

Woodbrook College Bray, Co. Wicklow



Student Support Policy

This policy was drafted in consultation with the education partners at Woodbrook College, Bray, Co. Wicklow and in accordance with best educational practice. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on June 7th, 2012

Student Support Policy

Pastoral Approach in Our School / Rationale

At Woodbrook College, we are committed to excellence in all that we do. We educate in an atmosphere that promotes responsibility, tolerance and respect. We are guided by Gospel-based values and, in keeping with our Catholic ethos and the principles of our founder Blessed Edmund Rice, we work as one inclusive community of Board of Management, staff, parents and students to provide a safe, caring and disciplined environment in which all of our students are challenged to reach their full potential in their academic, artistic, sporting and personal pursuits.

Aims

- To ensure students achieve the highest academic standards based on their own individual abilities.
- To deliver a broad-based curriculum that adequately responds to the needs of our students and society in general.
- To continue to provide and resource an extensive programme of extra-curricular activity which caters for the wide range of talents and interests amongst our students.
- To provide a student-centred education which strives to develop the whole person – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically and socially.
- To foster a spirit of co-operation and respect amongst all of our school community.
- To promote a happy, positive and safe environment where the wellbeing of each person is valued and respected and where healthy relationships are developed.
- To facilitate and embrace a harmonious integration of different cultures, faiths, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations and ethnic diversities.
- To inspire and promote lifelong learning in our students to prepare them to take their place as responsible citizens in a challenging society.
- To continue to grow our partnership with the wider community by reaching out in a tangible way to people in need.

Woodbrook College realises its core aims and goals through a variety of means, none more important than our Student Support approach. We understand Student Support as an approach to education which endeavours to value and develop each member of the school community.

Each member of the school community has access to the relevant pastoral structures and procedures and we invite all partners in the school community to contribute to the pastoral ethos of the school. We seek to nurture positive relationships as the core resource in developing a pastoral approach. This policy aims to put in place the framework necessary to underpin and support this approach. The policy will address the following areas.

- Pastoral Roles : definitions and responsibilities
- Pastoral Programmes
- Pastoral Procedures
- Resources and Professional Development
- Monitoring and Evaluation.

Student Support Roles: Definitions and Responsibilities

Every member of staff contributes to Student Support in our school. There are key roles, however, which carry additional Student Support support dimensions and responsibilities.

Student Support Team

- a) This team brings together all the support services of the school to review how the school is responding to the overall needs of the students and in particular students facing challenges. The team supports Year Heads, Class Tutors and Class Teachers, reviewing students with particular difficulties and advising relevant groups within the school community on pastoral issues.
- b) The Student Support team is appointed each year and its members may include but is not limited to:
Pastoral-Care Co-Ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Learning Support Co-Ordinator, S.P.H.E. Co-Ordinator, Attendance Officer, Class Tutor Representative, Year Head Representative, Amber Flag Co-ordinator.
- c) The Student Support team has a time-tabled meeting every week.
- d) Year Heads (who are not members of the Student Support team) may be asked to attend occasionally to give a review of students in their particular year group. They also update individual students Student Support file on the shared resources folder with any relevant information.

Student Support Co-Ordinator

- a) The Student Support Co-ordinator organises the weekly meetings of the Student Support team.
This will of necessity include the drawing up of an agenda and the distribution of the written minutes of the previous meeting.
- b) He/she co-ordinates the Student Support needs of students referred to the Student Support team.
- c) He/she keeps a record of all referrals and meetings with students so that progress can be monitored and reviewed.
- d) He/she updates the Student Support files on the shared resources with relevant information student about individual students

Guidance Counsellor

- a) The Guidance Counsellor Co-ordinates the school guidance and counselling service.
This includes:
 - Personal / Social Guidance and Counselling
 - Educational Guidance and Counselling
 - Career Guidance and Counselling
- b) This role is central to our Student Support provision and involves a range of activities which include:
 - Counselling
 - Assessment
 - Information
 - Educational Development Programmes
 - Personal and Social Development Programmes
 - Referral
 - Guidance activities to help pupils make transitions
 - Consultation with parents, teachers and students.

- Feedback to staff and school management on the needs of the students.

Learning Support Co-Ordinator

The Learning Support Co-Ordinator, in light of the results of assessment tests, offers support to the students in various subjects. This tuition is carried out in small groups. He/she works with subject teachers and liaises with the Guidance Counsellor. He/she also informs the Year Heads of progress throughout the year.

SPHE Co-Ordinator

Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) is a core area of school life and its link to Student Support is clear. Woodbrook College has a commitment to S.P.H.E and demonstrates this in its provision on the school Curriculum. Life-skills issues and RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) are taught in S.P.H.E. which are essential parts in the education of our students.

Principal

The Principal has an overall responsibility for ensuring that the framework for Student Support is valued in the school. The Principal's job is to set up a team to co-ordinate the Pastoral Activities of the school, to attend to weekly meetings, to offer support to this team as much as possible and to facilitate in service training for members of the Student Support team.

Class Tutors

The Class Tutor takes a special interest in his/her class and in the welfare of each of its individual students. The Class Tutor refers students to a member of the Student Support team for extra support when he/she feels the student is facing particular challenges or difficulties in either their school or personal life. The class tutor meets with his/her group every morning for 10 minutes. During this time, students have an opportunity to speak about how they are settling into school and ask for help, advice and support if needed in a group or one-to-one session with their tutor. Attendance, homework and behaviour is also monitored during this time.

Board of Management

The Board of Management role is to support the Student Support approach in the school and to support the Student Support Team in the implementation of Student Support Activities in the school.

