



**Walkwood**  
Church of England  Middle School

## Pastoral Strategy

“The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing.  
He lets me rest in grassy meadows; he leads me to restful waters; he keeps me alive.  
He guides me in proper paths for the sake of his good name.  
Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no danger because you are with me. Your rod and your staff protect me.”

*Psalm 23: 1-4*

“Church of England Schools have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually. Schools have a duty to try to remove any factor that might represent a hindrance to a child’s fulfilment. We want all pupils to want to engage in learning in a safe and welcoming ethos.”

*Valuing All God’s Children, Church of England, 2014*

“The core purpose of any Church school is to maximise the learning potential of every pupil within the love of God.”

*SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) 2012*



## Introduction: the theology

There is much comfort in the words of Psalm 23, and these have echoed through Church history in times of difficulty. The Lord God looks after those who follow, providing sustenance in the meadow, indicating the appropriate path of travel, even when circumstances are dark and foreboding. And at times when the individual feels under attack, the Lord provides protection.

Christ was The Good Shepherd. He provided the face-to-face guidance, being the most holy and profound prophet, acting as pastor to His folk. The commission He gave instructs that His followers are themselves to tend the people who are committed to their own care:

Jesus asked a second time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you!”

“Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus told him.

John 21: 16

Therefore, the approach of our school is to follow Christ’s commission to look after others because God the Father does the same of us.

Our pastoral care is always centred on the individual within community, and is delivered through the shared language derived from our Fruits of Faith.

The values we share as a school community embody the facets of human interaction within a mutually supportive society which we seek to promote. We believe these values are espoused by people of any mainstream British faith, and by individuals who do not hold a personal faith belief.



*Notice that the Walkwood tree is placed in a grassy meadow and is also by restful waters.*

It is our hope that the children will, in turn, shepherd others, either in the current times or in their future lives, when the two verses that exemplify the school badge are enacted through our pupils:

“I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.”

John 15: 16

“God blesses those people who are like trees growing beside a stream, trees that produce fruit in season and always have leaves.”

Psalm 1: 3

## Transition rationale

When we welcome our pupils to our school, we want to do so with the maximum amount of preparation so each child is best placed according to their needs. Whatever else the child brings in terms of friendships, family, learning need, background challenges, or pastoral baggage, then we want to find the most appropriate fit.

“You are welcome to come in; you don’t have to stand outside. I have prepared the house for you...”

Genesis 24:31



Although the incoming Year 4 and their parent(s) or carer(s) may feel as if there are guests, they are likely to be part of the school family for four years so we wish for them to settle quickly. This is much more likely to happen if, as the passage of scripture notes, if we are prepared.

To do so, there are many factors that we consider, and the information from an incoming pupil's Year 4 school is vital. Additionally, for pupils who are more vulnerable, including those who are SEND, the following passage seems apt, referring to the king's mother's work:

"She welcomes the poor and helps the needy."

*Proverbs 31: 20*

Our additional provision needs to be prepared too.

The following sections of this document outline what we do and the deadlines that are necessary in order for use to be appropriately prepared for our new Year 5 pupils. To that end, there will be an amended version each year with specific target dates.

A version of this process will apply to many of the pupils who join us at times other than the transition days.

Finally, the pastoral system is a living out of our school's definition:

**Spirituality is reaching towards God, connecting with each other and the world, in love.**

This reflects the command of Christ:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38  
This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

*Matthew 22: 37-38*



## Outline practice

We are a very friendly and focused school. We aim to inspire every child – whatever their abilities – to achieve their very best, and make a valuable contribution to the Walkwood community. We want our pupils to learn to live, preparing them for an adult life in a changing world, and as such we seek to equip our children for the future. We want them to excel in school... and in later life.

We aim to encourage children to be inclusive, aspirational and show honour and tolerance for others and for themselves.

Children are expected to be well behaved, well mannered, co-operate with adults and other children and be respectful of the property of others and the school. Our expectations arise out of the need for both living and working together. They are designed to make sense to those who have to carry them out. They are to be upheld because they make sense, rather than because their breach will lead to sanctions.

There is a very constructive and pleasant working atmosphere in the school based on the understanding that children are treated fairly, albeit firmly, when necessary. Rewarding pupils is central to our ‘Living and Learning Together’ policy. These include, but not limited to; regular, verbal teacher recognition, ePraise points and positive e-postcards to reward positive behaviour within our community. Drawing out that which is already within others is completely foundational to our approach to flourishing, cheering on the growth that they can see, even when it is just a small green shoot.

