



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Belfast High School

September 2024

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Introduction

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Belfast High School and to introduce this information booklet, which will provide you with key details about the policies, procedures, and ethos that underpin our school community. As Principal, I am proud to lead a school that is committed to both academic excellence and the personal development of every pupil.

This booklet outlines essential information on how our school operates on a day-to-day basis, including our policies on attendance, behaviour, and safeguarding, which are all designed to create a safe, structured, and supportive environment for your child. We have high expectations of all our pupils, and by following our clearly defined guidelines, we can ensure a positive and respectful atmosphere that promotes learning and personal success.

At Belfast High School, we recognise the importance of clear communication between home and school. Our procedures regarding assessment, reporting, and parent-teacher communication aim to keep you fully informed and engaged in your child's progress. In this booklet, you will find details on how we support students academically and pastorally, as well as the role of parents in reinforcing these efforts at home.

We also place a strong emphasis on pupil wellbeing. Our policies on anti-bullying and health and wellbeing are designed to ensure that every pupil feels valued and supported. Additionally, you will find information on health and safety protocols, as well as guidelines for managing specific situations such as illness or emergencies.

I hope you find this booklet a useful guide as your child begins or continues their time at Belfast High School. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child's experience at our school is a positive, enriching, and successful one.

Warm regards,

Mrs Charlotte Weir
Principal

SECTION 1: KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ethos and Aims

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.

Aims

We aim to:

- 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/carer-pupil-school) to enable our pupils to attain their full potential;
- prepare our pupils for the challenges and opportunities of the fast-paced 21st Century world.

Pupils are regularly reminded of the expectations we have regarding behaviour and conduct. In short, the School expects pupils to:

- Always demonstrate courtesy and manners to others;
- Be appropriately prepared to learn;
- Be committed to consistent hard work;
- Demonstrate high standards of uniform, appearance, punctuality and attendance;
- Show respect for school property and the property of others.

In turn, the School's curriculum will see pupils develop important skills which will allow them to become positive contributors to society. These include (but are not limited to):

- Leadership;
- Organisation;
- Resilience;
- Initiative;
- Communication.

Communication Between School and Home

Effective communication between the school and parents/carers is essential for the progress and wellbeing of all our pupils. Should you have any issue you wish to discuss please use the communication channels and contact details below.

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

Throughout the year, there are a number of means by which the School will communicate information.

Key information and important messages will be sent to parents/carers via School Gateway or email. Please ensure that you are registered for School Gateway and that your contact details are up to date.

Please note that the School Gateway absence notification facility should only be used to explain reasons for pupil absence. Should parents/carers need to email the School, they should be sent to info@belfasthigh.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk so that the most appropriate member of staff can deal with the query. The School telephone number is 028 90 864431.

In addition to School Gateway, members of staff may contact you by telephone or email regarding matters concerning your child.

When in school, pupils must only use devices as and when directed by their teacher. They should not be used to contact friends or family and the use of any social media is strictly prohibited. Devices should remain 'not seen and not heard' outside the classroom. Parents/carers are therefore requested not to contact pupils by phone during the school day. Urgent messages can be passed on to pupils via the School Office.

School Gateway

How to register for a School Gateway account

- To register for a School Gateway account:
 - Via the app, you will need to download the School Gateway app via App Store for Apple devices and Play Store for Android devices
 - If accessing via the web, please go to <https://login.schoolgateway.com/0/auth/login>
- Go to the login screen on the app/web
If using the web version of School Gateway, ensure the NEW USER tab is selected before inputting any details
- Enter the email address and mobile number that is registered with the school
- You will then receive a PIN on a text
- Enter the 4-digit PIN number received via text
- Once logged in the home screen will be displayed

If you have forgotten your PIN

- On the School Gateway login screen click on **Forgotten PIN**
- Enter the email address and mobile number that is registered with the school
- You will then receive a PIN on a text
- Enter the 4-digit PIN number received via text
- Once logged in the home screen will be displayed

I can still see my child's old school on my School Gateway account

The previous school will be removed when the old school delete your child as a leaver from their Schoolcomms account.

Alternatively, if you have provided the new school with a different email, you can register for a new School Gateway account using this email address along with your mobile number. This new account would then only be linked to the new school.

If already registered, do I need to re-register at the new school

- You do not need to re-register for School Gateway, to ensure that you can see your child's new school on your existing School Gateway account please ensure that all schools you are connected to have the same email address and mobile number
You can check the contact details the school have for you via the About Me Icon within your School Gateway account
- All attended schools are using School Gateway

How can I see all my children if they are at different schools?

- You will need to provide the school with the same email and mobile contact details as the other school/s that you are connected to
- All attended schools are using School Gateway

My account has locked

- If your School Gateway account has locked for an hour:
 - Wait the hour, on the School Gateway login screen click on **Forgotten PIN**
Enter the email and mobile that you have provided the school with, you will then receive a PIN on a text to your mobile
 - Input the new PIN and email on the School Gateway login screen and this will unlock your account and enable you to access
- If your account has locked for 24 hours, please contact your school for further assistance

I am unable to access School Gateway 'Details don't match' error

If you have already registered

Please check with your school that they have the correct email and mobile contact details for you entered onto your child's record on the school system.

If you are not registered

Please check with your school that they have the correct email and mobile contact details for you entered onto your child's record on the school system.

If using the web version of School Gateway, ensure the NEW USER tab is selected before inputting any details.

I can't see all of my children on my School Gateway account

If both or all children attend the same school

Contact your school to ensure that your current email and mobile number has been stored identically for each child in the school system.

If both or all children attend different schools

- Ensure both or all schools are using School Gateway
- If all are using School Gateway, contact your school to ensure that your current email and mobile number has been stored identically for each child in the school systems

As part of School Gateway's security process, the system automatically checks for a match between the email and mobile linked to your School Gateway account and the email and mobile information stored in the school system. If you need further assistance, please contact your child's school.

Due to Data Protection guidelines, School Gateway cannot access or view individual parent accounts and information. Your school will be able to contact School Gateway support if necessary.

School Calendar 2024-2025

Year 8 (pupils and parents/carers)	Wednesday 21 August (9.10am-10.45am)
Year 8	Thursday 22 August (9.10am-12.00pm)
Years 9, 10, 11 and 12	Friday 23 August (9.10am-TBC**)
Year 11/12 Parent Presentation	Friday 23 August (9.10am-10.15am)
Bank Holiday	Monday 26 August
Years 8, 11, 13 and 14	Tuesday 27 August (9.10am – full school day)
Year 13/14 Parent Presentation	Tuesday 27 August (9.10am-10.30am)
All Year Groups	Wednesday 28, Thursday 29 and Friday 30 August (9.10am) Full school days.
<i>School Development Day*</i>	<i>Friday 13 September 2024 (no pupils to attend)</i>
Half-Term Holiday	Monday 28 October - Friday 1 November 2024 (inclusive) School reopens Monday 4 November 2024
<i>School Development Day*</i>	<i>Tuesday 26 November 2024 (no pupils to attend)</i>
Last day of Christmas Term	Friday 20 December 2024 (11.50am finish)
Christmas Holiday	Monday 23 December 2023 – Friday 3 January 2025 (inclusive) School reopens Monday 6 January 2025
<i>School Development Day*</i>	<i>Monday 20 January 2025 (no pupils to attend)</i>
<i>School Development Day*</i>	<i>Monday 10 February 2025* (no pupils to attend)</i>
Half-Term Holiday	Tuesday 11 – Friday 14 February 2025 (inclusive) School reopens Monday 17 February 2025
<i>School Development Day*</i>	<i>Monday 17 March 2025 (no pupils to attend)</i>
<i>School Development Day*</i>	<i>Thursday 3 April 2025 (no pupils to attend)</i>
Easter Holiday	Monday 14 – Friday 25 April 2025 (inclusive) School reopens Monday 28 April 2025
May Day Holiday	Monday 5 May 2025
<i>School Development Day*</i>	<i>Monday 26 May 2025 (no pupils to attend)</i>
<i>School Development Day</i> <i>Last Day of Term</i>	<i>Monday 30 June 2025 (no pupils to attend)</i>

Please note:

*These dates are subject to change.

