

Pastoral Care Policy



Date ratified by BOG:
Date of next review: April 2026
Date reviewed: April 2024

Rationale

Park School are committed to provide a happy, safe and supportive environment that promotes the development of the whole pupil so they may reach their full potential in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. A comprehensive pastoral program is embedded in the curriculum for each pupil focusing on personal and social development.

Definition:

As an integral part of the whole curriculum, the Policy for Pastoral Care should be evident in:

- The hidden curriculum - school ethos, interpersonal relationships and the physical environment
- Individual subjects – teaching/learning methods, and the monitoring and recording of achievements
- Discipline Procedures – which are designed to enhance self-esteem
- Reward Procedures – which acknowledge efforts, achievements and contributions to all aspects of school life

The policy for Pastoral Care of the school involves teachers, pupils, parents and other members of the school community. For pupils this will involve encouraging them to set and achieve personal, social and academic goal. For teachers, it will involve providing them with opportunities for professional development.

Aims:

Through our Pastoral Care programme, we aim to:

- make the transition from primary to secondary as smooth as possible
- create and maintain an atmosphere where pupils feel they are well known, safe, valued, respected and happy
- promote the aims of our school
- implement our code of practice for behaviour which considers the views of all staff

- maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning
- respond in a sympathetic way to the concerns, fears and worries of our pupils
- build an atmosphere of trust
- make children aware of potential dangers through the teaching of Health Education and other subjects e.g. road and water safety
- Speak to pupils with respect at all times neither ridiculing nor belittling them. Always be supportive, taking into account all relevant information on that individual pupil both socially and educationally.

Structures and Responsibilities

While the general focus of pastoral care requires a caring commitment by all teachers, a structured approach is still needed to ensure that at least one teacher in the school, namely the form teacher, has a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each student in his/her form. With this knowledge the form teacher can support the learning and development of each student by motivating them, responding to their problems, approaching positively issues of discipline and by encouraging them to benefit from all the opportunities which the school has to offer.

The Pastoral Care structure operates as follows:

Form/Base Teacher – Curriculum Leaders – Vice-Principal – Principal.

This helps to ensure that there are channels of communication and a system which brings maximum benefit to all pupils.

In Years 8 to Post16 all pupils are assigned to a form class under the care of a Form Teacher, supported by a Senior Teacher.

The Form Teacher is responsible for the day to day welfare of the class. Pupils meet their Form Teacher every morning for a 15 minute registration period and at the end of the day for a 10 minute registration.

Form Teacher responsibilities include:

- To forge positive links with the pupils, becoming familiar with each pupils' abilities, interests and hobbies
- To be a source of encouragement and support to pupils – available to them should they have any particular concerns or difficulties
- To foster pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive self and group attitudes encouraging effort through the merit system
- To ensure that morning registration is conducted formally, allowing the pupils opportunity to be kept informed of any issues regarding routines/organisation of the school and to discuss any difficulties the pupils might have
- To play his/her role in the discipline structure
- In the first instance, deal with concerns referred to them by subject teachers and, when necessary, to pass it on to the Curriculum leader/SLT
- To monitor the dynamics in the classroom in terms of relationships etc and be alert to problems which may arise
- To ensure that pupils are aware of what is expected in terms of their attitude, behaviour and dress codes etc
- To monitor same and report any serious concerns to SLT
- To monitor attendance, adhere to required administration and report any concerns to the Vice Principal

Role of Curriculum Co-Ordinators

- To ensure that each student is offered a full range of related experiences in accordance with individual need, the aims of the school and the statutory curriculum
- To assist with the co-ordination of arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting at the end of the key stage
- To assist with curriculum development within this area of the school
- To ensure the behaviour system is implemented and consistent within school

The Range of Pastoral Activities

Whilst a range of elements contributes to the pastoral dimension of the school, certain specific activities provide for the personal and social development of the pupils.

Important aspects of personal and social education are addressed at appropriate stages in the pupil's school career. Various methods are used to deliver the program of personal and social education responding to the needs of and interests of the pupils.

- Key Stage 3: Timetabled Relationships and Sex Education, Citizenship and Personal Development is taught by base teacher. This allows consistency in the delivery of the program which may have been taught in a fragmented way previously.
- Key Stage 4: Pupils follow a Relationships and Sex Education program which covers topics such as self esteem, racism and cultural diversity and health education. The program is constantly evolving to respond to the needs of the curriculum and society as a whole.

Careers Education/Prince's Trust is delivered by a specialist member of staff, through timetabled classes. It aims to enable pupils to

manage transitions within and between education, training and occupations. A Careers Advisor from the Department of Employment and Learning also provides guidance for individual pupils.

- Post16: Pupils have timetabled lessons which are supported by Work Experience and guidance from the Careers Advisor from the Department of Employment and Learning.
- Some aspects of the Pastoral Program are delivered through other Learning Areas e.g. Religious Education, Science and Physical Education.
- In addition, the Registration Period every morning provides daily contact with the Form Teacher and creates a sense of group identity. All forms lead the assembly throughout the year, whilst all pupils are invited to participate actively in assembly through prayer and discussion. Assembly is held once a week for the whole school.
- The wealth of experience in sporting, cultural, social and cross-community activity which is offered beyond the classroom enables the pupils to improve their social skills and to develop an understanding of co-operation with others as well as affording a great deal of enjoyment.
- With the introduction of the Progress File as a replacement to the Record of Achievement, there is an obvious need to give all pupils a sense of responsibility.
- Pupils are reminded regularly during registration and assembly that they can speak to their form teacher and/or classroom assistant at any time to discuss their worries or concerns. They are also reminded of the School Counsellor availability.

Liaison with Parents

Close co-operation is seen as an integral part of the Pastoral System. Parents are kept informed both formally and informally.

Formal:

- Email or Class Dojo
- Parents Nights and Annual Review meetings at appropriate times of the year to discuss academic progress, pastoral matters or information regarding the curriculum
- By appointment or by telephone – this could be initiated by the school or the parent to discuss any concerns they may have, or any conditions outside school which may impact upon a pupil's behaviour or performance in school
- Reports

Informal:

- Attendance at any school events
- Homework diaries - class teachers or form teachers can communicate through this

Outside Agencies

The following outside agencies work with the school, offering support with the pastoral welfare of the pupils:

- Education Welfare Officer
- Educational Psychologists
- Social Workers
- School Health – Medical and Dental Services
- Community PSNI
- Eating Disorders Association

- Department of Employment and Learning
- Family Planning

Staff Development and Training

Staff are encouraged to develop their skills in pastoral care. Generally, it is the SLT or Vice Principal who attend courses on the relevant topics including bullying, counselling or health matters. This is then disseminated to colleagues.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The purpose of evaluating the pastoral dimension is to discover ways of improving the quality of provision in the school for the benefit of all pupils and teachers.

The Pastoral Care Policy is reviewed annually by the Vice Principal.

Pastoral Policies

Other Policies/documents relating to pastoral matters not contained in this policy are:

Anti-Bullying

Code of Discipline and Behaviour

Child Protection

Use of Reasonable Force

Drugs and Substance Abuse

Induction for Pupils

Induction for Staff

Relationships and Sex Education

Acceptable Use of ICT