



*Improvement, Nurture, Success, Potential
Innovation, Responsibility, Endeavour*

Pastoral Care Policy

Rationale

We define Pastoral Care as the created ethos through which our pupils develop and learn to their optimum potential. We provide the opportunity for **every** pupil to develop into responsible, self-aware, confident, and capable young people equipped to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.

Our school accepts that Pastoral Care must form the basis of, and permeate, all aspects of the curriculum.

The Vision Statement of Downpatrick Primary School

Our vision is for a school which provides equality of opportunity for all in partnership with the whole community, seeking to promote and develop every child's potential to the full in a meaningful and positive way. We strive to ensure that the children in our care are able to make the most of their educational opportunities and experiences with the ultimate aim of preparing them for a confident and responsible adult role in our society. Meeting the moral, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of our children, whatever their ability, is our priority.

Our school is strongly committed to providing a happy, secure, stimulating, healthy and attractive environment in which all members of our school community – children, staff, parents and governors – work together in an atmosphere of friendship and understanding.

This school builds on these traditional core values whilst embracing innovations in learning and teaching and changing technologies which keeps practice at the forefront of primary education.

Values

Our school subscribes to the view that every pupil has a right to feel safe and secure on all levels. We will actively promote a Pastoral Care ethos which allows for the development of the whole person, and which leads to **every** pupil making good choices which will form the basis for a healthy and positive lifestyle.

Pastoral Care will be the setting where our young people will acquire values and standards on the basis of observing these at work at every level.

It is also important to remember that schools are centres of *education* and we therefore accept the validity of a personal development approach rather than a delivery which is service driven.

Ethos

Ethos is an intangible concept with a tangible effect. It is our intention to establish an ethos which may be detected in the feelings of security at every level within our school.

This may be achieved through:

- creating a sense of belonging amongst all strands of our school community
- developing an atmosphere of mutual respect and caring
- creating an explicit Pastoral Care programme which allows for a fair and equitable exchange of views/ideas/attitudes, etc. in an atmosphere of trust
- implementation of our Positive Behaviour Management policy which creates a full sense of justice and fair play amongst our school community

- providing opportunities for **every** person to succeed and to be affirmed in their self-worth
- promoting positive relationships at every level
- working with parents for the mutual benefit of all
- establishing and maintaining links with the wider community
- affirming and actively promoting staff to develop positive attitudes towards themselves and to the pupils in our care
- creating a sense of self-worth at every level.

Relationships

Excellent relationships foster and develop in an atmosphere of **Respect**.

Our school will work towards creating opportunities where mutual respect can grow and develop. We aim to create a caring, empathetic and secure environment where our young people can develop good relationships based on those they experience.

Staff involved in Pastoral Care provision

The school has developed a coordinated system to provide pastoral care: -

- Each class teacher has a detailed knowledge of the needs and progress of each pupil in the class;
- The Pastoral Care Team comprises Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Maginnis (Pastoral Care leader), Miss Fitzsimons (Head of FS), Miss Bates (Head of KS1) and Mrs. Beattie (Head of KS2)
- The Safeguarding /Child Protection Team comprises Mr. Stevenson, Mrs. Beattie (Designated Teacher for Child Protection), Mrs. McClure (Deputy Designated Teacher), Mrs. Storey (Chair of B.O.G.) and Mr. J Briggs (Designated Governor)
- Photographs of the teachers responsible for Child Protection are displayed in each classroom and the children are regularly made aware of staff they can speak to if they have any concerns regarding school or home. All members of staff are issued with a Code of Conduct outlining guidelines for their behaviour towards pupils and are given Child Protection training at least annually.

The prime concern of the school is the welfare of the pupils. All concerns will be acted upon. If necessary, professional assistance is sought and the matter referred to relevant outside agencies (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare Officer, Social Services).

A copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is given to parents of children entering P1 and is sent home to other parents on request.

Our Attitudes

It is hoped that during their time in Downpatrick PS our pupils will be instilled with the values imparted from the CAPS (Character Approach to Problem Solving) programme used in school:

Responsibility (Sept)	Diligence (Feb)
Respect (Oct)	Forgiveness (March)
Honesty (Nov)	Patience (April)
Care (Dec)	Courtesy (May)
Friendship (Jan)	Revisit all (June)

- Individual children and classes are rewarded for demonstrating the above values through the Down Dynamo scheme.
- Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in helping others through the Buddy System, School Council and ECO Council.
- Children discuss appropriate issues such as friendship and bullying during PDMU sessions and Circle time.
- Classes take part in activities related to Anti-Bullying Week (NIABF)

Behaviour

At Downpatrick PS we adopt a positive approach to discipline expecting our pupils to behave in a responsible manner at all times. The school rules are for the greater enjoyment, safety and well-being of all our pupils. Class rules, rewards and consequences are explained to all pupils and are displayed in each classroom. Copies of the school's Positive Discipline Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy are available from the Principal on request. Parental leaflets are sent home periodically.

