



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

St. John's Primary School

Rationale

We in St. John's Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All of our staff has been subject to appropriate vetting procedures. The staff of our school has also adopted a Code of Conduct for our behaviour towards pupils (see Child Protection Policy).

Our Child Protection Policy and procedures also form a very important part of pastoral care in our school. Through these procedures we seek to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school.

Aims/Objectives

It is the aim of St. John's Primary School to provide a caring and happy environment so that each person, both child and adult can feel secure and safe within the school.

The pastoral dimension of the school involves all pupils and all adults involved with the life of the school and should contribute to the creation of a supportive atmosphere.

The academic aspects of each child's development will be dealt with in each subject policy statement.

In St John's the caring role of the teachers will be evident in all aspects of the child's school life.

The formal/ informal pastoral care curriculum will also aim to:

1. Enhance pupils' self esteem, self confidence and assertiveness.
2. Develop pupils' communication skills so that they can share their feelings and emotions.
3. Enhance pupils' knowledge of personal safety skills.

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- Set and achieve personal, social and academic goals
- Gain the maximum benefit from their time in school
- Take responsibility for their own actions and become more independent
- Develop self discipline and respect
- Develop an understanding of themselves as individuals, recognising their strengths and limitations, their personal qualities, their attitudes and values.
- Develop a respect for the opinions and rights of others and show tolerance towards them
- Develop an understanding of the world in which we live
- Foster relationships where they feel happy and secure.

The teaching staff will try to foster relationships where children can feel happy and secure and can come to the class teacher for any reason. They will always be available and willing to give time and support to those in need.

Other adults working in the school will work as partners with the teachers in providing a caring approach, always being aware of the children's individual backgrounds and experiences, needs and aspirations.

Ethos of the School

In Saint John's Primary School a good ethos has been achieved by the principal and staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school.

This ethos has contributed effectively to pastoral care as a result of:

- the healthy relationships within the school
- the promotion of pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence
- parental support for the work of the staff
- the positive approaches in promoting and maintaining good standards of discipline

It is in the formal and informal situations that teachers can be helped to foster the values of self-respect, self-discipline, tolerance, equality and fairness.

This has generated a positive climate within the school community where every individual should feel valued and cared for at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors have overall responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community.

The Principal with the support of the Designated Teacher must ensure that related policies are reviewed and updated and that agreed procedures are followed.

All teachers have responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils in the school. Through the planned curricular programme they will, amongst other things, build up pupils' esteem, encourage them to be assertive where appropriate and help them to make informed decisions about issues in terms of 'right' or 'wrong'.

Resourcing

Resources as required will be purchased for teachers to deliver pastoral care issues. Relevant courses offered by outside agencies will be attended where necessary.

Pastoral care encompasses all aspects of our school life and has a high profile.

Specific Procedures and Arrangements

Data Capture Forms

Parents are requested to complete a separate form for each child enrolled in our school giving details of a variety of necessary information including contact priority telephone numbers, medical concerns or other relevant information. Parents are asked to advise the school of any changes in circumstances as they become apparent.

Pupils Enrolled into Primary 1

During the summer term, prior to new P.1 beginners first attending in September, these children are invited along in June to participate in a 'Morning Welcome Session' giving them the opportunity to get to know their new teacher and their new class friends. This makes the official start a little less daunting.

Non-Class Time Supervision

Before school, break-time and lunch-time periods are supervised by classroom assistants. Classroom assistants have been trained in our Pastoral Care guidelines to ensure continuity in the standard of care. Parents may arrange with the principal to have their child supervised from 8.15 a.m. in our 'Morning Club' if required.

Sickness or Injury

During school hours this will be dealt with by the class teacher, or teacher with first-aid training. Parents or guardians will, if necessary, be contacted by telephone as soon as possible to arrange for the child to be further examined or taken home (Parents are always contacted in the case of a head injury). Significant accidents are recorded on the appropriate pupil accident form and after parents have signed them are stored in a locked file.

Medication

School staff cannot legally be required to administer medication or supervise a pupil taking it.

If a parent requires their child to be administered with medication they must inform the Principal or Vice-Principal detailing doses and times. Medicines must be supplied in the original container they were dispensed in and must be in date. If medication has been prescribed by a doctor then the child's name must be written on the bottle.

Absences

Parents should telephone the school on/before the day their child is absent to explain the reason for the absence. If a teacher has received no reason for a child's absence from their class by break time, then they will ask the Secretary to contact the child's parent/carer to ascertain a reason for absence.

