

Belfast Royal Academy

per vias sapientiae



Pastoral Care Policy
September 2025

Title	Pastoral Care Policy
Summary	Guidance for all stakeholders regarding: the ethos and values of the School which underpin pastoral provision; how the school will provide for the pastoral care of pupils; the roles and responsibilities of staff in delivering pastoral care.
Purpose	To outline how the School will deliver pastoral care.
Operational Date	September 2025
Next Review Date	August 2028
Author	Vice Principal (Pastoral)

To be posted on School website	Yes
Date and version posted (if applicable)	September 2025

Definition

Pastoral care is understood to be caring for pupils as whole individuals with intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs. The provision of high quality pastoral care is central to the ethos of the School.

Aims

Through our pastoral care policy, we aim:

- To create and maintain an atmosphere where pupils feel they are safe, valued, well-known, respected and happy.
- To create a harmonious and dynamic learning environment.
- To provide, when necessary, sympathetic and effective guidance and counselling, through internal and external provision.
- To raise awareness of possible risk of harm, and to encourage pupils to make safe choices.
- To strengthen links between the School, parents and the wider community.
- To prepare pupils for the challenges of adult and working life.

Ethos

Central to pastoral care in the School is the building of strong relationships and the fostering of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Respect for diversity, and the valuing of all members of the School community as equals, are at the heart of the School's ethos.

Roles and Responsibilities

The primary responsibility for the care and welfare of pupils rests with the Board of Governors. However, the School recognises that all staff share responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils and seeks to ensure that they are equipped to discharge their duties. Staff training regularly addresses pastoral care issues, and a number of members of staff are appointed to play a leading role, the most significant of whom are the Heads of Year, who deal with more serious matters of discipline and pupil welfare. The Heads of Year work closely with subject teachers, and with the Class Tutors, who see their Registration Groups every morning and who therefore have a significant pastoral role. Also central to pastoral care in the School are the Principal, the Pastoral Vice Principal who is also the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, the Pastoral Senior Teacher, the Key Stage Leaders, the Learning Support Coordinator, the Matron and the School Counsellor. Classroom Assistants, the Librarian, Careers staff, PE and Games staff, staff in charge of clubs and societies and canteen staff also play a significant role, as do Pupil Mentors, Pupil and School Councillors and Prefects. The school also works with external agencies where appropriate e.g. Streetbeat, YeHa, Jigsaw CCC.

A Pastoral Calendar has monthly themes to promote the Values and Aims of the School, as well as address contemporary issues e.g. exam stress, anxiety, pupil voice etc.

The Head of Year

The Head of Year plays a key role in the provision of pastoral care in the School. As far as possible, there is continuity in this role from Form I to Form MVI. The Head of Year will place a high priority in getting to know the pupils in his or her Form, and will conduct pastoral and progress interviews at intervals. The Head of Year will generally be the first point of contact between a parent or guardian and the school (Appendix 1).

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The School recognises its statutory duty to contribute to the safeguarding of the pupils in its care and its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy clearly identifies the welfare of the child as being paramount. Responsibility in school for Child Protection rests with the Board of Governors but is delegated to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, assisted by Deputy Designated Teachers. Training in Safeguarding and Child Protection for all staff, both teaching and support, takes place every year and staff are trained to recognise signs of abuse as well as how to respond when there is a Child Protection concern. The School works in co-operation with external agencies when child abuse is suspected. The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy includes a Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Staff which outlines clearly the expectations of staff regarding their contact with pupils. The School Diary includes a list of agencies, with QR codes, addressing a range of issues, whom pupils can contact for support.

Personal Development

The School encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing and seeks to help them to develop the skills to be able to do this. Aspects of personal development are addressed throughout the curriculum, most notably in Learning for Life and Work (LLW), LORIC, RSE and Religious Studies. Form, Year and Character Assemblies regularly address issues surrounding making wise life choices, and the School's Wellbeing Committee works to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles. The school also encourages pupils to avail of some of the many extra-curricular activities on offer, through which a wide range of life skills may be developed.

Transition and Induction

Much effort is made to ensure a smooth transition to the School. All new pupils have a Welcome Event in June when pupils can meet their Class Tutor, Head of Year and accustom themselves with the surroundings of BRA prior to starting in August. Information on Medical and Special Educational Needs will be forwarded to the Matron and Learning Support Coordinator respectively, who again will follow up as necessary. At the Welcome Event pupils will be presented with their House tie.

Where there are language issues for newcomer pupils, the Head of Year will liaise with the School's English and Modern Languages Departments to establish language support. Consideration will be given to the provision of some policy documents for parents in the home language, and where necessary, the School will liaise with the Education Authority NI to provide translators for induction or progress meetings with parents. A senior member of staff will take responsibility for the induction of new pupils in other Forms. There are also parental Induction evenings at the start of every academic year, and Welcome Days in August for all new pupils to help with their transition.

Raising a Concern

Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to contact their child's Head of Year or a senior member of staff if they have any concerns or worries (Appendix 1). This may be done by telephoning the General Office on 02890740423. Parents are encouraged to share concerns about home circumstances or other matters which may affect their child's welfare and/or academic progress. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention and information disclosed will be treated as confidential. The relevant staff will liaise as necessary to implement and monitor provision for care. The opinions of parents and children will be valued and where appropriate action will be taken.

Related policies

The School maintains a range of policies designed to support the pastoral care of pupils.

They are:

- Addressing Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Child Protection Complaints Procedure
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy
- e-Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Bereavement Policy
- Mental Health Policy

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that pastoral care is given a high priority in the School Development Plan. The pastoral Vice-Principal will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Pastoral Care Policy.



Pupils - Lines of Communication