School buses will not be available until Monday 2 September.

Key Staff

Senior Leadership

Principal	Mrs C Weir
Vice Principals	Mr M Lowry Mr M Smith
Senior Teachers	Mrs E Hood Mrs A Lowry Mr M McCann Mrs D McNeill

Heads of Department

Art and Design	Mr P O'Labhradha
Biology	Mrs E Edwards
Business Studies	Mrs D Millar
Careers	Miss A McNeill
Chemistry	Dr T Bradley
Classics	Dr J King
Computing	Mr D Coyles
Drama	Mrs E Burch
English	Mr D Young
French	Mr R Shufflebottom
Geography	Dr M Wood
German	Mrs M Brown
History and Politics	Mr J Wishart
Home Economics	Miss J McMullan
Mathematics	Mr G Turk
Media Studies	Mrs H Gillespie
Music and Performing Arts	Mrs E Burch
Physical Education	Miss S Moffett/Mr M Rainey
Physics	Mr C Spence
Religious Studies	Mrs P Wharry
Spanish	Ms A Cochrane
Technology and Design	Mr G Grimes

Literacy Co-ordinator	Mr A Fox
Numeracy Co-ordinator	Mr D McClelland

LLW Co-ordinator	Mrs P Wharry
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Heads of Year

Year 8	Miss J McQueen
Year 9	Mrs R Whitten
Year 10	Mrs K Rosbotham
Year 11	Miss E Lyle
Year 12	Mrs D Millar
Year 13	Mrs K McCann/Miss R Shields
Year 14	Mr D Wilson/Mrs N Griffith

Bursar	Miss E Hull
Assistant Bursar	Mrs L-A Kells

The School Day

Timings for the school day are as follows.

Please note that on Wednesday, school finishes at the earlier time of 3.05pm.

All pupils should arrive to school for the start of the day at 9.10am.

Registration/Assembly	9.10-9.20am
P1	9.25-10.25am
Break	10.25-10.45am
P2	10.45-11.45am
P3	11.50-12.50pm
Lunch	12.50-1.35pm
P4	1.35-2.35pm
P5	2.40-3.40pm

WEDNESDAY:

Registration/P1 (PD)	9.10-10.05am
Break	10.05-10.20am
P2	10.20-11.20am
P3	11.20-12.20pm
Lunch	12.20-1.05pm
P4	1.05-2.05pm
P5	2.05-3.05pm

Assemblies

Assembly is an important part of school life and takes place on the following days in the Assembly Hall at 9.10am:

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Years 13-14	Years 11-12	Years 9-10	Year 8

In addition, each year group has Assembly on the following days in the locations noted below:

	Week 1		Week 2	
Monday	Year 9	Inside Gym	Year 10	Inside Gym
Tuesday	Year 8	Inside Gym		
Thursday	Year 13	Coffee Bar	Year 14	Coffee Bar
Friday	Year 11	Inside Gym	Year 12	Inside Gym

House Assemblies take place once a term and provide pupils with an opportunity to come together with others in their House to learn about how the House Competitions are progressing and to celebrate success.

Autumn Term	Friday 8 November
Spring Term	Tuesday 25 February
Summer Term	Thursday 1 May

Attendance and Procedures for Absence

We believe that good attendance and punctuality are vital to the wellbeing and prospects of our pupils. For this reason, **the School target for attendance is 96%**.

Good attendance allows you to achieve your best, stay on top of work and maximise opportunities at school.

The table below illustrates how attendance below 96% can be damaging to learning. Therefore, if your child's attendance falls below 96%, you can expect support from the pastoral team.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

What happens if my child is late to Registration after 9.10am?

Pupils should be in their Form Room by 9.10am at the latest. Pupils who arrive at Registration after 9.10am will be marked Late.

What happens if my child arrives to school after Registration has finished?

Pupils who arrive at school after 9.20am should sign in at Reception. This will also be recorded as a Late.

What should I do if my child is off school due to a planned absence eg attending a wedding?

You should inform the School **at least 3 days in advance** if your child is are going to be absent.

You should **communicate the reason for absence by using the 'Attendance' tab on the School Gateway App**. Parents/carers are requested to use the School Gateway App exclusively, rather than using handwritten notes, phone calls or emails.

What should I do if my child is off school due to an unplanned absence. For example, due to illness?

You should **communicate the reason for absence by using the 'Attendance' tab on the School Gateway App** (See Parent Information Booklet). Again, parents/carers are requested to use the School Gateway App exclusively.

What happens if my child is likely to be off school for a long period of time?

If the absence is going to be prolonged, the school can assist with necessary arrangements for work etc. Parents/carers should contact the Head of Year in the first instance.

What should I do if my child needs to leave school early. For example, for an appointment?

There are 2 parts to this process:

1. You should **communicate the reason for absence by using the 'Attendance' tab on the School Gateway App**. This should be done before the time that your child needs to leave school and preferably before 9.30am.
2. Your child must sign out of school at reception when leaving and sign in at reception when returning to school.

What should I do if my child needs to leave school early eg due to illness?

Your child should report to their Head of Year or first aider who will make the necessary arrangements for your child to be collected if they feel that your child needs to go home.

Matters of persistent lateness and/or failure to follow the correct process when leaving during the day will be addressed by the Pastoral Team.

School reserves the right to follow up with a sanction in line with the Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy where necessary.

Uniform and Appearance

Our uniform identifies pupils as part of the Belfast High School community. Being appropriately dressed and taking pride in one's appearance allows pupils to develop a positive mindset for learning and contributing to the life of the School. The Appearance Code is outlined below. Further details regarding uniform and appearance, including the School's uniform list can be found in the Uniform and Appearance Policy which can be accessed via the School website: <https://www.belfasthigh.org.uk/index.php/policies/uniform-and-appearance>

Pre-Loved and Forgotten Items

The School operates a pre-loved uniform shop which is open at various times throughout the year and this is publicised through normal communication channels.

A small number of school ties are available to borrow from the Principal's PA if a pupil forgets their tie.

Appearance Code

School Uniform

- All pupils should wear their school blazer in the school building during the school day unless asked to remove it. Blazers may be removed in class.
- The top button of blouses and shirts should be fastened and blouses and shirts should be tucked in at all times.
- The skirt should be worn to **at least knee length**. Not above the knee. Skirts which do not cover the knee should not be purchased or worn.
- Parents/carers are asked to ensure that pupils wear appropriate shoes to school. Examples can be found in the appendices to the Uniform List. Canvas, suede, fashion shoes, black boots or black trainers are not permitted.
- Pupils should only wear the school coat, plain black, navy blue or dark blue coat **over** their blazer when coming to and from school. This should be removed upon entering the building.
- Pupils should only wear the school hoodie or senior school fleece **under** their blazer when coming to and from school. This should be removed upon entering the building.
- During periods of hot or cold weather, the School will make whatever contingencies it deems necessary regarding the wearing of uniform. These will be communicated in advance to pupils and parents/carers and will be time bound.
- Pupils are required to abide by the Pupil Uniform and Appearance Policy when attending external examination sessions and when in School for any reason during study leave and School Development Days.

