

**Our Lady's P.S.**



## **Pastoral Care Policy**

**Date ratified by Board of Governors:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Review:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Ethos Statement:**

Our Lady's Primary school is a focal point for the community. We want our school to be a caring environment which effectively develops the academic, personal, social and spiritual potential of each child.

We are a Catholic school and as such we have a distinct ethos, but we welcome children from all faiths and none.

Catholic Education takes place in communities inspired by the spirit of Christ. Christ's commandment to love God and neighbour inspires a caring ethos which is expressed in relationships within and beyond Catholic schools.

The education in our school is person centred. It promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God.

Catholic Education is inclusive. It is respectful of, and engages with people of all beliefs; it encourages the religious development of all in their own faith.

Catholic Education is rooted in the gospel values of respect for life, solidarity, truth and justice; it aims to harmonise faith and culture, build a better society and pursue the common good.

Together we aim to provide high quality rounded education for all our children so that they develop their full uniqueness and potential.

In our school the person and message of Christ find expression in:

- Communities of Faith, Service, Prayer and Worship;
- The development of each person's full potential in a climate of joy, freedom, respect, challenge, co-operation and celebration;
- The enrichment of pupil life-intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral, social and emotional;
- The promotion of a spirit of charity, social justice, global awareness and concern for others leading to practical outreach and partnerships;
- A culture of tolerance where people of diverse identities are recognised, welcomed, respected and cherished;
- Listening, mutual understanding, trust, reconciliation, healing and peace;
- The preparation of pupils to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives which will contribute to the common good;
- Promotion of family life in our school community, parish, and world.

**INTRODUCTION**

Pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the ethos, vision, values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and involves all members of our school community - children, parents and all other adults who contribute to the well being of each child.

The Pastoral Care dimension deals with the physical, social, emotional, moral and academic needs of pupils. The care of the teachers in Our Lady's will be evident in all aspects of the child's school life.

It is the aim of Our Lady's Primary school to provide a warm and caring environment in the school so that each person, both child and adult, associated with the school, can feel safe and secure.

**CHILDREN**

We believe that:

- Every child is unique and special.
- Every child has the right to feel happy, safe and secure in school.

- Every child has the right to be helped to develop to the best of their ability, within the limits of the school's resources.
- Every child should feel that their work and effort is valued.
- Every child should learn to respect their school, their teachers, their fellow pupils, visitors, property and the environment.
- Every child should be helped to develop confidence and positive self-esteem.
- Every child should be encouraged to develop independence of mind and take responsibility for their own action.
- Every child should be supported in their personal wellbeing

#### **STAFF (Teaching and Non-teaching)**

We believe that all staff:

- Deserve to be treated with courtesy, respect and given flexibility in our school.
- Opinions should be valued.
- Should work together as a team, for the good of the pupils and the good of the school.
- Should be supported in their professional development related to pastoral care; such as training in mental health, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Should promote a caring environment where pupil's learning is developed within the context of their individual needs and abilities.

#### **PARENTS**

- We believe that parents are vital partners in providing the best possible education for children.
- We believe that parents deserve to be kept well informed by the school of all matters relating to their child's education and welfare – both in school and online
- We believe that the school should be open in its approach to parents, so that they feel comfortable about communicating with the school.

#### **THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

We believe that members of the local and wider community have an important contribution to make to the education, which is provided in Our Lady's Tullysaran.

- a) The assistance of outside agencies will be sought to extend pupils' experiences e.g. Project work; visits to heritage sites, museums, local industry and farms.
- b) Links are well established with community centre, GAA club, Armagh Parish, Cuman na Bunscol, neighbouring schools and we are involved in shared education projects with Killylea Primary Schools (PEACE IV).

c) There will be links with statutory agencies involved in the health and welfare of children e.. EWO, school nurse, RISE NI etc.

## **Organisation of pastoral care within the school**

### **Responsibilities of staff members**

Ms Noreen Loughran is the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding/Child Protection. Mrs Karina O Hara is Deputy Designated Teacher.

Mr Ryan McCusker is the school 'Wellbeing Champion' and School Council Coordinator.

Every member of staff in the school has responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and well being of pupils.

Class teachers hold primary responsibility for the pastoral care of the pupils in their classes. Teachers will seek to develop relationships of trust, empathy and understanding within the classroom. This will provide the ethos within which pastoral care can be exercised.

Additional responsibility is held by the Designated teacher for Child Protection. As Designated Teacher, Ms Loughran is the main link between members of the school community and external agencies such as Social Services, School Medical Officer etc. She is the main source of information and advice in relation to Safeguarding/Child Protection for all members of the school community. She maintains all records in relation to Child Protection. Mrs. O'Hara is deputy designated teacher and will assume Ms Loughran's responsibilities in her absence.

### **Record keeping and administration**

An information form is kept for every pupil, this contains contact phone numbers as well as medical information.