The school actively promotes its core values – the Fruits of Faith – doing so through the curriculum as well as through collective worship and vertical tutor time. In enabling pupils to have an outstanding experience within the realms of spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning, the school also promotes British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The ten Fruits of Faith are Walkwood’s interpretation of character education. Character should also be taught: direct teaching of character provides the rationale, language and tools to use in developing character elsewhere in and out of school. Character is communicated through role modelling and emotional influence, therefore a strong school culture and ethos are essential. Indeed, “Education for character is already integral to the work of excellent schools. In these schools there is no tension between a rigorous and stretching academic education on the one hand and outstanding wider personal development on the other” (*Character Education Framework Guidance, DFE November 2019, para 5*).

Walkwood’s Fruits of Faith allow pupils and staff with the opportunities for example sharing and positive influences which motivate and promote character education. Our school provides educational experiences in and out of the classroom that equip pupils with the language, knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes that enable character development. Additionally, our school provides varied opportunities that generate the formation of good character, allowing pupils to seek and freely pursue their application of the Fruits of Faith into their own belief system. “These opportunities help young people to explore and express their character and build the skills they need for resilience, empathy and employability” (*Op. cit, para 13*).

At Walkwood, we use the college system to foster a sense of community and to ensure tutors and tutees are working to the same ends. This vertical structure (rather than the horizontal form system), means 9 and 13 year olds are in continual contact within the college. Older pupils’ own experiences and shared problems can often help a younger pupil as much as the advice of a tutor. Pupils are empowered.

We encourage and develop a joint sense of team spirit and belonging. Pupils will represent their college in a variety of academic, sporting and non-sporting competitions. Celebration of achievements are also incorporated in to Collective Worship sessions.

Numerous backgrounds and faiths are represented at Walkwood and through collective worship and our extensive curriculum, we teach that nobody has a monopoly on self-expression. Collective Worship is central to the spiritual life of the School, and whether pupils have a faith or not, this plays a proactive role in ensuring our community is inclusive and caring. Pupils at Walkwood will partake in Collective Worship in a variety of settings including gathering once a week both as a college and whole school forming a crucial part of our pastoral system, establishing the ethos and expectations of the school.

### Positive Correction

Positive teacher-pupil relationships play an absolutely essential part of what we do. We encourage pupils to own their behaviour and its consequences.

Positive correction focuses on giving pupils quick positive reminders about what to do instead of simply scolding them for what they are doing. Our choice of language when utilising our 'stepped consequences' needs to be of a positive nature remembering that pupils can earn their way back through the stepped consequences should they make the improvements teachers require.

Consequently, the 'stepped consequences' is a way of correction and not a punishment. As soon as the desired behaviour is recognised, then staff can indicate the pupil has 'stepped back'

### Equality, tolerance and inclusiveness

Pastoral Leaders and Pastoral Managers, working alongside the tutors, are here to listen, encourage and support. Pastoral care at Walkwood is not something that happens when things go wrong: it will be happening throughout the day. Relationships are warm and open, and transparency is essential.

When things go wrong, and they will from time to time, we firmly believe in a restorative approach when dealing with issues which arise. Our restorative perspective views misbehaviour as an affront against relationships, but yet is worthy of forgiveness. This approach maintains a focus on accountability of actions with a specific emphasis on empathy and repairing of harm. To that end, we seek to address underlying issues of misbehaviour and the reintegration of pupils back into the school and classroom community is essential. We allow for variation and personality but the values the School upholds are reinforced constantly through pastoral and restorative conversations.

Praise and recognition are given in various ways but when behaviour is inconsistent with the values of the school community, action is taken. When a pupil's behaviour gives cause for greater concern, parents are contacted and further action is discussed and agreed. Working closely with parents in the best interest of the child, is usually very effective and has the desired results.

### Pastoral care

Pastoral care is not an end in itself but firmly embedded in the values and norms of our school. It is clearly articulated and there is a shared and strong conceptual understanding of the meaning of pastoral care amongst staff across the school community.



Pastoral care is not an ‘add-on’ or complimentary practice. It is at the core of our school with an intelligent, responsible and focused practice centred on personal development and wellbeing; where happiness and welfare are seen as valuable. Success is built upon strong inclusive values. All our staff are devoted to the personal, social development, education and care of all pupils across the school.

