St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

'Achieving Excellence Together'

June 2026

Rationale

St Patrick's Academy is committed to the development and growth of the whole person. In our pastoral care work, we seek to create a community that develops self respect in our pupils, leading to a respect for others in the school community.

Aims

St Patrick's Academy believes that every pupil has a right to feel safe and secure at all times. We will actively promote a Pastoral Care ethos which allows for the development of the whole person, and which leads to every pupil making good choices which will form the basis for a healthy and positive lifestyle.

Pastoral Care will be the setting where our young people will acquire values and standards on the basis of observing these in practice at all levels. We aim to create a caring and secure environment where our young people can develop good relationships based on those they experience.

Ethos

Emphasising St Patrick as the patron of our school, we will endeavour to be:

- P - Partners in the pursuit of excellence.
- A - Achievers who reach their full potential.
- T - Team workers who value the contribution of others.
- R - Respecters of human dignity.
- I - Inspirers who set good example.
- C - Creators of a caring and generous community.
- K - Keepers of the faith and tradition.

Pastoral Organisation

- Each member of staff in St Patrick's Academy has a pastoral role. Overall responsibility for Pastoral Care is assigned to a Vice Principal, Senior Leader for Preventative Education, a Senior Teacher in charge of Pupil Welfare/Attendance, a co-coordinator of pupil wellbeing, a team of Heads of Year, Form Teachers and a Safeguarding Team.
- This system ensures that there are clear channels of communication, easily identified roles and responsibilities which bring maximum benefit to all students. There is also a school counsellor, school health officer, an attendance secretary, SENCo and an Assistant SENCo, Student Support Officer, Senior Teachers in charge of student support/achievement and a Year 8 Transition Team.

- Each Head of Year, supported by the Pastoral Care Vice Principal, oversees the general welfare of all pupils in the Year Group. Each pupil is assigned to a form teacher who, as far as possible, delivers the school's Pastoral Programme. This system enables the teacher to establish a close relationship with a small group of pupils and so allows for the development of trust and support within the form group.

Links with parents

In St Patrick's Academy we aim to work in partnership with parents/carers in the promotion of the overall good of the pupil. The school values and actively encourages communication with parents/carers.

To this end it:

- Organises Open Day for prospective pupils;
- Arranges Induction days for Year 8 pupils in June and August;
- Organises Information Evenings for parents of Year 8, Year 11 and Year 13 students;
- Arranges subject choice advice days;
- Provides progress reports three times per year;
- Provides a full, written report once a year;
- Arranges Parent-Teacher Meetings for each year group annually;
- Inform parents/carers when there are serious concerns relating to the attendance, progress or behaviour of their child;
- Encourages parents/carers to make contact with the school if they have concerns about any aspect of their child's education or welfare;
- Provides information to parents/carers on the Pastoral System and Safeguarding Procedures;
- Consults with parents/carers on the content and delivery of the pastoral curriculum, as well as any changes to policies;
- Informs parents/carers regarding workshops/presentations that their child will have the opportunity to participate in and seek their permission as appropriate;
- Organise information sessions and workshops for parents/carers, where possible.

Parents/carers are asked to:

- Inform the school of any change in family circumstances or of any information that you feel may impact on your child. Please be assured of diplomacy and sensitivity at all times;
- Ensure that our school office has a several of contact numbers for their child in case of any emergency;
- Make all contact through the school reception, rather than making direct contact with their child on their mobile phone.

The school website and app will provide parents/carers with the most up-to-date information about school events.

Transition
We appreciate the challenge that the transition to our school poses for new pupils. The Head of Year, Form Teachers and subject teachers aim to help pupils manage this change with ease by giving them appropriate support, encouragement and guidance.

There is an Induction Programme, *Follow the Yellow Brick Road,* for pupils transferring to St Patrick's Academy in Year 8. They, like Dorothy, are on a journey and, just like her, they will learn how to overcome obstacles, face wicked witches, realise their potential and manage changes in their life. In term two, our school counsellor will continue her work with our Year 8 pupils through 'Return to Oz' to evaluate how well they have settled into Academy life before moving on to explore the importance of resilience and perseverance. These are well-proven programmes which form part of our preventative mental health programme.

