



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Governors)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
(Principal)

Pastoral Care Policy

Vision Statement

St Mary's aims to 'provide all its pupils with the best education possible in a happy and caring environment where every child can feel secure, valued and respected as an individual.'

We promote this through our school ethos "OUR Success is Doing OUR Best"

Pastoral Care - A Policy Statement

Article 3: All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions they should think about how their decisions will affect children (UN Conventions on 'The Rights of the Child' - Unicef)

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 of self-esteem, self-discipline, tolerance, confidence and independence is also considered a priority.

Through the pastoral care dimension, the whole school community and its pupils will be encouraged to contribute to the creation of a caring, supportive atmosphere. This pastoral policy is an agreed course of action for supporting the learner in both academic progress and personal and social development.

As a Catholic School we seek to reflect the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic Faith and our local community. This involves everyone connected with life in our school, pupils, teachers, supervisors, classroom assistants, our parents, our church community and clergy and other groups and organisations within our locality.

All staff will strive to provide an ethos in which fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness will permeate all relationships

within the school community. High standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and sensitivity will be sought and everyone will be encouraged to set and achieve the highest personal, social and academic goals. The safety, welfare and development of everyone in our school community will be of paramount importance to all staff.

We in St. Mary's Primary School believe that the pastoral care structures are based on a shared understanding of what it means to be a Catholic School. This shared understanding appreciates that:

- Each person is unique and worthy of respect.
- Pastoral care is for the entire school community and not just for those experiencing difficulties.
- Each member of the school community has responsibility for the caring life of the school.
- Pastoral care permeates the life of the school.
- Pastoral care is not imposed but is a loving response to discerned needs.
- It avails of the support and expertise provided by statutory and voluntary bodies in the wider community.
- Appropriate resources and training will be provided to ensure the effective implementation of the programme.

OUR AIMS

1. We aim to develop within each child the necessary skills and attributes to promote self-discipline, self esteem, self-reliance and social awareness. We also aim to provide teachers with opportunities for professional development.
2. We aim to involve the whole community - teachers, ancillary staff, chaplains and outside agencies in guiding and advising pupils, helping them realise their own worth and enhancing their self-esteem in a safe, positive environment.

3. SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED

- Good communication at all levels.
- Creativity of pupils and staff.
- Regular evaluation of the pastoral care system and introduction of methods to improve it where necessary.

DEFINITION

Pastoral care is the structure and programmes in the school which attempts to meet the totality of needs of all pupils (social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical and mental) so all pupils have the opportunity to reach their potential in every area of their life and are equipped with the skills to cope with the 'outside world'.

RATIONALE

It is a statutory requirement under the Education Reform Order (N.I.) 1989 to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development and prepare pupils for the experiences, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

The ethos of the school will be reflected in the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of our pupils. It does not come about by chance. It is achieved by the principal and staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- To ensure learning can take place
- Respect for the rights of individuals
- Be firmly placed in the context of the whole curriculum.

RELATIONSHIPS

A good relationship between pupils and staff is paramount to generating a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels

valued and cared for at all times. Good relationships will be nurtured between:

- Staff and pupils
- Pupils and their peers
- Members of staff
- School and surrounding community
- Children will also be encouraged to develop and value a respect for themselves.

VALUES

The teacher should share his/her values and beliefs with the children and not only his/her knowledge. Life skills are central to the ethos of the school. The Catholic identity of our school will permeate all our values.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

- Positive school ethos is valued at all times.
- All pupils are valued and respected.
- Staff are encouraged to be consistent in their approach.
- Staff conduct is in compliance with the Child Protection policy.

PUPIL CODE OF CONDUCT

- Pupils are encouraged to value their peers.
- Pupils must treat each other with respect.
- No-one is to be excluded or made feel different.

SCHOOL RULES

- Class rules are devised by agreement with each class at the start of the year.
- Canteen and playground rules are agreed at school assemblies at the start of the school year.

- Pupils are rewarded for good behaviour and the school promotes positive behaviour. Pupils are aware that breaking rules lead to sanctions/loss of privileges.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Pastoral care is a shared responsibility for all staff and is promoted in all areas of teaching and learning and in all aspects of school life.
- All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- All pupils are made increasingly aware of their rights and responsibilities through our 'Rights Respecting School' work.

Our Board of Governors will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum including monitoring the safety of each child in the school. The staff will ensure that pastoral care is given a high profile in the School Development Plan. The principal will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Pastoral Care policy. She will work with all staff and ensure teaching resources are kept up to date and that staff are properly trained. The Principal will make sure that the non-teaching staff are familiar with the pastoral care policy and give help when needed. Each member of staff will work to build up pupil's self-esteem and encourage them to be assertive and to resist negative peer pressure. They will help them to celebrate success and develop the ability to make moral decisions and know the difference between right and wrong.

