



# Pastoral Care Policy

Reviewed: August 2024

Next review: August 2026

Reviewed by: Deputy Head – Student Engagement and Welfare

At Bedford Girls' School, we recognize that teachers are uniquely skilled in relating to students at an age-appropriate level. Relationships between and among staff, students and the wider community are centrally important. Pastoral care is an integral part of classroom teaching and leads to the development of intellectual, social and emotional skills, which can prepare children for challenging situations when they arise. Pastoral care encompasses reactive care, proactive care, developmental care, the promotion and maintenance of an orderly environment leading to a positive whole school ethos and the monitoring and support of students. Pastoral care focuses on the individual with an expectation that they participate fully in the school and wider community.

## Aims of our Pastoral Care

- To look after the total welfare of each student, taking into account their different needs at each stage of their education.
- To provide continuity and development of approach throughout the whole school, for students from Years 3 to Upper Sixth.
- To create a tolerant community which recognizes, respects and celebrates individual differences and nurtures in each a sense of self-worth and self-esteem.
- To help students to become confident, kind and responsible members of society who are well-equipped to make important life choices.
- To give each student the experience of school as a well-ordered, calm community where relationships are open and friendly, warm and supportive, so enabling each to develop their potential.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare, health and safety of each student in school and in activities outside school and ensure that they know who they can approach if they have a problem or concern.
- To ensure that every student is known and valued and that achievement, widely defined, is encouraged and rewarded as a means of promoting self-image and a sense of worth.
- To encourage self-discipline and good behaviour.
- To prevent poor discipline through vigilance, understanding and encouragement and to correct indiscipline with justice, fairness, compassion and appropriate support.
- To ensure that overall academic progress is monitored and a full record of each student's school career is maintained. Medical, learning support, MidYIS and ALIS scores, house point certificates awarded and behaviour management records are accessible on iSAMs
- To promote a partnership between home and school.
- To provide opportunities for leadership and community service.

# Implementation of Pastoral Care at Bedford Girls' School

## 1. Organisation of Students

- Each year group of the school has a pastoral structure appropriate to the age of the student.
- Students are placed in form groups and meet with their form tutor once daily. The form tutor is a key person in the school life of each student who monitors their tutee's academic work, progress and well-being through individual, form group and small group meetings within our pastoral programme. In the Junior School students have more daily contact with their form teacher, who teaches approximately two thirds of the timetable to their forms under the guidance of the Head of Year who co-ordinates the planning of the curriculum across the year group.
- New form groups are created in Years 7,8 and 9, 10 and 12. Heads of year work closely with form tutors to decide on the best combination of students and students' views are consulted. As students progress through the school they spend increasingly less time being taught in their form groups. We know that a broad network of friends helps with wellbeing and the development of resilience in young people. A new combination of students at these points helps to broaden the number of connections with others and also allows students to experience learning with different groups of individuals.
- All students are allocated to one of six Houses where they are able to meet new friends and contribute to a range of challenges in a friendly yet competitive environment.
- In the Senior School the oversight of student care is allocated to heads of year in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the Director of Sixth Form. Senior tutors support pastoral care in Years 7 and 9, Years 10 and 11, Year 12 and Year 13. This is supplemented by a wellbeing Officer for Years 7-11 and one for 6<sup>th</sup> Form. This pastoral team does not have a responsibility for a form; they have an overall responsibility for the efficiency and effectiveness of the form tutor team for each year group, an overview of student progress and the general welfare and behaviour of students in that year group.
- An induction programme for new students aims to promote their ability to enjoy, achieve and make a positive contribution to the school community. This is organised and overseen by the respective heads of years. A team of existing BGS students in the same year group helps new students during their settling in period.

## 2. Organisation of Pastoral Staff

All staff have a role in the pastoral care of students at Bedford Girls' School.

The Pastoral team is composed of:

- Deputy Head Student Engagement and Welfare
- Director of Safeguarding
- Director of Sixth Form
- Head of Years 10 and 11
- Head of Year 8
- Head of Years 7 and 9
- Senior Tutors
- Director of SEND
- Learning Support Teacher
- Head of PSHE
- School Counsellor
- School Nurse
- Wellbeing Officer Years 7 – 11
- Pastoral Officer Sixth Form
- Attendance Officer

The effectiveness of good pastoral care relies on good lines of communication. The role of Form Tutor remains crucial to a student's experience of school life and a major responsibility of the head of year is to support, encourage and guide tutors as they fulfil their day-to-day obligations to the members of their form.

Heads of year establish effective systems, structures and procedures so that form tutors know what to do and when. They monitor and evaluate their tutor teams to ensure pastoral care is coherent and consistent. The head of year is responsible for defining and articulating a positive vision for pastoral work, in line with the school's ethos and strategy.

A student may be referred to their head of year for extra support. Parents are advised that the form tutor is their usual first point of contact, but that the senior tutors, heads of year and all of the senior management team, including the Headmistress, are also ready to respond to queries or the expression of concerns. Students or parents may also choose to approach one of the six heads of houses if they have a concern; we are comfortable with the thought that students and parents should feel free to make initial contact with the member of staff of their choice. In any case, subject only to the particular nature or delicacy of the matter they raise, the form tutor will be kept fully informed. (See also 'Responsibilities of Form Tutors')

Teaching staff are encouraged to liaise with Heads of Department with subject specific queries; form tutors and heads of years work co-operatively to ensure the best outcome for each student. The Deputy Head Student Engagement and Welfare also works closely with staff, through the heads of years in particular.

Matters are followed up and dealt with as promptly as possible and close contacts with parents are strongly valued. Parents are aware that both the form tutor and head of year are readily available with all contact normally returned within two working days.

