



Introduction

Founded in 1833, St Malachy's College is a Catholic Grammar School for boys. The College began with eight boarders and ten day pupils. Today the population has grown to 1111 pupils. The pupils, with the coat of arms of the Diocese of Down and Connor on their school badge, remain loyal to the rich tradition of the College.



The College is in the heart of Belfast on the Antrim Road. It brings together pupils from an extensive catchment area and a wide range of backgrounds and needs. We currently draw from over 60 feeder primary schools in Belfast and the surrounding locale.

In our 2020–21 pupil population:

- 4.7 percent have a Statement of Educational Needs;
- 11.5 percent are on the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice;
- 0.036 percent are Looked After Children; and
- 23.3 percent are in receipt of Free School Meals.

Once a boy passes through the gates and walks up The Avenue, he becomes part of the College family. It is a place where boys make friends for life. Malachians constantly refer to the unique camaraderie, loyalty and special bonds that are initiated in their years at school and stay with them through adulthood.

Whole-School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing

'The taught pastoral provision is tailored effectively to the needs of the boys and is proactive in raising their awareness of the social and emotional challenges which they and others face.'

(ETI Inspection Report, March 2014)

The entire College staff seeks to promote and create an environment in which students, staff and parents are committed to the idea of excellence within a caring, supportive community.

Our pastoral care system is based on the principle of Catholic education and seeks to develop our commitment to the development of the whole human being. The school motto – Gloria ab Intus, Glory from Within – encapsulates the underpinning ethos of pastoral care within the College.

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) of pupils and staff infuses all documentation and boys are supported through these three intertwined strands of provision:

1. The Curriculum – specific aspects of Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) are explicitly delivered via topics such as Learning for Life and Work, Religious Education, Health Education and Science. However, EHWB support is visible in all academic classes as teachers encourage pupils to discuss their work, find solutions to problems and work productively with others. Teachers also support EHWB by setting work at an appropriate level and differentiating tasks to enable everyone to succeed. Gifted and Talented pupils are supported through the provision of stretch and challenge at an age appropriate level.
2. Pastoral Provision
3. Additional Educational Needs Support



Core Values or Mission Statement

'St Malachy's College, as a Catholic school, is dedicated to providing academic excellence in the context of a Christian community ethos. It seeks to preserve its traditions of spirituality and learning so that all pupils, staff and parents can experience continuity in achievement and further their own spiritual, educational and personal growth in a pleasant, interesting and stimulating environment.'

Our Mission Statement is at the heart of everything we do. It directs us to create an environment where pupils will be supported to be the very best they can be in all areas of their life, not simply academic achievement.

Policies

Reference to the EHWP of pupils and staff can be found in the College Development Plan and numerous policy documents. The mechanisms to support pupil EHWP are expressed in the aims of the College Pastoral Policy.

The Pastoral Care Policy aims to:

- promote the academic, physical, social, moral and spiritual development of all pupils;
- provide a supportive, caring school environment, atmosphere and sense of belonging in which all pupils are confident that they are well known, safe, valued, respected and have their progress regularly checked and reported on;
- identify the strengths, talents and potential of all our pupils, facilitating the fulfilment of these so that they emerge with high self-esteem and positive self-image;
- identify the personal, social, spiritual and educational constraints which hinder the growth of our pupils and help them learn coping strategies to deal with these;
- offer sympathetic, confidential and effective guidance, mentoring and counselling to our pupils, as and when required;
- empower our pupils with the basic skills, experiences, knowledge and attitudes that are required for work and leisure in today's society;
- prepare our pupils to become active, confident and responsible citizens;
- strengthen the links between the College, home and wider school community, including partner schools; and
- contribute towards the maintenance of positive behaviour and an orderly atmosphere in our school.

The Pastoral Care Policy, including EHWP provision, is an overarching policy from which other College policies flow, including Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Reasonable Force and Safe Handling, Positive Behaviour Management, Critical Incidents, Special Needs and Inclusion. The policy takes account of Human Rights Legislation (2003) and CCEA documentation (2002) that addresses Personal Development.

Policies are regularly reviewed by the governors, staff and where appropriate pupil and parents or carers.



