



Durham High School

# **Pastoral Care Policy**

This policy applies to the Whole School  
and is published to parents and pupils

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Reviewed: September 2022  
Next review: September 2023

*This policy should be read in conjunction with: Anti-bullying Policy; Behaviour Policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Missing Pupil Procedures; SEND Policy.*

## **Pastoral Care Aims**

All our pastoral work aspires to reflect the aims of Durham High School, which are to:

- Be a friendly, caring community based on Christian principles where every individual is valued.
- Develop the potential of every girl.
- Encourage academic excellence and a lifelong love of learning.

Pastoral Care is at the heart of everything we do. Our uniqueness comes from basing what we do on strong Christian values and a family ethos pervades throughout the School. In the spirit of *Every Child Matters* our Pastoral Care aims to make our pupils: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing, offering a holistic approach to addressing the needs of every pupil.

We are firmly committed to the ideal that pupils who are happy and settled are most able to achieve their true potential. Therefore, the primary aim of our Pastoral Care is, as far as possible, to ensure that each individual pupil feels valued, cared for and supported throughout their time at DHS by nurturing self-confidence, building self-esteem and emotional resilience, and giving each individual a sense of well-being so they can be happy and feel comfortable with themselves. We also aim to give each pupil opportunities to develop the social, spiritual and moral resources they need to cope with the demands of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Pastoral Care plays a major part in the Safeguarding of our pupils and is the responsibility of all, not merely the remit of the Form Teacher; every member of the School community plays an important part in this process. Nevertheless, the role of the Form Teacher is considered essential to achieving the key aims of the School and the priority of every Form Teacher is the Pastoral Care of the pupils in their care.

We consider that the partnership with parents is also crucial to the success of our Pastoral Care and we always aim to work together with parents to support our pupils through their education and development.

## **Pastoral Care within School**

We encourage pupils to recognise the importance of the role they play in cultivating a caring community by supporting one another and being reliable, loyal and caring friends. We expect pupils to look out for each other and offer support and help when needed. As in any school, friendships do not always run smoothly and when issues do arise we endeavour to support pupils in helping themselves to sort out issues, as far as possible with the aim of reconciling differences.

As pupils move through the School, there are more formal opportunities to offer pupil-on-pupil support; as a mentor to younger pupils including academic and pastoral buddies, a Form Rep, a House Captain or as part of the Sixth Form Senior Leadership Team who play an important role in both Pre-Prep and Prep Departments and Senior Department. Pupils work together on charity events, have assemblies together (in both Key Stage assemblies and whole School assemblies with Pre-Prep and Prep Departments and Senior Department meeting separately), enjoy joint social activities and much more. From Reception, each pupil is allocated to a House (Booth, Heath, Neville or Tempest) where a range of activities, such as creative, musical and sporting events enable pupils to get to know one another across year groups.

As staff, we aim to model supportive professional relationships, and to encourage each pupil to adopt an individual, positive approach to learning and to make the most of their time here at the High School. We recognise that knowing and valuing each individual pupil is essential; knowing their

parents and their family background, their strengths and weaknesses, their hopes and aspirations. This is a vital element of effective Pastoral Care.

By its very nature, Pastoral Care involves dealing with difficulties that inevitably arise from time to time. We recognise that excellent academic progress and effective Pastoral Care are intrinsically linked. Therefore, both academic and personal progress is monitored regularly by Heads of Year, to ensure that any problems are identified promptly. If problems do arise we aim to listen carefully to the pupils, to communicate quickly with parents and to manage problems sensitively.

We encourage pupils to let staff know about things that are concerning them or causing them to be unhappy. If pupils do not want to speak to a member of staff directly then in Pre-Prep and Prep Departments there is a 'Thoughts Box' for pupils to post comments or concerns that they may have about anything to do with School. There are also active School Councils in both Pre-Prep and Prep Departments and Senior Department which provide forums for pupils to voice opinions and concerns.

Through our assembly and PSHCCE programme we aim to develop emotional resilience by encouraging pupils to be mindful and to be able to deal with failure as well as academic success. We aim to build confidence and self-esteem through the use of praise and rewards as part of our assessment system. We strive to give pupils the confidence to think independently, analytically, logically, creatively and imaginatively and take on leadership roles within a School that provides a safe haven for pupils to develop these characteristics and grow into well-rounded adults, happy with and within themselves.

## **Pastoral Structure**

At Durham High School we pride ourselves on the fact that each pupil is known and knows that they are known.

The School's pastoral structure is a horizontal one based on year groups from Nursery to Year 13. The Form Class provides a framework for looking after each individual. The role of the Class Teacher in Pre-Prep and Prep Department and Form Teacher in Senior Department is essential to the work of the School. All Class Teachers and Form Teachers will work hard to get to know the pupils in their Class/Form and are usually the first point of contact for parents with non-academic queries or concerns.

