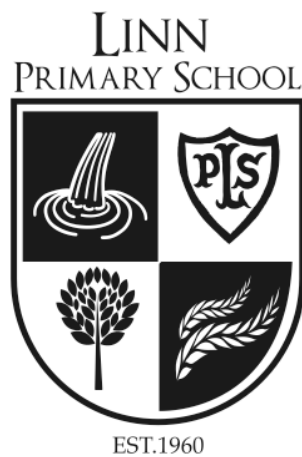


Linn Primary School and Nursery Unit



Pastoral Care Policy

*The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.
Article 3*

May 2021

1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Pastoral Care of our pupils is at the very heart of all that we do here at Linn Primary School & Nursery Unit. We treat each and every child as a unique and special individual and do all in our power to bring each one to their fullest potential. This Pastoral Care Policy is at the very core of our practice and is key to ensuring our pupils can strive to fulfil their potential.

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/carers in raising children. Children are surrounded by unhealthy influences (emotional, physical and spiritual). To counter balance the effects of these, we at Linn Primary School & Nursery Unit 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. Our Pastoral Care Policy should assist our pupils as they aim to reach their full potential in every area of life.

1.2 Definition

'Pastoral Care has been defined as concerning the personal relationships which influences the ethos and tone of the whole school. It is of crucial importance in creating an atmosphere in which young people feel secure, knowing they are valued as individuals and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development in a healthy and safe environment.'

T.J. Shaw, Chief Inspector, Evaluating Pastoral Care. DENI 1999

1.3 Ethos

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 29 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The ethos, or the distinctive character and atmosphere of Linn Primary School, should reflect how the school promotes the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of its pupils. It provides the context within which children feel secure, free from emotional and physical harm, and able to discuss their interests and voice their fears and concerns, confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response. It should inform and reassure the parents/carers that their children are being educated in a safe and caring atmosphere.

A climate which fosters effective learning is at the heart of the education process. Such a climate, or ethos, is best promoted through focusing on the creation and maintenance of good relationships: among the staff themselves; between staff and pupils; among pupils and their peers; between parents/carers and the school; and between the school and the community it serves. To build and maintain such a positive ethos requires all staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school.

All members of staff in Linn Primary School are aware that a positive, nurturing ethos does not come about by chance; it is achieved by the Principal, the Senior Leadership Team and all the staff, promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the informal and formal life of the school community.

In its booklet "Evaluating Schools", the Inspectorate (ETI) describes a positive ethos as one in which:

- the pupils' confidence and self-esteem are promoted;
- they are encouraged to value one another; and
- they show a strong sense of belonging to the school as a community.

Where the ethos is right, the pupils take a pride in their achievements and recognise the importance of high standards in their work and in their behaviour.

We are a nurturing school and our pastoral care is based on the following Six Principles of Nurture:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. Nurture is important for development of self-esteem.

4. Language is understood as a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. Transitions are significant in the lives of children.

For the pupils, the pastoral dimension takes place in school in two forms:

(a) 'The general focus' which requires all staff in the school to care, guide and advise pupils on personal and educational matters either formally or informally. All the staff in the school must work together to ensure that each pupil in the school feels cared for.

(b) 'The specialised focus' ensures that one particular teacher - the class teacher in our school, has a detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each pupil in his/her class.

Linn Primary School recognises that the academic and pastoral dimensions each have a distinctive but interdependent role. We believe that the pastoral care of our children is at the heart of teaching, helping the school reach its educational objectives. At all times we encourage our pupils to fulfil their potential.

We as a school, recognise the central role of the pastoral dimension as it maintains a healthy balance between the child as a learner and person. Clearly the pastoral and academic aspects of school life have a distinctive but interdependent contribution to make. Throughout the year a variety of activities are arranged to enhance the daily on-going work of pastoral care and extend the pupils' personal experiences and social skills.

When pupils have a range of opportunities to contribute to, and participate in, the framework of school life, they are more likely to show self-confidence, consideration for others, interest in what they are doing and pride in themselves and their school.

This policy supports the school in promoting a caring, supportive environment in which the staff and pupils can work in an atmosphere of mutual respect. As such pastoral care permeates all aspects of the curriculum.

