

A PASTORAL CARE POLICY

AGREE DATE	REVIEW DATE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW
21 11 24	2027	Mrs McWilliams
Chair of Governors		

Pastoral Care Policy and Practice

This document is based on Every School a Good School (DE2009) and sets out our school's policy and practice in relation to the care of pupils and the promotion of an environment where staff realise that the welfare of every child is of paramount consideration and so endeavour to create a caring, happy, secure, supportive and stimulating environment where children can develop socially, emotionally and physically at their own rate.

School Motto

"Preparation for Life"

School Ethos Statement

Howard Primary School and Nursery Unit is a vibrant, happy community, where the needs of all children come first. Howard provides a safe and motivating environment where everyone is valued. Pupils are supported to reach their full potential as confident and successful learners. We celebrate our pupils' achievements and believe that their years in Howard provide a firm foundation in their preparation for life.

Built on a strong Christian ethos, we aspire to be a community who are:

Respectful
Kind
Successful
Curious
Resilient
Supportive
Inclusive

Child Centred Provision

At Howard Primary School & Nursery Unit we aim to meet the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school by keeping the pupils' interests and welfare as the main focus. Outside agencies are liaised with, to ensure that pupils feel secure and are free from physical and emotional harm. Classroom activities are planned so that pupils are taught to work with their peers and so that they grow to value and respect the contributions and views of others. Positive approaches to discipline are employed to maintain good standards of behaviour and there is an appropriate balance between rewards and sanctions.

We promote equality of opportunity, high quality learning, and a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity. Pupils with specific medical needs and newcomers are welcomed into the school environment with every opportunity being taken to meet their educational, social and emotional needs. A School Council operates and plays a significant role in the organisation of charity events and in ensuring the views of our pupils are voiced.

We seek to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning by promoting good attendance at all times and by adopting a positive approach to discipline to encourage appropriate behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. Newcomers are welcomed into the school environment and every opportunity is taken to liaise with parents to ensure that children are settled and happy in their new environment. The resources provided by the Inclusion and Diversity Service are used with these children and the designated teacher liaises with this service to ensure that the best care is provided for those children who have English as an additional language. Children with special educational needs have PLPs prepared for them by class teachers and these are co-ordinated by the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

We believe in and support pupil participation and involvement in decisions about school life. We do this through-

Children are encouraged to offer their thoughts and opinions in Circle Time, class meetings and through the School Council. To facilitate children's involvement in school life all adults at Howard Primary School & Nursery Unit adhere to the Pupil Pastoral Promises (Appendix 3)

We realise the big step it is for many children making the transitions from home to nursery, nursery to primary and from primary to secondary school. In order to make this move as smooth as possible pre school pupils received a home learning booklet to complete with parents before starting nursery and have a phased in approach. The nursery teacher is also available to make home visits if requested. Nursery pupils are invited to visit their P1 teacher and classroom assistant for an afternoon in June and p1 teachers visit new primary one pupils in their pre-school setting. The Primary 7 pupils in Howard will accept invitations for 'Taster Days' from local post primary schools so that children can get a first-hand experience of what a typical day in a secondary may be like. Information on Open Nights is also provided for Primary 6 and 7 children. There is always full co-operation with each of the post primary schools that children may choose and all relevant information is passed to the next school.

The school follows its Safeguarding Policy and all relevant DE circulars. Children know about keeping safe and posters are in place around the school highlighting who children can talk to if they have a problem. A worry box is also available for children to express personal concerns or issues that may be bothering them. Internet Safety and anti-bullying are part of teachers' curricular planning and children are made aware of how to keep themselves safe in many different situations. Staff are trained in Child Protection on a bi-annual basis and this includes all teaching and non-teaching personnel. Parents receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy when their child starts school and all parents receive a copy when it is reviewed bi-annually. Volunteers in school are Access NI checked and parent volunteers are never left on their own with children.

