



# **PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

## Pastoral Care Policy

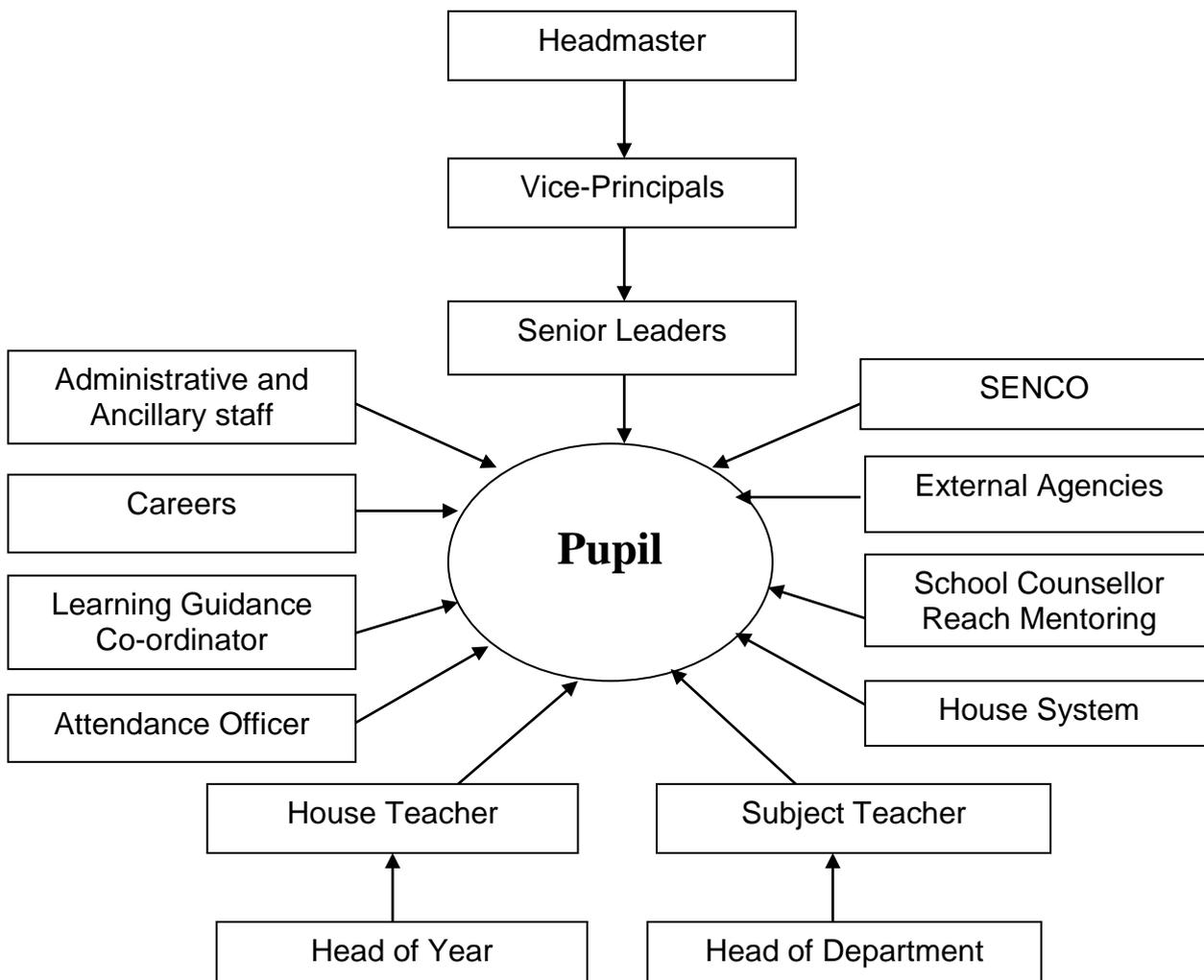
The Pastoral Care Policy reflects the Christian ethos of the school. At Lurgan College we are committed to promoting academic excellence within a caring environment.

