

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

We believe that the high quality of teaching and learning can only be achieved when all members of staff are fully committed to creating an environment of care and trust in which our children feel secure, knowing that they are valued as individuals. This environment is based on good relationships and mutual respect between staff, pupils and parents.

Pupils

The school believes that children learn most effectively in an atmosphere of care and trust which promotes the emotional and physical welfare of pupils.

It is the task of the school to ensure that

- The children feel secure and free from emotional and physical harm and are able to express their concerns in the knowledge that any concerns are received sympathetically and that appropriate action is taken.
- Planning for the taught curriculum integrates the pastoral dimension within its content, including aspects of health education.
- All staff are well informed in the area of child protection and have a responsibility to ensure the well-being of pupils by creating a secure and positive learning environment in which children can gain in confidence and self-esteem
- The school has realistically high expectations of success for all pupils.
- Approaches to teaching and learning include a range of strategies, independent, group and whole class teaching matched to the learning needs and abilities of the children, which promote enjoyment in learning and provide opportunities for each child to succeed.
- Learning outcomes are clearly identified in order to ensure children's motivation by giving them a clear understanding of the purposes and goals of their learning experiences.
- Classroom organisation ensures the safety of pupils while giving opportunities for independence and control over their own learning.
- The school has a high expectation of pupil behaviour. Through our positive Behaviour Management Plan we encourage good behaviour at all times and help children appreciate the need for and value of self-discipline.

- There is effective liaison between the school and representatives of appropriate external support agencies in relation to the care and protection of pupils.
- Teachers encourage pupils to always give of their best through a system of positive rewards within the classroom.
- There is support and encouragement for those whose special needs require special provision.
- The achievements of all pupils, whether within or outside the classroom are recognised, valued and celebrated by the school, thus enhancing the pupils' self esteem.
- Approaches to marking are positive, praising and rewarding effort and success while encouraging children to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a range of interests and achieve success in learning outside the formal curriculum through opportunities provided for extra curricular activities.
- There are good relationships and mutual respect between teachers and pupils and among the pupils within and outside the classroom.

The pupils are taught to work with their peers and so they grow to value and respect the contributions and views of others.

- The information received from formal and informal assessment is used to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The care and welfare of pupils is ensured through effective liaison between the school and the feeder schools at both pre-school and post-primary level.

Cross-referencing the following policies is essential in delivering the Pastoral Care Policy.

These policies include:

- Health and Safety
- Bullying
- Discipline
- Child Protection
- Personal Care
- Photographs in School
- Use of Reasonable Force
- Drugs/misuse of substances
- Acceptable use of the Internet
- Educational Visits

Parents

We recognise the important role parents play in their children's education. We value their co-operation and the support they give in the life of the school.

It is the task of the school to ensure that:

- There is a close relationship with parents emphasising mutual support, co-operation and responsibility for the moral, social, emotional and academic development of the child.
- There is effective communication between the school and parents. As partners with schools in their children's education, parents are consulted and asked to give feedback on the school's pastoral care arrangements.
- The parents know and have confidence in the school's pastoral arrangements.
- Parents are kept informed on the progress and well being of their children through parent teacher meetings, the annual school report and written feedback.
- Parents are aware that the school welcomes those who wish to discuss the needs of their own children.
- There is effective liaison between parents and the school in attempting to resolve difficulties relating to indiscipline and the care and welfare of pupils.
- There is effective liaison with parents and appropriate external support agencies: that indiscipline and other related problems are tackled by the school in partnership with parents and representatives of these agencies.

It is the task of parents to ensure that

- They keep the school informed of any changes regarding their child's circumstances, e.g. change of address, change of telephone numbers or domestic arrangements. The school treats all such information in the strictest confidence.
- They furnish the school with up-to-date emergency contact telephone numbers.

Staff

The school greatly values the loyalty, dedication and commitment given by all members of staff, teaching, auxiliary and ancillary. Staff welfare, morale and development are vital elements in the area of Pastoral Care.

It is the task of the school to ensure that:

- Staff work in a pleasant and safe environment and achieve job satisfaction.
- Staff are treated at all times with courtesy and respect by colleagues, parents and pupils.
- There is positive recognition from the Board of Governors for the work carried out in the school.
- There is effective communication between Principal, Senior Management and Staff.
- There is regular consultation among all members of staff in decision-making arrangements.
- There is positive feedback and praise from the Principal and Vice Principals.
- Staff have appropriate support from the management of the school and from other members of staff if required.
- Staff have access to CCMS Welfare Service.
- The particular strengths, expertise and interests of members of staff are fully utilised.
- There are development opportunities for members of staff through attendance at external or school-based courses.
- There are clearly defined job descriptions for members of staff.
- There is commitment to fairness and transparency in relation to employment and promotion procedure.
- There is an induction programme for beginning teachers and new members of staff.

The Pastoral Care of staff is encompassed in various policies and procedures, which have been officially adopted by the Board of Governors of the school e.g.

- Policy against Harassment in the Workplace
- Scheme for Occupational Maternity Leave
- Scheme for Occupational Paternity leave
- Scheme for Occupational Adoption Leave
- Procedure for Awarding of Management Allowances

- Scheme for Career Breaks for Teachers
- School Salary Policy
- CCMS Disciplinary Procedure for Teachers
- Scheme for the Indemnification of Teachers
- Scheme for the Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Maintained Schools
- Policies and Procedures set down in the CCMS Management File i.e.

Scheme of Management

Guidelines for Board of Governors

Scheme for appointment of Teachers

Management Arrangements

The Board of Governors and the Senior Management Team should provide clear and committed leadership in the field of pastoral care. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined, understood and accepted and lines of communication between various tiers of management should be open and well used.

It is the task of the Principal and Senior Management team to ensure that:

- The welfare of all registered pupils is safeguarded and promoted.
- Each member of staff is valued, that relationships among staff are harmonious and that morale is high.
- There is effective communication between the Principal, SMT, and the staff.
- There is effective consultation among all members of staff in decision-making arrangements.
- The staff has up-to-date information on issues such as child protection, bullying, and health and safety; and that through the relevant co-ordinators, they are aware of their legal responsibilities and the requirements and recommendations of DENI circulars.
- The particular strengths, expertise and interests of individual teachers are fully utilised.
- The needs of staff for training are met through attendance at external courses or through the organisation of suitable school-based professional development.
- The resources available to the school, both human and material are used efficiently and for the benefit of the pupils.
- The school's provision for pastoral care is monitored on a regular basis.

Mission Statement

"This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities."

.....Archbishop Oscar Romero