

DRUMADONNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL and NURSERY UNIT

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

DEFINITION AND AIMS

The pastoral dimension of this school involves all pupils and all adults involved with the life of the school.

For **PUPILS** this means encouraging them:

- a. to set and achieve personal, social and academic goals through a planned and developmental programme
- b. to help them gain maximum benefit from their time at school
- c. to develop independence of mind and to take responsibility for their own actions
- d. to develop self-discipline and self-respect
- e. to develop an understanding of themselves as individuals – their strengths and limitations, their personal qualities, their attitudes and values
- f. to develop a respect for the opinion of others
- g. to develop an understanding of the world in which they live.

For **TEACHERS** this means:

- a. establishing a clear vision of the school with its pupils, its community and its point of development
- b. developing whole school curriculum policies which establish principles for action throughout the school
- c. promoting a caring environment where pupils' learning is developed within the context of their individual needs and abilities
- d. providing them with opportunities for their own professional development
- e. establishing appropriate structures of time and support for those in need.

For **ADULTS** associated with the school this means:

- a. understanding, and having an empathy with, the general ethos of the school
- b. being partners with the teachers in providing a caring approach
- c. helping the pupils achieve their individual goals
- d. developing a team approach.

The pastoral dimension contributes to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in the school for both teachers and pupils where all adults have an influential part to play.

The Pastoral Dimension has a **GENERAL** and a **SPECIALISED FOCUS**.

GENERAL FOCUS

Since the pastoral dimension permeates all activities, the general focus requires a caring commitment by all teachers and adults to every aspect of school life. Therefore, the pastoral dimension should be evident in:-

- the school ethos
- the hidden curriculum
- extra-curricular activities
- individual subjects
- discipline procedures
- reward procedures

1. SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY

The school as a community is seen as an extended family where everyone works for the common good.

It is our intention that parents should be made welcome in the school and feel that their role is important and appreciated. For example, awareness sessions, sports day, performances, class assemblies etc. give parents opportunities to be a part of school life.

The ancillary staff should also feel that they have a vital role to play in the smooth running of the school.

Teachers also believe in sharing duties as part of a mutually supportive team.

The school must be seen as part of the wider community and the assistance of outside agencies is sought to extend the children's experiences. Links have also been established with neighbouring schools. There are links with statutory agencies involved in the health and welfare of the children. The local council is also involved in school life, running anti-litter and environmental projects. Speakers from local churches and organisations take part in school assemblies.

Local groups use the school premises for meetings.

2. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

The pastoral dimension is central to the ethos of the school. The atmosphere which the school is creating is ordered, yet sympathetic.

Routines are very much a part of school life and must be observed and maintained. However, there must be flexibility by everyone concerned so that when routines have to be altered, either temporarily or permanently, then changes should be understood and appreciated through efficient channels of communication.

3. ATTITUDES TO LEARNING

The pastoral dimension influences the attitudes to learning.

Teachers provide a range of learning styles in an encouraging framework to promote opportunities for active research and self-expression. The development of a flexible approach is of benefit to effective learning.

Learning is carried out in a happy atmosphere within the classroom where each pupil is treated as an important individual.

It is also of vital importance that children are given appropriate and challenging tasks as this essentially reflects caring about each individual's educational needs and development.

4. CARING ATTITUDE

The pastoral dimension necessitates a caring approach to all activities.

In our Discipline Policy we clearly outline the positive approach to discipline which we adopt where praise and encouragement are essential elements of activities throughout the school.

It is important that each teacher finds out as much as possible about every individual within his/her class and bears in mind how particular home circumstances may influence attitudes, expectations and behaviour.

This is further enhanced through meetings with parents – either the formal parent teacher meetings or more informal meetings.

SPECIALISED FOCUS

The class teacher has a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspiration, interests and academic progress of each pupil in the class. With this knowledge, allied to the teacher's skills, the work of the school, parents and other adults is integrated to support the learning and development of each pupil.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

We consider that the development of good inter-personal relationships is vital to ensure:

- a. mutual respect
- b. happiness and security for both pupils and staff
- c. positive attitudes

Pupils are encouraged, in the classroom and throughout the school, to assist one another and develop the art of listening.

The Principal has an important role to play in the development and nurturing of positive relationships amongst all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. This includes the Principal having regular contact with all staff and offering support and advice.

It is also essential that each individual seeks to fulfil his/her role as a member of the 'whole school team' in a manner which is both consistent and flexible and takes into account the complementary roles of others.

2. AREAS OF EXPERIENCE

It is important that children are offered a wide variety of experiences.

Our educational visits programme means that every child has the opportunity of at least one visit to a place of interest each year.

DAY TRIPS

Belfast Zoo
Streamvale Farm
Ulster Museum
Castleward
Aquarium, Portaferry
Tayto
Teddy Bears' Picnic, Rostrevor
Butterfly House, Seaforde
Ulster Folk Park
Palace Stables, Armagh
W5, Belfast
Lough Neagh Discovery Centre
Armagh Planetarium
Titanic, Belfast
Navan Fort, Armagh

RESIDENTIALS

York, England

3. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

A positive behavioural programme to enhance self-esteem has been adopted where self-discipline is encouraged. This is discussed at regular intervals with each class, on a whole-school basis and individually, when necessary.

4. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school encourages positive attitudes throughout its extra-curricular programme.

P6/7 children on residential visits learn to share in responsibilities undertaken.

During the day visits not only are horizons broadened and the curriculum enhanced but children are also encouraged to respect people and property.

P4-7 children in football, hockey, netball and tag rugby learn to be both competitive and co-operative. They learn positive attitudes of team spirit, the joy of winning and how to handle the disappointment of defeat.

In the Cycling Proficiency Scheme road safety, self-discipline, care of possessions and thought for other road users are encouraged.

P7 children take part in the "Bee Safe" programme.

P5 children learn about safety in the Fire Service Programme.

With the school in a rural setting, farm safety talks are given to the children.

In the Nursery Unit, visits from people who help us enrich the children's learning experiences. Visitors include the Fire Service, PSNI, Ambulance Service, music specialists, vets etc.

5. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The school will encourage the development, in pupils, of a wide range of personal interests. Children will also be encouraged to take responsibilities.

Personal and social development will be further enhanced through the extra-curricular programme.

Individual talents will be promoted and encouraged in all areas of school life.

6. HEALTH EDUCATION

Implicit in the pastoral dimension is a programme, throughout the school, for the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

For example, incentives are in place to promote healthy breaks.

IMPLEMENTATION

The successful implementation of a policy on Pastoral Care is dependent on it being communicated positively to staff, pupils, parents and all others involved in school life. Mrs. Minnis (Vice Principal), supported by the Principal, takes responsibility for pastoral care.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Training opportunities will be provided for the appropriate members of staff. In addition, all staff will be trained, on a regular basis, in the areas of Child Protection and Pastoral Care.

EVALUATION

The school will carry out, at regular intervals, an evaluation of the pastoral dimension to identify ways of improving the quality of provision for the benefit of all pupils and staff.

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