



Pastoral Care and Welfare Policy

Part I: Pastoral Care Structure, Systems and Special Support

Member of Staff Responsible	Deputy Head - Pastoral
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Distribution:	All

Introduction

This policy comprises two parts: the first describes the structure of pastoral care and how the school endeavours to support all of our boys, including those with particular needs. The second part focuses on emotional and mental health concerns.

The terms 'pastoral care' and 'welfare' are effectively interchangeable. The objective of the school's policy is to ensure that each boy feels safe at school, with his physiological and psychological needs being met on a daily basis, and that he is recognised, supported and developed as an individual.

The school endeavours to achieve its objective, first and foremost, by recognising that the school has a duty of care to its boys and that a boy cannot achieve his best or develop as an individual if his needs are not met. The school recognises its responsibilities but also its limitations and seeks the support of external experts, with consent from parents wherever possible, when this is required.

The staff of the school act 'in loco parentis' when parents are not supervising directly. We value the support of parents working in partnership with us and also seek ongoing support at home for help and guidance given to boys to ensure all-round benefit.

The school has a strong ethos of care and encourages its boys to be 'kind' as part of its ethos. Personal development is as important as achievement at Rokeby, and the pastoral care provision is designed to support this personal development.

The pastoral system values all of our boys equally, promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion through positive attitudes, kindness, social inclusion, and community cohesion. It also challenges and acts upon all forms of prejudice and inequality, including bullying and discrimination.

For completeness, this policy should be read or consulted in conjunction with the following:

- Behaviour, Conduct and Discipline policy
- Each and Every Boy Policy and Plan
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct (for staff)
- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Separated Parents Policy
- Parental Complaints Policy
- Learning Support Policy

General pastoral care systems and management, meetings and recording of matters

Structure and roles:

The school is organised into groupings where an adult has responsibility for a group of boys. In the Lower School, this is the class teacher, who is aided by a Teaching Assistant. In the Upper School, this is the Form Tutor. Each year group from Reception to Year 8 has a Year Head and a Deputy Year Head. The Year Head has general oversight of the welfare of the boys in that year group.

The Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School and Deputy Head - Pastoral have overall welfare responsibility for boys in the school under the Headmaster. They are aided by the Senior Teacher (Pastoral) and the Deputy Head of Lower School.

Meetings

Regular year group meetings are held within the school to discuss pupils' needs and how to support them. Similarly, there are fortnightly age group meetings (e.g. for Years 7 and 8) throughout the school in which pupils' welfare and wellbeing are discussed.

Form Tutors and class teachers are responsible for the day-to-day management of pupil welfare. They are expected to support boys as individuals and to follow the role requirements outlined in the *Staff Handbook* and the *Each and Every Boy Policy and Plan*, including the BASIN initiative (Boys' Activities, Strengths, Improvables and Needs).

Form Tutors are given time to meet with their boys every morning and non-games afternoon for registration and form period. Middle and Upper School staff are released to meet with individual boys whilst the rest of the classes are in assembly.

As outlined in this policy (parts 1 and 2), *case conference meetings are held when several parties need to be consulted or share information on a boy.*

Recording

It is vital that a record is kept of welfare matters, including meetings with parents. Unless instructed otherwise, all staff should note the matter and its outcome (with any action to follow) on 'My Concern' for pastoral and safeguarding matters and the school's Management Information Systems (iSAMS) for other matters. Any information on a boy should be held confidential, and any discussion or information shared on a particular need (such as those outlined below) should be treated with sensitivity by all staff.

Special support

(a) Special educational needs provision (including EAL and disabilities)

The school will endeavour to support all boys, including those identified as having additional learning needs. In the case of a formal diagnosis of a specific learning need, the Learning Support Coordinator

will work alongside other key staff and parents to ensure that a boy's welfare and pastoral care are taken into consideration when following recommendations from external agencies.

In the case of an undiagnosed learning need, the Learning Support Coordinator and other senior staff may recommend further investigation or observation of a boy to ensure his pastoral care and welfare needs are being met.

It is vital that there are open communication paths between school and home and that any previous medical or learning concerns, reports or diagnoses are shared with the school to enable adequate provision and support.

The school works in partnership with parents to ensure each boy's learning needs and welfare are met.

It is the school's desire for boys to thrive within the environment, and this must remain paramount.

If there are persistent concerns that a boy's welfare is suffering due to academic demands, this will be addressed with staff and parents, often with the support of the Learning Support Coordinator.

