

BALLYKEEL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Reviewed August 2023

PASTORAL CARE

In this modern world it is vital that we prepare our children to cope with being in the 21st century. We at Ballykeel Primary School are aware that family stability, child abuse and parental difficulties in raising children are all issues that need to be addressed in order to maximise engagement and potential. Due to changing messages and influences from society towards sex, drugs, leisure in relation to health, increased suicide attempts and bullying it is vital that Ballykeel Primary School places Pastoral Care at the heart of its policies to help pupils deal with outside pressures. In order to incorporate a common helping language and foundation for personal development, Ballykeel PS has embraced the principles of the Take 5 steps to well-being. We will endeavour to demonstrate these 5 steps throughout the school across a variety of appropriate, supported activities.

Pastoral Care encompasses almost every activity in which the school is engaged. It implies concern for the physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of pupils, teacher and ancillary staff and a commitment to their welfare, happiness and personal and professional development. Above all it implies a commitment to the development of caring relationships between all sectors of the school community, thereby creating an environment in which all may achieve to the fullness of their potential. In such an environment there will be:

- ❖ Respect for the rights of individual pupils, and recognition of each person's worth.
- ❖ Organised support for the work of the staff – 'structured caring'.
- ❖ Support for pupils with learning or other difficulties.
- ❖ A curriculum in which there are strong messages about social responsibility.

The school therefore places great emphasis on the Pastoral Care dimension and its ethos and policies reflect this. Related policies/documents include:

- The Curriculum
- Positive Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health & Safety
- Attendance
- Anti Bullying
- Healthy Eating
- RSE
- Internet use and e-safety
- PDMU
- Drugs and Alcohol Policy
- Safe Handling and Use of Reasonable Force
- Special Educational Needs
- Critical Incidents
- RE
- CRED
- First Aid and administration of Medication
- Intimate Care
- Acceptable use of mobile phones and related technologies

These reflect the school's commitment to pastoral care and are available to parents on request or by visiting the school website at www.ballykeelps.org.uk

MISSION STATEMENT

At Ballykeel Primary School we define Pastoral Care as a set of systems and programmes in our school which attempts to meet the total needs of all the pupils in our care. Our Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator is Mrs Thompson.

At Ballykeel we aim to provide a pleasant, safe and caring environment, where effective learning may take place, and every child is valued as an individual in his/her own right.

This school environment will ideally provide opportunities for the development of the child's academic, social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs. Our school pledges to promote the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing within our school environment. Our commitment to Take 5 will be visible to all staff and pupils and participation will be encouraged through a supportive environment. We will promote activities and opportunities throughout the school year that will embrace the key messages in order to support our children, parents and staff.

Through the support of parents, we hope that the children will attain their fullest potential as we seek to develop self-discipline, a positive self esteem and a sense of pride in themselves and in their school.

AIMS

We aim to:

1. Create a safe, secure environment for all members of the school community.
2. Promote positive and supportive relationships throughout the school so that effective teaching and learning can take place and where each child can develop to his or her full potential.
3. Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of all pupils in our care and prepare them for the responsibilities of life and experiences.
4. Promote a positive behaviour policy which respects the rights and responsibilities of teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents.
5. Develop children's social and life skills and develop positive attitudes towards self and others.
6. Anticipate and deal with problems which individual children might experience in school.
7. Encourage each child to take responsibility for themselves in what they do and how they behave.
8. Promote close links between home, school and the community.
9. Encourage individuals to be a safe and responsible user of technology.

OBJECTIVES

The pastoral dimension of the school encompasses all pupils and all adults involved with the life of the school.

For **pupils** this means encouraging them:

- to set and achieve personal, social and academic goals through a planned developmental programme.

- to develop self-confidence, independence and to take responsibility for their own actions.
- to develop self- discipline and self-respect.
- to develop an understanding of themselves as individuals – their strengths and limitations, their personal qualities, their attitudes and values.
- to develop a respect and understanding for other people and their way of life.
- to develop an understanding of the world in which they live.
- to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

For **teachers** this means:

- developing whole-school curriculum policies which establish principles for action throughout the school.
- promoting and nurturing the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils, especially since the onset of Covid.
- promoting a caring environment where pupils’ learning is developed within the context of their individual needs and abilities.
- seeking, where appropriate, the co-operation of outside agencies.
- regularly monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all aspects of pastoral provision.

