

PASTORAL CARE POLICY



Introduction

Through its pastoral care arrangements and provision, Portavogie Primary School demonstrates its continuing concern for the personal and social development of all its pupils, regardless of their age or ability, as individuals and as secure, successful and fully participating members of the school and its wider community. Pastoral care is, perhaps, at its most effective when it is all-pervasive and fully integrated into the school's daily routines, its curriculum and its extra-curricular activities. This approach has been adopted by the staff of Portavogie Primary. This policy, together with the child protection, anti-bullying and promoting positive behaviour policies outline the school's overall commitment to the pupils' welfare.

Rationale

This policy has been formulated and implemented:

- to cope with the effect of growing up in the 21st Century and the changing home
- backgrounds of our pupils i.e. family stability, child abuse
- parental difficulties in raising children.
- to maximise learning
- to ensure a safe, secure arena for all pupils

Aims

The aims of the school have clearly taken into account the importance attached to pastoral care of its pupils. The aims are as follows:

- to promote a happy, caring, attractive environment which will stimulate pupils
- to promote the spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the pupils at the school
- to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will be challenging, cater for the full range of abilities within the school and enable pupils to experience success
- to develop pupils self-confidence and self-discipline
- to encourage the pupils to value one another and to respect the views of other members of their community
- to prepare the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The following statement is in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and reinforces the staff's commitment to all pupils' welfare: "The school will aim to provide a happy, caring and safe environment in which the spiritual, moral and physical development of each pupil is promoted. The pupils will be encouraged to behave in a responsible manner, both to themselves and others, showing respect, courtesy and consideration at all times. They will also be encouraged to respect the views of others and to obey the rules which will be drawn up to ensure the good behaviour, safety and well-being of the pupils and the smooth running of the school."

Ethos of the School

In Portavogie Primary School a good ethos has been achieved by the principal and staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school.

This ethos has contributed effectively to pastoral care as a result of:

- the healthy relationships within the school
- the promotion of pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence
- parental support for the work of the staff
- the positive approaches in promoting and maintaining good standards of discipline

It is in the formal and informal situations that teachers can be helped to foster the values of self-respect, self-discipline, tolerance, equality and fairness.

This has generated a positive climate within the school community where every individual should feel valued and cared for at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors have overall responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community.

The Principal must ensure that related policies are reviewed and updated and that agreed procedures are followed.

All teachers have responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils in the school. Through the planned curricular programme they will, amongst other things, build up pupils' esteem, encourage them to be assertive where appropriate and help them to make informed decisions about issues in terms of 'right' or 'wrong'. They also have a responsibility to develop a programme of support for identified pupils to enhance their abilities to problem solve, think critically, manage conflict and to develop self esteem and self discipline.

The school secretary and principal are responsible for the review of pupil attendance records and the provision of support to pupils and parents in maintaining good standards of attendance.

The EWO is responsible for intervention programmes for identified pupils who have low attendance records.

Staff Training

Staff will be informed of any changes in policy and procedures as required.

Resourcing

Resources required will be obtained for teachers to deliver pastoral care issues. Relevant courses offered by the Board and outside agencies will be attended where possible.

Pastoral care encompasses all aspects of our school life and has a high profile.

Specific Procedures and Arrangements

Data Capture Forms

Parents are requested to complete a separate form for each child enrolled giving details of a variety of necessary information including contact priority telephone numbers. Parents are to advise the school of any changes in circumstances as they become apparent.

Pupils Enrolled into Primary 1

During the summer term prior to starting school in September, the new P1 children are invited along to participate in induction meetings in the Primary One classroom with the P1 teacher and classroom assistant. This gives them the opportunity to get to know their new teacher and their new class friends. This makes the official start a little less daunting.

Liaison with past / next teacher

To ensure continuity of the needs of the pupils class teachers liaise with the previous teacher. This may take the form of written notes on each child, groupings (e.g. reading), important home circumstances / health issues. However an informal but invaluable approach of sharing thoughts about individual children as the year progresses is often deemed more relevant and meaningful. Any notes on a child who has a serious health problem e.g. a nut allergy / severe asthma / diabetes is also placed in the office with details of illness / what to do and who to contact. Each class teacher leaves a policy document out for any substitute teacher plus any important information about the children which she feels the substitute teacher needs to be aware of.

