



'OPENING DOORS OF
OPPORTUNITY TOGETHER'

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

NOVEMBER 2023



Pastoral Care Policy

Mission Statement

Meadow Bridge Primary School aims to foster a safe, happy and caring environment where each child's personal development is nurtured. Every child's educational journey is enhanced and their lives enriched through stimulating learning experiences. Equal emphasis will be placed on pastoral care and on ensuring each individual reaches his or her academic potential, equipping them for the future.

Context

This document is based on Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement (DE 2009) and sets out our school's policy and practice in relation to the care of pupils and the promotion of a safe, stimulating, positive and caring environment for all pupils, teachers, and adults involved in the life of the school. Pastoral Care will play an integral part in the academic, social, emotional, physical and moral development of our pupils. This statement of school policy and procedure in Meadow Bridge Primary School has been compiled with the collaboration and support of the School Leadership Team and teaching staff and has the approval of the Board of Governors.

Ethos

The Pastoral Care of our children is at the heart of everything that happens in Meadow Bridge Primary School. We strongly believe that a child who is unhappy will not learn and so we have a well-developed Pastoral Care system organised and co-ordinated by the Principal. All members of staff have a responsibility to contribute to the Pastoral dimension of the life of the school. We aim to have an atmosphere of mutual respect between pupils and all staff. However this area is always a 'work in progress' as we constantly strive to improve the quality of our care and embrace the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We feel that we are well placed to deliver this curriculum as the atmosphere of mutual understanding required already exists within the ethos of the school.

Our school motto is 'Opening Doors of Opportunity Together'.

Aims

We aim to ensure that:-

- Pupils feel secure and happy at school and understand that they can speak to staff regarding personal issues and concerns;
- Pupils develop a sense of self-esteem and an awareness of the needs of others through self-discipline and a code of conduct;
- Pupils are encouraged to fulfil their moral, intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, creative and emotional potential;
- The values, attitudes, beliefs, and concerns of pupils are taken seriously;
- There is a promotion of positive relationships, mutual tolerance, and respect for others throughout the school;
- Relationships between pupils and staff operate on a basis of mutual respect;
- Pupils acquire knowledge, skills and practical abilities through effective teaching and learning;
- All members of staff feel valued and work together as a team;
- Good communications are maintained between parents and school;
- Outside agencies are utilised where appropriate to enhance pastoral care provision;
- All members of the school community work in a positive, secure, and healthy environment.

Child Centred Provision

At Meadow Bridge Primary School we aim to meet the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school through endeavouring to promote a safe, stimulating, and positive environment in order that everyone can develop those personal and social skills necessary to thrive within the school community.

Each teacher is concerned with the personal development and well-being of the individual pupils in his/her class. Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of the needs of others, to take responsibility for their own actions and to develop self-respect and self-esteem. We believe that the school is a community within a community and therefore aim to develop good relationships, based on respect between pupils, staff and parents.

We promote equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils, and a respect for diversity. The school values every pupil as an individual and seeks to provide equal opportunities through adopting a range of teaching strategies and offering a wide range of in-school and after-school clubs.

We seek to meet the additional educational and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning. Class teachers plan and teach differentiated work where appropriate. Miss J Wortley offers withdrawal support for Literacy and Numeracy and works closely with external agencies such as RISE and the EA.

We believe in and support pupil participation and involvement in decisions about school life. We do this through our House System, School Council, and Eco Committee. Mr A McCollum co-ordinates the House System and hands over the election of House Captains/Vice Captains to the Primary 7 pupils.

Mr A McCollum and Mrs D George co-ordinate the School Council and the Eco Committee respectively and take minutes of each meeting which are distributed to representatives.

The school follows guidelines set out in our Child Protection Policy fully. All members of staff have annual training in this regard.

We support children in making healthy choices through the provision of a healthy environment. We have a Healthy Break Policy and encourage all pupils to drink water. Our kitchen staff provide the option of a Health Handy Break that parents can avail of.. A range of sporting clubs, after-school activities, coaching sessions, and PE lessons, provide children with the opportunity to be active. We operate an extensive Games programme for Years 4-7.

Relationships

All staff work hard to establish positive working relationships with the pupils. We believe that how we treat our community is reciprocated. A good relationship between pupils and staff is paramount in generating a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels valued and cared for at all times. We promote positive relationships between teachers and their pupils and with other school-based staff, through regular meetings, PDMU lessons, well-being activities, residential and non-residential trips, extra-curricular activities, school productions, assemblies and Parent Teacher Association events.

Staff Welfare

The Principal and Board of Governors believe in an appropriate life/work balance and understand that there will be times when staff will, for valid personal reasons, require an increased level of support and understanding. Staff should feel that they are able to share concerns with their Head of Key Stage, Vice-Principal, or Principal and know that they will receive compassionate support. We have a Staff Well-Being Policy in place and Miss A Campbell is the Staff Well-Being lead teacher.

High Quality Teaching and Learning

We provide a broad and relevant curriculum as is evidenced by our planning and teaching. The school will strive to achieve a number of the aims of this policy through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) strand of the Revised Curriculum.

Staff will respond to other social, community and class issues as they arise, using their professional judgement and the Revised Curriculum. In certain circumstances outside agencies may be invited into school to support the work of staff in delivering the curriculum or dealing with pastoral issues.

Teachers use a range of teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom such as individual, paired and group tasks, talking and listening activities, role play and drama, and a wide range of active teaching methods. Circle Time also takes place and is an excellent tool in supporting pastoral issues.

Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils through the effective use of data, weekly evaluation of planning notes, self and peer assessment and monthly planning evaluations.

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 well-being, learning and achievement. These are developed by encouraging parents to be active participants in our school, through:-

- Meadow Bridge News;
- School Website;
- Regular Parent/Teacher consultations;
- Annual school reports;
- Open Day;
- School events eg Nativity Plays/Carol Service, School Production;
- PTA community events;
- Praying Parents Group;
- Parent support with areas of the curriculum;
- Parent Information Evenings;
- Link with local Nursing Home
- Link with local Nursery (Busy Bees)
- Local clergy/visiting speakers to Assemblies

We have good relationships and communication between the school and the education agencies that support pupils' health and well-being, learning and achievement, namely RISE, Outreach Support, and EA services.

We have good links with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies that support pupils' health and well-being, learning and achievement. These are Social Services, the school nurse, and Illuminate counseling service.

The school is involved in specific programmes that meet the needs of the community and nearby schools. These are:-

- Bee Safe Initiative
- Young Enterprise
- PSNI/Fire Service
- CEF
- Affiliated sports coaching

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that all individuals recognise their responsibilities in implementing the Pastoral Care Policy.

School Member	Responsibilities
TEACHING STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils. ▪ Develop a good rapport with pupils taught to foster an environment of mutual respect in classroom. ▪ Plan and deliver PDMU lessons using relevant themes and resources as well as other appropriate material. ▪ Help children to achieve their potential by setting appropriate expectations and providing support and encouragement. ▪ Encourage children to accept personal responsibility for their behaviour. ▪ Be alert to signs of distress and encourage pupils to speak to an appropriate adult. ▪ Listen to children who come to you with a problem, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them. ▪ Record minor incidents in the online Incident Books and inform Heads of Key Stages/Vice-Principal, to allow them to monitor patterns of concern. ▪ Refer to Anti-Bullying Policy if bullying is suspected. ▪ Maintain good communication with parents through meetings, reports, written comments on homework/notes home and verbal feedback. ▪ Attend in-service training on Pastoral Care and related issues. ▪ Be familiar with the school Pastoral Care Policy and be aware of current educational research and initiatives related to these issues. ▪ Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.
AUXILIARY STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils. ▪ Develop a good rapport with pupils and foster an environment of mutual respect in school. ▪ Be alert to signs of distress and encourage pupils to speak to an appropriate adult. ▪ Listen to children who come to you with a problem, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them. ▪ Report minor incidents to class teacher. ▪ Report concerns to class teacher if bullying is suspected. ▪ Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.
SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster effective communication between school and home. ▪ Raise awareness of and celebrate pupil achievement in school. ▪ Support House System in promoting Positive Behaviour. ▪ Monitor minor incidents and look out for concerning behaviour patterns. ▪ Monitor bullying incidents and support class teacher in dealing with issues of bullying. ▪ Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.

School Member	Responsibilities
PRINCIPAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend all relevant training and disseminate to colleagues. Facilitate staff briefings and in-service training ▪ Ensure that the policy is a living document which is communicated to the school community. ▪ Facilitate regular monitoring and review of Pastoral Care procedures. ▪ Foster effective communication between school and home. ▪ Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.
SLT / GOVERNORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be familiar with school policies and procedures. ▪ Ensure that all policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed as appropriate. ▪ Support staff and parents in the implementation of the policy and procedures. ▪ Deal with issues fairly, in accordance with legislation and EA guidelines. ▪ Consult with external agencies (where appropriate), including Educational Welfare and PSNI. ▪ Adhere to the school policy of confidentiality.
PARENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils. ▪ Help children to achieve their potential by setting appropriate expectations and providing support and encouragement. ▪ Encourage children to accept personal responsibility for their behaviour. ▪ Be alert to signs of distress and advise their children to report any concerns to a member of staff. ▪ Maintain good communication with school by attending organised meetings and informing school of any home issues which may impact a pupil. ▪ Be familiar with the school Pastoral Care Policy and encourage children to behave in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.(Sign Parent Information 'Pack') ▪ Work in partnership with the school and respect the sanctions imposed (in accordance with the school Positive Behaviour Policy) to promote positive resolutions.
PUPILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act in a respectful and supportive manner to fellow pupils and school community. ▪ Speak to a member of staff about any concerns. ▪ Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances. ▪ Raise issues with School Council representative. ▪ Accept personal responsibility for behaviour.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

In Meadow Bridge Primary School we operate an open-door policy and ensure that appointments are made available to all parents at the earliest convenience.

Parents are always welcome in school and are encouraged to communicate regularly with their child's teacher or the Principal if they have any concerns and worries. To ensure minimum disruption to teaching and learning, parents are encouraged to write a note or make an appointment via the secretary. They may also email the Principal. Urgent concerns are given immediate attention. We encourage parents to share concerns about home circumstances or medical matters which may affect their child's work or behaviour in school. Any information disclosed is treated as confidential. Staff meet regularly to discuss the pastoral care provision. The opinions of children, parents and staff are sought (via questionnaire) and valued. The SLT, Vice-Principal and Principal liaise frequently to ensure implementation of procedures and consistency of practice.

This policy is a working document and is reviewed constantly as we assess the effectiveness of our aims. This may result in a change of organisation, method, or content, as required for individual circumstances.