Pastoral care will mean different things in different contexts and there is no one agreed definition. It might involve counselling, sustaining, open door guidance, guiding, reconciling, peer support, mentoring and nurturing of pupils mixed with promoting and supporting self-efficacy, healthy risk-taking, goal setting, negotiation, reflection, empowerment and a welfare network. It might be all these and more. From a short-term view, we are there to protect the wellbeing of children and to be a safety net to pick them up from the vicissitudes of life. In the longer view, from the basics of making sure that the subjects we teach are those which a pupil will need, pastoral care also involves a clear intent to provide activities, opportunities and situations which develop resilience and resourcefulness, a training in good habits and, above all, the values and moral dimension which will sustain an individual’s wellbeing throughout their life. Indeed, our aspiration is that our pupils have inculcated in them the instinct to care for themselves and for others in later life, and know the fulfilment which results.

Pastoral care demands an incredible amount of time, energy, planning and coordination. Pastoral care is hugely collaborative and policies, procedures and processes are a collegial effort of regular communication, information sharing and shared responsibility. Care for the carers vigilance and pro-activity in nurturing and developing self-protecting systems so that staff wellbeing feeds the wellbeing of the pupil population.

There will be a minority of pupils for whom this system does not work. The school will continue to value such individuals, while seeking ways to manage their behaviour so as to maximize their learning, whilst minimising their negative effects upon others. Our success as a school is tested not by the absence of problems but by the way we deal with them.

For pupils who are struggling there will be the alternative system of lesson reports, playground reports, and Pastoral Support Plans. Any of these alternative systems will need to include the points system in their rewards and sanctions, even if the points themselves are not the main currency of the reward e.g., reading targets.

A key consideration in disciplinary matters is the gravity and persistence of the offence. So much has to do with the personalities of both pupil and teacher, the age of the pupil and the conditions and context of a particular situation, that no one response can be said to be effective in every circumstance.

## Pastoral who’s who?

### Tutor

The Tutor is a main and primary point of contact for all pupils. Over the course of four years at our school, the tutor gets to know their tutees very well and hold pupils’ well-being as a priority. Time is spent in tutor groups across the week, and together the tutor group focus upon aspects of Collective Worship, considering for example how our Fruits of Faith are interwoven throughout the school.

Tutors support the personal, social and academic development of each pupil and this is partly done through collaborative work on assembly themes. Parents are free to contact the Tutor about any issues and can do so by contacting the school office.



## **Pastoral Manager**

Our Pastoral Managers know our pupils very well and ensure that pupils in their year group team are feeling happy, safe and supported. They support the personal, social and academic development of each pupil by addressing their individual needs and by monitoring this constantly.

Any necessary intervention is swift and effective, to ensure the progress and well-being of pupils. The Pastoral Managers are the first port of call for parents, after the Tutor, in relation to pupil well-being and any issues which may arise at home.

## **Pastoral Co-ordinator**

The Pastoral Co-Ordinator supports the personal, social and academic development of pupils by raising awareness and ensuring good safeguarding practice. They ensure the school's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately; they also ensure the safeguarding policy is available and easily accessible to everyone in the school community. The Pastoral Co-ordinator makes links with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (and any successor organisation) to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

Additionally, they work with staff within the four colleges to support any specific children in need. Also, they encourage a culture of listening to children among all staff, ensuring that children's feelings are heard where the school puts measures in place to protect them.

The Pastoral Co-Ordinator will intervene by taking appropriate and effective action to ensure the progress and well-being of pupils and communicates effectively with all stakeholders to ensure that each pupil's welfare and progress is maintained.

## **Pastoral Leader**

The role of the Pastoral Leader encompasses leading, managing and advising colleagues on the pastoral arrangements and practices within the College. They co-ordinate and take day-to-day responsibility for the organisation and management of staff and resources involved in the pastoral delivery within the College.

Alongside the Pastoral Manager and the Tutor, the Pastoral Leader ensures that all pupils feel nurtured and safe. They are a point of contact for the pupil and/or parent, should they feel they need extra support.

## **Safeguarding Leads**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Alternate Designated Safeguarding Leads play a key role in ensuring all of the children in our school's community are safe: they are alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs and young carers. They encourage among staff a culture of listening to children, ensuring that children's feelings are heard where the school puts measures in place to protect them. They liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding, and when deciding whether to make a referral, acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff and parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead understands and leads on the assessment process for providing early help and intervention.



