

YFHS Policy 4: Pastoral Care

Adapted from Britain Yearly Meeting – ‘Pastoral care at Quaker Life children and young people’s events’

Agreed On: Date (last updated by)

To be reviewed by: Final staff meeting before YFHS 2027

What is pastoral care?

Pastoral care is what we do to look after participants’ mental, physical, social and spiritual well being and particular needs at events. Pastoral care is about what is said and observed, it is also about what is sensed. Pastoral care is the skill of noticing, hearing what is being said as well as being aware of non-verbal communication.

Every participant will have pastoral care needs but these will vary greatly. Some of these will be taken care of within the overall frameworks of pastoral care and awareness that each event provides, while others will need specific consideration. Some participants will require a low but still essential level of support, and others will have more complex needs that teams will be aware of before an event or that emerge at an event.

Pastoral care is about well-being in connection to relationships; a young person’s relationship with themselves, with their peers, with their family and their community. At Quaker events pastoral care is about nurturing positive relationships between peers and also with adult volunteers. This includes consideration of the environment and how the programme is structured as well as the role of staff, adult volunteers. Pastoral care of participants is taken seriously at Quaker events, this includes how particular needs are supported appropriately.

Common pastoral concerns at YFHS include; homesickness, social anxiety, wider family/friendship issues, emotional wellbeing.

Managing pastoral care

Pastoral care is managed by careful preparation in advance of an event. This is underpinned by and managed through relationships during events. These are the relationships between participants, between the participants and the event team (student helpers and staff) and within the event team (student helpers and staff). These procedures and guidelines set out the framework to establish the basic atmosphere and culture within which good pastoral care can flourish, detailing specific ways that relationships are shaped so that pastoral care can be modelled and delivered.

At YFHS where participants are 13 – 18 years old, participant’s pastoral care is primarily provided through nest groups (small groups) in which participants are

placed. These groups each have a staff member as leader or facilitator who is supported by student helpers.

All volunteers (staff and student helpers) have key tasks to undertake within their roles to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is provided. The staff member and student helper roles have a shared purpose but are very different in detail, application and responsibility. These roles are set out separately within staff member / student helper role profiles.

Before an event

Staff members will:

- Monitor the participant information that is provided on the initial application forms about participant's needs.
- Where necessary follow this up with a request for more information from the participant and their parent/guardian.
- Identify participants needing particular support, if possible prior to the annual staff residential planning meeting.
- Follow up, if necessary, by telephoning participants (or their parents/guardians) to discuss individual needs; seeking to involve participants and their parents/guardians as much as possible in decisions that affect them. It may be appropriate to arrange a face to face meeting and discussion.
- Ensure that there are opportunities for the staff members to explore, reflect on and find out more about participant's needs.
- Where it is decided that a participant's needs can be met by the existing staff body, staff will discuss who it is appropriate to nominate as a 'watching brief' for particular participants and devise the nest groups carefully with this in mind.
- Provide information about participant needs as appropriate for the wider staff and student helper team.

Every reasonable effort will be made so that all participants are accepted onto events. Before accepting participants into events, staff should identify the team's ability to manage any identified needs, and should weigh up the possible impact on the wider event and team and any reasonable adjustments that might be made to further participation.

The staff will discuss whether the staff and student helper volunteers will be able to meet the needs of the participant or whether external personal assistants would be required (at a cost to the participant) because of capacity or the specific expertise required.

A Pastoral Care Team will be identified every year, made up of four existing staff members and will have responsibility for overseeing the pastoral care arrangements for individual participants during the subsequent event.

During an event

Staff will:

- Oversee the nest groups to ensure that these are functioning in ways to provide care for each participant.
- Facilitate daily staff meetings where pastoral care issues will routinely be discussed.
- Support other staff members by being available for informal conversations about concerns, particularly checking in with team members who have 'watching briefs'.
- Make decisions about the appropriateness of informing the rest of the event team about specific issues and possible implications of these in the context of the event.
- Take responsibility for assessing risks and responding appropriately (see the Safeguarding policy for details), particularly considering whether the participant is at risk of harm to themselves, to others or to the wider event.

Ensure any safeguarding incidents occurring as a result of pastoral concerns are appropriately documented, actioned and communicated.

For details of what happens when pastoral care becomes a safeguarding issue (referrals) see Quakers in Yorkshire Safeguarding Policy. [Insert link...](#)

After an event

- Staff members are responsible for the management of records of participant information, including application information and pastoral care records.
- If a referral has been made to an external organisation there may be some ongoing involvement with an agency. There may, in very rare circumstances, be some short term involvement in the post-event pastoral care of a participant.

Limitations

Staff members should be clear with participants and themselves about the boundaries of their role. Providing in-depth counselling and/or ongoing support outside the event is not appropriate and it is important that they do not promise participants a level of support which they are unable to provide. It should also be recognised that staff members may not have the necessary skills, knowledge or training to deal with some of the issues which they face. The role of supporting participant needs is limited to that particular event. Staff members should not offer ongoing support following an event, even where their professional knowledge and skills equip them to do so. In such instances the staff should discuss any need for a referral or other forms of support they can offer.