



October 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your daughter should by now be well settled into her new year of study and is, hopefully, looking forward to the challenges and opportunities this year will bring. We should like to draw your attention to some important pastoral and administrative matters at this time.

Pastoral Structure and Pupil Support 2014-15

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the welfare or academic progress of your daughter, your first point of contact normally should be her Form Tutor. A full list of Form Tutors is available from a link on the 'Pastoral' page under the 'Studying at Strathearn' menu on our School website www.strathearn.org.uk. Heads of Year, Heads of Key Stage and Vice-Principal (Pastoral) are also available to contact if your daughter's Form Tutor is unavailable or if the concern is of a more serious nature.

Heads of Year (Key Stage 3)

Form 1	Mrs S Wyeth
Form 2	Ms S Young
Form 3	Mrs A McCracken

Head of Key Stage 4

Miss J Gibson
<u>Head of 6th Form</u>
Mrs L Myers

Vice-Principal (Pastoral):

Mrs H Graham

We should also like to remind you that there are particular staff with specific responsibilities for Special Educational Needs, Learning Support, Medical Needs and Safeguarding & Child Protection. These are:

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

Mrs R Browne

Learning Support Tutor

Mrs J Atkinson

School Health Nurses

Mrs C Boyd & Mrs E Flynn

Designated Teacher for Safeguarding & Child Protection

Mrs H Graham

Deputy Designated Teachers for Safeguarding & Child Protection

**Mrs L Myers &
Mr D Manning**

You may contact any of the above by telephone or email

School Telephone Number: 028 9047 1595; School email: info@strathearn.belfast.ni.sch.uk

Pastoral Policies

Our most recent fliers summarising the main aspects of our Safeguarding & Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Drugs-Substance Misuse Policies will be sent out by Parentmail. (Form 1 parents please note some of these have been updated since the Induction Evening in June). Please do take time to discuss these with your daughter at home. The latest versions of our policies are available from a link on the 'School Policies' page under 'Parental Information' menu on our website www.strathearn.org.uk, or at Reception, on request.

As part of our School safeguarding procedures and in response to an increased use by our pupils and staff of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, electronic tablets and smart phones, we continue to provide advice to both pupils, staff and parents on e-safety and cyberbullying. Much of this advice is based on that provided by Ineqe Ltd through their 'h2bsafer-online' website, CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) and Childnet International. As this form of communication changes very rapidly, we would urge you to make use of three important websites both to increase your awareness of how to keep your daughter safe online, as well as the benefits and dangers of social networking sites. These are: www.ineqe.com/h2bsafer-online, www.ceop.gov.uk and www.childnet.com. All of these websites have dedicated sections for parents and young people and are very user friendly. One area we have particular concerns about is the information pupils are posting about themselves online; www.ico.org.uk/Youth/section2/intro gives additional useful tips to keep your daughter safe.

Our Positive Behaviour Policy, which brings with it a system of rewarding those pupils with Merit Points who made a significant and special contribution to the ethos and life of the School is now well embedded. Merit Certificates and Merit Badges for 2013-14, were presented at special assemblies in September. We hope any of you whose daughters received these were as delighted with them as we were awarding them. Our more equitable system of graded and cumulative sanctions for inappropriate behaviour, based on a clear Pupil Code of Conduct, continues to provide pupils with clear guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. Overall, more than twice as many Merit Points were awarded than Behaviour Points – an indication that positive behaviour predominates in Strathearn! We continue to keep the Positive Behaviour Policy under review and revised some aspects for 2014-15.

This year a major review of our Anti-Bullying policy and of our policies relating to e-safety, digital media and acceptable use of the internet is being carried out. As part of this review, we will be giving all our stakeholders an opportunity to make their views known. Details of these consultations will follow later in the year.

New Life Counselling Service

As part of our wider pastoral support structure we again have an independent, dedicated counsellor from the Department of Education approved counselling service: New Life Counselling, confirmed until Christmas. Pupils made extensive use of the service last year. Pupils have received an information leaflet on the support available, how to access it and on the arrangements in place to ensure confidentiality. We would also encourage you to read this leaflet (also sent out by parentmail) and discuss it with your daughter. Further information about the counselling service is available from me or from www.newlifecounselling.net.

A 24/7 emergency helpline is also available: **Lifeline 0808 808 8000**.

Uniform

We continue to be very proud of how smart our pupils look in their uniform. It helps to reinforce our school identity and reflects a respect for both self and school. All staff continue to enforce uniform regulations as part of our Positive Behaviour Policy. Our uniform regulations are available to view under 'Uniform List' under the 'Parental Information' menu on our website.

House T-shirts and Badges

We are already working hard this year to develop pupils' sense of House identity with regular house events taking place and encouragement to show House identity through wearing of house t-shirts and badges. Parents were informed last June that these will be a compulsory part of the uniform from **September 2015**. If you wish your daughter to get as much wear out of these items as possible, the newly designed House T-shirts and badges are now available to buy from our sole stockists, Podium4Sport, who also supply our sports kit.

Attendance and Punctuality

We should also like to reiterate the significance of regular attendance and high standards of punctuality if your daughter is to fulfil her academic potential. There is clear evidence from our public examination results that a close relationship exists between pupils who fail to attend school regularly (excluding those with genuine health issues) and underperformance.

Our attendance register is an official legal document and we are obliged to account for all our pupils' absences and late arrivals to school as per Department of Education instructions. If your daughter is absent she should bring a note to her Form Tutor on the day she returns to explain her absence. If no reason is provided within a week of her return to school, her absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This cannot then be altered on the official attendance register. If she fails to provide a note to explain her absence on two or more occasions she will receive a Behaviour Point on her Behaviour Card, as part of our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Pupils should plan to arrive in school no later than **8.40 am** to allow them to go to their lockers and proceed to their Form rooms for **8.45 am**. A pupil who arrives in school after **8.50 am**, for whatever reason, must sign in at Reception. Your daughter must provide a reason for her late arrival. Unless she has a white card or the school bus is late, she must bring in a note from home or a parent must phone in to or email Reception, within 24 hours, to explain her lateness. If this does not happen, or if the explanation is not acceptable, her late arrival will be recorded on the official register as an unauthorized absence for the morning session (as per Department of Education instructions) and she will receive a Behaviour Point. In exceptional circumstances, such as adverse weather conditions, we will use our discretion to override the need for parents to send in a note or phone School.

We are grateful to parents who continue to support us in our efforts to implement high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Contact Details / Medical / Pastoral Forms

We would like to thank those parents who have returned the data collection and the pastoral and medical forms so promptly. This enables us to put in place any individual support required. ***Any parents who have not yet returned these important documents should do so as quickly as possible.*** If any of these sheets have been mislaid or lost, they can be downloaded from our website, www.strathearn.org.uk, from the link 'Parental Information' > 'Pastoral Information Booklet: Appendix'.

Illness

We would like to remind parents that if their daughter is unwell before coming to school she should be kept at home. This is particularly the case if she has vomiting, diarrhoea or a high temperature. We would urge you to keep your daughter at home, if she is ill, until she is symptom free for 24 hours.

Our aim is to create an atmosphere of openness and mutual responsibility for the progress and well-being of your daughter. Please do not hesitate to contact the school, at any time during the year, if you have any questions or wish to keep us up-to-date with personal information regarding your daughter.

Yours sincerely



H Graham
Vice Principal