

## **Pastoral Care**

This morning I wish to talk about Pastoral Care.

The term Pastoral Care relates to the idea of support for one another and in particular for those in who are in need. Systems of pastoral care can be found in all countries and cultures and can be traced back to the early days of humanity. Indeed, in ancient times elderly people in a community, as well as parents, would take on the responsibility of looking after the young.

In the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the Good Shepherd looking after and caring for His people. Jesus is seen to be like a shepherd, out in the fields, keeping watch over his flock of sheep and rescuing those who are in difficulty. Indeed the term pastoral is derived from the Latin word for shepherd or herdsman.

Pastoral Care in a modern setting normally involves a group of trained care workers who support people during times of trouble, pain, depression and grief. This support can also extend to sharing the joy of somebody's successes or achievements.

In Christian Churches around the world such pastoral care has traditionally been the responsibility of the Priest or Chaplain or to others in the congregation who receive special training. Sometimes it involves visiting a person's home or meeting them at a place where they feel comfortable and secure. On many occasions, this pastoral care is as simple as listening to another person, supporting them in their time of need, encouraging them to look positively to the future, and often just being a friend.

In schools across Hong Kong there are many adults charged with the responsibility of providing Pastoral Care. Each teacher has a duty to look after the well-being of students who fall under their care. In our school community we have additional pastoral carers: the Chaplain, the Guidance and Discipline Teams, the Social Workers, the school psychologist, the Prefects, the Peer-Mentors and others. Furthermore, each of you should care for your classmates and for others in our community.

St. Paul's College is a caring Christian school. Our aim is to provide a well disciplined, happy and safe environment in which boys can develop life-long practices of proper conduct and behaviour. At our school we are committed to an integrated whole-school approach to Pastoral Care. It is our aim that through the pastoral care system each of you will become more self-reliant and disciplined.

We expect you to show courtesy and consideration to others; to reflect a pride in your dress and appearance; and to conduct yourselves properly both inside and outside the school campus. For our part, the teachers will ensure that the problems and difficulties you might experience are dealt with in a sympathetic and professional manner.

At this time of a new school year I remind every one of the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities that underpin the Pastoral Care system in our school and which you can find on page 26 of the College Handbook.

The aims of our school rules are to make each person aware of the value of self-control and to develop a sense of responsibility for their own conduct and for the well being of others. Rules are established as guidelines for behaviour and should lead the student to be able to distinguish between freedom and license. Within a community, freedom can never mean complete liberty for the individual to do as they please, as they must be aware of the effect of any of their actions on others.

The Charter of Rights and Responsibilities applies to students, staff and parents/guardians. Let me tell you what is written in our Charter.

- We have the right to be respected. Therefore it is our responsibility to respect the rights and feelings of others.
- We have the right to a clean, healthy and safe environment. Therefore it is our responsibility to respect and protect our environment.
- We have the right to physical and emotional health. Therefore, it is our responsibility to make decisions and take actions that are in the best interest of our well being.
- We have the right to learn. Therefore it is our responsibility to actively contribute to building the best learning environment for ourselves and others.

So how do we go about ensuring that the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities applies daily in our College. Well, there are certain actions that each person in this Hall can adopt immediately.

1. Treating each other with respect and dignity.
2. Behaving in a manner which does not distract, disrupt, offend or endanger others.
3. Respecting and obeying the regulations that govern the school and community.
4. Promoting a healthy working and learning environment.
5. Demonstrating patience and understanding towards all members of the school.
6. Acting in ways that respect the physical and emotional well being of ourselves and others.
7. Honouring commitments and making good use of time.
8. Respecting property and equipment which belong to the school and others.

The Pastoral Care system that operates in our College is closely linked to the Charter of Rights and responsibilities. We all want SPC to be a great school where teachers and boys live and work together in harmony. However, this can only be achieved if each boy understands and appreciates the needs of others and tries his very best to uphold the spirit of the Charter.

*Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4*

Dr. J.R. Kennard