

PROMOTE

PROVIDE

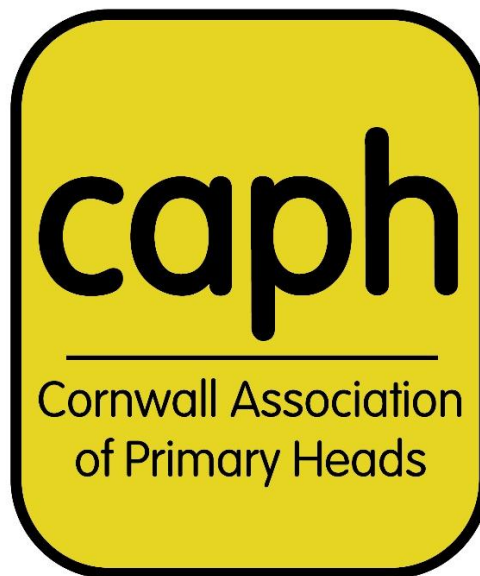
SUPPORT

EDUCATE

Cornwall Association of Primary Headteachers

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PASTORAL NETWORK HANDBOOK

2026

Cornwall Association of Primary Headteachers

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 - Associate Agreement (to be signed and returned)
 - Code Of Ethics and Confidentiality Agreement
-

1. Welcome:

As a part of CAPH membership, CAPH offers free access to a pastoral network for school leaders. This is facilitated by Pastoral Associates, all either former or current headteachers. School leaders receive contact as required (virtual or in person) to provide time and space to reflect on their own wellbeing and development. Visits are fully confidential, with no preparation or follow-up expected!

This programme has been running since 2016, with positive feedback received and some really strong supportive relationships formed. This network is offered as part of your membership.

Welcome to the CAPH Pastoral Network—let's make a difference together!

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2. Our Mission & Aims

Our Mission:

CAPH is a Co-operative Community Interest Company dedicated to supporting and improving the education, health, and care of children in Cornwall by championing excellence. By supporting school leaders and member schools, we aim to be a catalyst for innovation, facilitating connection, collaboration, and partnership across the education sector. Through these efforts, we work to raise the achievements and aspirations of both pupils and staff.

Aims:

Promote | Provide | Support | Educate

- **Promote Collaboration:** Promote professional development and collaborative support systems that equip school leaders to lead with confidence, driving positive change and improved outcomes for pupils and staff.
- **Provide Sustainability:** Provide sustainable practices and resources to ensure the long-term success and innovation, contributing to excellence in education across Cornwall.
- **Support Belonging:** Support a strong sense of belonging by fostering an inclusive, equitable and connected community where every member school feels valued and empowered to raise aspirations and achievements.
- **Educate for Sustainability and Belonging:** Educate and inspire school leaders to implement sustainable, inclusive practices that enhance the educational experience for all pupils and contribute to the collective wellbeing of Cornwall's children.

CAPH's Pastoral Network aims to create long-lasting professional connections between Cornish School Leaders in order to support their well-being, professional growth and development. We facilitate these high-quality educational sessions which grow these connections. We match our Pastoral Associates with school leaders using experience and understanding of the region.

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3. Impact of the Network

School Impact – Improved Culture & Outcomes:

- Stronger retention of talent: Increases job satisfaction and loyalty to the school.
- Succession planning: Growth of stronger leaders; the school will have a capable internal candidate for future leadership roles.
- Improved team culture: By investing in leadership growth, schools foster a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration, which will benefit the entire team.
- Enhanced classroom performance: As confidence and skill grow, teaching will reflect new insights and leadership, leading to better pupil outcomes.

Personal Impact - Leadership Development:

- Help develop leadership capabilities that align with the school's long-term goals.
- Provide guidance as colleagues navigate key career transitions, such as moving into a leadership role or taking on new responsibilities.
- Empower colleagues to mentor others within the school, creating a ripple effect of growth and leadership within teams.

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4. Pastoral Associates – Terms of Reference

Role of the Associate

- To provide a pastoral network to the school leader through a variety of face to face meetings, email, virtual and telephone contact.
- To build a positive and secure relationship with the school leader based on mutual trust and friendship in an environment that is non-judgemental, secure and confidential.
- To meet with and focus on the specific needs of that school leader with regard and respect for their emotional wellbeing, personal feelings and job satisfaction, supporting them in their ability to carry out their duties successfully, irrespective of the school's data, Ofsted report or demographic.
- To ensure that, on all occasions, the discussions between the associate and the school leader are completely confidential, secure and impartial.
- To be a good listener, showing empathy and understanding, developing an environment where the school leader feels confident that they can discuss any worries or concerns with the associate.
- To meet once termly, as required by the school leader (virtual or in person)
- To be prepared to be contacted by telephone and/or email and to be proactive in maintaining a level of contact to support the school leader.
- To be proactive in contacting and keeping in contact with the school leader whilst retaining regard for their workload.

