



LRGS Pupil Advocacy Policy

(Pupil access to a person independent of the school staff group)

The Pupil-friendly Version:

1. The school think it's important that **the voice of young people is heard**, and their concerns are taken seriously.
2. The school try to put in place **lots of people to help you**, we also want you to feel that you can turn to any adult in school for help. We understand that you may choose to trust a small number of people, but this is OK.
3. We understand that sometimes big organisations like schools can seem complicated and that you may feel that you have no influence. We also appreciate that some **young people find it difficult to speak to some adults in authority**.
4. We know that there are **situations** which young people may feel then need some extra support to get their voice heard for example, if they want to make a complaint, or share something that is worrying them.
5. We think the **boarding community is important** and we want to support these young people who don't see their parents as often as other pupils.
6. We want to **offer young people advocates** to help them get their views across. Advocates are like supporters, backers, or sponsors who campaign on a person's behalf. If you want an advocate, simply ask them, or say something like "is it OK if I have someone else with me?"
7. We think you should be able to **choose when you want an advocate, who this is, and what they do**. Sometimes it may not be appropriate to have a pupil advocate, so we will find you someone else suitable if this is the case. There are different people who could act as an advocate for you including:
 - A friend or another pupil (this is a peer advocate)
 - An adult you trust (like a teacher or your parent)
 - Someone independent from the school (like the Independent People of the Who To Turn To posters, a counsellor, or the careers advisor), all these people don't work for school so they are independent.
8. We understand that you may want to say something to someone, and for them to keep this a secret, this is sometimes called confidentiality. We need you to understand that for your own benefit there needs to be limits on confidentiality. **Advocates can't keep secrets you tell them if you say you're in danger or you've been harmed**. This is sometimes called having a safeguarding responsibility. These concerns are carefully shared with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead who is the Pastoral Deputy Head.
9. If you're ever in a situation you don't understand, or you feel like you need someone with you, **simply ask someone** to come with you beforehand, or ask the member of staff you're with if you could have an advocate.

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Policy Lead:	Deputy Head: Pastoral
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Statement of Purpose

Aims of this policy is to ensure all young people at LRGS have a voice in the situations which affect them. The school believe that young people need to be supported, that their views and concerns should be taken seriously, that the school works for them and the choices they have are clear.

The school acknowledge that diversity is important within the school community, but that difference can sometime lead to privilege for some and vulnerability for others. Groups seen as minorities may be disadvantaged by not have the volume of numbers to represent their voice.

The school are mindful of the boarding community as a discrete group for which this policy is particularly important. While this group find support in the boarding staff, their distance from their parents requires the school to have increased systems of support in place.

We also understand that young people may not have the skills or confidence to make their voices heard in certain circumstances and that they would benefit from advocates working for them. We know some pupils may not understand how institutions or systems work, may find it difficult to speak to someone in authority, or may find what they want to say upsetting. The purpose of this policy therefore is to outline how the advocacy service in school should work in order to support the young people at school.

Links to Other Policy or Guidance

This policy is linked to the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools 2022 and has been devised in line with

- National Standards for the Provision of Children’s Advocacy Services 2002 <https://article39.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/National-advocacy-standards-Nov-02.pdf>
- Guidance: Providing Effective Advocacy Services for Children and Young People Making a Complaint under the Children Act 1989 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advocacy-services-for-children-and-young-people>

This policy should be considered along with the Behaviour of Pupils Policy, Pastoral Care Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Pupil Relationships, Sexual Violence, and Sexual Harassment Between Children Policy and Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Concerns and Complaints Policy.

School Ethos: Who To Turn To

The school promotes an approach which encourages young people to turn to a variety of people and supports depending on their circumstance and need. Young people are empowered to make this choice themselves by promoting the Who To Turn To signposting system in school. Posters across the site, along with assembly messages encourage young people to make their own choice about who to turn to, enabling them to find a support they trust. In addition to this every pupil sits within a pastoral structure which includes an allocated Form Tutor, Head of Year, and Housemaster for Boarders. These named members of staff are responsible to supporting the pupils in their groups.

