PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral care system of St Mary’s is based on the school's philosophy that each student is known and nurtured as an individual.

It is our intention that we provide a safe and healthy environment for students and that policies and procedures related to the care, safety and welfare of students are in accordance with any applicable State and Commonwealth laws. Staff know of their obligations under those laws. In particular, St Mary’s teachers are required by law to report any suspected instances of sexual abuse of students to the Department of Child Protection. This is known as Mandatory Reporting. The school policy requires non-teaching staff to report suspected instances through the Principal, who will then report to the Department of Child Protection.

Structure

When a girl enters the secondary school at St Mary's, she is placed in a small pastoral care group, or Link, in the care of a Link teacher. Each Link is made up of between fifteen and eighteen girls, from Years 8 - 12 (three or four from each year) so that the senior students are able to act as role models and mentors for the younger girls. All are girls from the same House with the result that the Link groups help to foster house spirit and participation in all aspects of school life. Ideally, a student will remain in the same Link, with the same Link teacher, for all of the years she attends the secondary school.

The Link teacher will meet the Link group every day. On each day of the six-day cycle this will be a short meeting, for ten minutes at the beginning of the day, and on one day of the cycle it will be for an additional twenty-five minute period, just before lunch.

The Pastoral Care Team

While all the members of the school staff embrace the philosophy of caring for the individual, so that it is a part of every class and activity, there are some staff members whose roles include specific responsibilities with regard to pastoral care.

The Dean of Students has overall responsibility for the pastoral care system of the school, co-ordinating all the staff (and services) who are concerned with the well-being, behaviour and progress of each individual student.

The Year Teacher is concerned with the needs of students as members of a year, as well as with their needs as individuals.

The Link Teacher is concerned with each student as an individual. She/he will be aware of the student's academic progress and extra-curricular involvement, will be a source of information, guidance and advice, and will be concerned with the student's general well-being and sense of belonging within the St Mary’s community.

The School Counsellors provide personal counselling, advice and support for individual students (and parents) in relation to any of their concerns and problems, including study skills and career advice.

The Chaplain is a source of spiritual and personal support and guidance, not only for individual students and parents, but for the school community as a whole.
The **Head of Boarding** looks after the welfare and concerns of the boarders, not only in Anne Symington House, but also by communicating with the girls' teachers, Year Teachers and the Dean of Students in relation to the boarders' interests and progress.

The **Dean of Curriculum** is responsible for the academic programme of the school, including courses available, course content and programming, and School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA).

The **Dean of Administration** is responsible for the timetable and each individual student's subject selection.

**Contacting the School - Who to contact**

In matters to do with pastoral care it is probably easiest for parents to make contact with the **Dean of Students** or the **Year Teacher**. The **Link Teacher** is another possible point of contact, although sometimes a little more difficult to reach because she/he is more frequently in the classroom and not near a phone.

Any of these people will be able to answer your queries or concerns, and/or pass them on to appropriate staff members, who will then contact you.

We are sensitive to the need for confidentiality, and will only pass on information when it is agreed with parents that it is in the best interests of their daughter to do so. Of course, parents are always able to make confidential appointments directly with the **Counsellors**.

In matters to do with a student's subjects and timetable the **Dean of Administration** is the best person to contact, or the **Dean of Curriculum**, in relation to programmes of work, course content and teaching matters.

As **Principal**, Mrs Thomson is concerned with, has overall responsibility for and is vitally interested in all aspects of school life, particularly the needs of the students. With regard to any very serious matters, parents may wish to contact her. In Mrs Thomson's absence, Ms Karmelita as **Deputy Principal** should be contacted.

**When to make contact**

Contact the school as soon as you have a question, concern or problem. Immediate contact, for information, discussion or reassurance, will often prevent the development of a more serious issue.