



ST MARY'S

PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY UNIT

2024-25



Childhood is a unique experience
Respect it Enjoy it Protect it

Dear Parent/Guardian

St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit exists to provide a Catholic Education for the children of Bellaghy village and surrounding townlands. We enjoy excellent support from the parents and local community, we believe in working together as a faith community to build the foundations for life. We aim to be outward looking, working with the wider community to fully prepare our pupils for life in an increasingly culturally diverse society. We aim to encourage all pupils to be positive and confident about themselves in their faith, uniqueness, and diversity.



Our strong academic results are achieved by inspiring teaching which makes learning come alive. Our teachers are passionate about making learning meaningful and enjoyable and they care deeply about the successes of each individual. Your child will explore new subjects in imaginative ways including role play, specialist projects, trips, educational visits, make extensive use of digital and interactive media which will compliment traditional learning and teaching methods.

Our job is not just about giving every one of our children the very best education, but also inspiring them to become interested, curious, lifelong learners who relish the delights of discovery. We want every child in our school to be happy and to feel cared for, valued and trusted. Within a creative and challenging curriculum, we seek to develop a culture where children gain the confidence and self-respect to take responsibility for their own learning and work hard to achieve their full potential.

We want our school to provide an inspiring and enriching environment that is both safe and stimulating; a school that serves the needs of all our children, whatever their abilities. By fostering their curiosity, imagination, creativity and sense of self-worth, we aim to give all our children the inner resources to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Thank you for accepting this copy of the prospectus for St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit. It is intended to help you know more about the life and work of our school and give you some information about our aims, curriculum, pastoral care provision, general routine, policies and organisation. I would also encourage you to visit our website to find out more about life in St Mary's.

I hope you will encourage your child to take part in and enjoy the many opportunities afforded here and that your association with the school is a long and happy one. We look forward to welcoming you to St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Mary McCann
Principal



Childhood is a unique experience

Respect it

Enjoy it

Protect it

At St Mary's we aim to:

- 1.) Appreciate, respect and value 'childhood' as a unique and very special experience of living.
- 2.) Work closely with our parents and parish in the development of the catholic faith of our pupils.
- 3.) Get to know individual children, respond to their needs and help them achieve their potential.
- 4.) Develop in the children a positive self-image; respect for themselves and respect for others.
- 5.) Enable the children to become confident, independent and accept the uniqueness of their personalities, talents and capabilities.
- 6.) Promote the spiritual, moral, emotional, social, physical, creative, cultural and intellectual development of the children.
- 7.) Equip the children with the skills to cope with the challenges, difficulties, choices, pressures and influences of living in a modern world.
- 8.) Develop in the children an understanding of the need to care for the environment and the world in which we live.

Our Mission Statement:

St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit accepts and shares the responsibility of nurturing in our children the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith within the home and parish.

We wish to promote a way of life inspired by the life and teachings of Christ. We work as a team to provide a stimulating environment, in which each child can feel safe, secure, happy and cared for.

