

FAIR HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

At Fair Hill Primary School we have a responsibility for the care, welfare, safety and therefore the learning environment of all our pupils. The school's ethos provides the basis for this policy. The promotion of our agreed values and beliefs means a pupil centred approach.

Teachers, non-teaching staff and other adults are part of a team. This team wants to ensure pupils are happy and secure in whatever activity they are taking part in, whether social, spiritual, mental, emotional or physical. We have a caring commitment to guide and advise our pupils, equipping them with the skills needed to face the outside world. Teachers and non-teaching staff are encouraged to approach the care of our children in a positive way.

1.1 For **PUPILS** this means encouraging them: -

- i. to set and achieve personal, social and academic goals through a planned and developmental programme;
- ii. to help them gain maximum benefit from their time at school;
- iii. to develop independence of mind and to take responsibility for their own actions;
- iv. to develop self-discipline and self-respect;
- v. to develop an understanding of themselves as individuals - their strengths and limitations, their personal qualities, their attitudes and values;
- vi. to develop a respect for the opinion of others;
- vii. to develop an understanding of the world in which they live.

1.2 For **TEACHERS** this means:

- i. establishing a clear vision of the school with its pupils, its community and its point of development;
- ii. developing whole school curriculum policies, which establish principles for action throughout the school;
- iii. promoting a caring environment where pupils' learning is developed within the context of their individual needs and abilities;
- iv. being aware of the children's individual "background and experiences" and individual "needs and aspirations";
- v. providing them with opportunities for their own professional development;
- vi. establishing appropriate structures of time and support for those in need:

1.3 For **OTHER ADULTS** associated with the school this means:

- i. understanding, and having an empathy with, the general ethos of the school;
- ii. being partners with the teachers in providing a caring approach;
- iii. helping the pupils achieve their individual goals;
- iv. developing a team approach;

being aware of the children's individual "background and experiences" and individual "needs and aspirations".

The pastoral dimension contributes to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in the school for both teachers and pupils where all adults have an influential part to play.

The Pastoral Dimension has a GENERAL and a SPECIALISED FOCUS.

2.0 GENERAL FOCUS

Since the pastoral dimension permeates all activities, the general focus requires a caring commitment by all teachers and adults to every aspect of school life - in the following ways:

2.1 SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY

The school as a community is seen as an extended family where everyone works for the common good. Our pupils are supervised from 8.45am. Full supervision also continues during all extra curricular activities such as football, badminton, hockey etc. No child may remain in the classrooms, central resource areas, cloakrooms/toilet areas or other areas of the school grounds without adult supervision.

A Playground Buddy scheme is in operation and our Primary 6 and 7 pupils who have signed up take their duties seriously. They assist supervisors in putting out and storing away play equipment, helping children to play and ensuring that the supervisors are aware of any child who feels “left out”, so that something can be done as quickly as possible to include them.

At the end of the day our infant pupils remain with the class teacher until the assigned adult comes to collect them; senior pupils who do not travel on the bus wait at the school door to be collected whilst those who walk and whose parents have requested are walked down to the main road and crossed over by a member of staff. Any pupil travelling by school bus whose parent/carer is not present to collect them from their place of disembarkation is returned to the school and a member of staff will seek to contact the parent to make arrangements to have the child collected.

It is our intention that parents should be made welcome in the school and feel that their role is important and appreciated. They are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher or the Principal if they have any concerns or worries. To do this they will have to use the appropriate interview procedure. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention. We encourage parents to share concerns about home circumstances or medical matters, which may affect their child’s work or behaviour in school. Any information disclosed will be treated as confidential.

The ancillary staff have a vital role to play in the smooth- running of the school. Their views and opinions are sought regularly and their suggestions included in discussions in relation to reviewing policy and procedures.

Parents are encouraged to help in many ways such as going along on educational visits or lending a hand when appropriate during school hours. The school invites parents to information sessions as well as meetings to discuss their child’s progress. If at any time a teacher is concerned about a child’s progress or well being the parent will be contacted and invited in to discuss the matter.

Teachers also believe in sharing duties as part of a mutually supportive team. The school must be seen as part of the wider community.