Guidance for Associates

- There is no need to read Ofsted reports or access data prior to any visit but it is acceptable to look at the website to obtain a 'flavour' of the school.
- There is no requirement to meet in school in fact many heads prefer to meet elsewhere. A café or coffee shop; be guided by the school leader's wishes. If you do meet outside school over coffee please bear in mind the need to be discrete, such places are often crowded and you never know who is within earshot.
- There is no need to keep any paperwork and the suggestion is that you do not make notes whilst meeting with the school leader. If, however, you are concerned that something discussed has been contentious then it is acceptable to make notes afterwards as your record of the meeting. You should share this fact with the school leader.

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- Any safeguarding, child protection concerns or serious concerns for the well-being of the school leader should be shared with the school leader and must be reported to CAPH strategic Lead immediately.
- If you feel the relationship is not working or you are finding it difficult to engage with a school leader, or that there are other problems that affect your ability to provide support, then do not hesitate to let us know. It is unreasonable to expect all partnerships to be successful and it in no way reflects the ability or personality of the associate or the school leader.
- The support you give should be related to the head's emotional needs and there is no requirement to set targets or monitor achievement in any way whatsoever.
- There is no 'one size fits all' for this support and the needs of each school leader will be different.

Expenses

The Associate's School* will receive £50 per visit plus travel at 55p per mile.

A maximum of one visit per term are payable.

Claims should be submitted in arrears at the end of each half-term.

If there is likely to be more than one visit in a term this would need to be cleared with CAPH central office prior to claim.

**Should the Associate no longer be employed within a school or Trust, the expense should be invoiced by the individual.*



5. School Leaders – Guidance & Top Tips for Engagement

Top Ten Tips for getting the most out of your Pastoral Network sessions:

1. Be Clear About Your Goals

Before each session, think about what you want to achieve. Whether it's solving a specific problem or developing a skill, having a clear goal will help keep the conversation focused and productive.

2. Prepare in Advance

Take time to reflect on your progress, challenges, and any updates since the last session. Write down key points or questions you want to discuss to make the most of your time with your Associate.

3. Take Ownership of the Session

You are the driver of the process. Be proactive in guiding the conversation, bringing up topics that matter to you, and ensuring your goals are discussed. Don't wait for your Associate to lead the entire session.

4. Be Open and Honest

Be transparent about your challenges, concerns, and uncertainties. The more open you are, the better your mentor can help you. Remember, it's a safe space for learning and growth.

5. Ask Specific Questions

Instead of asking broad questions like, "How can I be better at my job?" ask targeted ones, such as, "What strategies would you suggest for improving my time management at work?". (See Section 6 and 7 in this Handbook for further guidance on questions the Associate may ask you too).

6. Be Open to Feedback

Associates offer feedback to help you grow, so be receptive to constructive criticism. View it as an opportunity for improvement and not as a judgment of your abilities.

7. Suggestion - Keep a Mentoring Journal

Some colleagues may find it useful to take notes during and after each session. Write down key insights, action points, and any feedback. A journal helps track your progress and ensures you're implementing what you've learned.

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8. Follow Through on Suggestions

If your Associate suggests tasks or goals to work on between sessions, try your best to complete them. This shows commitment to your development and respect for your Associate's time and guidance.

9. Be Respectful

Associates invest their time for a small token gesture. Most are also very busy School Leaders. With this in mind, it is important to be punctual for your sessions and stick to the agreed-upon time. If you need to reschedule, give your mentor ample notice. Don't forget to verbally show thanks and gratitude for the input and time your Associate is investing in the partnership. Without the good will of Associates, The CAPH Pastoral Network would not be able to offer the service we do as part of our membership.

10. Reflect on the Session Afterwards

After each session, take time to reflect on what was discussed. Consider how you can apply the conversations and insights you received to your work or personal development. This reflection deepens the impact of the session.

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4. Confidentiality & Ethics

Associates and the School Leaders within the CAPH Pastoral Network are expected to adhere to the guidance in this handbook.

Before the first session, both Pastoral Associates and School Leaders should read the following information carefully.

