



BALLYMENA ACADEMY

EST. 1828

Pastoral Care Policy

Policy ratified by Board of Governors: June 2025
Date of next Review: June 2028

Ballymena Academy strives to 'care for the individual and promote learning and achievement'. The school's overarching values are:



Pastoral Care lies at the heart of the school's overall policy, which seeks to provide a caring and happy environment in which individuals can realise their full potential.

Through its pastoral care arrangements and provision, the school aims to demonstrate its concern for the personal and social development of all pupils, regardless of their age or ability, as individuals and as secure, successful and fully participating members of the school and its wider community.

Pastoral care permeates every aspect of school life and finds expression in the structures, organisational policies and decision-making procedures of the school. Since it is all-pervasive, the pastoral care policy encompasses the aims, objectives, principles, practices and procedures of the following policies, which cumulatively define the pastoral ethos of Ballymena Academy:-

- Able, Gifted & Talented
- Admissions
- Addressing Bullying
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting
- Careers Education, Information and Guidance
- Critical Incident
- Drugs Education and Prevention
- Educational Site Visits
- Food in Schools
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Equality and Inclusion
- Email Guidelines
- Intimate Care
- Mobile Electronic Devices
- Period Dignity
- Positive Behaviour
- Pupil Attendance
- Pupil Medical Conditions
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs

Aims

The pastoral care system works to ensure:

Child centred provision

- by promoting a supportive and caring environment in which all pupils are valued, respected, safe and well known to members of staff, and have their progress regularly encouraged.
- by contributing to an orderly atmosphere and the promotion and maintenance of positive behaviour.
- by offering sympathetic and effective guidance and counselling when required.
- by contributing towards strengthening the links between parents, school and community.
- by meeting the needs and aspiration of each of the pupils
- by promotion of equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.
- by seeking to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils in order to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- by supporting pupil participation and involvement in decisions about school life.
- by following safeguarding and child protection guidelines.
- by supporting children in making healthy life choices through the provision of a positive learning environment.
- by encouraging pupils to:
 - develop a sense of self-worth;
 - develop self-discipline and resilience ;
 - take responsibility for their actions;
 - accept the consequences of their actions;
 - respect the rights and feelings of others;
 - be responsible for their own academic, personal and social development;
 - develop the basic skills, experiences, knowledge and attitudes that are required for employment and leisure in our ever-changing society.

High quality teaching and learning

- by providing a broad and relevant curriculum-
- by promoting positive relationships between teachers and their pupils and with other school-based staff.
- by teachers using a range of teaching strategies that respond to diversity within the classroom.
- by teachers reflecting on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils.

Effective leadership

- by Governors understanding their responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils.
- by supporting the professional development of staff and sharing and learning from best practice.
- by providing the resources needed to support pastoral care.
- by monitoring and evaluating our pastoral care practices.

A school connected to its local community

- by fostering good relationships and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community, crucial to our pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement.
- by having good links, relationships and communication between the school and relevant statutory and voluntary agencies that support pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement.
- by involvement in programmes that support the local and wider community.

Pastoral Care is supported and enhanced through the Pastoral Programme, including:-

Learning for Life and Work, Tutor Groups and Assemblies

The Learning for Life and Work / Tutor programmes support the pastoral provision of the school through dedicated lessons focusing on PSHE, Local and Global Citizenship and Education for Employability, as well as key keep safe wellbeing and pastoral messages.

Careers Education and Guidance

The Careers Department plays its part in pastoral care by offering guidance at all key transition points. A timetabled programme, careers talks & visits, an annual careers convention and one-to-one interviews, all help to ensure that decisions about subject choice and pathways are informed. Additionally, in Sixth Form, there are opportunities for work shadowing, practice interviews and guidance in completing application forms for employment, apprenticeships or further and higher education.

Health and Wellbeing Provision

Being a Take 5 school and participating in the Being Well Doing Well initiative strengthens the school's pastoral care provision by promoting a child-centred approach that supports emotional wellbeing, resilience and positive mental health. These initiatives empower pupils to take an active role in school life, encourage open dialogue about wellbeing and foster strong staff-pupil relationships. They also enhance connections with the wider community and external support services,

whilst providing structured, measurable frameworks that align with the school's leadership and monitoring processes, ensuring consistent and effective pastoral support.

The School Councils

Pupils from all Year Groups elect representatives to sit on the school councils.