PE/Games Kit

- Pupils should not deviate from the PE/Games kit outlined in the Uniform List. No other sportswear other than that listed is permitted.
- PE/Games kit may be worn to school on the days that pupils have **Games**. PE kit may not be worn to school by Year 8-12 on the days when they have **PE class**.
- Pupils representing the School at fixtures and other sporting events should travel in their PE/Games kit or School Uniform as directed by the member of staff in charge.
- Mouthguards should be worn when playing hockey or rugby.
- If taking part in a sporting event during the school day, pupils may get changed into their tracksuit at the following times:

Leaving before the start of period 2	Come to school in PE/Games kit
Leaving before the end of lunch	Get changed at breaktime
Leaving after lunch	Get changed at lunchtime

Pupils will be asked to replace any item of uniform that does not meet the requirements set out in the Uniform List and Appearance Code.

General Appearance

Examples of acceptable stud piercings



Acceptable ear piercings



Acceptable nose piercing

- Except for those piercings outlined above, pupils may not wear any other studs or rings around the ear or in the nose, tongue, eyebrow etc. at any time.
- Visible tattoos are not permitted.
- Badges, wristbands, emblems or any other paraphernalia which are deemed by the School as likely to cause offence, run counter to the ethos and values of the school or detract from the good appearance of the school uniform may not be worn.
- Hair should be tidy, neat and acceptable to the School.
- Unacceptable hairstyles are those which take away from the appearance of the School uniform. Extreme styles are not acceptable.
- Pupils are permitted to colour their hair, but we do not accept the use of unnatural colours, nor will we accept multi-coloured styles which go beyond the normal limits of highlighting.
- Head scarves, if worn, should be plain black, navy blue or dark blue.
- Hair accessories should be subtle in colour and style.
- Make-up must be unobtrusive.
- Nails must be natural, short and have one colour of polish, if any, for health and safety reasons.
- No other nail paraphernalia is permitted.
- The only jewellery permitted is a wristwatch or bracelet, small plain ring, two unobtrusive studs in each ear (maximum diameter 4mm) and one unobtrusive stud in the nose (maximum diameter 2mm).

Belfast High School reserves the right to issue further guidance on uniform and appearance to pupils and parents/carers during the school year.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team of the School will act as the final arbiter in matters concerning uniform and appearance.

Travelling to and from School

Buses

Bus passes will be available to those who are entitled to one at the beginning of September and will be distributed via Form Teachers. Please visit the Education Authority website for details of the online application process:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/home-to-school-transport>

Bus routes to and from School are as follows:

TO SCHOOL

1. Departs BALLYCARRY (0755) and WHITEHEAD (0807 as Service Bus 563B) via Carrickfergus and Shore Road passing Belfast High School (0838). Additional 563B service bus departs Whitehead at 0817 passing Belfast High School (0848).
2. 814 METRO SERVICE
0835 Northcott (Link Road), 0838 Prince Charles Way (Glebe Road), 0840 Carnmoney Village (Carnvue), 0843 Manse Road (BP Station), 0848 Doagh Road (Ballyduff), via Monkstown Road, 0855 Jordanstown Road (shops), 0903 Belfast High School.
3. SERVICE BUS 367:
 - a. Departs Ballyclare Road (Northcott 0806) via Antrim Road, O'Neill Road, Church Road, Shore Road, Rathcoole Drive, Doagh Road, Whiteabbey Station Road and Shore Road passing Belfast High School (0835);
 - b. Departs New Mossley (Manse Way 0822) via Ballyclare Road (Northcott 0831), Antrim Road, O'Neill Road, Church Road, Shore Road, Rathcoole Drive, Doagh Road, Whiteabbey Station Road and Shore Road passing Belfast High School (0900).
4. Departs Antrim Road (North Circular Road junction 0830) via Antrim Road, Carnmoney Road, Burnthill Roundabout, Prince Charles Way, Ballyhenry Road, Sandyknowes, Antrim Road, O'Neill Road and Whiteabbey Station Road.
5. Departs DOWNSHIRE ROAD Carrickfergus (0830) via Larne Road, Eden, Kilroot, Beltoy Road, Marshallstown Road, Middle Road, Top Road, Monkstown Road and Jordanstown Road.
6. Departs STRAID WALK (0835) via Oakfield Drive, Marshallstown Road, Top Road (Farm Lodge and Brambles), Monkstown Road and Jordanstown Road.
7. Departs Abbey Community College (0830) via Bridge Road, Doagh Road, Carnmoney Village, Prince Charles Way, Mossley, Top Road, Monkstown Road and Jordanstown Road.

Additional service buses:

- 563C *Departs Belfast, Laganside Bus Centre (0805) via Shore Road passing Belfast High School (0834)*
- 563B *Departs Belfast, Laganside Bus Centre (0820) via Shore Road passing Belfast High School (0849)*
- 566 *Departs Greenisland Estate (0852) via Station Road, Shore Road passing Belfast High School (0858)*

FROM SCHOOL

- 2** Greenisland Station Road, Top Road, Monkstown Road, Bridge Road, Doagh Road, Manse Road and **PRINCE CHARLES WAY**.
- 4** Whiteabbey Village, Whiteabbey Station Road, Cloughfern Corner, right to Doagh Road, Rathfern Estate, Doagh Road, Green End, Rathmullan Drive, **RATHCOOLE** Diamond, Church Road, O'Neill Road, Antrim Road to Belfast Castle turn-off.
- 5** Greenisland Station Road, Top Road, **THE BRAMBLES (1)**, Monkstown Road, Cloughfern Corner.
- 7** Cloughfern Corner, O'Neill Road, Glengormley, **BALLYCLARE ROAD**, Corr's Corner, Ballyhenry Road, Sandyknowes.
- 8** Jordanstown Road, Bridge Road, Doagh Road, Manse Road, **CARNMONEY ROAD** to Glengormley/ Antrim Road.
- 9** Shore Road, Corporation Street to Laganside Bus Centre, **BELFAST DIRECT (not Wednesdays)***.
- 14** Carrickfergus, (1st stop) Joymount, **KILROOT**.
- 15** Greenisland Station Road, **TOP ROAD**, Marshallstown Road, Kingsland Drive.
- 18** Jordanstown Road, **MONKSTOWN ROAD**, Doagh Road.
- 19** Joymount (1st stop), Kilroot, **WHITEHEAD** Railway Station, Duff's Corner, **BALLYCARRY**, Belttoy Road.

Additional service buses:

- *563e Passing BHS (1515) via Shore Road to Belfast, Laganside Bus Centre;*
- 563 Passing BHS (1602) via Shore Road to Belfast, Laganside Bus centre;*
- 563B Passing BHS (1519) via Shore Road to Carrickfergus;*
- 563 Passing BHS (1557) via Shore Road, Greenisland Station Road, Carrickfergus (Joymount) to Whitehead;*
- 563 Passing BHS (1658) via Shore Road, Greenisland Station Road, Carrickfergus (Joymount) to Kilroot.*

Notes:

Sports/Late Bus departs School Monday to Friday 1650 via Greenisland Station Road, Top Road, Monkstown Road, Bridge Road, Doagh Road, Manse Road, Ballyclare Road, Antrim Road, O'Neill Road, Rathcoole Diamond, Shore Road to Merville.

