



# Pastoral Care Policy

Ratified  
September 2022

Review Date  
September 2024

The Pastoral Dimension of St MacNissi's Primary School involves both staff and pupils. It permeates through everything that we do.

The Pastoral Care Policy of St MacNissi's Primary School is based on the following framework: Pastoral Care in School Circular 1999/10, which has been superseded by Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools Circular 2017/04.

We believe the school to be a vital part of the Catholic Community. We are firmly committed to providing a loving caring atmosphere, which embodies our Catholic Ethos in which the children can grow and develop to their full potential in all aspects of their life. We are committed to establishing close links with the home, the parish and the wider community.

Our school vision and aims embodies our views on what we consider important and desirable for our pupils.

- In St MacNissi's Primary School we make a concrete effort to increase each child's self-esteem and self-confidence.
- At all times there is an atmosphere of respect and expectation of good behaviour. The children are expected to try to make their peers happy and contented by refraining from any action or words that might hurt either physically or psychologically.
- An award system has been introduced whereby the children from each class are given certificates by the staff for effort shown every week. In addition to this, in house rewards systems are also in place, as well as Principal Awards.
- This increases the children's sense of pride in themselves, encourages feelings of responsibility and fosters a caring attitude towards other children.

## **St MacNissi's Primary School**

### **Statement of School Aims**

To provide for all pupils a broad and balanced curriculum based on core curriculum objectives of the curriculum taking account of the differing needs, learning styles and abilities of each child.

- To provide for the spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development of each child in an environment, which is both safe and welcoming and which respects and values the individuality of each child.
- To help children acquire knowledge, skills, practical abilities and the will and opportunity to use them
- To foster close, friendly and co-operative links with the home, local community, neighbouring schools and other support agencies to the benefit of its pupils.
- To develop in the pupils a sense of citizenship with respect for oneself and others and encourage self-control, self-confidence, co-operation, independence and high personal standards of work and behaviour.
- To ensure that children gain the highest possible standard relevant to the individual child in oracy, literacy and numeracy, which will adequately prepare them for their future role in society.
- To instil in the child a good general knowledge of the environment and culture both in his/her own community and the wider world.
- To provide opportunities for all the children to experience success, win praise and see themselves as valued members of our school and community.

*In developing the above aims we hope to develop each child to his/ her fullest potential as an individual, a contributor to society and a future contributor to the economy and the environment.*

## **Organisation and Responsibilities**

The personal and social development of the Children in St MacNissi's Primary School is enhanced effectively by a close relationship with the class teacher. Through the ongoing work in the classroom the class teacher can raise the pupils' social awareness, promote positive attitudes and build their self-esteem.

- As each teacher knows the children in his/ her class well it is his/her responsibility to be aware of children who may be suffering distress or from the effects of abuse and bring this to the attention of the Principal. In this way, as a caring school, we will endeavour to help each child work through whatever crisis that may be affecting their lives.
- Extra-curricular activities have been introduced to enable the children to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum and to foster a sense of pride in their own achievements.
- Each class prepares an assembly once a year in order to give the children experience of performing for their peers and to take pride in their achievements.

## **External Agencies**

It is the policy of the school to involve external agencies when help is needed: These agencies include:

### **1. Spiritual Support**

As a Catholic school we consider ourselves part of the Parish Community and maintain close links with our local Church, St MacNissi's Parish Church. We keep our parents informed and involved in our religious programmes throughout the school. Our school parish Priest and school Chaplin Very Rev. Father O'Brien visits regularly and is on hand to give advice and guidance whenever it is needed.

### **2. Health and Welfare Provision**

Our school nurse calls regularly to monitor the children's health and to give advice and guidance on relevant matters.

### **3. Support Agencies**

When there is a specific problem contact is made and maintained with a raft of support agencies such as RISE, Behaviour Support, Educational Psychology etc.

### **4. Education Welfare**

The EWO is in regular contact with the school and deals with any referrals made.

## **Staff Development**

Teachers at all levels need to feel that they are valued and that help, support and training are available to them.

It is the role of the Principal to ensure that the teacher's needs are met and that they receive encouragement and help in order to fulfil their responsibilities.

In St MacNissi's Primary School the teachers are encouraged to identify and to examine closely attitudes, skills and tasks which will enable them to carry out their responsibilities within the school.

In conjunction with our School Development Plan training will be organised through;

- Ongoing and in-house professional development
- School Based Courses
- Courses organised by E.A. / RTU etc.
- Award bearing courses and non-award bearing courses provided by institutions of higher education.

## **Methodology**

The ways in which pupils work with each other and with teachers can have an important bearing on pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Since pupils learn in different ways it is important to provide for a range of learning styles. However, whatever teaching strategies are used the teacher should ensure the development of the whole person and promote the active involvement of pupils in the learning process.

Teachers:

- Provide reassurance and build confidence.
- Encourage a pupil motivation and commitment.
- Promote a sense of achievement through challenge and developing a growth mindset.
- Give pupils sufficient opportunities to explore their own attitudes and values and those of others.
- Develop skills.
- Provide time so that pupils can reflect on what they have learnt.
- Provide opportunities for evaluation of the learning so that pupils can appreciate their own development and take responsibility for their own learning.

## **Health Education**

The school is pro-active in managing its Health Education Programme and avails of the services of various outside agencies.