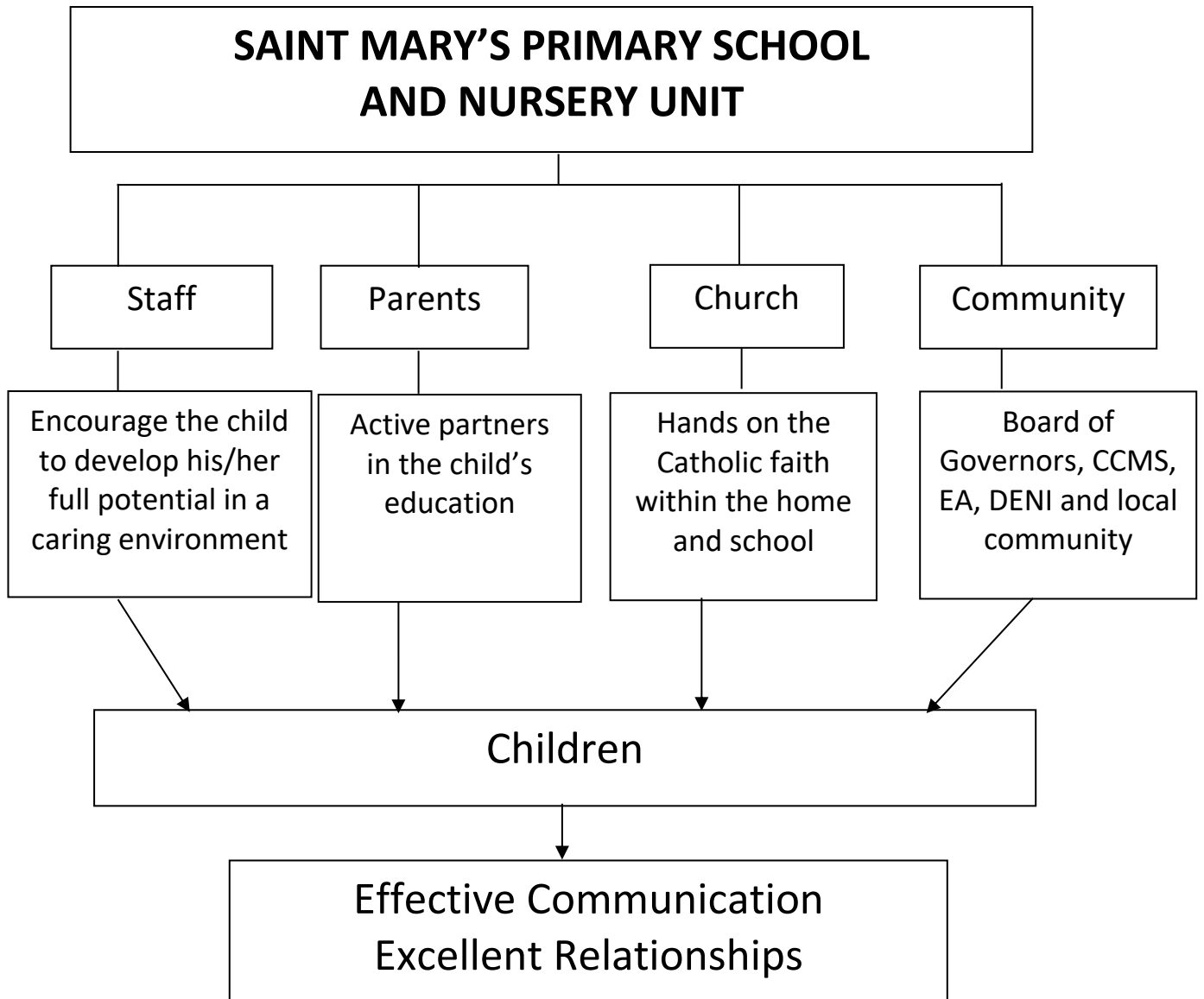
A 'child centred' approach is adopted in all issues.

Excellent relationships and effective communication with all partners involved in the education of our pupils is viewed as central to achieving our vision and aims.

The Board of Governors, principal and all members of staff share these ideas, values and beliefs.



Our Aims and Purposes



GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit
Address: 25 Mullaghboy Road
Bellaghy
Magherafelt
Co Derry
BT45 8HX
Telephone: 028 79386360
E-mail: info@stmarysps.bellaghy.ni.sch.uk
Website: www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk

BOARD OF GOVERNORS:

Chairperson Joe Diamond
Vice-Chairperson Father Pat O'Hagan
Secretary Mrs M McCann
Members Lucia Boyle, Louise Lennon, Francis Hughes, Tracy Scullion, Grainne Dooley

STAFF AND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

TEACHING STAFF

Mrs Mary McCann Principal
Mrs Claire McWilliams Vice-Principal, Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, Special Needs
Mrs Deirdre Mulholland WAU
Mrs Katie Carey PE
Mrs Margaret Fegan Literacy, Music/Art, First Aid,
Miss Grainne Dobbin ICT
Miss Lauren Elliott Numeracy
Mrs Aileen McLea Eco Council
Mrs Fiona McGill Nursery

