

LARNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
**PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils' personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes. Through the pastoral care arrangements and provision, the school demonstrates its continuing concern for its pupils as individuals, actively encouraging them to be secure, successful and fully participating members of the school and its wider community. Pastoral care is also concerned with preparing pupils for the demands and challenges of adult and working life.

**2. The Importance of Pastoral Care in Larne Grammar School**

2.1 The importance placed on the pastoral care of our pupils is reflected by, and embedded within, our school ethos and vision:

**Ethos**

“Larne Grammar School promotes positive moral values in a climate of high expectations and achievement among all the individuals and groups based on mutual respect. Pupils exhibit self control, personal responsibility and self worth, developed in the classroom and through a wide range of extra curricular activities. Pupils learn, grow and succeed in an atmosphere of praise and encouragement which promotes a sense of belonging and enjoyment for everyone.”

**Vision for Larne Grammar School**

“Larne Grammar School will strive to be a community-based centre of excellence whereby high quality teaching and learning will serve to enhance the lives of all, enabling pupils to achieve their potential in a spirit of mutual respect and support.”

2.2 Pastoral care is an integral part of the whole educational experience offered to our pupils and is not a distinct entity. It underpins every aspect of the pupils' experience in school, and exists, not for its own sake, but to enable pupils to achieve their potential.

**3. The Aim of Pastoral Care**

3.1 The school's Pastoral Care aim is:

- to offer the best possible pastoral care by providing support and guidance for pupils in an environment which is characterised by good relationships, mutual respect and tolerance.

3.2 We strive to continue to create an atmosphere in Larne Grammar School where our pupils:

- feel secure and accepted in a safe environment;
- know that they are valued as individuals;
- are encouraged in their learning, take pride in their work and develop a positive approach to study;
- can grow in their self-esteem, confidence and independent thinking;
- develop self discipline and a sense of responsibility;
- have the ability and knowledge to make informed decisions in relation to life choices;
- develop a positive approach to leisure activities and healthy living;
- contribute to the life of the school and the wider local community;
- foster good relationships among their peers and with staff;

where staff:

- know that they are valued as individuals;
- are treated with respect;
- use their professional knowledge and judgement to offer the best support and guidance possible to pupils and parents;
- use their professional knowledge and expertise to praise and encourage pupils to fulfil their potential;

and where parents:

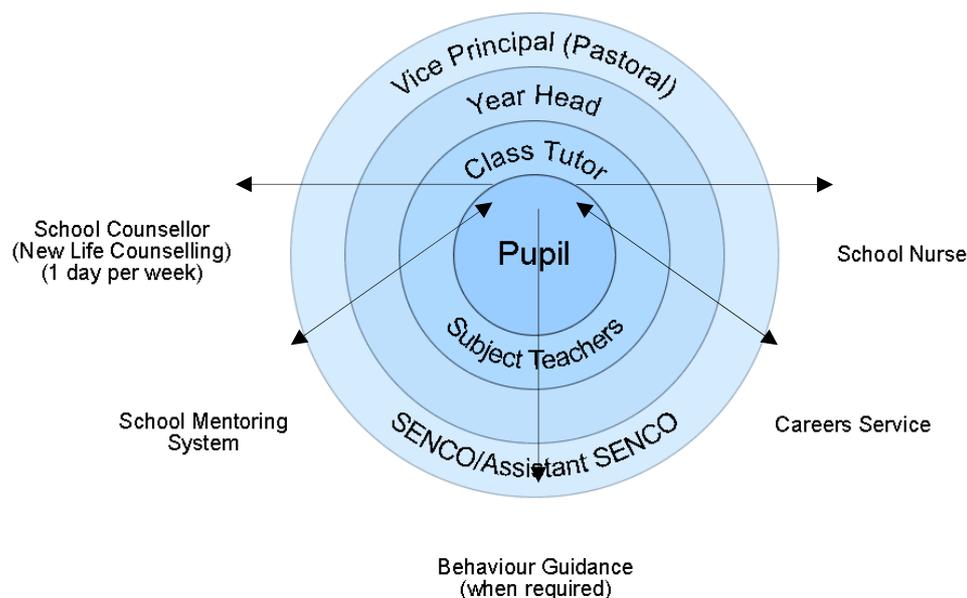
- are well informed;
- are reassured that their children are being educated in a safe and caring environment;

