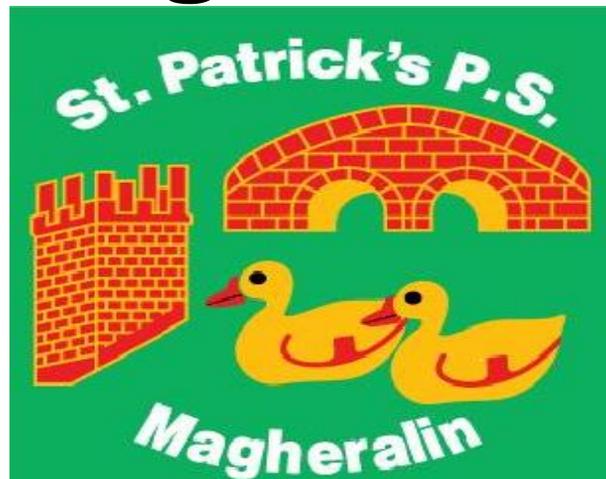


St. Patrick's Primary School Magheralin



Pastoral Care Policy

St. Patrick's Primary School

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Pastoral Care embraces all members of staff in St. Patrick's Primary School. This is concerned with the welfare - (health and safety)- of the pupils, the teaching staff and the ancillary staff i.e. the dinner ladies, the supervisors, the caretaker, the classroom assistant and the school secretary. The ethos is based on the values and principles of the Catholic Church and the teaching of Christ.

The pastoral dimension contributes to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in the school for all school members but where adults have an influential part to play. It is concerned with the development and general well-being of the child and involves all pupils and adults who are associated with the life of the school.

For pupils and staff members this means encouraging them

- (1) to set and achieve personal, social and academic goals through a planned and developmental programme
- (2) providing them with opportunities for their own professional development and establishing appropriate structures of time and support.

Since the pastoral dimension permeates all activities, the general focus requires a caring commitment by all teachers and adults to every aspect of school life.

The Pastoral Care Policy gives an overview of what we as a school wish to nurture in our staff and pupils. The school promotes a caring, supportive environment in which staff and pupils can work in an environment of mutual respect.

In St. Patrick's we see recognise that central to the success of this is the involvement of parents and other outside agencies in the community. We strive to work in partnership with them to achieve this.

AIMS

- To ensure that each pupil feels valued, special, unique and a member of the school community
- To instill a sense of personal worth and dignity through intellectual, moral, spiritual, social and physical development
- To empower pupils in building and monitoring good relationships with pupils, teachers and others
- To assist individuals to develop their lifestyles, appreciate life and respect the world in which they live
- To encourage a sense of personal accountability for their own learning and actions
- To develop and strengthen the link with the parish

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The class teacher is seen as the key person in having an impact on the children in his/her care. The class teacher will be responsible for implementing the policy of Pastoral Care and other related policies. The teacher however, should not be seen as working in isolation. The teacher is working in cooperation with other teachers in devising and revising policies with the Principal in addressing day to day concerns. The Principal will be responsible with the support of all staff in the effective delivery of the Pastoral Care Policy. Ancillary and Auxiliary staff will have an important role.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

The Pastoral Care Policy has many parts and there will be times when staff will need to refer to other policies which are either presently in place or being worked on.

These policies include:

- Health and safety
- Anti-Bullying
- Discipline
- Child Protection
- Drugs / Misuse of Substances
- Acceptable use of the Internet

LIAISON WITH PARENTS

We at St. Patrick's see ourselves as partners with parents and guardians in the education of their child. The parent is the primary educator. We see the school continuing this education in a more formal way. Mutual support and cooperation is an essential element in achieving our objectives. On-going activities to ensure communication and parental involvement include:

- Regular parent / teacher meetings
- Prospectus / News sheets
- Annual Progress reports
- Sporting Events
- Fund -raising activities
- Religious services

All volunteers, including parents, wishing to help must undergo the appropriate vetting procedures as advocated by the Southern Library and Education Board.

