

Ashgrove Primary School

Policy for  
Pastoral Care

1 January 2005  
VERSION 1:1

# Pastoral Care Policy

## Rationale

Good pastoral care is the key to a child's learning. If a child is happy the child will thrive and learn. Central to the aims of Ashgrove Primary School are concerns for the welfare and development of each child – growing up in a time and a society where challenges can include poverty, drugs, ill health, family instability, abuse. School staff, both teaching and non-teaching, make important contributions as partners in a broad team of parents, caring professionals and voluntary workers who have contact with the children. Acting in the best interests of each child in a supportive, positive atmosphere is a fundamental guide to all our policies and practice in Ashgrove Primary.

This accords with the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which states: “children have a right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them” (Article19). It also endorses the Children (NI) Order 1995 which establishes that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all matters relating to children.

## General Statement of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is a set of systems and programmes in school which attempt to meet all the needs of a child – social, spiritual, mental, emotional, physical – so that every child 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”.

Caring for others is a fundamental element in the ethos of the school, but for the purposes of this policy the main focus is on children. As professionals and role models all staff and voluntary workers in our school are expected to be considerate and supportive in dealing with colleagues, children and members of the public. Demonstrating respect, courtesy and co-operation is most likely to nurture similar attitudes and habits in others, and particularly in children. Consistent, fair and positive discipline will provide the parameters within which relations can be based on reasonable behaviour. An assurance of care, respect and security is necessary for a child if he/she is to thrive, to retain a healthy self-esteem and to gain confidence as an individual.

This policy has been drawn up to comply with requirements and guidance of Child Protection Legislation, Northern Child Protection Committee, DENI (particularly Circular 1997/4) and NEELB. The management has a responsibility to keep pastoral care high on the agenda. The principal will monitor and evaluate the policy to ensure that resources are available. All staff will deliver the policy on a day-to-day basis.

## Aims of Ashgrove Primary School

It is the aim of Ashgrove Primary School to welcome children of all abilities and backgrounds and to give them the care, encouragement, knowledge and skills to enjoy life and make a positive contribution to our world. More specifically we aim to:

- to present the pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum in accordance with the Education Reform (N.I.) Order 1989;
- to develop each pupil's self confidence, initiative and interdependence, and to help each child realise his/her potential;
- to foster a positive attitude towards the school and the local community through parental involvement in school activities and by pupil participation on community activity;
- to foster in the pupils inquiring, imaginative and logical minds;
- to help pupils acquire social skills, attitudes and knowledge relevant to their future lives in a fast changing world.

## Aims of Pastoral Care

Staff and other educational helpers hold a position of trust and their interaction with pupils should be a positive and enriching experience. In Ashgrove we aim to share positively with parents in creating a safe and caring environment where each child will happily develop his or her full potential.

The aim of pastoral care within a congenial, facilitative school climate is to ensure the wholesome, all-round development of children who are contented, socially at ease and educationally thriving.

To this end the school aims to be vigilant, to notice unhappy, preoccupied, irritable or depressed children, to investigate unobtrusively and to effect positive change.

## Personal Needs of Children

A number of requirements are basic to each child. Their provision includes the following:

### **Physical Needs**

- 1 the development of gross and fine motor skills and of co-ordination;
- 2 protection from hazards (recognising danger in situations or behaviour; safety in water, in sun, on the road etc; saying no when afraid or unhappy; knowing where to get help);
- 3 the establishment of habits in personal hygiene, including toileting, eating, dressing, keeping warm;

- 4 adequate sleep and rest;
- 5 medical checks and attention, including dental, sight and hearing;
- 6 play.

### **Emotional Needs**

- 1 feelings of protection and care;
- 2 development of self-esteem, identity, confidence (including confidence to say no when afraid or unhappy) and self-worth through the receipt of reassurance, encouragement, praise, guidance and recognition;
- 3 freedom to express ideas and feelings;
- 4 development of self-control.

### **Social Needs**

- 1 acceptance by peers and the ability to interact with respect, tolerance, co-operation and pleasure, including sharing, planning, working and playing together;
- 2 meaningful relationships with adults and other pupils based on mutual value and respect and the rights of the individual;
- 3 opportunities to decide and act independently;
- 4 an understanding of the need for rules.

