



METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST

PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

At Methodist College Preparatory Department we are committed to promoting the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of our pupils in an environment where the children feel secure and free from emotional and physical harm. We want them to be able to discuss their interests and to voice any fear or concerns they have, knowing that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response.

Certain areas of the curriculum are particularly pertinent to the pastoral care of our pupils - such as Health Education (in Science), Religious Education and Physical Education, but much of our pastoral care is integrated into all areas of the curriculum and into all aspects of our daily classroom life. So every member of staff has an important part to play in creating an environment of care and trust and it is our wish that every pupil will know at least one teacher with whom they feel able to discuss interests or problems in confidence.

In endeavouring to maintain good relationships with our pupils within and outside the classroom, we are pledged as a staff to promoting their self-confidence and self esteem, giving them as many opportunities as possible to develop independent thought and expression. As they learn the importance of working constructively with their peers, they will grow to value and to respect the opinions, views and contributions of others. We aim to be fair, firm, consistent and compassionate in our approach to keeping good order in the school, and, realising that ultimately the best discipline is self-discipline, we endeavour to enhance our pupils' confidence and self-esteem by celebrating their achievements, as well as by correcting any inappropriate behaviour.

It is vitally important that the children develop personal and social skills to help them cope with existing challenges and to prepare them for the next stage of their education and for adult life. We recognise that the satisfactory pastoral care of our pupils is crucial to achieving this and at Methodist College Prep our intention is to promote and to facilitate an atmosphere of care and respect throughout the whole school community. It is important

that we, as a staff work well together as a team, keeping the pupils' welfare as our main focus and that we have the confidence and support of our children's parents.

Working together constructively we can meet our pastoral care responsibilities which are both demanding and profound. We are committed to making our pupils' experience in Methodist College Prep an adventure which is happy, safe, productive and thoroughly fulfilling.

THE SCHOOL - ETHOS AND ENVIRONMENT

The Head of Department will endeavour to promote an atmosphere of care and trust by:

- encouraging good relationships and mutual respect among the staff and between staff and pupils
- expecting impartial, fair and consistent decisions by staff, particularly in dealing with pupils' concerns
- developing good lines of communication with parents and external agencies
- sending staff on training courses to ensure that they are kept well informed about potential dangers and monitoring the implementation of the above.

The staff will endeavour to promote trust by:

- valuing pupils and staff as individuals
- recognising and valuing all their achievements both inside and outside the classroom
- developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence through encouraging independence of thought and expression
- providing a healthy and safe environment in which pupils can collaborate and work
- expecting pupils to respect and be sensitive to the contributions and views of others
- demanding high standards of behaviour
- imposing fair and appropriate disciplinary procedures and sanctions.

The Deputy Head and Pastoral Care teacher will endeavour to guarantee child protection and will:

- ensure that the Kidscape programme is taught in P3 and P5
- ensure that the pupils know how to access the child protection arrangements
- ensure that training is given to staff as and when necessary
- ensure that the vetting of volunteers and sports coaches takes place, or that the children are always accompanied by a full-time member of staff
- ensure that a summary of the child protection arrangements is circulated to all parents at least once every two years.

The Head of Department will monitor the progress of any child on the Child Protection register and co-ordinate with the College if applicable.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

To ensure a structured approach to the caring of all pupils, we have developed the following structure:

Class teacher (CircleTime, class discussions, individual discussions)

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Mrs Allen

Deputy Head: Mr Allen

Head of Department: Ms Hamilton

It is important that teachers work in co-operation with the Pastoral Care co-ordinator who will provide support and leadership in the pastoral domain.

In the event of additional support being required, SENCO, Deputy Head and Head of Department will provide support.

The Head of Department will also inform Class Teacher and Pastoral Care Co-ordinator of any pastoral concerns he is made aware of (if appropriate).

Any information disclosed will be treated as confidential

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Whilst all policies and procedures within the school take cognisance of Pastoral Care of pupils and staff some specifically support Pastoral Care. These include:

1. Anti-Bullying
2. Child Protection
3. Acceptable Use of the Internet/E-Safety Policy
4. Bereavement Policy
5. Positive Behaviour Policy

Cross referencing the policies is essential in delivering the Pastoral Care Policy

FORMAL REWARDS

The use of rewards both formal and informal is a power tool in motivating students and modifying behaviour. Merits awarded for effort and improvement in personal best in work and behaviour often has immediate effects.

Children will be awarded stickers and stamps for work and behaviour in individual classes. Once a week in assembly, at least one child from each class (P1-P7) will receive a mention in the Golden Book which highlights a specific achievement or excellent behaviour. There will also be a class line up certificate of the week for P4-P7 and for P1-P3.

INFORMAL REWARDS

PRAISE:

- This builds up self confidence.

POSITIVE TEACHER ATTITUDE:

- Each teacher will get to know his/her pupils really well over the course of a year
They will listen to their pupils' opinions
- Criticise the act, not the person
- If possible, try to suggest ways to improve not to criticise.

ENVIRONMENT:

- Seek to create a supportive environment in the classroom
- Encourage peers to give advice

- Agree rules together.

