



ST. FRANCIS PS, AGHADERG

Pastoral Care Policy

Last Reviewed: ___April 2023___
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For review: ___October 2025___ (or in line with updated guidance or Circulars)

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Introduction

Pastoral Care is an all-embracing term which describes the whole atmosphere, ethos and tone of our school in its, mission to promote the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of the pupils.

The introduction to St. Francis' School Mission Statement well describes the nature of pastoral care in our school.

“At St. Francis's the child is at the heart of the Catholic faith community. As a school we aim to provide a high standard of child-centred education in a safe supportive learning environment, where respect and Christian values are promoted.”

Pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils' personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes: through the quality of teaching and learning; through the nature of relationships amongst pupils, teachers, parents and others; through arrangements for monitoring pupils' overall progress, academic, personal and social; through specific pastoral structures and support systems and through extra-curricular activities and the school ethos. Pastoral care accordingly, should help a school achieve success.

In St Francis', our Religious Education Policy and programme of work, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Staff Welfare Policy, Online Safety Policy and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy are the main policies designed to ensure we meet the aim of this Pastoral Care Policy Statement.

Aims

- To create an environment where children are safe and contented.
- To ensure the all-round development of each child.
- To help children grow in self-esteem, confidence and independence of thought.
- To communicate to our children, values and beliefs, which are in keeping with our ethos.
- To protect children from physical, social, emotional and intellectual harm and to provide them with the skills to cope with possible threats to their personal safety'
- To encourage tolerance, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- To promote warm and positive relationships between children, staff and parents.

Roles and Responsibility

While the Board of Governors, Principal and senior management have primary responsibility for the arrangements that promote and ensure the care and welfare of pupils and staff, it is obvious that pastoral care in the school is also a shared responsibility, involving the whole staff in co-operation with parents and pupils and others.

Responsibilities of staff members

Class teachers hold primary responsibility for the pastoral care of the pupils in their classes. This responsibility is shared with the classroom assistant and supervisory assistants. All staff will seek to develop relationships of trust, empathy and understanding to create the ethos

within which pastoral care can be exercised. Staff understand that we always take pastoral approach to any behaviour incidents and treat all children with respect and dignity, remembering that we ourselves are always role models.

Additional responsibilities are held by the Designated Teacher and the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Liaison with Parents

In St Francis' we value and appreciate the support we receive from the parents of our children in all aspects of school life. We are aware that our children require a positive and sympathetic relationship between home and school to develop fully and help them to overcome problems as they grow and mature.

The school recognises the rights and expectations of parents and acknowledges that we cannot achieve our aims if we do not work together with parents, helping parents to support the work of the school. Should problems or misunderstandings arise we seek to listen to the concerns of parents and work positively with them to reach an amicable solution.

Liaison with External Support Agencies

We recognise that occasionally we require expertise from external agencies. The school will seek the help and support of various external agencies when appropriate including the Child Protection Support Service, Education Welfare Service, Social Services, Behaviour Support Team, Educational Psychologist, RISE NI, School Health Team, Family Support Hub etc

The Pastoral Coordinator

St. Francis' Pastoral Care Coordinator is Mr O'Malley. Any low-level pastoral care concerns are dealt with by class teacher and recorded in each teacher's 'Pastoral Care Concerns' folder. More serious concerns the class teacher will discuss individual cases, share and agree appropriate strategies share with the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

When a child is reported to the Pastoral Care Coordinator, the concern and action taken will be recorded in a 'Record of Concern' sheet and dealt with as appropriately

Main Components of Pastoral Care in the School

Some of the principal features and components of pastoral care provision and practice in the school are set out under the following headings.

1. School Leadership.

The significance of the quality and effectiveness of the leadership of the head teacher and senior management in striving "to create a caring, happy and secure environment, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect, whilst being given the opportunity to develop their gifts and talents" is fully recognised and acknowledged by the Board of Governors of the school.

2. Staff Welfare and Development.

It is widely recognised in the world of work that care of staff is vital to ensure that stress and low morale do not jeopardise the success and prosperity of school life.

In schools, high pupil morale and expectations are difficult to establish and sustain without high teacher morale and expectations.

