

# Pastoral Care Policy

## Ballyhenry Primary School



“Achieving Potential in a Caring Environment.”

Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
2021	2023	Mrs L Knocker
Date ratified by Board of Governors: 21-04-21		



## PASTORAL CARE POLICY

### **DEFINITION OF PASTORAL CARE**

*'Pastoral Care has been defined as concerning the personal relationships which influences the ethos and tone of the whole school. It is of crucial importance in creating an atmosphere in which young people feel secure, knowing they are valued as individuals and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development in a healthy and safe environment.'*

**T.J. Shaw, Chief Inspector, Evaluating Pastoral Care. DENI 1999**

### **ETHOS of BALLYHENRY SCHOOL**

The ethos, or the distinctive character and atmosphere of Ballyhenry Primary School, should reflect how the school promotes the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of its pupils. It provides the context within which children feel secure, free from emotional and physical harm, and able to discuss their interests and voice their fears and concerns, confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response. It should inform and reassure the parents that their children are being educated in a safe and caring atmosphere.

A climate which fosters effective learning, both within class and about the school, is at the heart of the education process. Such a climate, or ethos, is best promoted through focusing on the creation and maintenance of good relationships: among the staff themselves, teaching and non-teaching; between staff and pupils; among pupils and their peers; between parents and the school; and between the school and the community it serves.

The staff are aware that a good ethos does not come about by chance; it is achieved by the Principal, members of the senior management and staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the informal and formal life of the school community.

In its booklet "Evaluating Schools", the Inspectorate describes a positive ethos as one in which:

- The pupils' confidence and self-esteem are promoted;
- They are encouraged to value one another; and
- They show a strong sense of belonging to the school as a community.

Where the ethos is right, the pupils take a pride in their achievements and recognise the importance of high standards in their work and in their behaviour.

For children the pastoral dimension takes place in the school in two forms:-

- (a) 'The general focus' which requires all teachers in the school to care, guide and advise pupils on personal and educational matters either formally or informally. All

teachers in the school must work together to ensure that each pupil in the school feels cared for.

- (b) 'The specialised focus' ensures that one particular teacher - the class teacher in our school, has a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each pupil in his/her class.

## **RATIONALE**

Ballyhenry Primary School recognises that the academic and pastoral dimensions each have a distinctive but interdependent role. Care and development of the whole person is written into our school policy as a central aim. We believe that the pastoral care of our children is at the heart of teaching, helping the school reach its educational objectives.

We as a school recognise the central role of the pastoral dimension as it maintains a healthy balance between the child as a learner and person. Clearly the pastoral and academic aspects of school life have a distinctive but interdependent contribution to make. Throughout the year a variety of activities are arranged to enhance the daily on-going work of pastoral care and extend the pupils' personal experiences and social skills.

School visits, outdoor education, involvement in the community, membership of school clubs and activities, playing for a school team and being involved in social and fundraising events help all to develop a sense of responsibility and worthwhile participation. Such activities outside the classroom provide pupils with valued and worthwhile experiences in education.

When pupils have a range of opportunities to contribute to, and participate in, the framework of school life, they are more likely to show self-confidence, consideration for others, interest in what they are doing and pride in themselves and their school.

Ballyhenry Primary School is a Rights Respecting School which means that everyone puts the rights of children at the heart of our school. These rights are outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The most relevant rights to this policy include:

**Article 3**

All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

**Article 19**

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

**Article 28**

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level that you can.

**Article 29**

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

This policy supports the school in promoting a caring, supportive environment in which the staff and pupils can work in an atmosphere of mutual respect. As such pastoral care permeates all aspects of the curriculum.

## POLICY AIMS

To:

- provide a safe, secure and caring learning environment in which the pupils and staff can feel supported, valued and members of the school community;
- instil in the pupils a sense of personal worth and intellectual, moral and spiritual development;
- encourage the pupils to have a sense of personal accountability for their own actions and learning;
- empower pupils in building and monitoring good relationships with pupils and staff;
- promote an appreciation of life and respect for the world in which we live;
- help pupils to realise that Ballyhenry Primary School is a community in itself and also part of the larger community so that they develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards themselves as well as in their social relationships with others;
- promote the school's Positive Behaviour Policy which respects the rights and responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents/carers;
- provide pupils with the personal, social and life skills necessary for a successful fulfilling and happy future;
- to develop effective school-home liaison in order to maintain parental support and co-operation.

