



Victoria College Preparatory School Pastoral Policy

November 2023

Policy Date – 13/11/23
Agreed by Governors – 21/11/13
Review Date – 13/11/26
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Rationale

Victoria College Preparatory School is committed to

- providing the best possible education
- creating a safe and supportive learning environment
- providing the opportunity for high quality learning for every pupil
- setting challenging goals and celebrating success
- ensuring that our pupils develop skills for life and work
- maximising opportunities for personal development
- building positive relationships through mutual trust and respect
- promoting loyalty and commitment to the school community
- encouraging pupils to be active and caring citizens

so that each pupil enjoys the whole school experience and reaches her full potential.

Implicit in the school aims is the development of the whole person through the curriculum and the school experience. A supportive atmosphere is created in which every pupil will enjoy a rounded and worthwhile educational experience by promoting excellent relationships between all members of the school community. This policy defines the role of pastoral care on the Preparatory Department and how it is to be implemented and evaluated.

Definition

The Pastoral Care Policy involves all members of the school community, including teachers, pupils and parents. This will involve encouraging individuals within school to set to set and achieve personal, social and academic goals through a developmental and proactive approach. The Pastoral Care Policy should contribute to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in the school for staff, pupils and their parents to promote the achievement of these goals.

Aims

The Pastoral Care Policy involves both a general and a specialised focus.

The general focus requires a caring commitment by all teachers to guide and advise pupils, either formally or informally, on personal and educational matters and all other staff to contribute by example. The implication of this is that the Pastoral Care Policy should permeate all activities in the Preparatory School.

As an integral part of the whole curriculum, the Pastoral Care Policy should be evident in:

- the hidden curriculum (which includes the school ethos, interpersonal relationships and the physical environment);
- extra-curricular activities (which might include membership of clubs or visits);
- areas of learning (which include cross-curricular themes, teaching/learning methods, and the monitoring and recording of achievements);
- discipline procedures (which are designed to bring pupils to personal autonomy and to enhance their self-esteem);
- reward procedures (which acknowledge efforts, achievements and contributions to all aspects of school life).

The specialised focus of the Pastoral Care Policy is to ensure that the class teacher has a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests, and academic progress of each pupil. With this knowledge, the class teacher integrates the work of parents/ guardians and others to support the learning and development of each pupil. It also enables the class teacher 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 school has to offer.

The class teachers may be supported when appropriate by the Head and Deputy Head of the Preparatory School, School Nurse and other external agencies including the Educational Welfare Officer and Educational Psychologist. In particular where there are health and behavioural issues consultation and advice is available from such agencies as the Child Protection Office at the Education Authority, the Police Service for Northern Ireland and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Objectives

The objectives for the personal and social development of the pupil are specific to the pupil and to the staff of the school.

For the pupil the objectives will be to:

- understand her own development
- understand others' perspectives and their role in relationships
- make sense of others and their judgements
- cope with conflicts
- present herself positively in a range of situations
- work with others
- make judgements and resolve issues (for example, friendship issues)
- understand strengths and competences
- adopt a positive approach to effective learning
- become an active member of the school

For staff the objectives will be to:

- create a clearly defined pastoral support system for other staff and relevant pupils
- identify and respond quickly and appropriately to the specific needs of the individual pupil
- maintain effective systems for recording and communication of information relevant to the welfare of the pupil
- establish positive links with the home in all aspects of pupil development
- liaise with support and welfare services as appropriate.

The concept of the school as a caring community has implications for all staff, teaching and non-teaching, who through their attitudes and behaviour contribute to the creation and maintenance of a caring environment.