At school level the promotion and development of staff welfare and development is an obvious responsibility of the Board of Governors, Principal and senior management but it is also the mutual responsibility of all colleagues in school.

It is also recognised that some of the sources of stress and low morale in schools (as in other organisations) often lie outside the influence of the schools themselves.

3. Child Protection Procedures

This component of pastoral care refers to school's policies that aim to protect the children from physical and emotional harm, from neglect and from any form of abuse. It also deals with the need for the school to ensure that the curriculum includes a programme for pupils on self-protection.

4. The Teaching and Learning Environment

Teachers strive to create and maintain a positive classroom climate: a quiet, calm relaxed attitude combined with fairness and a sense of purpose: an interest in and knowledge of the pupils individually and mutual respect, the pupil recognising the personal qualities, knowledge and skills of the teachers and the teachers being sensitive to the needs of the pupils and respecting their contributions.

This feature of pastoral care refers to the harmonious relations which are striven for nurtured and developed in the school between teachers and pupils and among the pupils within and outside the classroom.

It encompasses mutual respect, tolerance, the approachability of teachers, the growth of pupils, and the expectations that each bring to the school situation.

Pupils have a sense of security and are free from emotional and physical harm. Teachers are fair, consistent and compassionate in their approaches to discipline.

5. Partnership and Consultation with Parents

This aspect of pastoral care refers to the school's arrangements for keeping parents informed and up-to-date about their children's progress and about developments in school.

6. Extra-Curricular Activities.

This feature of pastoral care refers to the opportunities the school provides for learn and social activity outside the formal classroom setting.

7. School Environment

This aspect of pastoral care refers to the action of staff and management in ensuring safe, clean, comfortable and pleasant environment throughout the school for work leisure.

SENDO

To ensure the appropriate response to all of our children's needs and to comply with SENDO it is important that all members of staff are informed of a child's specific learning or possible medical conditions e.g. ASD, ADHD etc.

All members of staff have received training on Risk Assessment (Awareness Raising) and De-escalation and Diffusion of Challenging Behaviours.

Promoting a Positive Ethos for the Children of St Francis'

There are many ways in which the school and community seek to promote a positive ethos including:

- Assemblies
- Pupil of the Week P1-P7
- Principal's Homework voucher
- Barnabus Award
- Attendance at Mass throughout the year
- School Council
- Eco Team
- Anti bullying Ambassadors
- Digital leaders
- Playground Buddies
- Range of Lunchtime activities
- Wide range of afterschool activities
- Breakfast club
- Opportunities to represent the school in competitions and events.
- Shared Education Programme

- Circle Time
- PDMU Programme
- Feedback Policy
- Star Charts, Stickers
- Culture of Praise
- Work Displays- Corridors and Classrooms
- Buddy System for new pupils
- Lunchtime Play Activities
- Healthy Break
- First Aid Training Programme
P6/P7
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- Annual Reports
- Curriculum Talks
- Parent Interviews
- Sports Day
- Class Librarians
- Visits by school chaplain
- Sacramental Programmes
- Golden Aspirations
- Class Rules
- Something to Say Box
- Calm Zones
- Safeguarding Team known to all children
- Supervision Arrangements

Links to other policies

This policy should not be seen in isolation and should be cross referenced with other school policies, in particular the RSE Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Intimate Care Policy, Online Safety Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy, Drugs Policy and the Risk Assessment Policy.

Monitoring

On-going monitoring is an integral part of school life. The Pastoral Care and other policies are discussed at regular staff meetings to ensure that the policies are implemented as planned. Support is given to staff members, (including substitute teachers) who require assistance in carrying out any aspect of their pastoral role.

Evaluation and Review

Evaluation procedures are in place to discover ways of improving the quality of provision in the school for the benefit of all pupils and staff. The policy is evaluated on an on-going basis and periodically, with parents, pupils and staff views being requested through questionnaires, informal discussions and focus groups. Circulars and publications from DE, EA, CCMS and CCEA will be considered when reviewing our Pastoral Care Policy.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the school's system of pastoral care is effective when the school policy and planning for pastoral care are fully implemented and reflected in the quality of provision within and beyond the classroom and the effectiveness of the support arrangements for individual pupils.