Translink – telephone 028 90 365355.

All details correct at time of printing.

Bringing Cars to School (Sixth Form Only)

Pupils may be provided with parking permits if there is sufficient space with priority being given to Year 14 pupils. Permits may be withdrawn if space becomes limited, if there are health and safety concerns or there is a breach of the Sixth Form Agreement. Pupils must complete and provide all the necessary documentation **prior** to parking on site. When parking is available, pupils must not leave the carpark until 3.55pm (3.20pm on Wednesday). Permits must be displayed on the dashboard to avoid loss of this privilege.

A copy of the School's policy on pupil use of vehicles is available from the Head of Sixth Form on request.

Picking up and Dropping off Pupils

The school building will be open for pupils from 8.40am. Pupils must remain in the canteen only from 8.40am and 8.55am. Sixth Form pupils may access Sixth Form Study from 8.40am.

Parents/carers may drop pupils off in the main bus park in the morning time.

Parents/carers are not permitted to bring their cars onto the school grounds between 3.30pm and 4.00pm. This is to ensure the safe arrival and departure of the school buses at the end of the school day.

Parents/carers are encouraged to use the Ulster University (Jordanstown) car parks which are easily accessible for pupils at the end of the school day.

Parents/carers are requested not to park on the road just outside the school gates. Parking is prohibited in this area as it is an urban clearway.

In exceptional cases, School may issue permits to parents/carers to collect their child on site at the end of the School Day (eg if the child has suffered a serious injury which is impacting their mobility).

Cycling to and from School

Pupils who cycle to School should store their bicycle in the shelter adjacent to the Sports Hall during the School Day. Pupils should always wear a helmet and take care when cycling through the School grounds.

Canteen and Food Allergy Information

The School operates a canteen which is open before school, at break and at lunch times, serving a range of hot and cold dishes. Pupils can also use the 'grab and go' facility in the courtyard beside the Canteen. Sixth Form pupils have access to a Coffee Bar facility which is open during the day and servery which is open at break and lunchtime.

The Canteen, grab and go facility and Sixth Form Centre are all cashless. Please ensure that your child has enough money on their account. This can be topped up using ParentPay.

Should your son/daughter have any food allergy issues and wish to seek advice about services in the Canteen please contact the Canteen Manager, Mr B Kavanagh.

Please note that we endeavour to ensure the School is a nut-free school and seek your cooperation in supporting the safety of all pupils at the School. Nuts and peanuts are excluded from the School site based on the ingredient list of any food product.

Free School Meals and Uniform Grants

All parents/carers seeking to apply for this (including new applicants) are required to apply on-line via the EA website <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals>

The allowance is open to parents/carers whose child/children attend a school or Regional/FE College in Northern Ireland and who receive one of the following benefits:

- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable household income of £16,190 or less;
- Universal Credit with net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year; or
- where the parent/carer is an Asylum Seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support Assessment Team (ASAT).

Education Maintenance Allowance (Sixth Form Only)

Pupils who stay on at school to study A Levels may be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). EMA is a weekly award of £30 which is paid fortnightly to pupils who meet the eligibility criteria below.

It is intended to help cover the day-to-day costs that pupils have to meet including travel costs, books and equipment.

As well as the fortnightly EMA payments, two bonus payments of £100 may be paid to pupils if they achieve the goals and objectives that are set down as part of the Learning Agreement. The first bonus payment is made to pupils in January and the second bonus payment is made in June.

Pupils can receive EMA if they are aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 years on or between 2 July 2023 and 1 July 2024 and all of the following statements apply to you:

- Your household income is £20,500 or less for households with one dependent child;
- Your household income is £22,500 or less for households with more than one dependent child;
- You are full time at school or doing a minimum of 15 guided hours per week at college;
- You are studying an eligible course and attending all classes;
- You meet the nationality and residency rules set out in the EMA scheme;
- You have not already received the maximum allowance for EMA which is 117 positive or negative weekly attendance confirmations over the total length of your course.

Lockers

Lockers are available for pupil use and are allocated on a first come, first served basis across all year groups.

Further information will be provided by Heads of Year at the start of each academic year.

Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

The use of mobile phones and personal devices falls under the School's existing E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy which can be found [here](#).

The following information in respect of the use of mobile phones in school is made clear to pupils at the beginning and throughout the year and is also displayed around the School.

PUPIL USE OF MOBILE PHONES AT BELFAST HIGH SCHOOL

All pupils should know when, where and how to use their mobile phone properly in school.



LOOK AFTER YOUR PHONE

The School will take no responsibility for broken, lost or stolen mobile phones. Your phone is your responsibility.



PHONES SHOULD BE SILENT

Your phone should not be seen or heard in School, not even on vibrate. Keep it switched off or on silent.



CONTACTING HOME

To contact home, you use the School Office. You do not use your phone.



DURING EXTERNAL EXAMS

Phones and other electronic devices are prohibited in line with JCQ regulations.



WHEN TO USE YOUR PHONE

Only **when permitted** in the classroom. Sixth Form can use phones in the Sixth Form Study and Coffee Bar.



WHEN NOT TO USE YOUR PHONE

You **cannot** use your phone in the corridors, canteen, toilets, Assembly Hall, Inside Gym, pitches, playground Sports Hall and lunch areas.

SANCTIONS FOR MISUSE OF PHONES



PHONES OUTSIDE CLASS

If you do not put your phone away when asked, you will be given a **Wednesday** afterschool detention.



PHONES IN CLASS

If your phone is seen or heard during class you will be given a **Friday** afterschool detention.

Advice about using mobile phones safely can also be found here:
<https://onlinesafetyhub.safeguardingni.org/young-people/>

Medical Information

Parents/carers are asked to ensure that the Medical Form is completed upon acceptance of a place at the School for their child and that the School is informed of any changes in their child's medical condition.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure relevant medical information (including Care Plan if relevant) is shared with the School and any medicines or medical equipment e.g. Adrenaline auto-injectors are maintained/replaced as required.

The School will maintain a medical room for those pupils and employees who are suffering from a medical condition. This room is located close to the School Office.

The School will facilitate emergency medical treatment and staff to oversee regular treatment of those with medical needs. However, there is no overarching legal duty upon school staff to administer medication.

Any queries should be directed to your child's Form Teacher or Head of Year in the first instance.

Charges and Remissions

Information regarding charges and remissions is shared with parents/carers at the beginning of the School Year. Any queries regarding charging or remissions should be directed to the Bursar's Office in the first instance.

Friends of Belfast High School (FOBHS)

The Friends of Belfast High School provides an invaluable source of support to the School. The group serves the School by celebrating successes and organising events for everyone to enjoy. The Friends play a vital role in raising funds for school facilities, trips and resources.

For further information please contact the Chairperson, Mrs K-A Mayes on 02890 864431 or via email [**Friends@belfasthigh.org.uk**](mailto:Friends@belfasthigh.org.uk).

You can find out more about the work of the Friends [**here**](#).

Section 2: Supporting and Safeguarding Young People

Safeguarding and Child Protection

We in Belfast High School have a responsibility for the safeguarding and child protection of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy can be found [here](#).

