



BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

Pastoral Care Policy

- *Approval by the Board of Governors: Jan 2019*
- *The implementation of this policy will be monitored by: Senior Management Team*
- *This policy will be reviewed every two years*





Definition

Pastoral Care is a set of systems and programmes in school which attempts to meet the totality of needs of its pupils (social, spiritual, mental, emotional and physical) so that every pupil has the opportunity in a safe environment to reach his/her potential in every area of his/her life and is equipped with the skills to cope with the outside world.

RATIONALE

In Ballycastle High School we recognise the central importance of pastoral care as we seek to provide for our pupils a safe and caring environment in which they can develop their full personal and academic potential. The quality of pastoral care influences the ethos and tone of the whole school and we accept that pastoral care must permeate all aspects of the school's daily routines, its curriculum and its extra-curricular activities.

AIMS

- To welcome pupils into a community in which they can feel a sense of pride, loyalty and belonging and to encourage them to make their own personal contribution to enhance the corporate life of the school.
- To assist each pupil to reach personal fulfilment and happiness and to develop the qualities of self-esteem, self-reliance, adaptability, physical and spiritual well-being and moral responsibility.
- To ensure each pupil feels valued as an individual and that his/her opinions and concerns are listened to.
- To achieve a regulated, disciplined, happy and purposeful atmosphere in the school.
- To create an environment in school where pupils are safe and secure from harm.
- To help pupils to develop positive, co-operative, respectful and tolerant attitudes and behaviour and to promote self-discipline.
- To ensure that each pupil is well known by at least one teacher who shows a personal interest in his/her well-being.
- To assist, guide and stimulate pupils in working to achieve their full academic potential and to gain useful and relevant qualifications.
- To prepare pupils for the transition to Further and Higher Education and to adult and working life.
- To provide for pupils a wide and enriching extra-curricular programme through which they can develop their interests, talents and social skills.
- To facilitate close and co-operative links with parents.



Ethos

The ethos of the school will influence the effectiveness of a programme of personal safety and conversely the implementation of the programme will in turn affect the ethos of the school.

The values which underline successful personal safety cannot be taught didactically but can most effectively be fostered through the ethos of the school and positive role models provided by the adults within the school.

‘A good ethos does not come about by chance, it is achieved by the principal, members of senior management and staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life at the school community’.
DENI Circular 1999.

Relationships

The ethos of the school is created and sustained by warm and positive relationships among pupils and staff.

We cannot underestimate the significant contribution within relationships between pupils and teachers can make in this whole process. It is in the formal and informal situations with their teachers that children can be helped to foster self respect, self discipline, tolerance, equality and fairness. This generates a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels valued and cared for at all times. The School’s relationship with parents is also vital in making this happen.

Values

The teachers teach by communicating values and beliefs and not only knowledge of a subject.



PASTORAL CARE ARRANGEMENTS

All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching have a responsibility for the pastoral care and welfare of pupils and regular staff development and training is provided to ensure that knowledge and skills are kept up to date.

All teachers therefore have a role in creating an environment of care and trust, to promote effective learning. This role would include:

- Knowledge of individual needs, aspirations and abilities of pupils
- Ensuring that the emotional and physical welfare of pupils is as important as their academic progress
- Showing respect for the pupils
- Ensuring that pupils feel free from emotional and physical harm
- Ensuring that pupils feel happy and confident in their environment, able to learn in an atmosphere of trust
- Providing reassurance and support for pupils, building confidence and self-esteem which will increase pupil motivation and commitment
- Putting in place appropriate interventions and support to meet the needs of pupils and overcome any barriers to learning
- Ensuring that clear boundaries are in place so that pupils can differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- Consistency in dealing with issues
- Communicating issues to parents and other members of staff when appropriate
- Allowing for opportunities for pupils to celebrate their achievements

For the purposes of the pastoral system each Year Group is divided into Form Classes; each Form Class is devoted to the care of a Form Teacher and the work of the Form Teachers in each Year Group is co-ordinated by a Head of Year. The Head of Year and the form teachers for that year group constitute a 'Year Team'. The pastoral system is under the supervision of the Head of Pastoral Care.

Each Form Class meets the Form Teacher from 9.00 to 9.10am. Registration, routine administrative matters and any problems which may arise are also dealt with during this time. In addition, once per fortnight there is a form class, where a pastoral programme is followed.

Each Year Group has a regular Year Assembly taken by the Head of Year in which issues of particular relevance to the Year Group may be addressed.

FORM TEACHERS

Form Teachers stay with the same Form Class in Years 9-10 and 11-12 where possible. The Year 8 Year Heads have the responsibility for the induction and welfare

of pupils during the Year 8 year. Other Year Heads stay in their position as a Head of Year for a particular year group.

Peer mentors are attached to each Form Class in Year 8.

