

Dunclug Primary School

Policy for Pastoral Care

Annual Review carried out by Board of Governors on June 2020

DUNCLUG PRIMARY SCHOOL

GUIDELINES ON PASTORAL CARE

“Pastoral Care is concern for the child as an individual, and an attempt (through a consideration of factors that affect and influence the child) to develop to a maximum, the all round potential that is inherent in every pupil”.

(From - “Your Pastoral Care in School” by J. Gosling and R. Weeks).

Pastoral Care affects and influences every aspect of our role as educators as well as the development process of the pupils in our care. It cannot be ignored by any teacher. Thus, to be effective in the often difficult social environment in which we work we must first accept the concept of pastoral care as an integral part of our work and second, try to let it show clearly through in our teaching style.

The roots of pastoral care lie in the recognition that children are individuals. They are unique beings with individual needs, potential, limitations, circumstances, feelings, opportunities and expectations.

Every child possesses some qualities worthy of recognition and teachers should always be aware of the part they can play in heightening pupils’ self esteem. Every child should also be stretched to perform to the best of his/her ability bearing in mind that it may not be right to make the same demands of a child who is intelligent and comes from a caring home background, as it is of a child who has obvious special needs or difficult home circumstances. Many children have the luxury of normality in terms of health, social background and development. Others, unfortunately, do not.

Although we as teachers cannot be expected to have the remedy for all ills, we should use our professional ears and eyes to detect where help is needed.

From what has been stated earlier, it can be seen that there should be no divide between the academic and pastoral dimensions. It is our clear responsibility to develop the children on both fronts so that their time spent at this school is fruitful and contented.

AIMS

The twin aims of our policy on pastoral care should be as follows:

1. The development of the whole child - academically and personally.
2. A high regard for the dignity and worth of each individual child.
3. To develop and sustain a caring and happy learning environment which promotes respect and co-operation within the school community and where children are socially at ease and educationally thriving.
4. To make all staff aware of children's needs i.e. to notice unhappy, preoccupied, irritable, depressed children and to investigate unobtrusively.
5. To foster relationships between school, parents and external agencies.

In order to translate these aims into practice, it might be useful to split the pastoral dimension into a general school focus and a more specialised classrooms focus both of which should be complementary to each other.

THE GENERAL SCHOOL FOCUS

1. The general focus requires a caring commitment by all teachers to guide and advise pupils, either formally or informally, on personal and educational matters. The implication of this is that the pastoral dimension should permeate all activities in the school.
2. The physical environment of the school should be as clean, neat and attractive as possible. Classrooms and notice boards should have attractive and changing displays.
3. Our extra-curricular activities from Monday to Thursday and our Friday clubs should provide opportunities to foster better pupils' relationships.
4. It is important for pupils and parents to see that we, as members of staff, are committed to the school by our care for its physical attractiveness and our commitment beyond the end of the school day.
5. Parental involvement should be strongly encouraged and structures should be in place so that parents can liaise with the school and form a strong partnership. Examples of this involvement are:
 - ◆ our twice yearly parent/teacher consultations
 - ◆ parents as helpers e.g. on school visits
 - ◆ P.T.A. organised events

- ◆ parents as visitors, e.g. Carol Services, concerts.

6. Discipline Procedures. Please refer to school guidelines on discipline.

7. (a) An induction programme for new P1's involving:

- pre-school visits
- half-day attendance
- partial attendance for the first four/six weeks

(b) Links with local secondary schools for our P7 children including full or half-day visits. There are also good links with our on-site Nursery and College including learning/play sessions, music sessions, shared events etc.

8. Efficient monitoring of children's work and progress in order to

- diagnose children's strengths and weaknesses
- provide information for parents
- provide information for other teachers

Curriculum

In Dunclug Primary School much of the Pastoral Care is integrated into daily routines as well as specific areas of the curriculum such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), Shared Education, Community Relations Equality and Diversity, Assemblies, World Around Us (WAU) and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC), The Heartstart Programme, The Helping Hands Programme etc It is also found within PE, RE and Talking and Listening topics.

THE SPECIALIST CLASSROOM FOCUS

- In our classrooms we should strive to create an atmosphere that is conducive to academic work in an environment that is free from tension.
- The pre-requisites for the class teacher are that he/she should, as well as having sound discipline, be approachable, trusting, aware and caring. These may sound worn but they are evident in all good teachers.
- Difficult as it may be in larger classes, we must try to cater for the needs and abilities of the individual pupil and have close oversight of his/her academic and personal progress.
- Through everyday occurrences in the classroom, teachers can promote positive attitudes, build self esteem and raise pupils' social awareness.
- Teachers should be involved each day in encouraging and motivating pupils or counselling individuals / groups.