Pastoral responsibilities will be carried out more effectively when appropriate and continuing staff development is provided for teachers who need to feel that they are valued and that help, support and training are available to them. In particular they need to have:

- (a) Opportunities for training and professional development. This may be increasingly in the form of school-based courses, courses organised by the E.A. or relevant courses organised by other external agencies;
- (b) Appropriate leadership, co-ordination and motivation;
- (c) Clear job descriptions, sensitive appraisal and feedback;
- (d) Appropriate resources and facilities;
- (e) Opportunities to participate in corporate activities and to feel valued as members of a team.

For **other adults** associated with the school this means;

- 1) Having an understanding and empathy with the general ethos and aims of the school.
- 2) Being partners with the teachers in providing a caring approach.

ETHOS AND RELATIONSHIPS AT BALLYKEEL PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Ballykeel Primary School the entire staff approaches the care of our children in a positive way, reinforcing the philosophy and ethos of the school ensuring good relationships and communication between all elements of the school community.

By ensuring a safe, happy, caring environment where everyone feels valued, each child is helped to develop his/her own individual potential to the full in line with our ‘Educate, Enrich, Inspire’ motto.

Such an ethos is achieved by the Principal, SLT and staff promoting and facilitating an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school community. Our children are fully supervised and we place great emphasis on their welfare and well- being. Our ethos is centered on the

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 3 ‘The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.’

VALUES

As part of our school ethos we will communicate Christian values and beliefs to the children in our care. These will include honesty, respect for others, their belongings and their environment, good manners, helpfulness, kindness, thoughtfulness, a conscientious attitude, good behaviour, self-discipline, fair-mindedness and co-operation.

SELF ESTEEM

At Ballykeel Primary School we will endeavour to promote each child’s self-esteem and encourage them to be assertive, whilst remaining sensitive to the beliefs of others. This can be enhanced through the engagement of Take 5 activities.

Encouragement and praise with regard to their work will be achieved through positive marking and presentation of pupils’ work in attractive and stimulating displays, and also by publishing their work in our Ballykeel Bulletin, on our school website and through seesaw.

PERSONAL SAFETY

As a school we will endeavour to provide a healthy and safe environment in line with our Health and Safety policy.

We will encourage each child to take responsibility for his/her safety by making them aware of how to say no to people when they are afraid or unhappy:

- Knowing where to get help
- Recognising dangerous situations
- Safety in the water, on the road, in the sun etc.
- Fire Drill (once per half term)

STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of staff have responsibility for the general welfare of pupils. In addition, a formal pastoral structure exists to care for pupils in particular ways.

CLASS TEACHERS

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, parents and others to support the learning and development of each pupil.

The ways in which pupils work with each other and with teachers can have an important bearing on pupils’ personal, social and academic development. Class teachers should:

- 1) Ensure that learning is carried out in a happy atmosphere within the classroom, where each pupil is treated as an important individual.
- 2) Employ a range of teaching strategies in response to pupils’ needs.

- 3) Give pupils responsibility for some of their own learning.
- 4) Stretch pupils through appropriate and challenging tasks.
- 5) Integrate pupils with special needs as far as possible.
- 6) Provide reassurance and build confidence.
- 7) Encourage pupil motivation and commitment.
- 8) Promote a sense of achievement through praise, recognition and displays of children's work.
- 9) Be responsible for high standards of behaviour in his/her own class in accordance with the school's positive behaviour policy and reinforce pupil rules regularly.
- 10) Be responsible for standards of attainment, punctuality, attendance and dress within his or her own class.
- 11) Celebrate achievements of all pupils in and outside the classroom.
- 12) Ensure that knowledge of particular home circumstances influences their attitudes, expectations and actions and be responsible for passing on relevant information to the next teacher.
- 13) Liaise with parents, Principal, Vice-principal, SLT, designated teacher for pastoral care, or SENCO, as appropriate.