We support children in making healthy choices and through the provision of a healthy environment. We try to ensure that staff have received appropriate First Aid training and health and safety is a main priority at all times both inside and outside school. Healthy food is encouraged and the staff regularly promote a healthy eating approach, organising special events to highlight healthy food choices. The school's outdoor facilities are excellent and full use is made of the grounds and outdoor play equipment. PE is timetabled and all aspects of the physical development curriculum are covered in these lessons with good use made of outside agencies and specialists when possible. After school activities also focus on getting children actively involved in a wide range of physical activities.

High Quality Teaching and Learning

We provide a broad and relevant curriculum as is enhanced by a Scheme of Work for PDMU that meets the needs of the pupils. PDMU is timetabled in each classroom and includes Drugs Education and RSE where appropriate. RE and PE lessons also play an important part in promoting pastoral care within the curriculum. Specific programmes relating to health and well-being are also utilised e.g. Cycling Proficiency.

We promote positive relationships between teachers and their pupils and with other school-based staff through promoting good relationships in class using class charters which are completed in consultation with the children. Rewards and sanctions are used to promote positive behaviour. Playground supervisors and staff work together to ensure that children play fairly and safely at all times. A Staff Code of Conduct exists to safeguard children at all times.

Teachers use a range of teaching strategies that respond to diversity within the classroom such as Circle Time with collaborative learning promoted Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities are highlighted in each classroom.

Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils through the use of staff planning and staff meetings. Monitoring arrangements are in place relating to teaching and learning and these focus on pupil progress and achievements taking into account all factors e.g. SEN, EAL, home circumstances etc. Classroom observation will take place to assess pupils' personal development and behaviour with class teachers taking into careful consideration pastoral issues where pupil performance is not meeting expectations e.g. falling standardised scores or below expectations in progress tracking grids.

Effective Leadership

Governors understand their responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils. They do this by monitoring and evaluating the strategies in place for promoting pastoral care, health, well-being and attendance contained in the School Development Plan, including consulting with the School Council, pupils and parents if and when necessary. They attend Child Protection training as necessary and realise the importance of this role. In addition, they monitor the reporting of behaviour, suspension and expulsion when such occasions arise.

In relation to pastoral care we support the professional development of staff and sharing and learning from best practice by planning for training in pastoral matters in school using outside agencies when available or through the sharing of staff expertise on planned development days or in staff meetings. Teachers may also attend additional training e.g. Helping Hands, etc. and good practice is then shared with colleagues.

We provide the resources needed to support pastoral care through:

- effective staff deployment – specialist roles (see Appendix 2);
- classroom resources;
- play resources and facilities;
- posters for external resources e.g. ChildLine.

We monitor and evaluate our pastoral care practices in a number of ways through:

- reviewing the school's performance regularly in preparation of the School Development Plan;
- specific monitoring/evaluative duties of individual staff with responsibilities e.g. the curriculum leader for PDMU, Pastoral Care Coordinator (Appendix 2 for details);
- using school data for attendance, etc.;
- examples of plenary sessions and pupil feedback to teachers about teaching and learning with links to AfL and other areas of school life such as play and after school activities;
- seeking the opinion of the School Council if deemed to be necessary or appropriate and
- using questionnaires for pupils or parents.

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 wellbeing, learning and achievement. These are developed by:-

parents being made welcome in the school right from the moment they enter the reception area.

There are celebrations of children's work and achievement in weekly assemblies.

The recognition of achievements in and out of school

Parents feel free to raise concerns regarding any problems that have been raised with teachers and staff endeavour to get back to parents as soon as possible. This may be through a phone call or by organising an individual meeting with the concerned parent. When particular problems arise e.g. with regard to behaviour and attendance parents are spoken to about the school's concerns and staff work alongside parents where possible to meet the needs of individual children. A Complaints Procedure forms part of the Safeguarding Policy if parents feel that they need to pursue a formal complaints approach.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer for educational visits, sporting events and after school clubs.

Through particular homework activities, such as projects, parents may support their child by becoming a learner and partner in their child's education.

The PTA plays an important part in the life of the school seeking to provide much needed resources for the school to enhance the education already being provided.

A wide range of school documents is available on the school website to keep parents informed and up to date of all activities and developments. Letters and news sheets are sent to parents outlining past events and the calendar of activities for the future. This is also available on the website.

