**INTRODUCTION**

Pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life at Knocknagin PS, Desertmartin. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and involves all members of our school community - children, parents and all other adults who contribute to the well being of each child.

The Pastoral Care dimension deals with the physical, social, emotional, moral and academic needs of pupils. The caring of the teachers in the school will be evident in all aspects of the child’s school life.

It is the aim of our school to provide a warm and caring environment in the school so that each person, both child and adult, associated with the school, can feel safe and secure.

Name of Teacher responsible for Pastoral Care is **Mr Ronan Gallagher**

**AIMS**

* -  To create an environment where children are safe and contented.
* -  To ensure the all-round development of each child.
* -  To help children grow in self-esteem, confidence and independence of thought.
* -  To communicate to our children, values and beliefs, that are in keeping with our ethos.
* -  To protect children from physical, social, emotional and intellectual harm and to provide them with the skills to cope with possible threats to their personal safety, both within and outside school.
* -  To encourage tolerance, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others.
* -  To promote warm and positive relationships between children, staff and parents.

**CHILDREN**

We believe that every child is unique and special.

We believe that every child has the right to feel happy, safe and secure in school.

We believe that every child has the right to be helped to develop to the best of their ability, with the limits of the school’s resources.

We believe that every child should feel that their work and effort is valued.

We believe that every child should learn to respect their school, their teachers, their fellow pupils, visitors, property and the environment.

We believe that every child should be helped to develop confidence and positive self-esteem.

We believe that every child should be encouraged to develop independence of mind and take responsibility for their own action.

**STAFF** (Teaching and Non-teaching)

We believe that all members of staff deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect.
We believe that opinions of all members of staff should be valued.

We believe that the staff should work together as a team, for the good of the pupils and the good of the school.

We believe that flexibility is an essential quality in a small school setting.

We believe that the staff should promote a caring environment where pupil’s learning is developed within the context of their individual needs and abilities.

**PARENTS**

We believe that parents are vital partners in providing the best possible education for children.

We believe that parents deserve to be kept well informed by the school of all matters relating to their child’s education and welfare.

We believe that the school should be open in its approach to parents, so that they feel comfortable about communicating with the school.

**THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

We believe that members of the local and wider community have an important contribution to make to the education that is provided in
Knocknagin PS, Desertmartin

a) The assistance of outside agencies will be sought to extend pupils’ experiences e.g. Project work; visits of curator of Museum, local industrialists and farmers.

b)  Links will be established with neighbouring schools and Shared Education links have already been established with Desertmartin PS through the Shared Education Signature Project.

c)  There will be links with statutory agencies involved in the health and welfare of children.

**ORGANISATION OF PASTORAL CARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Our Board of Governors will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum including monitoring the safety of each child in the school. The Principal and staff will ensure that pastoral care is given a high profile in the school development plan. Each member of staff will work to build up pupils self esteem and encourage them to be assertive and to resist negative peer pressure. The will help them to celebrate success and develop the ability to make moral decisions and to know the difference between right and wrong.

**Responsibilities of staff members**

Every member of staff in the school has responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and well being of pupils.

Class teachers hold primary responsibility for the pastoral care of the pupils in their classes. This responsibility is shared with the part-time teacher for special needs and classroom assistants. Teachers will seek to develop relationships of trust, empathy and understanding within the classroom. This will provide the ethos within which pastoral care can be exercised.

Additional responsibility is held by the designated teacher for Child Protection , Mr.Gallagher , Coordinating includes:

* -  Liaison with teachers, parents and external support agencies.
* -  Attend relevant INSET.
* -  Coordinating the provision of school based INSET.
* -  Acting as the designated teacher for the investigation of claims of child abuse.
* -  Providing information and advice in relation to Child Protection for all members of the school community.
* -  Maintaining all records in relation to Child Protection.

Miss O’Callaghan is the deputy designated teacher and will assume Mr Gallagher’s responsibilities in his absence.

**RECORD KEEPING AND ADMINISTRATION**

An information form is kept for every child (for format see appendix). This form is completed annually by parents and provides information on pastoral and medical matters.

The school maintains an ‘Incident Book’. This records the details of all contacts made by parents with the school in relation to pastoral matters, together with action taken by the school in response to these concerns.

**COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

All parents are provided with an information pack giving details of the school’s pastoral care arrangements. Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher or the Principal if they have any concerns or worries. To do this they will have to use the appropriate interviews procedure. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention. We will encourage parents to share concerns about home circumstances or medical matters which may affect their child’s work or behaviour in school. Any information disclosed will be treated as confidential. Staff will meet regularly to discuss and review the Pastoral Care Policy. The opinions of parents and children will be valued and where appropriate actions will be taken.

**ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

To ensure a structured approach to the caring for all pupils we have developed the following basic structure:

Class Teacher

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Head of Pastoral Care

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Principal

Whilst the class teacher is identified as the key person in impacting on the care of the pupils in his/her class, it is important that they work in co- operation with the Head of Pastoral Care who will provide support and leadership in the pastoral domain.

In the event of additional support being required the Principal will also be available to support individual pupils.

**PASTORAL CARE CODE OF PRACTICE**

The school will seek to demonstrate its pastoral care in the following ways:

* -  Greeting pupils and welcoming them when they arrive at school.
* -  Encouraging a positive and happy atmosphere for learning. Chatting informally with pupils, listening to their news, their concerns, etc.
* -  Getting to know pupils personally, becoming aware of their personal circumstances and showing sensitivity to their individual needs.
* -  Supporting pupils, as far as possible in situations of need which may arise.
* -  Integrating Special Needs Children with other children.
* -  Promoting an ethos of respect and caring within classrooms.
* -  Giving pupils praise and encouragement in relation to their work and behaviour, through verbal and written comments and awards systems.
* -  Promoting the self-esteem and confidence of pupils.
* -  Allowing pupils to take on responsibility, through jobs in class and around the school.
* -  Assemblies which address a range of pastoral issues.
* -  Teaching provision which addresses issues related to pastoral care.
* -  Providing a range of learning styles which promotes opportunity for active research and self expression.
* -  Appropriate supervision of play areas at break and lunch time, with particular attention to the prevention of bullying.
* -  Supervision of pupils at home-time, to ensure safe departure from the school premises.
* -  Development of partnership and communication between all members of staff, in order to facilitate the sharing of information and concerns about pupils.
* -  Development of partnership and communication with parents, in order to facilitate the sharing of information and concerns about pupils.
* -  Appropriate strategies will be adopted where particular home circumstances are known to the school.

**CURRICULUM PROVISION FOR PASTORAL CARE**

In planning curricular provision for pastoral care, the school has taken CCEA’s draft guidance on Personal Development as a framework. This addresses curricular provision in three main areas:

**Personal Understanding**

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| Self-esteem & self awareness  | Addressed through Religious Education programme; aspects of work in English; promotion of pupils’ self confidence through participation in assemblies, Young Writer of the Month, Certificates, Comments, Stars. School promotes individual talents (e.g. Irish dance and Irish Music).  |
| Interpersonal & social skills  | The school has its own programme for development of social skills including good manners, paired working, group-working, meeting and greeting people, taking on responsibility. On school outings, pupils will be encouraged to respect people and property. On residential visits, pupils will learn to share in responsibilities undertaken.  |
| Emotional literacy  | This area is addressed through discussions, literature and opportunities which arise in the course of day to day classroom activity. The school uses circle time.  |

**Personal Health**

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| Developing a healthy lifestyle  | This is addressed through the school’s programme for science at KS1 and 2. This includes drugs education. The school also follows a ‘Boost better breaks’ policy. Extra- curricular activities provided include: (football, camogie, and cycling)  |
| Personal safety  | This is addressed through the science, religious education and Kidscape teaching programmes.  |
| Safety in the environment  | Each class uses the Road Safety calendar as a teaching resource on a regular basis. Fire safety is addressed through a teaching programme in P5. Cycling proficiency training is offered to pupils in P7.  |
| Relationship and sexuality education  | Appropriate aspects of this theme are addressed through the science and religious education teaching programmes. P7 pupils also participate in the ‘Love for Life’ programme. (See RSE Policy) |

