



PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Date Ratified by Board of Governors: 11/9/23

Date of Review: 11/9/25

1. INTRODUCTION

(a) Rationale

This policy is set in the context of a changing society where there is less family stability, an increase in child abuse and greater challenges facing parents in raising children. Children are surrounded by unhealthy influences (emotional, physical and spiritual). To counterbalance the effects of these we at St John's Eglish Primary School believe that a Pastoral Care System which promotes a healthy lifestyle and positive attitudes is essential. This system encompasses the development of strategies to enable the children to make reasoned and rational decisions about situations. It also includes the provision of an environment where the children feel safe, secure and valued and where their concerns are listened to and acted upon when necessary. The Pastoral Care Policy at St John's Eglish Primary School should ensure that children reach their full potential in every area of life as envisaged in our Mission Statement.

(b) Definitions

Pastoral Care is a set of systems and programmes in schools which attempt to meet the totality of needs of its pupils (social, spiritual, mental, emotional, physical) so that every pupil has the opportunity in a safe environment to reach his/her potential in every area of his/her life and is equipped with the skills to cope with the outside world.

(c) Aims

- To develop and sustain a caring and happy learning environment which promotes respect and co-operation within the school community and where children are socially at ease and educationally thriving.
- To make all staff aware of children's needs i.e. to notice unhappy, preoccupied, irritable, depressed children and to investigate unobtrusively.
- To foster relationships between school, parents and external agencies.²

2. SPECIFIC ISSUES

(a) Ethos

The ethos of St John's Eglish Primary School is achieved by all staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school community. There is an emphasis placed on the importance of the pastoral aspect of school life alongside learning.

We aim to:

1. Have good relationships in the school
2. Have a strong Catholic ethos
3. Promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence

4. Utilise positive approaches, where possible, to promoting and maintaining good standards of discipline

5. Inform parents of our pastoral care arrangements

(b) Relationships

The ethos of St John's Eglish Primary School aims to promote a positive climate within the school community through fostering warm, positive, caring relationships among pupils and staff.

(c) Values

Teachers will not only teach knowledge but impart values to enable pupils to cope with life in the outside world in conjunction with the Catholic Education Vision.

(d) Self-Esteem

We aim to promote pupils' positive self-esteem in order that each child feels valued.

(e) Personal Safety

We aim to promote each child's awareness of their responsibility for their own safety. e.g.

- Saying no to people when they are afraid or unhappy
- Knowing where to get help
- Recognising dangerous situations
- Safety in the playground, on the road, in water, in the sun.

3. CURRICULUM

In St John's Eglish Primary School much of the Pastoral Care is integrated into daily routines as well as specific areas of the curriculum such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), Shared Education, Assemblies, World Around Us (WAU) and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC). It is also found within PE, RE and Talking and Listening topics.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff, both teaching and non-teaching have a responsibility to make sure the policy is implemented by:

- Helping pupils to make informed decisions about issues in terms of "right" and "wrong"
- Building up pupils' self-esteem
- Encouraging pupils to be assertive (This will help them to resist peer pressure)
- Avoiding use of sarcasm, belittling, humiliation etc.

- Celebrating individual successes and encouraging sensitivity and thoughtfulness in the school community.

The Principal will identify issues and if appropriate include them on the agenda for whole staff meetings or as part of the School Development Plan. The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator (Principal) has the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the policy, to ensure there are adequate up to date resources available (subject to finances). The Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral care policy is in place and is implemented.⁴

5. SCOPE OF PASTORAL CARE

The development of a safe, secure and caring environment is at the centre of our school ethos and is the responsibility of everyone who works there. It begins with the induction of new pupils and parents to school procedures through information booklets, Parent Handbooks, Open Days and Induction Days. The early establishment of procedures for the younger children is an essential first step in the development of their confidence and self-esteem and one which is constantly reinforced and built upon as the children progress through the school. Maintaining high standards of behaviour and self-discipline is central to the overall care system, as is the show of consideration for other children's feelings and well-being. Verbal positive reinforcement, Dojo points, Golden Time and assembly awards aim to promote in a positive way good behaviour and application to work. The welfare of all the children in our care is of paramount importance. Teachers lead by example and promote and encourage healthy breaks at school. Article 3 UNCRC "The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children". Children will have the opportunity to attend Extra Curricular Activities to promote self-confidence, teamwork and positive relationships.

6.SUPERVISION

Children are supervised by teaching and non-teaching staff before school (9:00am-9:15am), at break time (10.45am-11.15am) and lunch time (12.15pm-1.45pm). At the end of the school day children in P1-3 are handed over to parents/child minders or are supervised at after school club to 3:15pm. Older children who have provided consent from their parents/guardians may walk or cycle home. Parents are requested to inform the school through Dojo of any changes to their children's collection arrangements. After school activities and educational visits are carefully planned with a view to providing maximum safety and supervision. Parental consent for any out of school activity is always sought.⁴

7. LIAISON WITH PARENTS

Parent Interviews are held in December each year and a written report is sent home in June. Parents or teachers may initiate a meeting at any time to discuss their child's progress or well-being. An appointment to talk to a child's teacher or the Principal may be made by contacting the school. Throughout each year a number of external support agencies visit the school regularly and on occasions meet with parents. Many of these agencies have direct contact with the children sharing their expertise, information and guidance with him/her to promote their safety and protection.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATING

Both policy and practice are reviewed regularly as an on-going process during staff meetings. Daily observation by all staff and the communication of incidents keeps teachers aware of the effectiveness of the pastoral care provision. It will be necessary to hear the views of pupils, teachers and parents. This may be done through questionnaires and on a face-to-face basis. The outcomes of any self-evaluation may then result in updating the current school policy.

9. STAFF TRAINING

Teaching and Support staff should be offered opportunity to attend in-service training on topics relating to pastoral care.

10. RESOURCES

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will ensure that there is an up-to-date range of resources which will be reviewed and updated regularly and kept in a central position. Deficiencies in the school building (cloakroom facilities, broken tiles etc.) should be brought to the attention of the principal/governors.