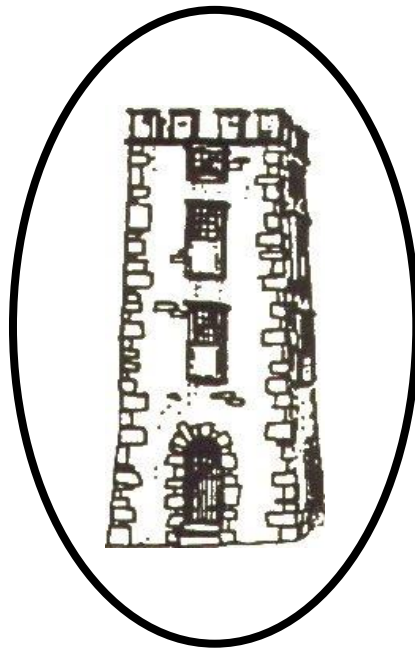


**St. Mary's Primary School  
& Nursery Unit  
Cushendall**



**Pastoral Care  
Policy**

2019/20

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## **Rationale**

An effective Pastoral Care system is essential to provide for our children as they encounter the rapid changes which are taking place in society. Children require all the skills necessary to deal with the rising pressures of media, family, education and peer pressure that they encounter in their daily lives. We in St Mary's believe effective Pastoral Care should contribute to the creation of a supportive atmosphere for the whole school community.

## **Definition**

Pastoral Care is composed of different policies, programmes and procedures which encourage each individual child to develop their full potential by catering for their spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual, physical and social needs, in a safe and secure environment. Each child will be encouraged to develop personal, social, emotional and academic skills to prepare them for the 'outside world'.

## **Aims**

1. We at St Mary's are aware of the need to help our children manage their present lives, as well as to help them prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, so we endeavour to provide for the development of the pupil as a person as well as a learner.
2. We aim to develop our pupils' "life skills" – critical thinking, decision making, effective communication, learning from mistakes, which are so necessary for their health and safety in today's society.
3. We aim to provide a caring commitment to guide and advise our pupils on both personal and educational matters and we seek to build up a community of children who care about each other and show respect for themselves and others.
4. The Staff of St Mary's aim to build a special relationship with, and a knowledge of, the children in their care and thus endeavour to raise the pupils' social awareness, promote positive attitudes and build their self-esteem.
5. Contributions to the pastoral work of the class teacher will come from their partnership with colleagues, local priests, educational welfare officers, community police, school nurse and other outside agencies.
6. We aim to promote a partnership and close working relationship with parents/guardians whose views and wishes as prime carers will be heard and respected to enable us to support their children's learning.
7. We aim to offer a framework of values and positive behaviour enabling our children to be self-reliant, motivated, self-disciplined and to make choices in a moral context.

## **2. SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **Ethos**

In St Mary's we promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation which will contribute to the learning process and generate a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels valued and cared for.

### **Relationships**

Many people are interacting daily within the school and consequently a wide range of relationships exist. As a school we will endeavour to promote positive, open relationships in both formal and informal situations.

The school recognises that regular, effective communication is crucial in Pastoral Care and positive relationships will be promoted between:-

- Board of Governors - School
- Principal - Staff
- Staff - Staff
- Staff - Pupils
- Pupils - Pupils
- School - Parents
- School - External Agencies/Community

### **Values**

Every opportunity will be taken to praise our pupils for their contributions to the life of the school. Through positive daily experiences, in addition to curricular activities, we aim to communicate the following positive values and beliefs:-

- Self-respect;
- Honesty;
- Tolerance;
- Respect for others and their property;
- Independence;
- Co-operation;
- Positive behaviour;
- Reconciliation.

## **Self-Esteem**

St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit recognise that the most important aspect of education is the wholeness of the child. As a school we will encourage children to think positively about themselves and accept their own individuality. We believe that a child's self-esteem will be boosted when they feel valued in all aspects of school life.

In St Mary's we will aim to promote positive self-esteem and confidence as these promote learning. Pupils will be involved in a range of activities to allow them all to experience success and thus giving the teachers an opportunity to praise each child.

## **Personal Safety**

Childhood is a time of joy and discovery when children should be nurtured and loved to enable them to grow into caring adults. Part of the process of discovery and growth must also help children to learn how to cope with potential dangers. The safe use of technology is an increasing challenge e.g. internet and mobile phones. St. Mary's aims to equip our children with the knowledge and skills to make them less vulnerable and more self-confident.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for Pastoral Care in the school.
- The Principal, Mrs Magee, has overall responsibility for promoting Pastoral Care and fostering positive relationships. In addition, she will review and update the policy, inform and liaise with parents and initiate and ensure Pastoral Care is forefront in the school's development plan.
- Teachers have responsibility for promoting Pastoral Care by :-
  - Helping children to make informed decisions;
  - Celebrating success;
  - Building up children's self-esteem;
  - Developing effective communication;
  - Encouraging assertiveness;
  - Encouraging sensitivity.

This will be further promoted through the PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) area of learning within the NI Curriculum and a range of CRED (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity) activities.

Teachers build up a knowledge of pupils as individuals and take an interest in their special needs and all round development.

Support staff will contribute to the promotion of Pastoral Care consistent with our policy.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure the Pastoral Care Policy is working effectively in our school, the policy, procedures and practice will be kept under review. We value the contribution that can be made by our teachers, parents and pupils to effect the appropriate change when necessary.

This will be achieved by:-

- Listening to the concerns of pupils and staff and acting on them;
- Listening to the views of pupils raised at School Council Meetings and acting on them;
- Parents being encouraged to inform the school immediately if they have any concerns;
- Parent / Teacher Interview Meetings;
- Staff and Board of Governors Meetings;
- S.E.N. Review Meetings;
- Open Days;
- Induction Days;
- Information Evenings;
- School Newsletters /Monthly Information Letters;
- Nursery Newsletters.