RANGE OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

These include:

- All areas of the NI Curriculum
- The Area of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities gives opportunities to explore relationships
- PDMU is taught to all classes. It aims to give pupils the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills required to make good choices in their lives
- Clubs and societies
- Educational trips
- Extra curricular activities
- Educational Visits
- School Assemblies.

Drugs Education

- The awareness of drugs and their uses is taught through Health Education and Science programmes appropriate for the age group. Efforts are made to ensure that children realise
- all drugs can have side-effects - depending on the person
- prescribed drugs can affect a patient very badly - allergic reactions etc
- no-one should take someone else's medicine
- many drugs taken by drug addicts are used in hospitals all the time to help people
- addicts are people suffering from addictive behaviour and have no control over it
- being healthy means keeping a balance in all things

Sex Education

Because of the wide range of physical development rates in the Primary School it is felt that detailed information is best delivered by parents at an appropriate time for the child. However, the following takes place:

- Life cycles of plants, animal and humans are taught in Science
- Health Education, Religious Education and Science all cover aspects
- Primary Seven pupils attend a lecture about puberty given by the School Nurse (boys and girls separately) Parents are informed and have to give their permission

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Children will be supervised from 8.30am. Full supervision also continues during all extra curricular activities. No child may remain in the classrooms, cloakroom areas, toilet areas or other area of the building during break or lunchtime without adult supervision.

PERSONAL SAFETY

We will encourage children to be responsible for their own personal safety and help them to acquire skills to do this. It is hoped that with guidance they will be able to make the correct decisions and know where to get help if or when they are confronted with danger.

The whole school community will be aware that;

Mr Allen is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Mrs Allen is the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

LIASON WITH PARENTS

We see ourselves as partners with parents in the Education of pupils. Mutual Support and co-operation is an essential element in achieving our objective. On going activities to ensure communication and parental involvement include:

- Letters home
- Written reports
- School Prospectus/website
- Parent interview- formal and informal
- Verbal contact-messages/phone calls from the school
- Verbal contact initiated by the parents
- Informal discussions
- Open door policy- parents are welcome to make an appointment to see the Head of Department or class teacher
- Curriculum involvement- homework
- Parent Teacher Association- PTA
- Social evenings and events
- Fund raising events
- Sporting events
- Musical shows.

RESOURCES

Although most situations will be addressed within the classroom, time will be made available for visits, interviews and consultations. It is our intention to build up a store of resources- textbooks, reference books, ICT support materials used and guidance material from the Education Authority (EA). All members of staff will keep specific resources on key issues linked to PDMU.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The class teacher is the key person in impacting on the care of the pupils in his/her class. Class teachers will monitor the progress academically and pastorally of children in their class. Where a teacher has a concern or has been made aware of a concern about the pastoral well being of a pupil in his/her class the following procedures will be followed:

1. Pastoral issues discussed in staff meetings and appropriate note made in the Pastoral Care Book.
2. When the teacher does not consider it appropriate, only the Pastoral Care co-ordinator will be informed.

As the pupil progresses through the school, Pastoral Care records, both verbal and written will be passed to the next teacher at the beginning of each academic year.

Ongoing monitoring is an integral part of our policy. Support is given to teachers who require any assistance in carrying out any aspect of their pastoral role. New members of staff and ancillary staff are informed of Pastoral Care procedures and will report any problems they hear/see to Mrs Allen, Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator.

LIASON WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

After appropriate consultation and communication with teacher, co-ordinator, Deputy Head and Head of Department a range of agencies may be consulted.

These may include:

Educational Psychologist

Chief Medical officer

School Nurse

Educational Welfare Officer

Department of Health and Social Services

PSNI

Education Authority.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

This can be facilitated during directed time and Staff Development days as well as formal/informal communication between staff.

The Co-ordinator will keep staff informed of what training is available outside school eg. Education Authority.

Outside agencies may be used for development and training if deemed necessary.

In Concluding our Pastoral Care Policy, we feel that the following points regarding child protection are worth remembering and should be noted by both staff and parents:

- school should contribute to the growth of every child's self-esteem through praise of both effort and achievement
- be aware of individual needs and personalities and always avoid making derogatory or discouraging remarks
- avoid inappropriate language and subject matter. Be sensitive to and aware of the behaviour and opinions of others. The opinions, prejudices, action and comment of others, particularly those in authority, can easily influence children
- be careful not to do or say something which could create a false impression or be misunderstood or interpreted as an 'innuendo'
- never dismiss or trivialise bullying behaviour
- never let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded
- if a child does disclose to you, it is important to reassure them and to tell them 'I believe you, it's not your fault', and 'I am going to help you'.
- one member of staff should never run an event single-handed - try to ensure an appropriate balance of male and female
- always ensure a suitable ratio of adults to children, depending on the activity
- never drive or walk a child home alone, or take a young person to your home, unless the situation is unavoidable
- avoid showing favouritism or singling individuals out in any way which is not appropriate
- avoid unnecessary physical contact
- ensure all helpers are aware of the dos and don'ts of physical contact
- on residential trips do not allow male staff to enter female rooms or vice-versa, unaccompanied.

NB

June 2023

Remember, it is your legal duty to report your concerns to the designated teacher within the preparatory school or in the senior school, if you suspect any form of abuse concerning a young person, or if information is disclosed to you.