

St. Mary's Primary and Nursery School
Bellaghy



Pastoral Care

Policy

Vision:- ' Childhood is unique -
Enjoy it
Respect it
Protect it'



Pastoral Care Policy and Practice
St. Mary's Primary and Nursery School
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This document is based on 'Every School a Good School' (DE 2009) and sets out our school's policy and practice in relation to the care of our pupils.

We aim to provide a rich and varied curriculum in order to promote the all-round development of the child in a happy, caring environment.

Together with the development of competence in the basic skills, the enhancement and support in the promotion of - self-esteem, self-discipline, tolerance, confidence and independence, are also considered a priority.

Through the pastoral care dimension both the school's adult community and its pupils will be encouraged to contribute to the creation of a caring, supportive atmosphere in the school.

This pastoral policy is an agreed course of action for supporting the learner in both academic progress and personal and social development.

Child centred provision

At St. Mary's Primary School we aim to meet the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school in that....

We promote equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.

The school embraces the principles and articles within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We have achieved a 'Rights Respecting School' award at both Levels 1 and 2.

We promote the UNCRC *Articles 12 and 13* - by showing respect to the views of the child and providing them with the opportunity (within the law) to freely express themselves.

The school follows Child Protection guidelines fully and regularly review / implement new Child Protection advice.

Disability access is available at both front and back door entrances and we have a purpose - built disabled toilet. Assistance for children with a physical disability is sought and professional recommendations are implemented.

We welcome newcomers to our school community and have availed of Translation Service from IDS for our pupils. (Eamon Mc Namee from IDS)

All pupils receive weekly Irish lessons. We have won a Foras Na Gaeilge , All-Ireland Language Competition.

We seek to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning

We implement the approaches within our extensive and thorough Additional Needs Policy through early identification of needs and by providing appropriate support and intervention.

Promotion of good attendance is also an aspect of our pastoral care and parents are informed of such through our Attendance Policy.

Our Positive Behaviour Policy helps the children to become aware of the need for acceptable behaviour and to have a respectful regard for others.

We believe in and support pupil participation and involvement in decisions about school life. We do this through

We have a very active and responsive School Council with two representatives from each class from P1 - P7. School Council Booklets are provided to each class so any pupil has access to raise an issue within the half termly meetings which are organised by Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and with the Principal in attendance. The Class representatives report matters from each year group. These concerns are discussed and recorded at the meetings and are also often reported at Staff Meetings and to Support Staff. Appropriate action is taken to address children's concerns and feedback given at next School Council Meeting.

Daily Prayers and Weekly Assemblies are another opportunity for pupil participation. On a regular basis, their views are considered; achievements are shared and celebrated through the Golden Book; forthcoming events are outlined and community news is revealed. We have daily worship, prayers are said, hymns are sung on special occasions and the school community are informed, advised or reminded of general day to day proceedings. Regular Self and Peer Evaluation; plenary sessions and pupil/teacher feedback and sharing of good practice all form part of our Assessment For Learning (AfL) approach to Teaching and Learning.

Other participatory practices include Circle Time, suggestion boxes, questionnaires, 'Big Jar of Happiness' 'Applause Box' and opportunities for voting to express choices are routine features within classes.

We have recently been awarded an Eco Schools Award and pupils from P1 to P7 form part of The Eco Council. Parents help in our school garden on a voluntary basis when required.

The school follows child protection guidelines fully by....

Ensuring the children know about keeping safe through specific PDMU Assemblies which include Anti-Bullying; Road Safety; Internet Safety; e-Safety; Peer Mediation; Home Safety; Healthy Eating; Personal Hygiene and Keeping Fit.

Within class, the PDMU programme is approached through specific lessons as well as cross curricular work in World Around Us and other subject areas where appropriate.

Our Child Protection Policy and Health and Safety Policy are reviewed and adjusted accordingly. All adult staff and Board of Governors personnel are informed and involved in related training and updates. Police checks of staff and volunteers are carried out when required.