## **Staff Training**

Training will be updated annually in relation to policies, procedures and pastoral issues and staff will be informed of Department of Education changes.

Support staff will be updated on policies and procedures by the Principal.

Staff will attend relevant courses provided by the Education Authority and external agencies.

'Baker Days' and directed time will be used for training as required.

## **Resources**

Pastoral Care encompasses all areas of school life and is important in the development of the 'whole' child. To ensure the implementation of the policy:-

- CEA resources to support PDMU are integrated into the learning and teaching programme for all classes P1-7;
- CRED Toolkit resources are, where possible, integrated into the learning and teaching programme for all classes P1-7 and included in nursery planning;

- Additional relevant resources will be purchased for use in class where necessary;
- Time is allocated for review, training and implementing change;
- Pastoral Care is part of the school development plan;
- The Board of Governors and Principal ensure the maintenance of the school environment.

## **Pastoral Activities**

As a school we integrate PDMU and CRED activities into the learning and teaching programme for Primaries 1-7 in keeping with NI Curriculum guidelines. These activities are also integrated into the play based learning in the Nursery Unit.

In 2010 we introduced a School Council to promote personal development and develop the active participation of children in the decision making process of the school. Councillors from P4-P7 attend regular meetings to discuss issues raised by the children. School Council Meetings are attended by the Principal who liaises between the staff and the School Council.

We also encourage pupils to participate in a range of additional activities to further develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Activities include:- class assemblies, Christmas plays, sport, music and participation in a wide range of competitions.

## **Supervision**

### **Primary School**

School starts at 9.15am. Pupils may come into school between 9.00am and 9.15am. and should go to their classroom where they will be supervised by the class teacher. Where this presents a real difficulty for parents the Principal must be consulted and a written explanation provided. In such instances pupils may arrive between 8.45am and 9.00am and will be supervised by the Principal.

Classroom assistants and duty teachers will supervise the pupils at break time. Supervisory assistants and the Principal will supervise the pupils at lunchtime.

After school parents/carers must collect P1-P2 pupils from the infant building. If, for any reason, pupils are not collected they will be supervised by a classroom assistant, teacher or the Principal until a 'named' collector can be contacted.

If a parent requires their child to leave school between 9.00am – 3.00pm the teacher should be informed in writing and the child collected from the classroom at the appropriate time. All relevant details for pupils in P3-7 must be entered in the 'Time Out' book in the Principal's office. Details for pupils in P1-2 should be entered in the 'Time Out' book in their own classroom.

All staff are involved in the supervision of children to ensure safety at all times between 9.00am and 3.00pm each day. Pupils from P3-P7 will be supervised by their class teacher while leaving school. The Principal/Vice-Principal/class teacher will

supervise children at the school gate to ensure no child remains unaccompanied while waiting to be collected.

### **Nursery Unit**

The Nursery Unit operates a dual day system with session times as follows:

Morning Session - 9.00 am – 11.30 am

Afternoon Session - 12.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Parents/carers must bring children directly into the nursery at the beginning of each session where the teacher and nursery assistant will be available to receive them as they arrive.

At all times the children will be under the supervision of the teacher and the nursery assistant. At the end of each session parents/carers must collect the children from the classroom. If, for any reason, children are not collected they will be supervised by the nursery assistant or teacher until a 'named' collector can be contacted.

### **Induction**

#### **Primary One**

In St. Mary's we recognise that coming to school for the first time is a very important and emotional step for parents and children alike. As part of our Transition To Primary One Policy, the Primary One teacher visits the Nursery Unit at regular intervals throughout the year. The nursery children also visit the Primary School to use the library and assembly hall throughout their time in nursery. This regular contact between the Nursery and the Primary School provides many opportunities for the Primary One teacher to introduce herself to the children and allows the children to begin to develop a relationship with the Primary School. From mid-term in Term 2 our Primary One teacher also makes regular visits the nursery unit to informally meet those children who are transferring to Primary One in St Mary's the following September.

All children who have applied for admission to Primary One and their parents, are also invited to an induction session which is held in June. This provides another opportunity for our nursery children to meet their teacher, the other children, become familiar with their new school and thus ease the transition from home or pre-school setting to Primary School. This induction programme also provides an opportunity for parents to meet each other, the Principal and staff, to become familiar with relevant school policies and procedures and discuss how they can prepare their child for coming to school.

Individual arrangements can be made to facilitate prospective parents and their children if the above mentioned programme is inconvenient.

## **Nursery Unit**

St. Mary's Nursery Unit offers a slightly different induction programme. Parents of prospective pupils are invited to an induction evening held in June. This is an opportunity for parents to meet the Principal and nursery staff, become familiar with relevant policies and procedures and also discuss what the nursery curriculum involves and how they can prepare their child for coming to nursery.

In September the nursery operates a phased intake where all children are admitted on the first day in small groups for a reduced session. This gradually builds up as time is extended and the groups are merged until all children in each session are at nursery for their full 2.5hr session. This phased approach gives the children an opportunity to feel safe and secure in their new surroundings and develop relationships with staff.

Signed: ..... (Chairperson of the Board of Governors)

Signed: ..... (Principal)

Date:

Initially Adopted: 27.01.03

Subsequent Review Dates: 04.05.04 , 07.06.06, 29.05.07, 09.06.08, 01.06.09,  
14.06.10, 23.05.11, 25.09.12, 30.04.13, 09.06.14, 26.05.15, 23.05.16, 19.06.17

Current Review Date: 04.06.19 at Board of Governors Meeting 2