AXCILLARY STAFF

Clerical Officer Mrs Nicola Scullion/Mrs Carmeen McKeever
Building Supervisor Mrs Sharron McQuade
Cleaners Mrs Donna Donnelly

LEARNING SUPPORT

Mrs Cathy McErlean (Fully trained First Aider)
Mrs Pamela Donnelly
Mrs Megan Hanson
Mrs Mary Curran
Mrs Liz Logan
Mrs Diane Evans
Mrs Zara McKeague
Mrs Pauline Cullen
Miss Hannah Byrne
Miss Sadie Cleary
Mrs Cathy McPeake (Fully trained First Aider)

CANTEEN STAFF

Cook Mrs Joanne Glasgow
Catering Assistants Mrs Dymphna Cartmill
Mrs Joanne McBride
Mrs Mary Convery

Admissions Information

Current Enrolment Number: 204

Approved Admissions Numbers: Nursery 26 pupils, Primary 1: 30 pupils

Age range: 3-11 years

Application for a place in our Nursery Unit or Year one can be applied for via the Education Authority's online portal in January. In selecting children for admission to the school, the Board of Governors will apply the criteria as set down on the EA Admissions Portal

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/pupil-applications-and-grants/admissions>

An application for a place in any other year group can be made to the school office at any time.

THE SCHOOL HOURS

The Nursery Day begins at 9.00am and ends at 11.30am.

The Primary School Day begins at 9.00 a.m. and ends at 2.00 p.m. for Primary 1, 2 and 3, however from the start of October, Primary 3 finish at 3pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and finish on Thursday and Friday at 2pm.

From September, Primary 4 to 7 classes finish every day at 3.00 p.m.

FOUNDATION STAGE

Foundation Stage is a term given to all children in Nursery, Primary 1 and Primary 2. This will provide a more appropriate curriculum for the youngest pupils and ease the change from pre-school to primary school. Formal learning will be introduced gradually, and at a pace that matches this age group's level of development. There is a strong emphasis on play-based learning and on personal, social and emotional development.

KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

Key Stage 1 includes Years 3 & 4, whilst Key Stage 2 remains Years 5 to 7. Pupils will be encouraged to make connections in their learning and see the relevance in what they are studying. There is an increased emphasis on Personal Development across the curriculum. It will be introduced as a specific Learning Area. Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities will be developed throughout all six Learning Areas.



Curriculum

NURSERY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The staff of the Nursery recognises the importance of play as the crucial and principle mode of young children's learning. When planning the curriculum, we provide as diverse and as many play opportunities as possible to promote the optimum learning potential of each child.

Areas of the Curriculum

- Personal and emotional development
- Physical development
- Language and literacy
- Early mathematical experiences
- Early scientific and technological experiences
- Knowledge and understanding of the environment
- Creative and aesthetic development

PRIMARY CURRICULUM

Aims and objectives:

- To develop the young person as an individual.
- To develop the young person as a contributor to society.
- To develop the young person as a contributor to the economy & environment.

Learning Areas:

- THE ARTS (Music, Art & Drama)
- LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
- MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY
- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
- WORLD AROUND US (Geography, Science, History & Technology)
- RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Whole Curriculum Skills and Capabilities:

- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Managing Information
- Being Creative
- Thinking, problem solving and decision-making
- Self-Management



ASSESSMENT

- Communication
- ICT
- Using Mathematics

Assessment / Reporting

Assessment has always been an integral part of the process of learning and teaching. In St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, teachers endeavour to ensure that assessment 'of' learning and assessment 'for' learning remain part and parcel of normal classroom practice.

Within St Mary's, standardised tests are often used to measure a child's achievement in relation to Literacy and Numeracy. The standardised score is on a scale that can be readily compared with standardised scores from other tests. Primary 4 – 7 complete GL Literacy tests which include aspects of Spelling, Grammar and Reading Comprehension along with GL Numeracy which assesses areas of Number, Shape and Space, Data Handling and Measure. Single Word Spelling Tests and the CAT 4 test (IQ) are also completed. Each standardised score is directly comparable and provides information which is used to highlight achievement and understanding while informing the teacher and parents of areas which require focused attention.

