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| Saint Joseph’s Primary School  Pastoral Care Policy  ‘Happiness is the soil in which intelligence grows’  *Reviewed: April 2018* |

**Context**

This document is based on Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement (DE 2009) and sets out our school’s policy and practice in relation to the care of pupils and the promotion of a safe, stimulating, positive and caring environment for all pupils, teachers and adults involved in the life of the school. Pastoral Care will play an integral part in the academic, social, emotional, physical and moral development of our pupils. This statement of school policy and procedure in Saint Joseph’s Primary School has been compiled with the collaboration and support of the School Leadership Team and teaching staff and has the approval of the Board of Governors.

Ethos

**A statement and evaluation of the ethos of St Joseph’s Primary School.**

**‘A small school with a big heart’**

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| ***'We want our school to be a place for everyone. To do some work and have some fun! Where people feel like they belong. We ask God’s Holy Spirit to be active here. To make an atmosphere of joy, peace and love.'*** |

The Pastoral Care of our children is at the heart of everything that happens in Saint Joseph’s Primary School. We strongly believe that a child who is unhappy will not learn and so we have a well developed Pastoral Care system organised and co-ordinated by the Principal. All members of staff have a responsibility to contribute to the Pastoral dimension of the life of the school. We aim to have an atmosphere of mutual respect between pupils and all staff. However this area is always a ‘work in progress’ as we constantly strive to improve the quality of our care and embrace the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We feel that we are well placed to deliver this curriculum as the atmosphere of mutual understanding required already exists within the ethos of the school.

We at St. Joseph’s Primary School aim to provide a happy and caring atmosphere for the child, where they feel secure and able to fulfil their potential. We will acknowledge and celebrate their achievements and individual strengths and differences and aim to promote their self-esteem and confidence at all times.

Our purpose is to provide a solid foundation to help them to progress to adulthood through:

* Encouraging each child to be confident, independent and responsible learners through a curriculum which suits the needs of each individual.
* Promoting the development of lively and enquiring minds to acquire skills towards self learning.
* Developing respect for others in terms of religion, race and personal circumstances and
* Encouraging the children to become active and interested members of the wider community.

In St. Joseph’s Primary School, the pastoral care structures are based on a shared understanding of what it means to be a Catholic school. We in St. Joseph’s P.S. have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

# Principles

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection”(DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees’ Regional Policy and Procedures(2005).

The following principles form the basis of our Pastoral Care Policy.

* It is a child’s right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously and each child is unique and worthy of respect. All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
* We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved. However, pastoral care is for the entire school community and not just for those experiencing difficulties.
* Each member of the school community has responsibility for the caring life of the school and hence pastoral care permeates the life of the school.
* Pastoral care avails of the support and expertise provided by statutory and voluntary bodies in the wider community.
* Appropriate resources, policies, procedures and training are provided to ensure the effective implementation of the pastoral care programme.
* The welfare of the child is paramount

This stated ethos is clearly evidenced in the daily operation of the school with a clear sense of purpose and identity present among both pupils and staff. This is supported by the maintenance and development of a high quality learning environment. The school was first established in 1864 and has been in the current building since 1948. We strive to ensure that the learning environment is enhanced and enriched so that the pupils have an environment that is fit for purpose.

Time, effort and attention is allocated to ensuring that positive relationships exist at all levels within the school community and this investment is rewarded by staff and pupils consistently working together in a purposeful and supportive manner.

We strive to create a Christian atmosphere where God’s love is experienced by all members of the school community through their relationships with each other, where Christ is an example to all and where each child is helped to develop his/ her full potential in every aspect of development-intellectual, social, physical, moral and religious. To achieve this children are made aware that they all have something to contribute to society. We believe that children have the right to succeed and be protected from failure.

