

# **Pastoral Care Team Plans 2014-present**

## **2014-2015 (Bullying- Cyber Bullying)**

Following a review of the Pastoral Care provision conducted by the Principal through observation, discussion with Middle Management, discussion with Guidance Counsellors & the Pastoral Care Coordinator it was found that the weekly current weekly meeting of the three counsellors, Deputy Principal, SEN Coordinator, Pastoral Care Coordinator was not working to meet the needs of the student population. On review it was found that individual children in need were being discussed but that the group was too large and that the pastoral care needs of the whole school population were not being met fully. Modelling the NEPS Continuum of support it has been decided to split the group into the following:

**Care Team:** Consisting of Annette Hickey ( Counsellor), Dolorus Powell (Guidance Counsellor), Angela O'Connell (SEN Coordinator), Jerry Shanahan ( Deputy Principal) & Karen Steenson (Principal)

This team will meet weekly and review the needs of at risk children formulating plans of individual interventions.

**Pastoral Care Team:** Consisting of Moira O'Keeffe (Pastoral Care Coordinator), Karen Steenson (Principal), Carmel Maunsell (Guidance Counsellor), Brendan Mullan (Subject teacher), Sheena Hanrahan ( ASD teacher) & Angela O'Connell (SEN Coordinator).

This team will review and address the pastoral needs of the whole school population formulating plans for group interventions as needed.

## **November 2014:**

Following reports from a number of parents to the Year Heads and management team of Bullying & Harassment on Social Media sites the Pastoral Care Team have decided to focus on this theme for the year. It has been suggested that the team may take a theme each year based on issues that emerge for students socially & developmentally. It has been decided this year to concentrate on the issue of Cyber Bullying and research interventions for students and parents.

Action: Cyber Bullying Workshops were organised for all Junior Year groups with Dr.

A parent evening was also organised where Dr. Maureen Griffen UC spoke and gave advice to parents.

An Advice Sheet was developed and sent to each parent.

A HR Manager was brought in to speak to the Senior Cycle about the impact their behaviour on line could have on employment and on Bullying in the workplace.

The group decided it would be wise also to reiterate the message of safety online in all correspondence from the school coming up to the Summer holidays and again in August before our return.

A questionnaire was carried out and 73% of students stated that they had learned something new from the workshops and 61% stated that it would affect the way they behaved online.

The **Anti-Bullying Policy** was revisited and updated and ratified by the BOM.

**Anti-Bullying Charter** redesigned by Student Leadership group.

Revised Classrooms Rules poster redesigned by Student Leadership and displayed in all classrooms.

### **2015-2016 (Positivity & Resilience) Amber Flag**

Following the annual review of cases by the Care Team it was identified that there were a number of children struggling with Mental Health issues of varying degrees. Much discussion was had as to the lack of resilience amongst our young people and the lack of skills around the areas of positive Mental Health. The Care team suggested that the Pastoral Care team could look at the area of Resilience & Positivity for the coming Year. This was also supported by the impact of a suicide of one of our students last January.

**Amber Flag Proposal** - Raising awareness and understanding of mental health in our school

Promoting Positive Mental Health

“Talk, connect and share”

Developed by [www.suicideaware.ie](http://www.suicideaware.ie) and endorsed by:

- Cork Red FM
- Cork GAA
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors

Why promote positive mental health?

- Crises in mental health due to alcohol and substance abuse, self-harm and suicide
- Up to 40% of people with learning difficulties experience mental health issues compared to 25% of the general population

Positive mental health aims to:

- Promote mental health and wellbeing for all
- Prevent mental health problems through increasing awareness, social support, reducing risk factors such as racism, bullying and isolation
- Improving quality of life for students with mental health problems by promoting recovery through awareness and education

As a school how do we encourage our students to take control of their mental health?

- Being healthy is about physical and mental health

- Promoting positive mental health will have a positive effect on individuals and communities and reduce stigma associated with mental health
- Education and awareness programme of mental health can encourage many young people to be more open in talking about their own concerns as well as understanding the worries and anxieties of others

To this endeavour I wish to embark on the Amber Flag Initiative.