Parents Association

The Parents Association meets on a monthly basis and acts in an advisory capacity in promoting the educational and Christian Ethos of the school and the general welfare of its pupils. The Association hosts occasional seminars for parents on adolescent well-being.

Senior Prefects

Senior Prefects assist the Student Support team in special projects such as the transition of 1st year students from primary to secondary school (peer buddy programme) and in the Christmas Hampers Appeal.

Students Council

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. Feedback is provided to the Student Support team through the co-ordinating teacher.

3. PASTORAL PROGRAMMES

S.P.H.E.

S.P.H.E. is a core area of school life and its link to Student Support is clear. Woodbrook College is committed to providing S.P.H.E. on the school curriculum which adheres to official Department of Education and Skills guidelines. S.P.H.E supports the personal development, health and well-being of students and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships. The aims of this programme are as follows;

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision making.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
- All Junior Cycle students receive one period per week of S.P.H.E. Teachers of this subject attend relevant in-services training.

Homework Club

A homework club is run daily for First Year students who might struggle to establish a homework routine at home. Extra help and support is provided by staff who encourage students to engage in this practice which helps increase their confidence in their ability and helps reduce discipline issues.

Lunchtime Library Club

A lunchtime library club is run daily where students can play games, read books or engage with their peers in a relaxed atmosphere. This helps students establish new friendships, increases their social skills and confidence and as a result assists the transition from primary school to secondary school.

Individual Support for Students

One to one support is given to students who may be facing particular challenges or difficulties in either their school life or home life. The school Guidance Counsellor and other members of the Student Support team meet with students on a regular basis or as is needed. Where appropriate students and parents are referred to outside agencies for extra support.

First Year Induction Programme

A three day summer camp is run in August prior to their commencement of Secondary School. This introduces First Year students to their new school environment and is an excellent opportunity for them to begin to form friendships. Both factors help to ensure their first day at secondary school is less daunting. There is also a one-day induction programme organised for new 1st year students on their first day in Woodbrook College where they meet their Year Head and Class Tutor, get a tour of the school, receive their lockers and get a brief introduction to secondary school life.

Student Information Meetings

Each year group meets with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head at the beginning of the year and at regular intervals throughout the school year. Expectations of the students in relation to Code of Behaviour and Discipline are outlined and students are informed of the students support structures available to them at Woodbrook College.

Parents Information Meetings

Meetings for the parents of new first year students take place at the beginning of each school year. Meetings are held for other year groups during the year for specific purposes e.g. Fifth Year Options, Transition Year etc. During these meetings information is imparted regarding the different student's support structures available to the students at Woodbrook College.

Workshops

From time to time, outside agencies are engaged to attend the school to provide workshops on areas where support is deemed necessary such as anti-bullying workshop, cyber bullying, drugs awareness, mental health and well-being. These are designed to highlight the dangers and everyday challenges students face and help them develop skills to deal with these challenges.

Study Skills Programme

A study skills programme is provided for 3rd years and 6th years to help them establish good study practice, which will ensure that they gain maximum benefit from their efforts which will in turn help them reach their full academic potential.

Mentor Programme

The Student Support co-ordinator provides Mentor training for Fifth Year Students to prepare them for mentoring First Years. This training is based on the BEST BUDDY Programme – Bettering Everyone’s Secondary Transition. Selected fifth year students are assigned to a small group of first year students to mentor them particularly in the early stages of first year. They are given time to meet their mentors and are an informal support to the younger students.

Student Council Leadership Training

Leadership training is provided to help students effectively deal with their roles and responsibilities as elected members of the student council.

Class Trips

Year Heads organise a class trip for each year group to allow students to engage in a fun activity outside school with their peers.

Retreats

Retreats are encouraged in the school and will from time to time be organised by the Religion teacher as part of the overall Religion Programme in the school. A first year pilgrimage is also organised as is house meditation for other year groups.

R.S.E. - Relationship and Sexuality Education

The RSE programme seeks to promote the overall development of the person and which includes the integration of sexuality into personal understanding, growth and development. It reflects the unique ethos of the school. At junior and senior cycle the areas of human growth and development, human sexuality and human relationships are studied.

Amber Flag

The Amber Flag Team under the guidance of the Amber Flag Co-ordinator is a team of staff and students who organise events and activities and other initiatives to promote wellbeing in school. The focus is on students providing activities and resources that may be of benefit to their peers. Lunchtime “fun” events are provided on a weekly basis to the whole school to promote positivity. In addition, teachers liaise with the team providing resources and support where appropriate.

Time-Out

The “Time-Out” room is an area where students who feel the need to talk to a member of staff can arrange a 20 minute time out to chat and share their thoughts. A rota of volunteer staff is posted on the “Time-Out” board so that students can choose a member of staff who they feel comfortable with. Staff are aware of the need to refer more serious issues of concern on to the Guidance Counsellor.

4. Pastoral Procedures

This Student Support policy describes some of the pastoral procedures currently in place in Woodbrook College. 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. This school has a number of policies which outline procedures to support students. These include:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Critical Incident Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- School Attendance Policy

5. Resources and Professional Development

The School is committed to providing the necessary resources to underpin this Student Support policy. We are committed to providing professional development programmes and training for the members of the Student Support team.

6. School Website and School App

Further resources to assist the Student Support needs of our students and their parents are posted on our school website at www.woodbrookcollege.ie and on our school app “woodbrookcollege”.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy

A review of this policy will be made annually to evaluate its effectiveness and to ensure successful implementation. The necessary updates and adjustments will be made accordingly. The Student Support Team is charged with leading the evaluation of the Student Support Policy.

Review

Review Date:..... 2016

Review Date:..... _____