

Pastoral care in independent schools

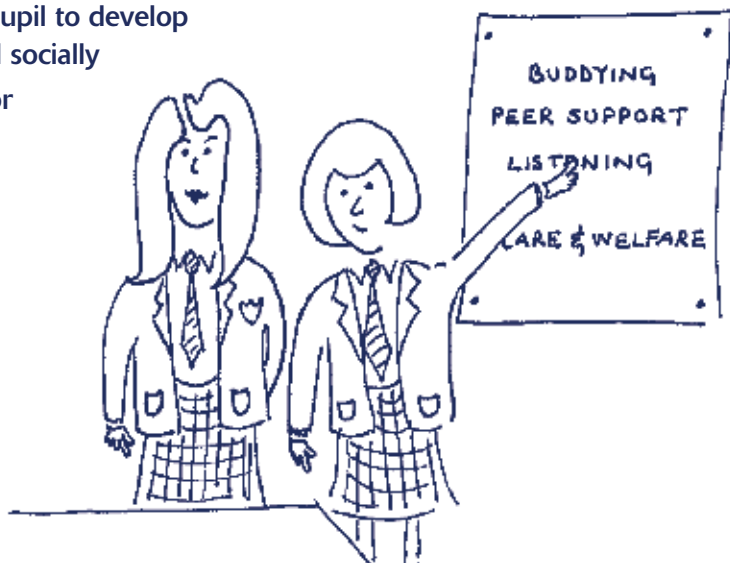


PASTORAL CARE IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Independent schools place an emphasis on meeting the personal, social, emotional and intellectual needs of each pupil so that pupils can participate fully in school life and develop individual talents. In each school, Guidance and Pastoral Care teams are responsible for pupils' wellbeing and they dedicate time and expertise to encouraging and supporting pupils.

Each school has its own pastoral care aims that describe how pupils are supported and nurtured. Broadly speaking, pupils are encouraged to give of their best, to support one another and to grow in confidence. While the aims will differ from school to school, they are likely to address some or all of the following:

- provide an environment in which pupils feel comfortable, safe and secure in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect
- encourage positive interaction between pupils
- provide the conditions where pupils can develop abilities, skills and talents
- provide activities appropriate to age and stage that encourage each individual pupil to develop spiritually, culturally, morally and socially
- develop pupils' responsibility - for themselves and others.



Day schools

In day schools, there are two common ways in which the work of the Guidance and Pastoral Care teams are structured.

- 1) In some schools, Guidance staff are responsible for the pupils in a specific year group which means that a pupil's Guidance tutor will change each year.
- 2) In other schools, pupils keep the same Guidance tutor throughout the duration of their school life and brothers and sisters are assigned the same Guidance tutor.

As approaches differ from school to school, you are advised to check how the system operates in the schools that you visit.

Boarding schools

House Parents, many of whom also have a teaching remit, play a vitally important Guidance role. Within each house, the House Parents have overall responsibility for pupils' care and welfare and they quickly get to know each young person as an individual. Each evening, a resident tutor is present to help pupils with academic work and to provide support. Friends and House Prefects are also on hand to offer help as is the Chaplain who can provide a listening ear.

In boarding schools, the House System is central to pupils' lives. A House is so much more than the place where pupils sleep! It represents life outside the academic side of the school – a home from home, a place of safety and security, a place of fun and camaraderie. Great importance is attached to the creation of a friendly, close-knit community in which young people can settle, make firm friendships, feel at home and thrive.

There are two different approaches to the structure of boarding houses and each offers many benefits.

1) The vertical system

In most boarding schools, houses include pupils from each year group which means that pupils can interact with a mixture of age groups.

2) The horizontal system

In other schools, the boarding houses are home to pupils from just one year group which means that pupils get to know their own year group very well.

Usually, boarding houses are single sex, although some sixth year boarding houses are mixed, with shared social areas - boys' and girls' rooms are located separately.

Typically, pupils are very loyal to their House and popular features of House life include inter-house competitions (including music, sport, drama, debating etc), outings and social events.

Developing morally and spiritually

Most independent schools seek to help pupils develop morally and spiritually within the context of the Christian tradition although pupils of all faiths and none are warmly welcomed. Most traditional Scottish boarding schools have a chapel, usually located centrally within the school grounds, and services provide an opportunity for the whole school community to gather together.

Personal and social education

Through each school's Personal and Social Education programme, pupils learn the facts about drugs, alcohol, smoking and sexual health, so that they can assess risks, make informed choices and protect themselves from harm.

Further information is available from individual schools. Please see www.scis.org.uk/schools for contact details.



61 Dublin Street
Edinburgh
EH3 6NL

Tel: 0131 556 2316

www.scis.org.uk

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