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| *Pastoral Care Policy* **Sunnylands**  **Primary School** |
| Sunnylands Primary School logo |
| **Pastoral Care**  **Policy**  ***Pastoral Care Coordinator: Mrs R. Nelson***  UPDATED November 2022 |

**Introduction**

The most important role of our school lies in the protection and safety of the children in its care. Therefore there is a need for effective pastoral care in schools to meet the challenges of:

1. The effect of growing up in the 21st century and the changing home backgrounds of our pupils.
2. Varying degrees of family stability.
3. Child abuse and other child protection issues
4. Varying abilities of parents to raise their children to be balanced, responsible, considerate citizens.
5. The changing attitudes and messages from society towards
   * Sex
   * Drugs
   * Leisure in relation to health
   * Stress and increased suicide attempts
6. Bullying.
7. Helping form a balanced, happy individual who can maximise their potential in school.

This Pastoral Care Policy is regarded as an extension of our school's Vision and Aims and a preface to the Anti-Bullying, Drugs, Child Protection/Safeguarding, Positive Behaviour and First Aid Policies. However, there are elements of Pastoral Care in all areas of the curriculum.

**Rationale**

It is a statutory requirement under the Education Reform Order (N.I.) 1989 to provide

a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural,

intellectual and physical development and prepare pupils for the experiences,

opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

Our Vision and Aims state that ***''*** **Sunnylands Primary School provides a safe and happy environment in which every child is treated as an individual and is given the opportunity to acquire knowledge , extend and enrich their experiences, and develop all those qualities necessary to make him or her an independent, contributing member of society summarised in our school motto : Learning for Life – Striving for Success.** Our school also aims ***'to create positive school attitudes which encourage self-discipline through a Christian ethos where self/mutual respect and understanding are central to all learning experiences.'***

The Christian ethos of our school is reflected in the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of our pupils. It does not come about by chance. It is achieved by the principal, senior leadership team and staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school community.

Our School's Health and Safety Policy, which has been adopted by the Board of Governors and reviewed annually, outlines procedures for the general safety and welfare of pupils on a day-to-day basis. The moral responsibility for the protection of children, however, extends beyond this and is the duty of every adult in the school.

Childhood is a wonderful yet vulnerable part of life and children deserve the full protection of society, its institutions and their personnel, particularly of those who comprise the caring professions and are regularly in contact with them. All children should be protected from violence and kept safe from harm in an environment where they are properly cared for, without fear, and secure.

Our school endeavours to uphold these standards and to ensure that decisions made by the Governors, Principal, and members of the teaching staff have the welfare of the child as their paramount consideration.

Every member is valued for the important role they play in the smooth running of this school. Openness and honesty are encouraged within the staff team and the Staff Leadership Team seek to foster good relationships and a sense of self worth for everyone. The basic right to come to work and feel happy and secure in that environment is an ongoing consideration. Consequently, it must be noted that, while this policy refers majoritively to the needs and rights of the children in our school, the Principal also places paramount importance on the Pastoral Care of the staff working in Sunnylands Primary School.

**Definition**

Pastoral Care is looking after the child’s whole development in a positive way, thus enabling them to cope more effectively with their learning in school and to develop the skills and attitudes which will enable them to understand themselves and develop their relationships with others.

It is a set of systems and programmes in school which attempt to meet the totality of every pupils' needs ( social, spiritual, mental, emotional, physical) so that he/she has the opportunity, in a safe environment, to reach his/her potential and be equipped with the skills to cope with the ‘outside world’.

**Aims**

Through this policy and the procedures in our school, we aim:

1. To identify areas and issues which are likely to adversely affect a child’s learning and to bring about early intervention.
2. To facilitate the development of positive and supportive relationships between all members of the school community.
3. To involve parents and outside agencies, as early and as positively as possible, in relation to any difficulties which may arise.
4. To contribute to the provision of the climate, the motivation and the skills which facilitate learning.
5. To help the individual child to enrich his/her own life.
6. To help prepare the pupils for the next stage of their education.
7. To help the individual develop his/her own life-style and to respect that of others.
8. To maintain a secure environment in which all of this is possible.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

All teachers are involved in Pastoral Care but the following will have specific roles:

Mrs R. Nelson Pastoral Care and P.D.M.U. Coordinator

Our Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the implementation of the

curriculum, including monitoring the safety of each child in the school. The Senior

Leadership Team ensures that Pastoral Care is given a high profile in the school

development plan each year. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates the implementation of the Pastoral Care policy. She works with all staff and ensures that teaching resources are kept up to date and that staff are properly trained. She makes sure that the non teaching staff are familiar with the pastoral care policy and given help when needed.