If you have a pastoral concern, please contact your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance (see page 8). Alternatively, you can submit a concern electronically using our Pastoral Alert [here](#). The School's Safeguarding Team is as follows:



Mr M Finlay
Board of Governors



Prof R Millar
Board of Governors



Mrs C Weir
Principal



Mr M Lowry
Vice Principal



Mr M Smith
Vice Principal



Mrs E Hood
Senior Leader



Mrs A Lowry
Senior Leader



Mr M McCann
Senior Leader



Mrs D McNeill
Senior Leader

Pastoral Curriculum

At Belfast High School we are dedicated to fostering the holistic development of our pupils through a comprehensive Pastoral Curriculum. This curriculum is thoughtfully designed to address a wide array of essential topics, contributing to the personal, social, and emotional growth of our pupils. Below is an overview of how we deliver this vital aspect of the curriculum:

Form Period

The primary delivery of the Pastoral Curriculum occurs during Form Periods on Wednesdays in Week 1. These sessions are a dedicated time where pupils engage with various pastoral themes under the guidance of their Form Tutors. Topics covered during these periods include, but are not limited to:

- Transition support and settling into the new school environment;
- Setting targets and goals for personal development;
- Understanding and managing relationships and friendships;
- Enhancing digital literacy and online safety.

Assemblies

Weekly assemblies provide another platform for delivering the Pastoral Curriculum. These gatherings allow us to address each Key Stage, reinforcing important messages and fostering a sense of community and shared values.

Additionally, we conduct fortnightly year group assemblies, offering more focused and age-appropriate discussions. These sessions enable us to tailor our pastoral support to the specific needs and developmental stages of different year groups.

Specialist Speakers

To enrich our Pastoral Curriculum, we regularly invite specialist speakers to deliver sessions on critical topics. These experts bring a wealth of knowledge and experience, providing our pupils with valuable insights and practical advice. Topics covered by specialist speakers include:

- Mental health awareness and well-being strategies;
- Understanding and addressing addiction and gambling;
- Promoting safe and responsible online behaviour;
- Navigating relationships and understanding consent.

By integrating these varied methods of delivery, we ensure that our Pastoral Curriculum is dynamic, engaging, and responsive to the needs of our pupils. Further details can be found in the School's Pastoral Care Policy which can be accessed [here](#).

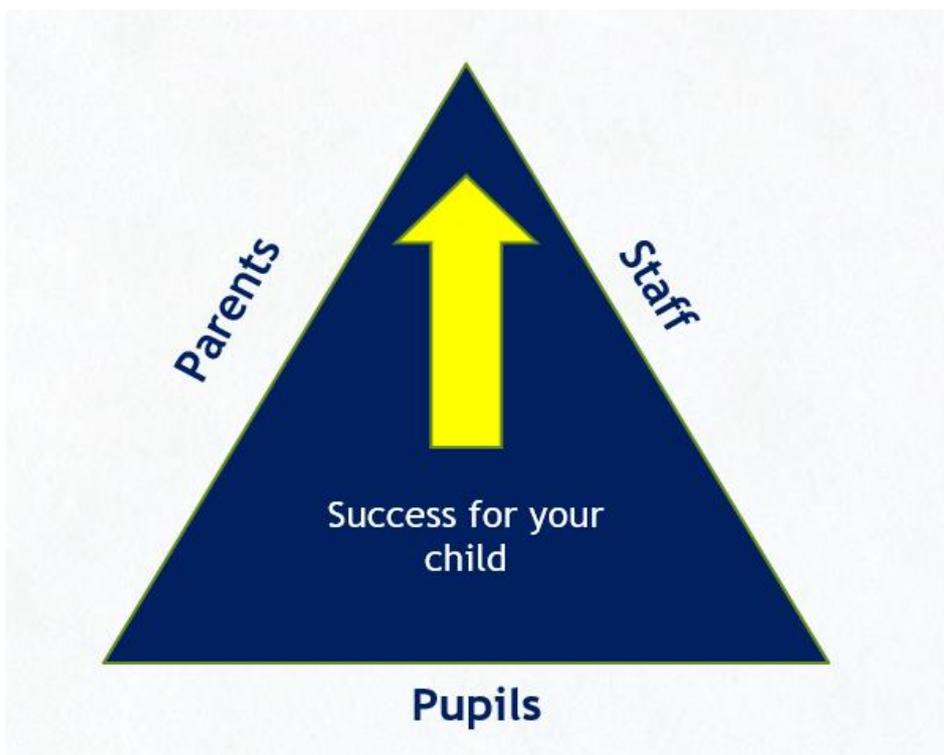
Promoting Positive Behaviour

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. The School believes that learning can best take place in a well-ordered and disciplined environment. Good behaviour is seen as essential for the safety and welfare of every pupil.

There are a variety of ways that parents/carers will be informed of positive and negative behaviour incidents that relate to their child. Parents/carers will receive notifications about positive and negative behaviour incidents through the School Gateway App. Teachers and pastoral leaders will also phone home and arrange meetings in school where the situation requires it.

The acceptance of a place at Belfast High School is interpreted by the Board of Governors as an indication that parents/carers and the pupil concerned accept and are in agreement with the ethos, philosophy, aims, policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the School including this policy and the Code of Conduct. Heads of Year, Heads of Key Stage, or in more serious matters, a Vice Principal will be happy to meet with parents/carers about contentious issues.

Our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy can be found in full [here](#).



Code of Conduct

The School expects pupils to:

- Always demonstrate courtesy and manners to others ;
- Be appropriately prepared to learn;
- Be committed to consistent hard work;
- Demonstrate high standard of dress, punctuality and attendance;
- Show respect for school property and the property of others.

Our full Code of Conduct can be found in Appendix 1 of our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy [here](#).

All pupils sign to confirm that they understand and accept the Code of Conduct at the start of each academic year.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

Bullying will never be tolerated or ignored at Belfast High School.

We encourage all pupils and parents/carers to report any instances of bullying or suspected bullying to the relevant Head of Year in the first instance.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy can be found in full [here](#).

Online Safety

In today's digital age, ensuring the online safety of our children is more critical than ever. The internet offers a wealth of educational resources and opportunities for social connection, but it also presents various risks that children need to be aware of and equipped to handle. As a school, we are committed to educating our pupils about safe and responsible online behaviour, and we recognise the essential role that parents/carers play in reinforcing these lessons at home.

Internet Safety Education in the Pastoral Curriculum

Internet safety is a key component of our Pastoral Curriculum, reflecting its importance in the well-being and development of our pupils. We deliver this vital education through Form Periods on Wednesdays in Week 1, pupils engage in structured lessons that cover various aspects of online safety. These sessions include discussions on identifying and avoiding online risks, understanding privacy settings, and the importance of maintaining a positive digital footprint. We also invite experts in online safety to speak to our pupils, providing them with current and relevant information about internet use. These specialists cover topics such as cyberbullying, digital resilience and the consequences of sharing personal information online.

Safer Schools NI

As an NI Safer School, we encourage all our pupils and parents/carers to download the Safer Schools NI App. The Safer Schools NI App contains contextual safeguarding information, advice and guidance, researched and written by online safeguarding experts. It's interactive, with engaging content which is easy-to-access, simple to understand and intuitive to use. The App is designed to be a one-stop-shop for accessing essential safeguarding information, advice, and guidance. It's a reference point you can turn to any time, right there on your phone. You can find out more about the app [here](#).