ACTIVITIES/ORGANISATION

- All pastoral care information such as who to speak to, phone numbers of organisations, first aiders, policies etc. is prominently displayed in the school entrance hall on the 'Helping Hands' board, and children are familiar with it. Signage throughout the school clearly displays our designated and deputy designated staff for child protection.
- Through assemblies, many areas of pastoral care will be addressed e.g. bullying, being kind, helpful, caring etc. Positive behaviour is regularly celebrated through 'Role model of the week', 'Pupil of the month' and 'Class of the month' awards and many other reward systems.
- We promote equality of opportunity, high quality learning, concern for the individual and a respect for diversity through our disability access arrangements, CRED, E.A.L. and special needs provision. The school has a Nurture Unit and this approach is at the core of our pastoral care.
- During the year we will promote the Take 5 steps to well-being message to children, parents and staff through a range of activities, events, leaflets and assemblies.
- We seek to meet the additional educational and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning by promoting good attendance and punctuality, promoting positive behaviour, welcoming newcomers and SEN provision.
- We believe in, and support pupil participation and involvement in decisions about school life. We do this through circle time, class meetings, Take 5 Pupil Champions, School Council, feedback from pupils and pupil feedback to teachers about teaching and learning, 'talk to me' box and questionnaires.
- We provide a Transition programme in P.7 to facilitate moving to secondary school. This is supported and supplemented by the school's family worker and EWO service.
- The school follows child protection guidelines fully. Children know about keeping safe through PDMU, assemblies and talks from outside bodies such as the PSNI. Staff child protection training takes place every other year and the DT and DDT staff attend all the regular training provided by the Education Authority. Parents are kept informed and they receive a summary every other year. All new parents at the P.1 induction receive a policy in their pack.
- When necessary, volunteers are vetted and all personnel are checked before starting work in the school. All records are kept securely in the school office. Governors are vetted.
- We support children in making healthy choices and through the provision of a healthy environment. We encourage children to eat healthy food for break, lunches and school dinners. Older pupils are encouraged to bring water to school to sip throughout the day. Children have two opportunities to play outdoors. Mrs JD Thompson is trained in Heartstart techniques, many members of staff, especially assistants, are first aiders and whole staff first aid training is updated regularly.

- A School Welfare Support teacher is available to pupils for two lunch times every week. This is a teacher familiar to children and they can notify her of their problem using the ‘talk to me’ box.
- When felt necessary we use “Barnardos Time 4 Me” Counselling Programme or Play Therapy.
- When possible we run a 10-week club to boost self-confidence for P.4 children. They are chosen on the basis of need e.g. difficult home situation, lack of self-esteem, new to the school.
- There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities including Weaving, The Cooking Crew, Board Games, Construction, Drama, Eco club, Let’s Go Spanish, Woolly Wonders, Art and Craft, Coding club / I Pad, Hockey, Football, Netball, Choir, Flute, Clarinet, Scripture Union, Accelerated reader, Reading Partners and ‘Power hour’.
- Every effort is made to ensure children remain safe. The school is kept locked and admission is only by a buzzer system at the front door, followed by all visitors signing in and wearing a visitor badge. P.4 -7 children are encouraged to travel to school and home again safely, children from P1-3 are always to be accompanied by an adult.
- Online Safety rules are prominently displayed in the school and are strictly adhered to. There is an online safety team. Special focus weeks on computer safety and regular workshops for children and parents are organised.
- Special events such as Anti bullying week, B.L.U.E. day, Kindness Day, Attendance week and Road Safety day are regular features.
- Staff have availed of training and/or have implemented programmes such as Helping Hands, Barnardos All Stars, Incredible Years.

NURTURE UNIT

Our new Nurture Unit is designed to be a bridge between home and school. It is a place where children will come to relax, share food and further develop their emotional well-being. The Nurture Room is based around the following principles;

- Children’s learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
- Language is a vital means of communication
- The importance of transition in children’s lives

The new unit is a wonderful asset to the school and over time it will offer many children a chance to re-visit their early learning skills and maximise their potential as they continue on their educational journey. There is a whole school approach in the adoption of the nurture principles and strategies.

LIAISON WITH PARENTS

Since the school is an extension of the home, and parents are the primary educators of children, we would see parental involvement as essential. Communication with, and the co-operation of, parents is necessary for the successful education of children socially, spiritually, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We seek to include as many of these links as possible.