The Form Teachers maintain daily contact with pupils in Form Assembly and act as the first point of contact for pupils and their parents. Their responsibilities include routine administrative tasks as well as the provision of pastoral care. Form Teachers have a key role to play in the pastoral care of their pupils. They are important role models and assist pupils to feel valued and secure, and to have high self-esteem and confidence.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

Parents will be encouraged to participate in school life. Parents will be informed through meetings, correspondences and homework diaries of the school's aims and policies relating to Pastoral Care and of their responsibility in supporting them. Parents will be informed of their child's progress and of any concerns which may arise. Parents will be informed of their legal duty in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time and of their legal duty in ensuring that their children do not cause injury or damage to others or to property.

Pupils

Pupils will be encouraged in the skills of self discipline, acceptable standards of behaviour and to have proper regard for authority. Pupils will have instruction on Health Education, Careers Education and Study Skills. Personal and Social Skills will also be developed through Learning for Life and Work and Sentinus programmes. Pupils will have the opportunity to participate in other enrichment programmes.

Class Teachers

All teachers have the responsibility for promoting and implementing the Aims of the Pastoral Care Policy. This means that all teachers should have a caring commitment to guide and advise pupils either formally or informally, on personal, educational and vocational matters.





The Form Teachers:

- record and monitor attendance and punctuality in accordance with the Attendance Policy.
- maintain standards of uniform and behaviour in accordance with the school Positive Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct for pupils.
- complete and check school reports.
- encourage pupils to participate fully in the life of the school.
- ensure the completion by pupils of Personal Record sheets which form the basis of the Progress File issued to each pupil at the end of Years 12 and 14. Form teachers and the Careers Department are actively involved in the preparation of the Progress File.
- liaise with colleagues and parents in the interests of pupils.
- help and support pupils in coping with problems.
- deal with areas of concern in relation to pupils. Academic problems are dealt with initially by the subject teacher and referred where necessary to the Head of Department; concerns of a personal, social, emotional or behavioural nature are dealt with initially by the Form Teacher and referred where necessary to the Head of Year. More serious areas issues are referred to the Head of Pastoral Care / Vice Principal.

Heads of Year

Heads of Year are responsible for: -

- ❖ The Social and Educational needs of pupils in their year group.
- ❖ Co-operating and consulting with other members of staff concerning the pupils in their year group.
- ❖ Consulting and co-ordinating with outside agencies (including parents) when relevant to the needs of the pupils in their year group.
- ❖ Counselling pupils in their year group individually or collectively.
- ❖ The school's internal reporting system.
- ❖ The twice yearly school reports of their year group.
- ❖ The oversight of homework and checking homework diaries for their year group.
- ❖ Conducting year assemblies for their year group.
- ❖ Monitoring attendance of their year group and liaise with Attendance Secretary.
- ❖ Attending Head of Year / SLT meetings.

- ❖ Liaising with SLT, Head of Pastoral Care/Designated Teacher concerning pupils in their year group.

Head of Pastoral Care Team

- ❖ Responsible for overall welfare of pupils.
- ❖ Responsible for overall welfare of staff.
- ❖ Co-ordinates work of Heads of Year and reports to SLT.
- ❖ Draws up, implements and reviews the Pastoral Care Policy.
- ❖ Monitors attendance patterns with the Attendance Secretary and Heads of Year.
- ❖ Liaises closely with Principal, Vice Principal, Heads of Year, class teachers and outside agencies regarding pupils with problems.
- ❖ Monitors behaviour patterns including bullying.
- ❖ Counselling pupils and referring pupils for counselling when required.

Designated Teacher

- ❖ Develops and reviews policy on Child Protection.
- ❖ Reports to Board of Governors.
- ❖ Plans, implements and reviews procedures for reporting suspected cases of abuse.
- ❖ Takes appropriate action on all concerns brought to her.
- ❖ Liaises with outside agencies (EWO, Social Services, Contact Youth, CAMHS, NSPCC, Barnardos, Zest and other professionals)
- ❖ Provides training, guidance and support for all teaching and non-teaching staff.

SLT

The Principal, vice-principal and SLT are responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place which will enable all staff to contribute effectively to establishing and maintaining a climate of good relationships and mutual respect.



Board of Governors

Has overall responsibility for the Pastoral Care Programme.

CURRICULUM

Each Department is led by a Head of Department who is responsible for maintaining high standards of teaching and learning within his/her subject area. Subject teachers aim to provide effective teaching and are encouraged to use methods which, by variety, imagination and sensitivity to the needs of individuals, create interest, participation and effective learning among the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to work steadily throughout the year and the results of regular assessment provide teachers with opportunities to monitor their progress and to take appropriate action.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Arrangements for pupils with Special Educational Needs are dealt with by the SENCO. (cf. Special Educational Needs Policy).

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

A system of Main Assemblies and Year Assemblies provides the opportunity for an act of worship during which personal, social and moral issues are explored within a Christian framework and the ethos and values of the school are promoted.

THE CAREERS DEPARTMENT

The Careers Department aims to raise pupils' aspirations and to help them to make wise choices as they prepare for the world beyond school. Through a timetabled programme of Careers Education and Guidance which involves pupils in personal career planning and through Careers Guidance interviews pupils are encouraged to explore their own interests and aptitudes and to make informed decisions about subject choices, Further and Higher Education and/or employment. In the Sixth Form all pupils have the opportunity to participate in a Work-Shadowing scheme and training in interview skills. In addition, some pupils in Year 12 also have the same opportunity. Careers officers from the Careers Service NI assist in delivering the Careers Education and Guidance Programme.



