



REIGATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy

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Policy Author:	Sarah Arthur, Deputy Head
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Introduction

Our main priority is to care and support each individual child, sensitive to their unique blend of talents and abilities.

The aim of the Reigate Grammar School Pastoral and Wellbeing Programme is to help pupils to find balance and fulfilment in their busy lives. Wellbeing is about much more than happiness, it is about understanding how our bodies and minds work and then learning to look after them through the challenging times of life.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Supervision Policy

The Form Tutor

There are many layers of guidance available, as pupils develop skills relating to working with others, enjoying positive relationships, taking responsibility and showing leadership. A network of support is in place to ensure that every pupil is shown the ultimate duty of care. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for others, and new pupils always appreciate the warm welcome they receive at RGS.

At the centre of every pupil's pastoral care is their Form Tutor. This member of staff will usually be a constant for them during their stay in any one section of the school. The Form Tutor sees each member of their form every day and we deliberately keep these groups small, usually 20 or below in the Lower School, reducing to 13-16 in the Upper School and Sixth Form.

Head of Year and Head of Section

The school is divided into three sections, with a Head of each section. They work closely with a Head of Year team whose focus is on ensuring that each and every child is supported academically and pastorally to feel confident in their academic studies and secure in their life beyond the classroom. They are there to offer guidance, encouragement and also to stretch and challenge the pupils, developing their skills in resolving day-to-day issues and discovering solutions themselves.

Pupil Induction

Pupil induction is a priority for each Section of the school. At 11+, 13+ and 16+ entry points, there are induction activities before they join the school in September. For example, a taster day for 13+ students, a two-day Sixth Form Induction programme, visits to the primary schools of our 11+ entrants and a First Form Induction Day. In September, new students come in a day earlier than everyone else to help them become orientated. Buddies and Mentors are provided to help pupils to settle in quickly.

Mentoring

We believe that support for pupils from their peers is vital in underpinning wellbeing and we offer a comprehensive mentoring programme. Pupils who join us at 11+ are mentored by an Upper Sixth Form pupil who acts like a big brother or sister to them and will also be in their House. The Upper Sixth Form Mentors apply for this position and receive specific training. First Form pupils also benefit from a Second Form Buddy. We also have a buddy system for new joiners at 13+ and 16+.

There is also a peer mentoring programme in place, where students from the Upper School and Sixth Form volunteer to take on a role as a peer mentor, offering someone similar to themselves in age to talk to about a variety of issues.

Wellbeing Centre

Our Learning Support Department, School Counsellor, Nurse and Chaplain are all based in our Wellbeing Centre. This building includes a designated room, *The Snug*, where pupils who need a little time out, can go to relax in a quiet, welcoming and cosy environment.

School Counselling

One of the most important aspects of wellbeing is having opportunities to talk through any concerns that a pupil might have. For those pupils who feel the need to explore any worries that they may have with someone who is separate from members of staff, the school has an independent Counsellor who is registered with the BACP. She is available on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. She operates a confidential service¹ and pupils may refer themselves directly to her (via email) or they may arrange an appointment via their Form Tutor, Head of Year/Section or Miss Arthur. The Counsellor is based in room C7, which is on the first floor of Cornwallis. Pupils may drop in at lunchtime for a confidential chat or they may have a longer one-to-one counselling session. The School Counsellor also offers group sessions and can meet with parents too.

School Counsellor: Mrs J Bovingdon (jbb@reigategrammar.org)

The School Chaplain

The role of the Chaplain is to offer support and encouragement to pupils who are facing difficulties or problems at home or at school. You do not have to be religious to see the Chaplain. If anyone from within the community would like to speak to or meet the Chaplain, please do get in touch.

School Chaplains: Mr P Chesterton and Rev P Jackson.

The School Nurse

RGS has a School Nurse who is available for drop-ins and also by appointment. She can give advice on matters such as puberty, emotional health and wellbeing, healthy diet and lifestyle choices. Day-to-day First Aid matters, these are dealt with by our qualified team of First Aiders based in the School Office and around the site. Students who feel unwell during the day can go to the office and they will be assessed by a First Aider. If needed, parents will be contacted and the pupil may need to go home.

External support

From time to time, pupils and their families need more specialist support than we can provide; for example, for matters of physical or emotional health. The school works closely with other agencies, such as CAMHS in order to ensure that referrals can be made, in conjunction with parents, when appropriate. If a pupil is being helped by an outside professional, we ask that parents keep us informed about this, so we can ensure that all the right support is in place in school.

Curriculum flexibility

To help RGS students feel happy at school, we offer choice in their curriculum and make it personal to each child. From the moment pupils begin in the First Form there are options about what they study and this carries on as they progress through the school. For example, we have adopted a three year GCSE programme. Not only does this allow pupils to study subjects in greater depth and avoid being just taught to the exam, it reduces the pressure of trying to cover everything in little over 18 months. We also encourage students to try out lots of different things during our Electives Programme. Pupils in the Upper School have a double lesson a week where they can choose to participate in a range of six-week courses such as conversational Italian, pottery or forensic Science. We want to foster in our pupils a sense of enjoying something for its own sake – not just because there is an exam at the end.

