

**St Michael's PS
Dunnamanagh**



Pastoral Care Policy

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Date approved: _____

Updated on: 22nd June 2020

Review Due: June 2022

Our Mission

St Michael's Primary School is an important part of the local community. It seeks to promote Catholic values and a friendly caring atmosphere whilst maintaining high educational standards. Parents are always welcome in the school and are invited and encouraged to support and participate in various activities and events during the school year.

Our Mission Statement was drawn up by parents at our first meeting as St Michael's PS on Tuesday 10th September 2020. It reflects us coming together and moving forward as one school:

Forward Together in Love

Rationale

Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith. It involves all members of the school community, children, parents and all adults involved in contributing to the wellbeing of each child.

We strive to create an atmosphere in our school where God's love is experienced by all members of the school community. The atmosphere of our school is based upon good relationships between staff, pupils and parents. As a staff we work as a team, respecting each other's roles and recognising individual talents and expertise. We are concerned with the individual needs and overall well-being of each child.

We recognise and value the important role which parents play in their child's education. Every effort is made to ensure that parents feel welcome, that they are made aware of the school's aims, objectives and policies and of their child's individual needs, progress and achievements. We expect our parents to co-operate with us to achieve these goals.

Definition

Pastoral Care is a set of systems, procedures and programmes which attempts to meet the totality of needs of the children in our care, allowing them to develop to their full potential, equipped with the necessary skills to cope in life. Pastoral Care addresses children's personal, social, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical needs and fosters positive relationships.

Aims

The aims of our Pastoral Care Policy are:

- To create a safe and secure environment for all.
- To promote our Catholic ethos - our values and attitudes.
- To promote positive relationships between parents, staff and pupils.
- To develop an awareness of both rights and responsibilities.
- To promote the good health and emotional well-being of staff, pupils and parents.
- To provide a supportive learning environment where each child is enabled to achieve competence in all curricular areas within his/her own capabilities.

- To implement a system of pastoral care, which encourages self-respect, respect for others and personal and social development for pupils, teachers and others in the school community.
- To heighten self-esteem, confidence and independence.
- To help each child to acquire knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live through a broad and balanced curriculum.
- To provide pupils with the necessary skills to cope with possible threats to their personal safety.
- To encourage a sensitivity to the needs of others.
- To develop a love of learning.
- To promote meaningful consultation with all staff, pupils and parents.
- To promote pupil participation.
- To develop a partnership with parents to facilitate the child's overall development.
- To develop links with the local community.
- To ensure positive experiences for pupils attending our school for the first time.
- To advise upon and ease the transition from primary to secondary school so that appropriate placement is made which will ensure future academic and personal development.

Staff and Governors

Staff and Governors are committed to:

- Providing a safe, secure, stimulating learning environment.
- Ensuring that the needs and aspirations of pupils are at the heart of all decision-making.
- Providing high standards of teaching and learning.
- Self-evaluation and the raising of standards.
- Enabling staff and pupils to express their views and ensuring that their views are considered.
- Developing self-esteem and self-confidence and to encouraging an appreciation of personal achievements and aspirations.
- Creating an inclusive environment where diversity among individuals is embraced, celebrated and responded to and equal opportunities are available
- Fostering, in partnership with parents and pupils, a system of pastoral care which promotes respect for oneself, others and the environment and which develops important values such as self-discipline, honesty, kindness and forgiveness.

- Ensuring that each pupil leaves our school equipped, as far as he/she is personally capable, with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for living in a changing environment.
- To promote the development of a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle.
- Establishing a creative and secure educational partnership between the school, the home, the parish and the wider community.
- Developing a love for learning and a motivation to ask questions and to make informed decisions and to prepare pupils to take a positive role in future learning, beyond St Michael's P.S.
- Ensure that each child has a respect for and a commitment to their faith. That they can pray and have developed a sense of a relationship with God and a sense of belonging to a faith community.
- Reinforcing positive behaviour and attitudes.