PERSONAL, SOCIAL & HEALTH EDUCATION

- Pupils in Years 8-12 have lessons in Personal Development as part of the Learning for Life and Work programme. In sixth form, pupils have 'General Studies' lessons where elements of Personal Development are covered.
- As they progress through the school pupils are helped to develop study skills and encouraged to take responsibility for independent learning.
- Health Education is taught as a Cross-Curricular Theme and by a number of external speakers, including representatives from 'Love for Life' who deliver a programme of Relationships and Sex Education to pupils in Years 8, 11 and 12.
- A valuable contribution to the Health Education programme is made by Mrs Veronica Kelly (School Nurse) who is available for pupils who wish to speak to her on health-related matters.
- Specific talks on health related issues are delivered to Years 8-11.
- 'Mindout', a programme for promoting positive mental health is delivered to Year 11 and 12 classes.
- An Internet safety unit is delivered by the ICT department to Year 8 and this is augmented by external speakers throughout Key Stages and 4 – these comprise of drama workshops by the Solomon Theatre Company with funding from PCSP.
- Independent Counselling sessions (Familyworks) are also available once a week during which individual pupils may discuss issues of concern, and receive support and help. Referrals may be made by pupils, parents or members of staff.

SAFEGUARDING

The school recognises that its pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. A copy of the school's Child Protection Policy is available on the school website. (cf. Child Protection Policy / Anti-bullying Policy).

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school places a very strong emphasis on the value of extra-curricular activities as a contribution to the education of its pupils, particularly in developing social skills, self-esteem, initiative and the ability to work as part of a team. All extra-curricular activities are provided by staff on a voluntary basis. Up-to-date information about clubs, societies and sporting events is given daily at registration or Main Assembly. All pupils are encouraged to become involved in extra-curricular activities which meet either at lunch-time or after school.



HOUSE SYSTEM

The House System promotes a sense of loyalty and a spirit of healthy competition. Each pupil is allocated to one of 3 Houses – Shesk, Taisie and Dun.

PROGRESS FILE

A Progress File is issued to each pupil at the end of Year 12 and up-dated at the end of Year 14. Although the Progress File includes comments by subject teachers and Form Teachers, the major contribution is made by the pupils themselves in the form of a list of their achievements and a personal statement at Year 12 and a CV at Year 14. Preparation for the Progress File begins in Year 8 and each year pupils have the opportunity to record their interest and achievements inside and outside school and to discuss these during an interview with their Form Teacher. The process helps pupils to set personal targets and aims to enhance their self-esteem and to give recognition to achievement beyond the academic.

PRIMARY SCHOOL LIAISON

A well-developed system of liaison with Primary schools aims to ensure a smooth transition to the Academy. Each year members of staff visit feeder Primary schools in the summer term to meet P7 pupils who are to transfer to Ballycastle High School in the next school year, to speak to their teachers and to provide information on the pastoral system and curricular issues, especially in English, Maths, Science and Computing.

LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

The school has strong links with external support agencies including the Education Authority, the Educational Welfare Officer, the School Medical Officer, CAMHS, Social Services and the PSNI.

LIAISON WITH PARENTS

The work of Ballycastle High School is based on a partnership of parents and staff, operating in the interests of the pupils and on the belief that pupils prosper academically and socially in conditions of strong home support for the pupil and the school. In addition to the Parents' Consultation meetings which are held annually for each year group, parents may contact the school to arrange an appointment with the

Principal, Vice Principal or Year Head. Support meetings with parents are arranged by Year Heads for those pupils whose academic progress is giving cause for concern.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

School-based training on pastoral issues is offered regularly on Staff Training days. Members of staff are facilitated to attend courses organised by EA and other agencies.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council which is made up of representatives from each year group and meets regularly to consult on school issues. In addition, pupils in sixth form can be part of a Joint School Council with Cross and Passion College.

Personal Safety of Pupils

In the interest of safety, pupils are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day. There are a few exceptions: -

- ❖ Pupils in the town who bring a note signed by their parent/guardian may go home for lunch.
- ❖ Where possible medical appointments should be made outside school hours. If this is not possible the pupil must bring a letter from her parent/guardian and present it to the school office. They will be issued with an exit-slip.
- ❖ Pupils who live in the town may walk home from school. Pupils who travel by bus must board the bus in the school grounds.

The Pastoral Care Policy is supported by a number of other policies including: -



- ❖ Child Protection Policy
- ❖ Relationships and Sexuality Policy
- ❖ Anti-bullying Policy
- ❖ Drugs Policy
- ❖ Discipline Policy
- ❖ Policy on the Use of reasonable Force
- ❖ Healthy eating Policy
- ❖ Pupil Attendance Policy
- ❖ Visitors policy
- ❖ Special Education Needs Policy
- ❖ Positive Behaviour Policy

Review

The Pastoral Care Policy will be regularly reviewed as part of our policy review cycle.