

# Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock



## Pastoral Care Policy

### Policy Details

Legal Status	Adopted	Version Date	Last Review	Next Review	Responsible
Non-Statutory	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	May 2025	May 2021	May 2029	Ms McCarthy

### Related Documents and Location

1. Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
2. Attendance Policy
3. Positive Behaviour Policy
4. Addressing Bullying Policy
5. Drugs Policy
6. eSafety and Digital Technology Policy
7. Special Educational Needs Policy
8. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
9. Policy for the Administration of Medication in School

All policies are available on the College Website and Private Folders.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **Mission Statement**

'Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock cares for young people in a way that encourages them to develop to their full potential within a supportive Christian community. We seek to prepare our students to play an active and responsible role in society, and to use their talents for the service of others.'

This Mission Statement guides us in the task of enabling our students to realise their full potential. It stresses the importance of relationships. Students are to be 'cared for' and their talents developed in a 'harmonious manner'. They are to be encouraged to use these talents for the benefit of others. In accordance with the aims of the College, this Pastoral Care Policy endeavours to further these values through its curriculum, in partnership between staff and students and as an extension of the Catholic family.

### **Vision Statement**

'Excellence through Care'

## **2. Aims**

In line with our Catholic values, we aim to:

- develop the 'whole person' as a follower of Christ;
- promote the philosophy and values of Catholic Education;
- develop positive attitudes in an atmosphere of cooperation, justice and mutual respect;
- prepare young people to be confident and creative contributors to society;
- enable young people to realise their full academic potential and develop all their gifts and talents;
- prepare students for adulthood by enabling them to acquire relevant knowledge and skills;
- engage positively with the local and wider community.

## **3. Definition of Pastoral Care**

Pastoral Care lies at the heart of the College's overall ethos which seeks to provide a caring and happy environment in which young people can develop to their full potential.

It aims to promote students' personal, social, moral and spiritual development and foster positive attitudes: through the quality of teaching and learning; through the nature of relationships amongst students and staff; through arrangements for monitoring students' overall progress - academic, personal and social; through specific pastoral and support systems; and through the College ethos.

The Pastoral Care system thus enables students to manage their present lives and prepare them for adult life in an ever-changing society.

## **4. Pastoral Care Structure**

Every student in the College belongs to a tutor group within a year group in the Junior, Senior or Upper School.

There are normally seven tutor groups in each year group. Each student is supported by a Tutor, a Head of Year and a Head of School. The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) oversees Pastoral Care within the College.

The Pastoral Team			
Year 8	Junior School	Head of Year 8	
Year 9		Head of Year 9	Head of Junior School
Year 10		Head of Year 10	
Year 11	Senior School	Head of Year 11	Head of Senior School
Year 12		Head of Year 12	
Year 13	Upper School	Head of Year 13	Head of Upper School
Year 14		Head of Year 14	

## 5. The Role of the Tutor, Head of Year, Head of School and Vice Principal (Pastoral Care)

### The Role of the Tutor

National Association of Pastoral Care in Education identifies the Tutor as the person who:

- Links the student and home;
- Connects the student with school staff and with other students in his/her tutor group;
- Monitors academic and personal progress of students;
- Provides information to other staff about his/her tutees;
- Coordinates the way the school can meet each student's needs.

Student welfare is promoted primarily through the Pastoral System, supported by subject teachers. Every student belongs to a tutor group and, ideally, the Tutor moves with the student from Year 8 to Year 14. The taught Personal Development Programme equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate their way through the challenges presented both by academic studies and other life issues successfully. Every Tutor has a weekly Tutor Counselling Period which can be used to provide individual support for students.

Students meet their Tutor every morning from 9.20-9.30 for Registration. They also have Personal Development classes with their Tutor. This provides an opportunity for students to ask questions or discuss any issues they may have. The Tutor is there to help the students and to make it easier for them to make progress in their studies. If students are having difficulties of any kind, they are encouraged to tell their Tutor as soon as possible.

The Tutor is also responsible for monitoring attendance, punctuality, homework and behaviour, as well as looking after the pastoral needs of the student. The Tutor will examine the entries from the Consequences and Rewards (CARE) Scheme from the previous day during Registration. It is hoped that this system will enable the Tutor to identify potential issues at an early stage. If a Tutor has serious concerns about the progress/behaviour of a student, he/she should speak directly to the Head of Year.

It is recognised that there will be some students who will need particular support because of specific learning difficulties, health concerns or family circumstances. The role of the Tutor is crucial in supporting the student and liaising with parents and relevant staff. The Tutor is their first point of contact for parents if they have any queries or concerns about their child.

### **Head of Year**

The Head of Year supports the Tutor in his/her pastoral role, providing leadership and, as such, is expected to take a caring interest in the needs of each individual student. The Head of Year is responsible for monitoring the following:

- Student welfare
- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Consequences and Rewards (CARE) Scheme
- Academic progress

The Head of Year meets with the relevant Head of School on a regular basis. Students with more complex pastoral needs will come under the care of the Head of Year.

