



# Victoria College Pastoral Policy

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**VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST**

Pastoral Care Policy Ratified 21/03/22

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## **PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

(In the policy documents of Victoria College the term “parents” is inclusive of guardians, carers and anyone who has legal responsibility for a pupil while they are attending the College.)

### **1. Rationale**

This policy is based on Every School a Good School (DE 2009) and sets out the College’s policy and practice in relation to the care of pupils and the promotion of an environment where pupils and staff adhere to the ethos and the aims of the school.

Victoria College is committed to maximising the learning potential of all pupils and providing education and pastoral support of the highest quality. The College recognises that all members of staff play an important role in supporting the academic progress, personal development and social and emotional wellbeing of the pupils. The College is committed to ensuring that pupils leave school with the skills, attitudes and behaviours which will enable them to realise their full potential in the world of work, in relationships and as active citizens in the modern world.

### **2. Definition**

Pastoral care refers to the academic, social and emotional support provided to pupils in order to ensure their needs are being met and to enable them to grow academically, emotionally, and personally.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

The College aims to:

- establish an inclusive community where all pupils and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexuality, gender orientation, appearance and ability
- reduce and remove barriers to learning to create a caring, supportive, and safe environment which values individuals for their unique talents and abilities
- create a supportive atmosphere in which every pupil will enjoy a rounded education which supports progression in learning
- ensure that trust and mutual respect underpin all relationships

- encourage each pupil to develop a strong sense of personal worth, social responsibility and consideration for others
- provide personal guidance and counselling appropriate to the needs of every pupil
- deliver a curriculum which meets the needs of every pupil
- provide high quality careers education, information advice and guidance to assist every pupil in making the transition from school to adult life
- deliver a programme of personal and social education appropriate to the needs of all pupils.

#### **4. Procedures**

The Pastoral Care Team in the College (Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Head of Year, Form Teacher, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)) aim to support all pupils in overcoming barriers to learning using a range of intervention and support strategies. We recognise that each pupil is unique and therefore so are their pastoral needs. Interventions are tailored to meet the specific needs of each pupil and external agencies are consulted and engaged with as appropriate. Support is provided to pupils in relation to many areas including attendance; behaviour for learning; academic progress; SEN; English as an Additional Language (EL); relationships in and outside of College; sexuality and gender; medical conditions; pregnancy and parenthood; young carer roles; anxiety; self-harm; eating disorders; bereavement and drug/alcohol misuse and internet safety.

The College operates a partnership model where staff work closely with pupils and their families, understanding that parents are the primary educators of their children. Communication between school staff and parents is key. If a parent has a concern, they should contact the Form Teacher in the first instance. If the matter is considered immediately serious, the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership team are available to help. As most staff have teaching timetables, they will endeavour to return any communications within 24 hrs.

Policies are reviewed regularly and key policies relating to care and support are available both on the College website and from the Office. These are communicated to all parents on entry to College.

A Safeguarding Committee established by the Board of Governors oversees the policies and procedures relating to the care and safeguarding of pupils. This committee includes the Designated Teachers and the Designated Governors for Child Protection.

The Principal and Designated Child Protection Teachers avail of regular training and pupils are aware of procedures to follow should they wish to seek support. There are

posters in school highlighting the Designated Team and form announcements and assemblies are used to highlight support available in College.

A counselling service is provided within the College through Familyworks and a referral system is in operation. Our Familyworks counsellor takes assemblies to raise awareness of the services provided and there are posters around College alerting pupils to the service and how to engage with it. Pupils may access counselling without consent from a parent and the sessions are confidential. However, any information of a safeguarding nature will be communicated to the Designated Teacher and shared with the appropriate parties.

The curriculum structure and the organisation of the school day facilitate regular contact between key pastoral staff and pupils through form time, assemblies, Learning for Life and Work and external agencies delivering one off or ongoing programmes.

Regular meetings are held whereby Heads of Year and Heads of Subject may share information and best practice to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met. Pastoral Teams within each year group meet regularly to plan and review practice, to discuss individual pupil concerns as well as wider issues relating to policies and new initiatives to provide support for the pupils.

The College offers a wide range of leadership opportunities to pupils through, mentoring schemes, the roles of Class Representative and Year Council, social and charity events, wide participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and the Sixth Form leadership team which includes Prefects and Ambassadors for the College.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

Pastoral care and safeguarding is the concern of all College staff. Within this context there is a clear pastoral structure with specific roles and responsibilities identified. The Principal and Vice Principal oversee the pastoral care within the College, supported by members of the SLT. Within each year group a Head of Year is appointed and is supported by a team of Form Teachers.

All members of staff are expected to have detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests, academic progress and emotional well-being of each pupil with whom they are in contact. Knowing individual pupils in this way enables teachers to motivate the pupils, to respond to their individual problems, to approach issues of discipline positively and to help them to benefit from all the opportunities which the College has to offer.

Record keeping is key to staff having all the information that they need to support a pupil effectively. The College uses SIMS to record pastoral information which is shared with staff confidentially on a 'need-to-know' basis to ensure the needs of the pupils are met.

Relationships are built and developed over the course of a pupil's experience in the College with the Form Teacher and Head of Year usually continuing with the same form class from Year 8 through to Year 14.

The Head of Year, supported by the Form Teachers, is responsible for coordinating and liaising effectively with teachers, parents and others to support the learning and development of each pupil in a year group.

It is the role of the SENCo and the SEN team to ensure that any special educational needs are identified and met, and that additional support is provided as appropriate.

The Head of Careers ensures that pupils are provided with up to date and relevant careers education information, advice and guidance and liaises effectively with Heads of Year and their teams delivering careers related topics through the Learning for Life and Work programme.

Members of the pastoral team liaise with external agencies to avail of expertise when delivering the pastoral programme through school assemblies, workshops and presentations, one-to-one interviews and counselling, residential experiences, visits, and competitions.

## **6. Partnership**

The College's pastoral care is supported by statutory and voluntary agencies.

### **Education Authority**

- Child Protection Support Services (CPSS)
- Education Welfare Service (EWS)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team
- Educational Psychology Team
- Peripatetic Services
- Familyworks School Counselling Service

### **NHS**

- Gateway Team
- Intensive Support Team
- Family Intervention Team
- Family Hub
- GPs
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Eating Disorders Unit

## PSNI

### Voluntary agencies

- Steps to Cope Drug and Alcohol Intervention Service for Young People (DAISY)
- The Rainbow Project
- Action Cancer
- NI Careers Service
- Luke Whitehouse – internet safety
- Samaritans NI
- Action Mental Health – suicide prevention and awareness
- Love for Life
- The Gideons

## **7. Linked Documents**

DENI 2001 Pastoral Care in Schools

DENI 2008 Evaluating Pastoral Care

DENI 2017 Safeguarding and Child Protection – A guide for schools

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy

Pupil Attendance Policy

Behaviour Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Managing Pupils Health Needs and Their Medication Policy

E – safety policy

Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

SEN & Inclusion Policy

Curriculum Policy

Health Promoting Schools Policy

Critical Incident plan

Health and Safety Policy

Risk Assessment Policy

## **8. Review and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years by the Board of Governors. The policy will be kept under review by senior members of staff who will keep Governors informed of any necessary changes.