Reporting to parents about their child's personal development takes place formally twice a year at parent teacher interviews and informally as and when the need arises. Written reports are provided in June each year.

There is community input into school life on matters related to health, wellbeing, identity and community issues through visits from outside agencies e.g. School Nurse, PSNI, Dairy Council, etc. and through educational visits e.g. Bee Safe programme.

Strong links exist between our school and Edendork PS with children involved in joint projects whenever the opportunity arises. The community makes use of the school facilities during evenings, weekends and holidays. Eg Burns, Dungannon Swifts etc

We have good relationships and communication between the school and the education agencies that support pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement, namely ELB Services e.g. Autism, Behaviour Support and Primary Referral Unit, CASS, Psychology, EWO etc.

We have good links with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies that support pupils' health and wellbeing, learning and achievement. These are School Nurse, Medical staff, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy etc. and we work closely with Social Services and PSNI/Child Protection when the need arises.

The school is involved in specific programmes that meet the needs of the community and nearby schools. These include transition events for children moving from pre-school into P1 e.g. Open Night, parental workshops, Play Days, Christmas parties etc. The school also works closely with secondary schools by attending special events and taster days to make the transition from primary to secondary education as smooth as possible.

Communicating with Parents

Parents will be informed that there is a Pastoral Care Policy and a copy is available from, the school. Parents will also be informed about policies at parent/teacher interviews, on our news sheets, on our website or by letters from the school.

Conclusion

- The school will continue to be aware of the need to help pupils to manage their lives at the moment, as well as to help them prepare for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- The development of the pupil as a person as well as a learner will be an important concern.
- Pupils will be encouraged to speak and discuss with teachers any area of concern.
- Teachers will ensure that openness and opportunities to discuss sensitive issues are provided either during class work, circle time or during a quiet moment of privacy.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring.

On-going monitoring is an integral part of our policy. Procedures are discussed at regular staff meetings to ensure the policy is implemented as planned. Support is given to those who require assistance in carrying out any aspect of their pastoral role.

Evaluation

Evaluation procedures are in place to discover ways of improving the quality of provision in the school for the benefit of all pupils and teachers.

All aspects of the policy are evaluated on an on-going basis with the views of parents, pupils and staff being requested through questionnaires and informal interviews. Whilst the head of Pastoral Care has overall responsibility for policy evaluation, self-evaluation is a feature of every member of staff's role. This feedback forms the basis of our staff development programme for the year.

Appendix 1	Related Policies
Appendix 2	Related Pastoral Roles and Responsibilities
Appendix 3	Pupil Pastoral Promises

Ratified by Board of Governors at a meeting on -----

Signed _____ Chair _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Principal _____ Date _____

Review _____

Appendix 1: Related Policies

- Admissions Criteria
- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection (including Use of Restraint)
- Code of Conduct (Staff)
- PD&MU
- Drugs Education
- Positive Behaviour/Discipline
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- SEN
- Administration of Medication in School
- UICT Policy
- Internet Safety Policy

Appendix 2: Related Pastoral Roles and Responsibilities

<u>Role/Responsible for</u>	<u>Name</u>
Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mr S Calvert
Shared Education	Mrs T McAllister
Pastoral Care Co-ordinator	Mrs P McWilliams
School Council Link Teacher	Mrs J Kingston
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Hardy & Miss J Somerville

Appendix 3: Pupil Pastoral Promises

All the adults at school make these promises – the Governors, teachers and other adults who work in school.

We will ask what you want and need and try to provide these things.

We will help you with any problems you have with your learning.

We will tell how you are getting on with your work and how to make it better.

We will make sure your parents know how to help you with your work and tell them how you are getting on at school.

We will get other people to help you, if you need special help.

We will have good resources to help you learn, relax and play.

We will be fair to you all and treat you all with respect.

We will involve you in decisions and pay attention to what you say.

We will keep you safe and make school a healthy place.

We will make it enjoyable learning how to be safe, happy and healthy.

We will make sure that adults and pupils try to get on well with each other.