Links have been fostered with St. Mary’s Barr Primary School through the Cross Community Contact Scheme. The school has developed a close link with Dromore High School, St. Coleman’s and Dromore Central Primaries to develop both pupil and staff skills in science and to share in the resources that this important link affords us. Close links have also been developed with the local Churches and C.E.F. in the area and their ministers are invited to participate in Morning Assembly.

The school will continue to work with statutory agencies involved in the health and welfare of children.

The assistance of outside agencies will be sought to extend pupils’ experiences e.g. the visit of the local PSNI.

2.2 THE SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY

The school will involve the community through aspects of the hidden curriculum e.g. litter and environmental projects, links with local firms.

The school will continue in its close links with local churches and other community organisations.

Children and local people will be encouraged to regard the school as “ their school” and hence develop a vested interest in its structure and precincts (perhaps through a programme to prevent vandalism in the community).

2.3 ACTIVITIES

The pastoral dimension permeates all aspects of school life but some specific activities can be identified which might promote this.

- a) Children are encouraged to have respect for people in the school and also for the structure and precincts of the school.
- b) Children are encouraged to assist those who are less able than themselves in all spheres of school life-academic, sporting etc.
- c) Children are encouraged to recognise the needs of many in our community less fortunate than themselves and help them through involvement in charitable organisations.
- d) Year groups can collaborate in projects, which will provide an awareness of local environmental issues e.g. ECO Club.
- e) The school is involved with St. Mary’s Barr through the Cross Community Contact Scheme and collaborates with other schools through competitions.
- f) The children meet will those from other schools both for friendly and competitive games e.g. football, netball.

2.4 ATTITUDES TO LEARNING

The pastoral dimension influences the attitudes to learning.

- i. Teachers provide a range of learning styles in an encouraging framework to promote opportunity for active research and self-expression.
- ii. Learning is carried out in a happy atmosphere within the classroom where each pupil is treated as an important individual.
- iii. Children with special needs will be integrated with other children.
- iv. It is also of vital importance that children are stretched through appropriate and challenging tasks as this essentially reflects caring about each individual's educational development.

2.5 CARING ATTITUDE

The pastoral dimension necessitates a caring approach to all activities.

- i. In our Discipline Policy we clearly outline the positive approach to discipline where praise and reward are essential elements of activities throughout the school
- ii. It is important that each teacher finds out as much as possible about every individual within his/her class and bears in mind how particular home circumstances may influence attitudes, expectations and behaviour.
- iii. This is further enhanced through meetings with parents, which should be arranged whenever a teacher feels necessary.
- iv. Parents are encouraged to support the school on the common aims to ensure the whole development of our pupils.

2.6 SPECIALISED FOCUS -

The class teacher has a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each pupil in the class. With this knowledge, allied to the teacher's skills, the work of the school, parents and other adults are integrated to support the learning and development of each pupil.

We consider that the development of good inter-personal relationships is vital to ensure:

- (i) mutual respect
- (ii) happiness and security for both pupils and staff
- (iii) positive attitudes.

Pupils are encouraged in the classroom and throughout the school to assist one another and develop the art of listening.

A programme for positive behaviour has been adopted as central to our discipline policy.

Positive attitudes are encouraged in extra curricular activities- residential visits, games and day visits.

Children are offered a wide range of experiences.

The school encourages the development in pupils of a wide range of personal interests and in the ability to take responsibility.

Implicit in the Pastoral Dimension is the work of the designated teacher on Child Abuse and a programme for Health Education. We will encourage children to be responsible for their own personal safety and help them acquire skills to be able to do this so that they will be able to make the correct decisions and know where to get help if or when they are confronted with danger. The whole school community will be aware of the Designated Teacher, and her Deputy who will be responsible for dealing with cases of child protection issues that arise. They will also be aware of the teacher responsible for First Aid and what the procedures are for dealing with children who need first aid.

The Principal has an important role to play in the development and nurturing of positive relationships amongst all members of staff both teaching and non-teaching. A vital dimension of this is the Principal having a sympathetic listening ear coupled with regular contact with all staff offering support and advice and agreeing objectives. It is also essential that each individual seeks to fulfil their role as a member of the 'whole school team' in a manner, which is both consistent and flexible and takes into account the complementary roles of others.

2. AREAS OF EXPERIENCE

It is important that children are offered a wide variety of experiences.

Our extensive educational visits programme means that every child has the opportunity of at least one visit to a place of interest each year.