All but the most trivial matters will be shared on a need-to-know basis and noted. Support tutors are also essential in ensuring the smooth running of the various stages of the students' career throughout the school, supporting the tutors and students in a variety of ways, e.g. covering tutor absence and support in report reading.

- All staff (especially form staff) are asked to be especially watchful of new students and to pass on any concerns to form tutors and the appropriate heads of years.
- Pastoral year team meetings are chaired by the heads of years or senior tutors most weeks and all matters of pastoral care, current issues, school policy and routines are discussed. Longer meetings are also held at the start of every term and half-term in order to ensure that all important business and strategic planning is in place.
- The Attendance Officer monitors the attendance of students and discusses any emerging patterns with the heads of years and Director of Safeguarding.
- The Deputy Head - Student Engagement and Welfare meets all heads of years individually on a weekly basis and collectively once a week; they also meet the Headmistress weekly, so that details concerning students and strategic matters relating to each stage can be discussed.
- Members of the pastoral team, specifically the school counsellor, the pastoral officers, heads of years, Director of Sixth Form, Director of SEND and a representative of the nursing team meet weekly to discuss emerging student matters and refer students to the appropriate level of support. This meeting is chaired by the Director of Safeguarding and exists to apply a multi disciplinary approach to more complex pastoral concerns.
- The heads of houses are also involved in supporting the pastoral care at BGS and will work closely with the heads of years as required.

### **3. The role of the classroom teacher**

Every teacher has a duty of care to the students in their classes. The quality of teaching is essential in pastoral care and

*Bold*

*Imaginative*

*Reflective*

staff at BGS prepare appropriate, well-resourced, confidently delivered and rigorously evaluated lessons. All staff have a role in safeguarding and the promotion of well-being. Staff develop trusting, supportive and constructive relationships and this allows all staff to relate to the individual child.

#### 4. Responsibilities and opportunities

Positive behaviour is promoted through a system of rewards, as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy. Students are made aware of the consequences of inappropriate conduct outlined in that policy.

Students have opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and leadership by representing their form group in the election of Form Heads or as a House Representative.

As senior members of the school, Sixth Form students have the opportunity to apply and be selected as the Girls' Leadership Group (GLG). From this group a Head Girl is selected to lead the team. At the beginning of Year 6, pupils can apply to serve on the Junior School Girls' Leadership Group, each with their own area of responsibility. Pupils are selected on the basis of a letter and their commitment to school and their house.

In the Senior School there is one House Captain and three House Prefects in each House. The Heads of Houses hold regular meetings with their House Captains and Prefects.

#### 5. Organisation of PSHE, Assemblies and General Welfare

- **The pastoral programme includes the delivery of some aspects of PSHE** in curriculum time and timetabled lessons through the year. This includes topics of Personal and Social Health and Sex Education, together with Careers and Citizenship Education. In the Senior School PSHE is delivered by a team of dedicated staff in a one hour lesson each week. In the Junior School and where possible in Years 7 and 8, PSHE is taught by form teachers.
- **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** of students is provided through the pastoral structure, the PSHE programme, the assemblies programme, individual subjects and a rich co-curricular programme of activities.
- The school nurses are available during term time to administer First Aid and medical care as well as making a valuable contribution to the health and well-being elements of the pastoral care programme.
- **Support mechanisms** exist within the academic and pastoral curriculum. Individuals who need routine help are well supported by their subject staff and/or form tutor. Help and guidance for those with a more personal issue can be obtained from specially trained nurses or our school counsellors or by referral to appropriate outside agencies. A notice board in the Health Centre provides details of community support. Counselling services, useful websites and help lines are made known to students via form room notices, directing them to the Health Centre for information.

#### 6. Levels of support

- In the weekly meeting of the pastoral team to discuss individual students, the appropriate level of pastoral care is recommended using the following guidance:

Level	Support	Who	Pastoral flag (iSAMS)
1	Touch base with trusted adult/Monitor	Form Tutor/mentor/trusted member of staff	blue

*Bold*

*Imaginative*

*Reflective*

2	Structured support (possible parent contact) Includes universal services	Nurses/Hoy/Pastoral support officer/Learning Support Team/Teacher/Mentors/Private counselling, CHUMS, Open Door, Relate	green
3	Structured intervention (parent involvement usually)	Learning Support Team School Counsellor plus Level 2	amber
4	Involvement of targeted and specialist external agencies (parent contact usually)	EHA, CDC, CAMHS, CIN, CP	red

Pastoral flags are added to iSAMS to indicate the level of support a student is receiving without compromising confidentiality.

### **Assemblies**

- All students attend approximately two assemblies each week which may reflect the ethos and beliefs of the six main religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism) and take into account the different religious backgrounds or non-religious backgrounds of the students. They will be reflective and may sometimes include a hymn although staff who lead assemblies will have their own styles. The responsibility for one of these assemblies each fortnight lies in Years 7 to 11 with the head of year; these are led by the head of year, students from a tutor group or other individuals or visiting speakers. SLT will also lead year group and whole school assemblies. The GLG are responsible for some assemblies during the year and the House Captains, along with staff heads of houses will lead one assembly per fortnight. Students from the GLG are responsible for the arrangements for arrival at and exit from whole school assemblies.
- In the Junior School, all students attend three to four assemblies per week. Assemblies led by the Head of Junior School or SLT reflect the ethos and values of the school and the beliefs of the six main religions. In these assemblies a hymn is sung and a prayer is sometimes said or time given for personal reflection. On Fridays, the Junior School students come together to celebrate their learning and parents are sometimes invited in to see presentations. Junior School students also come together fortnightly for 'Singing Assembly' led by the Director of Music.