



Pastoral Care Program Position Paper

Status:	Current	Supersedes: All previous Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Care Program position papers
Authorised by:	Deputy Principal – Students	Date of Authorisation: April 2024
References:	This position paper should be read in conjunction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Student Code of Behaviour Policy• Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Social Media and Responsible Use of ICT Policy• Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Social Student Planner• Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Social Camp Program Position Paper	
Review Date:	This policy will be reviewed every (3) three years, or as appropriate, to take account of new legislation or changes to school's operations and practices and to make sure it remains appropriate to the changing environment.	Next Review Date: April 2027
Policy Owner:	Principal in conjunction with the Deputy Principal – Students	Access: All Staff - Policies Procedures and Forms\STUDENT RELATED DOCUMENTS\POLICIES & PROCEDURES



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PURPOSE

This position paper has been developed to outline the philosophy and structure of the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Care Program.

SCOPE

The Care Program is implemented from Prep through to Year 12 and all students participate in timetabled pastoral care sessions.

POSITION STATEMENT

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School is committed to developing the whole girl, giving every opportunity to become clever, confident and connected. Research indicates that relationships between students and staff are critical factors in the development and maintenance of healthy school cultures and academic achievement. Quality pastoral care is about all school staff enhancing the wellbeing of students through their relationships, interventions and the learning experiences they provide.

This is achieved through a quality pastoral care program, called Care, that involves staff, students and the wider school community. The program focuses on addressing the social and emotional wellbeing of each student through a personalised approach based on quality relationships between students and teachers. It recognises that all members of the school community make a valuable contribution to the school culture and therefore the program is underpinned by an ethos of care and respect for all, with the ultimate goal to build the capacity of the school community to support each student to grow and develop and engage in meaningful and successful learning.

In the primary years, the Care program is implemented by the classroom teacher. Secondary students have a Care Mentor who supports them with their wellbeing and development. The primary classroom teacher and Care Mentor form the main line of communication between the school and home regarding all day school related information, and will assist the student in all areas: Academic progress, friendship issues, workload issues etc.

STRUCTURE

The Care program is overseen by the Deputy Principal – Students in consultation with the Director of Primary and the Director of Secondary. Each year, classroom teachers and Care Mentors meet to discuss and plan the year's program. The direction, theme and outline of the plan is provided by the Deputy Principal – Students.

Each student engages in care lessons delivered by:

- Classroom teachers (Prep – Year 6)
- Care Mentors (Year 7 – Year 12)

The classroom teachers and Care Mentors support the academic development of the student by:

- developing within each student a genuine desire to learn, both at school and as a life-long challenge;
- reinforcing the work of the subject teacher by regularly checking the student planner;
- consulting with specialist teachers as particular problems arise;
- providing help and advice on study problems and exam preparation;

The classroom teachers and Care Mentors support the social emotional development of the student by:

- modelling positive coping and emotional regulation strategies;
- actively teaching and prompting students to recognise and manage emotions, and to resolve conflict;
- facilitating students to learn healthy habits;
- identifying strategies to assist students with managing stress, and providing opportunity for students to use and practice these;
- facilitating students to build self-efficacy.

The classroom teachers and Care Mentors support positive student involvement in the school community by:

- encouraging all students to participate in co-curricular activities such as community days, whole school activities and sporting and cultural pursuits;
- familiarising students with the Code of Behaviour, uniform standards and school vision;
- regularly reinforcing routine matters such as good manners, respect, cleanliness, punctuality and self-discipline;
- encouraging confidence and connection within house and sister groups and year levels.



The fundamental structure of the Pastoral Care Program from Prep to Year 12 aligns with the school's values:

- **Courage and Integrity:** we value learning and are courageous in our approach to change, challenges, and decisions. We stand up for our values, act independently and how resilience. We are supportive of others to develop grit, intellect, and determination to contribute confidently to the world.
- **Respect:** respect for self and others is central to the vision. It encompasses positivity, integrity, empathy, inclusiveness, friendship, fairness and service. It means being mindful of the needs of self and others.
- **Pursuit of Excellent:** we inspire others to seek excellence in individual endeavours.
- **Innovation and Tradition:** we value those who have come before us and celebrate their risk traditions and history. We embrace the present through innovation, creativity and risk taking. We believe in the future and recognise the responsibility to provide of those who will come after us.
- **Connection and Inclusivity:** each girl is supported through connection and inclusivity. We embrace diversity, treat others with compassion and kindness and acceptance.
- **Intellectual Curiosity:** we are critically engaged and curious, embracing the challenges of a changing world and respond with curiosity, imagination, and innovative thinking.

