

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

SCHOOL ETHOS AND MISSION STATEMENT

Bellaghy Primary School strives to provide, in partnership with parents, a broad quality education so that all the pupils can reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment promoting self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

INTRODUCTION

Consultation Materials

- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools (A School Guide) 2017
- “Pastoral Care in Schools Child Protection”
- A guide for School Management to the Human Rights Act 1998
- Inter Agency Child Protection Care (1999 DENI)
- Racial Equality in Education. Good Practice Guide (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland)
- Every School A Good School

At Bellaghy Primary School we aim to create **“an atmosphere in which young people feel secure, know that they are valued as individuals, and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development in a healthy and safe environment”**.

(Evaluating Pastoral Care 1999)

At our school, we encourage parents, governors, teachers, other professionals and outside agencies to work together to provide a safe and challenging learning environment, to enable each child to excel in all areas of their development.

“The values which underline successful personal safety cannot be taught didactically but can most effectively be fostered through the ethos of a school and positive role models provided by the adults within the school”.

(Integrating Personal Safety Programmes into the Curriculum CCEA)

THE AIMS OF OUR SCHOOL

Governors and staff are deeply committed to the development of the whole child and this can be evidenced in the overall aims of the school:

- To ensure that each child's introduction to formal education is a happy and caring experience where enjoyment and success are paramount.
- To offer a broad, balanced curriculum which is designed to promote the social, educational, physical, moral, cultural and religious development of each child.
- To help pupils acquire knowledge and basic skills relevant to adult life.
- To maximize the potential of each individual, to develop self-confidence, self-respect, self-discipline and to promote a spirit of tolerance towards others.
- To promote a curriculum where a desire to learn is encouraged and where thinking and reasoning skills are stimulated.

RATIONALE

The quality of pastoral care influences the ethos and tone of the whole school. In today's world there is a legal obligation and a definite need for effective pastoral care in schools.

In the 21st century children are faced with changing home backgrounds and more than one model of a family unit. There are very real challenges in terms of child abuse and parental difficulties in raising children.

Children are living in a world where they are encountering ever-changing messages and influences from society towards sex, drugs and leisure in relation to health. Bullying is a very real issue.

In our school, we aim to maximise children's' learning in all of the above areas in a sensitive and structured manner. We aim to enable the pupils to grow in self-esteem, become informed and have the confidence to make good choices and decisions for their ultimate benefit.

DEFINITION OF PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is concerned with promoting pupils' personal, social, emotional and spiritual development and fostering positive attitudes:

- Through the quality of learning and teaching in all areas.
- Through the effective delivery of our Circle Time and P.D.M.U. programme

- Through the nature of relationships amongst pupils, teachers and other adults in the school.
- Through arrangements for monitoring pupils overall progress, academic, personal and social.
- Through extra-curricular activities and the school ethos.
- Through the prompt and thorough investigation of all incidents of bullying.
- Through the promotion of the positive, inclusive Code of Conduct, which has been drawn up, agreed and understood by all children, staff and parents. (In accordance with D.E. Circular 2003/11)

PERSONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

A number of requirements are basic to each child. Their provision includes the following:-

Physical Needs

1. The development of gross and fine motor skills and of co-ordination.
2. Protecting from hazards (recognising danger in situations or behaviour; safety in water, in sun, on the road; etc saying no when afraid or unhappy; knowing where to get help).
3. The establishment of habits in personal hygiene, including toileting, eating, dressing, keeping warm.
4. Adequate sleep and rest.
5. Medical checks and attention, including dental, sight and hearing.
6. Play.

Emotional Needs

1. Feelings of protection and care.
2. Development of self-esteem, identity, confidence (including confidence to say no when afraid or unhappy) and self-worth through the receipt of reassurance, encouragement, praise, guidance and recognition.
3. Freedom to express ideas and feelings.
4. Development of self-control

Social Needs

1. Acceptance by peers and the ability to interact with respect, tolerance, cooperation and pleasure, including sharing, planning, working and playing together.
2. Meaningful relationships with adults and other pupils based on mutual value and respect and the rights of an individual.
3. Opportunities to decide and act independently.
4. An understanding of the need for rules.

PASTORAL CARE IN THE CURRICULUM

The physical, emotional and social needs of children will be addressed in many ways. A secure, positive family school environment will act as a foundation for relationships and activities in caring for and developing individual children. The children's self-esteem and sense of worth will be developed through all pastoral activities.

