
Belfast Royal Academy

per vias sapientiae



Health and Wellbeing Policy

September 2025

Title	Health and Wellbeing Policy
Summary	Guidance for members of staff and pupils regarding: Health and Wellbeing ethos and procedures in Belfast Royal Academy
Purpose	To embed the concept that the 'Wellbeing' of all staff (teaching and support) and pupils should be at the heart of policy and practice.
Operational Date	September 2025
Next Review Date	September 2028
Author	Senior Teacher for Pastoral Care
Reviewed and Approved by Board of Governors	September 2025

To be posted on School website	Yes
Date and version posted	September 2025

HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Belfast Royal Academy recognises that, in order to ensure a thriving and dynamic learning community, the wellbeing of both pupils and staff should be at the heart of policy and practice. The Solihull Approach has been introduced with bespoke training for all staff. Wellbeing in school is underpinned by the shared and consistent engagement by staff, pupils, and parents of the Solihull Approach. Belfast Royal Academy was awarded the Carnegie Mental Health Gold Award in 2023.

1. Health and Wellbeing of Staff

The wellbeing of pupils depends centrally on the wellbeing of staff and therefore the school seeks to ensure that consideration of staff wellbeing is embedded in all areas of school life.

Members of staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. The Board of Governors takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty. These include:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Flexible Working Hours Policy

Other policies and procedures contribute to staff wellbeing by providing certainty, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff in different contexts, including:

- Salary Policy
- Attendance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Mediation Procedure
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- A Shared Professional Ethos

All Policies are published on the school website. The Staff Handbook provides easy reference to a wide range of information needed at different times by employees. All roles and responsibilities in the School are clearly defined in the management structure and in job descriptions.

The Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring a safe working environment. Appropriate risk assessments should be carried out and resulting recommendations actioned. Risk Assessments are completed and reviewed periodically by the Health and Safety Committee.

The Principal (supported by other members of SLT) is responsible for ensuring that school organisation takes due account of the need to promote staff wellbeing, for example:

- making provision for strong channels of communication with staff;
- considering and implementing changes in the organisation of work to try to forestall or solve difficulties that may arise;
- making individual interventions such as short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans and longer-term reasonable adjustments to work.

The Principal, Vice-Principals, Head of Finance and Corporate Services and other members of SLT encourage an atmosphere in which members of staff (teaching and support) feel comfortable in asking for help when it is needed. They seek to be sensitive to and to recognise early any factors in an employee's life that might precipitate stress-related issues. They act in a timely, supportive and proportionate manner when concerns arise. Staff are also not required to sign in or out.

Inspire Workplaces is a mental health charity which operates a free service in order to help members of staff be resilient as they tackle the demands of work and life. They are able to offer staff a professional support service as they understand the pressures and stresses that can impact on staff both inside and outside the workplace. Worries about relationships, money, legal issues, family etc. For free, confidential and immediate support call 0808 800 0002. Posters/Flyers are available from the Staffroom/Staff Workroom and further information is available from their website: <https://www.inspirewellbeing.org/workplaces>

A Staff Wellbeing Committee, chaired by the Senior Teacher for Pastoral Care, including members from all areas of school life, provides a formal mechanism for promoting staff wellbeing. **Appendix 1** outlines some of its work.

2. Health and Wellbeing of Pupils

Belfast Royal Academy recognises the link between physical and mental health and the ability to engage successfully in learning.

The school recognises the importance of promoting health and wellbeing through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, pupils should develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes necessary for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future.

Although all areas of health and wellbeing are firmly interlinked with one another, the main strands are seen as:

- Mental, emotional and social wellbeing (including use of electronic media) – **Appendix 3**;
- Resilience;
- Developing a 'Mind to be kind';
- Physical education, physical activity and sport;
- Food and health;
- Avoidance of substance misuse (over-the-counter and prescribed medicines, alcohol, drugs, tobacco and solvents);
- Examination stress.

Appendix 2 outlines the provision which the school makes in each area through curriculum subjects, extra-curricular activities and Assemblies.

Where school staff address an aspect of health and wellbeing, the school will ensure that they are properly equipped and trained to do so.

Some aspects of health and wellbeing will be addressed by outside organisations with particular specialisms e.g. Jigsaw CCC, TAMHI, Streetbeat, YeHa, Emotional Wellbeing Teams in Schools etc. Where this is the case, the school will ensure that the material covered is appropriate by meeting the organisation in advance and discussing and/or viewing the presentation material.

The school also has a Pupil Wellbeing Committee which provides a forum for pupils to highlight areas of concern and to develop initiatives for promoting pupil wellbeing.