In some cases, an alternative setting may be more suitable to ensure the boy's welfare needs are met. Staff will work closely with parents to recommend alternative schools that support a boy's needs and welfare and seek a smooth and positive transition for the boy.

Please refer to the Learning Support Policy for further information on learning support in the School.

The nature of the school building means that the setting may not be suitable to some pupils with a disability, although all reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate them. A risk assessment and decision are made on an individual basis. Please refer to the Accessibility Policy for more information.

(b) Supporting siblings and their families

We try to help families by bringing siblings through the school, but they must be able to thrive at Rokeby. Regardless, they may need to go to different senior schools.

Priority is given to siblings of children already in the school, with each registration treated as a stand-alone application. Each boy is assessed on his own merits. Should we feel the boy would not thrive at Rokeby, we have the right to withdraw our offer. This would be done through a discussion with the family, the Headmaster, and/or the Head of Lower School/Middle School.

Twins are placed in separate form classes. It is our belief that separating twins encourages the development of their individuality and independence. In older year groups, they may find themselves in the same set in some subjects.

(c) Looked-after children and adopted children

Looked-after children are cared for by the Local Authority (and may be in foster care). Not all adopted and looked-after children need additional help in school, but it is better for adoptive parents and teachers to be prepared to help those who do need extra support. We know that children who come into the care system can have experiences of distress and trauma, which can affect their behaviour, especially in group settings such as school.

Strategies may be put in place to enable them to cope in the classroom. Boys in these groups may present as being withdrawn or having difficult and challenging behaviour. Appropriate support will be provided through careful and close liaison with parents.

How can adoptive parents help their boy's education?

- Sharing enough information for the school to make sense of the boy's difficulties and being clear about the purpose of sharing (who needs to know what and for what purpose).
- Contacting key support staff to establish a partnership when the boy joins the school, rather than waiting until things go wrong.
- Working with the school to identify potential curriculum hotspots, such as family trees or teaching about genetics, and working with the school to identify modifications which will include the adopted boy.
- Identifying and linking up with other adoptive and special guardianship families at the school.
- Contacting their local authority adoption service if they need support to advocate for their son's educational needs.

(d) Bereaved children

We have procedures in place to support children, young people and staff to deal with bereavement and loss when it presents itself within our school and during the months and years that follow. All teaching staff have completed online bereavement training.

We have a Bereavement Policy, which we follow in the event of a bereavement.

We will work to support children and young people, their families, and staff through periods of loss and change in a caring environment.

Our communication is open and honest, and we use age-appropriate language.

Strategies will be put in place to support bereaved children and young people for as long as they need.

(e) Young carers

A young carer is defined as a child who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. We keep a record of all identified young carers. Young carers in the Lower School meet regularly with the Head of Lower School. Rokeby is committed to supporting any young carers who attend the school and may contact the young carers support team in the child's local authority. To help us identify young carers, we have a question on our admissions form that asks, "Is your child a young carer?" If the answer is yes, the Deputy Head – Pastoral will contact the family to discuss suitable ways of supporting the child.

(f) Other special cases, including summer birth dates and repeating a year

Boys who are born in the summer months (May-August in effect) may experience some delay in learning progress or be less socially advanced than some of their peers at school. Requests for such a boy to repeat a year or to be held back a year will be considered on a case-by-case basis according to what is considered in the boy's best interest.

In any situation where a parent considers a boy should receive special (as in unusual) treatment by the school, a discussion will be held with the parents. It is helpful for as much information to be shared as possible at these meetings.

(g) Parents: Separated and divorced parents, care and court orders

We provide support to children from homes where parents are separated or divorced.

This support can be emotional. Staff will be made aware of the home situation (assuming parents have kept the school informed) and will be sensitive towards the boy and give regular opportunities to discuss their feelings as appropriate. The school will put further support into place as deemed necessary.

This support can be practical as often these children live in two family homes, and books/equipment can be left at the 'other home'. The school aims to take a lenient view on such eventualities and work with parents to help their son be prepared for school each day.

See the school's Separated Parents Policy for further guidance.

(h) Safeguarding children

Safeguarding children is at the heart of everything we do, and we abide by all statutory guidance and legislation. The school's Safeguarding Policy outlines the school's stance and procedures regarding all safeguarding matters. Parents should be aware that the school may investigate a concern raised and that disclosures made to the school can sometimes be about a child's home life. Parents need to be reassured that the school will take great care in investigating such concerns, as our first duty is to the child.

(i) Non-traditional families, sexuality, gender identity

Through our PSHE and pastoral programmes, we work hard to eliminate direct or indirect discrimination and foster positive relationships in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

We recognise that boys born from IVF/surrogacy or living in non-traditional families, or those who feel that they are homosexual or bisexual or who may identify as female may need some additional pastoral support at certain times.