Specifically, pastoral care will be effected through:

1. Relationships: sensitive, positive, appropriate and polite interactions will be encouraged between individuals, regardless of status or group: children, parents, teachers, classroom assistants, kitchen staff and supervisors, secretary, caretaker and cleaners, principal and visitors.
2. Whole School Nurturing Approach – all members of staff involved. Language of choice. Restorative approaches and effective use of Positive Behaviour Policy.
3. Consistency of School Rules – Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe
4. PDMU through Strand 1 (Personal Understanding and Health) and Strand 2 (Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community). Respect, tolerance and interest in relations to people's differences; peaceful resolution of disagreement; courteous manners and behaviour in dealing with others will be acknowledged as positive and reinforced through praise and reward. Circle Time sessions will specifically address relevant pastoral issues in conjunction with assemblies.
5. Positive Discipline Policy - high expectations will be expressed regarding daily behaviour in class and around the school; positive behaviour will be rewarded and negative behaviour dealt with sensitively and meaningfully (see Positive Behaviour Policy); parents will be consulted when it is considered appropriate. All children will be encouraged to keep our three rules to keep everyone safe and happy.
6. Joint Charter with St John Bosco PS (Shared Education).

7. Assemblies addressing various linked themes and related awards.
8. School council involved in decision making process.
9. Circle times – a safe environment for children to talk about their feelings and issues important to them.
10. Health Education, through PDMU, will emphasise the value of bodily care, including routines of hygiene and the dangers of substance abuse. The school nurse may visit school to discuss issues around Health Education.
11. Community Contact: children will be encouraged to contribute to the life and needs of the local community through charitable giving, local events (such as carol singing, senior citizen's concert, sports fixtures) and events within the school to which parents and friends of the school are invited (open day, assemblies, Sports Day, concerts, etc.).
12. Religious Education - children will be asked to consider moral and spiritual issues and develop their sense of identity and self-esteem and responsibility.
13. Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Writing and Talking and Listening will enable children to express themselves personally and in ways which will be seen as acceptable to others. They will have opportunities to appreciate and comment positively on the expression of other people. They will be encouraged to stand up for what they believe, assertively and non-aggressively and success will be celebrated.
14. The wearing of uniform, punctuality, regular attendance, homeworks and appropriate parental contact will be seen as a commitment from home to help children gain confidence as a valued member of the school community.
16. Visitors (e.g. PSNI) will also help deliver issues such as road safety, stranger danger, e-safety.
17. An extensive after school programme is on offer for all children and runs alongside our curricular provision to emphasis self-esteem, good health and cooperation etc.
18. Counselling – when funding allows our children have the option of availing of the services of our counsellor if required.
21. Helping Hands programme, other transition programmes in P1 and P7.

LIAISON WITH PARENTS

The support of parents will be sought in implementing policies and enhancing the caring, productive school ethos. At all times, we will strive to develop a positive relationship between home and school, emphasising the value of this partnership. We will continue to promote Bellaghy Primary School as the natural choice of school in the local community.

Daily contact will include homework diaries, communication through Seesaw, telephone calls and informal meetings. More formal interviews will be held at intervals to advise parents of their child's progress and to consult them in relation to decisions. Where possible, parents wishing to speak to teachers or the principal should arrange an appointment. At all times visitors are required to report to Reception and respect security arrangements established for the safeguarding of all children.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

On occasions the particular needs of children will make it necessary to contact people and agencies outside school. Notes will be kept pertaining to such meetings. In addition to parents and named contact the following may be asked for (or given) assistance:

- Social Services - Social Workers and the Designated Teacher will exchange such information as may be required to act in the best interests of the child.
- PSNI - The school will co-operate fully with any enquiries from the PSNI and inform the police in appropriate circumstances. Referral to the police will result from the decision of the Principal, Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher in the Principal's absence. In the unlikely event of any being unavailable the Chairman of the Board of Governors will decide. Operation Encompass is embedded in the school and staff who deal with an Operation Encompass call are trained to deal effectively with the information received from PSNI and support the relevant child.
- School Doctor, Dentist, Nurse and Health Visitor - It will be the practice of the school to assist health visitors and other medical professionals in their caring for children to seek whatever advice and help may be required to ensure their welfare. Parents will be kept informed.
- School Psychology - On occasions the assessment and diagnosis of children with behavioural problems and/or learning difficulties will be requested with the consent of parents.
- Education Welfare - In general matters of conduct, welfare, attendance and punctuality the school will work in partnership with the EWO.

- RISE - On occasions the support of RISE will be sought in agreement with parents to help with specific needs of children.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Ref: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Having responsibility for children during a large part of every day the school is well placed to notice changes in their appearance, behaviour and achievement at an early stage. Our primary responsibility is the welfare of individual children and any concerns about their emotional or physical well-being will be raised with parents. Parents will be asked to update school information regularly, to disclose relevant advice on non-molestation (or other) orders and to inform the school about anything which would cause distress and change to a child, for example a bereavement, family disruption or social problem and so enable the school to be sensitive and supportive to the child's needs as a caring partner. Where evidence or disclosure from a child, raises concerns of abuse, the school will act quickly to follow child protection procedures. The Designated Teacher and the Deputy Designated Teacher will be given regular opportunities to familiarise themselves with requirements, procedures and advice relevant to pastoral care and child protection. All staff, will be kept informed of current Pastoral Care and Child Protection Policies and details relating to specific children as necessary.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Ref: Health and Safety Policy.

