

CARE TEAM

Introduction

The pastoral care system in Maryfield looks after the overall general wellbeing of students. The purpose of a Care Team is to provide for students who have a greater need for a higher level of intervention from the school community. The Care Team is a visible representation of the school's understanding and valuing of each student as an individual.

Students who experience severe difficulties in life will find it difficult to have cognitive space for learning.

Therefore **the rationale** of the care team is to strive to care in a genuine way to improve the lives of students and thereby ensure access to the curriculum and learning.

Aims

1. To share information in a **confidential** setting
2. To coordinate a single **transparent response** to the care needs of a student
3. To **review** and **monitor** the students with care needs

Objectives

1. The care team will concern itself primarily with the welfare and care of students in a non-judgemental way.
2. A system of caring and safety will be established which will complement the existing pastoral care system.
3. The care team will strive to create realistic positive outcomes in relation to the welfare, safety and happiness of students in the school.

Care Team and Code of Behaviour

The Care Team and the Code of Behaviour work together to provide the structure and the care that is necessary for the student to benefit from school. The student may be in the Care Team and the Disciplinary system at the same time.

Members of the Care Team

The core Care Team is made up of staff that have direct involvement in the care issues of students:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Guidance Counsellor
- Learning Support Teacher
- Year Head and Tutor of a particular student when required
- A staff representative*

*The staff representative will be on a voluntary basis and will change each year

Confidentiality

An essential element of the Care Team is maintaining clarity around the boundaries of confidentiality. It is essential for all members of the team, as well as all staff and students, to understand the concept of confidentiality in regard to child protection guidelines. (c. f. Guidance & Counselling School Plan, Section 6, p. 27)

Communication

Clear communication is essential. A person who refers a student does not need to know the details of what has been discussed in relation to the student, but they need to be assured that the student is being cared for.

Essential Elements of a Care Team

- Child centred/ advocate for the student
- Non-judgmental
- Solution focused as opposed to problem focused.
- Supported by staff, senior management and BOM
- Optimistic and hopeful
- Accountable through record keeping

All partners in the school community have a responsibility to be observant of the care needs of the student. The process of referral into the care team will be outlined clearly to staff.

Referral system

It is in the interest of the student to have a clear referral system. Individual staff members need to trust their intuition regarding a student who needs referral. To avoid confusion the system already established in the school regarding referral should be maintained. This system is as follows: A staff member will refer a student directly to the Year Head who in turn will refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor who will then liaise with the relevant members of the care team. A staff member or parent may also refer a student to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Red and Amber lists

These lists are intended to inform the staff about students who are identified as requiring emotional support and to communicate the work of the care team. When a student is on either list, staff will be aware that a key care team member is dealing with that student. This list will also heighten the awareness of staff to any issues arising with the student in the classroom.

It is essential to note that even if a student is on the list that normal code of behaviour applies at all times.

Meetings

The ethos of consistent and regular meetings is central to ensuring the success of the care team. To formalise and emphasise care of the student, members of the care team will meet on a fortnightly basis or as required.

Record-keeping

The care team coordinates the care management strategies of the key personnel in the school therefore there is no need to keep detailed records. One form will be used to keep a record of meetings. (c. f. Appendix)

Evaluation

The team need to be reminded that they need to take care of themselves as well as the students. Reflection and evaluation are necessary. Evaluation forms will be used for this purpose at the end of the academic year.

Link with other policies in the school

The Care Team process will link in with the following policies already in existence in the school:

Code of Behaviour links the discipline structure to the work of the care team

Anti-Bullying Policy may link with the care team in supporting both the victim and the instigator

Critical Incident Policy. This is an important policy for the care team as it outlines procedures that a school uses when faced with a trauma such as death of a student.

Admissions Policy. It is important to name the care team as part of the school's commitment to caring for the student and to alert parents to the fact that those students can be referred for internal support.

Guidance Policy. The care team is a support to the work of the guidance counsellor.

Special Needs Policy. This policy reflects the fact that students attending learning support or who have special needs may need the support of the care team.

SPHE Policy. The social, personal and health education of students is an integral part of the curriculum and links in with the care team and guidance.

Staff Induction. All new staff members are trained in the method of referral and the relevance of the red and amber list.