### Aims:

- To create a caring, supportive and safe environment in which all our pupils are valued as individuals.
- To maintain, develop and intensify the growth of the intellectual, spiritual, moral and aesthetic aspects of personality in all pupils.
- To encourage pupils to achieve their full academic and personal potential by monitoring and supporting their progress and helping them to reduce any barriers to learning.
- To enable pupils to develop the strategies and the resilience to respond appropriately to situations affecting their welfare.
- To facilitate the emotional health and wellbeing of every pupil
- To encourage pupils to take personal responsibility for their own learning through stimulating the development of the attitudes and qualities of initiative, self-motivation, self-confidence, self-reliance, self-esteem and independence.
- To encourage pupils to build positive relationships with staff and fellow pupils based on integrity, courtesy, tolerance, mutual respect, consideration and trust.

### Structure of the Pastoral Care System

Pastoral Care is viewed as an essential element of our educational provision. As illustrated in the diagram below, the school's strong emphasis on academic achievement is underpinned by a pupil-centred approach to pastoral care. We believe that all members of the school community have an important role to play in ensuring that all pupils have access to support and well planned individualised learning guidance.



## **Pastoral Care**

Pastoral Care is most effective when it is proactive and contributes to improved pupil performance by being fully integrated into the school's daily routines, its curriculum, and extra-curricular activities. The relationship between Pastoral Care and academic achievement should not be underestimated.

All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a role to play in promoting the aims of the Pastoral Care Policy and in helping to create and maintain a climate which is characterised by good relationships and mutual respect.

Pupils have open access to all staff including the Vice-Principals and the Headmaster and are actively encouraged to speak to, or seek advice from any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable.

### **The Pastoral Care Team**

The Pastoral Care Team is led by the Vice-Principal (Pastoral) and includes the Heads of Year, Learning Guidance Co-ordinator, Attendance Officer and the Head of Careers. In order to ensure continuity of care, the four Heads of Year remain with the pupils in their Year Group throughout their entire time at the school.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the members of the Pastoral Care Team can be found in the Staff Handbook.

### **Delivery of Pastoral Care**

The Heads of Year and the House Teachers are central to the provision of Pastoral Care in the school. The Heads of Year are responsible for establishing and maintaining a holistic overview of the academic achievement, personal development and welfare of all the pupils in a year group. They also direct the work of the House Teachers. The Heads of Year are available to meet with pupils every morning from 8.50 am until the beginning of school and at other times whenever pastoral needs arise.

On entry to the school each pupil is assigned to a House Group which is under the care of a House Teacher. House Teachers are the first point of contact every morning for registration and are the first port of call if pupils have any concerns or difficulties. House Teachers are responsible for getting to know the needs of the pupils in their House Group, supporting their learning and addressing any pastoral concerns. They also deliver the Personal Development Programme which provides the pupils with the opportunity to develop the strategies and the resilience to respond appropriately to situations which affect their welfare.

Within each classroom, the subject teacher seeks to foster self-esteem in pupils, to promote a sense of self-motivation and achievement and to allow pupils to explore their own attitudes and values within a supportive and caring atmosphere.

In Lurgan College pupils are encouraged to strive, not only to achieve their full academic potential, but also to develop into fully rounded individuals and to show care and consideration towards each other. Beyond the classroom, the aims of the Pastoral Care policy are developed by staff in the provision of extra-curricular activities and in a variety of field trips and school visits. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities available including: Choir, Band, Scripture Union, Rugby, Hockey, Netball, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Community Service and First Aid. In addition, pupils are strongly encouraged to participate in the wide range of House activities and to fill positions of responsibility in the school including becoming School Prefects, House Prefects, Librarians, Careers Monitors or Peer Mentors. These are prestigious positions to which pupils aspire and they are voted for by both staff and pupils. The selection criteria for these posts are based on a range of factors including participation in extra-curricular activities, good relationships, attitude, appearance, application and attendance. Pupils who are successful in attaining one of these positions have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

We believe pupils have the potential to make a very valuable contribution to the school ethos and environment. The School Council enables us to listen to the views of our pupils. The Council is led by

the Senior Prefects and consists of an elected representative from each House Group and also members of staff. Meetings are held at regular intervals throughout the year and provide a forum for pupils and staff to discuss issues of mutual interest or concern.

Assemblies address personal, social and moral issues, which are relevant to young people, within a Christian framework. Pupils are encouraged to lead both whole school and year assemblies.

The Learning for Life and Work programme (PSHE and Citizenship elements) is also designed to promote personal and social development.

The achievements of individuals and groups of pupils are celebrated both within school, on the school website and through publicity in the local paper – The Lurgan Mail.