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that children remain safe inside the school building, within the grounds and when outside on an educational visit. The premises will be kept locked during class and club times, with admission by use of buzzer/intercom at the main doors. In the event of a child suffering a minor injury in the playground or elsewhere, an Accident Report Form will be completed by an adult. More serious injuries will be referred to the principal or vice-principal. Depending on the nature of the injury, parents may be informed and asked to seek medical advice. In an emergency, medical help will be sought immediately and the parents contacted. The school will encourage children to travel to school and home safely through road safety teaching, advice on not speaking to strangers, etc. The children are encouraged to develop healthy habits through good health and hygiene routines, for example, regular exercise and care of themselves, personal hygiene etc. Most of the healthy aspects are covered by PDMU and P.E. (Also see Healthy Breaks Policy for more details).

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Ref: Positive Discipline Policy

Staff aim to use a positive approach to discipline, including the implementation of reward systems which are outlined in the Positive Discipline Policy. A Positive Discipline Policy provides an agreed course of action which promotes effective teaching and learning, the worth and value of each person and respects the rights of teachers, pupils and all other members of the school community. We aim to use a restorative approach if any difficulties arise and the Policy clearly sets out sanctions to be applied if the situation arises.

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Ref: Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself. Bullying thrives on secrecy, the reluctance of the target to talk about it, and the reluctance of responsible adults to acknowledge its existence. When the target pupil is hurt or distressed by the actions, and the person responsible either knows this and carries on, or does not care about the effect of his or her actions on the other child, the line between harmless teasing and bullying has been crossed. If bullying does occur, the procedures are clearly set out in the Anti Bullying Policy.

R.S.E.

Ref: RSE Policy

RSE should be taught appropriately and sensitively depending on the developmental stage of the child. We believe that RSE is a lifelong process, set within the wider context of societal issues. In Bellaghy Primary School we acknowledge that the learning process begins informally at home long before any formal education takes place. We hope to continue this process through the teaching of RSE. (see RSE policy for more details).

RESPONSIBILITIES

At Bellaghy Primary School, we approach the care of our children in a positive way. We place great emphasis on the well-being and welfare of all the children in our care.

TEACHING STAFF

- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Adhere to the staff code of conduct.
- Develop a good rapport with pupils taught to foster an environment of mutual respect in classroom.
- Plan and deliver PDMU lessons using relevant themes and resources as well as other appropriate material.
- Help children to achieve their potential by setting appropriate expectations and providing support and encouragement.
- Encourage children to accept personal responsibility for their behaviour.
- Be alert to signs of distress and encourage pupils to speak to an appropriate adult.
- Listen to children who come to you with a problem, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Record minor incidents in their Behaviour Book.
- Refer to Anti-Bullying Policy if bullying is suspected.
- Maintain good communication with parents through meetings, reports, written comments on homework/notes home and verbal feedback.
- Attend in-service training on Pastoral Care and related issues.
- Be familiar with the school Pastoral Care Policy and be aware of current educational research and initiatives related to these issues.
- Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.

SUPPORT STAFF

- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Adhere to the staff code of conduct.
- Develop a good rapport with pupils and foster an environment of mutual respect in school.
- Be alert to signs of distress and encourage pupils to speak to an appropriate adult.
- Listen to children who come to you with a problem, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report minor incidents to class teacher.
- Report concerns to class teacher if bullying is suspected.
- Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.
- Attend in-service training on Pastoral Care and related issues

PRINCIPAL

- Attend all relevant training and disseminate to colleagues. Facilitate staff briefings and in-service training.
- Ensure that the policy is a living document which is communicated to the school community.
- Facilitating regular monitoring and review of Pastoral Care procedures.
- Foster effective communication between school and home.
- Adhere to the staff code of conduct.
- Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality

GOVERNORS

- Be familiar with school policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed as appropriate.
- Support staff and parents in the implementation of the policy and procedures.
- Deal with issues fairly, in accordance with legislation and EA Guidelines.
- Consult with external agencies (where appropriate), including Educational Welfare and PSNI.
- Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.

PARENTS/CARERS

- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Help children to achieve their potential by setting appropriate expectations and providing support and encouragement.
- Encourage children to accept personal responsibility for their behaviour.
- Be alert to signs of distress and advise their children to report any concerns to a member of staff.
- Maintain good communication with school by attending organised meetings and informing school of any home issues which may impact pupil.
- Be familiar with the school Pastoral Care Policy and encourage children to behave in accordance with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Work in partnership with the school and respect the sanctions imposed (in accordance with the Positive Behaviour Policy) to promote positive resolutions.

PUPILS

- Act in a respectful and supportive manner to fellow pupils and all members of the school community.
- Speak to a member of staff about any concerns.

- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.
- Raise issues with pupil council representative.
- Accept personal responsibility for behaviour.
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THE PASTORAL CARE CO-ORDINATOR

- Monitor and Evaluate Pastoral Care throughout the school.
- Liaise with all staff to clarify roles, structures and procedures in relation to Pastoral Care.
- Report to Board of Governors

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy sits within a wider portfolio of Safeguarding policies.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors annually.

*Policy Reviewed – October 2024
Review Due – October 2025*