- Seesaw
- ‘Meet the teacher’ information sessions at the start of each school year
- ‘Ballykeel Bulletins’
- Parent outside Information Board
- P.1/2 newsletters and parent windows
- Website – www.ballykeelps.org.uk

- Take 5 steps to well-being information board to promote the key messages to children, parents and staff of work undertaken, events and future planning
- Texting service/ parent app/ email
- Questionnaires
- Parent workshops/Information sessions e.g. online safety, ‘Switched on and ready to learn’ for P1, P.1 reading, phonics and maths workshops
- Parents’ evenings
- Primary and Nursery open days
- SEN workshops and reviews.
- Parent/teacher interviews
- Contact through outside agencies such as EWO, nurse, RISE, educational psychologist, ASD service, Thornfield Speech and Language, Behaviour Support.
- Inclusion of parents in the organisation of school events
- Verbal contact – messages / phone calls
- Verbal contact initiated by parents
- ‘Open Door Policy’ – parents always welcome
- Parental consultation group
- Parents as ‘helpers’ e.g. fundraising events, school trips/swimming
- Talks, discussions e.g. online safety
- Initiatives to support parents as partners in their children’s learning e.g. Reading Partners, Power Hour, Accelerated Reading
- Social evenings / events e.g. Fashion show, musicals, Summer Fair
- School Council initiatives
- Induction days for Nursery and P.1

SUPERVISION

- School starts with a welcome time from 8.45 – 9.00am in classrooms. Dining hall supervision is provided by classroom assistants for dinners and packed lunches.
- At 1:50pm parents/carers can collect P.1, followed at 2.00pm by P.2 and P.3 children from outside their classrooms. At 3.00pm P.4 to P.7 children are escorted to three different school gates.
- Children are supervised in the corridors at all times by staff, as they proceed to and from the assembly hall and in the playgrounds.

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION

When supervising on the playground adults should display a positive, caring attitude to the children. They should:

- Ensure that children spend lunchtime in a happy atmosphere in which each child is treated as an important individual.
- Ensure that every reasonable effort is made to ensure the safety of the children including informing the Principal if any unauthorised adult is in the building or grounds and if any aspect of the building or grounds is presenting a risk to the safety of the pupils or staff.
- Keep children under close observation, being vigilant for physical or emotional intimidation, and children who appear unhappy and/or isolated.
- Carry out the school's positive behaviour policy consistently and fairly with emphasis placed on the reinforcement of good behaviour.
- Encourage children to become increasingly responsible for their own behaviour. e.g. become increasingly independent in dealing with minor problems – sometimes providing children with advice rather than directly taking control.
- Provide reassurance and build children's confidence.
- Build up knowledge of individual children.
- Liaise with the class teacher where appropriate.

LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The school works in partnership with various outside agencies. The safeguarding team will liaise with the Education Welfare Service and the Health and Social Services. Teachers with any concerns about a child's welfare should refer their concerns to Mrs J Thompson, or if a child protection issue, to the Designated Teacher Mrs JD Thompson.

Criteria for Referral to the Education Welfare Service:

1) **Social / Emotional / Medical / Educational Problems**

Where difficulties are thought to be a result of social, emotional, educational or medical problems affecting the pupil or family.

2) **Behaviour Difficulties**

Where behaviour problems are linked to absence and/or unusual or difficult behaviour in school which may lead to suspension or expulsion.

2) **Persistent Absenteeism or school refusal**

If the problem persists despite initial investigation and action by the school.

3) **Re-referral**

Where there is a recurrence of problems concerning a child whose case has previously been closed.

The school will also liaise with the school doctor, nurse and dentist. When a child commences his or her education at Ballykeel, parents are required to complete a personal information sheet on which they give information concerning the child's medical history. Parents are asked to update this information as required. From this data, children with special needs of a medical nature (e.g. asthma, ADHD, ASD, epilepsy, diabetes, eyesight, hearing, speech problems, allergies) are identified. Class teachers pass this information to the SENCO and new class teacher at the beginning of each year. Mrs Young (SENCO) will liaise with support teachers, the educational psychologist, RISE NI, ASD service and other agencies.