Good standards of behaviour are maintained through an appropriate balance of rewards and sanctions being implemented consistently by the staff.

The school values its partnership with parents. Parents' Meetings are held annually for all year groups. Parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time and the school will contact parents if there are any concerns about their child.

Information pertinent to the welfare of individual pupils is shared amongst staff by means of the confidential Pastoral Bulletin.

At the end of June, the Head of Year for the incoming Year 11 pupils liaises with staff at the Junior High School and then shares relevant pastoral information with the teaching staff prior to the start of the new academic year. Year 11 pupils are also interviewed by their Head of Year.

An Open Afternoon is held at the end of June for new Year 11 pupils and there is an Induction morning at the end of August for Year 11 and new Year 13 pupils. This affords pupils the opportunity to get to know their House Teachers, to find their way around the school, and to engage in a range of activities designed to ease the transition into life at the College.

Examination reports are completed after each set of exams and Progress reports are sent home every half term. The Learning Guidance Co-ordinator leads the work of the Learning Guidance Team to monitor the progress of pupils and to implement appropriate intervention strategies e.g. pupil interviews, individual target setting, contacting parents and, if necessary, the use of a weekly or daily reporting system.

There are two Pastoral Issues Boxes located around the school. Any pupil who is concerned about an issue, but does not feel able to speak to someone, can write it down and post it in one of the boxes. The Pastoral Vice-Principal opens these boxes on a regular basis and discusses the contents with appropriate members of staff.

## **The House System**

The House system is central to the development of the school's corporate identity. It encourages pupils to develop a sense of pride in the school, a healthy competitive spirit, leadership potential and it also promotes emotional health and wellbeing, collegiality and inclusion. The school is divided into four Houses - Boulger, Cowan, Harper and Kirkpatrick. Each House has a Head of House and four assistant House Teachers. On entry to the school each pupil is allocated to one of the four Houses; this is done either randomly or according to previous family connections with the school.

There is a wide range of sporting and cultural inter-house activities which are contested fiercely and include Skiing, Quiz, Music, Debating, Rugby, Hockey and Swimming Competitions;

House Prefects are selected on the basis of their leadership potential, track record of participation in House Competitions and a general willingness to work for the benefit of the House. The House Prefects meet with the Head of House on a regular basis and form committees to select and produce

teams for sports or to organise rehearsal schedules. House meetings are held every Monday morning.

A peer mentoring system has been developed in which mentors from each House group are appointed to support pupils in the corresponding House group for the year below them. The mentoring process operates as follows:

- Aspirant peer mentors complete an application form
- Four mentors are appointed from each House group in Years 14, 13 and 12
- The mentors are trained by external agencies (last year, the Reach Team)
- They participate in the Year 11 and Year 13 Induction days.
- On selected occasions throughout the school year they visit House Groups during Personal Development lessons and House Assemblies to assist with a planned programme of activities.

### **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (C.E.I.A.G.)**

It is the aim of the CEIAG department to do all in its power to assist all pupils in their career decision making. The department has made effective links with the Junior High School to support pupils with their career planning at transition from the Junior High School to the College. The taught careers programme is designed to enable pupils to identify and develop the skills and qualities necessary for effective career planning. Pupils develop sound employability skills through work related learning opportunities such as Work Experience and an Interview Skills Day. Pupils have access to an extensive variety of resources and are made aware of the wide range of training opportunities available to them. Pupils have access to one to one careers guidance meetings with their careers teacher and are also encouraged to have careers conversations with their subject teachers. The work of the CEIAG department is complemented well by the support of the Department for the Economy Careers Adviser. All Year 12 pupils have a one to one interview with the Careers Adviser and pupils in all other Year Groups can request an interview with the Adviser at any time throughout the academic year. Information from careers staff and the independent Careers Adviser relating to any concerns about a pupil are raised with the VP Pastoral and where relevant with the Pastoral Care Team and / or the Learning Guidance Team. The VP Pastoral and the Department of Economy Careers Adviser meet annually to discuss the progress of pupils with Special Educational Needs.