- Set up Amber Flag Project Team through volunteering or election of the student body
- Names of the team recorded on Form 1 at the start of each school year
- Team should represent a cross-section of the school community
- One staff member act as Co-Ordinator of the Amber Flag initiative
- Aim of team – promote Positive Mental Health in school
- Consult valuable professionals – Guidance Counsellors, SPHE teachers, HSE, Mental Health Nurse

Amber Flag Achievement Steps for Schools include the following:

- It is up to the school to decide how the team operates
- Records of meetings need to be maintained as evidence of the work of the team
- Next, the team audits the activities and services in the school that promote an ethos of Positive Mental Health. These are recorded on Form 2
- Then the team identify 3 goals/tasks to support/enhance the work that is already taking place in the school. These are recorded on Form 3. A Mental Health Awareness Day must be one of the 3 goals
  - The 3 goals/tasks must be completed in one school year
  - Once the goals have been decided upon an Application for the Amber Flag is made using Form 4
  - Towards the end of the school year a presentation of the Amber Flag will take place. The flag must be flown in a conspicuous place outside the school to convey the caring ethos of the school.
  - There is a small charge towards the cost of producing the flag

The Pastoral Care team have this year:

- gained our **Amber Flag** to be a school who looked after each other's Mental Health. This involved us doing a number of activities promoting Mental Health. Walk in my Shoes Campaign.
- During the Year the school Pastoral Care Team and Student Leadership group reviewed the Anti Bullying Policy and our revised version was ratified by the Board last Oct. We are using this week to re launch this new policy. The student Leadership team have also revised the Anti Bullying Charter and classroom rules displayed on the walls in each room and these more colorful modern versions will be delivered to each room this week.

- WE are anchoring the Cycle for Suicide this year also. We are eager to promote positivity and resilience in our students. WE did have a suicide in our school last year of one of our 6th years.
- We are experiencing a huge number of young people presenting with depression in the last number of years and we have an over loaded staff working to support families and students during this time. We are also struggling hugely in Clonmel with a lack of services to support Mental Health and the waiting lists.
- Visits from Alan Quinlan & Henry Shefflin who spoke to the school about Mental Health & getting up after a fall, resilience and knowing when to ask for help

**Review:**

**2016-2017: Healthy Choices (Substance Misuse)**

The theme for this year has arisen from the partnership with the community drugs based initiative. The schools in the locality are having an issue with drug dealers parking near the schools before school and after school. The management of the school has been in regular contact with the Gardai. The issue of weed has featured heavily in counselling sessions and the information coming from an number of sources is that it is second & third years that are the problem. S.P.H.E teacher have noted a rise in the normalising of weed amongst the students.

**Action:**

Survey conducted by Audra Cotter with 1st, 2nd & 3rd Years on student drug awareness & usage. Following this a programme was designed & delivered to all Junior cycle classes by Audra and her team. She then wrote a report on her findings with advice for the S.P.H.E Team to integrate into their programmes. She visited again in May for a follow up session.

She and the HSE drugs officer addressed the parents at an Parent Evening in April. 2017. In partnership with the school she worked with the pastoral Care team to revise **the Drugs Policy** and this will go to the BOM at the first meeting in Oct 2017 for ratification.

**Review:**

She will visit again in Sept 2017 to address the results of the survey concentrating particularly on Use of Energy Drinks, misinformation & Alcohol & where to go for help. This will happen in SPHE Classes.

**2017-2018 (Diversity & Inclusion) Yellow Flag****Proposal:**

Proposal for Wellbeing Team September 2017

**School Connectedness**

*Rationale:* Students are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours and succeed academically when they feel connected to school. Research has shown that young people who feel connected to their school are less likely to engage in many risk behaviours <sup>2</sup>, including early sexual initiation, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and violence and gang involvement. Students who feel connected to their school are also more likely to have better academic achievement, including higher grades, have better school attendance and stay in school longer. (American Psychological Association)

*Targeting:* School connectedness is particularly important for young people who are at increased risk for feeling alienated or isolated from others. Those at greater risk for feeling disconnected include students with disabilities, students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or question their sexual orientation, students who are homeless or any student who is chronically truant due to a variety of circumstances.

With this in mind I wish to embark of a program entitled:

**ACCEPTANCE WITHOUT EXCEPTION**

It entails:

1. Establishing a student Diversity committee (2 students per year) in order to provide them with the opportunity to raise awareness of issue they care about.
2. Each year identifying a focal group to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion and tolerance
3. Run an annual week of 'Acceptance Without Exception' campaign

4. During this week construct a bulletin board with information with regards to this group
5. Embark on an awareness campaign using a central art focal point constructed by the students
6. Invite speakers in to talk about issues that this focal group face and how to support change
7. Create lesson plans on the focus group and the issues/concerns they feel. Give this to SPHE, RE, CSPE teachers during a week to encourage more tolerant, informed attitudes and engaged members of society
8. Organise a fundraising initiative to contribute to a charity associated with the focus group
9. Begin a 'Your words matter' initiative in order to aid students to T.H.I.N.K (is it true, helpful, inspiring, necessary or kind) before they speak
10. Apply for the Yellow Flag Programme – promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity, for the year 2018-2019

All this will raise awareness of the minority group, spread information of supports and resources available associated with the issue, involve students in connecting with society and effecting change through fundraising, campaigning etc. It will create a school environment where each individual feels connected and responsible to each other. Teaching students about raising awareness will develop their advocacy skills and support them in making informed decisions with regards to behaviour and understand the consequences of actions/words.