In Senior Department, Deputy Form Teachers help by taking the register, and by sharing the responsibility of report reading and individual target setting, as directed by the Head of Year. Heads of Year rotate with their year groups for Years 8 and 9, for Years 10 and 11 and for years 12 and 13 which provides continuity of care.

In Pre-Prep and Prep Departments, Class Teachers deliver most of the curriculum and in Senior Department Key Stage 3 staff in non-setted subjects usually teach their specialist subject to their Form. For Senior Department teachers who teach in Pre-Prep and Prep Departments; any matter causing concern within lessons is immediately passed on to the Class Teacher. For all staff who teach in Senior Department, any matter causing concern should be referred to the Form Teacher and Head of Year. Heads of Department should be contacted regarding any academic concerns.

In Pre-Prep and Prep Departments, we foster a warm and caring environment so pupils can feel safe, secure and happy in their day-to-day work and play. Class Teachers deal with daily pastoral issues and pass more serious matters on to the Head of Pre-Prep and Prep Departments who has overall responsibility for the welfare of each pupil. If necessary, pastoral issues are brought to the attention of all staff in Pre-Prep and Prep Departments in Key Stage Meetings, JLT Meetings and whole staff meetings.

In Senior Department, we continue to offer the care and guidance required for pupils to grow to become confident young people by developing an ethos of mutual respect and a community in which we all look after one another by nurturing well-being and resilience through everything we do. Form

Teachers deliver the Tutor Programme which includes two PSHCCE sessions allowing Form Teachers to get to know their pupils well. A weekly programme of Year Group assemblies is organised by Heads of Year for their Year Groups and Year group activities and events play a further role in helping Form Teachers to bond with the pupils in their Form Class as well as the pupils to bond with one another within Forms and across year groups.

In Years 7 to 11 we have Heads of Year to whom Form Teachers report. There is a designated Head of Year 7 who works closely with Y6 internal and external pupils to support their transition into Senior Department. In addition, there are specific Heads of Year who work with Year 8 and 9. Year 10 and 11 have a Head of Key Stage 4 (instead of a Head of Year) and an Assistant Head of KS4 to assist with pastoral matters. The Head of Sixth Form oversees Years 12 and 13 and manages a team of Form Teachers. All Heads of Year report to and work closely and in conjunction with the Vice Principal and Assistant Principal. Pastoral issues are often shared with Senior Department staff in staff briefings and staff meetings. Heads of Year work closely with the SENCO when required.

Senior Department pastoral teams meet regularly to discuss pastoral issues. Heads of Year have half-termly meetings with their Form Teachers and Deputies and the Vice Principal and Assistant Principal hold regular fortnightly meetings with Heads of Year. Heads of Year also work with the PSHCCE Co-ordinator to develop pastoral activities through the PSHCCE curriculum appropriate for their year group.

Form Teachers across the whole School meet the pupils in their form class in twice-daily registration and all Form Teachers are willing to be there for the pupils at other times during the School day if the pupils wish to speak to them. The Head of Pre-Prep and Prep Departments, Heads of Year and the Vice Principal operate an open-door policy encouraging pupils to go to see them to discuss any problems or simply have a chat whenever they feel the need to do so. Senior Department Heads of Year also create opportunities to meet informally with pupils to chat about issues and listen to pupils' concerns.

### **School Counsellor**

Whilst pupils are free to talk to any member of staff if they have concerns, there is also the option of booking an appointment to talk in confidence to the School Counsellor. An appointment with the Counsellor can be made through the Head of Year in Senior Department and through the Head of Pre-Prep and Prep Departments for Pre-Prep and Prep Departments pupils. Parental consent is sought for all pupils under the age of 16. For pupils aged 16 or over, parental consent is usually sought but is not essential. All pupils have their first, three half-hour counselling sessions paid for by the School; parents pay for sessions thereafter.

### **Wellbeing Room**

Our new Wellbeing room is a safe and calm environment which is available for all pupils to use as a quiet space to take time to reflect and unwind. There are mindfulness colouring books, craft materials, self-help books and self sooth resources.

The Mental Health Leads have their one-to-one appointments in here and some group sessions too.

We acknowledge that pupils' wellbeing is fundamental to their overall health and success and believe this will be a valuable addition to our Pastoral Care.

The Extra-curricular Activity programme also includes a Mindfulness Activity once a week and a physical Wellbeing activity for pupils to join in with.

### **Mental Health Leads**

All staff have undertaken Mental Health Lead training or Senior Mental Health Lead in the case of the Vice Principal.

Senior Mental Health Lead with Strategic Oversight of Mental Health – Mrs Michelle Hill (Vice Principal)

EYFS and Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 – Mrs Kathryn Hall (Head of Pre-Prep Department), Youth Mental Health First Aid

Year 5, Year 6, Year 7, Year 8 and year 9 – Mrs Judith Lonsdale (Head of Year 7), Youth Mental Health First Aid

Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 – Mrs Clare Wheeler (Head of Sixth Form), Mental Health First Aid

Staff – Mr Ian Quigley (School Counsellor), Mental Health Nurse