



# **The Thomas Adams School**

## **Policy Statement**

### **Pastoral System**

Updated October 2018

Reviewed by Governors

## **The Pastoral System at Thomas Adams School**

The School aims to provide a disciplined, caring, fair and moral environment, with a recognition of both individuality and equality of opportunity, which allows full personal and social development. Mutual respect and good relationships between students, and also between staff and students is our goal, with the students being given responsibility and feeling valued whilst knowing that support and advice will always be available when needed.

The student support, or Pastoral system, operates within school to assist students in their personal development and to ensure that they learn as effectively as possible.

The School's Pastoral goals which will help ensure our general aims are:-

1. To establish and maintain good relationships with every student and the parents of those students.
2. To foster a caring, orderly, fair and moral environment with a recognition of both individuality and equality of opportunity which allows full personal, social, moral and spiritual development.
3. To monitor student progress across the curriculum.
4. To offer support and guidance for student achievement in the curriculum and beyond.
5. To provide colleagues with information to adapt teaching.
6. To engage wider networks as appropriate.

The Pastoral Team strive to use approaches that support pupils to learn the social and emotional skills necessary for life and for learning (SEAL).

We recognise that at times it is difficult for students to deal with their own emotions so they struggle to recognise how others are feeling. Research has shown that a well designed Pastoral system which promotes social and emotional skills has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour (Weare and Gray 2003; Zins et al 2004). For example:

- Pupils have higher self-esteem and confidence
- Pupils are happier and get on better
- Quieter pupils become more assertive and confident
- There is improved attendance
- There is less bullying.

The five main 'SEAL' areas are self awareness, empathy, motivation, managing feelings and social skills. The Pastoral Team strive to model good social and emotional skills to the young people and adults with whom they work.

### **Achieving the Aim and Goals**

All members of staff have a responsibility for realising the aims and goals by helping maintain a positive and caring school ethos. The school's policies, eg on Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development, Special Educational Needs, Disability Discrimination, Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality should be seen as complimentary to this statement on the work of the pastoral system at Thomas Adams.

However, the onus for achieving the aims and goals will fall to a large degree upon the leadership of the HOY.

In order to achieve these goals all staff will need to go beyond a restricted view of their role as just teachers. If we are to fulfil the above pastoral goals effectively, the HOY needs to be

at the centre of the student support system. The HOY is the first point of contact with parents on most substantial pastoral issues, and will look to build up strong relationships with parents during the time that they are associated with them. They work closely with the Senior Teacher: Behaviour and Standards, the Assistant Head: Behaviour, Welfare and Inclusion and other members of the SLT.

The HOYs have a major role in the support and guidance of students in their groups. The School's **Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education** policy states that:

**"Where students have breached the School Code of Conduct then time is spent with them explaining what aspects of their behaviour are unsatisfactory and what they need to do to avoid future breaches of the Code ..... students are encouraged to develop through a process of self-reflection".**

This process of self-reflection is aided through the mentoring process.

HOYs have a prime role in overseeing the social progress of members of their year group and in liaising closely with parents. They work closely with the Pastoral Support Workers and all members of staff on matters relating to their year group.

### **The work of the Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE) Co-ordinator**

The delivery of the PSHE Programme helps the school to achieve its pastoral goals for students. There is a focus on the development of self, of personal qualities and on personal growth but also a focus on the individual's interactions with others in a variety of social contexts. There is a strong emphasis on education for responsible citizenship both now and in the future and the development of an acceptable set of values.

All staff will be made aware of the PSHE Department's programme.

### **The work of the Special Educational Needs Department**

The work of the Special Educational Needs department helps the school to achieve its pastoral goals for students through:

- Continuing development of inclusive principles for all pupils with an identified individual need
- Working as an integral part of the teaching and learning process
- Monitoring and mentoring pupils on a regular basis to ensure sufficient individual pastoral support is in place
- Involving outside agencies where specialist advice is required to ensure pupils achieve all their personal goals.
- Working closely with the Pastoral Team to devise appropriate strategies to meet the needs of each pupil.