Pastoral

Pastoral care for Malachians often begins before a pupil even joins the College. The aims and ethos of the College are based on partnerships. We work very closely with our link primary schools to ensure that the transition from primary to St Malachy's College is a natural and positive experience. Year 8 pupils and tutors visit many feeder primary schools to talk about the College experience and answer questions that P7 pupils may have. We have also been invited into some of our feeder schools to take part in transition activities and teach post-primary style lessons.

Each member of staff is committed to the welfare of the students and the ethos of the College. The recent ETI report praised the 'holistic approach to supporting the boys'. The school is divided into three sections: Junior, Middle and Senior. Each section has a Head of School and there is a Year Head for each Year Group. The main pastoral support for each boy is provided by his Form Tutor. The Form Tutor meets the class at morning and afternoon registration and will mentor each pupil throughout the course of the year. A parent can always speak to someone who knows their child.

There is a timetabled tutorial period during which the pupils follow a Personal Health and Social Education programme that is matched to each age group's needs. External agencies also deliver a range of programmes on a wide variety of issues such as alcohol, relationships, personal safety, team building and study skills.

To foster positive behaviour, St Malachy's College incorporates a preventative curriculum into its pastoral care provision. This encourages our boys to be aware of risks prevalent in today's society and to make informed and safe choices both within and out of the College.

The preventative curriculum is delivered through the Personal, Health, Social and Economic programme in tutorial groups, assemblies and enrichment activities, and a range of events and activities organised throughout the year.

Areas covered include:

- Anti-Bullying workshops;
- eSafety education;
- Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Education;
- Mind Out mental health;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (delivered in-house and by Love for Life);
- Concussion training;
- Anger management; and
- Study skills.

External agencies are used where appropriate, for example:

- Love for Life;
- Diageo – SMASHED;
- YMCA – SHAARP;
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland;



- Careers Advisory Service; and
- Lighthouse.

Resources used by tutors include:

- Year 8 Induction booklet;
- Homework diary;
- Man of the Month;
- Google Classroom – Resources shared, for example PowerPoints or PDFs;
- Tutorial booklets;
- Becoming a Malachian booklets; and
- Learning for Life and Work tasks.

Activities to support wellbeing and resilience include:

- Transition and induction planned and monitored;
- Mental and Physical Health awareness and education;
- Time Management and Organisation ;
- Self-concept (Who am I?);
- Morals, beliefs and values (Catholic or Christian);
- Goal setting (personal development plan);
- Man of the Month, Class Rewards or Trips – celebrating and rewarding achievement;
- Peer Mentoring scheme (run with trained peer mentors or prefects from Key Stage 5); and
- Year 8 Race – physical fitness, goal setting and inclusiveness.

Since March 2020, our pastoral provision has also included strategies to support pupils who are self isolating or diagnosed with Covid. During school closures, pastoral care continues to be delivered through regular Form Teacher contact with their class and parents or carers. Suggestions for maintaining positive EHWPB were distributed as well as a wide range of fun-based activities. Pupil engagement was closely monitored and any concerns followed up within a short time scale.

An online enrichment programme was developed, in collaboration with tutors, to address increasing sedentary behaviours and promote wellbeing in general – two to three periods per week during Enrichment or Tutorial and Friday mornings.

Special Educational Needs

The Additional Educational Needs provision in St. Malachy's College is designed to ensure that all students with specific individual learning needs, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, are supported within an inclusive and socially integrated learning environment.

There is a Learning Support Co-ordinator, who is assisted by Specialist Teachers, Learning Mentors and Classroom Assistants. The team ensures that each pupil has full access to the curriculum and enjoys a varied, engaging and socially inclusive experience at the College. There is a strong focus on Continuing Professional Development with staff availing of a wide range of accredited courses such as Understanding Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Applied Behaviour Analysis, Mental Health and Anxiety Management, Anxiety-Based School Refusal and Peripatetic Learning.



We have introduced a monthly Parent Support Group, which takes place on a Saturday morning. This allows parents to meet staff on an informal basis and to share experiences and support each other.

Development Planning and Self-Evaluation

St Malachy's is a self-evaluating school. It is a place that is data rich and uses its analyses of relevant information to shape action planning and future developments. There are well-embedded systems and practices in place to secure the highest performance in the key areas of:

- ethos, moral purpose and values;
- academic achievement and attainment; and
- curriculum and pastoral provision.