### **External Agencies**

In order to provide the best support to all pupils, the school is fully committed to working with a wide range of appropriate specialist external agencies and professionals including the Education Welfare Officer, Sensory Support Team, Specific Learning Difficulties Service for Literacy (SpLD), Educational Psychology, Special Education, Pupil Personal Development Service, the Autism Team, the Inclusion and Diversity Service, CAMHS and Social Services. Information and contact details for a range of external agencies which may be helpful to individual pupils are displayed on the Pastoral Care Notice Board.

In addition, speakers from external agencies complement the in-house delivery of the Personal Development Programme e.g. Love for Life, Aware Defeat Depression, Teenage Cancer Trust, PSNI, Everybody (Eating Disorders), MensSana, Studyseed, Action Mental Health, A21 (Human Trafficking) and the Reach Team.

### **Counselling / Mentoring Services**

During the last few years there has been a significant increase in the number, complexity and sensitivity of Pastoral Care issues which schools are expected to address. In light of this, and to complement the school's Pastoral Care system, we offer pupils access to an independent counselling service which is provided by Familyworks, and mentoring by the Reach Team.

The Counsellor is available in school one morning a week to speak to pupils by appointment or through the drop in service. Pupils can make an appointment by completing a self-referral form and posting it in the box outside the office or by speaking to any member of the teaching staff. Mentoring with the Reach Team is organised by the Heads of Year.

It should be noted that in counselling and mentoring absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed; the welfare of the pupil will, at all times, take precedence over confidentiality. The Counsellor and Mentors are obliged to report all incidents of suspected or actual abuse to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. There is close liaison between the Counsellor and Mentors and the Pastoral Vice-Principal to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met in an appropriate and coherent manner.

### **Child Protection/Safeguarding**

Child Protection is an extremely important part of Pastoral Care. When abuse is suspected, or when a pupil makes an allegation that he or she is suffering or has suffered abuse, the school has a statutory obligation under the Children (N.I.) Order 1995 and in line with the requirements of the Department of Education Circular 2017/04 Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, to make a referral either to Social Services or the PSNI. The school will usually initially seek advice from the Child Protection Officers at the Education Authority before making a referral. The Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy sets out the procedures which should be followed when reporting an incident of child abuse. In the case of a pupil disclosing that she is pregnant, the procedures outlined in the school's Teenage Pregnancy Policy are followed.

### **Additional Needs**

The school is committed to offering an inclusive curriculum which allows all pupils to have access to an appropriate education and affords them the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Pupils with Additional Needs are placed on the Special Needs, Medical or Newcomer Registers. These are issued to staff at the beginning of each academic year and are updated during the year if necessary. To ensure continuity of provision for pupils with Special Needs, the Pastoral Vice-Principal meets with the SENCO from the Junior High School in June to discuss the specific difficulties of the pupils who are transferring to the College and to pass on the most recent Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In September, new IEPs are drawn up for pupils on the SEN Register in consultation with the pupils and if appropriate, external agencies. Each pupil's progress in meeting the targets on the IEP is reviewed twice a year, in February and June, and the outcomes discussed with both the pupil and his/her parents. The parents of pupils with Statements of SEN are also invited to a formal review meeting once a year. The two Vice-Principals meet with the Newcomer pupils and their parents at the Junior High School in June to discuss subject choices and any special arrangements which may need to be put in place. If necessary, interpreters are booked for these meetings and any subsequent Information Sessions or Parents' Meetings when the pupils transfer to the school.

### **Staff Development**

The school recognises the need for ongoing, high quality staff development in order to build the capacity of teachers to support all pupils. Pastoral care issues are regularly addressed on Staff Development Days and recent training has focused on Autism, Dyslexia, Eating Disorders, Inclusion and Diversity, and First Aid including CPR and the use of a Defibrillator. In order to build capacity, members of the Pastoral Care Team are encouraged to participate in training provided by the EA (Southern Region) Pupil and Personal Development Services and other external agencies. Relevant information gained at courses is then disseminated to other members of the Pastoral Care Team.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Due to the nature of Pastoral Care it is not always possible to assess formally the outcomes or measure in easily quantifiable terms the effectiveness of the provision. However, pupils and staff are encouraged to become involved in monitoring and evaluating Pastoral Care, including the Personal Development Programme, through the School Council, feedback at meetings between Heads of Year and House Teachers, and questionnaires. Informal feedback from parents, pupils and staff is also valued and used by the Pastoral Care Team to effect improvement by helping plan staff development, and to develop or modify existing provision.