The Role of the School Chaplain

The school Chaplain supports the Primary School providing friendship to the children and the staff. Fr. Eamon Mc Devitt meets the staff and the children very regularly, visiting classes, celebrating Masses, preparing for the sacraments and arranged visits to the church. Fr. Mc Devitt also takes time to speak to the children on a more informal basis during break-time or lunch time. The Chaplain has a key role in supporting the Pastoral Care system in the school, particularly at a time of bereavement, illness or some other crisis. The pupils and staff know that the Chaplain is there to support them

The Role of the Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator for Pastoral Care is the Principal, Mrs J Carlin. She promotes a network of caring relationships at every level of school life. When necessary, Mrs Carlin advises staff on curriculum content and relevant issues relating to Pastoral Care. She works in close collaboration with the School Chaplain Fr Mc Devitt, school staff, teaching and the non-teaching to ensure that Pastoral Care is regarded as a shared responsibility.

The Role of the Teacher

As teachers in a Catholic school we accept the intrinsic nature of teaching as a vocation and in doing so we aim to:

1. Provide a caring atmosphere for all pupils and to encourage pupils to be caring people.
2. Accept each child with his/her strengths and weaknesses and develop the potential of each child.
3. Encourage the physical, social and moral welfare of each pupil.
4. Develop within each child the skills necessary to promote self-discipline, self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and social awareness.
5. Develop a sense of responsibility and to encourage self-respect, respect for others and respect for property.

6. Promote positive attitudes to learning and to encourage enjoyment and fulfilment in learning experiences.
7. Each class teacher is responsible for knowing the children they teach and for delivering the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Teachers will provide a listening ear and provide reassurance.
8. It is the classroom teacher who will create a climate in which the children feel safe and secure and the teacher will encourage pupil motivation and commitment.
9. The personal and social development of pupils will grow from the close relationship between the teacher and the pupils e.g. recognising personal achievement.
10. Through daily classroom practice the self- esteem of children will be developed, positive attitudes will be promoted, and teacher will raise pupils' social awareness, e.g. PATHS, Circle time, PDMU/RE Curriculum, quality feedback, etc. There will be an opportunity to explore these attitudes and those of others.

The class teacher will endeavour to provide time for children to reflect on what they have learned and provide opportunities for children to evaluate their own learning so that children will appreciate their own development and adopt a positive attitude to learning. The teacher and the children will discuss and develop class rules (Class Charter) at the start of each academic year, and these, together with the school 'Golden' rules will be reinforced throughout the year. The school 'Golden' rules are used to promote a positive behavioural approach. These rules are:

- We are gentle
- We are kind and helpful
- We listen
- We are honest
- We work hard
- We look after property

The most important aspect of the Pastoral Dimension is the quality of interaction between pupil and teacher. We recognise that Pastoral Care involves both pupils and teachers and requires a caring commitment by all teachers.

This is achieved by teachers sharing duties and supporting one another. Adults and parents work together as a team and work for the common good of the children in our care.

The Pastoral dimension in our school is to be seen in all areas of our teaching. It should be evident in the way we communicate with the children and in how we communicate with each other.

The Role of the Classroom Assistant, Student Teacher or Volunteer

- Understanding and having a commitment to the general ethos of the school.
- Being a partner with the teacher in providing a caring approach.
- Helping the children to achieve their personal goals.
- Developing a team approach where each member has a role to play.

- Being aware of the children's individual backgrounds and experiences and individual needs and aspirations.

Ancillary staff will also be involved in the creation of a caring and cheerful environment wherein personal and social development may take place.

Parental Involvement

Our Pastoral Care system recognises and values the important role that parents play in their child's education - therefore we try to ensure that they become active participators in the child's education process. To facilitate this, we make parents aware of our aims and policies and welcome a two-way communication system, which ultimately benefits the child. The school as a community should be an extended family where everyone works for the common good. Parents will always be made welcome and encouraged to feel that their role is important and appreciated. Parents, teachers and staff will share duties as part of a mutual team. This partnership with good communication and cooperation will be necessary for the all-round development of each child.

Parents are asked to inform teachers regarding any pupil's health or emotional problems on data capture sheets at the beginning of each school year or if problems arise during the year by contacting the Principal.

