

# **Ballylifford Primary School**



## **Pastoral Care Policy**

## **Introduction**

The Principal and Staff of Ballylifford Primary School firmly believe that as well as educating our pupils in the areas of academics, we share a deep concern for each child's personal and social development: that is, our approach will include the essential elements of the children's safety, security and personal welfare.

After full staff consultation, we have decided to implement a pastoral care policy through the main areas of: School Ethos - Provision - Management.

### ***School Ethos***

We place a strong emphasis on our school's physical environment. We strive to create a warm, inviting, friendly atmosphere with evidence of children's successes displayed throughout the school. Classrooms will be bright and cheerful and conducive to effective learning.

This atmosphere will allow pupils to be:

- Happy
- Safe
- Valued for themselves as individuals
- Supported
- Encouraged to voice any concerns they may have
- Valued for their contribution to the efficient and effective running of the school

To create this atmosphere, we are further aware of the vital part played by "relationships" between pupils, teachers, teachers and pupils, teachers and parents, teachers and Principal and indeed between all personnel who are involved in the daily life of the school.

The Principal will continue to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the teaching staff. He will endeavour to make working conditions as comfortable and pleasant as possible and both welcome and value their contributions and opinions on all aspects of day-to-day affairs; as well as on producing policy documents and guidelines as required.

Pupils will be encouraged to work together harmoniously in classroom activities: they will be motivated, through good example and self-esteem, to have respect for each other at all times in school and at home. In the playground they will be encouraged to have a sense of "fair play," a concern for each other's welfare and safety and a caring approach to younger children. For this reason, the pupils of different age groups have been assigned certain areas of the playground: this is to encourage "peer" relationships and to minimise the potential for accidents.

In the area of academics, the school has valued the support of the assigned Educational Psychologist with effective lines of communication.

The pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have had the benefit of a programme of Fire Prevention. Additionally, the children in Key Stage 2 benefit from PSNI workshop highlighting specific advice on drugs and alcohol abuse.

The teaching staff strive to administer fairly the aspects of our Discipline Policy. Staff are encouraged to be consistently fair and strong emphasis on promoting positive behaviour is adhered to. A balanced approach in applying sanctions for unwelcome behaviour has been agreed and carried out. At our weekly awards assembly, various aspects relating to discipline and the children's welfare in general are emphasised e.g. safety in movement in/around the school, courtesy to teachers and to each other, an orderly manner for waiting on/boarding transport, table manners. Attention to good manners will be ongoing and this will include table manners in the dining hall at lunchtime, opening doors for people, being polite to everyone and speaking to visitors to the school.

## ***Provision of Pastoral Care***

In a small school like Ballylifford Primary School the Principal and Teaching Staff know each child personally and will as a team take responsibility for implementing the pastoral Care Policy. This will be facilitated by our shared acceptance that the children in each class have emotional and physical needs in addition to those of a purely academic nature. An awareness of each child's uniqueness is central to our school ethos.

The Staff will be all too aware of the dangers faced by children: they will be guided in their approach by the advice in the various leaflets/circulars that are issued to schools. The main areas of concern to be addressed through all our school policies will be:

- Child Protection
- Anti-bullying
- First Aid
- Special Needs
- E- safety
- Health and Safety
- Handling complaints
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Intimate Care
- Positive Discipline

These policies are essential documents in Ballylifford Primary School and are available for everyone on request.

The children will know that he/she can express his/her concerns to the class teacher following our Child Protection Procedures- or indeed to any member of the teaching staff, and that any concerns will be dealt with in a caring manner. In the event of a physical injury at school, the pupil will be attended to medically (as is permissible) and the parent notified immediately. Such incidents will be clearly described and documented in the school's "Accident File" and our First Aid policy implemented.