Safety on Arrival to or Departure from School

On arrival or departure from school, parents are advised to:

- Park only in the Church Car Park so that pupils can enter school via the back entrance.
- Teachers on duty at the end of the school day will supervise children being collected in the back car-park.
- A teacher will also supervise children boarding buses at the end of the school day.
- Children walking home from school will exit via the back door.
- The teacher on duty brings, **to the school office**, any child not collected until the parent arrives and if necessary will contact the home.

Door Security System

When each school day begins, this system is put into operation. No entry through the front door of the Main building can be accessed without knowledge of the visitor's identity and purpose. The visitor will also be asked to complete the Visitor's Book on arrival and produce ID.

Parental Interviews

These will be by formal arrangement once a year and by request as necessary. Parents are encouraged to arrange to meet with class teachers, vice-principal or principal if they have concerns regarding any aspect of school life pertaining to their child as soon as possible. Such meetings are encouraged to dispel or alleviate worries before any possible distress is caused. However, these informal meetings must be brief so as not to hinder teachers completing their afternoon teaching duties.

Informal contact is often made when children are being left to, or being collected from, school. Such contact is very useful in keeping the staff informed of minor problems, temporary changes in family routine, medical appointments, changes to home collection etc..

Personal and Social Well-being

Both aspects of development are addressed within PDMU and as they arise in other curricular subjects and at appropriate times during school assemblies.

Within school pupils are regularly reminded that they may speak to any member of staff about any matter at all which is disturbing or worrying them.

Conflict between children will usually be resolved as soon as possible after an event occurs, by talking the problem through with a member of staff who will help all parties to realise why the issue arose and how it could best have been avoided.

Supervision on out of School Visits

This will be in the ratio of 1 adult to 10 pupils on most occasions. Parents will assist where appropriate.

Vetting

Adults working with, or regularly supervising pupils, will be vetted according to Child Protection procedures.

Minimum Force

If required, this step will be in accordance with D.E.N.I. regulations and will be a final resort when all other options have been exhausted.

Child Protection Policy

A copy of the school's policy is available at the school office, on the website and on the Child Protection board. A copy will be issued on request from a parent.

Members of the Board of Governors and all full-time staff will receive training every two years in the procedures involved and are aware of the designated teachers holding responsibility in the area of Child Protection.

Liaison with Parents and External Agencies

Our school is an extended family where everyone works for the common good. We see ourselves as partners with parents in the education of pupils. Mutual support and co-operation is an essential element in achieving our objectives.

Liaison with parents:

Parents will always be made welcome in the school through formal and informal meetings and will be encouraged to feel that their role is important and appreciated.

Our school will foster trust and build relationships with parents by:

- Raising awareness of the school's Child Protection arrangements at parent evenings, in the school prospectus and annually in a school newsletter (see Appendix 1 of the Pastoral Care Policy).
- Regular parent/teacher meetings.
- Prospectus, newsletters, letters.
- Annual reports (not produced at present due to Industrial Action)
- Sporting events.
- Sacrament meetings.
- Communion celebrations.
- Fundraising activities.
- PSG Meetings.
- Information Nights.
- School concerts.

Liaison with external agencies.

We are committed to developing good working relationships with relevant external support agencies to enhance, protect and support individual pupils' and teachers' social and emotional welfare.

Pupils' experiences will be extended by visits from members of outside agencies e.g. School nurse, Priests, GAA coaches, After School Providers, CR Providers, Community Police.

Agencies involved in the health and welfare of the children will also have strong links with the school. These will include psychologists, behavioural management team, health promotion, EA Welfare Service, bereavement counsellors etc..

Agencies involved in the health and welfare of the staff will also have strong links with the school. These will include CCMS Welfare Officer, for teachers and EA Welfare Officer for all staff.

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Staff Development and Training

Pastoral remains a permanent feature of our School Development Plan and subsequently staff development and training are considered essential to support this. Our on-going development programme helps teachers identify the attitudes, values, skills and knowledge, which will enable them to carry out their pastoral roles.

Ongoing training in interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, counselling skills and teaching methods, which engage pupils actively in their learning. Training programmes are organised through:

- Courses organised by EA
- Whole staff school based training.
- RTU Trainers
- First Aid Training Bodies.

School Policies:

Whilst all policies and procedures within the school take into account the pastoral care of pupils and staff, some support it in very specific areas.

Cross-referencing the following policies is essential in delivering the pastoral care policy.