**The Staff Code of Conduct for Pastoral Care**

* Positive school ethos is valued at all times.
* All pupils and staff are valued and respected.
* The conduct is strongly linked to the Child Protection policy.
* Staff are encouraged to be consistent in their approach.

***The careful monitoring and development of staff wellbeing is also an essential part of a highly effective school. All members of the Senior Leadership Team maintain an ‘open door policy’ for assisting staff with any difficulties, concerns or personal issues. Audits and regular staff consultations also provide the opportunity for staff to identify good practice and areas for improvement. Staff are also aware of the CareCall Support Service.***

**The Pupil Code of Conduct for Pastoral Care**

* Our ethos is one where all pupils are valued equally and must treat each other with respect.
* Our School Council assists the school leadership to ensure our voice is heard
* No-one is to be excluded or made feel differente.g. children with a learning difficulty, physical disability or a Newcomer pupil
* We maintain a sense of relationship, belonging and acceptance with positive peers (Barnardo’s Paths Programme/Paths Plus and Friendship group)

Each member of staff works to 'build up' pupils' self esteem and encourage them to

be assertive in order to resist negative peer pressure. We help children to celebrate

success, develop the ability to make moral decisions and to know the difference

between right and wrong. When a new pupil ‘joins’ our school, we endeavour to ensure that they are cared for by all staff and pupils in a supportive and caring manner. ***All policies are made available in the relevant language for parents upon request.***

**Class Teachers:**

Each class teacher is responsible for knowing the children that they teach and

for delivering to them those aspects of the educational themes as stated

in the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

It is important for each teacher to create a 'climate for learning' within his/her classroom where children can feel secure. The children must be made fully aware of the expectations of their own class teacher and of the school as a whole.

Each teacher establishes a set of classroom rules, as well as reinforcing the school's Golden Rules. Children should be aware that if they consistently break these rules then certain consequences will be incurred.

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that his/her class is supervised at all times. Further details may be found in the school's Supervision Policy.

Our Positive Behaviour Policy exists to assist with overall discipline within Sunnylands Primary School.

The ways in which children work with each other and with teachers can have an important bearing on pupils’ personal, social and academic development. Consequently, class teachers:

1. Ensure that learning is carried out in a happy atmosphere within the classroom, where each pupil is treated as an important individual.
2. Employ a range of teaching strategies in response to pupils’ needs.
3. Give pupils responsibility for some of their own learning.
4. Encourage pupils through appropriate and challenging tasks.
5. Integrate pupils with special needs as far as possible.
6. Provide reassurance and build confidence.
7. Encourage pupil motivation and commitment.
8. Give pupils sufficient opportunity to explore their own attitudes and values and those of others.
9. Promote a sense of achievement through praise, recognition and displays of children’s work.
10. Provide time so that children may reflect on what they have learned.

**Liaising with Colleagues:**

Opportunities are taken by staff to discuss certain situations with colleagues at staff meetings, on training days, during directed time, during lunch breaks, etc. These discussions may address academic, emotional, social or physical aspects that other members of the staff need to be aware of.

Information is distributed to members of staff listing the children in their class with such conditions as poor hearing, asthma, diabetes, peanut allergy, etc. This sheet is displayed prominently in the class so that the information is available to visiting/substitute teachers. Those children with such a condition that would require immediate medical attention have a small photograph and the relevant course of action (with contact numbers) displayed in the First Aid Room so that lunchtime supervisors and other members of staff are also made aware.

Emergency contact numbers for all the children can be obtained from the file in the office or from the computer system in the Secretary’s or Principal's Office, allowing quick contact of parents or other responsible person should the need arise.

Staff understand that they have no legal requirement to administer medicines. However, acting in loco parentis and following strict regulations, parents complete necessary documentation in order for medicines to be administered.

Further details may be found in our First Aid and 'Administration of Medicines' policies.

**Liaising with Parents:**

Communication with and co-operation of parents is necessary for the successful education of children socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

The following is a (non exhaustive) list of ways in which communication with parents

takes place:

- Letters home

- Monthly Newsletter

- Texting Service

- School Website

- Two Parental Interviews during the year (in addition to our Open Door policy)

- Parental Audits

- Open Night

- Verbal contact (messages/phone calls)

- SeeSaw and/or email

- Verbal contact initiated by parents

- Contact through E.W.O., school nurse, educational psychologist

- Project work

- Further parental consultation in the event of a specific issue or concern

- Curriculum involvement (e.g. reading, signing homeworks etc)

- Parents who can share skills e.g. vet, nurse, estate agent etc.

