



# PASTORAL CARE POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

### **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**

The ethos, or the distinctive character and atmosphere of Omagh County 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/carers that their children are being educated in a safe and caring atmosphere.

A climate which fosters effective learning is at the heart of the education process. This climate, or ethos, is best promoted through focusing on the creation and maintenance of good relationships: among the staff themselves; between staff and pupils; among pupils and their peers; between parents/carers and the school; and between the school and the community it serves.

All members of staff in Omagh Primary School are aware that a positive ethos does not come about by chance; it is achieved by the Principal, the Senior Leadership Team and all the 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 (ETI) 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.

## **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/she is aware of with respect to the pupil's pastoral care.

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

**Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Miss J Funston**

**Deputy Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Mrs E Alcorn**

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.

### **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.

### **All Staff should:**

- 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.

### **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 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, Vice-Principal, 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.

### **Senior Leadership and Management Team**

- Members of the Senior Leadership and Management 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.

## Parents'

### **Parents should:**

- 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 the Barnardos PATHS Programme ;
- Promotion of the School Charter;
- Use of Golden Time and Golden Rules;
- Circle Time;
- Use of outside agencies eg Cancer Focus, Dairy Council, Action Cancer Women's Aid Helping Hands, Action for Children, NIABF
- Extra-curricular activities - Eg, Scripture Union and Sports;
- Educational visits (including residential trips);
- A modular or separate unit of work approach (including workshops) may also be used when appropriate eg Yr 7 Transition Programme, Yr 5 Stringed tuition, Yr6/7 Art Programme;
- Informal and formal rewards - PATHS Awards, Good Citizen Award, Pupil of the Week Award; 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 (paper and/or email format);
- Monthly newsletter;
- 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 - E-Safety, PATHS Workshop, SATCHEL Programme, Big Bed Time Read; Curriculum Meetings
- Talks, discussions, lectures, Nursery Media Initiative, How to help your child read, Paired Reading, Athletics, Reflexology to support SEN;
- 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 Western 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;

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- 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 and
- Golden Time Policy.

### **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 agencies may be used for development and training if it is deemed necessary.

### **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.

## SCHOOL CHARTER

Through consultation with the pupils, staff and parents/carers we have established a School Charter which is based on six articles from the '**United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child**'.

**Our School Charter is as follows:**

- **Article 2 (without discrimination)**
- Every child must be treated equally no matter of race, gender, nationality or religion and treated fairly whatever their ability or need.
- **Article 3 (best interests of the child)** The best interest of the child must be a top priority in everything we do.
- **Article 12 (respect the views of the child)** Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them.
- **Article 19 (protection from all forms of violence)** Every child must be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment.
- **Article 24 (health & Health Services)** Every child has the right to good health care.
- **Article 29 (goals of education)** Every child has the right to develop their personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own cultures, and the environment.

We believe, through this Charter, the pastoral care of our school community is more effective and beneficial to all.