All connected to the school community will work in a spirit of mutual respect. Where such a spirit permeates a school, the success of the Pastoral Care Policy will be significantly strengthened.

### School Charter

Our School Charter has been written and agreed by all pupils through Class and school Councils. It is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child' and has been shared with all stakeholders.

In Ballyhenry we are **SAFE-READY-RESPECTFUL**. These are the key words we use to ensure that we have clear expectation for our behaviour and how we treat each other. We are relentlessly consistent in our approach.



**THE BALLYHENRY WAY**

For a safe and happy school we are expected to be

**SAFE**      **READY**      **RESPECTFUL**

- Wonderful Walking;
- Keep our hands and our feet to ourselves;
- Exercise self-control.

- Arrive at school on time;
- Wear our uniform;
- Look after our belonging;
- Legendary Line-ups.

- Respect everyone in school;
- Be truthful, well-mannered and kind;
- Take pride in our school;
- Set a good example to others.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As the class teacher has the opportunity to get to know each member of his/her class very well over the course of the academic year, he/she does have a central role in the pastoral dimension.

In some instances it may be necessary to inform the Principal/Pastoral Care co-ordinator of aspects of a pupil's welfare, academic, personal or otherwise which may be causing particular concerns. The Principal will also keep a pupil's class teacher aware of any concerns he is aware of with respect to the pupil's pastoral care.

### **Pastoral Care Co-ordinator**

*Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Mrs L Knocker*

The pastoral care co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating pastoral care throughout the school. In conjunction with the Principal and staff, this includes:

- liaison with teachers, parents/carers and the external support agencies;
- attending relevant training;
- co-ordinating the provision of school-based training;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Pastoral Care Policy.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team will support all staff in their efforts to achieve the aims of this Pastoral Care Policy.
- They will assist the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator in the monitoring, evaluation and review of the effectiveness of this policy.

### **The Class Teacher**

The class teacher should become aware of situations early and, where appropriate, intervene positively and modify behaviour.

The class teacher should have detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each pupil in the class. With this knowledge, the teacher can integrate the work of the school, parent/carer and others to support the learning and development of each pupil.

Relationships with their teachers and other pupils influence pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Consequently, the teachers should:

- ensure that learning takes place in a happy atmosphere within the classroom;
- encourage pupil motivation and commitment to tasks in hand;
- employ a range of teaching strategies in response to pupils' perceived needs;
- give pupils responsibility for some of their own learning;
- provide pupils with appropriate tasks which challenge and stretch them;
- through praise, recognition and displays of pupils' work, promote a sense of achievement;
- accept responsibility for standards of behaviour in own classroom through the effective implementation of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy;

- ensure that knowledge of particular home circumstances and other relevant information is passed on to the Pastoral Care co-ordinator and other relevant teachers including the teacher who inherits the class;
- as appropriate liaise with parents/carers, Principal, Senior Teacher, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, and/or the Designated Teacher for Child Protection;
- ensure that attitudes, expectations and actions are influenced by knowledge of particular family situations and/or home circumstances;
- be responsible for standards of attainment, dress, punctuality and attendance within own class.

**All Staff should:**

- promote the values of the School's Code of Conduct;
- value each pupil and treat every child as an individual;
- provide friendly support and reassurance to build pupils' confidence;
- make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety of pupils;
- place an emphasis on the reinforcement of positive behaviour, while carrying out consistently and fairly the school's Positive Behaviour Policy;
- build up a working knowledge of the pupils, both as individuals and collectively;
- encourage pupils to become increasingly responsible for their own behaviour;
- display a positive and caring attitude to children;
- as appropriate liaise with other staff eg., teachers, non-teaching staff, Pastoral Care co-ordinator, Senior Leadership Team, Designated Teacher for Child Protection and/or the Principal.

**Pupils**

We encourage pupils to develop:

- independence of mind and to take responsibility for their own actions;
- self-respect and self-discipline;
- an understanding of their own strengths and limitations, their personal qualities, values and attitudes;
- a respect for other people and their way of life;
- tolerance and an understanding of differences;
- an understanding of the world in which we live.