Responsibilities

Every teacher and assistant has a pastoral role to play and the responsibilities of the class teacher within the Pastoral Care Policy include:

- contributing to the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of the Pastoral Care Policy
- advising on curricular issues
- liaison with colleagues, parents and external support agencies

- dealing with disciplinary issues
- monitoring and recording the academic and social performance of pupils
- identifying the pastoral activities for a particular class group
- planning and teaching the timetabled Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) programme
- knowing all the aspirations and backgrounds of pupils
- encouraging and motivating pupils
- counselling individual pupils and groups
- responding to individual/group successes or failures
- preparing and compiling progress reports for pupils

Liason with parents

The academic progress and the social development of pupils depends on a good relationship between the home and school. Contact can be made both formally and informally as appropriate.

Formal:

1. Parents meetings at appropriate times of the year to discuss academic progress or pastoral matters.
2. By appointment or by telephone - this can be initiated by either the school or parent/guardian.
3. Providing written reports on progress of pupils.

Informal:

School events including Open Morning, sporting events, Friends of Prep events, and school productions, as well as all other potential points of contact including the beginning and end of the school day. Parents and staff may also communicate through the pupil's Seesaw account or via email.

Review and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed at least once every three years by the Board of Governors and kept under review by senior members of staff who will keep Governors informed of any difficulties that may arise.

Links with other policies

Anti-Bullying Policy
Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Positive Behaviour Management
Online Safety Policy
Behaviour for Learning Policy
SEN & Inclusion Policy

APPENDIX

THE RANGE OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

- Parents feel welcome to telephone and make an appointment with any member of staff.
- Regular parent meetings to discuss children's progress, eg termly Parent Consultations, Transfer Meetings, P1 Induction, Baseline Assessment, Special Needs Reviews and progress reports.
- Use of outside agencies, eg NSPCC, Scripture Union.
- Links with other schools, eg Sporting Events, Choir Festivals, Music Mornings, etc.
- Charity events.
- Links with Senior School, eg musical events, use of facilities, Year 8 induction.
- Links across year groups – through assemblies, sharing of finished projects, writing for another age group.
- Health Education activities in all year groups including drugs awareness.
- Prep 7 Prefects – all Prep 7 girls are prefects and have responsibilities that include helping other year groups at break and lunchtime, ringing the school bell and routine administration activities.
- Prep 6 Buddies – helping children in other year groups make friends and play well together in the playground and in the Hall on wet days.
- Prep 5 Guardian Angels – All Prep 5 pupils are paired with one or more Prep 1 pupil to help them settle into the Prep School, support them coming into the playground during morning playtimes and breaks, and participate in whole class activities arranged by the Year 5 and Year 1 teachers.
- School councillors, elected from each class, in Preps 3-7, liaise with their peers and staff to deal with issues arising from within the school community.
- Prep Action Groups - girls elected from Preps 1-7 liaise with their peers and staff to deal with eco awareness and issues within the school environment.
- Buddy and Prefect pupils are responsible for Foundation Stage girls in the canteen.
- Cycling Proficiency and Road Safety Programme.
- Links with community, eg PSNI / Fire Service / Veterinary clini

Mission Statement

**VICTORIA COLLEGE DEVELOPS THE FULL POTENTIAL OF EACH INDIVIDUAL,
THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED BY:**

... CREATING A LEARNING SOCIETY, IN WHICH,

- positive relationships can flourish;
- achievement and progress are celebrated;
- opportunities exist for everyone to develop;
- critical reflection leads to action;
- stimulating teaching fosters independent learning.

... PROMOTING VALUES, WHICH FOSTER;

- self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline;
- understanding of right and wrong;
- personal responsibility;
- tolerance of the beliefs and attitudes of others;
- the growth of creativity.

... BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS, WHICH ARE EVIDENT IN OUR:

- welcoming, tolerant and courteous behaviour;
- concern for the rights and needs of others;
- supportive behaviour, encouraging mutual trust and respect;
- loyalty and commitment to the success of the school community;
- openness and effective communication.

... PROVIDING EDUCATION FOR LIFE, WHICH PROMOTES:

- the ability to make informed choices and to make good decisions;
- realistic goal-setting for the future;
- effective skills in investigation and problem solving;
- team work and leadership skills;