- Information Talks/discussions eg Induction programme for P1, ‘Meet the teacher events’

- Parent workshops (e.g. Positive Parenting classes)

- Information booklets e.g. Family Information Booklet

- Annual Pupil Report

**Liaising with External Agencies:**

If a teacher is concerned about a child either physically, emotionally, intellectually or socially, consultation will take place between the Principal and the teacher. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection may also need to be informed.

Help then can be sought from a range of agencies:

- Support teachers/Field Officers

- Educational Psychologists

- Inclusion and Diversity Service

- Special Education and Special Schools

- Educational Welfare Officers

- Social Workers

- Local P.S.N.I.

- School Nurse

- School Doctor

- DHSS

This school enjoys good working relationships with all our Education partners.

Other agencies may be contacted if required.

**Liaising with the Local Community:**

* local churches
* Fund-raising events
* Information evenings e.g. PSNI
* Community Fairs
* Links with other schools (Shared Education Project) and local nurseries

**Staff Development and Training**

In order that teachers may effectively carry out their Pastoral responsibilities, they themselves must feel that they are valued and that help, support and training are available to them.

Training may be required in interpersonal skills and teaching methods that engage pupils actively in their learning. The training will be provided through:

* School based courses, led by the coordinator
* Courses organised by the Education Authority
* Other outside agencies, if it is felt necessary, e.g. ministers, nurse, E.W.O., educational psychologist, etc.

As needs within the school are identified they will be addressed in the

appropriate manner.

**Encouraging and Motivating Pupils:**

Encouragement and motivation of pupils takes place at a class level and also on a wider, whole school level. Personal achievement is acknowledged and encouraged within the classroom by the teachers. School assemblies provide the opportunity to encourage and motivate children on a wider scale with children bringing 'outside school' achievements into school to be presented and discussed in assembly.

*Full attendance is rewarded each year with a prize and certificate for relevant pupils.*

Pupils from P4-7 also annually nominate two class members for the School Council which meets regularly and enables the children to have ‘a voice’ in our school development.

Monthly prizes are awarded to those children who excel in each particular month’s target.

Each week one pupil from each class is awarded a “Pupil of the Week” certificate and their photograph is displayed in the school Entrance Hall. Small certificates, stickers and prizes are made available to all members of staff (including the Principal) to award any good act or piece of work whenever necessary.

Sunnylands Stars are awarded to classes and individuals who are deemed to deserve these for effort, manners etc. Class of the month is awarded to those who have the most stars.

Sporting achievements are encouraged and emphasis is placed on participation when announced in assembly. Sports’ Day and sponsored sports events are other such occasions when pupils are encouraged to do their best and all pupils are awarded with a small token for their achievement in taking part.

**Curricular Management and Organisation**

Pastoral care activities are provided through subjects, extra curricular activities, assemblies, trips and visits to develop individuals to their potential. The pastoral development of every child is always in conjunction with their daily academic learning through every step of a child's school life.

Pastoral Care in Sunnylands Primary School is developed through -

* All curricular areas (in particular - Personal Development and Mutual Understanding: – PDMU)
* Use of Golden Time and Golden Rules
* Use of outside agencies
* Clubs
* Educational visits (including residential trips)
* Informal and formal rewards
* School assemblies

Circle Time can also be used in class as a means of establishing trust and building up the self-esteem of pupils, as well as being a useful tool for dealing with Pastoral Care issues.

**Resources**

Although most situations will be addressed within the classroom, time will be made available for visits, interviews, consultations, etc. if at all possible when a class teacher needs to follow up a particular case.

We have some books available on circle time, bullying, self esteem etc. Teachers may speak to the PDMU or Pastoral Care coordinator who will advise of appropriate material.

It is our intention to continue to build up a store of materials useful in the context of Pastoral Care.

**Monitoring, Recording and Evaluation**

Class teachers will monitor the progress (academically and pastorally) of children in their class. Where a teacher has a concern about the pastoral well being of any child in his/her class, records will be kept of incidents and the necessary action taken. As the pupil progresses through the school records of pastoral concerns or issues will be passed onto the child’s next teacher. Where the teacher considers it appropriate the Pastoral Care co-ordinator will be informed.

An Annual Pupil Report is sent home to parents where the teacher may

comment on the child’s social as well as academic progress.

Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher or the Principal if they have any concerns and worries. 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 school will update this Policy in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually each year. Staff and governors will meet to discuss and review the pastoral care policy. The opinions of parents and children will be valued and where appropriate, action will be taken.

**Conclusion**

The evaluation of our school's system of pastoral care is effective when the school

policy and planning for pastoral care are fully implemented and clearly reflected in the quality of provision and support both within and beyond the classroom.

At all levels of the caring process all staff and pupils need to feel valued, safe and secure.