SECONDARY PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM

The Brainwise School Program – Central Focus

The structure of the Pastoral Care program from year 7 to year 12 is centred around the 'Brainwise School Program'. Developed by Dr. Judi Newman, an expert in applied neuroscience, and adapted to cater for students at Girls Grammar. Neuroscience is a field of study that takes the latest in social cognitive neuroscience research and applies it to leadership, motivation, learning and influence. The aim of the Brainwise School Program is to equip students with a deep understanding of the brain so that they can improve thinking, focus and memory. Research shows that students who have an understanding of how the brain functions, and how it responds instinctively, they are more likely to improve their academic achievements and social emotional wellbeing. The main principals covered within the program include:

- The learner needs to be learning ready.
- Stress inhibits cognition, creativity, and memory.
- Relationships are essential to student success.
- The brain stem needs to be calm for logical thought and problem solving.
- Chronic negativity hampers synaptic connections.
- Mood is contagious.
- Intelligence can grow when it is exercised.
- Focus on confidence and motivational levels. Self-belief enhances success.
- The brain requires a brain break when on cognitive overload.
- Students can improve memory by learning memory techniques.
- Spaced recall and repetition consolidates memory.
- The brain requires processing down time when learning something new.

Across the course of this year long program, students will engage in 20 themes of learning;

Theme No.	Topic	Neuroscience Principle
1	Intelligence	Intelligence is not set at birth; therefore everyone can be smart. You can become smarter by exercising your intelligence
2	Learning readiness	Students identifying if they are learning ready; they cannot access the thinking brain if they are in the emotional brain, i.e., if they are feeling stressed or distracted.
3	The neuron	Students who understand the brain achieve better academically, socially, and emotionally.
4	The brain	All thinking and learning starts in the brain. There are three parts to the brain 1) emotional brain, 2) social brain, 3) thinking brain. We need to be in our thinking brain to be learning ready.
5	Learning intent and success criteria	Teachers can increase clarity for students by stating the learning intent and success criteria. Common rituals and routines across the school establish a sense of belonging and reduce behaviour referrals.
6	The learning dip	Learning can be uncomfortable, so students need to learn how to stick through the learning dip. Learning is an effortful activity not a passive one. The learning dip shows us a natural progression of how the brain functions, related to emotion, while in learning.



7	Memory techniques	Learning can be made easier, without lowering the bar; survival memories are more powerful than semantic memories. Single tasking uses less fuel.
8	Brain breaks	The brain was not designed to process a continuous flow of new information. A brain break relieves cognitive overload. Students learn how to give their brain a break, to enhance content retention.
9	Gratefulness and happiness	Positive emotions create positive brain traits. Chronic negativity leads to cortisol levels that hamper synaptic connections and speed up brain cell death. Exercising the social brain leads to improved learning outcomes.
10	Brain state	For best learning outcomes, students need to be in a state of 'contribute'. The brain does not learn well when stressed, or when in a state of 'agitate'. The brain needs to be calm for rational thinking.
11	Making friends	Students who have a strong friendship network, or who develop strong social connections, are less anxious and are more resilient.
12	Error detection	Error detection is an important part of learning as we all make mistakes. The quickest type of error detection is feedback. Students who can acknowledge and use error detection in their favour, will have improved learning outcomes.
13	Brain wellness	Movement, healthful eating, sleep, drinking water and helpful thinking and helpful habits all contribute to brain health.
14	Brain strengths	Every brain is different, and everyone has different strengths. We can improve thinking by applying the thinking levels of learning.
15	Kindness	Positive emotions create positive brain traits. Kindness creates dopamine and serotonin which is good for mood and synaptic growth.
16	Focus	We only remember what we pay attention to. We have a short attention span. Setting goals helps our brain work on what we want.
17	Repetition and spaced learning	The best memory tool is repetition and recall over time. Use it or lose it. A habit takes at least 17 repetitions to strengthen neuron connections.
18	Empathy	Understanding what others are feeling helps build understanding and is important to sound relationships. This develops the social brain; students who have a more highly developed social brain, leads to improved learning outcomes.
19	Resilience	Build resilience with small successes along the way and sound problem solving perspectives. This builds self-efficacy and leads to improved learning outcomes.
20	Creativity	Students need down time and special conditions to generate an aha moment.