These policies include:

- Anti-Bullying
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Misuse of Drugs/Substances Policy
- Child Protection
- Handling Complaints
- E-Safety (ICT Policy)
- Administration of medicines.
- Healthy School Policy.
- School Food Policy.
- Inclusion Policy
- No Smoking Policy.
- PDMU Policy
- Health safety and Welfare Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- SEN
- Educational visits
- First Aid Policy
- Intimate Care
- Code Of Conduct

This is not an exhaustive list.

The School in the Community

St. John's Primary School sees itself as having a vital role to play in the community. The Board of Governors, Principal and Staff are firmly committed to the statement of aims of Catholic Education reflected in Christian teaching and values.

Consequently, the school will have a close association with our parish clergy who will support our religious education programme by visiting classes. They will also take part in Church celebrations eg. First Communion, Confirmation, First Friday Masses and Penitential Services.

We also believe in training the children to show compassion towards those in the community and also further afield who need help and support. Throughout each year the children and parents will be asked to support a specific charity for that year eg.. Diabetics Association, Children's Cancer Research, Kidney Donor Association, Shoe Box Appeal etc..

We value our close links with Moy Regional Primary School. The teaching staff and children will continue to work together to promote better community relations. We also have a well-established Community Relations Programme. Both schools co-operate through curriculum orientated C.R trips and sporting events.

Pupils from St. John's go to visit our local second level schools in Dungannon and Armagh, often participating in organised sporting events.

Attitudes to Learning

Our school will encourage a positive and happy atmosphere for learning, where each child will be treated as an individual.

Children with Special Needs will be integrated with other children. Each child will be encouraged to work hard to achieve his/her maximum potential. Children's work will be displayed in the classrooms, corridors and Assembly Hall.

Our teachers will provide a range of learning styles to promote opportunities for active research and self-expression.

Caring Attitude

The pastoral dimension necessitates a caring approach to all activities. In St. John's there will be a positive and fair approach to discipline where praise and reward are fundamental.

Where there are 'particular' home circumstances appropriate strategies will be adopted.

Parents will be encouraged to support the school in the common aim of ensuring the whole development of the pupils.

Pupils will also be encouraged to assist one another in the classroom, care for one another and develop the skill of listening, thereby helping them show tolerance and respect for others.

Positive attitudes will be actively promoted in games, musical activities etc.. Children will be helped to develop an awareness of safety through the Road Safety, Cycling Proficiency and Pastoral Care programme.

Monitoring and Evaluation

MONITORING:

On-going monitoring is an integral part of our policy. Procedures are discussed informally and at staff meetings to ensure that the policy is implemented as planned. Support is given to those teachers who require assistance in carrying out any aspect of their pastoral role.

EVALUATION:

All aspects of the policy are continually being evaluated to discover ways of improving the quality of provision in the school (Through Student Council and PSG meetings and in PDMU lessons). The views of the parents, pupils and teachers are taken into account.

Date of review: September 2021

Ratified by Governors _____ **Date:** _____

Chairman's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 1

St. John's Primary School Moy
PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

In order to achieve the potential of each pupil, the school recognises that it has a responsibility to do everything possible to care for each child's physical and emotional well-being. The school will endeavour to provide a comfortable and safe environment for learning.

Due to the nature of Primary Education it will be the responsibility of each class teacher to look after the pastoral needs of the children in his/her class, though a female teacher will be responsible for any problems of senior girls and a male teacher will be responsible for any problems of senior boys. Class teachers will attempt to resolve the worries of new pupils and relieve their anxieties. The Principal will be grateful for information about any difficult home circumstances, which may be causing distress or anxiety.

ALL STAFF, both teaching and non-teaching will work together to limit the opportunities for BULLYING in both the school and the playground.

One aspect of our Pastoral Care policy outlines arrangements that we have in place for dealing with child protection.

If you have any concerns about your or another child's safety please **follow the guidelines below**.

I have a concern about my/a child's safety.

Talk to the child's class teacher.

I can also talk to the designated teacher for child protection Mrs S McLaughlin or if Mrs McLaughlin is unavailable, contact the deputy-designated teacher Mrs L McKnight (Principal).

I can also talk/write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors Dean Kevin Donaghy.

AT ANYTIME I CAN TALK TO THE SOCIAL WORKER OR THE POLICE

In the event of a complaint the designated teacher for pastoral care Mrs S McLaughlin or the deputy-designated teacher Mrs L McKnight will keep parents informed on the progress and outcome of the complaint as soon as possible.