Appendix 1 The Staff Wellbeing Committee

The Staff Wellbeing Committee is the main consultative body on staff wellbeing issues. It is chaired by the Senior Teacher for Pastoral Care and includes representatives of teaching and support staff. It meets twice per term and is informed by wider consultation with staff. The Staff Wellbeing Committee seeks to provide a forum for raising concerns regarding matters which may be having a negative effect of staff wellbeing and feeds back to SLT, as well as taking a lead on organising initiatives to promote the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. These include:

- Ensuring a calendar for the school year which is conducive to good health through consultation with staff regarding the organisation of holidays;
- Ensuring there is a staff wellbeing component to at least one staff day per year;
- Minimising the number of evenings where staff are required to come in to school;
- Organising health checks for staff;
- Organising influenza vaccinations for all staff;
- Promoting and organising Staff challenges during Wellbeing week;
- In conjunction with the Staffroom Committee and Principal, organising treats for all staff throughout the year;
- Sourcing outside catering for August Staff Days;
- Implementing Staff wellbeing challenges throughout the year e.g. 100 Day Challenge, Lockdown challenge, Project ReStart Relaxation challenge, Departmental Trivial Pursuit quiz, Staff Bingo, 'Yes Day', 'Step into Spring';
- Sourcing prizes for staff initiatives;
- Organising the 'Thank you' box and raffles;
- Annual Staff Wellbeing questionnaire;
- Staff counselling services provided by Inspire Workplaces and Jigsaw CCC;
- Cycle to work scheme;
- Enhancement of school facilities, including renovation of staff toilets.

Appendix 2 Wellbeing provision for pupils through the curriculum or extra-curricular activities

This lists the wellbeing provision which the school makes through curriculum subjects, extra-curricular activities and Assemblies.

- Increase in counselling provision via Familyworks and Jigsaw CCC, as well as our Mentoring service via Streetbeat and YeHa;
- Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Extensive list of extra-curricular activities;
- Pupil Wellbeing Committee;
- Pupil and School Council;
- Honours system;
- Merit system with termly prizes;
- Organisation of a themed Wellbeing Week with appropriate activities;
- External speakers at Assemblies/workshops e.g. Eating disorders NI, TAMHI, Jigsaw CCC;
- Organisation of specialist workshops e.g. Examination stress;
- PLACE programme in conjunction with YeHa for Form V pupils;
- Mentoring programme in conjunction with TAMHI for LVI pupils;
- House System;
- Pupil questionnaires i.e. 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion', 'Pupil Wellbeing', 'Mindfulness' etc.;
- Stress Control in Schools programme;
- Pastoral Care Google Classroom;
- Enhancement of school site i.e. Careers Library, Jackson Suite, LVI Common Room;
- Effective Lines of Communication for Pastoral, Academic, SEN, Child Protection and Safeguarding issues;
- Wellbeing Boxes;
- LORIC programme for KS3 pupils;
- LLW provision;
- Period Dignity Project;
- Postcards of Commendation;
- School Matron;
- House charity collections;
- UCAS Mentors for MVI pupils;
- Welcome postcards delivered to all Form I pupils;
- Pupil achievement recognised at Year Assemblies.

Appendix 3 The Mental Health of pupils

Belfast Royal Academy seeks to promote positive mental health for every pupil across the school. The School pursues this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, the School aims to recognise and respond to mental ill health and in developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures. The School seeks to promote a safe and stable environment for pupils and staff who are affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Related policies:

- Medical Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Addressing Bullying Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy
- Pastoral Calendar
- RSE Policy

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the relevant Head of Year in the first instance.

If there is a fear that the pupil or a member of staff is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be followed.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Team

Designated Teacher: Mr C McCarey

Deputy Designated Teachers: Mrs K McIntyre
Mrs J McNally
Ms K Barnett

Designated Teacher



Mr. C McCarey

Deputy Designated Teachers



Mrs McIntyre



Mrs McNally



Ms Barnett

If the pupil or member of staff presents a **medical emergency** then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Matron, or designated First Aider.

The **Lines of Communication Document** is displayed in every classroom throughout the School which highlights the Pastoral Care and Safeguarding members of staff.

We seek to ensure that all staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and through other relevant outside agencies through **signposting**.

Various displays including the Safeguarding posters and Need to Talk posters are strategically placed throughout the school site, such as in foyers and corridors. These posters highlight the key members of staff who pupils may speak to if necessary. The Homework Diary contains a "Useful Numbers" section which highlights key organisations for pupils to use, as well as QR codes. Sources of support are also signposted through the daily notices via the Class Tutors, and through Form, Year and Main School Assemblies.

If a pupil chooses to **disclose concerns** about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Members of staff will listen rather than advise and our first thoughts will be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures will be recorded in writing and forwarded to the Head of Year. Disclosures relating to Safeguarding or Child Protection will be recorded using the Note of Concern as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and referred urgently to the Designated Teacher, or to one of the Deputies.

An **individual care plan** for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health, may be produced. If deemed appropriate, this will be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals and may include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Where it is deemed appropriate to **inform parents**, the School will seek to be sensitive in its approach.

The School recognises that it can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their son/daughter's issues, and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. Pastoral staff will seek to highlight further sources of information and give parents leaflets to take away, where possible, as parents will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that is being shared.

Parents will be provided with clear means of contacting the School with further questions, and a follow-up meeting or phone call will be arranged, if deemed necessary.

Counselling is provided by the Education Authority through Hope. The School may also uses additional counselling services such as Jigsaw CCC.

Pupils can either self-refer, or be referred by a member of staff. Pupils can either complete an online referral form (<https://familyworksni.com/>) or speak to any member of staff. The counsellor will complete an initial assessment with the pupil and then following the assessment, the pupil may be contracted to a specific number of sessions, depending on the assessed need. The counselling services also operates a drop-in service during lunch time every Wednesday.

- Key Contact for School Counselling: Mr C McCarey
- Deputy Key Contact for School Counselling: Ms K Barnett

Mentoring is provided by YeHa and Steetbeat. Pupils can be referred by a member of staff.