



## **St. Kilian's Community School Chaplaincy Policy (November 2014)**

### **The Role of the Chaplain**

'The school Chaplain, as a faith presence, committed to the values of Christ, and on behalf of the Church and school communities, accompanies each person on the journey through life'.

The position of the School Chaplain comes from provisions set out in the Deeds of Trust for Community Schools. Chaplaincy is an essential component in the structure of the school. The school as a whole must be involved at every level in the development and exercise of the role of the Chaplain. The Chaplain works in close co-operation with all members of school staff, in particular, school management, the R.E. Department, Guidance Counsellor and Home School Liaison Community Coordinator.

In St. Kilian's Community School the Chaplain provides a pastoral care service for all students, staff, past pupils and families. The Chaplain accompanies members of the school community on their journey through life. He/She will also respond to the spiritual and religious needs of the students and the whole school community respecting the denominational, religious and personal convictions of all.

### **Pastoral Care**

The Chaplain should strive to show the individual concern and love that God has for everybody. The Chaplain shows care for students struggling with a wide range of obstacles, including: self harm, family problems, confusing relationships, friendship issues, peer pressure, self-esteem issues, bullying, bereavement and separation, stress and anxiety. The Chaplain is also present to share in their joyful experiences.

## **Pastoral Counselling**

The Chaplain has the privilege of walking part of life's journey with each student. Within a faith context, the Chaplain is present to students, staff and parents/guardians when they need to share their worries, concerns and troubles with someone in confidence.

The School Chaplain is a safe person for young people to connect with at school, providing a listening ear, caring presence, and message of hope. This means that the Chaplain is always available to each student and is willing to just sit and listen to what is going on for them at that point in their lives. Where necessary, the Chaplain will liaise with parents and recognise when a student needs to be referred on to another professional.

At St. Kilian's, the Chaplain is available to students throughout the school week, both in classroom settings and at the Chaplain's office. A comfortable Reflection Room is available to students where they can meet with the Chaplain. Students can use the open door policy of the Chaplain to drop in or make an appointment for a more suitable time. In addition to dropping into the Chaplain's room themselves, a student visit may arise when they are referred by Year Heads, other teachers, or when a member of staff or parent/guardian is concerned about a particular a student.

The Chaplain supports students, staff and their families, where appropriate, in dealing with bereavement of family members and loved ones.

## **Confidentiality**

In personal meetings with the chaplain the confidentiality rule is followed in accordance with Child Protection Guidelines, i.e. the Principal and or parents/guardians are informed if it is felt that the student is in danger, a danger to him/herself or to others. The same applies if it becomes known that another person is in danger. Apart from this, all matters are dealt with in strict confidence.

## **Care Team**

Issues concerning the health and welfare of the students are dealt with by the Care Team, both individually and through their regular meetings. The Chaplain is a member of the Pastoral Care Team where he/she can liaise with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Home

School Community Liaison Coordinator, School Completion Programme Coordinator, SEN Coordinator and Behaviour for Learning Teacher.

In consultation with families, in-school and/or externally sourced supports are put in place for students, where appropriate.

The Chaplain alongside school management and Care Team members, plays an important role when the school community is faced with particularly difficult and challenging situations, as laid out in the school's Critical Incident Policy.

### **Spiritual Guidance**

The Chaplain animates the spiritual life of the school community and offers opportunities to develop a meaningful relationship with God.

The Chaplain cares for the young people's spiritual needs also. While many young people have difficulty with organised religion, they recognise their need for God. They have spirituality. The Chaplain is in the privileged position to guide students and to explore various prayer methods which bring peace and fulfilment. Working alongside the Religion Department within the school, the Chaplain ensures the school community has time to celebrate its identity in religious worship.

### **Retreats**

The Chaplain organises retreats for different year groups. The retreat provides the students with an opportunity to reflect on their own lives, the issues they may face every day and where God fits into their lives.

### **Liturgy and Sacraments**

The Chaplain facilitates the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This includes organising school Masses (e.g. Opening of School Year Mass, Remembrance Service, Carol Service, Lenten Reconciliation Service and End of School Year Mass), prayer services in accordance with the liturgical year, meditation etc.

The Chaplain highlights the liturgical seasons. The Chaplain, along with the RE teachers, provides each student with opportunities to learn new ways of talking to God. Prayer experiences are offered to help develop a relationship with God.

### **Social Outreach and Justice**

The Chaplain promotes a spirit of concern for others within and beyond the school community. The chaplain may help the students take part in fundraising work for charities to help those in need. For example, fundraising for St. Vincent de Paul, Alone, Trocaire, homeless organisations, etc.. Helping those in our own community through community service programmes is also an area that the Chaplain may help students become involved in e.g. visiting day care centres.

The Chaplain will also raise awareness of social justice problems and moral issues in our locality and worldwide, for example, poverty, child labour, war, human rights, etc..

### **School/Parish/Home link**

Our school is in St. Fergal's Parish, Ballywaltrim. The Chaplain seeks to strengthen the connection between school and the local community by encouraging students to become involved in their own local Church and Faith communities.

The Chaplain, in conjunction with the Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, provides a vital link between home and school, especially where a student is experiencing difficulties either at home or in school. This can take the form of visiting or ringing parents, listening to their concerns, providing relevant help or referral, or attending coffee mornings for the parents of the first years. The Chaplain may also visit students during times of illness or long absenteeism from school.

### **Religious Education**

The Chaplain, as a member of the RE department, is involved in the delivery of the National Curriculum as an RE teacher.

***The work of the Chaplain is in full compliance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools (DES 2011).***