**Parents**

We welcome parents to be involved with the pastoral care in school:

- be involved in their child's education by support and encouragement of the child's learning at school and at home;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- ensure that their child is prepared for school both physically and emotionally;
- inform the school of any factors which may affect their child's progress and well-being;
- support school policies in relation to pastoral care;
- play their part in implementing agreements made with the school in respect of their child.

**Governors**

Governors will:

- be kept informed about proposed changes to the pastoral care policy;
- be invited to participate in relevant training as appropriate;
- monitor the implementation of the school's Pastoral Care Policy.

### **RANGE OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES**

Opportunities to be provided at the appropriate stages of development are included in the following:

- All curricular areas - particular reference is given to Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and Paths Plus;
- Promotion of the School Charter;
- Use of Golden Time;
- Circle Time;
- Use of outside agencies;
- Extra-curricular activities
- Educational visits (including residential trips);
- Informal and formal rewards; and
- School assemblies.

### **LIAISON WITH PARENTS/CARERS**

As school is an extension of the home, and parents/carers are the primary educators of children, we should see parental/carer involvement as essential. Communication with, and co-operation of, parents/carers is necessary for the successful education of children socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We seek to communicate with the parents/carers in a variety of ways:

- Letters home;
- Weekly newsletter;
- Emails and updates
- Written reports – distributed in June;
- Parental/carer interviews – both formal and informal;
- Contact through Education Welfare Officer (EWO);
- Parent Teachers' Association (PTA);
- Verbal contact – messages / phone calls;
- Verbal contact – initiated by parents/carers;
- 'Open Door Policy' parents/carers welcome to make an appointment to speak to the Principal or class teacher. Informal discussion is encouraged if time is available;
- Curriculum involvement Eg. Project work/homework;
- Parents/carer invited to the school to meet with the Principal or class teacher;
- Parent/carer presentations;
- Talks, discussions,
- Social evenings / events.

### **LIAISON WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

After appropriate consultation and communication, a range of agencies may be utilised each with a particular specialism: For example:

- EA NE Region Officers;
- Educational Welfare Service;
- School Educational Psychology Service;
- PSNI;
- Clinical Medical Officer & School Nurse; and
- Department of Health and Social Services.

### **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy is linked with the following school policies which include:

- Child Protection/Safeguarding Children;
- Positive Behaviour;
- Intimate Care;
- Special Educational Needs (including Gifted and Talented)
- Use of Reasonable Force;
- Anti-Bullying;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Drugs
- Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED);
- Attendance;
- Managing Attendance at Work;
- Circle Time;
- E-Safety;
- Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones and Related Technologies;

#### **RESOURCING:**

Although most situations will be addressed within the classroom, time will be made available for visits, interviews, consultations etc. It is also our intention to build up and maintain a store of materials useful in the context of the pastoral dimension. Textbooks, reference books, case studies, circulars, support and guidance materials, correspondence, children's work etc., can be gathered. Much of this material will be linked to PDMU and the school's Health Education programme but all members of staff will keep specific resources on key issues as the occasion arises.

#### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

Staff are provided with opportunities to attend in-service training in the area of pastoral care. This can be facilitated during directed time and staff development days as well as formal and informal communication between individual members of staff. The pastoral care co-ordinator will also endeavour to keep staff informed of what training is available from outside the school. As needs are recognised and communicated they will be addressed in the appropriate manner. Outside

#### **STAFF WELFARE.**

It is widely recognised in the world of work that care of staff is vital to ensure that stress and low morale do not jeopardise the success and prosperity of school life.

In schools, high pupil morale and expectations are difficult to establish and sustain without high teacher morale and expectations.

At school level the promotion and development of staff welfare and development is an obvious responsibility of the Board of Governors, Principal and Senior Leadership Team but it is also the mutual responsibility of all colleagues in school.

#### **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

This component of pastoral care refers to the school's Child Protection Policy. This policy puts in place procedures to ensure that pupils are protected from physical and emotional harm, from neglect and sexual abuse.

#### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The teaching staff will monitor the progress academically and pastorally of children in their classes. Where a pastoral concern is identified about the well-being of any child, records will

be kept of incidents or concerns and appropriate action taken if necessary. As a pupil progresses through the school, records of pastoral concerns or issues will be passed onto the child's next teacher. If appropriate the Pastoral Care co-ordinator will be informed.

**REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in light of new information/ recommendations.

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