The school ensures that Pastoral Care is integrated into day to day teaching and learning, by encouraging children to:

- take a pride in their work;
- recognise the importance of high standards of presentation and behaviour;

- be courteous and well mannered;
- attend regularly.

As a school we promote confidence and self-esteem amongst our pupils through a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. We encourage pupils to value one another and to express their own views whilst appreciating and respecting the views of others.

2.0

POLICY AIMS

To:

- provide a safe, secure, happy and caring learning environment in which the pupils and staff can feel supported, valued and members of the school community;
- generate a positive and inclusive climate within the school where each individual feels valued and cared for at all times;
- instil in the pupils a sense of personal worth and intellectual, moral and spiritual development;
- develop greater self-concept and self-esteem through the recognition of their worth;
- encourage the pupils to have a sense of personal accountability for their own actions and learning;
- foster the growth and recognition of the potential of each individual;
- foster self-respect, self-discipline, tolerance, equality and fairness;
- promote an appreciation of life and respect for the world in which we live;
- empower pupils in building and monitoring good relationships with pupils, staff and the wider school community;
- help the pupils to realise that our school is a community in itself and also part of the larger community so that they develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards themselves as well as in their social relationships with others;

- promote the school's Positive Behaviour Policy which respects the rights and responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents/carers;
- provide pupils with the personal, social and life skills necessary for a successful fulfilling and happy future;
- to develop effective school-home liaison in order to maintain parental/carer support and co-operation;
- Support and extend the work of the home and the community in promoting the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

3.0

ACHIEVING THE AIMS OF THIS POLICY

3.1 These aims will be achieved through:

- effective relationships among staff, pupils and parents;
- integration of the six principles of nurture and Nurture Group provision;
- the promotion of the school's Rights Respecting School Charter;
- rewarding good behaviour and endeavour and recognising pupil achievement;
- the promotion of each pupil's awareness of their responsibility for their own safety;
- the effective delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Pastoral care is integrated into our daily routines as well as the specific curriculum areas of: -
 - Personal Development and Understanding (PDMU);
 - the World Around Us (WAU);
 - Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC);
 - Physical Education.
- the effective delivery of Health Education, Anti-bullying, drug and alcohol misuse, Relationships and Sexuality Education and e-safety;

- pupil achievement, whether inside or outside the classroom, being recognised, valued and celebrated by the school through display boards, photographs and presentations.
- clear Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and regular Staff Training;
- effective liaison with parents and appropriate external support agencies, e.g. EWO, CAMHS, Social Services, School Psychology Service, Behaviour Support, ASD Service;
- pupils having the opportunity to share in a variety of activities through extra-curricular and social events with both pupils from their own school and young people from other schools;
- the existence of 'Class, School and Eco Councils' which provide opportunities for pupils to raise and discuss issues which can be forwarded to the school's Senior Leadership Team and the Principal.
- the use of Golden Rules, Good Choices and Recognition Boards;
- school visits, outdoor education, involvement in the community, membership of school clubs and activities, playing for a school team and being involved in social and fundraising events help all to develop a sense of responsibility and worthwhile participation. Such activities outside the classroom provide pupils with valued and worthwhile experiences in education;

3.2 Related Policies

These aims are further achieved through the effective implication of the following policies:

- Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones and Related Technologies;
- Anti-Bullying;
- Attendance;
- Misuse of Drugs;
- E-Safety;
- Personal/Intimate Care;
- Positive Behaviour;
- Relationships and Sexuality;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Learning Support;
- Code of Conduct;

- Use of Reasonable Force;
- Nurture.

The very nature of this and its associated policies is that they will, in practice, be constantly reviewed and updated as procedures are tried and tested. It is a responsive policy, changing as new demands are placed on the school and the relationships within it.

4.0 RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships between pupils and teachers make a significant contribution to the whole process of pastoral care. In both formal and informal situations, teachers can help foster self-respect, self-discipline, tolerance, equality and fairness through their own example of transacting with individuals.

Within this climate it is hoped that pupils and staff feel free to express their views and their concerns in the knowledge that these concerns will be received sympathetically and that appropriate and reasonable action will be taken to alleviate those concerns.