### **Head of School (Junior/Senior/Upper)**

The Head of School is a member of the Senior Leadership Team who is responsible for coordinating and supporting the work of the Tutor and Head of Year, providing leadership and direction. The Head of School has overall responsibility for the academic and social welfare of the students in his/her School. They monitor academic progress, homework, behaviour, attendance and punctuality. The Head of School ensures that the needs of the students are being addressed and that the relevant support systems are put into place. The Head of School maintains records of intervention by the Tutor/Head of Year/LST and liaises with home if a change in behaviour, demeanour or commitment to work manifests itself. They liaise with the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) on issues regarding Child Protection/Safeguarding.

### **Vice Principal (Pastoral Care)**

The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) leads the Pastoral Team and supports the Principal in the leadership of the College to ensure its continuing improvement.

## **6. Child Protection/Safeguarding**

The College is committed to providing a safe, caring environment which promotes the protection and safeguarding of each individual child. In accordance with the aims of the College and in order to fulfil our statutory obligation under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which requires schools to play their part in the prevention and reporting of child abuse, this Policy aims to ensure the protection and safeguarding of all our students.

If any parent, member of staff or student has concerns about the possible abuse or the welfare of a child, those concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or a Deputy Designated Teacher.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Ms G McCarthy
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs M Davey

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs A Fox
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs N McCarry

## **7. HOPE (External Counsellor) and Time to Talk**

The College has as an external counsellor from HOPE on site two days per week and a 'Time to Talk' listening service, provided by experienced staff.

Students are able to self-refer to either service or ask a member of staff to arrange an initial meeting. College staff are happy to support students with any issue which may cause worry or concern.

The College also implements DE and EA polices on Health and Well-being through use of the Take 5 programme.

## **8. Mentors**

Mentors are Upper School students who are selected to carry out various roles in the College:

- Four Year 8 Mentors are assigned to each Year 8 tutor group. For the duration of the Mentor Programme, the Mentors will meet the class one period per week to explore various themes, e.g. smoking, drinking, drugs, bullying, prejudice, friendship, school, the environment, talents and relationships. Music, art, drama, poetry and story are used to explore the chosen theme.
- Year 9 Mentors support Year 9 tutor groups helping with fundraising.
- Digital Mentors promote positive IT use inside and outside of school, particularly in relation to staying safe online.
- Addressing Bullying Mentors support students by delivering assemblies to all year groups during Addressing Bullying Week; delivering addressing bullying lessons to every tutor group in the Junior School and creating the Focus of the Week.

## **9. Student Voice**

The College is committed to the promotion of the Student Voice. There are 102 elected representatives involved in the Junior/Senior/Upper School Student Councils, two students from each tutor group.

There are also 14 students (two from each year group) elected to the College Student Voice, led by the Head Boy and Head Girl.

The Junior/Senior/Upper School Councils meet four times per academic year and feed into the College Student Voice which meets on eight occasions.

## **10. Catholic Ethos**

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock is a Catholic Grammar School owned by the Diocese of Down and Connor. Its Catholic ethos is a lived experienced which permeates all aspects of school life.

Regular liturgical worship provides opportunities for students to come together in prayer. Year 8-14 students attend Retreats in the course of their school career, provided by the Chaplain.

Students attend Religious Education classes in Key Stage 3 and sit CCEA's GCSE in Religious Studies in Year 11 and 12. In the Upper School, a modular Religious Education Programme is available for all students.

### **11. Personal Development (PD) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programmes**

The Personal Development Programmes are delivered by the team of Tutors throughout Year 8-14. The Personal Development Programmes are devised by the Head of Schools in consultation with Tutors/Heads of Year, students and parents. All Personal Development Programmes are reviewed and updated at the end of each academic year.

The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programmes are designed by the RSE Coordinator and delivered by a small team. All RSE Programmes are reviewed and updated at the end of each academic year. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Coordinator works in conjunction with the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care).

Year 8	<b>PD:</b> Students have 22 Personal Development lessons per annum. <b>RSE:</b> Two six-week RSE Modules are delivered to each tutor group.
Year 9	<b>PD:</b> Students have 22 Personal Development lessons per annum. <b>RSE:</b> Two six-week RSE Modules are delivered to each tutor group.
Year 10	<b>PD:</b> Students have 22 Personal Development lessons per annum. <b>RSE:</b> Two six-week RSE Modules are delivered to each tutor group.
Year 11	<b>PD:</b> Year 11 have one Personal Development lesson per week. <b>RSE:</b> The whole year group attends a presentation delivered by an external agency.
Year 12	<b>PD:</b> Year 12 have one Personal Development lesson per week, alternating with Careers. <b>RSE:</b> Aspects of RSE are delivered through GCSE Learning for Life and Work (LLW), Science and Religious Studies in consultation with the RSE Coordinator.
Year 13	<b>PD:</b> Year 13 have one Personal Development lesson per week. <b>RSE:</b> A ten-week RSE Module is delivered to each tutor group.
Year 14	<b>PD:</b> Year 14 has one Personal Development lesson per week. <b>RSE:</b> A six-week RSE Module is delivered to each tutor group and the whole year group also attends a presentation delivered by an external agency.

### **12. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy**

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy, please contact Ms McCarthy, Vice Principal, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the College's Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at [www.knock.co.uk](http://www.knock.co.uk). Should you remain dissatisfied with the College's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided on Page 11 of the Complaints Procedure.

Signed: Mr Leo O'Reilly  
(Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Signed: Miss Deborah McLaughlin  
(Principal)

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025