For example:

- P1** Ark Farm
- P2** Palace Stables
- P3** Palace Stables
- P4** Indian Temple
- P5** Indian Temple
- P6** Kilbroney
- P7** Kilbroney

During the day visits, not only are horizons broadened and the curriculum enhanced, children are also encouraged to respect people and property.

3. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

A positive behavioural programme to enhance self-esteem has been adopted where self-discipline is encouraged. This is discussed at regular intervals with each class and on a whole-school basis as well as individually when necessary.

4. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school encourages positive attitudes throughout its extra-curricular programme.

P6 -P7 children on residential visits learn to share in responsibilities undertaken.

P5- P7 children in football and rugby learn to be both competitive and co-operative.

They learn positive attitudes of team spirit, the joy of winning and how to handle the disappointment of defeat

Other Clubs include: -

P4-7 Badminton Club –developing positive attitudes to sport and learning to be both competitive and co-operative.

P4-7 ECO Club –learning to respect the environment, taking some responsibility for enhancing the school environment and working as a team.

P4-7 Art & Craft-Children learn to co-operate with other members of the group, to support those who may need extra assistance and to appreciate each other's talents.

P4-7 Computer Club -Working in small groups, those who attended enhanced their basic computer skills in what proved a most beneficial and enjoyable activity.

P6-7 –Pupils from P6 and P7 each spent 3 days at the Ulster Folk Park participating in a wide range of outdoor and indoor activities.

COMMUNICATION

A policy on Pastoral Care depends on it being communicated positively to staff, pupils, parents and all others involved in the life of the school. To support this Pastoral Dimension the Principal, as Designated teacher within the school, will co-ordinate and communicate our policy to staff and parents.

LIASON WITH PARENTS

We see ourselves as partners in the education of pupils. Mutual support and co-operation is an essential element in achieving our objectives. On-going activities to ensure communication and parental involvement include:

- Ø Regular parent/teacher meetings(curricular)
- Ø Parents' Evenings (information)
- Ø Prospectus, letters, website
- Ø Annual Report
- Ø Sporting Events
- Ø Fund-raising activities
- Ø Extra-curricular activities
- Ø Services
- Ø Concerts/plays

TRAINING

Opportunities will be provided for the Designated Teacher and other relevant staff to undergo training appropriate to this school.

RESOURCES

Resources required to maintain and update the pastoral care policy will be updated as necessary.

EVALUATION

The school will carry out, at regular intervals, an evaluation of its Pastoral Dimension. This will be based on any updated information received in the school and on feedback from staff, pupils', parents' views and that of any relevant outside agencies.

Fair Hill Primary School will do all in its power to keep children safe by the following procedures:

PLAYGROUNDS

At breaktime a teacher, aided by a classroom assistant where numbers demand, supervises each playground.

At lunchtime each playground is supervised by lunchtime supervisors, two in the senior playground and two in the infant playground.

ACCIDENTS

Accidents, which occur during school hours, are reported to Mrs Spratt, First Aid Qualified teacher and/or to the Principal.

First aid may be administered depending on the injury. When there is a concern about an injury, attempts will be made to contact parents or those whose name has been given to the office as a point of contact.

Parents should ensure that the office is notified of any changes of phone number or address.

Accident report forms (both internal and SELB), are filled in for accidents occurring in the school.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure a safe journey to and from school for their child. Where children travel by school bus drivers are asked to report all incidents of bad behaviour on the bus to the Principal immediately. Parents will be informed of the behaviour and asked to support the school in improving their child's behaviour. If incidents of bad behaviour are repeated the parent may be asked, in the interests of the safety of the other pupils travelling on the bus, to transport their child to school.

Pupils, when in school uniform must abide by the rules of the school. They should aim to be ambassadors for Fair Hill Primary School. Reports, made to the school, of pupils behaving in an inappropriate manner, whilst in school uniform, will be dealt with by the school according to its discipline policy.

Any parent needing to get a child out of school during school hours **must** collect them from the classroom. Children are not permitted to meet someone outside during school hours. Parents **must** notify the school when someone other than the parent/usual carer is picking the child up from school.

All visitors should report to the secretary's office on entering the school. A CCTV system operates in both playgrounds and in the area to the rear of the school.

Entry to the school is by the front door, which is operated under security-controlled access.

ATTENDANCE

Detailed attendance records are kept on computer.

