

St Joseph's Primary School (Madden)



Pastoral Care Policy



Policy Review

Date Agreed: May 2024

Next Review Date: May 2027

Signed Chair of Governors:
Mr P Mc Aleavey

INTRODUCTION

Pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the 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 caring of the teachers in the school will be evident in all aspects of the child's school life.

It is the aim of our 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.

**Name of Designated Teacher is:
Mr Paul Hart**

AIMS

- To create an environment where children are safe and contented.
- To ensure the all-round development of each child.
- To help children grow in self-esteem, confidence and independence of thought.
- To communicate to our children, values and beliefs, that are in keeping with our ethos.
- To protect children from physical, social, emotional and intellectual harm and to provide them with the skills to cope with possible threats to their personal safety, both within and outside school.
- To encourage tolerance, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- To promote warm and positive relationships between children, staff and parents.

Statement of the school's core values in relation to pastoral care.

CHILDREN

We believe that every child is unique and special.

We believe that every child has the right to feel happy, safe and secure in school.

We believe that every child has the right to be helped to develop to the best of their ability, within the limits of the school's resources.

We believe that every child should feel that their work and effort is valued.

We believe that every child should learn to respect their school, their teachers, their fellow pupils, visitors, property and the environment.

We believe that every child should be helped to develop confidence and positive self-esteem.

We believe that every child should be encouraged to develop independence of mind and take responsibility for their own actions.

STAFF (Teaching and Non-teaching)

We believe that all members of staff deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect.

We believe that the opinions of all members of staff should be valued.

We believe that the staff should work together as a team, for the good of the pupils and the good of the school.

We believe that flexibility is an essential quality in a small school setting.

We believe that the staff 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.

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 St. Joseph', Madden.

- a) The assistance of outside agencies will be sought to extend pupils' experiences e.g. Project work; visits of curator of Museum, local industrialists and farmers.
- b) Links will be established with neighbouring schools and shared education links will continue to be fostered with Drumhillery PS.
- c) There will be links with statutory agencies involved in the health and welfare of children.

ORGANISATION OF PASTORAL CARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Roles and Responsibilities

Our Board of Governors will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum including monitoring the safety of each child in the school. The Principal and staff will ensure that pastoral care is given a high profile in the school development plan. Each member of staff will work to build up pupils self esteem and encourage them to be assertive and to resist negative peer pressure. They will help them to celebrate success and develop the ability to make moral decisions and to know the difference between right and wrong.

Responsibilities of staff members

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. This responsibility is shared with the part-time teacher for special needs and classroom assistants. 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. Coordinating includes:

- Liaison with teachers, parents and external support agencies.
- Attend relevant INSET.
- Coordinating the provision of school based INSET.
- Acting as the designated teacher for the investigation of claims of child abuse.
- Providing information and advice in relation to Child Protection for all members of the school community.
- Maintaining all records in relation to Child Protection.

Mr. Hart is the Designated teacher.

Record keeping and administration

An information form is kept for every child. This form is completed annually by parents and provides information on pastoral and medical matters.

The school maintains an 'Incident Book'. This records the details of all contacts made by parents with the school in relation to pastoral matters, together with action taken by the school in response to these concerns.

Communication with parents

All parents are provided with an information pack giving details of the school's pastoral care arrangements. Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to contact their child's teacher or the Principal if they have any concerns or worries. To do this they are required to use the appropriate interviews procedure. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention. We will 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. Staff will meet regularly to discuss and review the Pastoral Care Policy. The opinions of parents and children will be valued and where appropriate actions will be taken.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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

Class Teacher



Head of Pastoral Care



Principal

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 Head of Pastoral Care 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.

Pastoral Care Code of Practice

The school will seek to demonstrate its pastoral care in the following ways:

- Greeting pupils and welcoming them when they arrive at school.
- Encouraging a positive and happy atmosphere for learning. Chatting informally with pupils, listening to their news, their concerns, etc.
- Getting to know pupils personally, becoming aware of their personal circumstances and showing sensitivity to their individual needs.
- Supporting pupils, as far as possible in situations of need which may arise.
- Developing inclusive practices.
- Promoting an ethos of respect and caring within classrooms.
- Giving pupils praise and encouragement in relation to their work and behaviour, through verbal and written comments and awards systems.
- Promoting the self-esteem and confidence of pupils.
- Allowing pupils to take on responsibility, through jobs in class and around the school.
- Assemblies which address a range of pastoral issues.
- Teaching provision which addresses issues related to pastoral care.
- Providing a range of learning styles which promotes opportunity for active research and self expression.
- Appropriate supervision of play areas at break and lunch time, with particular attention to the prevention of bullying.
- Supervision of pupils at home-time, to ensure safe departure from the school premises.
- Development of partnership and communication between all members of staff, in order to facilitate the sharing of information and concerns about pupils.
- Development of partnership and communication with parents, in order to facilitate the sharing of information and concerns about pupils.