We ensure that our curriculum offers opportunities to learn about people with a diverse range of identities. We teach our boys to recognise and challenge stereotypes and prejudice and to value difference.

The school welcomes discussion with parents on how best to support their sons and ensure their sons are treated in a supportive way by other adults and children at school.

Knowing and supporting our boys

(a) BASIN – Boys' Activities, Strengths, Improvables and Needs

A key pastoral monitoring tool we have developed is BASIN. This enables our pastoral staff to get to know each and every boy, particularly the activities he enjoys, his strengths, areas he can improve in and his needs. Importantly, we can then put in place the support he may need to be able to flourish further.

It takes the shape of the Form Tutor first researching their tutor group prior to the new school year and then regular meetings with boys to establish their goals, friendships, strengths and needs. This is all recorded on ISAMS.

It is expected that this system flags up any concerns that can be shared with other teaching staff and/or parents so that the boys receive the appropriate level of support.

(b) PASS – Pupil Attitudes to Self and School

This is a biannual survey which requires boys to answer a selection of questions regarding their attitudes towards themselves and school. Boys are given opportunities to express their views about themselves as learners in school. This information is used to tailor our pastoral and academic provision to meet individual needs.

The results are reported back in the form of a colour-coded spreadsheet, and pastoral staff analyse them to ascertain areas of strength and areas for support to remove barriers to learning. As appropriate, this may be discussed with the boy and his parents.

(c) Mindfulness

Boys are taught the basic principles of mindfulness through the ‘breathe’ and ‘b’ courses (<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/breathe/breathe-curriculum/> <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/teach-dot-b/dot-b-curriculum/>). This is delivered in Years 5 and 8 and refreshed with reference to the programme in various assemblies and other opportunities, such as mindfulness drop-in sessions.

The aim of providing mindfulness to boys is to facilitate a further coping strategy in times of busyness and stress or in terms of managing their emotions and benefitting in being in the present moment. It helps promote well-being and increase resilience.

(d) Zones of Regulation

Regulation is something that everyone continuously works on, whether we are aware of it or not. We use zones of regulation with all boys from Reception to Year 8 to help them understand the full range of their emotions and explore tools and strategies to self-regulate and support their wellbeing. Zones of regulation are taught via lessons, assemblies, and pastoral support sessions. All classrooms have common zones visual displays, and a common zones language is used by all teaching staff. <https://zonesofregulation.com/about/>

(e) ELSA

If a boy needs some specific emotional support, he may be referred to our ELSA team.

ELSAs are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. They are existing staff who have had special training from educational psychologists to support the emotional development of children and young people in school. They provide one-to-one support to address areas such as: friendship difficulties, bereavement, anger management and self-esteem, amongst others.

If we feel that a boy may benefit from some ELSA support, the Senior Teacher Pastoral will make contact with the boy's parents to introduce and outline the ELSA programme.

Most ELSA programmes last for a number of weeks, helping the pupil learn specific new skills or coping strategies.

(f) Mentors

If a boy is not achieving his potential or has some ongoing pastoral concerns, he may be assigned a mentor. This is an existing member of staff with whom the boy feels comfortable talking. The boy will meet with their mentor regularly to discuss their wellbeing and progress and set and review personal targets.

(g) Peer Mediators

Peer mediation is problem-solving by boys with boys. We train peer mediators in Years 4-8 to support their peers in resolving conflict and working out problems.

When boys get involved in mediation, they fill out a feedback form, which is given to the staff coordinator and form tutor. The boys take their roles seriously, and they are recognised when on duty by the peer mediator badges/ arm bands that they wear. Peer mediation points are signposted on the playground areas.

Escalation and management of welfare issues

When welfare needs have reached a point whereby several concerns have been raised over a period of time, and additional services or external advice may be required, the staff members involved will put the following in place:

- An internal 'case conference' will be held to discuss the various concerns and any progress made to date.
- Parents will be invited to meet the lead staff to discuss the concerns and construct a written and recorded plan to assist in the improvement of the welfare of the boy concerned.
- If deemed beneficial, the school may need to complete a Local Authority Early Needs Assessment alongside the parents in order to access additional support/services. This facilitates multi-agency involvement, which enables practitioners to support children, meet their needs, and improve their lives.
- Additional support services such as counselling, specialist health support, educational psychologist involvement, etc., will be discussed and commenced if deemed appropriate and in the boy's best interests.