Pupil Voice

The voice of young people is respected in school. There are many formal and informal outlets for pupil views, from questionnaires and surveys, policy consultations, discrete and ad-hoc pupil voice groups, year group and boarding forums, and the Seward Committee (Pupil Council).

Acting as an Advocate

A young people in school can ask anyone to act as an advocate for them. In addition, we advertise adults who are independent from the school who can also be called upon to be an advocate. Advocates act for the young person and as such they are expected to listen to the instructions of the young person, and seek clear permission with regards to their role and actions. (Standard 1: Advocacy is led by the views and wishes of children and young people.)

Their role is to support the young person to have the self-confidence to ask the school for the things they have a right to. (Standard 2: Advocacy champions the rights and needs of children and young people.)

The school will explain the role and expectations of an advocate both in the moment, but also in wider terms such as in assemblies, briefings and training sessions.

Limits of the Advocacy Service

There are certain circumstances where pupil advocates are not appropriate, for example during investigations into behaviour incidents or allegations, due to the need to protect other individuals and maintain confidentiality. In this circumstance the school will signpost an alternative adult advocate if it feels, due to issues of confidentiality, a pupil advocate is inappropriate.

Sometimes, due to the need to expedite a timely resolution to an investigation the school may not be able to facilitate the advocacy arrangement the young person prefers. In this circumstance the school will endeavour to signpost an alternative.

The school will work to include advocacy support as soon as possible, and before any decisions are made, if the young person has initially requested this support.

Asking for an Advocate: Process and Timescales

A young person can request an advocate at any time and are encouraged to do this clearly and as early in the process as they can, either asking directly for example by asking "can I have someone else with me?" or indirectly by emailing someone they trust.

Staff also have a responsibility to judge situations and consider the emotions shown by a young person, any signs of distress or anxiety, their levels of engagement and the extent to which they understand the situation. They are expected to make a professional judgement as to when it is in the young person's best interests to pause the conversation and offer the young person access to an appropriate advocate in order to support them.

The school will endeavour to provide an advocacy in a timely manner, and where timescales allow the school will build in advocacy support into a situation. The school are mindful of the emotional concern and worry prolonged timescales may create and endeavour to inform the young person of expected timescales for the availability of advocacy services the same day if possible. (Standard 5: Advocacy gives help and advice quickly when they are requested.)

Independence and Confidential

There are a range of advocates available to young people. The school endeavour to be transparent regarding the connection each advocate has with the school, so that any conflicts of interests are clearly identifies. This information will be publicised within the service offer so that young people know the levels of connection and accountability individual advocates have towards the school. (Standard 6: Advocacy works exclusively for children and young people.)

The advocacy service offer will be clear regarding levels of confidentiality. The advocacy service in school sits under the safeguarding policy and as such advocates have a responsibility to report concerns of significant harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Advocates are expected to report to the Designates Safeguarding Lead, instances when a young person

discloses their intention to cause harm to themselves or others, or to commit a crime. Allegations against members of staff must be reported to the Head and advocates must be aware of the school's Whistleblowing policy and LADO service. (Standard 7: The Advocacy Service operates to a high level of confidentiality and ensures that children, young people and other agencies are aware of its confidentiality policies.)

Types of Advocates

The school endeavour to provide young people with an advocate of their choice and offer the following:

