



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

AIMS OF PASTORAL CARE:

Care for the development, well being and progress of all pupils is fundamental to the School. The pastoral dimension is integral to all that we do, in and out of the classroom. It integrates and gives coherence to the different aspects of a pupil's school experience, enabling each pupil to gain the maximum benefit from his time at RBAI.

At RBAI, we are committed to delivering effective pastoral care. We acknowledge that the quality of pastoral care influences and shapes the ethos of the School. It contributes to the creation of a caring atmosphere in which our young people feel valued. It provides a safe and secure environment which will facilitate their intellectual, physical, social, personal and moral development. It encourages a climate of good relationships, mutual respect and tolerance; an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of others. It emphasises the value of each individual pupil, while encouraging a real sense of community and togetherness. It will develop each pupil's self esteem, confidence and independence of mind. It will provide each pupil with the skills necessary to meet with confidence the demands and challenges at key stages of transition within school and through life.

While pastoral care is the primary responsibility of the pastoral staff, tutors and housemasters, all staff within the School community have a responsibility to promote the good practice as defined within this Policy. All members of staff are obliged to contribute to establishing and maintaining an ethos which is characterised by a commitment to care, open access, relationships of trust and co-operation.

OBJECTIVES:

- To develop a pastoral system which will integrate all aspects of the school experience.
- To promote inclusion¹.
- To promote the personal development of each pupil through the broader curriculum and the Personal Development Programme.

¹ Inclusion is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.

- To demonstrate care for the well being of each pupil and respond to any difficulties a pupil may be experiencing.
- To provide for the needs of pupils at times of difficulty through pastoral support and referral, where appropriate, to the School Counsellor or an alternative external agency.
- To recognise and value the potential of each pupil, enabling each pupil to develop his full potential and encouraging him to take responsibility for his own individual learning and progression.
- To encourage self-motivation and self-discipline.
- To create an atmosphere which will foster and encourage mutual respect and acceptable standards of behaviour.
- To facilitate pupil participation and communication through pupil councils.
- To recognise and acknowledge pupil achievement.
- To put in place effective arrangements for monitoring pupil behaviour and progress across the curriculum.
- To establish clear lines of communication and referral.
- To foster a relationship with parents which will aid the discussion and resolution of difficulties in school relating to discipline and the care and welfare of pupils.
- To meet the training needs and professional development of staff through attendance at external courses or through school based professional development.
- To ensure that staff have up to date information on issues such as safeguarding (including preventative education), child protection, drugs education, special needs education: that staff are aware of their legal responsibilities and the requirements and recommendations of relevant DENI circulars.
- To provide support through internal resources such as the Pastoral Hub and the Diversity Group.
- To establish effective links with the community and external agencies.

PASTORAL STRUCTURE:

The pastoral system at RBAI is based on a House structure. There are six Houses: **Dill, Jones, Kelvin, Larmor, Pirrie** and **Stevenson**, each headed by a Housemaster. Pupils coming into the School are allocated to a House. The Tutor appointed in Year 8 usually remains with the group for six years. This continuity of pastoral care is one of the strengths of our pastoral system. The House represents a familial structure in which pupils will quickly come to identify and have a real sense of belonging and togetherness. The Tutor is responsible for a group of circa 26 pupils and will have a detailed knowledge of the pupils in his or her care. They will monitor each pupil's progress and behaviour as well as responding to their needs. They will oversee the personal, social and emotional development of each pupil in the group. In Sixth Form pupils become the immediate responsibility of the Housemaster.

A Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is responsible for the strategic direction and coordination of Special Educational Needs provision in the School. They are supported by an Assistant SENCO and a team of classroom assistants; all are based in the Pastoral Hub

In Year 8 there is an Induction Co-ordinator who will oversee the transition of Year 8 pupils.

A pupil (peer) mentoring system is available in School. It is targeted at Year 8 but available also to pupils in Year 9. This service is about pupils offering support to other pupils by listening to them. This is a further way of helping pupils to talk about issues which concern them and to cope with the difficulties of making the transition to a new school. All mentors are Year 14 pupils and receive training to help develop their listening skills and to heighten the awareness of the needs of our pupils. Peer mentors are not expected to solve other pupils' problems, they are there to listen and, if necessary, refer onwards.

The **School Counsellor** is from Family Works Counselling and is available in school two days per week. Parents and staff may refer a pupil, via tutor, Housemaster or Vice Principal (Pastoral and Pupil Achievement). A pupil may refer himself. There will be an initial assessment session, followed normally by four to six sessions. The counsellor will liaise with the Vice Principal (Pastoral and Pupil Achievement). Matters discussed with the counsellor are confidential unless issues are mentioned which raise concerns about child protection.