### **Pastoral Caseload**

The importance of a systematic approach to the difficulties encountered by our students on a temporary or more permanent basis cannot be overstated. The pastoral casework aspect of pastoral care is time consuming and requires patience and a degree of knowledge usually born of experience. More sophisticated skills will be required with certain students and this will be a major concern of the Senior Teacher: Behaviour and Standards, the Welfare & Inclusion Officer and the Assistant Head: Behaviour, Welfare & Inclusion. It may also require coordinating provision and liaising with outside agencies as necessary.

It is a school objective to create an environment in which students feel able to discuss matters that concern them with an adult. This will often be the HOY, the form tutor, a Pastoral Support Worker, the Senior Teacher Behaviour and Standards or the Assistant Head: Behaviour, Welfare & Inclusion but this could also be any member of the teaching or non-teaching staff to whom they relate.

The school has its own Pastoral Office which is a central part of school life. Pastoral Support Workers, Heads of Year and pastoral members of the Senior Management Team operate from this area and are available to offer care, support, guidance and advice of a behavioural, academic and social nature to staff, pupils and parents alike. Detailed electronic accounts of the daily conduct/pastoral matters are managed from this area, as well as in-depth work with students, parents and teachers. A daily meeting takes place to discuss issues arising. Relevant information is shared with staff, external agencies and parents etc when appropriate.

Students can also see the school's Welfare and Inclusion Officer, who plays a valuable role in the school's pastoral system. There is an "Open Door" session held each week by the School Nurse organised by the Pastoral Team. The School will seek outside help where we believe specific counselling expertise is needed.

However, all school staff have a role to play in helping students handle difficulties as part of the school's pastoral provision. Experience, a caring approach and common sense can go a long way towards helping students overcome or come to terms with particular situations.

Other important requirements are:-

- To try and empathise.
- To listen.
- Not to give too much advice or be directive.
- To handle the discussion so that all possible options become clear and so that the student is better placed to make decisions.
- To seek advice from more senior staff if staff feel out of their depth - in some cases it may be necessary to involve external agencies.
- To respect confidentiality but to be aware of limits - e.g. where staff become aware of criminal offences, drug abuse problems, pregnancies. In such cases staff must seek advice.
- To keep Head of Year informed whenever this does not break confidentiality. Particular names need not be mentioned, but it is important that staff do not put themselves in a compromising position through giving inaccurate advice or through inactivity.

### **The Attendance Data and Medical Officer**

The Attendance, Data and Medical Officer is an integral part of the School's pastoral work. She deals with all medical matters and liaises closely with the Pastoral staff. She gives particular support to students with more serious medical conditions and does a good deal of "hidden" pastoral work on a day to day basis.

### **Use of External Agencies**

The school will make full use of external agencies when appropriate, either on a routine planned basis or in a more *as hoc* way. See "Links to Support Agencies".

### **Pastoral care throughout the curriculum**

The tasks mentioned above, which are performed by teachers in their traditional "pastoral" role, are not the whole story. "Caring" for and "supporting" students is something that takes place throughout the day in the lessons in which our students are involved. Significant

pastoral, caring acts also take place day in, day out in classrooms. For example, marking students work regularly and providing feedback - positive wherever possible - shows care, as does providing lessons which are well planned in terms of:

- ❑ Their appropriateness to the level of ability of students.
- ❑ The timing and pacing of the different activities.
- ❑ The variety of teaching approaches used.
- ❑ Providing opportunities for individual contacts during lessons between teacher and students.
- ❑ Enabling children to experience success.

Care and support relates to the monitoring and promotion of the development and progress of each student in all respects. Mentoring is also an important vehicle for ensuring that students recognise their own achievements, strengths and weaknesses via our SLT/student review meetings.

Pastoral care is not, therefore, a peripheral activity to the main work of the school which is student learning: rather it is integral to it. While a formal "pastoral" structure rightly exists it is easy to forget that most teachers are form tutors and all are subject teachers. It is in the role of subject teachers that we have the opportunity for caring in its broadest sense i.e. through our everyday contacts with students. Clearly then, there should be no conflict between the pastoral and curricular aims of the school.

**The School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy encapsulates much of what has been written here.**