

Pastoral Care Policy



OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE PARRAMATTA

Policy Objectives

- OLMC staff to maintain an environment of care in the context of relationship: relationship with God, others and self.
- OLMC staff to create a positive atmosphere, whereby the self-esteem of all members of our community is enhanced.
- OLMC is committed to implement formal structures as well as informal opportunities for care of this community.
- At OLMC we exercise and instil the values of mercy and justice in communication, motivation and discipline practices.

Policy Statement

- Pastoral Care involves all members of OLMC and is evidence of the Gospel precepts of love, mercy and justice within our school.
- Pastoral Care at OLMC refers to the total care of the student. It embraces all aspects of school life, the academic, emotional, physical, spiritual and social.
- The Pastoral Care structure encourages relationships built on respect, communication and an approach to student management that promotes the dignity of the person. The structure enables each student to be cared for as an individual, and places an emphasis on affirming the good qualities of each student and encouraging them to grow and assume responsibility for their own personal development.
- To support and enhance the pastoral structure, we believe that it is the responsibility of all staff members to contribute in appropriate ways, according to their roles and responsibilities, and to provide support and affirmation to all students while they are members of the community.
- Pastoral Care at OLMC supports the thesis that the school climate exercises an influence on learning. It is believed that the level of performance of all students is improved by a positive approach to learning and positive relationships within and outside the school.
- Pastoral Care at OLMC permeates every phase of the school day. Our school provides many formal and informal opportunities for teacher/student and student/student relationships. It is within these relationships that we exhibit interest in each other and value people as individuals and our most precious possessions.
- Complaints – all complaints regarding the pastoral care of students will be dealt with as per the OLMC Resolution of Complaints Policy. This policy can be accessed on the College website.

Supporting Procedures

At OLMC programs, structures and specialist personnel ensure that specific needs are met in a systematic fashion

Programs and Structures

At OLMC there is a structured program of Pastoral Care to enhance and facilitate opportunities for the creation and maintenance of the caring environment. This includes:

- Students belong to a Homeroom and a Year Group (horizontal structure);
- Homeroom groups meet daily from 8.45am – 9am;
- Homerooms have one Pastoral Teacher to a ratio of approximately 20 students;
- Pastoral Care Year Teams are established at each year level and led by a Pastoral Leader;
- Pastoral teams meet on a regular basis to develop and refine Pastoral Care programs which are based on the identified needs of the students;
- The Pastoral Care program is structured horizontally to meet the specific needs of students at each year level and is implemented over the whole year with approximately 5 one hour lessons per term;
- The formal Pastoral Care Program includes activities on mindfulness, self-esteem, safe behaviours, anti-bullying, study skills, mental health issues, social justice, student leadership, and camps;
- The student leadership program allows students to develop their leadership talents and potential (refer to the Student Leadership Policy);
- The Big Sister/Little Sister and Peer Support Programs gives seniors added responsibility, promotes leadership and aids the Year 6-7 transition program;
- The Student Management Policy aims to develop a high degree of self-discipline and self-respect that allows students to maximise their potential;
- The partnership with parents/carers permits both informal and formal connections through activities such as Parent Teacher meetings, College Masses, OLMC Parents and Friends meetings, Information evenings;
- The Induction Program for staff and students ensures that all members of the community are made to feel welcome and at ease in their new environment; and
- Staff is made aware of their responsibilities with respect to Pastoral Care at induction, through policies such as this located on the staff portal, as well as through professional learning, fortnightly Pastoral Team meetings.

Responsibilities

The Pastoral Leadership Team consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Director of Pastoral Care, Assistant Leader of Pastoral Care, Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Pastoral Leaders and College Counsellors.

- The purpose of this group is to address issues related to the pastoral care of students. This is achieved by ensuring consistency across the year levels regarding the College's expectations and by working collaboratively to ensure key events and activities are appropriately and effectively organised.

The Principal and Deputy Principal are responsible for:

- Ensuring pastoral care permeates the whole school;
- Taking responsibility for student welfare and are involved in all the decision making processes concerning the future of students;
- Meeting regularly with the Director of Pastoral Care and Pastoral Leaders to ensure implementation of College policies related to student welfare;
- Providing assistance with the management of students referred to them as per the Student Behaviour Plan (see Student Management Policy);
- Ensuring the curriculum and subject policies reflect and support the Pastoral Care Policy of the school; and
- Selecting staff who have a willingness to endorse this policy.

The Director of Pastoral Care is responsible for:

- Facilitating the pastoral life of the College, providing leadership in pastoral issues and is the key point of reference for pastoral and welfare concerns;
- Liaising with and supporting Pastoral Leaders and other staff in their guidance roles;
- Co-operating with and advising teachers of methods of student management; and
- Recommending and referring students to the College Counsellor and to outside agencies for counselling.

The Assistant Leader of Pastoral Care is responsible for:

- Overseeing the programming of the formal Pastoral Care lessons; supporting Pastoral Leaders in the delivery of well-resourced and contemporary topics;
- Acting as a guidance and support person for Pastoral Leaders; and
- The organization of student related pastoral activities e.g. student vaccination program and initiatives such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence;

The Pastoral Leader is responsible for:

- The overall coordination of their team of Pastoral Teachers and the welfare and management of the students in their year group;
- Supporting and relating to students both formally and informally, thus fostering an atmosphere of trust and responsibility;
- The organization of year group activities e.g. camp;
- Liaising with parents on matters of student welfare;
- Liaising with Pastoral and Subject Teachers on the welfare of their students;
- Acting as a guidance and support person for Pastoral Teachers;
- Overseeing and evaluating the formal Pastoral Care Program within the year group in consultation with the Assistant Pastoral Care Coordinator;
- Liaising with Leaders of Learning regarding any ongoing management/discipline problems.

The Pastoral Teacher is responsible for:

- The effective conduct of their Homeroom and for the nurturing and care of each student;
- Assisting the Pastoral Leader with the organisation and management of the year group activities and events e.g. camp;
- Organising activities which celebrate various events in the lives of students in their Homeroom;
- Ensuring that students have opportunities to interact with each other in Homeroom and Pastoral Care lessons;
- Liaising with the Pastoral Leader regarding student welfare;
- Ensuring that prayer is an integral part of Homeroom;
- Following up student absences from school of 3 or more days where no explanation has been provided by the parents/carers and ensuring an explanation is provided for unexplained absences in <7 days; and
- Attending to administrative duties referred to in the role description.

The Subject Teacher is responsible for:

- Catering for individual needs of students by using various teaching methods to challenge and stimulate;
- Providing opportunities for students to relate and express themselves in a fair and just manner;
- Liaising with the Leader of Learning regarding teaching methods, strategies and classroom management.

The Leader of Learning is responsible for:

- Liaising with subject teachers and taking responsibility for teaching methods, strategies and classroom management;
- Reporting to Pastoral Leaders any ongoing management/discipline problems.

The College Counsellors are responsible for:

- Giving professional counselling and guidance to students with particular social and emotional needs; and
- Liaising with and supporting the Pastoral Leadership Team with the care of students.