Each child is allocated an individual Pupil Profile which contains a summative record of achievement in various subject areas together with other information such as Additional Needs, Medical records, Pupil Progress Reports etc. Parents will meet teachers in Term 1 to discuss children's progress. At the end of each school year parents will be given a written report, which can be discussed with the class teacher.

CCEA EXPECTED ASSESSMENT LEVELS FOR MOST CHILDREN:

End of Key Stage 1-P4; Level 2.

End of Key Stage 2- P7; Level 4

End of Key Stage 3- Year 10; Level 5.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our Religious Education programme is complimented with the Grow in Love series and prepares each child for participation in the liturgy and sacraments of the Catholic Church. Our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme "In the Beginning", a programme adopted and agreed at parochial level.

Pastoral Care Assemblies are held weekly and each class proudly presents a monthly assembly for parents and friends. Mass and other religious ceremonies are offered at special times of the year.

We see the school as a vital part of the Parish of Ballyscullion and take every opportunity to contribute to the life of the parish. Our parish priest Fr Pat O'Hagan visits the school regularly, playing a very full and active role in the life of the school.

PROMOTING READING

We recognise and actively promote the importance of reading. The school has a well-stocked library with an electronic scanning system which is used to track interests and trends. Each class has a timetabled Library time for shared, paired and individual reading.

Primary 4 to 7 use the Renaissance Learning 'Accelerated Reader' Programme which assesses comprehension skills in a fun interactive way. Healthy competition is used to encourage reluctant readers through the use of targets and prizes. Monthly Accelerated Reader Assemblies are held and certificates awarded at all levels.



ADDITIONAL NEEDS IN ST. MARY'S

It is our policy to strive for early identification of children with Additional Needs. On-going assessment of all children, by all staff (including our Nursery), is an integral part of the school curriculum. As a result of this, a teacher may express a concern about a particular child and this initiates the school's additional needs procedure.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (NI) 2005

A new law relating to disability discrimination in education came into effect on the 1st September 2005. The new law is called the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (also known as SENDO). The new law applies to schools, education and library boards, universities and colleges including teacher training and agricultural colleges.

Aims of SENDO:

Sendo aims to

- Introduce disability discrimination law to the education sector in Northern Ireland.
- Strengthen the rights of children with Special Educational Needs to be educated in mainstream education.

More details are available on request.

Disability access is now in operation in the school.

HOMEWORK IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We consider homework to be an excellent home-school link and a valuable discipline for the older child. Homework can be either oral or written.

By oral we mean: { learning and memorising
finding out
physical movement
preparing reading
revision

There is no homework at weekends and holiday times.

Please tell us if your child is having difficulty with homework or if family circumstances make homework stressful



PASTORAL CARE

We strive to develop and maintain excellent relationships between pupils, all staff, parents, church and wider community based on trust and forgiveness.

Policies exist for Promotion of Good Behaviour, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying, Health and Well-Being, Drugs Education, Medical /First Aid, ICT & Internet Use and Safety, and many curricular policies. These are issued to parents on request, are on display in the school and are on school website.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

All medical conditions should be reported to the school. Should your child require urgent medication to be administered during the school day, you are requested to contact the class teacher and / or the principal.

If you have any queries or worries about these arrangements, please telephone the school and speak to the principal.

CHILD PROTECTION

The designated teacher for Child Protection and e-safety is Mrs C McWilliams. In her absence, Mrs M Fegan (Primary) & Mrs Fiona McGill (Nursery) will assume responsibility for child protection matters. We seek to protect our pupils by helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to help keep themselves safe. The problems of neglect or abuse of a child will not be ignored by anyone who works in the school. A copy of the school's policy and procedures is issued to all parents.



USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN ST. MARY'S.

ICT across the curriculum has the potential to transform and enrich pupils' learning experiences and environments. It can empower pupils, develop self-esteem and promote positive attitudes to learning. Additionally, the creative use of ICT has the potential to improve pupils' thinking skills, providing them with opportunities to become independent, self-motivated and flexible learners.