Supporting Online Safety at Home

As parents/carers, you play a crucial role in supporting and reinforcing the online safety education that your children receive at school. If you ever concerns about your child's safety online do feel free to contact our pastoral team for advice. Further guidance on how you can keep your child safe online is available [here](#).

SEND

The School is committed to supporting pupils who have identified Special Educational Needs and/or a medical diagnosis. If a parent/carer believes there are underlying education needs, they should contact the School for advice. In the first instance, the School will seek to support your child through Whole School Provision ie reasonable adjustments and school-based support to ensure a positive learning experience for your child.

If this provision does not have the desired impact and your child continues to have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age, the School will discuss the best way forward with parents/carers. This may include support through Special Educational Needs Provision which will see your child included on the School's SEN Register and the Learning Support Coordinator (Mrs A Lowry) will arrange a Personal Learning Plan to support your child's needs.

Further information is available [here](#).

Counselling Services

Currently, the School's independent counselling service is provided by ASCERT NI and is delivered in partnership with the Department of Education through the Independent Counselling Service for Schools. The counsellor offers a safe and confidential environment for pupils to discuss any concerns they may have, from academic pressures to personal issues.

Parents/carers are encouraged to reach out to the school counsellor if they notice their child struggling or if they have concerns about their child's well-being. The counsellor is here to provide guidance, resources, and support, ensuring that every pupil can thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

For more information or to schedule a meeting with the school counsellor, please contact the school office and ask to speak to Mrs Hood.

Illness and Medical Procedures

Where a pupil will be absent from school because of illness, parents/carers should follow the procedures outlined in the section entitled *Attendance and Procedure for Absence*. Where a pupil becomes sick during the school day, they should follow the procedures below:

During class time

- Pupil should report their illness to their class teacher.
- Pupil should then see their Head of Year to establish if they need to go home.
- If the pupil needs to go home, parents/carers will be contacted to collect them.
- If the pupil requires medication they can go to the medical room in the library.

During break or lunch time

- Pupil should go to the medical room in the Library.
- If they need to go home, they will need to get permission from their Head of Year and parents/carers will be contacted. Pupils should never leave School when unwell without following this procedure.
- If they need medication, they can receive this in the medical room until they feel well enough to return to class.

Pupils will only be given medication that parents/carers have consented to.

Concussion Awareness

Concussion is a brain injury which is usually caused by hitting the head or a fall. It can happen at any time, anywhere: for example during sports, in the school playground, or at home. Concussion must always be taken seriously and it is vitally important that any child/young person suspected of having concussion should immediately be stopped from continuing whatever activity they are doing and be assessed by a medical professional for diagnosis and guidance. A second injury when a child has a concussion can be extremely serious and may even be fatal. It is vitally important therefore that medical clearance is sought before your child returns to school/play. Children should not resume physical activities such as Physical Education (PE), sports or games until permitted to do so by a medical professional.

The primary responsibility of parents/carers is to discuss the details of the guidance included in the 'Recognise and Remove' leaflet with their child. This is accessible [here](#).

In addition, parents/carers should inform the school of any suspected concussion that their child may have suffered outside school hours and confirm that the child has been medically assessed.

Belfast High School's Concussion Protocol is accessible [here](#).

Enrichment

Our goal is to foster well-rounded individuals who are not only academically accomplished but also socially responsible and equipped with the skills needed for future success. The programme's objective is to help pupils acquire the communication, leadership, organisational, self-reliance, and initiative skills they will need in the future, as well as a strong sense of community.

Examples of our enrichment activities include learning sign language, assisting in the upkeep of our Eco-Schools Green Flag Award, working with language mentors, facilitating paired reading in local primary schools, Young Enterprise, the Co-operation Ireland Silver Peace Award, expanding one's knowledge of current events and the classical world, and finishing MOOCs, 'massive open online courses', in order to enhance UCAS applications.

Our Sixth Form Enrichment Programme offers a wide range of activities that support skill development, personal growth, and overall wellbeing to supplement academic studies.

Extra and Co-Curricular Activities

We are delighted to offer a thriving extra and co-curricular programme to our pupils with over 50 clubs and societies available. We believe that participating in extra-curricular activities provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to broaden their horizons, develop new skills, meet new people and enjoy a rich and full experience of school life. Our aim is that the variety of the programme will ensure that every pupil can find something that will appeal to them and we strongly encourage all our pupils to engage as fully as possible in the range of activities on offer. Look out for the booklet detailing all the activities on offer which is shared with parents/carers in the autumn term.

Sport



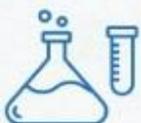
Athletics Club	Football	Rugby
Basketball Club	Fantasy Football	Table Tennis
Badminton	Golf Competitions	Tennis
Cricket	Hockey	
Cross-Country	Netball	

The Arts



Acoustics Club	Folk Group	Photography / Photoshop
Art Club	Junior Drama	Senior Strings
Chamber Choir	Junior Strings	Ukulele Orchestra
Choir	Junior Ukulele	Wind Band
Crochet Club	Orchestra	
Film Group	Performing Arts Club	

STEM



Animal House	Lego Club
Chemistry Club	Robotics / First Tech Challenge
EcoClub	Sound and Light
iDea Award Club	

Wellness



Charities and Community Service	Panthers (physical and personal wellness of school pupils)
Gardening Club	The People's Project
Let's Cook Club	Wellness Ambassadors

Humanities and Languages



Bar Mock Trial	Debating Society
Board Games Club	Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
Library	German Board Games Café -Treffpunkt
Chess Club	School Newspaper
Chinese Club	
Christian Union (CU)	

School Council

The School Council plays an important role in shaping the educational experience at our school. The Council collaborates to support and enhance our school's vision. Meetings are held regularly to discuss key issues, review policies, and seek pupil feedback on matters arising in the school.

Members of the School Council are elected bi-annually, ensuring fresh perspectives and continuous improvement. This collaborative body provides valuable input on school policies, resource allocation, and key issues, ensuring that the voices of pupils are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

We encourage Council members to speak to pupils in their year to gain insights into pupils' experiences of Belfast High School and create the best possible learning experience for our pupils. The School Council meets at lunchtimes and is led by the Deputy Head Boy and Girl. Mrs Hood is the link teacher.

Section 3: Ensuring Every Pupil Fulfils their Potential

The House System

On entering the School every pupil and member of staff is assigned to one of the 4 Houses - Boyd, Pyper Storey and Watson. The current 'House' system in Belfast High School dates from 1963. The names Boyd, Pyper, Storey and Watson were the surnames of men who "had given distinguished service to the School," in the words of Dr Harte, the Headmaster at the time: Mr Robert Boyd was a long serving Bursar of the School; Mr James Pyper was a member of the family who had founded the School and he had been Principal of the School for over fifty years; Captain J W Storey was the Chairman of the Board of Governors; Rev Dr Watson was a former Chairman of the Board of Governors. Prior to that time the 'Houses' were known as Ardilea, Carlisle, Glenravel and Somerton. Ardilea is the name of the old house that is on the current School site and which was incorporated into the new school which opened in 1963; Carlisle and Glenravel were place names from the area in north Belfast where the old school was located; Somerton was the name of the Preparatory Department of the School, opened in 1946.