Pupils are informed of Designated Teacher/ Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection so they are aware of whom to approach if they have an issue that is worrying them.

Parents are kept informed of Child Protection concerns and latest legislation through newsletters, the school web-site and policies available to view on-line.

We support children in making healthy choices and through the provision of a healthy environment.

In line with Public Health Agency advice; the Department of Education guidance (Healthy Food for Healthy Outcomes) and our Health & Well Being Policy, we implement the Healthy Breaks scheme and support provision of nutritious School Meals . We have excellent working relationships with the kitchen staff who co-operate with the demands of the school day and needs of the pupils. We provide milk and bread based refreshments to purchase and encourage fruit/vegetable snacks for early morning break. School dinners are prepared in accordance with guidance in the 'Food in Schools Policy'. Children also have access to fresh, chilled drinking water throughout the day.

Further support is given through:-

Assemblies based on 'Healthy Eating' and 'Personal Hygiene' ;

Visits, talks, activities from

HeartStart

NI Water

The Dairy Council

Community Police (Firework Safety; Internet Safety)

Fire Safety (Fire Service)

Road Safety

Cycling Proficiency

Home Safety, Be Safe (Magherafelt Council)

Health Officers (Asthma; Diabetes)

Dietician

Dentist

Nurse

A healthy environment is provided to ensure children have opportunities for keeping physically active through our Outdoor Learning & Play Facilities. These include climbing frames; balance logs; rope bridges; climbing ramps and swing tyres.

Large outdoor play items are also available - scooters, tricycles, wheelie trays, skipping ropes, twirling cones, balancing pedal bikes, small play equipment and 'horizontal' circular bikes.

Our playground has recently had Game Graphics repainted (which were chosen by the pupils) and many Wall Murals and Mosaics attached round play areas. Outdoor learning can also take place using the Sensory Area - a large xylophone, sand pit and water systems; willow hut; tables and benches.

We adhere closely to the 'Health and Safety' and 'First Aid' arrangements.

High quality teaching and learning

We provide a broad and relevant curriculum as is evidenced by....

Our 'Teaching and Learning' Policy encompasses a comprehensive and appropriate curriculum which takes account of, not only the child as an individual but also as a child of the 21st century. Teachers planners are prepared in detail and take account of the children and their abilities. Planner evaluations encourage reflection both in content and progress achieved.

We strive to provide a wide ranging curriculum both within school and through links with various industries, businesses, Government bodies, health officials and comprehensive class visits (from Nursery to Primary 7) to a broad range of venues.

Collaborative timetabling ensures each class has access to regular use of facilities such as Computer Suite, Library, Hall and Outdoor Play and Sensory Areas.

Within our school, we endeavour to deliver an effective PDMU curriculum with specific programmes related to Health and Well Being eg - Dental and Health Officers, Road Safety, HeartStart, Fire Safety, Cycling Proficiency, NI Water personnel in relation to Water & Health and 'Saving Water', Personal Hygiene/ Health Officers, Peer Mediation, STEM, STEPS and Sentinus initiatives , Primary Life Sciences Programme, Magherafelt Council for Environmental issues such as Litter-Pick and Home Safety, BeSafe initiative, Community Police as regards Internet Safety and Firework Safety and Financial Capability through BannVale Credit Union - to promote Saving.

We promote positive relationships between teachers and their pupils and with other school-based staff through.....

The school community - teachers, supervisory staff, classroom assistants, secretary, cooks and support staff consult and work together to promote positive relationships within the school, playground, dining room and general school environs. Each class discusses and agrees upon a class contract (with reference to Rights Respecting articles). Rewards and Sanctions - as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy - are explained (with respect to age-group) - and the school community implement these accordingly.

A 'Staff Code of Conduct' and 'Student/Volunteer Code of Conduct' are provided and explained to current and new staff.