They ensure that the school's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately across our school. They work with the governing body to ensure the school Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly; also, they take responsibility for ensuring the safeguarding policy is available and easily accessible to everyone in the school community.

### **Assistant Principal**

As with all members of the Senior Leadership Team, the Assistant Principal works with the staff and governors to maintain a clear vision, securing the commitment of everyone to achieving it. To do this, they develop, promote and audit the ethos of the school, ensuring that proactivity and reactivity are balanced so that strategic plans unfold as they should. Being the lead on matters of safeguarding, uphold the belief that "no child here should live in fear", ensuring that process and practices are in place which allow pupils to report matters of concern.

Additionally, they ensure consistency in the day-to-day responsibility for the organisation and management of staff and resources involved in the pastoral delivery, monitoring the same to ensure consistency. Furthermore, the consistency and effectiveness of the tutor-based times is ensured. The coordination and overall administration of the Living and Learning Together policy, as well as other relevant policies are also part of this role, particularly attendance and rewards. Transition arrangements are also overseen by the Assistant Principal, this being for pupils coming into the school as well as for those that are leaving.

## **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

The statutory document that is *Keeping Children Safe in Education* makes it clear that all staff should be aware of our school's processes for help and support, understanding their role in it. In addition, this statutory guidance makes it clear that any child may benefit from early help, but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health care plan).
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation.
- Is in a family circumstance present challenges for the child; such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Is a privately fostered child.

All teachers and staff know precisely how to identify and report concerns, via staff training on induction and our regular updates on safeguarding. We have a record of annual recording that all staff have read *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Concerns logged on our electronic recording system are monitored every week by our Designated Safeguarding Leads where actions are reviewed and updated.



## Attendance

Our College Leaders regularly monitor the attendance of the pupils within their colleges. If attendance becomes a concern pupil and their families are supported in the following ways:

- Supportive conversations with pupils to identify a support need.
- Staff communicating with parents/carers at home to offer help and support to improve attendance.
- Formal letters identifying the concern are sent to parents when attendance is not improving.
- Asking for medical evidence to support a child's absence from school.
- Referral to the Local Authority for further action when attendance is consistently a concern.

The school operates a first day response system which means that parents are contacted by phone or text if their child is absent without reason. Home visits to the family home may be conducted if a child is absent without reason.

Attendance that is below 92% is logged as a concern on our electronic recording system. These concerns are discussed by the pastoral staff and the safeguarding team in school regularly and actions are reviewed and updated.

## Curriculum identification

### Love to learn

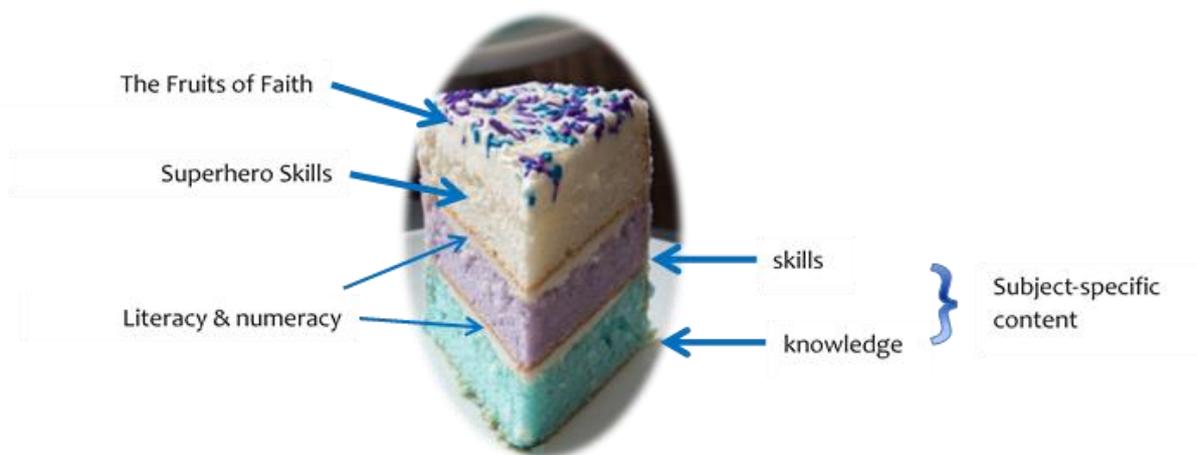
This aspect concerns the subject content and associated subject-specific skills, that are structured and delivered in an age-appropriate, engaging and differentiated way. The content holds both the subject matter and the subject-specific processes that are taught and explored.