The following is a list of some ways in which communication with parents will take place in St Michael's Primary School:

- School Prospectus
- School Policies
- School Letters
- Homework Diary
- Informal notes from class teacher
- Quality feedback/marking of pupils' work
- Parents' Noticeboard
- School Website
- School Mass, Celebrating the Sacraments
- Induction Days and New Beginning booklet for Primary 1 pupils
- Workshops/training opportunities for parents
- Parent-Teacher Meetings
- End of Year Reports
- Verbal Communication (Telephone Calls/ Text Messages)

- Contact through Education Welfare Officer (EWO), School Nurse, Educational Psychologist.
- Fundraising events
- Prize-Giving, Special Assemblies, Sports Day, School Performances
- Pre-sacramental meeting (Year 4 and 7)
- Transfer interviews for Year 7 pupils to advise on appropriate placement.

Monitoring, Recording and Evaluating

Class teachers will monitor the progress of each child in their care, both academically and pastorally. Any concerns will be reported to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs K Carlin) or in her absence the Deputy Designated. (Mrs J Carlin)

Resources

Most issues will be addressed within the classroom environment. However, on occasion when time is required to follow up an issue, time will be given to the staff member to carry this through, e.g. Interview, meeting, consultation, etc.

Materials on Circle time, Anti-Bullying, Promoting Positive Behaviour etc are available to staff and can be requested from the Designated Teacher at any time.

Liaising with External Links

If a teacher is concerned about a child either physically, emotionally, intellectually or socially, the teacher will communicate this to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in the school- Mrs. K Carlin or Mrs J Carlin, principal. Help may be sought from a range of support agencies. These may include:

Board of Governors, Department of Education for Northern Ireland, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), Education Authority (EA), Officer for Child Protection, Educational Psychology Service, Education Welfare Officer, Peripatetic Teachers/Outreach Teachers, Road Safety Coordinator, Behaviour Support Team, RISE, DHSS, School Doctor/Nurse, Social Worker, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, CAMHS, LAC Team, PSNI, charities such as NSPCC, Childline and St. Vincent de Paul, Fire and Rescue Service and local playgroups, nurseries, other primary and post-primary schools.

Other Relevant Policies

The school has a duty to ensure that Pastoral Care permeates all activities and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Health and Safety
- Staff Health and Emotional Well-Being
- Administration of Medication
- Drugs
- Educational Visits and Activities
- Critical Incidents
- Bereavement and Loss

- Attendance
- Healthy Breaks/Healthy Eating
- Intimate Care
- Pupil Collection
- Internet Safety and Acceptable Use/E-Safety
- PDMU
- Handling Complaints

Health and Safety

Our aim is to ensure the health and safety of all those who work in or visit the school.

There are two main aspects to this;

1. Conditions within the school must be healthy and safe.
2. Pupils must be educated as to how to be healthy and safe.

Conditions

Many aspects of pupil safety are addressed in the Positive Behaviour Policy, but the following also applies;

- The school building and equipment will be kept clean.
- The toilet areas will be hygienic with hand washing and drying materials always being available.
- The grounds will be kept free of litter and discarded food.
- Pupils will be expected to change into different clothing for Physical Education.
- Fire drills will be carried out 3 times per year.
- The Safety Representative and/or Building Supervisor will carry out an inspection as per the appropriate part of the CCMS audit. In addition, portable electrical appliance testing will take place each year by the designated person.
- Medicines which pupils must take in school will be kept safely out of the way by teachers.

Supervision

Our aim would be to ensure that, as far as is humanly possible pupils are supervised continually throughout the school day. Officially this supervision is carried out by teachers, supervisory assistants and bus drivers. However, all adults working within the school are conscious of the safety of pupils and supervise in an unofficial capacity.

Teachers' rota is established so as;

- Children walking/travelling by car are supervised as they arrive and depart.
- Children travelling by bus are escorted to and from the school.
- Children are supervised during break time and playtime (whether indoor or outdoor) by Classroom assistant or teacher

- Children having dinner and lunch are supervised by teacher and classroom assistants.

In the event of someone being unable to continue in a supervisory capacity due to an unforeseen emergency arising that person must arrange for someone else to cover temporarily.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The Board of Governors will review this policy every three years. The school staff regularly review the policy regarding its implementation. The Principal ensures that the policy is implemented on a day to day basis and that all staff are aware of the details of the policy as it applies to them.