Teachers use a range of teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom such as.....

Development of Personal Capabilities by encouraging self-management of learning and collaborative learning through group work is a valued aspect of our teaching and learning approach.

The acknowledgement of Learning Styles and provision for Assessment for Learning respects diversity within the class. Circle Time provides a forum for discussion of issues arising in class.

Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils through.....

The use of:- regular planning and evaluating, weekly staff meetings; monitoring arrangements, data analysis to inform teaching; IEP's and reviews; Target Setting- for class and individual pupils; Internal Moderation for both Numeracy and Literacy - have aided reflection on teacher work and consideration of the outcomes of individual pupils. Teachers are also sensitive to pastoral issues which may have an impact on pupil performance and behaviour.

Effective leadership

Governors understand their responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils. They do this by.....

Governors monitor and evaluate the strategies in place for promoting Pastoral Care, health, well-being and attendance as contained in the School Development Plan. The Designated Governor and Child Protection Sub Committee ensure Child Protection Training is in place and updated. Governors also monitor reports of negative behaviour, suspension and exclusion.

In relation to pastoral care we support the professional development of staff and sharing and learning from best practice by.....

Pastoral matters as regards training, are supported through INSET, Exceptional Closure days, staff retreats and weekly meetings. We share good practice through hosting or visiting other schools - both local and European (Comenius Project and Dissolving Boundaries initiative.)

We provide the resources needed to support pastoral care through.....

The effective use of external agencies is another support system used in the school for pastoral care needs. These include CASS, Clergy, Barnardos Support, Helping Hands, Counselling, Trauma and Bereavement team and Roots of Empathy and Mast team. Staff are effectively deployed in specialist roles to address pastoral issues.

We monitor and evaluate our pastoral care practices in a number of ways.....

The school's performance is checked regularly in the preparation of the School Development Plan. School data is monitored and SIMS modules are used for attendance, school meals and behaviour management incidents.

The School Council is involved in providing feedback from all classes and making suggestions for general concerns that the pupils have. Feedback is given to the Council on action taken as regards such matters.

The use of pupil and parent questionnaires have been successfully used to gather information (eg. - Uniform, Language Learning, Homework, Views on Annual Christmas Concert, Outdoor Learning and MAST)

Monitoring or evaluative duties of staff with responsibilities such as Curriculum leaders and pastoral Care Coordinator.

A school connected to its local community

Good relationships and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community are crucial to our pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement. These are developed by.....

The children's parents, relatives, friends and wider school community are made welcome through Assemblies, annual Christmas concert, Grandparents Day, preparation for the Sacraments, annual Beginning of School year Mass and many occasions for celebrating work, effort and achievement.

Each week, at Friday Assembly, we celebrate and share the day to day Positive contributions the pupils have made in each class throughout that week. We also recognise the children's positive efforts through class 'Stars of the Week'.

Parents are also supported as learners and partners in their child's education through information evenings, curriculum mornings, Paired Reading and presentations by specialist guests such as Maths evenings. They also help as volunteers - such as Sports Day, the school garden, Ceili dancing, and other community events.

We provide copies of school documents such as newsletters, policies, curriculum information and guides - both on the website and in print form.

The Parent Teacher Association - 'Friends of St. Mary's; meet twice each term and host fund raising activities once per term.

Reporting to Parents about their child's academic progress and personal development occurs in the first term in the form of a Parent Teacher Meeting. Parents receive oral feedback and any relevant test results at that stage.

Written reports are sent out towards end of Summer term.

IEP meetings with parents take place in first term (October) and are reviewed again in the second term (February).

Parents are supported in contacting school to meet with the class teacher if they have any concerns or require an appointment.

The Complaints Procedure is followed as outlined within the Child Protection Policy. We encourage and host cross community initiatives through school celebrations such as the opening of our Outdoor Learning area and Library, Cross Community Choreography for the Olympics, the Maths Magic Show, fund raising, Mother and Toddler group and seasonal and Religious celebrations such as Harvest and Easter.