### **2018-2019- Plan**

This year the Diversity Committee hopes to embark on 3 initiatives under the theme '***Many leaves, one tree***'. Though we are all individuals when we come together and support / celebrate our differences we enrich our community. The Committee has linked these initiatives to the new Indicators of Wellbeing all culminating in our Diversity Awareness Week in April 2019. As part of Wellbeing Indicators of the new Junior Cycle the indicator 'Connected' promotes students:

- (1) 'feeling connected to their school, their friends, community and the wider world'
- (2) 'understanding how their actions and interactions impact on their own wellbeing and that of others in local and global context'

The Indicator 'Resilient' encourages students to:

- (1) 'Know where they can go for help'

With these 2 indicators in mind the Committee would like to develop the following for our school community to benefit from:

### ● Living History Program

**How:** The Committee will research potential people in the community who they will interview during the year beginning after October mid term break. Potential Interviewees will range from a variety of cultural backgrounds, different nationalities / religions, sexual orientation and unique life experiences. From that list, in conjunction with management, the Committee will be assigned an individual every 2/3 weeks from the community who volunteers to be interviewed. The Committee will interview that person, either in person or through email, about their lives and events that have happened during their lives. The Committee will then write up about that person, detailing their events in their lives and trying to connect it, where possibly, to the curriculum eg. History, geography, CSPE, SPHE, Business etc. They will construct a poster of the interview + information researched and post it on the 'Living History' noticeboard for all students to read.

An extension of this would be as part of Diversity Awareness Week in April 2019 we could invite certain interviewees to give different talks to classes to raise awareness of Diversity. Speakers could share a bit about their culture, life experience or create some of their traditional food / music or celebrate a cultural holiday in class.

**Why:** This allows students the opportunity to get to know people within the community. It also allows members of the community to assist the school system and to get involved with the school. It involves people from the community that may not have been involved in the school system before.

### ● Create a Community Resource Map

The Committee will construct a visual representation of our community and the various skills people/organisations have to offer in order to understand what community resources are available. Where possible they will point out the materials people can supply at cost or for free, the time they can invest in projects, and how they can connect to curriculum, and classroom activities. We will include the networks they can utilize to raise awareness of the needs of local children and families. It is envisioned that this resource map will be used as a life long resource for students even after they finish school and embark on adulthood. It is envisioned that all students will be given their own individual community resource map during Diversity Awareness Week.

**Why:** This will offer students a quick reference guide of all the organisations in Clonmel where they can seek help / support for themselves or their families so they know where to go for help, in whatever shape/form, if they require it.

### ● Christmas Toy Appeal

Many organisations locally / nationally seek toys to be given to those in need whether to illness, homeless or crisis. Donating toys is a simple way to make a real difference in the lives of children, those who spend their Christmas in hospitals, refuge or who's parents struggle to afford presents. The Committee would like to visit the 2 primary schools in the Clonmel area to embark on this appeal as well as our own school. There are 2 types of toy appeals that the Committee can embark on either in conjunction or either/or.

- (1) Temple Street Christmas Toy Appeal - Specific presents can be bought for donation ranging in age from newborns to teenagers. Unfortunately they cannot accept used toys of any kind due to strict infection control guidelines.
- (2) Refuge Centers / Charity Shops – Donations of used toys. This is important in the run up to Christmas where many children will be brought new toys on Christmas Day often the old toys may be discarded. By donating these old toys we will encourage students to make room for the new toys that will be arriving and also feel that they have contributed to those who are not in as fortunate circumstances as they are.

Finally the Committee would then like to encourage each student to take a photo with the toy they are donating. Primary age students may like to write a note about a memory they have with the toy or imagine what fun another child can have with their toy. We can use this during our Diversity Awareness Week in April 2019 to make a collage – ‘The Tree of Giving’. It is proposed that a SPHE / Religion class will wrap each present and then write a Christmas good will message and attach it the present.

**Why:** Donation of toys, whether bought or given freely encourages students to feel connected to their community and helps them to understand how their actions/interactions can impact on the wellbeing of others, whether nationally or locally, as well as themselves.