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- have opportunities to act in partnership with the school;
  - display a sense of responsibility in terms of the support they provide at home to supplement learning in school.
- 3.3 The Pastoral Care system should provide academic and emotional support and help to promote good discipline and challenge unacceptable behaviour. In this school we undertake the following tasks to help us to achieve our Pastoral Care aim:
- ensure that Pastoral Care is central in the daily life of the school and is fully embedded within the school curriculum;
  - develop a timetabled programme of study for all pupils (within Learning for Life and Work and through the Class Tutorial programme);
  - ensure a well-developed programme of Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) is offered throughout the school;
  - devise policies and procedures which ensure the physical and emotional security of our pupils (Child Protection Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and any others which may be relevant);
  - put in place a pastoral structure which identifies staff with particular specialised roles and responsibilities;
  - monitor pupil progress and communicate this to parents;
  - offer a wide variety of extra-curricular activities;
  - help and guide pupils through critical transition times by providing advice, support, mentoring and counselling;
  - liaise with parents and other agencies for the benefit of the pupils;
  - create a caring and orderly community which is sensitive to the needs of pupils, staff and parents and promotes good relationships;
  - aim for high standards of behaviour to provide an environment in which pupils can achieve their potential;
  - provide support services (school nurse, school counselling support staff, Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Guidance Support Officer).

**4. The Organisation of Pastoral Care in Larne Grammar School**

- 4.1 The individual guidance and welfare of pupils is provided through a year-based pastoral system as seen in the diagram below:



- 4.2 On entry to the school each pupil is allocated to a tutor group with a Class Tutor who has daily contact with the pupils and is responsible for dealing with day to day matters, as well as monitoring overall progress and providing educational guidance.

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- 4.3 Year 8, 9 and 10 tutor groups have one session each of Personal Development, Employability and Citizenship weekly. Year 13 and 14 tutor groups have one weekly session of Class Tutorial with their Year Head and, on occasions, a visiting speaker.
- 4.4 Year 11 and 12 tutor groups follow a modular Learning for Life & Work programme which includes Employability (Careers), Personal Development and Citizenship. Drugs and Relationships and Sexuality Education are covered by Personal Development, Biology and RE classes.
- 4.5 Class Tutors are supported by experienced Year Heads and a Vice-Principal who work closely with the Principal, parents, support services and welfare services.
- 4.6 **Year 8**
- 4.6.1 Once the pupils have been accepted into the school from primary school they are invited to an introduction evening in June. They meet other pupils transferring to the school and, together with their parents/guardians, have an opportunity to meet with the school nurse, the Year Head, the Vice Principals and the Principal. Any issues concerning the pastoral, medical or educational needs of the pupils can be discussed with the relevant member of staff in confidence.
- 4.6.2 All pupils are assigned to a tutor group with a Class Tutor and class prefects. The Year Head has responsibility for all pupils in Year 8 and liaises with the primary schools from which the pupils are transferring. Year 8 pupils participate in an Induction Day at the start of the year to familiarise themselves with the school and its daily routines.
- 4.6.3 A progress report will be sent to parents/guardians around the mid term break at the end of October. Parents/guardians will also receive a mid year report following the examinations held in January. Parents/guardians are invited to a Parent Consultation afternoon around the mid term break in February and an end of year report will be issued following the end of year examinations held in May/June. Pupils experiencing difficulties will be placed on report which will communicate progress with parents/guardians.
- 4.7 **Years 9 to 12**
- 4.7.1 Pupils remain in the same tutor group with the same Class Tutor as far as is possible. This enables the Class Tutor and the pupil to develop a good relationship. The Year Head has responsibility for all pupils in a year group and works closely with his/her colleagues to maintain co-ordinated support for pupils.
- 4.7.2 Progress reports and mid year reports are sent as in Year 8. In Years 9, 10 and 11 an end of year report is issued following the end of year examinations in May/June. Pupils experiencing difficulties will be placed on report which will communicate progress with parents/guardians. Parents are invited to Parent Consultation afternoons which are held at the end of February for Year 9, early February for Year 10, late November for Year 11 and early November for Year 12.
- 4.7.3 Careers information is provided to pupils in Years 10 and 12, before selecting the courses they wish to study. Individual careers interviews are arranged in Year 12 for all pupils with the Careers Service. In addition representatives from the Careers department in school and the Careers Service attend transition meetings for those pupils who are on Stage 5 of the SEN register and in Years 10 and above to ensure that all relevant information is available.
- 4.8 **Years 13 & 14**
- 4.8.1 Post GCSE, pupils are regrouped in four tutor groups to encourage greater mixing and enable new pupils to integrate easily into the school. An Induction Day for each year group takes place before school commences. In Year 13 this provides an opportunity to mix informally with other members of the year group, including members transferring from other schools. In Year 14 this enables pupils to think about their increased responsibility for their own learning and the path ahead after school. A weekly tutorial programme focuses on relevant issues, including career pathways and the procedures for applying to university.