It is a responsibility of the school to foster trust and build relationships with parents by -

"Raising awareness of the school's Child Protection arrangements within the Pastoral Care Policy."

Establishing procedures whereby parents may make a complaint about child abuse and the recourse that they may have if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

Parents will be informed of these procedures through the School Prospectus and annual information sent at the start of the school year.

PASTORAL CARE ARRANGEMENTS

In line with our policy of maximizing the potential of each pupil, the school recognises that it has a responsibility to do everything possible to care for each pupil's physical and emotional well-being. The school will endeavour to provide a comfortable a safe environment for learning.

Due to the nature of Primary Education, class teachers will look after the pastoral needs of the children in his/her care.

When a child is sick or injured, the school will, in the first instance, provide First Aid Assistance (without administering medicine unless authorised by SELB) and, if necessary, contact the parent/guardian by phone in order to bring them to school. If this proves unsuccessful the child will be taken to the nearest hospital.

In all cases, it will be the policy of the school to act in the best interests of the child.

The Pastoral Care Policy is an integral part of both the informal and formal Curriculum and permeates every aspect of life in St. Patrick's Primary School. The Ethos of the school will influence the effectiveness of the school's Personal Safety Programme*. This will support each child's development in ways, which would foster security, confidence and independence. It is central to the well-being of the individual and is, therefore, an integral part of all aspects of the curriculum.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To enhance each pupil's self-esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness
- To develop each pupil's communication skills
- To enhance each pupil's personal safety skills

For this policy to be successful the school must-

- create an environment, in the school and the classroom, where every child is a valued member of the community.
- promote class and group discussions of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance.
- identify a range of people to whom the children can turn to share their concerns and discuss their problems.
- integrate key concepts of personal safety within the curriculum.

CHILD PROTECTION

Procedures for Referral:-

1. The designated teacher is Miss. Oliver.
2. A teacher or any other member of staff who has concerns about a child must report his/her concerns to Miss. Oliver who has a designated responsibility for liaising with the Principal, the Social Services and other relevant agencies on cases of suspected child abuse.
3. If Miss. Oliver decides there is a reason for concern, she, after consultation with the principal, should contact the appropriate Child Care Senior Social Worker and confirm the referral in writing within 24 hours (ACPC 7). Where uncertainty exists Miss. Oliver should take the opportunity of consulting with the senior Social Worker as described in the main body of these procedures. (Chapter 7)
4. Miss. Oliver should inform the nominated officer of the Southern Education and Library Board and the Diocesan Administrator and provide a copy of the referral.

5. Where an Educational Psychologist, Education Officer, or other SELB staff member is the first to identify concerns about a child, he/she must inform Miss. Oliver, the nominated officer of the Southern Education and Library Board and the Diocesan Administrator. The case will be notified to the appropriate Child Care Senior Worker by the nominated officer.
6. After referral Miss. Oliver must attend and provide reports for the child protection case conference.

It is for the social services to investigate suspected abuse and to determine what action to take including notifying the police, however, in circumstances where it is unclear whether abuse has occurred, such as - a suspicious bruise is observed or a child suffers from poor hygiene - good practice would suggest that the appropriate school staff should make an initial enquire of the parent for an explanation and refer to social services if the explanation is unforthcoming or unsatisfactory.

- School's Personal Safety Programme involves the continued need to inform children about their health and well-being in all areas. This shall be managed by the following initiatives and others that may arise throughout the school year.
 - Stranger Danger initiatives
 - Police alerts re. personal safety
 - Wally and Wise (safety in the sun and healthy eating)
 - Smoke busters
 - Visit from school dentist / nurse
 - Visit from emergency services (i.e. police/fire services)
 - Circle Time
 - School Assembly information
 - Cycling Proficiency
 - Heart Start Program
 - Physical Education
 - Science topics

This list is not exhaustive and shall be updated and reviewed annually in line with this policy.