Any absences from school should be explained in writing to the class teacher on return to school.

The school is obliged to report unexplained absences to the school's educational welfare officer.

The above procedures are vital to discourage truancy and protect the safety of our pupils.

PROCEDURES FOR ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE BY STAFF/OTHERS

All staff teaching and non-teaching have been vetted by the SELB.

Parents who help out in the school or assist educational visits are vetted through the required forms being forwarded to the SELB. for Criminal Records check.

If a member of staff has a concern that a child is being abused in any way (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect), or an allegation is made towards a member of staff, that information must be reported to the designated teacher for child abuse in the school.

The designated teacher is Mrs Clinghan.

The deputy-designated teacher is Mrs Spratt.

The designated teacher will inform Social Services and / or the PSNI. The designated officer for child abuse in SELB will also be notified.

Where the designated teacher is suspected to have abused a child, the deputy-designated teacher will be informed already by the person who is aware of the possible offence. Normal procedures will then be instigated as defined by DENI. At present the designated teacher is the Principal and therefore as well as informing Social Services and/ or PSNI the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Designated Officer of the Education and Library Board will also be informed.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Indications of abuse of children with Special Educational Needs will be reported exactly as for other children, according to established procedures. The Designated teacher will identify and respond to any particular communication needs that the pupil may have.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

1. The Board of Governors should be aware of the school's Pastoral Care Policy and Child Protection Procedures.
2. The Board of Governors should be aware of the role of the Designated teacher and should enable her to carry out the duties of that role effectively and with appropriate support and training.
3. The Board of Governors should be kept informed of allegations of abuse against a member of staff, either through the Chairperson or named member of the Board who will liaise with the Designated teacher/ Principal/ Deputy Designated Teacher.
4. It is the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board of Governors to ensure that a complaint made against the Principal will be thoroughly investigated, by instigation of normal procedures. The Chairperson should inform the complainants, if necessary on a regular basis, of the investigations, which have been, or are being, made and their outcome.
5. The Board of Governors must notify the Department of any instance where a teacher is dismissed on grounds of gross misconduct, so that his/ her continued recognition as a teacher can be considered.

6. It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to ensure that all staff are clear about the standards of behaviour expected of them.
7. The Board of Governors shall provide, in conjunction with DENI, induction training for all new members of the Board and encourage existing members to avail of such training and guidance necessary to ensure the effective discharge of their roles and responsibilities.

BULLYING

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately if bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that his/her child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Principal/ designated teacher for child protection and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied, during the school day.

A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Principal / designated teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation, which has been carried out, and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case and reference will be made to our Discipline Policy. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate child protection procedures- for further details see Anti-Bullying Policy.

DRUGS

A drugs forms part of our health education policy.

INTERNET

An effective Internet policy is in operation to ensure the safety of our pupils. The school uses a filtered system to help to protect our pupils as well as other measures taken. For further details please see relevant policy.

CONDUCT OF STAFF

The conduct of school staff, teaching and non-teaching towards the pupils in the school must be above reproach. Any abuse of that position of trust by any member of staff must be regarded with the utmost gravity.

Members of staff will be encouraged to reflect on every aspect of their contact with children, which may give rise to perceptions or allegations of abuse.

Refer to 'Code of Conduct,' SELB.

PHYSICAL CONDUCT

Physical conduct may be a necessary part of teaching some pupils with

- (1) SEN e.g. children with medical problems: and
- (2) young children, e.g. helping them with toileting.

In such instances there will be clear guidelines for staff, which maintain a balance between providing support and preventing abuse or potential perceptions of abuse.

Parents will be informed of these guidelines.

In extreme cases, minimum necessary force may be used to prevent a pupil causing injury or harm to himself or others.

DAILY CONTACT

It may be necessary, from time to time, to lift a child if he/ she has fallen or is distressed. A distressed or tired young child may need to be comforted by sitting on the lap of a member of staff. This will only be done when necessary and in full view of staff and other children.

When a member of staff is working with a pupil in the staff room the blinds will remain open at all times so that the area may be viewed by another member of staff.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The above procedures will also apply to those children with special educational needs. If the special needs are of a physical/medical nature, specific procedures may be need to be drawn up and agreed by relevant personnel. (e.g. Education & Library Board, Medical Consultant, parents/those with parental responsibility.)

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