

QEGS Pastoral Support Officer Procedure and Practice Manual

For students, parents/guardians and school staff

What is the role of the Pastoral Support Officer?

The Pastoral Support Officer (PSO), Miss Susy Armstrong, supports students in school with any mental health concerns, or any issues which may be effecting a student's well-being. The PSO provides one to one support by offering regular appointments in school, offering a safe space for students to discuss their feelings, or any issues they may be facing either within school, or within their personal life. Outside of appointments, students can also access support from the Duty Pastoral Officer (DPO), Mr Nick Henderson.

What types of things may be discussed in pastoral meetings?

A student may wish to speak to the PSO if they are struggling with any mental health concerns such as:

- Anxiety
- Low moods/ Depression
- Self esteem
- Eating disorders
- Self-harm

As well as any mental health concerns, a student may wish to speak to the PSO if they are having problems with:

- Bullying
- Exam stress
- Family issues
- Friendship issues

The PSO may advise a student to seek professional advice from their GP, or may discuss a referral to external agencies such as:

- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Barnardo's MyTime
- Kooth
- Coaching in Mind
- Your Voice

How is a student referred for pastoral meetings?

A student is usually referred to the PSO for pastoral meetings by their Head of Year (HoY) or another member of the safeguarding team. Any other member of staff in school can also raise concerns to the student's HoY or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Allen Martin, who may then refer to the PSO.

If a parent wishes to raise any concerns about their child, then they are encouraged to discuss this with the student's form tutor.

Alternatively, a student in school is welcomed to speak with any member of staff if they wish to raise any concerns. For pastoral support during break times or lunch times, a student is encouraged to speak with DPO, Mr Henderson. If a student feels like regular pastoral appointments with the PSO would be beneficial, they are encouraged to discuss with their HoY.

For more information on how a student can access support within school, please see 'Appendix 1: Reporting Mental Health Concerns Flowchart' within the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy which can be accessed here:

<https://qegs.website/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing-Policy-2021.pdf>

Where will the meeting be?

Meetings will take place in the Pastoral Meeting Room in the main building in school. If a student is unsure of where this is then the PSO can arrange to meet them at reception and show them to the room for their initial appointment.

When will the meeting be?

Meetings will usually take place during lesson time, this will be on different days and at different times each week to ensure that too much of the same lesson is not being missed. If a student wishes to have appointments during a break time, or part of their lunchtime, then they should discuss this with the PSO. For sixth formers, appointments will be made during their free/study periods.

It is a student's responsibility to catch up on any work they have missed during appointments. A student should notify the PSO of any tests, exams, or important pieces of work to ensure that a pastoral meeting does not coincide with this.

A reminder will be sent via EduLink to the student the day before their appointment, or in the morning on a Monday. A student should inform the PSO as soon as they can if they are unable to attend their appointment, this allows the space to be given to another student.

An email will be sent to teachers to notify them if a student is going to be missing part of their lesson.

How long will a meeting be?

A meeting will usually last around 20 minutes, but may vary depending on what a student wishes to discuss.

How often will meetings be?

Meetings can be weekly, fortnightly, monthly or once a term, depending on what suits the student. The PSO and student will discuss how often they feel a meeting is required, this will be reviewed frequently and meetings may become less/more frequent as time goes on. A student should discuss with the PSO if they feel they no longer require regular pastoral meetings. Alternatively, a student should discuss with the PSO if they feel like they need more frequent pastoral support.

How many pastoral meetings will a student have?

A student is likely to have around 6-8 pastoral meetings with the PSO. It may be necessary for a student to have more than this if more support is required. Alternatively, a referral to an external service may be discussed with the student and parent/guardian if the PSO believes that little improvement in their well-being has been made during this time, and believes the student may benefit from more specialist support.

What can a student expect to take away from a pastoral meeting?

The aim of pastoral appointments is to offer a safe space for students to express their feelings and have their voice heard. In the initial meeting, the student and PSO will discuss what a student hopes to take away from pastoral appointments, whether this be working on building self-esteem, coping with anxiety, or having somewhere to talk about any issues they are having in school or in their home life. During the meeting, a student may be given relevant resources to look through, or worksheets to complete.

When would a parent or guardian be contacted?

Parents will be informed if it has been arranged for their child to have pastoral meetings within school. If something a student discusses with the PSO indicates that their own safety, or the safety of others could be at risk, then the school's safeguarding procedure will be followed, and parents will be notified. Similarly, parents will be contacted if the PSO

believes that a student is withholding information from their parents which could help a parent to keep their child safe. As well as this, the PSO will contact parents if it is believed that a student's mental health is deteriorating.