## **Pastoral Care in the Curriculum**

The physical, emotional and social needs of children will be addressed in many ways. A stable, secure and positive school environment will act as a foundation for relationships and activities in caring for and developing individual children. Specifically, pastoral care will be effected through:

- 1 Relationships: sensitive, positive, appropriate and polite interactions will be encouraged between individuals, regardless of status or group: children, parents, teachers, classroom assistants, kitchen staff and supervisors, secretary, caretaker and cleaners, principal and visitors;
- 2 Education for Mutual Understanding: respect, tolerance and interest in relation to people's differences; peaceful resolution of disagreement; courteous manners and behaviour in dealing with others: such behaviour will be acknowledged as positive and reinforced through praise and reward;

- 3 Good Behaviour and Discipline Policy: high expectations will be expressed regarding daily behaviour in class and around the school; positive behaviour will be rewarded and negative behaviour dealt with sensitively and meaningfully (see Good Behaviour and Discipline Policy); parents will be consulted when it is considered to be appropriate.
- 4 Health Education will emphasise the value of bodily care, including routines of hygiene and the dangers of substance abuse;
- 5 Community Contact: children will be encouraged to contribute to the life and needs of the local community through charitable giving (including weekly donations and Harvest and Christmas assemblies), local events (such as carol singing, sports fixtures and local news-sheets) and events within the school to which parents and friends of the school are invited (open afternoon, story telling evenings, assemblies, Sports Day etc.); such contacts will provide opportunities for the development of identity, self-esteem and responsibility;
- 6 Religious Education: children will be asked to consider moral and spiritual issues and develop their sense of identity and self-worth;
- 7 Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Writing and Talking and Listening will enable children to express themselves personally and in ways which will be seen as acceptable to others; they will have opportunities to appreciate and comment positively on the expression of other people; they will be encouraged to stand up for what they believe, assertively and non-aggressively; success will be celebrated;
- 8 The wearing of uniform, punctuality, regular attendance, homeworks and appropriate parental contact will be seen as a commitment from home to help children gain confidence as an equal, loyal and valued member of the school community.

### Liaison with Parents

The support of parents will be sought in implementing policies and enhancing the caring, productive school ethos. We will continue to promote Ashgrove Primary as the natural choice of school in the local community and attempt further to develop links between home and school through which an understanding will develop of the roles, responsibilities, rights and routines which influence and involve individual children both in school and at home. A sense of partnership and shared ownership will be fostered. Daily contact will include reading cards, homework diaries, telephone calls and informal meetings. More formal interviews will be held at intervals to advise parents of their child's progress and to consult them in relation to decisions. (see Homework Policy, Policy on Assessment, and Special Educational Needs Policy)

Where possible, parents wishing to speak to teachers or the principal should arrange an appointment. **At all time visitors are required to report to Reception and**

**respect the security arrangements established for the good of all classes and individual children**

In order to verify the legitimacy of a telephone caller the school may ask for name and telephone number and return the call with such information as was requested or was necessary. Personal details relating to individual children will not normally be provided over the phone, but may be given to relations in person.

Outside Agencies

On occasions the particular needs of children will make it necessary to contact people and agencies outside school. Notes will be kept pertaining to such meetings. In addition to parents and named contacts the following may be asked for (or given) assistance:

**Social Services**

Social workers and the Designated Teacher will exchange such information as may be required to act in the best interests of the child.

**Local Police**

The school will co-operate fully with any enquiries from the PSNI and inform the police in appropriate circumstances. Referral to the police will result from the decision of the principal or vice principal in the principal's absence. In the unlikely event of both being unavailable the Key Stage 1 Co-ordinator will decide.

**School Doctor, Dentist, Nurse and Health Visitor**

It will be the practice of the school to assist health visitors and other medical professionals in their caring for children and to seek whatever advice and help may be required to ensure their welfare. Parents will be kept informed.

**School Psychology Service**

On occasions the assessment and diagnosis of children with behavioural problems and/or learning difficulties will be requested with the consent of parents.

**Educational Welfare**

In general matters of conduct, welfare, attendance and punctuality the school will work in partnership with the EWO.

## Training

The principal, designated teacher and deputy designated teacher will be given regular opportunities to familiarise themselves with requirements, procedures and advice relevant to pastoral care and child protection. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, will be kept informed of current pastoral care and child protection policies and details relating to specific children as necessary.

## Safety

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that children remain safe inside the school building, within the grounds and when outside school on an educational visit.

The premises will be kept locked during class and club times, with admission by use of buzzer/intercom at the car park door.

In the event of a child suffering more than a very minor injury in the playground or elsewhere, an accident report form will be completed by an adult witness and/or the first on the scene. This will be referred to the principal or vice principal. Depending on the nature of the injury, parents may be informed and asked to seek medical advice. In an emergency, medical help will be sought immediately and the parents contacted.

The school will encourage children to travel to school and home safely through road safety teaching, advice on not speaking to strangers, etc. We will co-operate with other educating bodies such as the safety officer of the Department of the Environment, and officers from the Community and Traffic branches of the PSNI. Reported matters of indiscipline from outside school will be discussed with the pupils concerned and will be referred to parents and/or the police if of a serious nature.

Members of staff appointed within the NEELB are required to disclose details of any criminal record that they may have. This is verified by the PSNI. Ashgrove Primary School will compile a list of volunteers who may wish to contribute to the life of the school. They will be asked to submit to a criminal record search and familiarise themselves with the contents of our policy for Pastoral Care including Child Protection.