Pastoral Care Policy

Sacred Heart Primary School
Dundrum

November 2022

Introduction

Pastoral Care is an all-embracing term which describes the whole atmosphere, ethos and tone of our school in its mission to promote the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of the pupils. In Sacred Heart, Dundrum we are primarily concerned with the safety, health, well-being and personal development of all our pupils. We recognise the uniqueness of each child and through our pastoral care, we want to ensure that each child feels cherished and thrives to achieve their full potential in a safe and happy environment.

Aims

- To create a safe, caring community within our school where there is self-respect and respect for the views, opinions and differences of others
- To develop all aspects of a child's well-being i.e. their spiritual, moral, emotional, physical and academic development.
- To provide an environment that will enable each child to develop their self-confidence, self-esteem and promote a positive self-image.
- To work in partnership with parents and outside agencies to overcome any difficulty a pupil may encounter and therefore enrich the quality of teaching and learning.
- To help pupils appreciate and value the opportunities and resources they have and to work as a school to help others in our community and the wider environment.

Pastoral care in Sacred Heart encompasses and pervades the whole life and work of the school in which:

· all the pupils and all the staff feel valued as individuals, feel safe and secure and are encouraged to develop their gifts and talents.
· the staff work well together, as an effective team keeping the pupils' interests and welfare as their main focus.
· there are good relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils within and outside the classroom.
· the pupils are secure and are protected from emotional and physical harm.
· the pupils' opinions are valued and their worries and concerns are dealt with sympathetically and appropriately.
· the self-esteem of the pupils are promoted and they have opportunities to develop independence of thought and expression.

· the pupils are taught to work with their peers arid to value and respect the opinions of others.
· our parents are closely involved in and knowledgeable about the life and work of the school.

Liaison with Parents and other Agencies

In Sacred Heart we value the close collaboration with parents in all aspects of school life. We encourage parents to bring any areas of concern firstly to the class teacher's attention as soon as possible. Should problems or misunderstandings arise, we will listen and work with parents. We would ask parents to support our pastoral care policies and procedures which have been developed after much consultation and ongoing review with all members of our school community. The school will utilise the support and expertise of other agencies.
These include:

- EA and CCMS
- Education Psychologists
- Our School Nurse and Health Agencies
- NSPCC
- Our Parish Priest
- Charitable Associations
- Board of Governors

The school has clear lines of communication and good, flexible relationships with relevant external advice and support agencies, e.g. CCMS, EA, DENI, School Medical services, social services, police, etc. The school strives to promote and sustain good and high standards of behaviour a discipline which reflect an appropriate balance between rewards and sanctions. Disciplinary procedures are implemented consistently by all staff in a fair and positive manner.

Responsibility
While the Board of Governors, Principal and senior management have primary responsibility for the arrangements that promote and ensure the care and welfare of pupils and staff, it is obvious that pastoral care in the school is a shared responsibility, involving the whole staff in co-operation with parents and pupils.

All members of staff have the support of the principal in matters of pastoral care and also have access to external support agencies.

The Pastoral Team

The Pastoral Team is comprised of members of the teaching staff. Members of the team, meet as and when is required to discuss individual cases causing concern, and to share and agree appropriate strategies. This is then reported back to the appropriate staff and when appropriate, the parents of the child. When a child is reported to the team with regard to any Pastoral matter, action taken will be recorded.

Main Components of Pastoral Care in the School

Some of the principal features and components of pastoral care provision and practice in the school are set out under the following headings.

1. School Leadership

The significance of the quality and effectiveness of the leadership of the head teacher and senior management in striving "to create a caring, happy and secure environment, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect, whilst being given the opportunity to develop their gifts and talents" is fully recognised and acknowledged by the Board of Governors of the school.

2. Staff Welfare and Development

It is widely recognised in the world of work that care of staff is vital to ensure that stress and low morale do not jeopardise the success and prosperity of school life. In schools, high pupil morale and expectations are difficult to establish and sustain without high teacher morale and expectations. At school level the promotion and development of staff welfare and development is an obvious responsibility of the Board of Governors, Principal and senior management but it is also the mutual responsibility of all colleagues in school. It is also recognised that some of the sources of stress and low morale in schools (as in other organisations) often lie outside the influence of the schools themselves.