- Appropriate strategies will be adopted where particular home circumstances are known to the school.

CURRICULUM PROVISION FOR PASTORAL CARE

In planning curricular provision for pastoral care, the school has taken CCEA's draft guidance on Personal Development as a framework. This addresses curricular provision in three main areas:

Personal Understanding

Self-esteem & self awareness	Addressed through Religious Education programme; aspects of work in English; promotion of pupils' self confidence through participation in assemblies, Young Writer of the Month, Certificates, Comments, Stars. School promotes individual talents (e.g. Irish dance and Irish Music).
Interpersonal & social skills	The school has its own programme for development of social skills including good manners, paired working, group-working, meeting and greeting people, taking on responsibility. On school outings, pupils will be encouraged to respect people and property. On residential visits, pupils will learn to share in responsibilities undertaken.
Emotional literacy	This area is addressed through discussions, literature and opportunities which arise in the course of day to day classroom activity. The school uses circle time.
Mental Health	Support for Mental Health strategies and resilience will be provided via the PDMU programme. We will continue to utilize the support of 'Relax Kids' to assist teachers with the development of this area of the curriculum.

Personal Health

Developing a healthy lifestyle	This is addressed through the school's programme for science at KS1 and 2. This includes drugs education. The school also follows a 'Boost better breaks' policy. Extra-curricular activities provided include: (Soccer Gaelic football, camogie, and cycling). Once a year the school undertakes a 'Health Week' for all classes and Heart Start programme from P5 – P7.
Personal safety	This is addressed through the science, religious education and Kidscape teaching programmes.
Safety in the environment	Each class uses the Road Safety calendar as a teaching resource on a regular basis. Fire safety is addressed through a teaching programme in P5. Cycling proficiency training is offered to pupils in P7.
Relationship and sexuality education	Appropriate aspects of this theme are addressed through the science and religious education teaching programmes and Kidscape. P7 pupils also participate in the 'Love for Life' programme. Furthermore E.Safety is promoted through parental awareness evenings and in whole school ICT classes

Living in the local and wider community (Citizenship)

People in the community	Grandparents visit the school to contribute to history lessons and projects. A range of other visitors come into the school from the wider community to contribute to topics such as 'People who help us'. Industry Links - farming, Linwoods.
Culture in the community	The school has close association with local bodies (e.g. Church, Football and Camogie Clubs). Pupils participate in local festivals and musical events. Irish Traditional Evening, Musical workshops (St Patrick's High School, Keady)
The wider community	Pupils participate in a range of school visits to places of historical, cultural and environmental interest. P7 pupils also go on a residential visit in the 3rd term. The school takes part in inter-school events such as quizzes and sports competitions. The school selects two charities to support each year.
Environmental issues	These issues are addressed through science and geography teaching programmes. The school has an anti-litter policy. Children in P2/3 set up bird feeders as part of cross-curricular topic work. P5/6 are covering the BESAFE campaign. EMU group monitor the effectiveness of our local environmental work.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

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

Cross referencing is essential in delivering the pastoral care policy.

These policies include:

- Health and Safety
- Bullying
- Discipline/Including Positive Behaviour Programme
- Drugs/Misuse of Substances
- Child Protection
- Acceptable use of the Internet
- Use of reasonable force
- Special Education Needs
- Pupils with Medical Needs in School
- Concerns & complaints (includes a statement in school prospectus)
- Anti-bullying

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
- Courses organised by EA
- Courses provided by other bodies.
- Visitors from EA to school – ACE Team

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 programme throughout the school.

LIAISON WITH BOARD OF GOVERNORS

For GOVERNORS 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
- PI induction booklet, News Sheets,
- Annual Progress Reports
- Sporting events
- Fundraising activities
- Extra-curricular activities
- Musical shows
- Irish Traditional Concerts
- End of Year Mass
- Penitential Services
- First Holy Communion
- Enrollment Services
- Curriculum meetings
- Christmas Play
- Service of Light

All volunteers, including parents, wishing to help must undergo the appropriate vetting procedures as advocated by the EA

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.

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 to ensure that the policies 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.

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

Conclusion

The evaluation of the school's system of pastoral care is effective when the school policy and planning for pastoral care are fully implemented and reflected in the quality of provision within and beyond the classroom and the effectiveness of the support arrangements for individual pupils.

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