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- 4.8.2 Pupils have the opportunity to study independently, under supervision, and are given the opportunity to relax in the Common Room.
- 4.8.3 The academic progress of pupils is tracked to ensure that all pupils are fulfilling their potential, and this can lead to extra support measures being put in place if there are difficulties which are causing the pupils to underachieve.
- 4.8.4 Progress reports and mid year reports are sent as in Year 12. Parents/guardians are invited to Parent Consultation afternoons which are held in early November for Year 13 and late November for Year 14.

4.9 **Class Tutor**

- 4.9.1 Most members of staff are required to act as Class Tutors. This is a very responsible role which is vital both to the efficient running of the school and successful pastoral care. A Class Tutor is accountable to the Year Head.
- 4.9.2 The Class Tutor should be the first person to whom a pupil will turn for help or advice, although it may sometimes be necessary to refer the matter to the Year Head (or Designated Teacher as per Child Protection Policy), to the appropriate member of the senior staff or, through them, to an outside agency. Daily contact with the Class Tutors ensures that unobtrusive care is exercised.
- 4.9.3 The main functions are as follows:

- **Registration and routine business** - The Class Tutor should be in position to receive pupils and is responsible for the accurate daily marking of the class register at the beginning of the Registration Period and for seeing that all information is maintained and up to date. Other returns of a routine nature should be dealt with as required, together with the distribution of information to parents. All absences must be accounted for by parental notes which should be retained for one year and failure on the part of pupils to supply these should be reported to the Year Head.
- **Reports and Records** - The Class Tutor is responsible for the maintenance of progress cards and pupils' individual files together with duplicates of reports. Any information of a confidential nature should be referred to the Vice Principal (Pastoral). The Class Tutor is expected to comment on reports and to cover aspects of achievement and personality which are not included in academic reports.
- **References and special reports** - In consultation with colleagues, Class Tutors may be expected to prepare initial drafts for references, testimonials and reports to outside agencies as required.
- **Personal appearance and conduct** - Class Tutors are expected to keep a close eye on the personal appearance and behaviour of the pupils in their charge and to insist on reasonable standards being maintained.
- **School Planners** - Class Tutors should check and initial school planners during registration periods.
- **Assemblies** - Class Tutors are expected to attend assemblies with their classes and to record attendance in assembly.
- **Year Meetings** - Class Tutors are expected to attend meetings called by the Year Head.
- **Relationships with Parents** - It is hoped that parents would see Class Tutors as a matter of priority at Parents' Evenings and, whenever possible, they will be involved when parents visit the school at other times. They are also encouraged to foster good home-school relationships but are advised not to undertake home visits or arrange interviews without prior reference to the Year Head.
- **Attendance and punctuality** - Class Tutors should supervise attendance and punctuality using their attendance registers once a week and checking reasons for absence, truancy and punctuality. Year Heads should be made aware of any pupil whose record is unsatisfactory.

4.10 **Year Head**

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4.10.1 The Year Heads have a key role to play in the school's pastoral structure and provide information, support, encouragement and guidance for each pupil in their year group. They are also responsible for challenging unacceptable behaviour and promoting alternative positive behaviour. Each Year Head leads and manages his/her team of Class Tutors and co-ordinates and oversees their work. In addition to dealing with individual pupils, the Year Head establishes a relationship with each tutor group and promotes a sense of year group identity, through Year Assemblies, support for the nominated Year Charity and other year group activities. Year Heads work in close partnership with parents.