### Learn to Live

Here we have the learning roots – our 'Superhero skills'. These six aspects are part of the Walkwood Way, and are delivered in each lesson. Teaching draws out the opportunity for applying these learning and thinking skills. Literacy and numeracy strands are part of this section too.

### Learn to Love

Our ten school values – our Fruits of Faith – are an aspect of our school that is unique to us. These values are in action throughout our school, and are thus another part of the Walkwood Way. It is appropriate that opportunities to model these values, and to exercise them, are within lessons.



## Spiritual and Social Education

This subject is a combination of Religious Education, Citizenship and Personal, Social, Health Education. By teaching these subjects within a coherent framework, we encourage pupils to consider that social decisions and morality are also linked to the spiritual sphere. The skills that work well in RE can be used to discern and judge in aspects of social learning too, applying the Fruits of Faith abundantly.

Spiritual and Social Education is a planned programme of learning through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives. As part of a whole school approach, the subject develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society. It also helps them to connect and apply the knowledge and understanding they learn in all subjects to practical, real-life situations while helping them to feel safe and secure enough to fulfil their academic potential.

We follow the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (SACRE) produced by Worcestershire. Religious Education (RE) is taught to all children except those who are taken out by their parents. Our teaching promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils. It reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of other principle religions represented in Great Britain.

Our teaching enables pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, attitudes, practices and rituals. They will also develop their own beliefs and values. We will not convert or steer pupils towards a particular religious belief. They will also be aware that some people have no attachment to religious beliefs and follow secular philosophies.

In our programmes we promote British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs to prepare our pupils for life in modern day Britain. Our lessons enable our pupils to understand the British democratic process and how to effect peaceful changes in society.

## Collective Worship

Collective worship will:

- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and pupils;
- include a variety of elements at different times;
- involve the pupils.

Morning Worship takes place at the start of the school day, as it is a time when various groups within the school can meet together for prayer and reflection.

There is general agreement that worship should be an educational activity offering opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief.

As with any effective lesson, the teacher should employ a variety of teaching styles that engage and challenge.

The school is to have a two-yearly cycle of themes that reflect the key aspects of the Christian year, as well as Saints Days and other Christian themes. There are different groupings for worship within a school week – tutor groups, Colleges, half-school, whole school. The rota for each year is published, although the need for flexibility as the terms unfold, and to accommodate unforeseen events, should be accepted and catered for.

The Fruits of Faith change on a half-termly basis and run on a two year cycle, which is why there are two words for each letter. The exception is the summer term, which will just have one value ('Honesty' in year 1 and 'Honour' in year 2). In addition to this, there will be a 'theme of the week'. These are also related to the half-termly values. All assemblies (apart from a few special exceptions) that take place in that week must be on that theme. Each week, pupils have time in their tutor groups to reflect on the theme and record this in their 'Worship Evaluation' booklet.

## Pupil leadership

Within each tutor group, there are usually two pupils who lead on collective worship. They are supported through training and have time to prepare resources. These pupils will introduce and deliver the worship activities to their fellow pupils.

As each tutor group is made up of pupils across the different year groups, the older pupils work as buddies to the new pupils. They support and encourage as new pupils settle into Walkwood routines, and this activity is in addition to the care that the tutor affords. Indeed, with about 8 new pupils in each tutor group each year rather than a whole class, the tutor and other pupils can get to know the new members of the group quickly and can respond more effectively throughout the time in that tutor group.

There is a Pupil Parliament that has representatives from the different tutor groups. This meets regularly to discuss matters that are pertinent for the pupils, or to gauge responses to matters that are offered to the pupils for discussion. There are usually at least two Speakers for the Parliament.

Each year the school holds elections for positions of leadership. These include:

- Head Girl and Head Boy
- Prefects
- College Captains and Vice-Captains
- Sports Council

Pupils in Year 7 apply for these positions by filling in an application form, interviews may follow with the most senior positions being offered as elections either within Colleges, or for the Head Girl and Head Boy, before the whole school.