To further improve attendance in Ballykeel we have introduced a 'Class of the Month' scheme from P1-P7, this is based purely on the percentage attendance of the whole class for each month. The winners have a 'chill out' day doing only fun activities and get the Attendance Cup to display in their classroom. Photos of the winning class for each month are displayed in prominent places in the school such as the outside notice board and monthly newsletter to parents. This has proved successful and is very competitive between classes and teachers, but most importantly has seen a rise in the overall percentage attendance of the whole school. An 'Attendance week' is sometimes used to help promote good attendance and focus children on effective learning. A 'Parent Information Booklet' written by parents, the pastoral care coordinator and Education Welfare Service Officer is given to all families annually. The school also continues to monitor very closely those children whose attendance gives any cause for concern.

STAFF TRAINING

All staff will be kept updated and informed about Pastoral Care issues. Teachers will avail of additional training and/or qualifications e.g. Heartstart, Helping Hands, First Aid, Resilience awareness. Pastoral Care is part of the School Development Plan and will therefore be subject to regular updates.

PASTORAL SUPPORT AND AGENCY LINKS

Classroom teacher is the main support

Safeguarding team

Critical Incidents team

All the teachers in the school

Classroom assistants

Building supervisor

Parent helpers

Supervisory assistants

Clerical Officers

Minister

Canteen Staff

Education Welfare Officers

Community Police/PSNI
Outreach Support
Educational Psychologist
Behaviour support
ASD Service
Nurse / Doctor
Social Services
Peripatetic Services
Child Protection Designated and Deputy Designated Staff
SENCO / Special Needs Teachers
Community Care Team
Speech Therapist/RISE NI
Health Visitors
Road Safety Officer
CAMHS
Women's Aid
Barnardos
NSPCC- CHILDLINE
Play Therapy
Nurture Unit
RSE
Take 5 steps to well-being advisory team

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Governors have overall responsibility for the pastoral care of the school community by:

- ensuring a safe environment
- ensuring that correct policies are in place and implemented.

The Principal, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and safeguarding team will:

- ensure that the Pastoral Care Policy is implemented
- see that all related policies are implemented and procedures followed
- monitor and evaluate all pastoral care practices regularly and update the policy after formal and informal consultation with staff/parents/pupils
- consider issues arising from parent interviews, questionnaires and the School Council / Pupil Champions
- provide teaching resources in all matters dealing with Pastoral Care issues
- ensure all staff have access to relevant and appropriate training.

RELATED PASTORAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position in school</u>	<u>Role</u>
Mrs S Sheeran	Principal SLT	Oversees CP procedures, Positive Behaviour policy and procedures.
Mrs JD Thompson	Acting Vice Principal SLT	Designated Teacher for Child Protection. RSE co-ordinator Health Education and Healthy Eating
Mrs J Thompson	Head of Foundation & KS1 SLT	Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection. Pastoral Care co-ordinator.
Mrs K McGuckian	Head of Nursery Unit SLT	Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection Health and Safety co-ordinator
Mrs B Esler	SLT	Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection Joint ICT co-ordinator (Acceptable use of the internet and E – safety) First Aid
Mrs H Young	SEN Teacher	SENCO School Welfare Support teacher
Miss L Kane	Teacher	RE co-ordinator Ext Sch co ordinator Parent Liaison co ordinator Joint ICT co-ordinator (Acceptable use of the internet and E – safety)
Mrs Kathryn Carruthers	Teacher	CRED co-ordinator
Mrs D Ritchie	Teacher	In charge of First Aid
Mrs A McWhirter	Teacher	PDMU co-ordinator
Mr J Hughes	Teacher	School Council Liaison

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

- The Pastoral Care Policy and practice will be reviewed annually after formal and informal consultation with staff/parents/pupils, making use of school data- assessment, incidents, behaviour, attendance etc.
- Issues arising from annual parent interviews/ questionnaires will be considered in relation to pastoral care
- Activities such as circle time, plenary sessions and pupil feedback provide opportunities to raise issues relating to pastoral care which will initiate necessary change if required
- The School Council/ Pupil Champions are involved in the monitoring, evaluating and participation in audits to ascertain pupil opinions, views and ideas in relation to school life and spreading the Take 5 steps to well-being message.