## **Curriculum provision for Pastoral Care**

- In their Physical/Health Education, the pupils will be familiar with the importance of healthy eating and the school will promote healthy snacks and The Daily Mile Programme, Road Safety Programme, the importance of hygiene and towards the end of KS2, the harmful effects of smoking and alcohol and drug abuse.
- PDMU lessons
- Grow in love
- Catholic Ethos through prayer and Assembly daily.
- Health Promotion

At all times, there is on-going consultation with parents - formally and informally - regarding any matters of concern for the pupils' welfare. An "open door" policy will be adhered to and parents will be offered opportunities to express concerns relating to their children and the school. This will be done by appointment but urgent matters will be dealt with sooner. The awareness of promoting self-esteem in our pupils is an automatic feature of classroom life for each teacher. Teachers use similar methods of acknowledging good behaviour/progress including written, verbal and Race Track system. All teaching staff will motivate children through stimulating teaching and learning strategies. A common approach is further used at school assembly in the form of certificates as rewards for various achievements - academic or otherwise through Pupil of the Month, Weekly Principals award, School Values Cup, Super Literacy and Super Numeracy Awards. This school has strong liaison with parents.

The schools policies on 'Child Protection' and 'Special Needs' strongly reflect the guidance/recommendations of relevant DENI circulars. All parents/teaching staff and all personnel are issued with our guidelines for Child Protection.

### ***Managing the Provision of Pastoral Care***

We realise that to successfully provide Pastoral Care for our pupils, we need and acknowledge the fullest co-operation and consultation between all the personnel involved directly/indirectly in the life of Ballylifford Primary School. We appreciate;

- The views of members of the teaching staff are invited
  - The support from the Board of Governors is sought
  - The help with diagnosing learning difficulties is obtained from the Schools' Educational Psychologist and outside agencies eg CPSS/CAHMS
  - The support in matters of welfare is welcomed from the school's Educational Welfare Officer
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- The school staff, on a daily-basis, will always be open to the concerns/needs of every pupil in a supportive, caring and sympathetic capacity
  - The attendance by the Designated Teacher(s) for Child protection/Pastoral Care is on-going.
  - On-going training for all Staff and Governors in Child Protection.

### ***Parents / Community / Other Agencies***

The participation of parents has been discussed previously. This school enjoys very supportive relations with parents and the degree of co-operation from parents is excellent. Parents appreciate that we are partners in the provision of education/welfare for their children. The parents display their co-operation by their full acceptance of our school Discipline Policy. They constantly respond effectively to the school's policy of requiring a signature of approval if their children are going on school trips, after school activities and informing us of absences due to illness.

Our school enjoys a wide range of shared educational/social activities by way of:

1. Our partnership with Coagh PS in Shared Education
2. A variety of Educational, Social and sporting events.

### **We have excellent links established in Ballylifford Primary School**

- We work closely with our main Post-Primary Schools to ensure smooth transition.
- We welcome students for work experience from a variety of schools and colleges.
- We visit our feeder playgroups to establish links with our P1 children.
- Our children attend open days in feeder schools,
- Our children attend many different educational programmes with other Primary schools eg Bee Safe
- Sporting events are attended with other schools throughout the school year.
- Inclusion of the community in school – Open Mornings, Christmas Events, Grandparents Day etc

## **CARE VALUES**

### **CHILDREN**

We support the principle that every child has the right to feel safe, happy and free from harm in school and we value the contribution every child can make to school life. Central to the creation of this environment is a commitment to the Catholic ethos and the recognition of the worth and value of each child and a cultivation of self respect so that the child may accept his/her appropriate responsibilities and show respect for others.

Children have the right to develop to their full potential within the limits of the school's resources and their achievements should be recognised. This is done through our assemblies and Pupil of the Month and weekly Principal awards for each Key Stage, weekly class line award and End of Year Prize Giving.

We believe that every child should learn to respect their school, the pupils and teachers, visitors to the school and the property and environment. They should be helped to recognise the responsibility they have to contribute to the development of this ethos.

### **STAFF**

As a staff we are committed to working for the good of the school. Our staff brings a range of experience and abilities to the school and each member's contribution is valued and appreciated.

All members of staff are treated with courtesy, fairness and respect and their opinions listened to and valued. Every staff member is entitled to support in their work, particularly in situations of difficulty or crisis and are entitled to a clear definition of his/her role and responsibilities within the school. We strive to ensure that teachers are supported in that they feel valued, and recognition is given that they are doing a worthwhile job in order to promote and maintain good staff morale.



## **PARENTS**

Parents are vital partners in providing the best possible education for their children and are the first educators of our pupils. Whilst parents have an important contribution to make to our school practice, the professional judgement of teachers should always be respected, and parents are asked to support the work of the school by promoting and reinforcing its values at home.

## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Board of Governors has a responsibility to establish a clear vision of the school and its responsibilities to the children in its care. They develop with teachers, parents, pupils and themselves whole policies that reflect the caring ethos of the school. They ensure that policies and procedures reflect fairness, justice and equality to all. In this way they provide a safe, secure and comfortable learning and working environment.

## **OTHER ADULTS WORKING IN OUR SCHOOL**

Other adults strive to lead by example in ensuring that each child is able to achieve their full potential by the demonstration of good relationships with all in the school.

## **THE COMMUNITY**

The local and wider community has an important contribution to make to the education we provide in Ballylifford Primary School. We seek and appreciate the contributions of clergy, education advisory and support staff, music tutors, sports coaches, health professions, student on placement, visitors from various charities and other professionals e.g. local fire service etc. We encourage strong links with the local community by facilitating evening activities. We are delighted to have our 'Friends of Ballylifford' Association such an active and vibrant part of our school life.

## **ORGANISATION OF PASTORAL CARE WITHIN SCHOOL**

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

Class teachers will seek to develop relationships of trust and understanding within the classroom and hold primary responsibility for the pastoral care of the pupils in their classes.

The designated teacher and deputy designated teachers are the main link between the members of the school community and external agencies.

They hold additional responsibility for child protection. The designated teacher is the main source of information and advice in relation to child protection for members of the school community and maintains records in relation to this. The deputy designated teacher will assume these responsibilities in her absence.

### **RECORD KEEPING AND ADMINISTRATION**

An information form is completed by the parent/guardian for every pupil and provides information on pastoral and medical matters. This information will be passed on to the relevant class teacher.

The school maintains a register of concerns held by the designated teacher. This contains records of concerns expressed by pupils or teachers reported to the designated teacher together with actions, if any, taken by the school in response to these concerns.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

All parents are provided with an information leaflet giving details of the school's pastoral care arrangements. Parents may make an appointment to see a teacher at a time that is mutually convenient by phoning the school and arranging an appointment through the Principal.

### **CURRICULUM PROVISION**

We promote the ethos of our school by teaching and promoting the rules of our school designed to encourage respect for ourselves and others. Personal safety is addressed through our contact with outside agencies, such as the PSNI, NSPCC, Fire Service, Road Safety Service, and Cycling Proficiency programme.

R.E. and Grow in Love programmes - Values contained in these programmes.

Science and the environment

Road Safety and Health issues

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

These are seen by pupils, teachers and parents alike as opportunities for learning outside the classroom which are both enjoyable and beneficial. These are addressed by a number of after school clubs currently on offer to the pupils. We hope to widen our choice of extra curricular activities as tutors become available and with the support of parents and school community.

## **LIAISON WITH PARENTS**

Parents may telephone or call to make an appointment to speak to teachers or principal at a mutually convenient time.

We have an established rota of meetings set across the school for all parents.

- End of October/Start of November, 1<sup>st</sup> set of Parent-Teacher Meetings
- End of June, Statutory written Report to all parents regarding their child(ren's) progress across the year.

Parents are invited to visit the school to discuss pupils' progress on a formally arranged day and an end of year report for each child is furnished. Teachers use these occasions to give information and listen to comments from parents which will help the teachers to more fully understand how to provide for the pupils' pastoral as well as learning needs.

In the unlikely event of school emergency closure, all parents will be part of the school texting service allowing the school to issue a text to parents to advise of unexpected closures. The school twitter account, website and termly newsletter will also update the school community of any forthcoming events.

## **LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

- Health Agencies
- Dental Agencies
- E.W.O.
- School Psychology Services
- Behaviour Team
- Social Services

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATIONS**

We will update this policy in the light of further guidance and legislation as necessary. The implementation of both policy and procedures will be monitored and on-going evaluation will ensure its effectiveness.

*(Please refer to our current School Policy for Assessment)*

## ***Conclusion***

Our Policy is concerned with our concern for the needs of all the children in our school. We acknowledge that as well as attending to their educational progress, it is our utmost intention to be always fully responsive to their concerns of whatever nature. Our combined aim is to ensure that all our pupils will enjoy a happy, safe and caring passage through Ballylifford Primary School Primary School.

In addressing our Policy, we ensured that our Pastoral Care Programme reflected the recommendations and guidelines of DENI .

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BoG Chairperson**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Principal**

**Approved by Governors: May 2019**

**Next Review: May 2022**