4.10.2 Responsibilities of Year Head

- Leadership of and support for Class Tutors within the year, ensuring that registration classes are used constructively.
- To assist in the formulation of the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy and in the production of relevant study skills booklets.
- To help tutors to familiarise pupils with the School rules and encourage them to adhere to them.
- To ensure that Class Tutors (i) meet regularly and understand the policy of the school on all important matters of discipline and pastoral care and (ii) develop their class groups so that every pupil feels that the school is doing everything possible to fulfil his or her full potential. A short meeting should be called by the Year Head twice per term to discuss problems arising. They should arrange dates and times of meetings with Class Tutors and inform them well in advance of any alterations to the planned programme.
- To liaise between senior management and Class Tutors and to brief the Vice Principal (Pastoral) regularly.
- To supervise attendance and punctuality. Year Heads should inspect absentee lists on a regular basis, noting any instances when pupils in the same year appear to be absent frequently on the same days. The Year Head should follow up and interview any pupils referred to them by class tutors. Pupils of compulsory school age whose attendance falls below 85% may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- To liaise with members of staff when a pupil has problems.
- To arrange meetings as required with parents in order to acquaint them with school policy, or to discuss the welfare and general problems arising with a particular pupil. Meetings with parents should be arranged for a time when both Class Tutor and Year Head can be present, where possible.
- To know all pupils in the year group as well as possible and to become accepted as a person to whom they can turn for guidance in addition to their class tutor.
- To be willing to liaise closely with the Vice Principal (Pastoral) in relation to outside agencies such as: the Educational Welfare Officer, Social Services, Police Liaison Officer and medical staff.
- To supervise and direct the Daily and Weekly Report system, if applicable, including the holding of a thorough end-of-week inspection of report forms.
- To liaise with staff involved in mentoring in relation to pupils within their year group.
- To monitor conduct and merit cards, initiating the award of certificates where appropriate,
- To have the oversight of the maintenance of all appropriate records, including pupils' individual files and records.
- To supervise SEN Education Plans and Action Plans.
- To make regular spot-checks of homework planners and to encourage Class Tutors to make a thorough inspection on a weekly basis.

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- To co-ordinate all information received from staff, parents and outside agencies regarding individual pupils; to ensure that this information is distributed correctly and check that action is taken where and when necessary.
- To write to parents when necessary, ensuring that the Vice Principal (Pastoral) receives a copy of all letters sent out by Year Heads.
- To ensure that Year assemblies are conducted appropriately.
- To organise representatives for the Schools' Council.
- To organise the Year Charity.

**4.11 School Counsellor**

New Life Counselling work in partnership with most post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and provide a counsellor to work in Larne Grammar School one day per week. The counsellor provides an opportunity for pupils to discuss and try to resolve concerns or problems they may have in a confidential manner. Pupils refer themselves by means of the counsellor's post box situated outside the medical room, by speaking with the school nurse or by speaking with any other member of staff who then passes on the referral through the Pastoral Vice Principal. Attendance at any counselling appointment is voluntary and pupils may withdraw at any time. The focus is very much on empowering the pupils to formulate their own ways of dealing with the circumstances in which they find themselves. All information discussed during an appointment will remain confidential between the pupil and the counsellor, unless it relates to a Child Protection issue, in which case the counsellor forwards the information to the Designated (or Deputy Designated) Teacher for Child Protection who will take the appropriate action, as is required by the law and the safe guarding of the pupil (see Child Protection Policy). Brief confidential notes are kept by the counsellor, and a weekly appointment log of the pupils' names and times is passed to the Pastoral Vice Principal (to enable all pupils to be accounted for in the case of an incident such as a fire).

**4.12 Prefects**

- 4.12.1 All prefects, both junior (Year 13) and senior (Year 14) make a valuable contribution to the school as role models, promoting a sense of responsibility and commitment to the school. They mix with junior pupils as they carry out their duties at break and lunch times and can be approached by a pupil who is worried.
- 4.12.2 Each tutor group for pupils in Year 8 to 10 is generally assigned two senior prefects (one male and one female) who have volunteered to assist the Class Tutor and support the younger pupils. They play a very important role as often younger pupils will feel more comfortable first raising an issue or concern with their class prefect.