3. Child Protection Procedures
This component of pastoral care refers to school's policies that aim to protect the children from physical and emotional harm, from neglect and from any form of abuse. It also deals with the need for the school to ensure that the curriculum includes a programme for pupils on self-protection.

4. The Teaching and Learning Environment
Teachers strive to create and maintain a positive classroom climate: "A quiet, calm relaxed attitude combined with fairness and a sense of purpose: a demonstration of interest in and knowledge of the pupils individually and mutual respect, the pupil recognising the personal qualities, knowledge and skills of the teachers and the teachers being sensitive to the needs of the pupils and respecting their contributions. This feature of pastoral care refers to the harmonious relations which are striven for, nurtured and developed in the school between teachers and pupils and among the pupils within and outside the classroom.
It encompasses mutual respect, tolerance, the approachability of teachers, the growth of pupils, and the expectations that each bring to the school situation. Pupils have a sense of security and are free from emotional and physical harm. Teachers are fair, consistent and compassionate in their approaches to discipline.

5. Partnership and Consultation with Parents
This aspect of pastoral care refers to the school' s arrangements for keeping parents informed and up-to-date about their children's progress and about developments in school.

6. Extra Curricular Activities
This feature of pastoral care refers to the opportunities the school provides for learning and social activity outside the formal classroom setting

7. School Environment
This aspect of pastoral care refers to the action of staff and management in ensuring safe, clean, comfortable and pleasant environment throughout the school for work leisure.

8. Rewards

The recognition of pupil achievement is of vital importance in developing pupil self-esteem and promoting continuous motivation and engagement with regard to learning. At a class level, each class has their own individual and group reward systems. At a school level we have a weekly assembly where we recognise and present the 'Pupils of the Week' with a certificate. We also have 'Pupil of the Month' rewards for our hardworking pupils. Children are presented with a certificate in acknowledgement of their achievement. Our reward system is immensely popular with pupils and is very successful in promoting positive attitudes to learning.

Bullying - Guidance to staff (Refer to Anti-bullying Policy)

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else through physical, verbal, emotional or psychological aggression. Children must realise that any form of bullying is unacceptable and that such behaviour will be dealt with appropriately by the staff of the school. Individual members of staff need to be alert both inside and outside the classroom. Children must be aware that it is the responsibility of everyone to report acts of bullying as soon as they arise. They need to be aware that this is not 'telling tales'. To be seen to act is as important as taking action. Silence and secrecy nurture bullying.

The above aspects of pastoral care are developed in a wide range of curricular policies. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with the following policies:

· Anti Bullying Policy
· Positive Behaviour Policy
· Child Protection Policy
· Special Education Needs Policy
· Religious Education Policy

· Health and Safety Policy
· Healthy Eating and Lifestyle Policy
· Drugs Policy
· RSE Policy
· Attendance Policy

The pastoral care of our pupils will be developed and enhanced through a wide range of activities and opportunities. These, combined with the Northern Ireland Curriculum, enhance the development of the 'Whole' child. These include:

- Weekly assemblies
- Whole school liturgical events and class masses
- The involvement of all pupils in presentations and school productions
- The recognition of achievements in and out of school
- The celebration of children's work
- Class duties/responsibilities and Playground Buddies
- The involvement of pupils in charities and supporting our community
- Extra curricular activities
- Our extended sport and instrumental programme
- Circle time
- Parent/Teacher meetings
- Educational visits and residentials
- The full involvement of pupils in their classroom Rules, Rewards and Consequences
- Grandparents' Day
- Catholic Schools Week
- Additional learning support
- The ongoing review of all pastoral care policies and procedures
- Events throughout the year which continue to reinforce important pastoral information e.g. Anti- Bullying Week, Children's Mental Health Week, Safer Internet Day, Health & Safety Week (these areas are also reviewed with pupils on many occasions throughout the school year)