- In the classrooms a variety of teaching methods and strategies is recommended, many of which should engage the pupils actively in their learning. Sometimes pupils may be working in groups, at other times as individuals while, at other times, the whole class may be working together. At times, the acquisition of knowledge may not be the main concern, with the acquisition of skills being to the forefront.
- Class assemblies, outings, competitions and projects provide many opportunities for the pastoral dimension to be encouraged.
- As schemes and lessons are prepared, it is worthwhile to spend some time considering how the pastoral dimension inherent in every lesson can be enhanced.
- A sense of achievement should be promoted in pupils through challenge and remediation.
- As children get older, they should begin to appreciate their own development and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers will not only teach knowledge but impart values to enable pupils to cope with life in the outside world. (Refer to Drugs/Health Education Policies).
- We aim to promote pupils' positive self-esteem in order that each child feels valued.
- We aim to promote each child's awareness of their responsibility for their own safety.

In conclusion it is to be hoped and expected that the pastoral dimension should contribute to a supportive atmosphere in the school for both teachers and pupils

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, both teaching and non-teaching have a responsibility to make sure the policy is implemented by:

- Helping pupils to make informed decisions about issues in terms of "right" and "wrong"
- Building up pupils' self-esteem
- Encouraging pupils to be assertive (This will help them to resist peer pressure)
- Avoiding use of sarcasm, belittling, humiliation etc.
- Celebrating individual successes and encouraging sensitivity and thoughtfulness in the school community.

The S.L.T. identify issues and if appropriate include them on the agenda for whole staff meetings or as part of the School Development Plan. The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Principal has the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the policy, to ensure there are adequate up to date resources available (subject to finances). The Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral care policy is in place and is implemented.

Liaison with Parents

Parent Interviews are held in October and March each year and a written report is sent home in June. Parents or teachers may initiate a meeting at any time to discuss their child's progress or well-being. An appointment to talk to a child's teacher or the Principal may be made by contacting the school. Throughout each year a number of external support agencies visit the school regularly and on occasions meet with parents. These include the school's Educational Psychologist, EA advisers, Education Welfare Officers (EWO), Literacy Teaching Support Service (LTSS), RISE NI, School Doctor and Nurse, Local Clergy, PSNI and local charities. Many of these agencies have direct contact with the children sharing their expertise, information and guidance with him/her to promote their safety and protection.

Supervision

Pupils who have signed up for our Breakfast Club are supervised from 8.30am to 8.45am in the Canteen. Children are supervised by teaching and non-teaching staff at break time (10.30-10.50am) and lunch time (12.20-1.00pm).

At the end of the school day children in P1-3 are handed over to parents/guardians. Older children who have provided written consent from their parents/guardians may walk home. Parents are requested to inform the school in writing of any changes to their children's collection arrangements.

After school activities and educational visits are carefully planned with a view to providing maximum safety and supervision. Parental consent for any out of school activity is always sought.

EVALUATING PASTORAL CARE 1999 (DENI) SUMMARY

ETHOS - Effective when:-

- Relationships are good. Between teachers / pupils, between teachers / parents, among staff, among pupils.
- Pupils feel secure - free from emotional and physical harm
- Self confidence and self esteem are promoted
- Pupils are taught to work with their peers
- Principal and staff use positive approaches

SYSTEM OF PASTORAL CARE - Effective when:-

- Staff knowledgeable about child abuse, bullying, drug abuse from relevant policies and circulars

- Pupils are developing useful personal and social skills
- Teachers are fair, firm, consistent, compassionate. High standards of behaviour are expected and are evident
- Indiscipline tackled by the school in partnership with parents and support agencies where appropriate
- Achievements of pupils are recognised and celebrated
- Individualised support and guidance
- Information from formal and informal assessment is used to improve the quality of teaching
- School's provision for pastoral care is monitored on a regular basis
- Pupils are confident that staff will make a determined effort to resolve their personal problems and concerns
- Parents can visit the school to discuss the progress and particular needs of their children
- Members of the local community with specific expertise provide the pupils and staff with information and guidance
- Pupils engage in educational and social activities with young people from other schools and cultures.
- Accommodation and resources promote pastoral care.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Both policy and practice are reviewed regularly as an on-going process during staff meetings. Daily observation by all staff and the communication of incidents keep teachers aware of the effectiveness of the pastoral care provision. It will be necessary to hear the views of pupils, teachers and parents. This may be done through questionnaires, The School Council, The Worry Box, and on a person/person basis. The outcomes of any self-evaluation may then result in updating the current school policy.

Staff Training

Teaching and Support staff should be offered opportunity to attend in-service training on topics relating to pastoral care.

Resources

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will ensure that there is an up to date range of resources which will be reviewed and updated regularly and kept in a central position. Deficiencies in the school building (cloakroom facilities, broken tiles etc.) should be brought to the attention of the principal/governors.

Action Plan Targets 2020/21:

- For both teaching and non-teaching staff to effectively follow the school guidelines on the new Discipline Policy.
- To continue to build upon the links and relationships with Dunclug Nursery and Dunclug College.
- To securely implement a Newcomer Programme.
- To continue to recognise and celebrate achievement of pupils.
- Ensure staff are knowledge on relevant policies and circulars.