	Funded by school?	Managed by?	Confidentiality?
Peer advocacy: friends, Prefects and Pupil Advocates	n/a	The school expect all young people in school to behave in line the school ethos, and policies show how pupils are managed. Prefects have their own management structures and report to the Head of Sixth Form.	All pupils are encouraged to act in the best interests of other pupils. Sometime this can mean finding the line between supporting a friend themselves, and knowing when an adult is needed. The school would encourage young people to support their friend, but also to encourage them to bring trusted adults into help with complex situations. School Prefects complete safeguarding training and are expected to report concerns to the pastoral staff who will exercise discretion when supporting young people.
Parents, careers & family	n/a	n/a	n/a
School staff: including Teachers, Learning Support, and Boarding Staff	Most school staff have a contract of employment with the school. There are a small number of volunteers e.g. the Friend of LRGS who are not paid by the school.	All staff and volunteers have a line manager who is responsible for appraising their conduct and performance.	The school operate an early help approach to pupil wellbeing and as such are encouraged to record concerns they have about pupils on school systems. These systems have a hierarchy of confidentiality, information only goes to staff who work directly with the young person, and this group reduces as the concern or sensitive of the information increases. At its highest level of confidentiality the Safeguarding Team share information only with other DSLs in the best interests of the young person.
Independent People	Independent People are not paid by the school and as such have no conflict of interests with the school as their employee.	Independent People are not managed by school. However, school staff to work with them to co-ordinate visits and access.	Independent People must meet the safeguarding requirements of the school. The school do not require them to report on their interactions with pupils however they have a responsibility to follow the school's safeguarding policy and disclose concerns of significant harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
Independent Careers Advisor	The Independent Careers Advisor is paid by the school to offer independent advice and support to pupils.	The Independent Careers Advisor is managed by the Deputy Head: Curriculum.	The school request feedback from the Independent Careers Advisor in relation to careers or futures concerns so we can better support the young person. When acting as an advocate the school do not require them to report on their interactions with pupils however, they have a responsibility to follow the school's safeguarding policy and disclose concerns of significant harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
School Counsellors and	School Counsellors and	Counsellors and Mental Health	School Counsellors and Mental Health Practitioners operate a level of confidentiality appropriate to the

Commissioned Mental Health Practitioners	Commissioned Mental Health Practitioners are paid by the school to provide a counselling service to pupils.	Practitioners are managed by the Deputy Head: Pastoral.	principles of the therapeutic relationship. The school do not require them to report on their interactions with pupils or to disclose the content of the sessions. With the consent of the young people information is sometimes shared with relevant pastoral leads. School Counsellors do have a responsibility to follow the school's safeguarding policy and disclose concerns of significant harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
SEND Specialist Teachers	The school commission external specialist teachers to support pupils with appropriate special educational needs or disabilities.	The Specialist Teachers are managed by the SENDCo and overseen by the Deputy Head: Pastoral.	SEND Specialist Teachers are used to communicate with and for a young person with SEND. The school require updates on their impact regarding specialist SEND input, however SEND pupils may wish to use this relationship to share their concerns. With the consent of the young person this information is sometimes shared with relevant pastoral leads. Specialist Teachers do have a responsibility to follow the school's safeguarding policy and disclose concerns of significant harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
External agencies: e.g. CAMHS practitioner; allocated social workers; Barnardo's etc.	External agencies are not funded by the school.	The school have no role in managing external partners.	External groups operate their own confidentiality policies. They sometimes share information with the school, with the consent of the young person, and advocate for them. In this instance the school work cooperatively with this partner and endeavour to make required or requested changes.

Concerns and Complaints

The school's Concerns and Complaints Policy is used to managed complaints procedures regarding the adults involved in the advocacy service. The Behaviour of Pupils Policy is used to managed complaints regarding the pupil advocates. (Standard 9: The advocacy service has an effective and easy to use complaints procedure.)

Management of the Service

The management of the advocacy service in school overseen by the Deputy Head: Pastoral with the Head of Boarding leading the advocacy service for boarders. Any needs associated with the advocacy service will be funded by the Pastoral Care Budget or the Training and Development Budget as appropriate. (Standard 10: Advocacy is well managed and gives value for money.)

Monitoring the Impact of the Policy

Advocacy will be promoted in diverse places in varying ways, the school are mindful of key areas and minority groups and will proactively engage with these groups to hear their views on efficacy. (Standard 4: Advocacy is well-publicised, accessible and easy to use.) (Standard 3: All Advocacy Services have clear policies to promote equalities issues and monitor services to ensure that no young person is discriminated against due to age, gender, race, culture, religion, language, disability or sexual orientation.) Pupil Voice sessions will be used to hear how best to advertise and use this service – these views will then be fed back to staff. (Standard 8: Advocacy listens to the views and ideas of children and young people in order to improve the service provided.)