

Well Being Policy



St Benignus NS, Balscadden

1.0 Introduction

One of the most important settings for the promotion of a young person's mental health and well-being is the school. We are committed to supporting and promoting the mental health of all our pupils through the various policies and practices at the school.

2.0 The policy's relationship to the school's mission statement and ethos

St Benignus NS aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. We endeavour to promote the social health of our pupils and encourage positive relationships between all members of the school community. We believe that the promotion of the well-being of our pupils is central to that aim.

3.0 Aims

3.1 To promote mental health awareness.

3.2 To build on the existing good practice in the school.

3.3 To develop a coherent whole school approach to mental health which is integrated into the core school structures and practices.

4.0 School policies and practices

4.1 Anti-Bullying and Code of Good Behaviour

Our school's Anti-Bullying Policy is embedded in our Code of Good Behaviour which takes a positive approach to children's behaviour. It works on three levels; prevention, intervention and support. The preventative aspect of the policy is the most important and aims to create a positive school environment where negative behaviour is not part of school life. We

celebrate Anti-Bullying/Friendship weeks in the course of the year to emphasise the core principles of our positive approach.

4.2 Child protection

The school has a Child Safeguarding Statement that robustly addressed all aspects of Child Protection.

4.3 SPHE

The curricular area of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) teaches about many aspects of well-being. The school has a whole school plan which outlines how this is taught in each class. We use programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Weaving Well-Being.

4.4 PE

Every class is timetabled for Physical Education (PE) twice a week in line with our Active School approach. We have a whole school plan that outlines how and when all the aspects of PE is taught.

4.5 Green Schools and School Garden

Our school is a Green School. We have been awarded Green School status in the areas of Energy, Litter & Waste, Travel, Water and Biodiversity. We believe that an awareness and appreciation of the environment is central to a person's sense of well-being. We have a school garden that a designated class cultivate every year. They grow plants and vegetables to give them an appreciation of nature.

4.6 Healthy Eating Policy

The school's Healthy Eating Policy promotes healthy lunches in school. We believe healthy eating is central to well-being.

4.7 Mobile Phone Policy and Internet Safety

Our Mobile Phone Policy states that no mobile phone or electronic devices are allowed in the school or on any school organised activities. We believe this is central to preserving the positive mental health of our pupils. The school will from time to time organise workshops with experts in the area of internet safety for pupils and parents. We also teach about internet safety in the senior classes through SPHE and Anti-Cyber-Bullying lessons.

5.0 Staff approach

The presence of one supportive adult in a child's life is critically important to their well-being, sense of connectedness, self-confidence and ability to cope with difficulties. Teachers and other school staff can sometimes be the one that acts as a powerful protective force in a child's life.

6.0 Other school activities

6.1 Fun Days

The school will organise fun days in the course of the school year. There will be a fun day every term where funds permit. These days will include storytelling, skipping workshops, science activities, magicians etc. St Benignus Day will be celebrated at the beginning of November every year and special activities for the pupils will be organised around that day. From time to time the school will have non-uniform and Jersey days at the end of term or mid-term.

6.2 Parents' Association activities

The Parents' Association will organise a number of children-centred activities over the course of the year. These will include the Christmas family Quiz, First Holy Communion party, Santa Claus visit, the annual Book Fair, Recycling Days, Vincent de Paul Food Appeal, Homeless Shelter Shoebox Appeal, Christmas Cards/Calendars. They support the work of local groups which also benefits our pupils, such as the annual Balscadden Tractor Run, the Christmas Tree Lighting and the Christmas Carol Service. The Parents' Association also run the school Credit Union through Progressive Credit Union on a weekly basis where they work alongside 6th class pupils. The Parents' Association support an activity that is unique to each class group. They are: 1st Class (Ardgillan Tree Walk); 2nd Class (Library visit); 3rd Class (Swimming); 4th Class (Trim Castle trip); 5th Class (Science Fair trip); 6th Class (Cycling Workshops).

