




South Lee Prep School
Bury St Edmunds

Pastoral Care Policy September 2024

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Pastoral Care

At South Lee, we value the social and emotional wellbeing of our pupils as highly as their academic achievements. It is our aim to make every child feel nurtured, confident, secure, valued and supported. We believe that education is about what happens both inside and outside of the classroom and that social and emotional growth and education, enhances self-esteem, leading to happy and more productive learners.

The quality of relationships within the school is of paramount importance and our excellent pastoral care system is designed to encourage and facilitate strong bonds throughout our school community. In particular the rapport and relationships that children establish with adults and other pupils are central to their experience at South Lee, developing mutual trust and respect.

Sense of Belonging

From the moment children enter South Lee, we instil a sense of belonging in them. Each child is encouraged to be themselves and to find joy and pride in their own achievements. A growth mindset is championed right from the outset, teaching our pupils to be resilient, to challenge themselves and to persevere from the start. We teach our pupils that it is by making mistakes that we learn and grow and that taking responsibility for our actions helps us to become better human beings. Developing a sense of right and wrong and mutual respect starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage with our golden values and carries on right through the school until the children leave us at the end of Year 8.

Leadership and Responsibility

We believe each one of our pupils has the capacity to be a leader and the ability to take on responsibilities. To that end we are always looking for ways to encourage our pupils to 'have a go' and to try new things. Opportunities abound for them to get involved both on a planned level, but also on a more ad hoc level. For example, there are many ways to help the teacher in the classroom, and for peer mentoring in the Prep School. Any pupil can put themselves forward to lead a lesson on something in which they are interested, to run a lunchtime club or to perform in assembly. Children from each year group serve on the School Council, which meet to consider matters of importance raised by the children. There is no reward or privilege system for such opportunities – making such a contribution is seen as its own reward. The children are actively encouraged to contribute at whatever level is appropriate for them.

The Curriculum

We devote considerable amounts of formal curriculum time to fostering the children's development.

- Personal and Social Education is taught throughout the school in the form of PSHEE lessons.
- Daily registration periods with Tutors provide time to address issues of significance with any particular class and time is available for staff to meet to discuss any pastoral issues that have arisen.
- Assemblies provide a collective moral and spiritual framework to the life of the school and can be used to address any matters of general concern or, much more often, celebration.
- Regular 'House meetings' to discuss and plan for house events and to spend quality time together in a mixed age setting.
- The academic curriculum is itself full of opportunities for children to 'think beyond themselves', particularly in the Humanities subjects.
- The development of the children's ability to possess and express their feelings and to read and respond to others' feelings is at the heart of Sport, Drama, Art and Music, which are taught by specialists as part of the curriculum throughout the school.
- Each child has a 'safety circle', a network of adults to whom they will go to with a worry. We revisit these at the beginning of each term, so that the children know we care about their worries, but also so that they can change their list, dependant on how they are feeling and to whom they feel closest.

Supporting Our Pupils: The Tutor System

All staff are expected to be part of the pastoral system and to see this as being a collective responsibility and an integral part of their job. Pastoral care is about taking an interest in any matter that may have a bearing on a child's welfare and happiness and ensuring that action is taken, as appropriate, to promote the well-being of a child. A core part of this work is regular communication with parents.

In the Prep School the Tutors and the Deputy Heads will all expect to be involved in dealing with pastoral issues and to be informed of any concerns.

In the Pre-Prep (including Reception), children are in the pastoral care of their class teacher.

In the nursery, children are in the pastoral care of their class leaders, or in the case of Reception, their class teacher. The Nursery Manager is in charge of the overall management of pastoral care in Nursey.