All connected to the school community will work in a spirit of mutual respect. Where such a spirit permeates a school, the success of the Pastoral Care Policy will be significantly strengthened.

5.0 OUR SCHOOL CHARTER

Through consultation with the pupils, staff and parents/carers we have established a School Charter which is based on six articles from the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child'.

Linn Primary School Charter

Our pupils have the right to:

Learn and be the best we can
Article 28 & 29

Be looked after and kept safe
Article 19

Say what we think and be listened to
Article 12

Good health care and a healthy lifestyle
Article 24

Relax and play with our friends
Article 31

The pupils agree to respect each other and come to school ready to work their best.

The adults agree to treat the pupils fairly and make our school a fun, safe place to learn so we can reach our full potential.

6.0

ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Pastoral Care Team

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Mrs A Duff

Deputy Pastoral Care Co-ordinators (PS): Mr A Ritchie & Mrs G Date

Deputy Pastoral Care Co-ordinators (NU): Miss V Thompson

The pastoral care co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating pastoral care throughout the school. In conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and staff, this includes:

- liaising with staff, parents/carers and the external support agencies;
- attending relevant training;
- co-ordinating the provision of school-based training;
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Pastoral Care Policy.

6.2 Pupils

We encourage pupils to develop:

- independence of mind and to take responsibility for their own actions;
- self-respect and self-discipline
- an understanding of their own strengths and limitations, their personal qualities, values and attitudes;
- a respect for other people and their way of life;
- tolerance and an understanding of differences;
- an understanding of the world in which we live.

6.3 Staff

All staff should:

- promote the nurturing ethos and values of the School Charter;
- value each pupil and treat every child as an individual;
- provide friendly support and reassurance to build pupils' confidence;
- make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety of pupils;
- place an emphasis on the reinforcement of positive behaviour, while carrying out consistently and fairly the school's Positive Behaviour Policy;
- show and respect for other people, cultures and their way of life;
- have tolerance and an understanding of differences;
- build up a working knowledge of the pupils, both as individuals and collectively;
- encourage pupils to become increasingly responsible for their own behaviour;
- display a positive and caring attitude to children;
- display an understanding of the world in which we live;
- maintain pastoral care records to ensure effective communication between staff as a pupil progresses through the school;
- as appropriate liaise with other staff eg. teachers, non-teaching staff, Pastoral Care co-ordinator, Senior Leadership Team, Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection and/or the Principal.

6.4 The Class Teacher

Every child has a right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 28 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The class teacher should become aware of situations early and, where appropriate, intervene positively with appropriate strategies to modify behaviour.

The class teacher should have detailed knowledge of the needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress of each pupil in the class. With this knowledge, the teacher can integrate the work of the school, parent/carer and others to support the learning and development of each pupil.

Relationships with their teachers and other pupils influence pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Consequently, the teachers should:

- ensure that learning takes place in a happy atmosphere within the classroom;
- encourage pupil motivation and commitment to tasks in hand;
- employ a range of teaching strategies in response to pupils' perceived needs;
- give pupils responsibility for some of their own learning;
- provide pupils with appropriate tasks which challenge and stretch them;
- through praise, recognition and displays of pupils' work, promote a sense of achievement
- accept responsibility for standards of behaviour in their own classroom through the effective implementation of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy;
- ensure that knowledge of particular home circumstances and other relevant information is passed on to the Pastoral Care co-ordinator and other relevant teachers including the teacher who inherits the class;
- as appropriate liaise with parents/carers, Principal, Vice-Principal, Pastoral Care Coordinator, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Nurture Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- ensure that attitudes, expectations and actions are influenced by knowledge of particular family situations and/or home circumstances;
- be responsible for standards of attainment, dress, punctuality and attendance within own class.

6.5 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team will support all staff in their efforts to achieve the aims of this Pastoral Care policy;
- They will assist the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator in the monitoring, evaluation and review of the effectiveness of this policy;

- The SLT will identify issues and if appropriate include them on the agenda for whole school review or as a specific target/s within the School Development Plan.

