



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Belfast High School

Date: March 2024

Date Ratified: 29 May 2024

Ratified by: Board of Governors

Responsibility: Board of Governors

Author: Vice Principal

Review Date: March 2027

ETHOS

At Belfast High School we believe that through high aspirations, perseverance and commitment, every pupil can fulfil their potential in the caring, warm and inclusive atmosphere offered here.

RATIONALE

Pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life and therefore there are many ways in which the aims set out in the Pastoral Care Policy could be achieved. For the sake of clarity this document lists only the main activities related to each aim.

This policy sets out the School's aims in its provision of pastoral care and its purpose is to explain some of the ways in which the School seeks to achieve these aims.

AIMS (OF THE SCHOOL)

- provide a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum which suits the needs of all pupils in a changing society and which encourages each pupil in his or her intellectual, cultural, aesthetic and physical development;
- instil in each pupil the determination to strive in all activities, academic and otherwise, to achieve his or her own level of excellence;
- encourage in pupils a respect for religious and moral values;
- create a caring environment in which the needs of each pupil are considered;
- foster social attitudes which will enable each pupil to take his or her place as a responsible member of the community;
- value and respect everyone, recognise their strengths and differences, encourage them to develop their skills and abilities and have a positive attitude to each and every member of our community;
- develop the three-way partnership (parent-pupil-school) to enable our pupils to attain their full potential;
- prepare our pupils for the challenges and opportunities of the fast-paced C21st world.

AIMS (OF THIS POLICY)

This policy aims to outline the ways in which the school maintains a caring and respectful environment where pupils feel safe and valued and are encouraged to take their place as a responsible member of the community.

This policy also aims to highlight the ways in which the school works with parents/carers and the wider community in order to strengthen links between all three stakeholders.

PASTORAL CARE DEFINITION

This document is based on Every School a Good School (DE 2009) and sets out our school's policy and practice in relation to the care of pupils and the promotion of an environment where pupils and staff adhere to the ethos and aims of the school.

PASTORAL CARE STRUCTURE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility for the care and welfare of pupils rests with the Board of Governors. However, all staff share responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils.

Whole-school pastoral care priorities are identified by the Senior Leadership Team comprising the Principal, two Vice Principals and four Senior Teachers, three of whom act as Heads of Key Stage. Pastoral Care is co-ordinated within each Key Stage by the Head of Key Stage and at Year group level by Heads of Year who each lead a team of Form Teachers.

The Head of Year oversees the holistic welfare of all pupils in the Year group with regard to their personal, social and academic progress. The Head of Year also co-ordinates the team of Form Teachers. As far as possible, Heads of Year and Form Teachers remain with their Year group throughout their School career to provide continuity of care for each pupil in the Year group, thereby supporting the learning development and welfare of each pupil. It is also the responsibility of the Head of Year to liaise closely with subject teachers, Heads of Department and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) concerning all aspects of pupil welfare.

Regular meetings are held whereby Heads of Key Stage meet with Heads of Year and Heads of Year meet with the Form Teachers to share information and best practice to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met. Regular meetings also take place to plan and review practice, discuss individual pupil concerns as well as wider issues relating to policies and initiatives to provide support for the pupils.

It is our belief that all teachers should create and maintain a caring commitment to guide and advise pupils. Staff therefore contribute formally and informally through daily registration, teaching, co and extra-curricular activities. All staff have responsibility for encouraging pupils to maintain high standards of attendance, behaviour, appearance and punctuality.

Administrative and ancillary staff support the teaching staff in monitoring attendance, first-aid and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for learning. The support of a number of services is available to pupils including a School Counsellor who visits the School each week, Educational Welfare Officer, Medical Services, Social Services and Careers Personnel. These combine to meet the varied and often complex needs of our pupils.

Strong links exist with a range of external agencies to enhance the support provided for pupils.

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The Safeguarding Team oversees the policies and procedures relating to the care and safeguarding of pupils, as well as all day-to-day duties. The Safeguarding Team avail of regular training and pupils are aware of procedures to follow should they wish to seek support. The Safeguarding Team reports to the Safeguarding Committee of the Board of Governors termly.

ASSEMBLIES

The system of whole school and Year group assemblies provides the opportunity for the values of the School to be promoted, success celebrated and important information to be disseminated.

CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (CEIAG)

Careers education enables pupils to learn about their own skills, attributes and interests, supports pupils during crucial decision-making processes and provides numerous opportunities for them to learn about potential careers and the world of work.

At Key Stage 3 the focus is on developing our pupils' knowledge and skills of the world of work and their self-awareness to help inform them on subject choices as they begin to shape their future. In Year 10 all pupils and their parents/carers are offered one-to-one interviews to assist them in making well-informed decisions about their son/daughter's subject choices.