Pastoral Monitoring

Our pastoral monitoring is designed to ensure that we notice and act upon any matter of concern. To this end:

- Each child has a Pupil Support Plan (PSP) which records any pastoral or academic incidents relating to the child. This information is shared with the relevant staff, so action can be put in place swiftly to support the child.
- DSLs meet bi weekly to discuss the welfare of the children. A record of any action needed is kept internally and notes of any matter of significance, be it a playground incident or a parental query, are likewise circulated so that all concerned are fully aware of all current issues.
- Weekly meetings of staff are led by the Headd which provide the opportunity to bring the circumstances of any child to the attention of the staff in general.
- The Head and the Deputy Heads meet weekly to review all current safeguarding, pastoral and academic issues and to ensure that appropriate action is being taken.
- A full and extensive review of each pupil's circumstances takes place twice each year and involves tutors producing reports and feeding back via a Parents evening during the year.

Pastoral Action

If pastoral monitoring ensures that we notice any concern, it is essential that this should be translated into action to benefit a child.

- Sometimes, a concern is vague – Is a child making sufficient effort? Is a child unhappy in the playground? In such circumstances, 'blind' monitoring of a child may be used, whereby staff record their observations of a child, within and/or beyond the classroom, to gather further information with regard to any difficulty.
- Sometimes, if the concern is clear, it will be beneficial for the child to be involved in such monitoring, getting direct feedback from each teacher at the end of a lesson with regard to behaviour or progress. This may involve the child having a Monitoring Card. It is important that this is seen as a way of supporting the child and not as a punitive measure.
- Sometimes, the concern is academic and will lead to further investigation, the tutor and/or others collating the views of all teachers or involving the Individual Development specialists.
- Sometimes, the concern is with a child's workload. In such cases, a child's workload, extra-curricular involvement and other organisational issues are reviewed. Adjustments can be made, and organisational support is given.

- Sometimes, the concern is with a child's self-esteem or happiness. The cause is sought and addressed and the tutor, or another 'mentor', often one of the senior managers or someone on the child's safety circle, is found to give particular attention to the child.

Communication with Home

Tutors should be well known to parents and will usually be the first point of contact, although the Senior Leaders are equally available.

- All tutors can be contacted by email and appointments can be made throughout the year when their availability to parents can be guaranteed, and will phone, email or arrange to meet with parents at any other mutually convenient times.
- Any significant pastoral concern which arises at School will be shared with parents and the school wishes to know as soon as possible of any concern arising at home, whether or not it relates directly to school life.
- As children grow, so we try to give them increased responsibility to resolve minor concerns under our guidance. In such circumstances, it is good if children are able to reach a happy resolution themselves and it may therefore be that we do not inform parents of the older children if they have had and resolved a minor worry. In general, though, parents should expect to be informed of any significant incident involving their child.

When Things Go Wrong

It is inevitable that at times things will go wrong and we teach the children that this is a normal part of life. Being unhappy at times, is normal and mistakes in the way we treat each other are important to our learning. Often with young children an act of unkindness occurs impulsively without much thought for the consequences. Such incidents provide an opportunity to educate the children individually, in small groups, in classes or as a whole school about what is right and wrong and how our actions can make other people feel upset or sad. We encourage dialogue and ensure that each person is listened to and that a resolution is reached to solve the problem. All those involved should feel clear that they have been heard, have been valued, have been guided, have been forgiven, if necessary, and can be trusted. Above all, they should feel secure in the care of the staff concerned.

Major Life Events

It is inevitably the case, in a school such as South Lee and in the world in which we live, that some of our children will, at some time, experience major trauma. The serious illness of a parent, a family bereavement, the separation or divorce of parents are all part of the life of our community. In such circumstances, special care is taken of the children.

We can refer parents to bereavement counsellors, child and family therapists and divorce counsellors who will work in close co-operation with us to ensure the best outcome for the child. Often, children will 'bury' an unhappiness until they are ready to deal with it. With bereavement, for

instance, difficulties can often arise about two years after the event, and we keep a careful note of all vulnerable children to ensure that their circumstances remain fresh in our minds. It is a privilege to us to be of use to families facing difficult circumstances and it is one of the great strengths of our community that staff and parents alike have provided the most wonderful support to families in need in the past.

Bullying and Sanctions

Please refer to our Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy and Cyber-bullying Policy