



# A Parents' Guide To Pastoral Care

<b>Date of next policy review</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Name of person responsible for this policy</b>	<b>Christopher Fulton</b>
<b>Other related policies</b>	<b>T&amp;L, SEN, Safeguarding, Anti-bullying, E-Safety Policy</b>
<b>Issued to</b>	<b>Staff, governors, parents</b>
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## **PARENTS' GUIDE TO PASTORAL CARE**

The Board of Governors and staff at Victoria Primary School and Nursery Unit 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, spiritually 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**

- Provide a happy, safe and stimulating working environment in which each child feels secure and valued as they develop.
- Encourage positive relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves.
- Nurture and celebrate children's success and achievements to build self confidence and self esteem.
- 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.
- Set clear standards for positive discipline and to enforce these consistently for the good of all and in a way which is understood by the pupils.
- Maintaining, nurturing and valuing 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 and school support staff. 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 a matter of priority. We will endeavor to give appropriate time to each situation as it arises.

### **Safeguarding/ Child Protection**

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 9.00 am 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 and must sign in with the school secretary and wear a visitors badge at all times.

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, Mr J. Clarke or the Deputy Designated Teachers, Mr Fulton, Mrs Addis or Mrs Kernaghan.

### **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. 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 children to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills which will enable them to live a healthy lifestyle. A copy of our Drugs Policy is available upon request.

## **Home/School Links**

Parents and teachers are encouraged to keep in touch with each other, particularly where either has any concern about a pupil. Although it is a requirement to only hold one parent/teacher meeting annually, we as a school recognise how important communication is with home and school. As a result, we will plan on holding two parent teacher interviews at other points throughout the year.

Where possible, any other appointments to see the Principal or teachers should be arranged through the School Secretary.

## **PDMU** (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) and **CITIZENSHIP**

In an effort to celebrate pupils' achievements and to promote our school values we present Over and Above awards at a whole school Assembly each week. We also enjoy acknowledging the children's achievements outside school (such as Boys/Girls Brigade, Scouts, Sports, Music etc) and would encourage the children to bring in certificates, medals and cups to show their peers in class.

## **Special Educational Needs**

Victoria Primary School is committed to providing equal access for all pupils to a broad and balanced Northern Ireland Curriculum. As a school we recognise that some pupils during their school career may have special education needs and/ or a disability and we endeavour to make every possible arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

Mrs Kernaghan has the overall responsibility as SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator).

We value your important input as parents. Should you have any concerns regarding your child's education please speak your child's class teacher or a member of the SEN team.

## **Discipline**

Our Positive Behaviour 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. 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 wish to be helpful in this regard but certain conditions need to be imposed.

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

**Could we also ask you please 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 Procedures/ Lateness**

We are obligated 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 school's Attendance Policy for more information.

We also are required to officially note all late arrivals to school. **The school day begins at 9.00am.** 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.

## **Morning Arrangements**

A Breakfast Club operates within school from 8.00am every morning in our canteen. We provide cereal, toast and juice.

## **Break and Lunch Time**

Break and lunch time periods give the children an opportunity to participate in physical play. All children are supervised outside during these times.

## **Healthy Breaks Policy**

We have worked alongside health professionals to develop this policy. The Board of Governors and staff are committed to implementing this. Children are encouraged to eat fruit, vegetables or bread based products at break time and drink milk or water. We allow pupils to enjoy a treat on a Friday for their break.

### **Parents/ Volunteers etc**

We are enthusiastic about parental involvement in the life of the school. To protect our children, parents and other outside persons coming into school and in keeping with Department policy, all parents, volunteers, music tutors, coaches etc. will be vetted using the Enhanced Disclosure Access NI online form. Anyone parent wishing to assist as a volunteer in school should contact the school office.

### **Use of Photographs/Video**

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 media sources. 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 for your permission to do so and you have been issued a consent form. **We would ask parents to advise Mr Fulton, Principal, in writing if they wish their child to be excluded from photographs and the school website etc.**

### **Use of mobile phones or similar devices in school**

Children should not bring their mobile phones into school. Due to the ease of access to the internet on modern mobile phone devices, we are unable to monitor personal internet and social media activity on a child's device. For this reason it should not be brought into school.

### **Headlice**

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 will only inform parents if a number of children in the class have an infestation.

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.

### **Pastoral Care Resources**

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 Mr Fulton, Mr Clarke or Mrs Kernaghan or other outside agencies eg. NI Family Support.

<http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk>

The full policy reflects our school's commitment to pastoral care, however, in light of Covid-19, the following changes are required and are outlined in this addendum:

- 1) Due to the government advice to provide a staggered start to the school day in order to ensure social distancing, our doors will now close at 9.10am. Children will be marked late if they arrive to school after 9.10am.
- 2) At the beginning of each academic year we provide a meet the teacher event. This is designed to allow parents to attend a year group meeting to discuss the new curriculum year. In light of Covid-19, teachers have created a Parental Information Pack containing information for parents / carers to replace the face-to-face meet the teacher meeting. This pack will be sent home in paper format and also uploaded onto the school website available on the year group pages.
- 3) Assemblies – we are unable to conduct whole school / key stage assemblies in the school hall. Celebration of good work etc will be completed in the classroom by the class teacher. In order to limit the spread of Covid-19, we request that children do not bring in items from home to show the class.
- 4) Due to Covid-19, we will not be accepting a large number of visitors and parental helpers into school. This will be reviewed in the future.
- 5) Supporting the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of pupils.  
As a school we recognize the strain that the impacts of Covid-19 has had on members of our school community with reference to physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. In order to support our community, we have implemented the following approaches:

For pupils

- ✓ Development of a whole school Nurture Room to support individual pupils or groups of pupils. This room is staffed full time throughout the school week and will focus on building resilience in health and well-being of pupils.
- ✓ Each week, for 2 hours, Lexi the therapy dog, from Assistance Dogs NI, visits school to work with identified children.
- ✓ In each classroom, there are posters of specific adults around school who can support pupils at any point. These have been placed in classrooms as a visual reminder to pupils.
- ✓ We have allowed teachers a flexible approach to curriculum planning to best support the needs of pupils in their class.