

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

RATIONALE

In Banbridge Academy 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.

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 eight 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 two Year Heads. The Year Heads and eight Form Teachers constitute a Pastoral Care

Team, together with the Heads of Junior, Middle and Senior School. The pastoral system is under the supervision of a Vice Principal.

Each Form Class meets the Form Teacher from 9.00 to 9.15 am at Form Assembly where a pastoral programme is followed. Registration, routine administrative matters and any problems which may arise are also dealt with during this time.

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

PASTORAL TEAMS

Form Teachers stay with the same Form Class in Years 8-14 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 with their Form from Years 9-14 where possible.

Form Prefects are attached to each Form Class in Year 8 and Sixth Form students (who are also trained as Digital Leaders or Anti-Bullying Ambassadors) assist with elements of the pastoral programme.

The Pastoral Teams 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.

The Pastoral Teams:

- 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.
- review academic progress. The Form Teacher interviews each pupil in his/her Form Class after each of the twice-yearly sets of examinations. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their progress and to set personal targets.

- encourage pupils to participate fully in the life of the school and monitor their involvement in extra-curricular activities during the twice-yearly interviews.
- 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 Year Head. More serious issues are referred to the Heads of School or Vice Principal.

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.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Arrangements for pupils with Special Educational Needs are dealt with by the Learning Support Co-ordinators. (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 help pupils discover and develop their skills, interests, aptitudes and values in order to help them make informed choices for the future. Working both within the timetable and through extra-curricular opportunities, the department supports and encourages pupils as they develop self-awareness, learn about career opportunities and manage their career journey within and beyond school.

In the Sixth Form all pupils have the opportunity to participate in a work shadowing scheme and receive training in interview skills. Pupils have access to a wide range of up-to-date reference materials from selected online providers and receive training in the latest developments in recruitment processes and technologies. Careers officers from the Careers Service NI assist in delivering the careers education and guidance programme, particularly through the provision of one-to-one interviews at key decision-making junctures.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL & HEALTH EDUCATION

- Pupils in Years 8, 9, and 11 have lessons in Personal Development as part of the Learning for Life and Work programme.
- 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 9, 11 and 14.
- A valuable contribution to the Health Education programme is made by the the visiting School Nurses from the Southern Trust, who are available for pupils who wish to speak to them on health-related matters.
- Specific talks on health-related issues are delivered to Year 8 and Year 11.
- A programme for promoting positive mental health is delivered to Year 11 classes.
- An Internet safety unit is delivered by the ICT department to Year 8 and this is augmented by a PSNI course for Year 9 Personal Development classes.
- Sixth Form Students have a Lecture Period each week where a range of Careers and Personal Development topics are covered.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- The Pupil Welfare Auxillary is an invaluable source of support for young people throughout the school day. A Pupil Hub has been created where pupils who need some quiet time may go at break or lunch.
- Independent Counselling sessions are also available twice 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.
- Reach Mentoring partners with school to provide ongoing support for young people who may be facing difficult life circumstances or need some extra support. Mentoring sessions take place one afternoon per week.

SAFEGUARDING

The school recognises that its pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. A copy of the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is available on the school website. (cf. Safeguarding 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 Form or Main Assembly. All pupils are encouraged to become involved in extra-curricular activities which meet either at lunch-time or after school, and pupils (under staff guidance) take a leading part in their organisation and management.

HOUSE SYSTEM

The House System promotes a sense of loyalty and a spirit of healthy competition. Through regular House Assemblies pupils are encouraged to participate in a range of House activities. Each pupil is allocated to one of 4 Houses - Crozier, Dunbar, McWilliam, Waddell. Each House is led by one male and one female member of staff and by pupils with specific roles and responsibilities.

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 Banbridge Academy 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. An Induction afternoon is held in June where P7 pupils can meet with their new Form class and a bespoke morning is held in late August where pupils tour the school and meet teachers.

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

Parents are also kept regularly up to date with school issues via the calendar on the school website, SIMS parent app, text messages and various forms of social media.

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 members of staff meets once a month to consult on school issues.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly and made available to parents on the school website. A survey will be conducted among pupils and parents to monitor and evaluate the delivery of Pastoral Care at the end of each School Development Plan cycle.

RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Approved by Board of Governors- February 2024