Structure of the Pastoral Care Planner

Each year level from year 7 to year 12 has a developed Pastoral Care Planner, which outlines the agenda for the day, key activities, and calendared school events. Each weekday is allocated a key agenda; facilitated by the Care Mentor, students engage in routine activities focused at the daily agenda.

Day	Agenda	Overview
Monday	Weekly Warm up & Wellbeing Check- in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Planner check: ensure students are utilising these effectively by documenting homework and assessment. Students complete 'Wellbeing Check in' on their OneNote Page: Care Mentors check responses to the questions to monitor and support student wellbeing. Care Mentors can then report or refer matters to Head of Secondary, School Counsellor, or Deputy Principal – Students, if required. <p><i>Pending the time of term, Care Mentors will allow students time to download the assessment schedule from the school website.</i></p>
Tuesday and Thursday	Care Program & Brainwise School Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainwise School Program: Students engage in the neuroscience of learning, aided with



		<p>embedded activities that align with the themes of the program, <i>see above</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Program: Care Mentors develop and deliver appropriate topics, content and/or lessons specific to the age group, including, but not limited to puberty, development and safe relationships, etc.
Wednesday	Whip up Wednesday	<p><i>Assembly, House Meetings and Sisters groups run on a Wednesday; Care lessons are consequently shortened to 10 minutes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Mentors complete roll call, uniform check and daily notices before dismissing students to the allocated activity until the end of Lesson 1.
Friday	Feel Good Friday / catch up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel Good Friday notes: students are allocated a peer in their Care group to write a kind note to. These are written and placed in the students 'Feel Good Friday envelop' which are displayed in the Care classroom. Catch up: allows Care Mentors additional time before the end of the week to catch up on Care related topics, such as the Brainwise School Program.

In addition to the routine agenda for each day, at the beginning of each term there are care lessons dedicated to 'Welcome to Care', where Care Mentors cover off on the basics of schooling, including, but not limited to allocating and checking lockers, covering student related policies, student planner and timetable checking, etc. Throughout the Pastoral Care Planners, additional activities are embedded to ensure proper process and organisation of students, including, but not limited to, Student Council nomination process and voting, International Women's Day, ANZAC Day, etc.

Each year level has a dedicated Teams page, linked to a OneNote. Care Mentors regularly monitor this and update key information and documents. Students have access to these sources to ensure they are kept informed and up to date with the structure and expectations of their Care groups.

Year 11 – Guiding into Leadership

In preparation for assuming leadership roles, year 11 students undergo a tailored pastoral care program in Semester 1. This program focuses on equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to transition smoothly into leadership positions with the school community. Through targeted activities and personalised guidance, students are given an opportunity to hone in on their leadership capabilities, communication skills and emotional intelligence. The program addresses their specific needs and concerns, ensuring they are well-prepared to navigate the challenges and expectations of leadership with confidence and competence. By investing in their development early on, the school aims to cultivate a cohort of responsible, empathetic leaders poised to make a positive impact, regardless of Prefect position.

PRIMARY PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM

The Care Program from Prep to Year 6 supports readiness for learning across all curriculum areas and is an important component of a social and emotional learning curriculum focusing on:

- Self-awareness
- Social Awareness
- Self-management
- Relationship Skills
- Decision Making

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Smiling Mind Program

It is widely acknowledged that mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, affect one in seven primary-aged children, and an estimated 50% of all serious mental health issues in adulthood begin before age fourteen (beyondblue.com.au).