At Key Stage 4 pupils build on the foundations that they laid at Key Stage 3, preparing for their post-16 pathway. In Year 12, in addition to individual one-to-one interviews, all pupils receive a careers guidance meeting with a careers advisor from the Department of the Economy.

In Sixth Form the focus moves to preparing our pupils for career pathways beyond school. All pupils participate in a rigorous interview skills programme and have the opportunity to carry out work experience.

Universities and employers from the UK, Ireland and further afield are invited into the school to discuss the opportunities they can provide and Sixth Form pupils attend university open days.

Parents/carers are welcome to attend individual Careers interviews and are invited to attend the Key Stage 4 and 5 parent information sessions, during which important Careers information is presented, in order to ensure that they are fully informed and able to support their child.

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LIFE

Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in a variety of enriching school experiences through which they can assume roles of responsibility, work with others and contribute to decision-making about aspects of School life (see Appendix 2). These include co and extra-curricular activities, participating in provincial and nationwide competitions, inter-house competitions and the School Council. The Prefect system also affords Year 13 and 14 pupils the opportunity to develop as role models.

PARENTS AND CARERS IN PARTNERSHIP

The School encourages mutual respect by developing good staff/pupil relationships both within and outside class. Each pupil is afforded the best possible opportunities for achievement through high expectations, personal targets, support and encouragement. We believe that the fostering of trust and good relationships with the parents/carers of our pupils is very important. A close partnership between home and School should help ensure that all our pupils learn and develop to their full potential in a caring, supportive and safe environment. If parents/carers have any concerns about any aspect of their child's education they are encouraged to contact the School (see appendix 3).

Parents/carers are encouraged to share concerns about home circumstances or other matters which may affect their child's welfare and/or academic progress. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention and information disclosed will be treated with utmost discretion. The relevant staff will liaise as necessary to implement and monitor provision for care. The opinions of parents/carers and children will be valued and where appropriate action will be taken.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Pupils are taught personal development in discreet LLW lessons at Key Stage 3 and through the Form Period structure at Key Stage 4. The effective pastoral care of our pupils involves responding to their needs at a period in their lives when they are developing and acquiring a wide range of knowledge and life skills. Consequently, our PD curriculum seeks to:

- guide them in the formation of values and attitudes;
- help them develop good social, personal and inter-personal skills;
- nurture their self-esteem, resilience and independence;
- promote good physical and mental health;
- enable them to make informed decisions;

The PD curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is meeting the needs of our pupils and fulfilling statutory requirements. On occasions, elements of the PD curriculum may be delivered by external facilitators.

PUPIL LEADERSHIP

Belfast High School offers a wide range of leadership opportunities to pupils through initiatives such as:

- House system
- Pupil mentoring

- School Council
- Form Captains
- Charity and community engagement (IMPACT)
- Young Enterprise
- Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
- Sixth Form leadership team which includes Prefects and Senior Prefects
- A range of other co and extra-curricular opportunities
- Enrichment activities

TRANSITION AND INDUCTION

Much effort is made to ensure a smooth transition to the school. The School has an extensive induction programme for all pupils entering the School in Year 8 and Year 13. All new pupils entering other Year groups will have an initial meeting with the Head of Key Stage, Vice Principal or Principal. Information on Medical and Special Educational Needs will be forwarded to the relevant staff, who will follow up as necessary. Consideration will be given to the provision of some policy documents for parents/carers in the home language, and where necessary, the School will liaise with the Education Authority to provide translators for induction or progress meetings with parents/carers.

Parents/carers are invited to attend induction talks at the start of each Key Stage and Year 14.