**Aims**

**We aim to give the children in our care an awareness of their own special skills and talents.**

We aim to ensure that:-

* Pupils feel secure and happy at school and understand that they can speak to staff regarding personal issues and concerns;
* Pupils develop a sense of self-esteem and an awareness of the needs of others through self-discipline and a code of conduct;
* Pupils are encouraged to fulfil their moral, intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, creative and emotional potential;
* The values, attitudes, beliefs and concerns of pupils are taken seriously;
* There is a promotion of positive relationships, mutual tolerance and respect for others throughout the school;
* Relationships between pupils and staff operate on a basis of mutual respect;
* Pupils acquire knowledge, skills and practical abilities through effective teaching and learning;
* We prepare the children for adult life at home, at work, at leisure and at large as responsible citizens;
* We help the children develop qualities of mind, body, spirit, feeling and imagination;
* We create a school which is complementary to the Catholic home;
* We create an atmosphere of a Christian Community in the school where everyone plays their part in living out a Christian way of life;
* We employ a system of pastoral care which will exemplify fairness, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness, while, at the same time setting high standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and generosity;
* All members of staff feel valued and work together as a team;
* Good communications are maintained between parents and school;
* Outside agencies are utilised where appropriate to enhance pastoral care provision;
* All members of the school community work in a positive, secure and healthy environment.

**Child Centered Provision**

At Saint Joseph’s Primary School we aim to meet the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school through endeavouring to promote a safe, stimulating and positive environment in order that everyone can develop those personal and social skills necessary to thrive within the school community.

Each teacher is concerned with the personal development and well-being of the individual pupils in his/her class. Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of the needs of others, to take responsibility for their own actions and to develop self-respect and self-esteem. We believe that the school is a community within a community and therefore aim to develop good relationships, based on respect, between pupils, staff and parents.

We promote equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity. The school values every pupil as an individual and seeks to provide equal opportunities through adopting a range of teaching strategies and offering a wide range of in-school and after-school clubs.

We seek to meet the additional educational and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning. Class teachers plan and teach differentiated work where appropriate. Mrs O’Hare offers withdrawal support for Literacy and Numeracy and works closely with external agencies such as Literacy Support and EA.

We believe in and support pupil participation and involvement in decisions about school life. We do this through our School Council and Eco Council. Mrs L Cochrane and Mrs H Turley co-ordinate the School Council and the Eco Council respectively and take minutes of each meeting which are distributed to representatives.

The school follows guidelines set out in our Child Protection Policy fully. All members of staff have annual training in this regard.

We support children in making healthy choices through the provision of a healthy environment. We have a Healthy Break Policy and encourage all pupils to drink water. A range of sporting clubs, after-school activities, coaching sessions and PE lessons provide children with the opportunity to be active. We operate an extensive Extended schools programme for Years 1-7.

**Relationships**

All staff work hard to establish positive working relationships with the pupils. We believe that how we treat our community is reciprocated. A good relationship between pupils and staff is paramount in generating a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels valued and cared for at all times. We promote positive relationships between teachers and their pupils and with other school-based staff, through regular meetings, PDMU lessons, residential and non-residential trips, extra-curricular activities, School Productions, assemblies and Parent Teacher Association events.

**Staff Welfare**

The Principal and Board of Governors believe in an appropriate life/work balance and understand that there will be times when staff will, for valid personal reasons, require an increased level of support and understanding. Staff should feel that they are able to share concerns with their Principal and know that they will receive compassionate support.

**High Quality Teaching and Learning**

We provide a broad and relevant curriculum as is evidenced by our planning and teaching. The school will strive to achieve a number of the aims of this policy through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) strand of the Revised Curriculum.

Staff will respond to other social, community and class issues as they arise, using their professional judgement and the Revised Curriculum. In certain circumstances outside agencies may be invited into school to support the work of staff in delivering the curriculum or dealing with pastoral issues.

Teachers use a range of teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom such as individual, paired and group tasks, talking and listening activities, role play and drama and a wide range of active teaching methods. Circle Time is also timetabled and is an excellent tool in supporting pastoral issues.

Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils through the effective use of data, weekly evaluation of planning notes, self and peer assessment and monthly planning evaluations.

**A School Connected To Its Local Community**

Good relationships and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community are crucial to our pupils’ health and well-being, learning and achievement. These are developed by encouraging parents to be active participants in our school, through:-

* School Facebook account
* School monthly Newsletters
* regular Parent/Teacher consultations;
* annual school reports;
* Open Evening
* school events eg Nativity Plays/Carol Service, School Production;
* PTA community events;
* Bring your family to breakfast events
* Parent support with areas of the curriculum
* STEM.
* ECO
* Links with other schools
* Local clergy/visiting speakers to Assembles

We have good relationships and communication between the school and the education agencies that support pupils’ health and well-being, learning and achievement, namely Down Outreach Support and EA services.