Non-Class Time Supervision

Before school, break-time and lunch-time periods are supervised by at least two teachers, classroom assistants or supervisory assistants on a rota basis. Supervisory assistants have been issued with a set of guidelines to ensure continuity in the standard of care.

Sickness or Injury

During school hours this will be dealt with by the class teacher, a classroom assistant, or teacher holding the post of first-aid. Parents or guardians will, if necessary, be contacted by telephone as soon as possible to arrange for the child to be further examined or taken home. Significant accidents are recorded on the appropriate pupil accident form and forwarded to the Education Authority. Details of all first-aid administered by the teacher are also recorded in school records.

Medication

At the beginning of each school year parents are invited to a parent teacher interview. Parents are asked to supply details of any current or on-going medical problems which could affect their child's progress or daily life in school. Parents are asked to inform the school when a child has developed a new illness and give details/instructions as to medication and if and when they wish staff to administer the same.

Medical expertise will be sought as appropriate.

Absences

Parents should either explain a child's absence in the form of a letter or telephone call, on or before the day the child returns to school.

Unexplained absences will be pursued in the interests of the child and as by regulation.

See Attendance Policy

Safety on Arrival to or Departure from School

On arrival or departure from school, parents are advised to:

- park only on the school side of the New Harbour Road
- in parking, pupils leave the car at the footpath side
- refrain from turning at the school gates

P1 - P3 teachers walk the children to the school gates at the end of classes each day to meet their parents or guardians. P4 -P7 teachers dismiss the pupils from the front door of the school. Each class teacher has the responsibility of

bringing back into school any child not met until the parent arrives and if necessary will contact the home.

Door Security System

When each school day begins, this system is put into operation. No entry into the main building can then be accessed without knowledge of the visitor's identity and purpose.

Parental Interviews

These will be by formal arrangement twice a year and by request as necessary. Parents are encouraged to arrange to meet with class teachers, the principal or the designated teacher if they have concerns regarding any aspect of school life pertaining to their child as soon as possible. Such meetings are encouraged to dispel or alleviate worries before any possible distress is caused.

Informal contact is often made when children are being left to, or being collected from, school. Such contact is very useful in keeping the staff informed of minor problems, temporary changes in family routine, medical appointments etc..

Reports

Reports are issued once a year and include reference to pupil behaviour during the year.

Personal and Social Well-being

Both aspects of development are addressed within PDMU and as they arise in other curricular subjects and at appropriate times during school assemblies.

Regular contact is maintained with health professionals -

School Nurse

Educational Psychology Service (when necessary)

Within school pupils are regularly reminded that they may speak to any member of staff they wish to in the strictest confidence about any matter at all which is disturbing or worrying them. All pupils know who the designated teacher and deputy designated teacher are within the school.

Conflict between children is usually resolved by talking the problem through with two teachers who will help all parties to realise why the issue arose and how it could best have been avoided.

Supervision on out of School Visits

This will be in the ratio of 1 adult to 10 pupils on most occasions. Parents will assist where appropriate. On school residential tours the ratio preferred will be 1 adult to 8 pupils.

Vetting

All adults working with, or regularly supervising pupils, will be vetted according to Child Protection procedures (Access NI).

Minimum Force

If required, this step will be in accordance with D.E.N.I. circular 1999/9 and will be a final resort when all other options have been exhausted.

Child Protection Policy

A copy of the school's policy is available at the school office, on the website and will be issued on request.

Parents and pupils Child Protection leaflets are distributed during the first term of school.

Members of the Board of Governors and all full-time staff have received training in the procedures involved and are aware of the designated teachers holding responsibility. The designated teacher trains all members of staff every two years.

Other relevant policies

All staff should be aware of the following related school policies and relevant Board and DENI guidelines:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Intimate Care policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Use of reasonable force / safe handling policy
- SEN policy
- Policy in relation to Drugs
- Policy on Health and Safety
- Policy on Anti-bullying
- Board guidance on educational visits
- First Aid and the administration of medicines policy
- RSE policy
- Policy on mobile phone use.
- Policy on the Guidelines of The Use of the Internet and Digital Technology and E-learning

The use of Photographic Images

The school recognise that photographic images can be used in a positive way to promote school life and to motivate the children. However, in line with DENI guidance, the school seeks parental consent before using these images.