The school records the details of contacts made with parents in relation to pastoral matters, together with action taken by the school in response to these matters. These are held in compliance with data protection regulations.

### **Communication with parents**

Parents receive an information pack when their child begins in Reception/P1. This includes a summary of our Child Protection policy. They will also receive a folder containing all the relevant policies that make up pastoral care in the school. These can also be access via our school website.

## **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

To ensure a structured approach to the caring for all pupils we have developed the following basic structure:

### **Class Teacher**



### **Pastoral Care Leader – Ms Loughran ( DT)**



### **Principal (Mr Toner)**

Whilst the class teacher is identified as the key person in impacting on the care of the pupils in his/her class, it is important that they work in co-operation with the Pastoral Care Leader Ms Loughran who will provide support and leadership in the pastoral domain.

In the event of additional support being required the Principal will also be available to support individual pupils.

## **Principles of Pastoral Care**

Our school is committed to demonstrating its pastoral care through the following practices:

- **Warm Welcomes:** Greeting pupils and welcoming them warmly as they arrive at school.
- **Positive Learning Environment:** Fostering a positive and happy atmosphere conducive to learning.
- **Informal Conversations:** Engaging in informal chats with pupils, listening to their news, concerns, and experiences.
- **Personal Connections:** Getting to know pupils personally, understanding their circumstances, and showing sensitivity to their individual needs.
- **Support in Need:** Providing support to pupils in situations of need as far as possible.
- **Inclusive Integration:** Integrating children with special needs with their peers.
- **Respectful Ethos:** Promoting a caring and respectful ethos within classrooms.
- **Praise and Encouragement:** Offering praise and encouragement for pupils' work and behaviour through verbal and written comments and award systems.
- **Self-Esteem and Confidence:** Enhancing pupils' self-esteem and confidence through positive behaviour reward systems and other tailored methods.
- **Responsibility Opportunities:** Allowing pupils to take on responsibilities through classroom and school-wide jobs.
- **Pastoral Assemblies:** Conducting assemblies that address a range of pastoral issues.
- **Pastoral Education:** Providing teaching that addresses issues related to pastoral care.
- **Diverse Learning Styles:** Offering a range of learning styles that promote opportunities for active research and self-expression.
- **Supervised Play Areas:** Ensuring appropriate supervision of play areas during break and lunch times, with a focus on preventing bullying.
- **Safe Arrival and Departure:** Supervising pupils in the morning and at home time to ensure their safe arrival and departure from the school premises. All children will be escorted to the school buses and seated, with guidance on appropriate behaviour.
- **Staff Collaboration:** Developing partnerships and communication among all staff members to facilitate the sharing of information and concerns about pupils.
- **Home Circumstances Strategies:** Adopting appropriate strategies when the school is aware of particular home circumstances affecting pupils.

## **Curriculum Provision for Pastoral Care**

In planning curricular provision for pastoral care, the school is following the PDMU programme as detailed in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The minimum requirements are set out below. The school is also using the supplementary materials provided by CCEA integrating contemporary issues such as digital citizenship, climate issues, RSE and social justice issues into the curriculum where appropriate.

## **FOUNDATION STAGE**

Teachers should enable children to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

### **PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING AND HEALTH**

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- themselves and their personal attributes;
- their own and others' feelings and emotions;
- their dispositions and attitudes to learning;
- the importance of keeping healthy and how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments.

## **MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE LOCAL AND WIDER COMMUNITY**

Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- their relationships with family and friends;
- their responsibilities for self and others;
- how to respond appropriately in conflict situations;
- similarities and differences between groups of people;
- learning to live as a member of a community.

### **Progression**

As pupils progress through the Foundation Stage they should be enabled to:

- express a sense of self awareness;
- show some self control and express their own feelings and emotions appropriately;
- show a positive attitude to learning;
- adopt healthy and hygienic routines and understand how to keep safe;
- form good relationships with adults and other pupils;
- show independence and know when to seek help;
- show respect when working and playing together and recognise the need for rules;
- recognise similarities and differences in families and the wider community;
- be familiar with the interdependent nature of the class/school community.

## **KEY STAGE ONE**

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

### **PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING AND HEALTH**

- their self esteem and self confidence;
- their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions affect others;
- positive attitudes to learning and achievement;
- strategies and skills for keeping themselves healthy and safe.

## **MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE LOCAL AND WIDER COMMUNITY**

- initiating and developing mutually satisfying relationships;
- responsibility and respect, honesty and fairness;
- constructive approaches to conflict;
- similarities and differences between people;
- developing themselves as members of a community

## **KEY STAGE TWO**

The minimum content for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is set out below.

Teachers should enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

### **PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING AND HEALTH**

- their self esteem, self confidence and how they develop as individuals;
- their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others;
- effective learning strategies;
- how to sustain their health, growth and well being and coping safely and efficiently with their environment.