6.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers should:

- be involved in their child's education by support and encouragement of the child's learning at school and at home;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- ensure that their child is prepared for school both physically and emotionally;
- inform the school of any factors which may affect their child's progress and wellbeing;
- support school policies in relation to pastoral care;
- play their part in implementing agreements made with the school in respect of their child.

6.7 Governors

Governors will:

- be kept informed about proposed changes to the pastoral care policy;
- be invited to participate in relevant training as appropriate;
- monitor the implementation of the school's Pastoral Care Policy.

7.0

LIAISON WITH PARENTS/CARERS

As school is an extension of the home, and parents/carers are the primary educators of children, we should see parental/carer involvement as essential.

Communication with, and co-operation of, parents/carers is necessary for the successful education of children socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We seek to communicate with the parents/carers in a variety of ways:

- Letters home/Seesaw messages;
- Weekly newsletter;
- Written reports - distributed in June;
- Parental/carer interviews - (2 sets per year);
- Contact through Education Welfare Officer (EWO);
- Parent Teachers' Association (PTA);
- Verbal/written contact with parents/carers initiated by school staff;
- Verbal/contact with parents/carers initiated by parents/carers;
- 'Open Door Policy' parents/carers welcome to make an appointment to speak to the Principal or class teacher. Informal discussion is encouraged if time is available;
- Curriculum involvement eg. including homework;
- Parents/carer invited to the school to meet with the Principal, SLT member or class teacher;
- Parent/carer presentations;
- Talks, discussions, lectures;
- Social media;
- Social evenings / events.

8.0

LIASING WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

If a teacher is concerned about a child either physically, emotionally, intellectually or socially, consultation will take place between the Principal and the teacher.

Help then can be sought from a range of agencies:

EA/DE
 Educational Psychologist
 Educational Welfare Officer
 Rise
 ZL Counselling
 PSNI
 School Nursing Service
 DHSS
 The Family Support Hub
 Action for Children

Other agencies may be contacted if required.

9.0

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

This component of pastoral care refers to the school's Child Protection Policy. This policy puts in place procedures to ensure that pupils are protected from physical and emotional harm, from neglect and sexual abuse.

The school promotes the following articles from the United Nations Convention the Rights of a Child:

Article 12 (respect the views of the child) Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them.

Article 19 (protection from all forms of violence) Every child must be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment.

We therefore encourage pupils to be responsible for their own personal safety and help them to acquire the skills to be able to do this so that they will be able to make the correct decisions and know where to get help if or when they are confronted with danger. The whole school community is informed of who are the Designated and Deputy Teachers for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

The pupils are also made aware of the teacher responsible for first aid and what the procedures are for dealing with children who need first aid.

Pupils are encouraged to speak to their class teacher, designated teachers or any member of staff if they need help or are concerned about anything.

10.0

RESOURCES

Although most situations will be addressed within the classroom, time will be made available for visits, interviews, consultations etc. It is also our intention to build up and maintain a store of materials useful in the context of the pastoral dimension.

All members of staff will keep specific resources on key issues as the occasion arises. The school will endeavour to deploy staff with appropriate strengths, expertise and interests in the taught element of the pastoral system.

11.0

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Staff are provided with opportunities to attend in-service training in the area of pastoral care. This can be facilitated during directed time and staff

development days as well as formal and informal communication between individual members of staff.

The pastoral care co-ordinator will also endeavour to keep staff informed of what training is available from outside the school. As needs are recognised and communicated they will be addressed in the appropriate manner. Outside agencies may be utilised to deliver relevant training and upskill staff.

12.0 STAFF WELFARE

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 Leadership Team but it is also the mutual responsibility of all colleagues in school.

13.0 MONITORING and EVALUATION OF PUPILS' PASTORAL WELFARE

The teaching staff will monitor the progress academically and pastorally of children in their classes. Where a pastoral concern is identified about the well-being of any child, records will be kept of incidents or concerns and appropriate action taken if necessary. As a pupil progresses through the school, records of pastoral concerns or issues will be passed onto the child's next teacher. If appropriate the Pastoral Care co-ordinator will be informed.

14.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in light of new information/recommendations. The views of the pupils, staff, parents/carers and the Board of Governors should be taken into consideration during any review of this policy.

The next review will take place in May 2024.