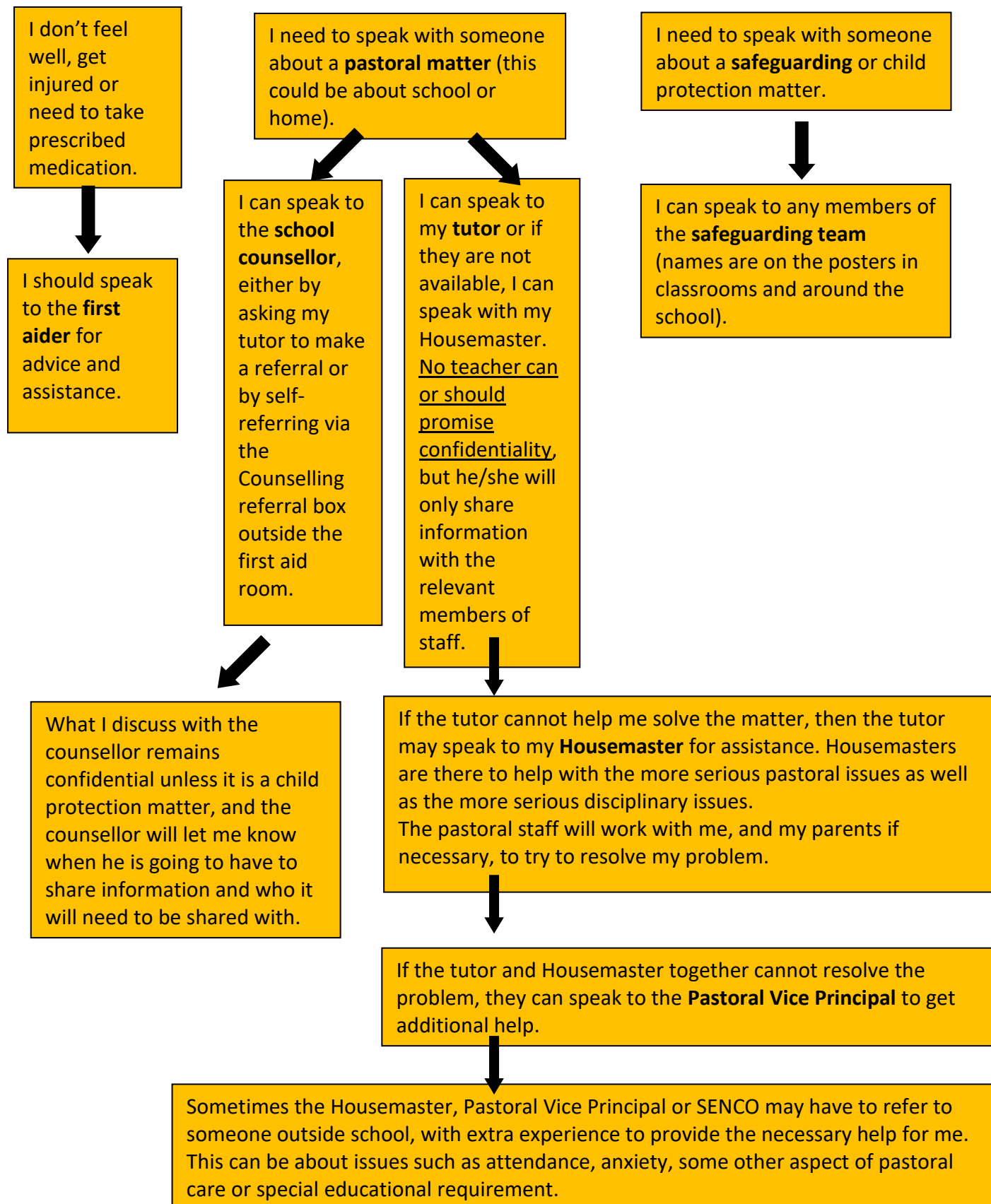
The school provides a **first aider** to care for pupils who may become ill and unable to continue with their class or who have been injured during the school day and require first aid.

The Vice Principal (Pastoral and Pupil Achievement) has overall responsibility for pastoral care which includes child protection and special needs.

The school has access to appropriate specialist external agencies:

- Education Authority
 - Education and Welfare Officer (EWO)
 - Special Educational Needs
 - Educational Psychology
 - Autism Advisory and Intervention Service
- Social Services
- Young People's Centre
- Love for Life
- Action Cancer
- PSNI
- Cruse Bereavement Support
- Cara Friend
- Made for More
- Resolute Minds

Appendix D – SUMMARY OF PASTORAL STRUCTURE FOR PUPILS



Appendix E – RELATED POLICIES

- 4a. Anti-Bullying Policy
- 4b. Positive Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- 4c. Pupil Acceptable Use Policy
- 4e. e-safety Policy
- 5a. Administration of Medication
- 5b. Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- 5c. Drug Education Policy
- 5e. Counselling Policy
- 5f. RSE Policy
- 5g. Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Policy

Reviewed August 2026