## Residential trips

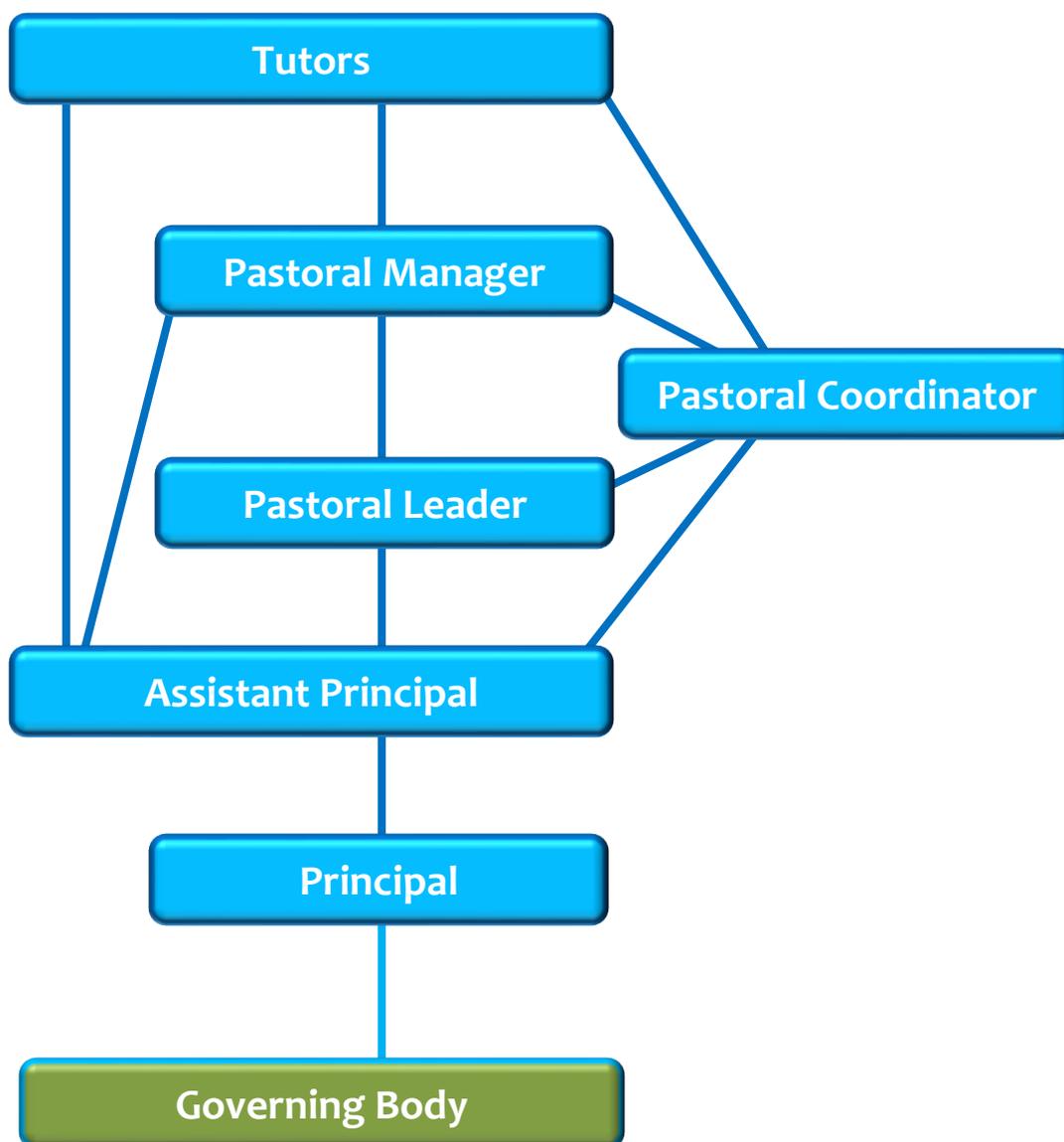
Each year, the school offers a residential experience to pupils in each year group as long as we have sufficient staff. These visits have included camping in the Brecon Beacons, water activities on the Isle of Wight, outdoor pursuits near the North Yorkshire coast and a three-day visit to London.

These allow pupils to apply the Fruits of Faith in non-school situations, as frequent reference is made to these as part of the trips. Each trip has different facets of learning as well as allowing pupils to experience different part of our country.

In additional, there is a skiing trip every two years.



Appendix  
Pastoral Leadership



Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.



They shall be like a **tree** planted by **water**,  
sending out its roots by the **stream**.  
It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay **green**;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear **fruit**.

*Jeremiah 17: 7-8*

Let your word be in our mouth, O Lord, your truth in our heart and your will in  
our mind.

Let us think only what is good and discern your presence in all that we do.  
Let us at all times be alive to the promptings of your Holy Spirit;  
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*Jakob Böhme (1575-1624)*