In the primary classroom, students engage with the Smiling Minds program. The evidence based SEL program builds students' confidence and wellbeing. The curriculum includes lessons co-designed by psychologists and educators incorporating brain break activities which are engaging and enjoyable to foster improved social and emotional skills, foundational to mental health and wellbeing. The research evidence suggests that practicing mindfulness strengthens brain areas related to attention. This leads to improved emotional regulation, mental health, and cognition. These improvements are found both in adults (including teachers) and in school students. Students who participate in mindfulness programs also show improved academic performance. Investing only 6% of the school day in mindfulness practice is associated with an increase of approximately 16% relative to peers in mental health and academic performance.

Overview of Primary Events and Primary Care Program

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Primary events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investiture • Primary Council Elections • Valentines Day Fundraiser • Life Education Van • International Women's Day • Harmony Day • 10yrs to year 12 Swimming • Carnival Cross Country Carnival • Easter Bonnet Parade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANZAC Day • Mother's Day – Twilight Soiree • Do it for Dolly Day • National Simultaneous Storytime • Primary Social • Romp in the Park • Athletics Carnival • Year 5 Readers Cup Competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAIDOC Week Assembly • Camps – Year 4 to year 6 • Interhouse Choir • Book Week Parade • Interhouse Reading Competition • Father's Day: BBQ • Daffodil Day • R U OK? Day • Ball Games Carnival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance Day • Pony Tail Chop • Day for Daniel • Pink Day and Pink Gate Challenge • Prep to Year 4 Swimming Carnival • Transition Day • Speech Night • Year 6 Graduation • Girls Rock • School Party
Brainwise School Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory information and overview • Theme 1: Intelligence • Theme 2: Learning Readiness • Theme 3: The Neuron • Theme 4: The Brain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on prior learning • Theme 6: The Learning Dip • Theme 7: Memory Techniques • Theme 8: Brain Breaks • Theme 9: Gratitude and Happiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on prior learning • Theme 11: Making friends • Theme 12: Error Detection • Theme 13: Brain Wellness • Theme 14: Brain Strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on prior learning • Theme 16: Focus • Theme 17: Repetition and Spaced learning • Theme 18: Empathy • Theme 19: Resilience



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 5: Learning intent and success criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 10: Brain State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 15: Kindness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 20: Creativity
Smiling Mind Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Optimism • My Strengths • Gratitude • Making Decisions • Empathy • Acts Of Kindness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Relationships • Positive Communication • A Curious Mind • Growth Mindset • Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Attention • The Senses • Savouring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement • Self-Compassion • Recognising Emotions • Managing Emotion

CAMPS AND PASTORAL CARE

The Rockhampton Girls Grammar Camp Program forms an important part of the Years 4 to 12 pastoral care program. Research clearly pinpoints that learning away at residential learning experiences such as camps provide opportunities, benefits and impacts that cannot be achieved in any other educational context or setting. All students are expected to attend scheduled camps as part of the pastoral care program.

Attending school camps fosters social and emotional growth in students by providing opportunities for teamwork, resilience, and self-discovery in unfamiliar environments. This hands-on experience complements the school's Pastoral Care Program, by reinforcing empathy, communication skills, and building a strengthen connection across cohorts, for the crucial and holistic development of students and their wellbeing.

Further information on camps is available in the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Camp Position Paper.

SISTERS AND HOUSES

Rockhampton Girls Grammar's Sisters Program is a unique aspect of our school community. From their first day, all Primary students are matched with a big Sister who will welcome her and help her feel part of our school community by supporting, guiding, and encouraging her. No matter their age, all our girls have a peer to champion them, inspire them and build their self-confidence.

Sisters lessons are held school-wide throughout the term with the aim of strengthening connections and developing relationships between the primary and secondary students. During these Sisters lessons, the students are engaged in a wide range of targeted activities, fostering a well-rounded and strong school community.

House spirit is strong at Rockhampton Girls Grammar School and, to foster house pride and connection, House meetings are held during the term, on alternative weeks to Sisters meetings and Assemblies. Lead by the House Prefect and year 12 leaders, students engage with one another to strengthen connections and develop relationships in the aim of bolstering house spirit.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Care Program is overseen by the Deputy Principal – Students, in conjunction with the Director of Primary, Director of Secondary, primary classroom teachers and Care Mentors. Further information about the program can be obtained from the Deputy Principal – Students.