

## Mental Health

Balcarras is committed to supporting the positive mental health of all pupils in the school.

There is no doubt, since the COVID Pandemic, the mental health of some pupils is a concern. There is a lot of evidence that nationally, teenagers found the pandemic particularly difficult, and the national picture is that the mental health of some teenagers has been detrimentally affected. Balcarras is no exception to this.

### Parents

We have always said that you know your children better than we do. We recognise that you are best placed to identify any issues of concern and support your children through any difficulties they may face. The school is committed to do everything we can to support you and we will always contact you if we have any concerns about your child. Many of the staff at Balcarras are parents too. We know that bringing up teenagers is not always a straightforward task. The school has a number of strategies that we use to support our young people and their families and they are detailed below.



Balcarras will work alongside parents to put support measures in place, offer guidance and try to find pathways that will help improve the mental health in any pupil who is grappling with their mental health.



### Tutors

For all pupils, their tutor is the first “port of call”. Pupils meet their tutors twice every day, and there is a strong bond between tutor and their tutees. Tutors can listen to pupils’ concerns and offer advice and guidance to help with many of the issues that pupils may worry about in school.

Many problems can be resolved in school when a pupil takes the time to have a proper conversation with their tutor. Tutors can also pass on information to the Head of House if they feel a pupil needs further support with an issue.

### Heads of Houses

The Heads of Houses are exceptional pastoral leaders at Balcarras School. They have the oversight for the care of all pupils in their House and often have a good relationship with a family, especially if older siblings have also attended the school.

**Foley Graveney**  
**Ottewell Selvey**

The Heads of House are the gateway to connecting pupils with external agencies, who can offer additional guidance when needed. Balcarras School works with a large range of external agencies who can provide additional support and guidance for pupils when required.

### Well-Being Room

In summer 2022, Balcarras School refurbished the old H&SC room and made it into the Well-Being Room. This is a dedicated space where pupils can go whenever there is a need.



The Well-Being Room is quiet, has plenty of computer provision and there is also room for pupils to work on individual work at a quiet working space. The Well-Being room is overseen by Miss Hill, the pupils' Pastoral Support.

### **Pastoral Support – Miss Hill**

In summer 2022, Balcarras School appointed a new role to the school. Miss Hill took on the role of Pastoral Support. This is a caring role, for pupils who need support in the day, or someone to listen to their worries. The role is to counsel and guide the pupils, but also to encourage them back to lessons when they feel able to do so – as ultimately Balcarras firmly believes that pupils should be in lessons – this is where their education takes place.



### **Pastoral Support Pages**

Balcarras has provided an outstanding online provision for pupils and parents. The Pastoral Pages, which are found on the school website, contain a huge host of information and guidance, as well as details on the help that is available for families and pupils. The school strongly encourages all parents and pupils to spend some time looking through the Pastoral Pages, even if you feel your mental health is good, as the guidance contained there is excellent and can help everyone to maintain a positive mental health.

### **Early Help**

#### **Co-Ordinator - Jubaida**

Early Help is the name Gloucestershire County has given to the help that is available for pupils, even before things become too serious. Balcarras link Early Help Co-ordinator visits the school every week and meets with the Pastoral Team to discuss pupils who may need Early Help, and the progress made by pupils who are being supported by Early Help.

### **Personal Development**

Personal Development at the school takes place every Monday through a half hour lesson delivered by the tutor team. In addition, there is a two-hour lesson every half term which is delivered by external speakers, expert professionals and the tutor team. The programme is comprehensive and age appropriate, and covers all of the key requirements. Parents can view the programme in its entirety on the school's VLE and website, and parents are encouraged to talk to their children about what has been discussed in the personal development sessions.

### **External agencies**

Further details of all of the agencies and their roles can be found on the Pastoral Pages.

### **School Counsellor**

James Mann is the school counsellor. He is exceptional in his role and can offer sensible and practical counsel to pupils, no matter what their concerns. The waiting list for The Counsellor is quite long. All pupils are offered six sessions as part of their counselling offer.

### **Well-Being Hub**

The Well-Being Hub is a free online tool for parents. It provides excellent guidance and additional support for families who may need some extra help. Access is via the Pastoral Support Pages of the school's VLE.