Pastoral Associate and School Leader should:

- Create a shared understanding of Pastoral Associateship etiquette, relationships and expectations by using CAPH Pastoral Network Handbook as guidance.
- Demonstrate personal integrity and honesty in interactions; being sensitive to and mindful of each other's context, environment, experiences, values and beliefs.
- Use appropriate, respectful and professional language when communicating.
- Seek to create a safe, supportive and trusting relationship and environment in which the School Leader can share professional goals and aspirations.
- Be mindful not to disclose sensitive information about colleagues (past or present) or schools.
- Keep confidential the identity of anyone mentioned within sessions.
- Not take written records or notes of what is said and communicated within meetings in a form which could be deciphered or understood by others.

If either Pastoral Associate or School Leader are concerned about the mental well-being of the other; believing there is imminent or likely risk of danger or harm to themselves or others, this should be reported to the Head Office at CAPH immediately who will assess and evaluate the need for intervention or disclosure to another party. Should this person not be available, Associates must contact a relevant services as they would a member of the public (e.g. 101/999).

If either Pastoral Associate or School Leader feel their match has not been a good foundation for a relationship, they should reach out to the Head Office at CAPH (via email):

emma@caph.org.uk (Strategic Lead, CAPH)

The Strategic Lead will discuss a respectful exit, or alteration, from the programme. Please be mindful that relationships and trust take time to build and at least two sessions should be held before requesting further support or asking for a rematch.

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5. The Match!

So you have been matched and you are ready to have your first call with your School Leader! This is an exciting opportunity to set the foundation for a successful Pastoral Associating relationship.

As the Pastoral Associate, it is your job to reach out to your School Leader first. You should do this within a week of receiving your matching email. Your School Leader may be nervous, so a short friendly email introducing yourself and suggesting an initial call will put them at ease. It is not a Pastoral Associate session as such and the purpose of it is to cover key areas like logistics, begin building rapport, and to establish a professional but supportive tone for your relationship.

For Example:

Practicalities

Before diving into deeper conversations, it's important to establish some basic details for how your Pastoral Associate relationship will run smoothly:

Agree on meeting frequency and duration: Discuss how often you will meet (once a term – when?) and consider how long your sessions will last. Typically, meetings last around one hour, but it's best to check what works for both of you.

Decide on the online platform and/or F2F meeting location: Whether it's Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, or another platform, decide what works best for both of you. Ensure you're both familiar with the technology to avoid any hiccups later. Agree how, when and who will be responsible for setting up links and sharing these.

Agree on confidentiality: Remind your School Leader about the importance of confidentiality. Both of you should feel safe sharing your thoughts openly. Refer to the ethics and confidentiality information above and agree that everything discussed remains private.

Set expectations: You might want to clarify boundaries around timekeeping, cancellations, and rescheduling. It's helpful to agree on a process if one of you needs to change a session time.

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**Generating Rapport**

Creating a comfortable, open space for conversation is key to a strong Pastoral Associate relationship.

Here's how you can begin to foster rapport:

Start with a friendly introduction: Share a bit about yourself – your background, your Pastoral Associate experience, and why you're excited to work together. Encourage your School Leader to do the same, allowing them to share their experiences, goals, and any concerns they may have.

Be curious and ask questions: Ask open-ended questions to get to know them better. You might ask, "What's your main goal for Pastoral Associate?" or "What do you enjoy most about your work?" Showing genuine interest helps build a personal connection. Consider why you have been matched.

Set a supportive tone: Let them know that you're here to help guide, not judge. Encourage them to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns with you over time.

Be professional, yet approachable: While it's important to maintain professionalism, don't be afraid to be warm and approachable. A relaxed tone helps your School Leader feel comfortable and safe.

Setting foundations for the future

Encourage openness: Reinforce that your Pastoral Associate relationship is a space where they can be honest about challenges and goals. This call is about getting to know each other and setting a foundation for trust.

Set the focus or agenda for future meetings: Ask your School Leader if they have any immediate goals they'd like to focus on. Let them know they can also bring new topics to each session. You could suggest your School Leader to do a 'gap' task eg start a journal or use one of the self awareness tools.

Wrap up with a next step: Before ending the call, confirm the time and date for your next meeting. Having this organised reassures your School Leader.

After the call send a short email telling the School Leader how great it was to meet them and confirm in writing the date, time and online link for your next session



6. Suggested Session Structures

Session Length: 1 hour Objective: Focus on setting and achieving specific goals with actionable steps.

