

**Pastoral Care Policy**

**Date Reviewed & Ratified by Board of Governors: February 2023**

**Signed by………………………………………………………………………**

**………………………………………………………………………**

**Next Policy Review Date: February 2024**

**PASTORAL CARE**

**Rationale**

It is important to all of us in St. Patrick’s Primary School that each person is happy, secure, respected and has a positive attitude to learning. Therefore, we desire to integrate the academic, social and religious dimension of the school’s energy so that an atmosphere of care and respect prevails within the positive learning environment in this Catholic and community school. We hope to create an atmosphere in our school where God’s Love is experienced by all members of the school community.

In each of the school policies we have integrated this commitment. However, we feel that the pastoral dimension is particularly relevant to the following areas of school life and that the policies and procedures should carry this commitment: Religious Education, Positive Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Health and Safety, Child Protection, Drugs Education, Staff Welfare / Development, Special Needs, RSE.

In St. Patrick’s P.S., the pastoral care structures are based on a shared understanding of what it means to be a Catholic School. This shared understanding appreciates that:

* Each person is unique and worthy of respect.
* Pastoral care is for the entire school community and not just for those experiencing difficulties.
* Each member of the school community has responsibility for the caring life of the school.
* Pastoral care permeates the life of the school and is not imposed but is a loving response to discerned needs.
* It avails of the support and expertise provided by statutory and voluntary bodies in the wider community.
* Appropriate resources and training will be provided to ensure the effective implementation of the programme.

**Aims**

Pastoral Care aims to:

1. Create an environment of a caring Christian community inspired by the values of Jesus so that each child and member of staff feels valued.

2. Ensure the welfare and safety of all.

3. Ensure concern for the development of the whole person.

4. Develop within each child the skills necessary to promote self-discipline, self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and social awareness.

5. Promote positive attitudes to learning.

6. Encourage enjoyment and fulfilment in learning experiences.

7. Encourage self-respect and respect for others

8. Develop a sense of responsibility and a sense of honesty and fair play.

9. Encourage respect for property.

10. Develop a positive partnership with parents and local community to facilitate the child’s holistic development.

**Principles**

We recognise that Pastoral Care involves pupils, parents, staff and local community and requires a caring commitment by all.

The Pastoral dimension in our school is to be seen in all areas of our teaching. It is to be seen in the way we communicate with the children and also in how we communicate with each other. We aim to foster and promote pupils’ confidence, self- esteem and motivation by praising and rewarding success and giving attention to their emotional, social and physical well-being.

The Pastoral dimension should also be most visible in our ethos, the curriculum, home - school links and in The Positive Behaviour Policy. The Pastoral dimension is also evident in the extra-curricular activities of our school: swimming, football, gaelic and soccer, art/craft, choir, drama/musicals, Spanish, Cycling Proficiency, Mandarin/Confucius Programme etc.

**Skills To Be Developed**

1. Good communication at all levels

2. Creativity of staff and pupils

3. Confidence and self-esteem and self- reliance

4. Team work among pupils and pupils /staff

Many of these skills we hope will be acquired through the curriculum, and in particular, developed further through work in a variety of other areas e.g.

PDMU/CRED/TSPC, School Assemblies, Local Feis, Cycling Proficiency, Drugs Education, Healthy Breaks/Healthy Lunch Boxes, Anti Bullying Week Activities,

Class Behaviour Rewards, Pupil of the Week, Talent Show, Prizegiving.

**Everyday Experiences**

Our Pastoral Care Policy translates into the everyday experiences of each person in the classroom and in the school at all times. The school management team, teachers, supervisory assistants and classroom assistants must be ever vigilant to ensure that an atmosphere of trust and harmony prevails. They must try as far as is possible to anticipate likely areas of difficulty and to take steps to ensure the safety and well-being of each person.

**Parent Liaison**

In St. Patrick’s, liaison with parents is seen to be crucial in ensuring that the children are feeling happy, safe and in the best position to develop to the best of their ability.