BOYD's symbol is the microscope, reflecting Belfast's prominence in science and technology in the 19th and early 20th centuries. By the outbreak of the First World War advances in these areas had made Belfast one of the greatest industrial centres in the United Kingdom and Belfast-made goods were sold throughout the British Empire. Studying individual science subjects is an important part of the school curriculum today in Belfast High School.

WATSON's symbol is the hand holding the sheaf of crops, reflecting the importance of agriculture in the Ulster economy to feed the population, to provide employment and to assist with industrial output. The sheaf may represent edible crops or it may represent flax which was the important raw material for the linen industry. The hard-working nature of farmers is a quality which the School wants to instil in all its pupils. In Biology and Geography we can learn about different crops in various topics. We can also make delicious food in Home Economics.

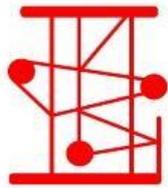
PYPER's symbol is the ship reflecting the historic role of shipbuilding in Belfast and Belfast's status as a major trading port. Harland and Wolff was perhaps the most famous of the shipbuilding companies providing employment for 20,000 workers in the early 20th century. Famous ships included the Titanic, HMS Belfast and the Canberra. Before 1942 Belfast High School was known as Belfast Mercantile College so the ship symbol may also hark back to the word 'mercantile' in the School's former name. Today History and Technology are subjects that teach pupils about the successes of the past and the importance of invention and innovation for the future.

STOREY's symbol is the loom reflecting the importance of weaving in the Ulster economy from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Linen became a staple industry of this region resulting in Belfast receiving the nickname 'Linenopolis.' However, the Belfast area was also important as a major cotton producing centre in the early 19th century before the outbreak of the American Civil War restricted imports of raw cotton to the United Kingdom. The linen industry, however, went into decline after World War Two when newer and cheaper textiles were discovered. In Art classes, pupils have the opportunity to make products using all sorts of materials.

The symbols of the Houses are taken from the images on our school crest.

The House system provides a series of challenges and opportunities for pupils throughout the year. Pupils can take part in these challenges and earn points for their house. There is a wide variety of challenges including spelling bees, Easter Egg Hunts, sporting challenges, language learning and much more.

This fosters a sense of cooperation across the year groups and a healthy spirit of competition. Senior Prefects co-ordinate the House System and run the competitions and assemblies developing their leadership skills as they do so.



**STOREY
HOUSE**



**BOYD
HOUSE**



**PYPER
HOUSE**



**WATSON
HOUSE**

Honours and Colours

At Belfast High School we believe in celebrating the diverse achievements of our pupils, both inside and outside the classroom. Our Honours and Colours system is designed to recognise and reward excellence in sports, arts, and other areas of special achievement. The School has 3 levels of award, Colours, Half-Honours and Honours. Pupils are entitled to wear the following if they receive an award:

Colours: a colours tie

Half Honours: a colours tie and pocket badge on the blazer with the name of the appropriate activity and year(s).

Honours: an honours blazer with the name of the appropriate activity and the year(s).

All awards are made for a period of 2 years and entitle the recipient to wear the tie, pocket or blazer for this time.

The School will recognise significant achievements of individual pupils in sports/activities which are not offered in school and in which they do not represent the School directly in the following ways:

1. School Assembly, Highlights Magazine and school website.
2. Inclusion in the annual School Prize Distribution Booklet.

Homework

Homework is a crucial part of our educational approach, designed to reinforce learning, foster independent study habits, and help pupils develop essential time management skills.

Each pupil is required to record their homework assignments in their pupil planner. This planner serves as a personal organiser and a communication tool between home and school. While some assignments will be posted on Google Classroom, not all homework will be available online. Therefore, it is essential for pupils to consistently use their pupil planner to keep track of all their assignments and deadlines.

We encourage parents/carers to check their child's pupil planner on a weekly basis, especially or pupils in Year 8-10. This regular review helps ensure that homework is being completed and deadlines are being met.

In exceptional circumstances where a pupil is unable to complete their homework by the stated deadline, we ask that parents/carers provide a note for the teacher explaining the situation. This note helps teachers understand any challenges the pupil may be facing and allows for appropriate accommodations or support.

If parents/carers have any concerns regarding homework, these should be directed to the Head of Department for the relevant subject (see page 8). Open communication helps us address any issues promptly and ensures that pupils receive the support they need to succeed.

Using the Pupil Planner

Every pupil in Belfast High School receives a pupil planner at the start of the academic year. This contains lots of helpful information about school life including lesson timings, bus routes, pastoral information, attendance advice, uniform rules and much more. The bulk of the planner consists of space for pupils to record their daily homework. The planners are crucial for helping pupils develop their organisation skills and every pupil is expected to bring their planner to school every day to record homework. Parents/carers are encouraged to check and sign the Pupil Planner each week to confirm it is being used effectively. Pupils in Key Stage 3 will have their planners checked by their Form Teacher each week.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is an integral part of our educational framework, enhancing the learning experience for all our pupils. This powerful tool helps streamline communication and provide valuable resources, ensuring that pupils have everything they need to succeed at their fingertips.

Google Classroom for Each Subject and Year Group

Pupils are assigned a Google Classroom for each subject they study, as well as a Google Classroom for their year group and their House. This systematic approach allows for a comprehensive and organised digital learning environment as well as for effective and efficient information sharing. We encourage parents/carers to stay engaged with their child's Google Classroom activities and to regularly check their child's 'To-do List' on Google Classroom which will show deadlines across all subjects.

While there will be some variation between departments, subject Google Classrooms will usually include the following:

- Homework;
- Lesson Material;
- Revision Materials;
- Explanation Videos and Modelling;
- Past Papers and Mark Schemes;
- Exam Board Support Materials;
- A Grade Exemplars;
- Extension Materials.

Pastoral Google Classrooms are an important forum for communicating messages and opportunities for pupils. They will include:

- **Year-Specific Announcements:** Important information relevant to the entire year group such as event details, deadlines, and pastoral messages is shared here.
- **Pastoral Support Resources:** Resources related to pupils' wellbeing, including internet safety education are posted in the year group Google Classroom.
- **Community Building:** The year group classroom fosters a sense of community and shared experience among pupils.
- **Opportunities:** External organisations often have numerous opportunities for our young people to take advantage of Google Classroom is one way we use to promote these opportunities for our pupils.

Academic Performance and Progression

The School is committed to ensuring that parents/carers are informed of the academic performance and progression of your child throughout their time at the School. By providing this information, we aim to foster a collaborative environment where parents/carers, pupils, and teachers work together to support each pupil's academic growth and achievement. The School will communicate this through:

Reports

Pupils will receive one Annual Report and additional Progress Reports which provide a statement indicating their current progress in their subjects.

Dates for school examinations are published in the school calendar at the start of the school year and further details regarding assessment and reporting can be found on the School website.

Target Setting

To help pupils achieve their full potential, academic target grades are set for them in each of their subjects. These target grades are based on Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs) data is collected in Year 8 and Year 11 and Advanced Level Information System (ALIS) data in Year 13.

Using the data from CATs and ALIS, we set targets that are designed to be aspirational. These targets aim to:

- **Motivate Pupils:** By showing pupils what they can achieve, we hope to inspire them to strive for excellence.
- **Guide Progress:** Targets serve as a benchmark for pupils to measure their progress and understand the expectations set for them.
- **Encourage Growth:** Aspirational targets challenge pupils to push their boundaries and reach their full potential.