1. Check-in (10 minutes)
Start by building rapport & assessing how the School Leader is doing.
"How have you been since we last spoke?" "What's been the highlight of your week?" "Have there been any challenges you'd like to discuss?"
2. Set the Goal for the Session (5 minutes)
Work together to define a clear goal for the session. This could be addressing a challenge, learning a new skill, or reflecting on recent progress.
"What would you like to focus on today?"
"Is there a particular challenge or goal you'd like to work through?"
3. Explore the School Leader's Current Situation (15 minutes)
Encourage the School Leader to explain their situation in detail, offering guidance or feedback based on what they share. Listen more than you talk.
"Can you tell me more about how things are going with your current project?"
"What steps have you taken so far?" "How do you feel about your progress?"
4. Problem-Solving (20 minutes)
Offer insights, brainstorm ideas, and collaboratively plan actionable next steps to overcome challenges or achieve the School Leader's goals.
"What do you think might be the next best step?"
"What resources or strategies could help you move forward?"
5. Reflect and Summarize (5 minutes)
Summarise key takeaways from the session and clarify the suggestions for the School Leader.
"What are the three key things you're taking away from today's session?"
"What will you prioritize between now and our next meeting?"
6. Wrap-up and Plan for Next Session (5 minutes)
Set a date for the next session and briefly discuss what might be covered, or tell them what you might return to.



7. Raising self-awareness in your School Leader & Promoting 'Radical Candor'

Questions to ask and comments to try with your School Leader when they seem to be stuck in a cycle:

Identifying Patterns

What recurring thoughts or feelings do you notice yourself having?

Are you aware that...

What have you tried in the past to change this situation?

I've noticed that you always bring the conversation back to...

Exploring Perspectives and Understanding Motivations

Have you spoken to anyone else about this?

Do others feel the same? How might someone else see this?

If you were advising a friend in your position, what would you suggest they do?

Why did you take that approach? What were you hoping to achieve?

Challenging Assumptions and Encouraging Action

Are there some assumptions you are making about this situation that might not be true?

What small step could you take right now?

If you had to choose one action to take today, what would it be?

Reflecting on Impact and Envisioning Change

How is being stuck in this cycle affecting your personal and professional life?

What is the worst that could happen? What would you miss out on if you continued down this path? How might your situation change if you took a different approach?

What's one belief you could let go of that might help you move forward?

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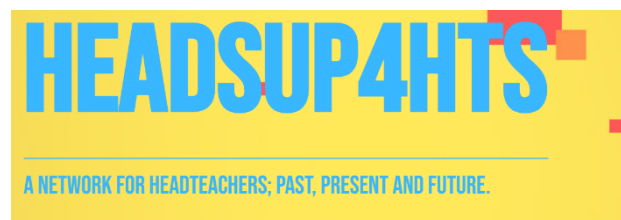
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8. TOOLS & SIGNPOSTING:

HeadsUp4HTs: Gain access to weekly sessions, tailored support, and be part of a movement that advocates for ethical leadership. They offer a range of support from free peer sessions for Headteachers to a monthly membership subscription for full access to HeadsUp4HTs app, discounted events, and more. [HeadsUp4HTs](#)



The High 5 strengths tests are relatively inexpensive and offer a report on strengths and areas for development. This might be a good starting point for your School Leader to reflect upon. <https://high5test.com/personality-test-for-individuals/>

The Positive Intelligence Saboteurs test is free of charge and can be useful identifying the causes behind negative thought patterns. <https://www.positiveintelligence.com/saboteurs/>

Completing a **Myers Briggs Assessment** could help your School Leader consider their personality type and build a profile where they can understand themselves better. <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>

A 360 evaluation by trusted colleagues could be the eye opener a School Leader needs to reflect on how others perceive them to be. Here is a free one although there are many alternatives to be found on the internet

Completing the VIA character strengths assessment can help a School Leader understand where they excel and where their lesser strengths lie. This resource is free. <https://www.viacharacter.org/>

Education Support - FREE & confidential contact: [Education Support](#)

Can you tell us more? This will help us find the right information for you.

I need support with my mental health

My personal life is affecting my work

I need support with my finances

I'd like advice about a work issue

I'm concerned about a colleague's mental health

I'm not sure – show me more

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9. FAQs For Pastoral Associates

1. What is the time commitment? Pastoral Associate sessions should last approximately 1 hour. However, the length is flexible to accommodate the needs of the School Leader and the Pastoral Associate. We recommend holding sessions every 4-6 weeks by mutual agreement, but this can be adjusted based on circumstances such as urgent support.

