A Parent’s Guide to Pastoral Care

The Board of Governors and staff at Damhead Primary School through the school’s Pastoral Care Programme aim to create a happy, supportive, secure, stimulating and stable environment in which children can develop physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually to their full potential.

We have been entrusted with the care of all enrolled pupils at this school. Our responsibility for pastoral care extends to all activities and contexts which are part of school life both curricular and extra-curricular.

AIMS

1. To create and sustain an environment in which our pupils feel safe, secure and are supported as they develop.
2. To develop positive relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves.
3. Through our procedures and organisation to encourage pupils to contribute positively to school life and to develop a strong sense of identity within our school family.
4. To set clear standards for discipline and to enforce these consistently for the good of all and in a way which is understood by the pupils.
5. To maintain, nurture and value partnership with parents and the wider community.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible as the representative of the Board of Governors for providing the resources, organisation and good communication which are necessary to promote a caring environment. However the key role in caring is performed by the classroom teachers. They are well placed on a day to day basis to monitor pupils and deal with issues which may arise.

Should a parent have any concerns about a child’s well-being, we would encourage them to make contact with us at school. Some difficulties which children experience can seem relatively unimportant to an adult; however we feel it is an essential part of our role that such issues are dealt with as matter of priority. We will endeavour to give appropriate time to each situation as it arises.

Child Protection/Safeguarding

We as a school have a pastoral responsibility towards our pupils and recognise that the children have a right to be protected from harm. We have child protection procedures in place within school, which reflect our legal duties and our pastoral responsibilities. School doors are secured from 9.10am each morning and access after this time is granted only through the office. Visitors must speak to a member of staff before gaining access to the school.

Our Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy is available for inspection. This policy is reviewed annually and requires all staff, both teaching and non-teaching to be trained in this area.

If you have a concern about something that is happening in school, please speak to the class teacher or Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Alison Radcliffe or the Deputy Designated Teacher, Mrs Dawn Graham. In their absence please speak to the Principal.
**BULLYING**

Bullying is wrong, harmful and unacceptable. We aim through our ethos and curriculum to inform children appropriately and encourage within them a sense of self-confidence and self-worth.

We have an anti-bullying policy in school, giving guidance for teachers and pupils. If you, as a parent or guardian, suspect your child is being bullied please inform the school at once by telephoning the Principal or Head of Pastoral Care, Mrs Alison Radcliffe. Your concerns will be taken seriously and an investigation will begin immediately.

**DRUGS**

The Board of Governors, Principal and staff take a serious view of the misuse of drugs. We will not tolerate the using or selling of drugs in school and will take appropriate disciplinary measures on any pupil believed to be guilty of the offence. Our Drugs Education Programme, primarily taught through the subject area PDMU will provide opportunities for our child to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills which will enable them to live a healthy lifestyle. The positive influence of the home is required to support school.

**HOME/SCHOOL LINKS**

Parents and teachers are encouraged to keep in touch with each other, particularly where either has any concern about a pupil. Parent/teacher interviews are arranged twice annually, when parents have an opportunity to discuss their child’s progress.

Year Group meetings will be scheduled in September.

Appointments to see the Principal or teachers should be arranged through the School Secretary. Class teaching starts promptly at 9.00 am. In order to keep disturbances to lessons to an absolute minimum, we would ask you to understand that telephone calls are not put through to classes at this time. Please leave a message with the office staff. Should the matter be deemed urgent, appropriate contact will be made with the teacher.

**PDMU** (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding)
and
**CITIZENSHIP**
In an effort to celebrate pupils’ achievements and to teach children our school values we present Citizenship Awards at a whole school Assembly each month. We also enjoy acknowledging the children’s achievements outside school (such as Boys/Girls Brigade, Scouts, Sports etc) and would encourage the children to bring in certificates, medals and cups to show their peers at Assemblies.

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The school has a Special Needs Programme for its pupils by attempting to identify children experiencing learning difficulties through early intervention. Having identified difficulties, remediation can commence through small group teaching/one to one using specialised teachers. Mrs Gemma Baillie is the school’s Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Please speak to the class teacher in the first instance should you have any concerns regarding your child’s education. A referral will be made to the Special Education Needs Team (Mrs Baillie and Miss Dobbin) if deemed necessary.

**DISCIPLINE**

Our Discipline Policy promotes positive discipline. All pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner both to themselves and others. Consideration, courtesy and respect for other people and our environment should be observed at all times. Each child will be made aware of what is deemed acceptable behaviour through promotion and practice of our school values displayed in the school foyer. We would ask for your support as parents in ensuring that this be maintained.

**MEDICAL ISSUES**

Legally, schools are not compelled to administer medication to children.

Ideally the administration of medication to children should be given by parents. In rare cases, it is necessary for the child to take the medicine during school hours. The staff of the school wishes to be helpful in this regard but certain conditions need to be imposed.

Our Drugs and Medication Policy has recently been reviewed and is available for inspection. The following procedures are in place.

Medication should be clearly marked with the name of the child, the dosage and times that the medication needs to be administered clearly stated. Parents should hand the medication directly to the teacher and complete a consent form. If the consent form is not completed by a parent we cannot administer medication.

Could we also ask you to update the school during the course of the year of any changes in your child’s medical history? It is important that we are made aware of
all conditions and allergies of our children. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

ATTENDANCE

We are obliged by law to keep a record of your child’s attendance. Please inform the school in writing for reasons of absence. Please refer to the Department’s Guide to Pupil Attendance.

LATENESS

The Education Welfare Officer requires us to officially note all late arrivals to school. The school day begins at 8.55 am. Consideration will be given to those pupils who travel to school by bus.