**Living in the local and wider community (Citizenship)**

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| --- | --- |
| People in the community  | Grandparents visit the school to contribute to history lessons and projects. A range of other visitors come into the school from the wider community to contribute to topics such as ‘People who help us’. Industry Links - farming, |
| Culture in the community  | The school has close association with local bodies (e.g. Church, Football and Camogie Clubs). Pupils participate in local festivals and musical events. Irish Traditional Evening, Musical workshops and also Shared Education. trips.  |
| The wider community  | Pupils participate in a range of school visits to places of historical, cultural and environmental interest.. The school takes part in inter-school events such as quizzes and sports competitions. The school selects two charities to support each year and each class supports their own chosen charity.  |
| Environmental issues  | These issues are addressed through science and geography teaching programmes. The school has an anti- litter policy. Children in P3/4 set up bird feeders as part of cross- curricular topic work. The school is looking at becoming an Eco School with a green flag award. |

**SUPPORTING POLICIES**

Whilst all policies and procedures within the school take cognisance of the pastoral care of pupils and staff some directly support it in very specific areas.

Cross referencing is essential in delivering the pastoral care policy. These policies include:

* •Health and Safety
* •Bullying
* •Discipline/Including Positive Behaviour Programme
* •Drugs/Misuse of Substances
* •Child Protection
* •Acceptable use of the Internet
* •Use of reasonable force
* •Special Education Needs
* •Pupils with Medical Needs in School
* •Concerns & complaints (includes a statement in school prospectus)

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

Aspects of pastoral care remain a permanent feature of our School Development Plan and subsequently staff development and training are considered essential to support this. Our on-going development programme helps teachers identify the attitudes, values, skills and knowledge which will enable them to carry out their pastoral roles.

Ongoing training in interpersonal skills, counselling skills and teaching methods which engage pupils actively in their learning.
Training programmes are organised through:

* •On-site courses
* •Courses organised by Education Authority
* •Courses provided by other bodies.
* •Visitors from Education Authority to school

**RESOURCING**

To ensure the implementation of the policy the Principal will ensure that adequate resources are made available and that time will be made available to develop the programme throughout the school.

**LIAISON WITH BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

For GOVERNORS of the school this means:

a) providing a safe learning environment
b) encouraging the professional development of all the staff
c) being aware of all relevant legislation
d) being fair employers
e) dealing with all cases of grievances and/or discipline, fairly and effectively

f) involving themselves in the life of the school as far as their time permits

**LIAISON WITH PARENTS**

We see ourselves as partners with parents in the education of pupils. Mutual support and co-operation is an essential element in achieving our objectives. On-going activities to ensure communication and parental involvement include:

* •Regular parent/teacher meetings
* •DELTA (Including parent workshops)
* •Pl booklet, News Sheets, Letters, End of Year Booklet
* •Annual Progress Reports
* •Website
* •Sporting events
* •Fundraising activities
* •Extra-curricular activities
* •Musical shows
* •Irish Traditional Night
* •End of Year Mass
* •Penitential Services
* •First Holy Communion
* •Enrolment Services
* •Curriculum meetings
* •Christmas Play

**LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

We are committed to developing good working relationships with relevant external support agencies to enhance, protect and support individual pupil’s social and emotional welfare.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

On-going monitoring is an integral part of our policy. The Pastoral Care and other policies are discussed at regular staff meetings to ensure that the policies are implemented as planned. Support is given to those teachers, (including substitute teachers) who require assistance in carrying out any aspect of their pastoral role.

Evaluation procedures are in place to discover ways of improving the quality of provision in the school for the benefit of all pupils and teachers.

All aspects of the policy are evaluated on an on-going basis with parents’, pupils’ and staff views being requested through questionnaires, informal interviews and focus groups. Recent Circulars from DENI, Education Authority, CCMS AND CCEA will be taken into consideration when reviewing our pastoral care policy. Whilst the Head of Pastoral Care has overall responsibility for evaluation, self-evaluation is a feature of every teacher’s role.

**CONCLUSION**

The evaluation of the Knocknagin PS’s system of pastoral care is effective when the school policy and planning for pastoral care are fully implemented and reflected in the quality of provision within and beyond the classroom and the effectiveness of the support arrangements for individual pupils.

At all levels of the caring process all staff and pupils need to feel valued, safe and secure.