2. How many sessions are expected? We ask for a commitment of at least **three sessions per academic year**. Experience shows that it usually takes at least two sessions to build a meaningful rapport, but more may be necessary depending on the School Leader's needs. However, where matches have been positive, the Pastoral Associate-School Leader relationship has been long lasting with our longest partnerships now entering their 3rd year together!

3. How are Pastoral Associates and School Leaders matched? We match Pastoral Associates and School Leaders based on experience, life stage, cultural diversity, and other factors. Matches are made manually to ensure the best possible fit.

4. What should I do if the Pastoral Associate-School Leader relationship isn't working? Building trust and rapport takes time, so we encourage at least two meetings before considering changes. If, after several sessions, the partnership still isn't working, please contact us at the CAPH Head Office, and we will work with both parties to find a respectful solution and graceful exit.

5. Who do I contact if I have concerns about my School Leader? If you are concerned about your School Leader's well-being or mental health, please contact the CAPH Strategic Lead. We will discuss the issue confidentially and help plan next steps.

6. What additional support is provided to Pastoral Associates? We hold online sessions throughout the year where Pastoral Associates and School Leaders can share experiences and learn from one another. Additionally, contact the CAPH Head Office for any questions or support you may need.

7. How can I ensure confidentiality during Pastoral Associate sessions? Confidentiality is essential for building trust in the Pastoral Associate-School Leader relationship. All participants are required to commit to a confidentiality agreement. If confidentiality is breached, please contact us immediately so we can address the issue.

8. What is expected from Pastoral Associates? Pastoral Associates are expected to guide and share their experiences. Storytelling is encouraged, as it fosters connection. However, it's important to protect intellectual property and confidentiality, avoiding the use of specific names or situations that may compromise privacy.



9. Is there a provided / suggested structure for Pastoral Associate sessions? We don't prescribe a rigid structure for sessions, as we believe conversations should evolve naturally. However, you can prepare by reminding your School Leader of upcoming sessions and beginning by discussing their recent successes. Feel free to use open-ended questions to guide the conversation and encourage reflection. In Section 5, 6 and 7 above we have shared some suggested sentence starters and broad structures for new Pastoral Associates to use if they wish.

10. How much of the session should be guided by the School Leader? The School Leader should guide the direction of the session, with the Pastoral Associate serving as a co-pilot. However, Pastoral Associates can provide gentle guidance to ensure that the conversation remains productive and focused on growth. School Leaders are supported in this through their onboarding.

11. Can I still be a Pastoral Associate if I don't have a current leadership title or am a serving Head? Absolutely. CAPH Pastoral Network is not focused on titles or roles. It's about connecting people who have valuable expertise and experiences to share, empowering both Pastoral Associates and School Leaders to grow. The only thing we do ask is that Associates have had experience of Headship.

12. Can I be a Pastoral Associate if I have never supported anyone in this way before? Absolutely. The Pastoral Associate role is a great opportunity for professional growth. We are careful to match all our Pastoral Associates with School Leaders who they will be able to support and as long as the match is correct then we believe everyone has the power to be a successful Pastoral Associate. We support new Pastoral Associates and are always on the other end of an email to offer guidance if needed.

13. What should I do if I know others who may want to join CAPH Pastoral Network as an Associate or School Leader requiring the support? If you know someone interested in joining, ask them to email us at pastoral@caph.org.uk 'Interest in Joining CAPH Pastoral Network' in the subject line.

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10. Process for On-boarding Associates and School Leaders

1. (Strategic Lead) Identify/meet potential candidates to enlist as Pastoral Associate
2. (Strategic Lead) Discuss Pastoral Network terms and guidance, explain onboarding process
3. (CAPH office) Action & Issue:
 - a. Associate Agreement
 - b. Terms of Reference and Handbook
 - c. Claim and Invoice forms
 - d. Add new Associate to Spreadsheet
4. (CAPH office) Check Associate Agreement has been signed and returned - Update spreadsheet
5. (Strategic Lead) Allocate Associate to a Senior Leader (update spreadsheet)
6. (CAPH office) Email Terms of Reference and Pastoral Handbook to New Senior Leader
7. (Strategic Lead) Check with Associates termly to assess Senior Leader engagement
8. (CAPH office) Reminder to Associates to claim for visit and travel expenses
9. (Strategic Lead) Check with HT termly to assess success of support provided by Associate
10. (CAPH Finance) Processing of Invoices and Claims