

# School Retreats Policy



"Live as free people"

## St Peter's Community School

Approved November 2017

## Scope

Retreats are a part of St. Peter's spiritual engagement with young people and are organised for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year group as part of the Religious Education (RE) programme.

## Rationale

To go on a retreat is a special event in a person's life. It can be an enriching experience, to move away from a time from the hustle and bustle of school and everyday life, to find for a short while, a space for prayer, peace and tranquillity. A retreat is recognised as an opportunity to enhance the spiritual, emotional and social development of young people.

## Introduction

Our retreats take place in the school itself or in a retreat centre. Partners in the process of organising and delivering youth retreats include:

- School staff i.e. the School Principal, RE Teachers, Chaplain
- Retreat facilitator/team
- Students

## Guiding Principles

1. Youth retreats should offer positive faith experiences for young people.
2. Those involved in youth retreat work must have appropriate qualifications. The team leader, at least, should have a qualification, preferable a primary degree or equivalent, in theology, spirituality or religious education.
3. Retreat facilitators/team members should have training and/or accredited experience in the organisation and running of youth retreats. They should attend ongoing supervision, either personally or in group.
4. A contract should be agreed between the school and the retreat providers, clearly stating the purpose and boundaries of the retreat, what is appropriate and what is not acceptable as part of the experience.
5. Retreats should be carefully planned and an outline of the programme submitted to the teacher in charge prior to commencement.
6. There will be a liaising between the teacher in charge and the retreat facilitator prior to, on the day in question and in a follow-up review of the retreat.
7. Youth retreats are not occasions for individual counselling or inappropriate personal sharing. Care should be exercised that young people who may require individual counselling or the intervention of designated personnel for safeguarding children are brought in due course to the attention of relevant staff.
8. Retreats with peers are not occasions for young people to share what might make them vulnerable or render them subject to peer pressure or amusement. Respect for the individual person must always be paramount.
9. All persons attending the retreat, including team members, should sign in/out of the centre where the retreat takes place. Copies of this log should be retained by the school and the retreat team.
10. The teachers involved must evaluate the experience and pass this written evaluation to the Principal.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE**

- Retreat personnel must have been recruited and vetted in accordance with Church and State guidelines (Garda and PSNI vetting and certification).
- All young people, under the age of 18, attending retreats must have written permission from parents or guardians.
- If disclosures that create concern occur during the retreat the team must follow the school's guidelines and report to the school's designated liaison officer for safeguarding children.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **School Principal**

- To ensure that all necessary protocols relating to good practice and to safeguarding children and young people are in place.
- To Review summary reports and evaluations of retreats delivered.

### **Teacher in Charge of Retreat**

- To negotiate with the retreat facilitator before, during and after the retreat.
- To check credentials of the facilitator/team.
- To check that retreat facilitator and team are familiar with and committed to school's guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and disclosure of abuse.
- To provide lists of names and relevant information regarding participants (e.g. health and safety concerns, recent events) to the retreat facilitator/team, having due regard for confidentiality.
- To ensure the availability of first aid.
- To present a summary report, together with an evaluation to the Principal.

### **Retreat Facilitator/Team**

- To present an authentic account of themselves and their retreat programme to the teacher in charge.
- To fill in the declaration form prior to the retreat – See Appendix 1
- To familiarise participants at the start of each day, in an age-appropriate way, with the purpose and boundaries of the retreat.
- To observe good practice in all matters relating to the retreat.
- To engage only in appropriate sharing at all times

### **Students**

- To co-operate with and show respect for the retreat facilitator/team, teacher in charge and fellow participants in the course of the retreat day.

## Appendix 1 – Declaration Form for Retreat Teams

St. Peter's ask that prospective retreat team facilitators complete the following documentation in advance of any retreat being organised.

### Retreat Team

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Leader/Director

Name	Accreditation
_____	_____

### Team Members

Name	Accreditation
1. _____	_____

Name	Accreditation
2. _____	_____

Name	Accreditation
3. _____	_____

Name	Accreditation
4. _____	_____

Name	Accreditation
5. _____	_____

Is each team member conversant with all relevant child protection policies? Yes  No

Please confirm that each member of the team will implement the above policies

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does each team member comply with vetting arrangements for child protection in accordance with Church and State Guidelines? Yes  No

## Appendix 2 – Retreat Day Report Form

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Retreat: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

### Retreat Team Members

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

### Retreat Theme

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Liturgies Conducted

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Other Activities

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Summary of Student Evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: .....(Facilitator) Date: .....

Signed: .....(Teacher) Date: .....

Signed: .....(Principal) Date: .....

## Retreat Policy

### To be completed and signed by the teacher organising the retreat

- Facilitators must have appropriate qualifications, training and have been recruited/vetted in accordance with Church and State Guidelines. Credentials have been checked by the teacher and written confirmation if filed.
- I have checked that the team and facilitator(s) are familiar with the school's guidelines on safeguarding children and disclosure of abuse.
- The programme and an outline of the purpose and boundaries of the retreat was given to and agreed with me prior to commencement and the retreat.
- Written permission from parents was obtained for each student under the age of eighteen.
- A log of attendance is retained by the school including the names of the students and the facilitators.
- I have evaluated the experience and given a summary report to the principal.
- The declaration and report forms are completed (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Policy)
- All relevant documentation is filed in the school office

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher

Date \_\_\_\_\_