Every member of the College community has ownership of and a valuable role to play in shaping provision. The current development plan runs from 2018–21 and discussions within the whole school community are underway to shape its successor.

Planning and evaluation are a very valuable element of good EHWP and it is an embedded practice at all levels in the College structure. For example, in advance of school examinations pupils are expected to produce a realistic revision plan and their adherence to this is monitored. Following the examinations, pupils evaluate their progress and their preparations against their results and create an action plan.

Similarly, Heads of Department and Pastoral Leaders create annual plans for their area and return to these throughout the year for evaluation.

Staff Training

The College is a teaching college with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) delivered through in-house expertise and links with the Area Learning Community. There will be a clear focus on continuous improvement with regular opportunities for all staff to review and refresh pedagogical practice and build expertise and capacity.

The development of middle leaders, (focused on in School Development Plan 2015–18), enables them to demonstrate clear and effective strategic and pastoral leadership within their areas of responsibility, informed by professional knowledge and expertise.

Staff in the College are encouraged to avail of a wide range of CPD opportunities to support their pupils' EHWP. Teachers and support staff have attended courses run by Education Authority and offered through the Teacher Professional Learning strand of the Shared Education Project. We also engage outside agencies, where appropriate.

Most recently staff have undertaken training in:

- Counselling;
- Behaviour Management;
- Child Protection; and
- Relationship and Sexuality Education.



Staff Wellbeing

Staff at the College are supported in a variety of ways. The wellbeing of staff is included in the School Development Plan and time is given to this when planning staff days.

As part of our collegial approach, staff informally support one another within and between departments. The staff share a very pleasant kitchen and staff room that is well provisioned. This creates a valuable space for colleagues to meet, relax and chat.

The staff are made aware of the support mechanisms available to them, for example Aspire and those through Teaching Unions. We also have the benefit of support through our school Spiritual Director.

Following major events and critical incidents, staff are provided with additional support through EA and school counsellors.

The school staff have a vibrant social life with regular events and activities. This helps colleagues to bond and share experiences and issues.

Pupil Voice

There are a range of mechanisms for listening to pupil voice. Each class has two representatives to take their issues or thoughts to the student council. The student council discusses issues with staff and has been instrumental in informing changes in school life. Pupils are encouraged to express their thoughts to their tutor and class teachers and time is set aside for this.

To elect representatives, year heads link with the AS level Politics class to run a full diplomatic voting process, overseen by tutors. Students have the opportunity to present their ideas to their class group and, once elected, whole Year Group.

Pupils are also canvassed for their opinions on issues such as the next School Development Plan.

Following events facilitated by external agencies, evaluations are taken from pupils and provision is adjusted accordingly. Pupil Voice is a key element of planning and shaping the Shared Education Programme between St Malachy's and Belfast Royal Academy.

Our Year 8 pupils have their own news sheet which comes out several times a year. It gives them an opportunity to showcase their activities and discuss issues important to them.

The College's social media platforms are also used productively to highlight pupil creativity and celebrate their achievements.

Engaging with Parents or Carers

A positive relationship between staff and parents or carers is critical to the maintenance and development of good EHWP. The first note a pupil makes in the College is the email address for his Year 8 Form Teacher. Parents and carers are encouraged to work with the Form Teacher through regular contact to support their son.

Parents receive academic reports twice a year. In 2020, we introduced the Parent app as an extension to the text service. This allows us to communicate more frequently with parents and this was particularly useful during lockdown.



The academic year with all boys and their parents being invited to attend an Induction or Information session. These sessions provide parents with important information about the year ahead and gives them opportunities to meet the Principal and other senior leaders as well as the staff who will be working closely with their sons. Parents and carers are regularly invited to attend concerts, plays, art exhibitions and religious services at the College, as well as the two annual prize giving ceremonies. These provide opportunities for parents to celebrate their sons and be welcomed as part of the College family.

We have an active Parents Group – The Friends of St Malachy's – who run events and raise valuable funds for the pupils.

We also have strong links with many Alumni, particularly via the Old Boys' Association. These links enhance and develop the history and heritage of the College as a community, spanning generations and passing on core values. We believe that our past pupils can play a significant role in helping to skill our boys in ways that will help them develop into good men who can thrive in adult life.