Pastoral Care Policy

Summary

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Pastoral Care Policy

Preamble
The aim of the pastoral care programme of the Armidale School is to foster the emotional, physical, social and spiritual well being of each student in the school. The aim is for every student to be known and feel connected to The Armidale School and to particular staff members who may be their Housemaster, Director of Pastoral Care, Advisor, school counsellor, the school Chaplain or simply their classroom teacher.

The objects of this policy are to encourage students to:

- Be guided by their rights and responsibilities
- Be encouraged by positive affirmation and rewards
- Become involved in a range of activities within the school
- Reduce poor behaviour with fair and firm penalties and if poor behaviour persists
- Gain assistance from the school’s welfare and counselling resources, in cooperation with parents
- Enjoy a cooperative learning environment

Assisting students and working within the framework of the school safety net as well as working with parents is the foundation for the School’s pastoral care programme. The school safety net consists of Housemasters, Advisors, Counsellor, sport coaching staff, the Chaplain, the Deputy Headmaster and indeed their peers.

Pastoral care responsibilities mean showing a willingness to be an adult on whom boys may depend for support, someone who will listen, advise, encourage and help.

Structure
The welfare of students is the responsibility of no one person. All staff members are part of the welfare network and boys should feel free to talk to any staff member with whom they enjoy a good rapport. All staff share responsibility for the pastoral care of students but some have specific responsibilities.

Housemasters (Boarding) and Director of Pastoral Care (Day Houses)
Their primary responsibility is a pastoral one. They are expected to know their boys well and understand their needs. The role is a parental one, one of support and encouragement, sometimes correction, but always as a mentor rather than a monitor. They will need to give time to this pastoral role well beyond the time for administration and routine etc.

The Housemaster is responsible for the character of the house, for its tone and morale. School and house aims and individual needs can only be met in a positive climate

In boarding the Deputy Housemaster is expected to make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the house and to the well being of the members of that house. He or she should provide general support and assistance to the housemaster.

Advisors and Advisor groups
The staff at The Armidale School have many roles, teaching, coaching and involvement in the activities programme – and they advise. The last is a very important component of the overall role of staff within the school and should involve staff more closely with students than most interactions. In 2010 the Advisor System was introduced by giving current students the opportunity to select their Advisor who they will retain throughout their years at school. The groups are predominantly mixed in age groups form Years 9-12.
The advisor is an advocate for his students and is the connecting point between home and school and between the student and the faculty. The advisor can act as a mediator as well as a confidante and act in the student's interest in a general practical manner. It is vital that the advisor communicates with the parents of each of his students. The first contact should be an introduction at the beginning of Term One informing the parents that their son is in their particular advisor group. This is the first and most important step in establishing a partnership based on mutual support for the student.

A fundamental aspect of the role of the advisor is to assist his students in the long term by having those conversations from which a young person learns how to respect rules, how to judge the effects of their actions on other people and thus be a positive presence in the life of The Armidale School.

The interaction that develops between the advisor and his students should lead to the potential formation of a more long-lasting and meaningful relationship between a student, staff member and, ultimately parents.

**Advisor Meetings**

The underlying function of advisor meetings is more important than just gathering together for administrative purposes, they enable the advisor to establish an informal relationship with each of the boys in the group. Students should be encouraged to support the educational endeavours of the school and assume some responsibility for their engagement in the many opportunities on offer. The quality of life in the school community is the responsibility of all students.

**Chaplain**

The chaplain is expected to be involved in a more general pastoral ministry to the students, staff and parents. This is a nebulous responsibility, which cannot be defined but means time spent informally getting to know individuals.

It also means being available for consultation, crisis or referral. The chaplain is expected to be teacher and a youth worker i.e. a person who has a real love for working with children and can reach and communicate with them. He will work closely and consult with the Headmaster, the Deputy Headmaster, the School Counsellor, Dean of Students and Housemasters.

**School Counsellor**

There are three main areas of responsibility in this role:

Psychological Counselling and referral for student’s, parents and staff with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention. Coordination of the Support Services centre linking with support services and curriculum areas in the school. Initiating and supporting mental health promotion and prevention programmes such as Mind Matters into the school.

**Senior Students**

Support and lead younger students through a variety of activities such as House events, the Cadet Unit, school leadership positions and peer group mentoring.

**Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster**

Ultimately responsible for the welfare of students attending The Armidale School.
Student welfare is not conducted in isolation. Often the problem may first become apparent to the Director of Studies, a Cadet CUO or a sport coach. The team approach is then applied; all of the staff concerned then work together to assist the boy using the skills and experience of a diverse range of staff members. Invariably the most effective method of helping boys is to draw on this diversity of expertise found within the school.