We have good relationships and communication between the school and the education agencies that support pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement, namely.....

We have strong links with Education and Library Services such as CASS, Autism ASD and Behaviour Support & Primary Referral Unit, Educational Welfare Officer, Psychologist, the Multi Agency Support Team, our Parish Priest and local clergy, the School Doctor, Magherafelt District Council, Trauma and Bereavement Support through Barnardos and CCMS.

We have good links with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies that support pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement. These are.....

We avail of Health Agency support through School Nurse, Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy, Dental Services, CASS, Social Services and PSNI as regards Child Protection. Personnel from the Fire Service, Northern Ireland Water, Fit for Life programme, Sure Start, Helping Hands Project, Women's Aid, NSPCC, Diabetes/ Asthma/ First Aid specialists and demonstrations from the Dairy Council.

Links with industry and businesses is another feature of our school - such as Ditty's Bakery, Farm and Forest visits, shop and Post Office visits, and Woodvale Adventure Centre activities. Trips to Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, American Folk Park, Belfast Zoo and areas of local history such as Bellaghy Bawn and Church Island.

STEM & STEP, Sentinus and Primary Life Sciences links where children work alongside specialised scientists and academics and carry out related investigative projects. These are then shared with other cross community schools at venues such as Stormont, Queen's University, W5, UUI, and local secondary schools.

The school is involved in specific programmes that meet the needs of the community and nearby schools. These are.....

Pupils are supported in their transition to local Secondary Schools through special programmes throughout their final year as well as link days during the Primary 6 year. The Nursery to Primary 1 transition is supported during the summer term in their final year at Nursery by planned familiarisation mornings spent in the main school primary One classroom.

Nursery and Primary One teachers also host Induction Talks for new parents in the Summer term.

Sacramental talks from Father Dolan and personnel from the Diocesan Office also help parents, guardians and pupils prepare for the Sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation

Pupils can also avail of a very varied After Schools activities including- Choir, Football, Camogie, Tin Whistle, Guitar and Irish Dancing.

We also support many charities such as the annual Shoe Box Appeal, Heart Foundation, St. Vincent de Paul, Mental Health, Trocaire and local fund raising projects.

September 2014

[Pastoral Care Policy review date – August 2015]

Appendix 1: Related policies

Admissions Criteria

Child Protection Policy

Code of Conduct (staff)

Code of Practice for Safe use of ICT

Anti Bullying Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Complaints Procedure for Parents

Critical Incident

Attendance Policy

Curriculum policies for RE, Physical Development and PDMU and Teaching and Learning Policy

Drugs Education

Food in Schools

Health and Safety

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Additional Needs Policy

Use of Restraint

Appendix 2: Related pastoral roles and responsibilities (2010-11)

Name	Role/Responsible for	Duties
Mrs Mary Mc Cann	Designated Teacher for Child Protection	
Mrs Margaret Fegan	Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	
Mrs Margaret Mc Auley	Pastoral Care coordinator	
Mrs Fiona Conway	SENCO	
Mrs Margaret Mc Auley	School Council Link Teacher	
Mrs Margaret Fegan	Heartstart coordinator/trainer	



All the adults at school make these promises - the Governors, teachers and other adults who work in school.

We will ask you what you want and need and try to provide these things.

We will help you with any problems you have with your learning.

We will tell how you are getting on with your work and how to make it better.

We will make sure your parents know how to help you with your work and tell them how you are getting on at school.

We will get other people to help you, if you need special help.

We will have good resources to help you learn, relax and play.

We will be fair to you all and treat you all with respect.

We will involve you in decisions and pay attention to what you say.

We will keep you safe and make school a healthy place.

We will make it enjoyable learning how to be safe, happy and healthy.

We will make sure that adults and pupils try to get on well with each other.