Attendance and late arrivals will be monitored by the school and Education Welfare Officer. We would ask you to make every effort to adhere to this timetable. Please remember: It is unsettling for children to arrive in late to class.

MORNING ARRANGEMENTS

A Breakfast Club operates within school from 8.00am – 8.30 am every morning in our Assembly Hall. We provide cereal, toast and juice/milk/water. The cost is £1.

Other children not attending Breakfast Club may enter the school premises from 8.30am.

Please note that whilst this is not a legal requirement, the school will endeavour to assist parents by opening the doors at this time.

All children must go to their designated playground area (weather permitting). In the event of poor weather conditions the children will remain in the Assembly Hall until 8.55am. The children are supervised in Assembly Hall and in the Playground.

BREAK AND LUNCH TIME

Break and lunch time periods give the children an opportunity to participate in physical play. All children are expected to be in the playgrounds during these breaks even if the weather is damp or cold. It is essential that all children bring a coat to school each day for use in the playground.

HEALTHY BREAKS POLICY
We have worked alongside health professionals to develop this policy. The Board of Governors and staff are committed to implementing this. Pupils have a fifteen minute break mid-morning and the children are encouraged during this period to:

Eat only fruit, vegetables or bread based products at break time

Drink only milk or water at break time.

The school will provide relevant information on the foods and drinks that are suitable for a break time snack.

Toast, muffins, fruit are also available to buy from the canteen.

**PICK UP ARRANGEMENTS**

Children in Year 1-3 should be picked up at 2pm. All Year 1-3 children must be picked up by a responsible adult. Giving due consideration to Road Safety / Stranger Danger, no child will be allowed to go beyond the school gate on their own.

All other children will be allowed to leave school at 3pm.

A HOP Club (Helping Out Parents) Club operates within school. The cost of this is £3 per child per hour. The HOP Club operates from 2-5pm. However we are very aware that many parents do not finish work until 5pm and therefore we will make allowances of up to 15 minutes. **We would remind parents that HOP places MUST be booked before 11am each day.** The only exception to this rule will be if there is an emergency situation eg. Parent being asked to remain in work, family emergency etc.

**STAFF CAR PARK AND ENTRANCE**

We must insist that the staff car park is strictly out of bounds for all parents and children with the exception of pupils/parents who hold a Disability Badge. For health and safety reasons we would ask that all children enter school via the playground entrance and do not walk through the staff car park after 8.30am. **Children using the Breakfast Club should come into school via the main entrance.**

**PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

In order for us to adhere to the guidelines set down by Education Authority and Social Services with regard to the number of accompanying adults on school trips, we are asking you to consider if you wish to be included on a list available parent volunteers for school trips.
There is much to be gained for the children on these trips. However, if we are unable to adhere to the guidelines, organizing such trips may prove impossible.

It is an obligation of the school to have a Police Check carried out on all members of staff and volunteers in the school. New regulations which have come into place which require us to make fresh applications for those parents who have volunteered in the past. Please indicate on the reply slip if you wish to volunteer your services.

**USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS**

You will appreciate that we would wish to celebrate school activities and functions by recording them by video and the taking of photographs, with the possibility of these being included on our school website or other social media sites. The children may also be photographed as part of our observation records which would show some of the work they have been involved in. (this is particularly relevant to Foundation Stage classes)

However we are obliged to ask your permission to do so. **We would request parents to advise Mrs J Laverty, Principal in writing if they wish their child to be excluded from photographs and the school website etc.**

**INTERNET ACCESS AND SAFETY**

As part of our ICT and Internet Safety Policy in school we are required to seek the permission of parents before we allow the children to use internet facilities in school. Our system is managed and filtered by C2Kni (in line with all Northern Ireland schools) and is well supervised. We would ask you to complete the Internet Safety Agreement for those children in Years 3 – 7, spending time discussing the importance of using the internet appropriately with your son/daughter and return to the class teacher.

An Internet Safety Week will be held during the school year.

**USE OF MOBILE PHONES OR SIMILAR DEVICES IN SCHOOL**

Permission to have a mobile phone in school will only be given if the request is based on the use of the phone before or after school to enhance the pupil’s safety/well-being. Phones should be kept in school bags during the school day.

Should parents need to contact pupils or vice versa they are welcome to do so through the school office.
REQUESTS FOR HOMEWORK

We would remind you that homework/classwork is not provided for children who are on holiday during term time.

HEAD LICE

We are very aware that this can be a frustrating issue for parents. However, following strict guidelines set down by the Department of Health, schools are forbidden to inform parents of every instance of infestation of lice in classes.

We would continue to encourage you to check all children’s hair on a very regular basis and use appropriate treatments only when infestation is found. We will continue to issue timely reminders in the weekly notes to encourage thorough checking.

PASTORAL CARE RESOURCES

We have a library of Pastoral care resources and policies on display in the foyer. If you require any advice or guidance on dealing with an issue such as death/sickness in family, separation or divorce etc. please do not hesitate to contact Mrs J Laverty or Mrs A Radcliffe

“A PARENT’S GUIDE TO PASTORAL CARE”

REPLY SLIP

Please return this to the class teacher of your youngest child at school

Names of children and class

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__________________________
I acknowledge receipt of “A Parent’s Guide to Pastoral Care”.

I wish to offer my assistance to the school as a Parent Volunteer
Yes / No

I give permission for my child’s photograph to be used in school or for the school website.

Note: Please submit to Mrs J Laverty, Principal, notification in writing if you do not wish your child’s photograph to be taken or used in the school website

Signed ___________________________ Dated ________