Attendance

Pupils are encouraged to attain full attendance and recognition of this achievement is given through the awarding of attendance certificates at a special assembly each September. The EWO monitors attendance by visiting the school on a regular basis and appropriate action is taken where attendance or punctuality is not at an expected level.

Medical

The school has Medical and Drugs policies which are available on request. Medical and dental services make regular visits to the school. The school secretary and class teachers have contact details for each child and these details are updated annually. Miss Bates is the school's contact for First Aid. Relevant staff are given photographs and details of children with severe allergies and these are on display in the staff room for all staff to view. A first aid update is given to all staff to view. A first aid update is given to all staff at the beginning of each academic year. Nuts, nut products and sesame seeds may not be brought into school and parents are informed of other foods which cannot be eaten in particular classrooms. EpiPen training and training for staff monitoring diabetic pupils is provided as required. A defibrillator is positioned in the foyer of the school and staff have been given training on its use.

Our school as a community

The school is seen as an extended family where everyone works for the common good: -

- Induction days are held for P1 parents;

- An Open evening is held in December to enable parents to view children's work and classrooms;
- An Open Afternoon/evening is held in December for prospective P1 parents, and in May for Learning Support Centre parents.
- Parents are made welcome in the school. They are given curriculum overviews at the beginning of the school year, invited to parental interviews and made to feel that their views are important. Information is given to parents on a regular basis via the school website, social media school sites and notes sent home with the pupils;
- Parents take an active role in raising funds for school resources through participation in PTA committees and events and through contributing to the School Fund;
- Parents can accompany teachers and Non-Teaching staff on educational visits;
- Parents are invited annually to the Attendance Assembly, Christmas Presentations, Carol Service, KS2 Play / Show and the Leavers' Assembly.

The school as part of a wider community

- Links have been established with schools in the local area and further afield e.g. Blackwater Integrated College, Down High School and St Brigid's Primary School through the Shared Education N.I. programme;
- The Principal and teachers participate in local cluster groups to share good practice;
- People with interesting careers or hobbies e.g. fireman, beekeeper are invited to speak to classes;
- Local clergy regularly take part in weekly assemblies;
- School participates in local events and competitions e.g. carol singing and submitting entries for Down Council Competitions
- The school regularly supports both local and global charities;

Welfare of pupils

- A supervised breakfast club is available from 8.15am and a supervised after school club is available 2-5.30pm pm Mon to Fri
- Children are supervised at break and lunchtimes by teaching and Non-Teaching staff. Members of staff provide First Aid at these times;
- Break time snacks and lunches are available from the school canteen;
- A wide range of after school activities are available to pupils – these are organised by teachers and other vetted outside agencies;
- At the end of the school day: -
- P1-3 pupils must be collected from their class teachers in the playground by a parent or other adult (with authorisation from parents);
- Teachers walk P4-7 children to the front of the school;
- P4 children must be collected by a parent or other adult
- Only P5, P6 and P7 children are permitted to walk home unaccompanied and all must be on our School Walking Register.
- Access to the main school, KS1 block and Library is via a keypad/electronic fob during the school day.
- Parents removing their child/children during normal school hours must sign and record the time in the Parent Visitor Record Book when picking up and, if appropriate, returning their child/children;

Professional Counselling

The value of professional counselling should never be underestimated. A counsellor can offer immense support to a young person who needs help and guidance. Our school will endeavour to enlist the support of Professional Counsellors to assist our young people to develop towards a more concise and definitive awareness of self.

All counsellors who assist in this extremely important area will be familiar with BAC or equivalent guidelines.

Counselling/Relationships

Teachers will endeavour to build effective, empathetic relationships with our pupils in order to provide advice and support whenever necessary. However, we retain awareness of the need for other avenues of support.

Training and Support

In order to support staff our school recognizes the importance of training as a priority area in the establishment of a caring and pastoral environment.

Related School Policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- PDMU Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Misuse of Drugs/Substances Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Storage and Administration of Medication policy

Evaluation and Monitoring

This school recognizes and accepts the importance of monitoring and evaluating all aspects of Pastoral Care at every level. To this end we follow the procedures for self-evaluation as outlined in the DE document 'Together Towards improvement'

Approved by SMT - March 2019

Date policy agreed by Board of Governors and staff _____

Signed Chair of Governors _____

Date for review of policy _____