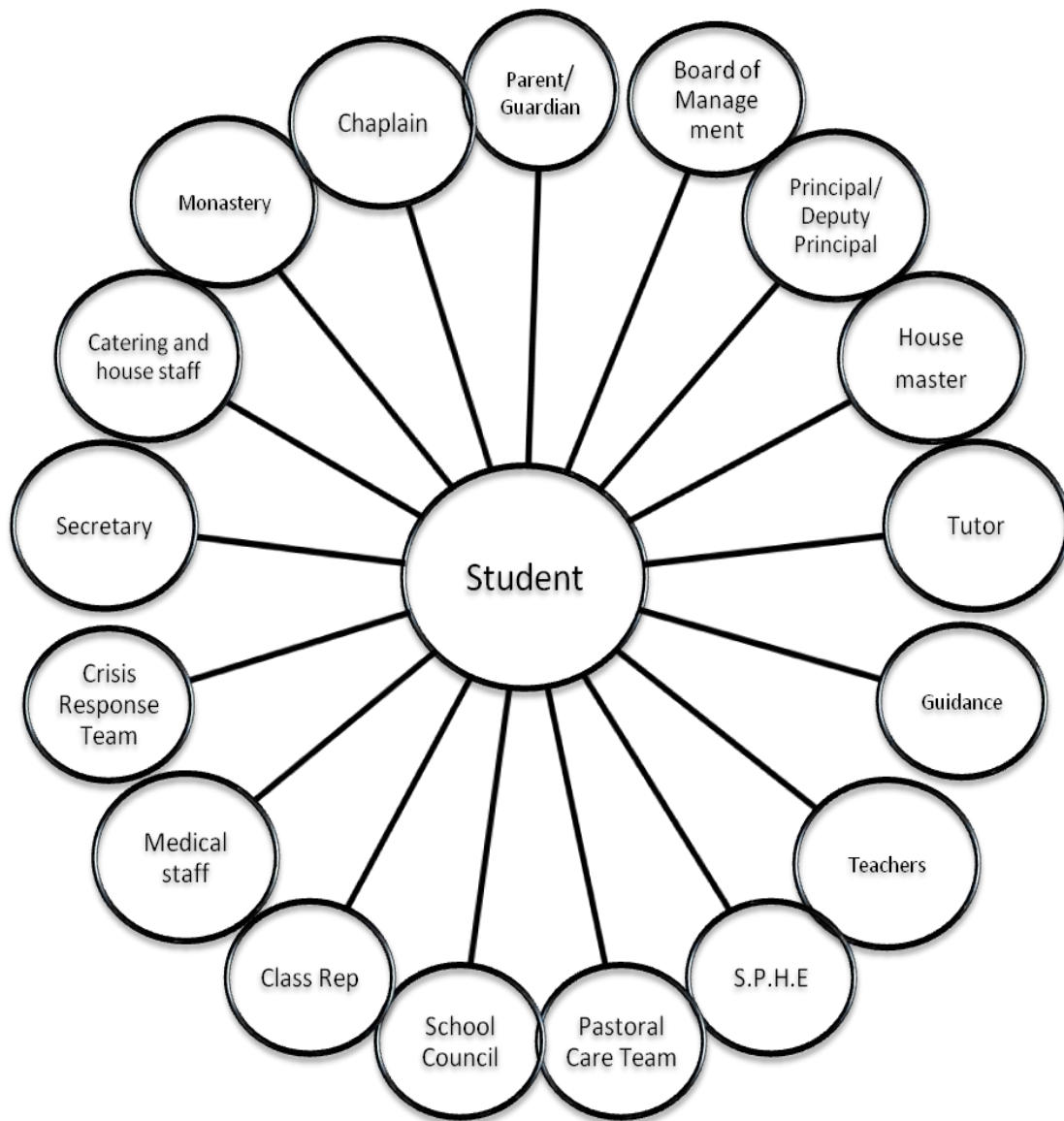


Diagram 1 – Elements of Pastoral Care

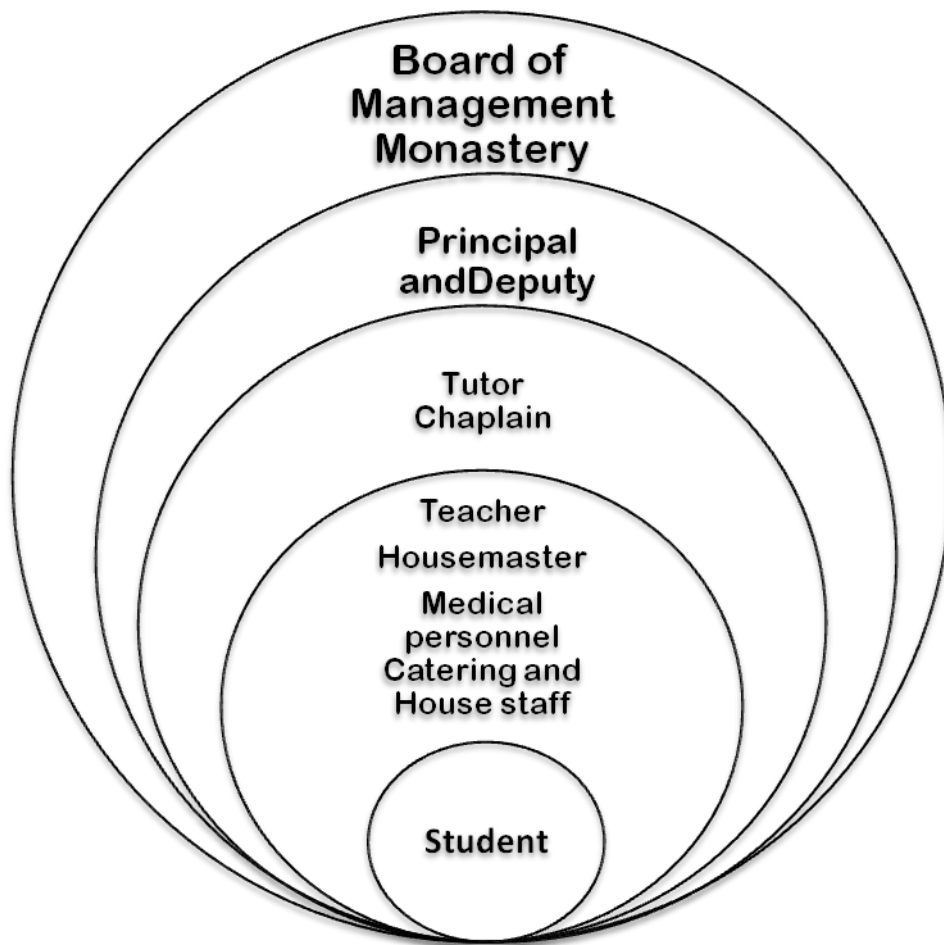


Diagram 2 - Elements of Pastoral Care by frequency of contact