Pupils and staff in St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit develop their ICT skills by engaging in meaningful research and purposeful activities set in relevant contexts. They use ICT to handle and communicate information, solve problems, pose questions and take risks.



Our pupils are given many opportunities to process, present and exchange their ideas and to translate their thinking into creative outcomes that show an awareness of audience and purpose.

Pupils are provided with ample opportunities to collaborate within and beyond the classroom, to share and exchange their work and to exhibit and showcase their learning.

Pupils and staff are experienced users of web-cam and engage with other pupils at local/ national level and we will continue to engage with pupils /staff from various schools in NEELB and the wider school community. Key Stage 2 pupils often engage in STEM challenges and competitions (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), presenting their work in Local Secondary schools or at Queen's and Jordanstown universities.

St. Mary's is fortunate to have fully equipped ICT suite, interactive SMART boards in all classrooms, the hall and library. Each class (P1-7) have seven ipads and within Key Stage 2 (P5-7) the pupils have shared access to twenty five chrome devices to enhance their learning and provide opportunities for challenge-based learning.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A highlight of the year is the annual Christmas Concert when children in the school will be given the opportunity to display their talents on the stage to entertain their parents, relations and friends.

Great importance is placed on music and drama within school and children combine these with prayer during monthly assemblies, which are given by classes on a rota system. All parents and wider family are invited in on this day and it's always superbly well attended.

We are very proud of our school choir, who take part in high-profile competitions with success. Children receive EA tuition in strings and woodwind on a weekly basis.

Sport is very important and the school takes part in Football, and Camogie tournaments organised in South Derry. Fortunately we are able to provide swimming lessons for P4-P7 at Greenvale Leisure Centre's Swimming Pool.

Athletics and games skills are well developed in school; older children experience wide range of games development. Primary 1-7 children receive weekly coaching in Fundamental on a weekly basis funded by Bellaghy GAC. We are very grateful for this financial support. Children compete in the South Derry schools sports/athletics and cross-country races.





UNIFORM

St Mary's PS and NU uniform is bright and modern. It plays an important role in school, promoting a sense of pride, self-confidence, and a feeling of belonging.

- ¼ zip with the school crest
- t-shirt with the school crest
- shorts with the school crest
- unbranded plain track bottoms
- trainers/school shoes

Uniform t-shirt, ¼-zip and school shorts are available to purchase from O'Neills Magherafelt. The children wear plain navy unbranded track bottoms which can be purchased from many retailers. Children may wear trainers or black shoes.

Children must wear appropriate P.E gear, including shorts, tee-shirt and trainers.

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

The school operates a healthy breaktime snack scheme. The following snacks are encouraged: bread, yoghurt, pieces of fresh fruit, raw vegetables, plain biscuit.

DINNERS

The Department of Education have introduced new Nutritional Guidelines for School Meals. Additional funds have been provided to ensure that your child's meal is of a high nutritional content. By modifying recipes, the fat, salt and sugar content will be reduced. The vegetable content of the meal will be increased by incorporating additional vegetables into recipes. The same principle applies regarding fruit (additional fruit will be incorporated into the dessert recipes).

Your child will be provided with a set meal. This will include a choice of main course and sweet keeping to nutritional guidelines. Milk, bread and fresh fruit will be provided with the dinner and is included in the current price of **£2.60** (subject to change for next academic year)

PACKED LUNCHES

We try to encourage a 'healthy lunchbox' and we request that fizzy drinks, crisps or chocolate bars/sweets are not included. One day per week (Monday) is a 'treat day' where the children are allowed one small treat, such as a biscuit bar. Children taking lunch are also encouraged to eat at least one piece of fruit as part of their lunch.



FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S

We have an established Parent Group and these parents have many valuable ideas in making school better for our pupils.

The Parent's aim to promote the interests of the school, to encourage social contacts amongst parents and to carry out activities or functions in support of the school. It does not concern itself with the formal curriculum of the school. The group meets on a regular basis each term.

Contact Parent: Lucia Boyle luciaboyle@hotmail.com for more information.