## **MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE LOCAL AND WIDER COMMUNITY**

- initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships;



- human rights and social responsibility;
- causes of conflict and appropriate responses;
- valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity;
- playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment.

### **Supporting Policies**

Whilst all policies and procedures within the school take cognisance of the pastoral care of pupils and staff some support it in very specific areas.

Cross referencing is essential in delivering the pastoral care policy – all of which are regularly reviewed and updated.

These policies include:

- Positive Behaviour/Discipline
- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection
- Drugs/Misuse of Substances
- Health & Safety
- Acceptable use of the Internet & E-Safety
- Use of reasonable force & Safe Handling
- Special Education Needs
- First Aid & Administration of Medicines
- Complaints Procedure
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Feedback Policy
- Emotional Health & Wellbeing Policy
- Bereavement Policy

### **Staff Development and Training**

Aspects of pastoral care remain a permanent feature of our School Development Plan and subsequently staff development and training are considered essential to support this. Our on-going development programme helps teachers identify the attitudes, values, skills and knowledge which will enable them to carry out their pastoral roles.

Ongoing training in interpersonal skills, counseling skills and teaching methods which engage pupils actively in their learning.

Training programmes are organised through:

- On-site courses/ In-Service Training
- Courses organised by EA
- Courses provided by external bodies.
- School nurse, RISE NI, E.W.O etc.

### **Resourcing**

To ensure the implementation of the policy the Principal will ensure that adequate resources are made available and that time will be made available to develop the program throughout the school.

### **Liaison with Board of Governors**

For Governor of the school this means:

- a) providing a safe learning environment
- b) encouraging the professional development of all the staff
- c) being aware of all relevant legislation
- d) being fair employers
- e) dealing with all cases of grievances and/or discipline, fairly and effectively
- f) involving themselves in the life of the school as far as their time permits

### **Liaison with Parents**

We see ourselves as partners with parents 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:

- Regular parent/teacher meetings
- Parent workshops
- Class Information
- Annual Progress Reports
- Sporting events
- Fundraising activities
- Extra-curricular activities
- Musical shows/performances
- School Masses
- Penitential Services
- First Holy Communion
- Information Sessions to prepare children for the sacraments
- Curriculum meetings
- Christmas Plays

### **Liaison with External Agencies**

We are committed to developing good working relationships with relevant external support agencies to enhance, protect and support individual pupil's social and emotional welfare and overall wellbeing.

### **Personal and Social Wellbeing**

Both aspects of development are addressed within PDMU and as they arise in other curricular subjects and at appropriate times during school assemblies.

Within school, pupils are regularly reminded, that they may speak to any member of staff about any matter at all which is disturbing or worrying them.

Conflict between children will usually be resolved as soon as possible after an event occurs, by talking the problem through with a member of staff who will help all parties to realise why the issue arose and how it could best have been avoided, always with a focus on resolution.

### **Supervision on out of School Visits**

This will be in the ratio of 1 adult to 10 pupils on most occasions. Parents will assist where appropriate.

### **Vetting**

Adults working with, or regularly supervising pupils, will be vetted according to Child Protection procedures.

### **Respect Charter**

We believe that Respect is a central value of our school ethos and pastoral care. We have agreed a 'Respect Charter' that will form a basis for all interactions within our school community. Our Respect Charter is attached to this policy.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **Monitoring**

On-going monitoring is an integral part of our policy. The Pastoral Care and other policies are discussed regularly at staff meetings and are an integral part of our School Development planning to ensure that they are implemented as planned. Support is given to those teachers, (including substitute teachers) who require assistance in carrying out any aspect of their pastoral role.

#### **Evaluation**

Evaluation procedures are in place to discover ways of improving the quality of provision in the school for the benefit of all pupils and teachers.

All aspects of the policy are evaluated on an on-going basis with parents', pupils' and staff views being requested through questionnaires, informal interviews and focus groups. Recent Circulars from DENI, EA, CCMS AND CCEA will be taken into consideration when reviewing our pastoral care policy and agreeing our School Development Plan priorities.

Whilst the Head of Pastoral Care has overall responsibility for evaluation, self-evaluation is a feature of every teacher's role.

# Our Lady's P.S.



## Respect Charter

In Our Lady's Primary School, we aspire to encourage a sense of respect for each person as an individual. Our Respect Charter is designed to clarify what we expect of ourselves and of each other as we interact on a daily basis. Everyone connected to our school community is encouraged to commit to the charter and endeavor to fulfil its central value.

All individuals are to be treated with dignity and respect.

Our Respect Charter extends to interactions between members of staff, governors and volunteers in their exchanges with both pupils and parents. It also extends to parents in their contact with the school and indeed also to pupils in their daily interactions with other pupils and members of the school community.