In Year 9, pupils look at developing resilience and realising their dreams by studying the journey of Eddie "the Eagle" Edwards. Nothing came easy in Eddie Edwards' life. Despite being seen as the class reject and a 'loser', Edwards was a man of astonishing resilience and initiative and achieved his dreams of competing in the Olympics. Pupils study his story and take part in workshops based around the theme of reaching their potential and building resilience. In Year 10, our school counsellor runs a workshop 'Teenage Brain – Under Construction' to help pupils better understand their emotions and provide techniques on how to manage their emotions and lessen anxiety.

These initiatives are led by both our School Counsellor and Head of Year and are delivered by the Form Teachers. Programmes for all Key Stage 3 pupils are now in place. Year 8 pupils are also supported through our 'Cara' or 'Buddy' system as well as by a team of dedicated Year 8 prefects.

There are also induction programmes for pupils in Years 11 and Year 13. To help Year 13 pupils cope with the challenges of A Level, the Head of Key Stage, Head of Year 13, supported by the pastoral team, and the Area Learning Mentor provide guidance on independent study and personal skill development such as advice day interviews and study skills. All Year 13 pupils are encouraged to participate in one of the many voluntary and extracurricular activities available to them.

Professional Counselling

The value of professional counselling should never be underestimated. A counsellor can offer immense support to a young person who needs help and guidance. Our school will endeavour to provide a Professional Counsellor to help our young people to develop a definitive awareness of self. Our counsellor can be contacted at counsellor@stpatricksacademy.ni.sch.uk Matters raised with the school counsellor will only be brought to our attention if a safeguarding issue is raised. In this instance, the school will implement the school's Safeguarding Procedures. In all other situations, matters discussed between the counsellor and the pupil are subject to a confidentiality agreement. Pupils are able to self-refer by knocking on counsellor's door or, alternatively, through the referral box outside the Principal's Office.

Counselling/Relationships

Staff will endeavour to build positive relationships with our young people in order to provide advice and support. However, we acknowledge the need for other support organisations.

Student Council

The council is made up of elected representatives from all year groups and meets on a regular basis. It's aims are:

- To give pupil representatives the opportunity to discuss issues which concern them;
- To make a valuable and meaningful contribution to decision making in the school;
- To act as a channel of communication between the staff and the pupils;
- To develop ideas and suggestions designed to enhance the quality of life for everyone in St Patrick's Academy.

Bereavement

St Patrick's Academy is committed to providing a caring and supportive environment during and after the bereavement of a member of our school community. We have a dedicated policies aimed at supporting any pupil or staff member who experiences bereavement while they are in our school and acknowledge that we may have to employ different strategies and procedures, depending on an individual's circumstances. A teacher with responsibility for pupil wellbeing will monitor and update a bereavement register.

Period dignity

We are committed to supporting any pupil or staff member who experiences period poverty and will include relevant lessons as part of our personal development programme to create greater awareness of period dignity and menstrual wellbeing. We aim to provide free period products to any pupil or staff member who requires them. The teacher with responsibility for pupil wellbeing will oversee menstrual wellbeing initiatives.

Managing External Agencies

We acknowledge the importance of ensuring that any external agencies involved with our school must adhere to the values and ethos of St Patrick's Academy. We ensure Service Level Agreements are drawn up to inform all contributory parties such as:

- Education Welfare Officers;
- Educational Psychology Service;
- Gateway Team;
- Education Authority's Child Protection/Safeguarding Officers;
- School Chaplain;
- Love for Life;
- Thrive Academy;
- NI Chest, Heart and Stroke;
- Mood Matters/Aware Defeat Depression;
- PIPS;
- PSNI;
- Smashed Live.

Training and Support

St Patrick's Academy recognises the importance of training for all staff in the establishment of a caring and pastoral community.

Related School Policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such it should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Addressing Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Bereavement Policy
- Bereavement for Pupils Policy
- Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy
- CCTV Policy (Acceptable Use)
- Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Health Education Policy (to include Healthy Eating)
- I.C.T. Policy (Acceptable Use of)
- Period Dignity Policy
- Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Professional Conduct for staff Policy
- Punctuality Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- School Trips Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Storage and Administration of Medication Policy (To include First Aid)
- Uniform Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy
- Visitors' Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

These policies are available on the school website at www.stpatricksacademy.org.uk.

Evaluation and Monitoring

This school recognises and accepts the importance of on-going monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of Pastoral Care at every level. St Patrick's Academy will follow the procedures for self evaluation as outlined in the DE document 'Together Towards Improvement'.

Reviewed: June 2026

To be reviewed: June 2027