CHILDREN'S COUNCIL AND ECO COUNCIL

The children's council is made up of 2 children who are voted by the children from each class. Primary 6 and 7 have four members on the council.

The children's council are involved in making important decisions which help to make our school and community a better place for all who share it.

The aims of the children's council are:

- To be involved in making decisions which affect the children's school life such as Positive Behaviour Programme, Playground Activities etc
- To represent the opinions of the children in each class on a whole school basis
- To contribute to and review school development plan.



Pupils represent each class in our school Eco Council, making important decisions and taking action to be an eco-friendly school. We are very proud of our Green Eco Flag status which is a tribute to the continued hard work and effort from all pupils and staff.

The school council and the Eco council are involved in helping to manage our charity work. Here are a few members sorting donations from the Nifty Needles Knitting Group, who donated hand knitted hats, scarves and blankets to the Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal. Both councils and Beth from the charity, send their thanks for the very generous donation.



OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS LEARNING

MORNING CLUB (P1- P7) 8.10AM TO 8.45AM

St. Mary's Primary School provides a morning club to facilitate working parents from 8.10am every morning. The staff ensure the pupils have a very welcoming and cheerful start to the school day. Please contact the school office for Morning Club application forms.

The club currently costs £1 a day per child. (2024-25)

TWO TO THREE CLUB 223

St. Mary's is delighted to offer a 2-3pm club every week, Monday to Friday. This club takes place outside in our playground weather permitting. In poorer weather, the club moves indoors. The aim of this club is to facilitate multiple pick-ups for parents and provide fun activities—playground games, drawing, ICT, sports, etc.

The club currently costs £2.50 a day per child. (2024-25)

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

St. Mary's runs an after school programme using the talents of teaching and non- staff and outside specialists. We aim to provide a wide balance of activities to cater for the requests and interests expressed by our pupils in all areas of creative expression and sport.



CHILD PROTECTION IN ST MARY'S

St Mary's Child Protection Policy meets the requirements of 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - a guide for schools' (Circular 2017/04), 'Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Procedures Manual' and 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland'. It recognises that the interests of the child are paramount. Our school and the nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance document issued by the Department of Education: Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017.

The Policy ensures that all those working in St Mary's are trained to identify various forms of child abuse: (a) Neglect (b) Physical Injury (c) Sexual Abuse (d) Emotional Abuse (e) Exploitation and to follow agreed procedures to protect the children. There is a Code of Conduct for all staff working in St Anne's. All personnel working in the school, including volunteers, are subject to the appropriate vetting as required by Circular 2013/01.

All staff, whether full-time or part-time, paid or voluntary, are responsible for protecting our pupils. A hard copy of the school's Child Protection Policy is given annually to all Nursery and P1 pupils. Pupils joining the school during the academic year also receive a hard copy of the policy. A copy of our Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy are available on our school website and can also be obtained from the school office. An email is sent to the parents of all pupils at the beginning of each school year with a link taking them directly to the school's Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

The following members of staff have special responsibility regarding Child Protection:

Designated Governor for Child Protection: Mrs Tracy Scullion

Designated Teacher for Child Protection and eSafety: Mrs C McWilliams

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs M Fegan

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Nursery): Mrs F McGill

St. Mary's Peer Mediators

Some of our senior school councillors also take on the role of St Mary's Peer Mediator Team. Their role is to take the lead in reinforcing the strong anti-bullying culture we foster within St Mary's. They liaise closely with staff ensuring everyone feels safe and welcome within our school and community.

E-safety At St. Mary's Primary School

Our vision is to create motivated 'life-long' learners using ICT to enhance and extend learning and teaching across the whole curriculum. We understand the responsibility to educate our pupils on e-safety issues; teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and related technologies and raising their awareness of the risks associated with the use of internet technologies and online platforms.

- **The use of the C2k Education Network filtering solution provides security and protection to C2k email accounts and internet access.**
- **Staff must preview any recommended sites before use to ensure their suitability.**
- **Children will have supervised access to Internet resources.**
- **Children are taught what to do if they are presented with inappropriate material.**

St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit

25 Mullaghboy Road, Bellaghy, Magherafelt, Co Derry, BT45 8HX

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