**4.13 Mentoring**

- 4.13.1 Some pupils require additional support in terms of organisation, presentation of homework, or with English and Mathematics. Once such pupils have been identified they can be referred to the mentoring programme by either a Head of Department or their Year Head. Mentoring takes place during registration times in the mornings and after school for an hour. The pupils can receive one-to-one support from a trained Year 13 pupil. Where appropriate, this support may be delivered in a group setting. All sessions will be overseen by a member of the teaching staff. Parents/guardians are informed of the referrals to mentoring and their support is important to ensure the pupils meet the targets set. The scheme is co-ordinated by the assistant SENCO and specially selected staff cover the morning sessions. The aims of the mentoring programme are to:
- address specific pastoral issues
  - establish and promote good organisational skills
  - support those who are underachieving in academic subjects
  - promote self esteem
  - develop personal and interpersonal skills
  - create positive relationships between junior and senior pupils

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- encourage and enable Year 13 pupils to take increased responsibility in a leadership role
- 4.13.2 The library and computer rooms are also available after school to facilitate those pupils who choose to remain in school to complete homework or study.
- 4.14 **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**  
Pupils who are identified as SEN learners (for example, pupils with specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, speech and language difficulties, medical conditions) are placed on the SEN register at the appropriate stage and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is agreed by the SENCO, Year Head, parents and pupils. All subject staff have an input to this plan and it will be reviewed annually. Once the plan has been agreed, a copy is made available to each member of staff and those who teach the pupil create subject specific plans for that pupil. If appropriate, the pupil will receive support from classroom assistants and may additionally receive support from the school nurse, the Educational Welfare Officer, Educational Psychologists and an outreach worker from the Behaviour Guidance Centre in Antrim. The school makes necessary adjustments to provide full access for those with physical disabilities. The SENCO liaises with the examinations officer to ensure that special examination access arrangements are in place for those pupils entitled to such arrangements. Those pupils who are in Years 10 and above will also attend a transition review meeting annually, enabling consideration to be given to suitable career options.
- 4.15 **School Nurse**
- 4.15.1 The school nurse is based in the medical room. She plays a vital role in the pastoral care of pupils and is available from 8:30 am until 4:15 pm (finishing 15 minutes earlier on Friday). Any pupil who feels unwell in school should ask permission from a member of staff to absent themselves from class and report to the medical room, accompanied by another pupil, if necessary. The nurse will decide on the appropriate treatment and may contact a parent/guardian if necessary. Pupils who arrive late to school also report to the medical room and their time of arrival will be added to the computer system. The medical room may also be used at the discretion of the nurse, as a place for a short period of 'time out' for those pupils who require this facility.
- 4.15.2 A number of other staff have received First Aid training and are available to help pupils if the nurse is unavailable.
- 4.16 **Learning for Life and Work (LLW)**
- 4.16.1 All pupils in Years 8 to 12 have timetabled classes for Learning for Life and Work. In these taught classes pupils cover discrete topics relating to their personal and social development. The pupils have an opportunity to develop inter-personal and study skills and self-discipline. Pupils are encouraged to discuss issues relating to healthy living, relationships and sexuality, citizenship and employability and to think about the consequences of choices made and actions taken.
- 4.16.2 In Years 13 and 14 the tutorial programme is designed to prepare pupils for life beyond school as they make the transition to adulthood. Topics include personal and road safety, managing time and money, developing independent learning skills and preparing for university, higher education or the world of work. There are also visits from former pupils, charity representatives and speakers from various universities.
- 4.17 **Careers Education Information & Guidance (CEIAG)**
- 4.17.1 Careers education is an integral part of the learning experiences of all pupils. A programme is delivered through employability and is embedded as a cross-curricular theme within other subjects. Towards the end of each Key Stage (Years 10, 12 and 14) there is a focus on Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance as vital and important decisions are made which will affect the futures of the pupils concerned.