To keep parents/carers informed and involved in their child's academic journey, we include these target grades alongside actual grades in the pupil progress reports sent home.

Parent/Teacher Consultations

Parents/carers will have the opportunity to meet with their child's subject teachers once a year at our parent/teacher consultation sessions. These consultations take place on a video conferencing platform called School Cloud. As the date for your child's consultations approaches, parents/carers will receive an email communication from the school detailing how they can access School Cloud and make appointments.

If you want to speak to your child's teacher outside of the parent/teacher consultations, please phone the school on 028 9086 4431 or email: info@belfasthigh.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk.

External Examinations

Coursework and Controlled Assessment

Coursework and Controlled Assessment are forms of assessment normally, though not always, marked by the centre and moderated by the Awarding Body.

Given that in many subjects coursework and Controlled Assessment constitute a significant portion of the final GCSE or A Level grade, partnership between pupils, teachers and parents/carers is imperative to ensure that candidates submit the highest quality work of which they are capable.

Your support in the following areas will therefore assist your child:

- Parents/carers should ensure that their son/daughter meets all deadlines for submission of coursework and Controlled Assessment;
- Parents/carers should ensure, except in cases of legitimate absence, that their child is in school and as well prepared as possible for coursework and Controlled Assessment preparation and completion;
- Parents/carers should familiarise themselves with communications from School and discuss their contents with their child, especially regarding procedures if a pupil fails to complete their coursework/Controlled Assessment or in cases of malpractice e.g. plagiarism.

The School abides by all regulations set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) which regulates all external exams and Controlled Assessment. Pupils and parents should be aware of the JCQ regulations, particularly regarding malpractice and plagiarism, which can be found on the JCQ website [here](#).

Revision

Research consistently shows that the best form of revision is active revision. At Belfast High School pupils are taught that simply reading and highlighting as part of revision, while not useless, is one of the least effective revision strategies. Pupils need to remember, retrieve and regurgitate facts on a regular basis so that they move from their short term to their long-term memory. Belfast High pupils are taught these study skills as part of Form Time and parents/carers can learn more about the most effective techniques [here](#).

Study Leave

During the Winter Exams and the external exams in May and June, pupils in Year 11-14 will be able to take advantage of study leave during their exam period. This means they only need to attend school when they have an exam. We hope this encourages independent private study.

The Sixth Form Study will be available to pupils who would rather study in school.

Parents/carers will be informed in writing about the details of study leave before each exam period begins. It is vital that pupils sign in and out of school during periods of study leave.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration may be given by the exam board following an examination or assessment to ensure that a candidate with a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time it is conducted is given some recognition of the difficulty they have faced. Clearly, any Special Consideration granted cannot take away the difficulty the candidate has faced and can only be a relatively minor adjustment to ensure that the integrity of the standard is not compromised.

While the School can make an application for Special Consideration, the decision to apply Special Consideration rests solely with the exam board. It remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to alert the School to any circumstances which may fall under the remit of Special Consideration. At that point, the School will be able to advise on an individual basis.

You can find out more about Special Consideration [here](#).

Subject Choice

The school curriculum aims to develop the knowledge skills and capabilities that our pupils will need to thrive in the fast-moving world of work society in the 21st Century. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum across the 3 Key Stages and pupils are given an extensive choice of what they want to study from Y10 onwards. Below are the subjects on offer at each Key Stage. The availability of these subjects can sometimes vary depending on pupil demand.

Key Stage 3 Taught Curriculum 2024-25

Subject	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Art and Design	2	2	3*
Biology	2	2	2
Careers			1
Chemistry	2	2	2
Classical Civilisation			3*
Classics		2	
Computing	2	2	3*
Drama	2		3*
English	6	6	6
Form Period	1	1	1
French	4	3+	3*
Games	2	2	2
Geography	3	3	3
German		3+	3*
History	3	3	3
Home Economics	2	2	3*
Latin			3*
Literacy	1		
Learning for Life and Work	1	1	2
Mathematics	6	6	6
Music	2	2	3*
Numeracy	1		
Physical Education	2	2	2
Physics	2	2	2
Spanish		3+	3*
Religious Studies	2	2	3
Technology and Design	2	2	3*

* In Year 10 pupils select one modern language from French, German and Spanish and 4 subjects chosen from Art, Classical Civilisation, Computing, French, German, Home Economics, Latin, Music, Drama, Spanish and Technology and Design.

+ in Year 9 pupils study 2 modern languages from French, German and Spanish.

At Key Stage 3 pupils have the opportunity to acquire, develop and demonstrate the skills and personal capabilities of the NI Curriculum across the curriculum in ways that are appropriate to each subject area. Discrete time is provided for computing for all pupils in Years 8 and 9 in which pupils follow a programme which develops their skills and competencies in using information and communication technology.

Key Stage 4 Taught Curriculum 2024-25

In Years 11 and 12 pupils prepare for and take their Level 2 qualifications.

All Key Stage 4 pupils complete GCSEs in English Language and Mathematics.

Pupils following Pathway A also study OCN Religious Studies and OCN Applied Science (Level 2) as well as 4 additional GCSE subjects.

Pupils following Pathway B or Pathway C also take GCSE English Literature and GCSE Religious Studies (Short Course).

In addition to the standard curriculum above, Further Maths and Latin can be taken as additional GCSEs.

Pupils following Pathway B or C will also have the option to complete an additional GCSE Religious Studies module during Year 12 to achieve a full GCSE.

We encourage pupils to choose a range of subjects for a broad and balanced curriculum to keep as many future career paths open as possible.

Pupils will also follow the statutory aspects of the Key Stage 4 curriculum: Careers, Employability, Citizenship, Personal Development, PE and Games.

The 28 Level 2 subjects offered in 2024-25 curriculum are:

Applied Science (OCN)	Art and Design	Biology	Business and Communication Systems
Business Studies	Chemistry	Child Development	Classical Civilisation
Computer Science	Drama	Electronics	English Language
English Literature	Food and Nutrition	French	Further Maths
Geography	German	History	Latin
Learning for Life and Work	Mathematics	Music	Physical Education
Physics	Religious Studies*	Spanish	Technology and Design

* GCSE or OCN Level 2

Key Stage 5 Taught Curriculum 2024-25

The 26 A Level subjects offered in 2024-25 are:

Art and Design	Biology	Business Studies	Chemistry
Classical Civilisation	Computer Science	Drama	Electronics
English Literature	French	Further Maths	Geography
German	Government and Politics	Health and Social Care	History
Latin	Mathematics	Media Studies	Music
Nutrition and Food Science	Physical Education	Physics	Religious Studies
Spanish	Technology and Design		

Section 4: Additional Information for Parents/Carers

Policies and GDPR

Parents/carers can access a range of school policies [here](#). At Belfast High School we believe privacy is important. We are committed to complying with our data protection obligations and to being concise, clear and transparent about how we obtain and use personal data and how (and when) we delete that information once it is no longer required. Parents/carers can access our policies in relation to Data Protection and GDPR [here](#).

Emergency Closures

An emergency closure is highly unlikely but could occur for some of the reasons such as severe weather conditions, health emergencies, security threats or building issues. If it becomes necessary to have an emergency closure, parents/carers will be informed through multiple channels including the School Gateway App, email and school social media channels. We will keep parents/carers regularly informed through these channels as the situation develops.

Critical Incidents

A critical incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within our school community and which overwhelms our normal coping mechanisms. Our Critical Incidents Policy is available on request.