We also offer a very flexible curriculum with some students studying 12 GCSEs and others 8. For example, a pupil with a heavy extra-curricular involvement where they might be competing a national level, requires flexibility from us. We also offer Learning Pathways which are complimentary courses to offer students additional teaching time where they need it.

In summary, we build the school and our curriculum in particular, around the child.

¹ Please note that where a student expresses anything which gives rise to concern for their welfare, health or safety, then the counsellor will share this information with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads at the school.

Extra-Curricular

We believe that one of the secrets of wellbeing is to balance academic work with a range of other interests. We really encourage pupils to make use of the range of clubs and societies on offer. Your child's Form Tutor will discuss this with them and help them to choose which activities to become involved in for the year ahead. We do expect all RGS pupils to get involved in the wider life of the school and the range of opportunities available.

Parents: A Partnership

We share the most important job in the world – bringing up your children. In our experience, the stronger the relationships between the staff at RGS and our parental community are, the more children thrive.

How do we secure those relationships? Talking! We operate a truly open door policy and welcome parental contact via email or on the phone, and are happy to meet parents at times to suit them. We ask that parents keep us in the loop about what's going on for them. Changes in family circumstances, parental job changes, death of beloved pet, a house move, family mental or physical health issues. All of these things and more will have an impact on how a child is experiencing the world. Making a trusted adult at school aware means that we can have an extra eye out on that child, or offer particular support, a listening ear, or a distraction. This openness makes all the difference in helping develop balanced young men and women.

To help facilitate this relationship, we have Meet the Tutor and Parent Information evenings for all years in the Autumn Term and this provides an opportunity for initial face-to-face contact.

Why might parents worry about getting in touch?

Sometimes parents tell us that they don't want to bother us with something, or that they are nervous about sharing private family matters and wondering what will happen to that information.

Firstly, you are never bothering us. What could be more important than finding out more information about your child who you have entrusted to our care? Please never let this stop you from picking up the phone, or sending us an email. We always want to know.

Secondly, information you share with us will be handled very discreetly and we will discuss with you where the matter is sensitive about who at school needs to know in order to best look after your child. Sometimes things happen which can feel difficult to talk about, or even embarrassing and it can take a lot of courage to share these matters. Pastoral staff are used to dealing with a whole range of family experiences and will be more than happy to listen to you and work with you to ensure that we have the right support in place for your child.

I cannot stress enough the importance about talking to us about emotional, mental-health, physical, social or other developments for your child, large or small. This is a crucial part of the home-school partnership.

Wellbeing at Reigate Grammar School

The Wellbeing Programme is delivered through Electives, PSHEE and PE lessons with accompanying lectures. Also, through individual interactions across and within year groups, through talks in assemblies and discussions in tutorials, through advice given by teachers, tutors, mentors, buddies and through the extensive extra-curricular programme. In short, wellbeing is part of everyday life at Reigate Grammar School.

Divided into several categories, the programme allows students of all ages to explore and understand their own:

- Physical health and wellbeing (including the balance between diet, exercise and sleep, mental health, sexual health)
- Emotional health and wellbeing (including friendships, anti-bullying, e-safety, mental health issues, managing stress and knowing when to seek help and how to adapt to change and develop resilience)

Mindfulness

Within our wellbeing programme we are pleased to be able to offer Mindfulness to our students. RGS is a community which aims to for students to flourish, enjoy their school days and be prepared for a happy and successful adult life. We believe an introduction to the life skill of Mindfulness may be one way in which we can help them to achieve this.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the ability to pay attention, non-judgementally, to the here and now. The aim of the Mindfulness course at RGS is for the students to learn some simple yet effective practices that may help them to deal with some of the challenges that they face now, and in the future. Please note that Mindfulness is non-religious.

Mindfulness at RGS

We introduced Mindfulness using the Mindfulness in Schools Project's (MiSP) .b course which is specifically aimed at introducing Mindfulness to teenagers in schools. The students learn some simple mindfulness meditation techniques, which typically include paying close attention to the senses such as breathing and sensations coming from different parts of the body, to eating, to movement and to sounds in the environment. The course was initially offered as part of the Elective and 7Plus programme.

Further information

Please have a look at the Mindfulness in School Project website (www.mindfulnessinschools.org) or speak to one of the .b Mindfulness trained teachers at the school (Ms Clarke, Mrs Holbrook-Wilson, Mrs Lawson or Mr Newman).

Pupil voice

We invite feedback from our pupil body on a regular basis and their views are taken into account. There are lots of different ways this happens, from the School Council to small discussion groups and forums. Pupils are asked to review their experience of lessons and learning, offer feedback on what it is like to begin at the school, they contribute to changes in our canteen provision and so on. In short, we want to know what they think!

One of the most important aspects of a successful, fulfilled life at Reigate Grammar School is the ability to communicate with others. Where your son or daughter is unsure about anything, please encourage them to ask. If they feel that something is unfair, if they do not understand the reasoning behind something, please encourage them to find an answer. Communicating with their peers and staff is a vital part of your child's development and also their day-to-day happiness. They can approach staff in person, or if they prefer to write a note, or send an email, this is absolutely fine.

When they leave RGS, we hope that they will be: kind, articulate and able to listen, principled and courteous, independent-minded and always ready to help others.

They will be prepared for life ahead.