6.3 Active School and Sports

Our school was awarded the Active School Flag. In order to maintain this Active School status the children are involved in various active pursuits outside of the normal curricular areas. We believe that an active body leads to an active mind. We host an Active Week every year. We also host a Sports For All day in June every year. The school also enters teams in the Cumann na mBuncsol Athletics in Morton Stadium every year. This encourages training, fitness and team spirit. We also enter three football teams in the Fingal Schools League every year. This encourages boys and girls to participate in a team sport. We have a Walk to School every morning from the local church. This is jointly run by parents and teachers. It promotes physical activity and a positive morning routine.

6.4 Break times and Lunch times

We encourage the children to run and exercise at break times and lunchtimes. Goalposts for the grass areas, line markings on the tarmac areas and skipping ropes are all provided for the children to encourage high levels of physical activities at their break times.

6.5 Student Council

Our school has an active Student Council. The Student Council has its own iPad for research and coming up with ideas. They meet on a regular basis and give input on decisions that are made in the school that affect them. For example they decide on the cover illustration of the homework journal every year.

6.6 Reward Systems

Every class teacher has a reward system in place in their class as part of our Code of Good Behaviour. They incorporate class, group and individual awards. Class awards include golden time and baking days. They are used as a motivational tool and encourage the well-being of all pupils. Whole school rewards are also given from the school principal to encourage special effort. The school hosts an awards ceremony at the end of 6th class to recognise special achievement.

6.7 Buddy Systems and peer learning

Buddy Systems are used to help junior infants to settle in on the playground every September where pupils from 6th class buddy up with junior infant children. Likewise pupils from 5th and 6th classes are matched with children from junior and senior infants for peer reading activities. This is mutually beneficial to the self esteem of the pupils involved.

6.8 Roots of Empathy

The school runs a Roots of Empathy programme every year where a baby visits the class over the course of the year. The children learn about empathy through watching the development of the baby over the year.

6.9 Art and Class work Displays

Notice boards are installed around the school and in all classrooms to help display the work of the children. This enhances the children's sense of self and promotes feelings of well-being.

6.10 Welcoming Classrooms

Our school promotes 'welcoming classrooms'. Our teachers make a huge effort to ensure that their classrooms are welcoming to all our pupils. This includes door displays, birthday charts, class libraries etc.

6.11 Community links

Our school places a huge importance on positive links with the local Balcadden community. We support the activities of the local Tractor Run committee, the local senior citizens group, the local church committee and the local Youth Club. We also support ad hoc community events that occur from time to time. We believe that a sense of connectedness to your local

community is of the utmost importance to the well-being of children both during their time in our school and beyond.

6.12 After School Activities

We promote the use of our hall for after school activities. Classes that we promote include Irish Dancing, yoga, French classes, creative writing and arts and crafts.

6.13 Summer and Easter camps

The school facilitates the holding of summer camps and Easter camps.

6.14 School Choir and Christmas performances

The school promotes membership of the school choir for both boys and girls in the school. They perform at the Christmas concerts and also support the First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies. The choir are brought on a special trip to a musical every year. Every class, every year perform a Christmas play for the parents and grandparents. This is a source of great joy and enjoyment for the children taking part and their families.

6.15 School Tours

Every year each class goes on a school tour that is age appropriate and suitable to the pupils of that particular class. This is a fun activity that the children look forward to all year.

7.0 Supports

The school provides parents with supports to help children who are having difficulty with their well-being. Options for support are discussed with parents and the class teachers, support teachers and the school principal to ensure that each child gets the support they require. Where appropriate a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), may also be involved in a child's care. Support can range from help from support teachers to referrals to outside agencies (GP, TUSLA, CAMHS, NEPS, Rainbows etc). All supports are agreed with parents and follow ups are also agreed.

If you as a parent have a non-emergency concern for your child's well-being the first point of contact is with the class teacher. The class teacher will consult with support teachers and the school principal to ensure that the best plan of support is put in place for the child, in consultation with parents and outside agencies as agreed by all parties.

In the case of an emergency concern for your child, you should contact your GP, your local A&E Department or contact Emergency Services by phoning 999, depending on the timing of the emergency.

8.0 Character Strengths

Our school promotes positive character strengths. Through a parents' sub-committee, the student council, the Board of Management and the staff the following character strengths were agreed as priorities: Gratitude, self-control, leadership, honesty, emotional intelligence, kindness, forgiveness, bravery, perseverance and teamwork.

Reviewed 26/2/2018

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ (date)

Signed: _____
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____