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 aim **'to provide all its pupils with the best education possible in a happy and caring environment where every child can feel secure, valued and respected as an individual.'**

The school embraces the principles and articles within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). 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 reviews the Child Protection policy, implementing new Child

Protection advice as appropriate. Assistance for children with a physical disability is sought and professional recommendations are implemented when necessary. We welcome children from all denominations, traditions and cultures in our school.

Our Child Protection Health and Safety Policies are reviewed and adjusted accordingly. All staff and Board of Governors personnel are informed and involved in related training and updates. Vetting 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 informed of the school's updated Child Protection policy annually which can be accessed from our school website and in our policies box at the front door. The views of the parents are sought on this policy before it is adopted by the Board of Governors. A Child Protection summary leaflet is provided for parents at the beginning of each academic year. Parents are also kept informed of Child Protection information and the latest legislation through the school's text messaging system, letters, newsletters as well as the school web-site.

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 healthy snacks to purchase and encourage children to drink milk or water and eat fruit/vegetables/brown bread and dairy produce for early morning break. School dinners are prepared in accordance with guidance in the 'Food in Schools Policy'. Children are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to school and they also have access to fresh, chilled drinking water throughout the day.

Further support is given through: - assemblies based on 'Healthy Eating' and 'Personal Hygiene' and visits, talks, activities from:

The Dairy Council

Action Cancer

Community Police (Firework Safety; Internet Safety)

Fire Safety (Fire Service)

Road Safety

Cycling Proficiency
NSPCC workshops
Dental Nurse
School Nurse
Sustrans

A healthy environment is provided to ensure children have opportunities for keeping physically active through our outdoor learning & play facilities. These include a digging and construction area and tyres etc. Large outdoor play items are also available - body scooters, skipping ropes, cones. Small play equipment is also available. Children play group games, class games and devise their own playground games. We adhere closely to the school's 'Health and Safety' and 'First Aid' arrangements.

SELF-ESTEEM

We believe that self-esteem and respect are central to the development of the whole child and promotes learning.

We will encourage children to be responsible for their own personal safety and help them to acquire skills to be able to do this so that they will be able to make the correct decisions and know where to get help if or when they are confronted with danger. The whole school community will be aware of the Designated Teacher (Miss Mc Rory) who will be responsible for dealing with cases of child protection issues which come to light. Mrs. Keown is the Deputy-Designated Teacher. Pupils will also be aware of the named First Aiders in the school (Miss K McRory) who are responsible for First Aid. Children will be also be able to speak to their class teacher if they need help or are concerned as well.

The designated Governor with responsibility for Pastoral Care/Child Protection is Mrs. Mairead Phair. Mrs L. Stewart is Chairperson of the Board of Governors and a member of the Safeguarding Team along with Miss K. Mc Rory and Mrs Keown.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our 'Learning and Teaching' Policy encompasses a comprehensive and appropriate curriculum which takes account of children as individuals as well as children in 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 to a broad range of venues. Within our school, we endeavour to deliver an effective PDMU curriculum with specific programmes related to Health and Well Being: Road Safety, Fire Safety, Cycling Proficiency, Farm Safety, STEM, Sentinus initiatives, NSPCC Safety programme, Community Police as regards Internet Safety and Firework Safety and Financial Capability through Danske Bank - to promote saving. We also hold internet safety workshops for parents facilitated by our local PSNI School Liaison Officer and the NSPCC.

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, cook, lollipop lady and support staff consult and work together to promote positive relationships within the school, playground, dining room and general school environment. Each class discusses and agrees a class code of conduct contract (in compliance with Rights Respecting articles). Rewards and Sanctions - as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy - are also agreed (with respect to age-group) - and the school community implement these accordingly. A 'Staff Code of Conduct' is 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, Literacy and ICT - 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.

RANGE OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

Children will be supervised from 8.45 a.m - 9.00a.m at the school gate by the lollipop lady Mrs Pearson, and then from 9.00a.m - 9.15a.m by a class teacher. Full supervision also continues during all extra-curricular activities. No child may remain in the classrooms, cloakroom/toilet areas or other areas of the building during playtimes or lunch times without adult supervision. Children may not enter the building at break times or lunch times without the permission of the teachers, supervisory assistants or classroom assistants. Adequate supervision will be provided during educational and non-educational trips and where possible, vetted persons only will be used (see links in Fire Prevention & Fire Safety/Health & Safety policies).

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Governors understand their responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils:-

Governors monitor and evaluate the strategies in place for promoting Pastoral Care, Health and Well-Being as well as Attendance as contained in the School Development Plan. The Designated Governor and the Safeguarding Team ensure Child Protection training is in place and updated when necessary. Governors also monitor reports of anti-bullying, suspension and expulsion.