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- 4.17.2 Information relating to the subjects on offer at GCSE is available for pupils and parents and representatives from the Careers Service attend the Year 10 Parents' afternoon.
- 4.17.3 Similarly, in Year 12, information relating to the subjects on offer at AS and A2 level is available for pupils and parents. Representatives from the Careers Service attend the Year 12 Parents' afternoon. In addition all pupils in Year 12 have an individual interview with a member of the Careers Service, arranged by the Careers Co-ordinator.
- 4.17.4 In Year 13, after Christmas, all pupils are offered an interview with a member of the Careers Staff within school to assist with choices in relation to further education or employment. Pupils in Year 14 are afforded the opportunity to have an interview with an experienced panel related to the area in which the pupils wish to pursue their careers.
- 4.17.5 All pupils in Year 14 are assigned a member of staff to act as a mentor for the UCAS procedure. This person will write a reference for the pupil and check the pupil's personal statement, ensuring they have made realistic choices based on their potential.
- 4.18 **School Council**  
Each tutor group nominates two pupils (1 male and 1 female) to stand for election for the School Council. Those not elected will form a committee to liaise between the tutor groups and the council members to ensure that all pupils have a voice on the council. The School Council meets twice per term and provides the opportunity for pupils to have an input into the management of the school by:
- allowing pupils to become involved in the decision-making processes of the school
  - having the opportunity to contribute to school improvement through the discussion of issues that are important to them
  - encouraging the flow of ideas and opinions and promoting communication between the Principal, and the pupils representing different year groups.
- 4.19 **Extra curricular activities**
- 4.19.1 All pupils are encouraged to develop and pursue their interests through a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities. These activities afford pupils the opportunities for personal and social development, acquiring and refining skills, facing and overcoming challenges and co-operating with others, whilst engaging in an enjoyable activity. These voluntary activities take place before and after school, during lunch time and at weekends. Individual music tuition with peripatetic staff takes place during the school day, with pupils missing lessons on a rotational basis to minimise the impact on their learning. All tutors are Access NI checked and have undergone Child Protection Training in school.
- 4.19.2 All pupils are strongly advised to engage in the programme on offer, using their energies, talents, skills and enthusiasm in a constructive manner which will give rise to a sense of belonging to the school and, in many cases, represent the school positively within the community.
- 4.19.3 School trips afford pupils the opportunity to travel, make new friends, experience new cultures and there are many on offer from year to year.
- 4.19.4 All activities and trips are organised and supervised by school staff on a voluntary basis and pupils are expected to show courtesy and respect at all times. Some volunteers from the local community also participate in these activities and have been Access NI checked and have undergone Child Protection Training in school.
- 4.20 **Anti-bullying**
- 4.20.1 All pupils are expected to be courteous and respectful to all other members of the school community and the wider community with whom they come in contact. Any form of bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Pupils who perceive any activity to be bullying, either towards themselves or another pupil, are encouraged to report this activity to a member of staff.

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4.20.2 Anti-bullying week takes place during the latter part of the first term to reinforce the positive behaviour sought and discourage any form of bullying. Awareness is raised through promotional displays and several activities at lunch time. These activities are led by the LLW Co-ordinator, who is assisted by an enthusiastic team of pupils in Years 13 and 14.

4.21 **Health Promotion**

4.21.1 A healthy lifestyle is promoted throughout the school and at all times during the year. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily in the canteen and there are no sweets available for purchase in school. Pupils are asked to refrain from bringing products which contain nuts into school. This is to minimise the risk to those with severe nut allergies. Pupils are also encouraged to actively participate in PE and Games lessons, to walk to school, where possible, and to exercise at lunch time. Pupils are encouraged to drink water, rather than any other drinks to keep hydrated.

4.21.2 Health Promotion Week takes place during the first term to reinforce the benefits of following a healthy lifestyle. A team of staff and senior pupils, led by the Personal Development Co-ordinator, devise a week's programme of activities following a theme, which differs from year to year. Almost all pupils participate in the programme on offer and there is a great sense of enjoyment and well-being evident.

4.22 **Rewards & Sanctions**

It is important to acknowledge and reward good behaviour, achievement and acts of kindness and all pupils in Years 8 to 12 are issued with a merit card on which these events can be noted. Accumulated signings lead to the issue of certificates and rewards. We celebrate achievements and successes of pupils, both inside and outside school, by the following means:

- plasma screens in school
- announcements in assembly
- publication in the local press
- recognition at the annual prize giving
- articles in the school magazine and parental newsletters
- displays and multimedia presentations at Open Night

A conduct card is issued to record unacceptable behaviour and work and the sanction given. Details are included in the 'Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy'.

5. **Review and Evaluation**

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated annually by members of the Pastoral Team in consultation with the Head of Pastoral Care and the Senior Leadership Team.