* Parents should be aware that they are welcome at any time to arrange a meeting for a suitable pre-arranged time to discuss the needs of their own child/children.
* Parents should be consulted and asked to give feedback on our Pastoral Care Systems.
* Parents should get information on Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Positive Behaviour, Anti Bullying and E-Safety from the school.

Liaison with parents is considered central to the school’s focus and is evident through various activities.

1. P.1. Induction Programme
2. Individual Class Parent Information Evenings
3. Parent-teacher meetings will be arranged annually
4. Annual Book Fair
5. Paired Reading and PIN meetings
6. Meetings for Holy Communion and Confirmation to be arranged by chaplain
7. Monthly Newsletter sent home
8. Homework diaries for two way communication.
9. School website

10.Text messages

**Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors of St. Patrick’s sees its role in respect to Pastoral Care as follows:

* To ensure that the school is effectively meeting its statutory obligations.
* To ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils and staff in St. Patrick’s are safeguarded and promoted.
* To ensure that roles, responsibilities, procedures and practices of the school are clear to all and are implemented systematically and consistently.
* To ensure through effective monitoring and evaluation that further development and training issues are addressed.

**Liaison with External Agencies.**

In St. Patrick’s, we are committed to working with external agencies to help promote the safety, well-being and care of all. Such groups include, E.A. Services, Child and Adolescent Teams, Extern, E.W.O., Social Services, School Nurse, PSNI, CCMS, Action for Children (Fermanagh Hub), Women’s Aid

**Physical, Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Pupils & Staff**

St. Patrick’s Mullanaskea understands that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as those that may lead to the need to self-isolate at home and school closures, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents.

For children returning to school after a period of absence, staff will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupils’ mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy.

Where possible, St. Patrick’s Mullanaskea will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents/carers and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. The staff of St. Patrick’s Mullanaskea will be alert to mental health concerns in children who are at home, and act on these immediately, following our reporting procedures. At St. Patrick’s Mullanaskea, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents & carers). We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important to our lives physical health.

At St. Patrick’s Mullanaskea, we endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress. We aim to ensure that the children are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support. At St. Patrick’s Mullanaskea, we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a proactive way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

* Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
* Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
* Promoting self-esteem, and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
* Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
* Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
* Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs.
* Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
* Developing an open culture where it is normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

* Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
* Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
* Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
* Promoting opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
* Promoting opportunities to reflect
* With the use of the Listening Ear Box
* With the use of P.D.M.U. lessons
* With the use of the Drawing and Talking Programme

Supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school. At St. Patrick’s Mullanaskea we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance. Staff are supported pastorally and have access to enriched opportunities.

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health

**The Promotion of Healthy, Respectful Relationships including the use of Language, Behaviours and Consent**

The school promotes healthy relationships in all of its practices and policies. Healthy relationships are manifested by how we treat each other through our use of tolerant language, appropriate behaviours and consent. This pervades through all of school life including at extra-curricular activities, school trips, class time, play time and at other social events such as dinnertime in the canteen. This value set is also appropriate when children are online. Any contravention of these basic rules is considered disrespectful, and reminders will be constantly issued on how to be the appropriate.

Each week at assembly, examples of good behaviours are promoted and rewarded through the Pupil of the Week Certificate as well as by the Principal in her weekly address to the staff and children. This transcends to all classes where each staff member reiterates these values. School policies reflect this and are shared accordingly with the parents and Governors.

**Operation Encompass**

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children’s exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

When the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day, to share this information with a member of the safeguarding school. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide direct or indirect support to this child and family.

This information will be treated like any other child protection information as per DE Circular 2020/07. It will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete the online Operation Encompass training, so they able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Ongoing monitoring is an integral part of our policy. Mrs. Ciara O’Connor is the co-ordinator for Pastoral Care. Support will be given to those teachers who require assistance in carrying out any aspect of the pastoral role.

In St. Patrick’s, we believe that our Pastoral Care Programme will only be effective if we regularly share it with the whole school community – pupils, staff (including ancillary and auxiliary), parents and governors. It underpins every aspect of school life.