## **Drugs Education Policy**

Drugs education is part of the statutory curriculum for all primary school pupils and is specifically included in the programme of study for Science and Technology. The drugs education programme is delivered within the context of Personal Development and carefully matched to the age and maturity of the pupils concerned.

## **Shared Education**

Education for Mutual Understanding is about self-respect, respect for others and the improvement of relationships between people of differing cultural traditions.

It is the policy of St MacNissi's Primary School that pupils:

- Are encouraged to develop respect for others;
- Are encouraged to understand and accept individual differences;
- Are given opportunity to improve relationships between people of both similar and differing cultural traditions;
- Are encouraged to confront and resolve conflict in non-violent ways.

Pupils will have experiences of shared education within the school and outside of the school.

## **Curriculum Complaints**

Where parents consider that the curriculum provision for their child is not satisfactory they are invited to express their concern to the school through-

1. The class teacher, with permission of the principal.
2. The Principal.
3. The school Board of Governors.
4. The E.A. complaints tribunal for curriculum matters.

Please refer to Concerns and Complaints Policy.

## **Homework Policy**

Homework is an important part of the school day.

By extending the child's learning from classroom to home, homework forges an important link between home and school and between teachers and parents.

### **Aims**

- To reinforce class work.
- To prepare pupils for new work in school.
- To extend the children's knowledge and understanding.
- To give parents an opportunity to see what is happening in school and to take some share in their child's learning.
- To give pupils a chance to find out things for themselves.
- To promote characteristics such as personal pride in achievement, initiative and self-confidence.
- To provide children with opportunity to develop some independence in their own work.
- To arouse interest and curiosity.
- To stimulate imagination.

### **Effective use of Homework is dependent on four factors.**

- The environment of the child as the basis for learning.
- Tasks, which foster and create interests.
- Homework activities that are enjoyable experiences.
- The values that parents place on homework.

### **How Parents Can Help**

Homework is best done in an environment free from distraction so find a quiet place for the work to be done.

Please show an interest:

- Ask questions and talk about the work.
- Praise and encourage your child to do their best.
- Check that work is properly presented and completed.
- Try and avoid conflict with children over homework. This will be counter-productive, create stress and spoil the family atmosphere.
- Sign homework if requested by the teacher.
- Support and encouragement from parents help to boost children's confidence and their sense of achievement at "a job well done".
- The development of good study habits and the organisation and completion of homework to a high standard at an early age can help establish a pattern for future study.

**Parents will be informed if children persistently do not produce their homework.**

*It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children have at least made a substantial effort to complete homework.*

*If homework is not done, we would appreciate a note explaining why.*

*Teachers should not be expected to spend valuable teaching time trying to establish why homework has not been completed.*

*We would encourage parents to emphasise to their children the important role homework plays in their education.*

### **Positive Discipline and Behaviour**

Our discipline policy provides information and guidance for teachers and parents to ensure the safety and well being of the children and to encourage self-discipline. Self-respect and respect for the rights of others are the foundation of our School Discipline Policy.

In order to maintain a happy secure environment, we have a minimum of rules:

- Children are expected to be well-mannered at all times;
- Children should never hurt anyone on purpose;
- Children must always walk on corridors and stairs;
- Children should have respect for their own and other people's property'
- Children are encouraged not to throw litter inside or outside the school;
- With the exception of children who go home at lunchtime no child is allowed out of the school grounds at any time.

**Golden Rule: We treat others as we want to be treated ourselves.**



The pastoral care of our pupils will be developed and enhanced through a wide range of activities, incorporated into and alongside the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The activities and opportunities include:

- Delivery of Grow in Love Programmes
- The Wonder of My Being Programme
- Weekly Assemblies
- Whole School and Class Masses
- Recognition of achievements both inside and outside of school
- Displays celebrating children's work
- Playground Monitors
- Wellbeing Champions
- Class responsibilities
- Digital Leaders
- ECO Warriors
- School Council
- Supporting charities including Road of Hope, Trocaire and NSPCC
- Achievements celebrated in school events
- Provision of extra-curricular activities
- Circle time/ PDMU Programme
- Educational Trips and Visits
- Involvement in Anti-Bullying Week
- Breakfast Club
- Catholic Schools Week
- Via the School's Monthly Newsletter

### **Parental Involvement**

St MacNissi's Primary School is committed to establishing and developing close links with parents which foster and promote their educational progress of their children, bringing the school and community into closer supportive contact. We strive to work in close partnership with parents.

## **Aims**

1. To develop a close working relationship with parents based on trust and understanding.
2. To stimulate parental interest through invitations to school events.
3. To continue to develop as a parent friendly school.
4. To establish effective links with pre-school children and their parents.
5. To further develop this relationship as the child progresses from class to class and prepares for transition to secondary school.
6. To inform and consult with parents throughout the child's school career.
7. To be available at specific times to discuss with parents any problems as they arise.
8. To enlist parent's help with home assignments and encourage parents to develop a good working relationship with each class teacher.
9. To promote a caring attitude within the school and between the school and the community.
10. To establish and develop liaison with all other school agencies for the pastoral and educational benefit of the children.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The purpose of evaluating the pastoral dimension is to discover ways of improving the quality of provision in the school for the benefit of all pupils and teachers.

On an annual basis or when a particular situation arises, we will evaluate the current position of our Pastoral Care provision within the school.