We liaise closely with our parish priest, Fr. Alexander and church organisations especially in preparing the children for the reception of the sacraments of First Holy Communion, First Confession and Confirmation. We co-operate with the work carried out by the local Health Authority personnel and when necessary, we seek the help and advice of other statutory agencies. We co-operate fully with other visitors such as the school nurse, dental nurse and educational psychologist who visit the school in order for the needs of the children. We have good links with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies that support pupils’ health and well-being, learning and achievement.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is important that all individuals recognise their responsibilities in implementing the Pastoral Care Policy.

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| School Member | Responsibilities |
| **TEACHING STAFF** | * Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils. * Develop a good rapport with pupils taught to foster an environment of mutual respect in classroom. * Plan and deliver PDMU lessons using relevant themes and resources as well as other appropriate material. * Help children to achieve their potential by setting appropriate expectations and providing support and encouragement. * Encourage children to accept personal responsibility for their behaviour. * Be alert to signs of distress and encourage pupils to speak to an appropriate adult. * Listen to children who come to you with a problem, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them. * Record minor incidents in the Incident Book and provide teachers and Principal with copy to monitor patterns of concern. * Refer to Anti-Bullying Policy if bullying is suspected. * Maintain good communication with parents through meetings, reports, written comments on homework/notes home and verbal feedback. * Attend in-service training on Pastoral Care and related issues. * Be familiar with the school Pastoral Care Policy and be aware of current educational research and initiatives related to these issues. * Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality |
| **AUXILIARY STAFF** | * Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils. * Develop a good rapport with pupils and foster an environment of mutual respect in school. * Be alert to signs of distress and encourage pupils to speak to an appropriate adult. * Listen to children who come to you with a problem, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them. * Report minor incidents to class teacher. * Report concerns to class teacher if bullying is suspected. * Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality |
| **SLT** | * Foster effective communication between school and home. * Raise awareness of and celebrate pupil achievement in school. * Support Positive Discipline in promoting Positive Behaviour. * Monitor minor incidents and look out for concerning behaviour patterns. * Monitor bullying incidents and support class teacher in dealing with issues of bullying. * Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality. |
| School Member | Responsibilities |
| **PRINCIPAL** | * Attend all relevant training and disseminate to colleagues. Facilitate staff briefings and in-service training * Ensure that the policy is a living document which is communicated to the school community. * Facilitating regular monitoring and review of Pastoral Care procedures. * Foster effective communication between school and home. * Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality. |
| **SLT /**  **GOVERNORS** | * Be familiar with school policies and procedures. * Ensure that all policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed as appropriate. * Support staff and parents in the implementation of the policy and procedures. * Deal with issues fairly, in accordance with legislation and SEELB guidelines. * Consult with external agencies (where appropriate), including Educational Welfare and PSNI. * Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality. |
| **PARENTS** | * Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils. * Help children to achieve their potential by setting appropriate expectations and providing support and encouragement. * Encourage children to accept personal responsibility for their behaviour. * Be alert to signs of distress and advise their children to report any concerns to a member of staff. * Maintain good communication with school by attending organised meetings and informing school of any home issues which may impact pupil. * Be familiar with the school Pastoral Care Policy and encourage children to behave in accordance with the school’s Behaviour Policy.(Sign Pastoral ‘pack’) * Work in partnership with the school and respect the sanctions imposed (in accordance with the school Discipline Policy) to promote positive resolutions. |
| **PUPILS** | * Act in a respectful and supportive manner to fellow pupils and school community. * Speak to a member of staff about any concerns. * Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances. * Raise issues with pupil council representative. * Accept personal responsibility for behaviour. |

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

**In Saint Joseph’s Primary School we operate an open-door policy and ensure that appointments are made available to all parents at the earliest convenience.**

Parents are always welcome in school and are encouraged to communicate regularly with their child’s teacher or the Principal if they have any concerns and worries through making an appointment at an appropriate time. To ensure minimum disruption to teaching and learning, parents are encouraged to write a note or make an appointment via the secretary. They may also email the Principal. Urgent concerns are given immediate attention. We 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 is treated as confidential. Staff meet regularly to discuss the pastoral care provision. The opinions of children, parents and staff are sought (via questionnaire) and valued. The teachers and Principal liaise frequently to ensure implementation of procedures and consistency of practice.

This policy is a working document and is reviewed constantly as we assess the effectiveness of our aims. This may result in a change of organisation, method or content as required for individual circumstances.