OTHER RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

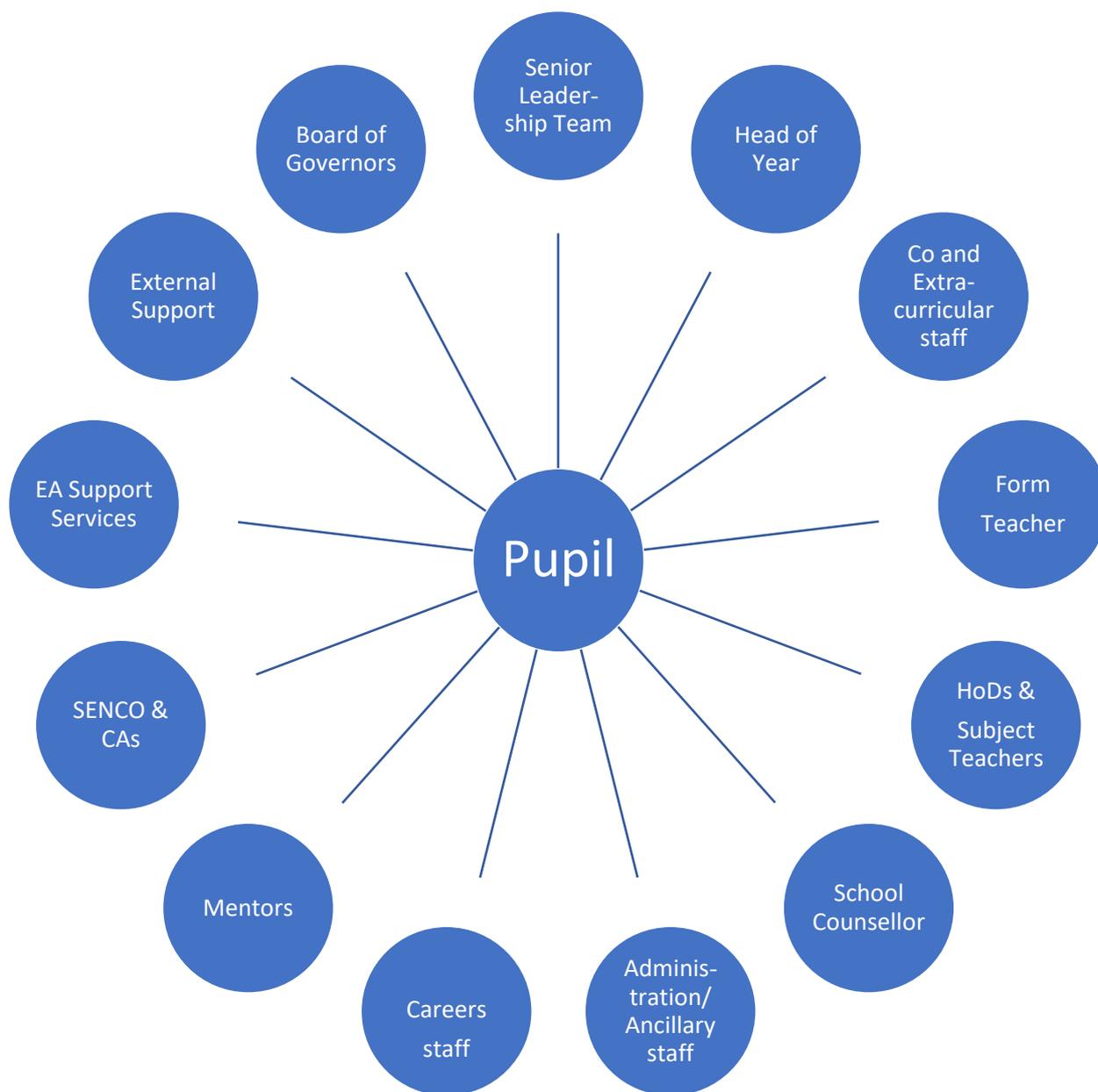
The school maintains a range of policies designed to support the pastoral care of pupils. They include:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Concussion Protocol
- Critical Incident Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Drugs Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- E-safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Honours and Colours Awards
- Intimate Care Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Suspension and Expulsion Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs

REVIEW

This policy will be kept under review by the Board of Governors, in line with the School's Policy Review Schedule.

PUPIL SUPPORT IN BELFAST HIGH SCHOOL



CO AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Belfast High School offers an extensive range of co and extra-curricular activities. These are promoted regularly in School. Senior Prefects are responsible for organising an Extra-curricular Fair each September where pupils can find out more about the range of activities on offer.

SPORT	THE ARTS
Athletics Club Basketball Club Badminton Cricket Cross-country Football Fantasy Football Golf Competitions Hockey Netball Rugby Table Tennis Tennis	Acoustics Club Art Club Chamber Choir Choir Crochet Club Film Group Folk Group Junior Drama Junior Strings Junior Ukelele Orchestra Performing Arts Club Photography/Photoshop Senior Strings Ukelele Orchestra Wind Band
STEM	HUMANITIES and LANGUAGES
Animal House Chemistry Club Eco Club iDea Award Club Lego Club Robotics / First Tech Challenge Sound and Light	Bar Mock Trial Board Games Club Library Chess Club Christian Union (CU) Debating Society Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme German Board Games Café (Treffpunkt) School Newspaper
WELLNESS	
Charities and Community Service Gardening Club Let's Cook Club Panthers (physical and personal wellness group) The People's Project Wellness Ambassadors	

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

	Pastoral	Academic	Special Educational Needs	Safeguarding and Child Protection	General Enquiries	Financial Enquiries
1	Form Teacher	Class Teacher	HoD or HoY	Deputy Designated Teacher	School Office	Bursar/ Assistant Bursar
	↓	↓	↓	↓		
2	Head of Year	Head of Department	SENCo	Designated Teacher		
	↓	↓	↓	↓		
3	Head of Key Stage	Departmental SLT Link				
	↓	↓	↓	↓		
4	Vice Principal	Vice Principal	Vice Principal			
	↓	↓	↓	↓		
5	Principal	Principal	Principal	Principal		