This is designed to give pupils a voice, in a constructive and organised way, to a variety of matters of relevance to them.

Peer Mentoring

Each year a number of Sixth Form students take the opportunity to participate in peer mentoring training. As a result, they are able, under the guidance of the Class Tutor, to assist younger pupils, particularly those in the junior school with organisational problems they may be facing.

The Prefect System

Pupils become school prefects at the start of Year 14. Under the direction of the Head Boy, Head Girl and their Deputies, they are involved in the organisation of the school and all the functions which take place.

The Co-curricular Programme

The school offers a wide range of co-curricular activities. Participation in these activities gives pupils a sense of belonging and a sense of loyalty to the school.

Provision of additional support structures includes :

- School Nurse
- First Aiders
- Care Team - consisting of the Vice-Principal (Pastoral), SENCO, EWO, Educational Psychologist and Behaviour Support Co-ordinator, which meets at least once a term.
- Mentors
- Counselling service
- Occupational Therapist
- Liaison with appropriate external services
- Effective relationships among staff, pupils and parents.
- A well-developed Primary School Liaison programme
- Year 8 Induction Programme
- Rewarding good behaviour and endeavour and recognising pupil achievement.
- Clear Safeguarding procedures and regular Staff Training.
- Practical information, including websites and contact numbers of relevant external agencies, is posted on two dedicated noticeboards (Advice Stops).

Roles and Responsibilities:

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff play a pivotal role in pastoral care. All members of staff should be fully committed to creating an environment of care and trust and to ensuring the emotional and physical welfare of the pupils, as well as their academic progress. In doing so they should adhere to school policy.

Regular contact with pupils enables them to observe the well-being or otherwise of the children in their care. They are the eyes and ears of the rest of the pastoral care team and are alert to changes in pupils' performance, behaviour, or appearance which may require action or intervention. They work with other staff, as necessary, for the benefit of pupils, briefing the Tutor, Pastoral Adviser and Head of Year as information comes to hand.

Class Tutors

The tutor system enables at least one teacher to have a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each pupil. The role of the class tutor is to establish a rapport and secure good relationships with pupils, and to show an interest in the progress of each individual giving help and support when needed. This is facilitated by regular interaction and by working with other staff, as necessary, for the benefit of the pupils, briefing the Pastoral Adviser and/or Head of Year as information comes to hand.

Pastoral Advisers

Pastoral Advisers liaise closely with Tutors and class teachers and are available to provide pastoral support to pupils when needed. They work closely with the Head of Year and meet regularly with the Vice-Principal in charge of Pastoral Care.

Heads of Year

Heads of Year are in overall charge of pastoral matters relating to their particular year group. Their role is to monitor the welfare, discipline and progress of their pupils, and to foster optimum development in these areas through the provision of constructive support and, where necessary, the imposition of appropriate sanctions. To this end they lead a team of Tutors who are in daily contact with their pupils, and they liaise closely with the Pastoral Advisers and the Vice-Principal in charge of Pastoral Care. They also meet as a Committee to oversee the whole-school provision of pastoral care. Aspects of their role include the organisation of Tutor Group meetings, the taking of Form Assemblies, liaison with parents and the underwriting of school reports.

Learning Support and Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinators

The Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSCo) takes the lead in the coordination of Learning Support including - management of the assistant LSCo and the Learning Support Assistants; the development and oversight of Personal Learning Plans(PLPs); liaising regularly with external agencies such as the Education Authority's (EA) Educational Psychology Services, the Family and Child Consultation Service, the Autism Support Disorder (ASD) Support Service and the EA services for those with visual or hearing impairment.

Vice-Principal in charge of Pastoral Care

The role of the Vice-Principal in charge of Pastoral Care is to liaise regularly with Heads of Year and Pastoral Advisers, and with outside agencies when appropriate.

It also involves chairing the regular meetings of the HOY Committee and making recommendations to S.L.T. on matters associated with pupil welfare and fostering positive behaviour.

Principal

The Principal meets regularly with the Vice-Principal in charge of pastoral care to monitor the pastoral care provision, to provide support and to determine action to be taken.

The Principal also meets with Heads of Year, parents and/or pupils as appropriate. He also reports to the Board of Governors on matters concerning pastoral care.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors seeks to ensure that the aims of the Pastoral Care policy are fulfilled and to provide appropriate training and resources to facilitate the implementation of the policy.

Review

The Pastoral Care Policy and procedures are reviewed and updated in line with the School's Policy Review Schedule.