

Confey College Chaplaincy Policy **March 2025**

<u>Name of School:</u> Confey College	<u>Address:</u> Riverforest, Leixlip, Co.Kildare	<u>School Contact No:</u> 01 6245322	<u>School Roll No:</u> 70691C
<u>Name of Chaplain:</u> Brid Kenny	<u>Principal:</u> Mike O’Byrne	<u>Deputy Principal(s):</u> Mary Cullen Brid Keely Aisling Greene	
<u>School Mission Statement:</u> Confey College is a co-educational, multi-denominational Post Primary School, which shares the core values of our patron KWETB We believe we can make a difference by providing a quality education to our students in a caring, inclusive environment. We strive to provide a holistic approach to achieving excellence, enabling students to develop as mature, well-rounded, informed and valued members of society. We value respect, fairness, equality and everyone’s right to be themselves. We aim to help and empower our students to become their best selves and to appreciate the rights of others. We strive for kind, collaborative relationships between our students, our staff and our parents. We educate our students not only for now, but also for life’s journey.			

Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and TRUSTEESHIP

ETBs are statutory authorities, which have responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions. ETBs manage and operate second-level schools, further

education training colleges, multi-faith community national schools and a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes.¹

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) offers a vision of education with clearly expressed values. Their vision is about “Nurturing a learning community, enriching educational experience, empowering the pursuit of excellence, whilst leading a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in the Irish Education and training system”. The values that they offer are Respect, Inclusion, Learner Focused, Professional, Dynamic, and Integrity.²

Confey College is a designated community college in KWETB and is under the trusteeship of the Archbishop’s House in Dublin Diocese. The BOM has representatives from the Archbishop’s House and Church of Ireland on the Board of Management.

Pastoral care is extremely important in the school. “Pastoral care is a person-centred, holistic approach to care that complements the care offered by other helping disciplines while paying particular attention to spiritual care.”³ The school also has a core pastoral care team: chaplain, two guidance counsellors, a team of Additional Educational Needs teachers, Year Heads, and a Senior Management Team, which includes the Principal and three Deputy Principals. This team meets once a week for the Pastoral Care Meeting.

Confey College “is a co-educational post-primary school. The school has a long tradition of excellence in education. The school has a strong ethos of RESPECT FOR ALL, which is on the crest of the school uniform. ‘Respect for All’ underpins a caring learning environment in which each student is challenged to reach their full potential. We are proud of the broad curriculum we offer, our excellent academic results, our first-class facilities and our wide range of co-curricular activities.”⁴ The school has a very diverse population with many nationalities, faiths and non-faiths in the school. It has over 900 students and 70 staff.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAPLAIN IN CONFHEY COLLEGE

The role of the chaplain in Confey College is essentially one of presence and availability to the school community. “Presence is about an ability to “be with” another person or an ability to enter the space of another person. Presence is about “being” rather than “doing”. Presence is about an inner capacity of “being with” and resisting the urge to always “fix”.”⁵ Our ability to be present in a context comes from deep within ourselves. It is radiating out of our experiences, our faith, our

¹“About ETBI : ETBI”, *Etbi.ie*, 2020, <https://www.etbi.ie/about-etbi/>

²“About Us - Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board”, *Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board*, 2020, <http://kildarewicklow.etb.ie/about-us/>, Accessed 10 November 2019.

³ David Pohlmann, *School Chaplaincy An Introduction*, (Eugene, Oregon, Wipf and Stock publishers, 2013), p.16.

⁴ Confey Leixlip, *Confey College Leixlip*, 2020, <http://www.confeycollege.org/>, Accessed 20 November, 2019.

⁵ Edited by Thomas G. Grenham, *Pastoral Ministry for Today, Who Do you say that I am? Conference papers 2008* (Dublin, Veritas, 2009) P.41

pain and our joy. The chaplain will support the students as they navigate their way through a key developmental stage in their lives. It is important to note that the chaplain will also be a presence to the staff in school in their professional and personal lives by being available to them.

“The chaplain has the privilege of walking part of life’s journey with each individual. This is characterised by respect, support, hope and challenge”⁶

The chaplain animates the ritual and spiritual life of the school year. These may include the 1st Year Welcome Night, the Winter Wellbeing concert with 1st year and the 6th Year Graduation.

The chaplain is present and available in the school in a pastoral capacity. This is about ‘entering the trenches or the mineshaft that is the human condition and coming face to face with situations and differences of all kinds: culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, and so on.’⁷ On a day-to-day level, a chaplain may engage in one to one pastoral counselling with students. This happens with the expectation that a student will be referred on to external services such as the GP, CAMHS, NEPS, Jigsaw, Insync and Pieta House should the need arise. The chaplain will also link in with and communicate with parents. In the case of a child protection or child welfare issue the chaplain will report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person (Principal) or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy Principal).

The chaplain is also available and present to staff members and may spend time in the staff room in order to be available to them. The chaplain may attend funerals of close relatives of students and close relatives of staff members. They may also supervise on corridors in order to be present and available to the students. They often go to matches with the students and many other school events.

The chaplain builds a prefect/mentor team from 5th year in order to work with 1st years. The prefects engage in a number of activities with the new group from Day 1. They help our 1st years find their classrooms and help settle them in on a day that can be ‘confusing, overwhelming, nerve-wrecking, exciting and interesting’. The prefects will give them a tour of the school on their first day and help reassure them around any questions they may have. Prefects will engage in a number of activities with them during the first term in class, they will work with them for their Welcome Night and go ice-skating with them before Christmas. Prefects may be trained to give a talk to the 1st years on the anti-bullying policy alongside the chaplain in the school. They will help them understand a definition of bullying, the different types of bullying, the impact bullying can have on the victim and procedures in the school when alleged bullying is reported to the school.

The chaplain will also have a number of hours of teaching Religious Education in a school. Full time chaplains teach 4 hours of the subject. This is to maintain contact with the students and to be seen as a member of staff. “There is an educational role for the chaplain in teaching students about the beliefs of other faiths, comparing and contrasting the different religious views of students in

⁶Luke Monahan SM and Caroline Renehan , *The Chaplain: A Faith Presence in the School Community* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1998), p. 13.

⁷Thomas G Grenham, 'The Intercultural Reality of Pastoral Presence', in *Pastoral Ministry for Today, 'Who Do You Say That I Am?'* Conference Papers 2008, ed. by THomas G Grenham(Dublin: Veritas, 2009), p. 50.

the school in a safe environment, teaching about inclusion and generally creating a school atmosphere which values and is interested in diversity.”⁸

⁸ Áine Moran, *The Rationale for School Chaplaincy in Ireland*, (Dublin: Mater Dei Institute of Education, 2014), p.32.