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

Staff training needs in the area of Pastoral Care are supported through INSET, Exceptional Closure days and staff meetings. Staff also share good practice through hosting or visiting other schools, shared book looks and participating in cluster group meetings.

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 liaison with CASS, Clergy, NSPCC, Helping Hands, Trauma and Bereavement team, CAHMS, 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 and assessment. 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, parent and staff questionnaires have been successfully used to gather information. The Pastoral Care Coordinator and Curriculum Coordinators also use valuable ways of monitoring and evaluating the pastoral care system such as talking to focus groups

A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY /SUPPORT MECHANISMS/ LIAISON WITH 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.

The children's parents, relatives, friends and wider school community are made welcome through assemblies, annual Christmas plays, Grandparents' Day, Halloween Disco evening, preparation for the Sacraments as well as numerous fundraisers such as Santa Saturday, Bring N' Buy sales, bag packs etc. At school assemblies, 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 'Pupil of the Week' and 'Pupil of the Month',

Parents are also supported as learners and partners in their child's education through information/curriculum evenings, curriculum workshops as well as presentations by specialist guests. They also help as volunteers at a range of school related events - eg. school trips, Sacramental events and school discos as well as the numerous activities they plan through the PTFA group. Additionally, 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 meet each term and host regular fund raising activities. 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. Parents are also invited to arrange a meeting about their child's progress in the Summer term if required. IEP meetings with parents take place once each term.

We work on cross community/sector initiatives through programmes such as the 'Shared Education Programme' too. *We have good relationships and communication between the school and the education agencies that support pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement.* We have strong links with the Education Authority services such as the: ASD team, SEBD team, Educational Welfare Service, Educational Psychologist and the Multi Agency Support Teams.

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

Fivemiletown Health Centre, Mid Ulster Council, Clogher Valley Cluster Group, CAHMS, the NSPCC, School Nurse, Speech Therapy, CASS, CCMS, Social Services and PSNI. Personnel from the Fire Service, NSPCC, Trocaire, Mid Ulster Council, Sustrans, STEM, First Aid specialists and Dairy Council have facilitated talks, presentations and workshops in our school. Links with industry and businesses is another feature of our school. Pupils and staff go on regular educational visits eg. farm visits, theatre visits etc.

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. The Nursery/Playgroup to Primary 1 transition is supported by planned familiarisation visits. Additionally, the Primary One Teacher and the Principal also host induction meetings for new parents in the Summer term.

Sacramental advice from the clergy and personnel from the Diocesan Office also help staff, 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- Gaelic Sports, Gardening, ICT, Literacy, Numeracy, Athletics, Art & Craft. We also support many charities such as the annual Shoe Box

Appeal, Children Helping Children, Trocaire and many other local fund raising projects.

POLICY ON DISTRIBUTION OF MEDICINES

In St. Mary's P.S. staff distribute medicines to children if they feel comfortable and if the parents have provided written consent and clear guidance. Only those staff who have been trained in the administration of medicines to pupils will administer medication eg. for pupils with care plans. Medicines will not be administered unless parental consent forms are signed.

CURRICULAR MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

Pastoral care activities are provided through the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, assemblies, trips and visits.

LIAISON WITH PARENTS

Formal and informal methods used to communicate/liaise with parents (eg. the school website, text messages, letters, Parent Teacher meetings). The Complaints Procedure is followed as outlined within the Handling Complaints policy.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Regular INSET training both in-school and in conjunction a with cluster group of other schools within the Clogher Valley area.
- Training of both teaching and non-teaching staff will be led by the Principal.
- Resources required for Pastoral Care will be updated as necessary.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The school will update this Policy in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it every two years. Staff will meet regularly to discuss and review this Pastoral Care policy. The opinions of pupils, parents, staff and governors will be valued and where appropriate, action will be taken.

Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to contact their child's teacher or the Principal if they have any concerns and worries. To do this they will have to use the appropriate procedure. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention. We will encourage parents to share concerns about home circumstances or medical matters which may affect their child's work or behaviour in school. Any information disclosed will be treated as confidential.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of each member of staff and its effectiveness and implementation will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the school's system of pastoral care is effective when the school policy and planning for pastoral care are fully implemented and reflected in the quality of provision within and beyond the classroom and the effectiveness of the support arrangements for individual pupils.

At all levels of the caring process all staff and pupils need to feel valued, safe and secure.

This policy will be carefully monitored by staff and Pastoral Care coordinator Mrs Ailis Cullinan-Keown.

Appendix 1

Suite of Pastoral Care Policies

The following is a list of other related Pastoral Care policies which are also available from the school.

- Child Protection/Safeguarding
- Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid
- Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety
- Relationships & Sexuality Education
- Digit Images (Mobile Phones & Cameras)
- E-Safety
- Intimate Care
- Handling Complaints
- Fire Prevention/Safety
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Disposal of Records Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy