



St Mary's Nursery School

▪ Principal: Mrs Sinéad Hoy MEd ▪

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

It is the policy of St Mary's that effective pastoral care should reflect the good working practice we use daily within our school.

Our pastoral care policy focuses on the children in our care and extends outwards to encompass our staff, parents, students and visitors entering our school.

Good pastoral care begins with the fostering of positive relationships where children feel safe, secure and loved and adults feel valued and respected. We shall endeavour to promote these between:

- Our pupils and their peers
- Our pupils and staff
- Staff members
- Staff and parents
- Staff/parents and outside agencies/visitors
- School/BOG

Pastoral Care Amongst Children and Their Peers

The Settling In Process

At St Mary's we endeavour to begin the nurturing of positive relationships between each individual child and its peers from their first visit to our school.

Prior to this visit, we offer a home visit whereby your child will be reassured by first meeting us in their home environment.

Each child shall then be invited to come and see their classroom prior to their starting date. This visit lasts for one hour and the group of children attending is much smaller than the full class group.

With their parent(s) the child is free to choose activities, become familiar with the classroom layout and to find out where the toileting and washroom facilities are. Staff shall be nearby to assist the child and parent to feel comfortable, relaxed and so to begin the process of bonding with teachers and other children in the room.

After this initial visit, each child will commence a carefully structured settling in process. This process allows for each child to take their first steps towards independence within the safety of a small group of no more than 7 children. The children also attend for shorter periods of time which builds up gradually as their self-confidence grows.

In this way each child can bond with his/her teachers, feel confident that their needs will be met and seek out familiar friends on coming to school each day.

A comprehensive view of our procedures can be found in our Settling in Policy.

Positive Behaviour Management Strategies/Discipline

At St Mary's we recognise that young children need help and nurturing to develop in their capacity to share and take turns, co-operate, negotiate and to make independent and positive choices.

Within each classroom a climate of positive discipline exists which provides a framework for each child to experience successes, take a pride in their achievements, feel loved and valued and build on their self-esteem.

Occasionally children may engage in behaviour which is unwanted or undesirable. With Nursery children the most common types of unwanted behaviour are hitting, pushing, nipping or biting. These incidents are dealt with in accordance with our promoting positive behaviour policy, and through the use of conflict resolution techniques. Where children are experiencing behavioural difficulties which have not responded to behaviour management strategies, and have concurrently gone through the Code of Practice, Board support shall be sought.

Our children will be provided with sufficiently challenging activities which interest and stimulate. Staff will encourage and praise.

In particular, positive behaviour should always be acknowledged as this is a powerful motivator for children to repeat desirable behaviours.

Adults As Role Models

Children look to adults as their role models. They will mirror the behaviour of adults without discriminating between acceptable or unacceptable behaviours.

All staff at St Mary's will use appropriate language when speaking to the children. When speaking with other staff members we shall always be polite and cheery. We will expect equally high standards of our children.

Fostering Pastoral Care Amongst Pupils and Staff

At St Mary's we strive to promote links between the home and our Nursery School at every opportunity.

We believe the foundations of a successful relationship between our pupils and our staff are laid at the time of the HOME VISIT.

Each child will benefit from a pre-arranged home visit from their teacher. It is a short visit of no more than 10 minutes, but it allows each child to meet their teacher whilst in their own surroundings and on their own terms. The child will hopefully recognise their teacher from the photograph in the School Booklet which their parents received at the Open Night.

The teacher is also able to glean pieces of information which allows her to chat to the child about their favourite toys/TV programmes, pets or family members. This is useful during the settling in period.

During the summer months each child will receive a letter which has their symbol printed onto it, and a laminated copy of their symbol to keep.

Settling In Groups

Smaller groups throughout the settling in period allow the teachers to devote more time to each individual child. It also ensures that each child has many opportunities to work 1:1 with his/her teacher to master the basic social skills required to be independent within the classroom, eg visiting the toilet, accessing snack, using paint drying rack, accessing equipment.

The children become confident that their needs will be met and so (in most cases) can quickly begin to bond with their teachers.

As the children's confidence and independence grows, the groups can be combined to form the full class group of 26, and the day lengthened to incorporate dinner time.

The full settling in procedure is outlined in our Parents' Booklet.

Establishing Routines

With very young children it is vital to establish a familiar routine as early as possible.

Children need the comfort and security of a daily routine, and to know what is going to happen next. In St Mary's we establish a routine right from the beginning of settling in. Parents are given a copy of our daily routine in their Parents' Booklet so that they can talk about and reinforce the routine at home. The daily routine is posted throughout the school environment as a visual schedule. We operate an open plan style each morning 9.00am. - 11.00am.

From time to time there are changes to the daily routine, eg when there is an outing or a visitor to the school. In these instances the children will be warned in advance and a change card used on the visual schedule. Children who are particularly anxious about changes to the routine will be given extra support and reassurance.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

A great deal of the work carried out in St Mary's Nursery School focuses on developing the social and emotional skills of our pupils.

To foster and develop self-control all staff members shall have high expectations of our children's' behaviour. At all times we shall strive to increase wanted behaviour and decrease unwanted behaviour. Children shall be helped to understand the rules in place in their classroom, eg sitting nicely, playing quietly, using particular areas for activities, sharing toys and equipment.

The establishing of routine encourages children to be co-operative during transitional periods of the day. Staff are always aware of the need to be consistent in their behaviour management strategies and to use

- anticipation,
- distraction,
- redirection
- and intervention

appropriately. All staff are trained in conflict resolution techniques in the Nursery and employ the strategies laid out in our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

Unwanted or undesirable behaviour shall be dealt with in accordance with our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Positive or wanted behaviour should be highlighted and praised.

Links with parents will always be maintained and where an individual child is experiencing behavioural difficulties their support is vital. Board assistance may also be sought.

Adults As Role Models

At St Mary's the staff will at all times be aware of the need to model good and appropriate behaviour for the children in their care.

Fostering Pastoral Care Amongst Staff/Students

Students - Induction

At St Mary's we welcome students from within and outside our Parish. This may range from trainee teachers undertaking their teaching qualification through to NNEB, CACHE or NVQ students seeking placements to work alongside qualified staff and down to school pupils looking for work experience.

Students are welcome to visit our school prior to beginning their placement. They will each be given a familiarising tour of the school, meet the staff and take away an induction/staff hand book. This hand book will include details about the school, a copy of our child protection policy and relevant health and safety policies.

Our link staff member for students is Mrs Weatherald.

Students - Roles and Responsibilities

Students at St Mary's are expected to work alongside permanent staff members as part of a team. Dependent on the type of qualification being undertaken, the roles and responsibilities may vary.

It is the responsibility of all staff members to assist students in their understanding of their roles.

Tasks allocated to students shall be done with consideration given to their overall progression in learning, eg beginning with small groups for a story time and building up to a larger group.

Students are expected to attend staff or planning meetings where this falls within their attendance time. Staff will liaise, when necessary, with students' tutors to appraise them of their progress.

The rule of confidentiality and Child Protection is stressed at all times. Health and Safety awareness is also promoted.

Staff

All new staff members at St Mary's shall have an induction period whereby they are familiarised with the school layout and routines of the teaching day.

All staff shall have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, both to the school as an employer, to the staff team as a co-worker and to the children in their care. Where appropriate, job specifications are put into place and signed by the staff member. A copy of the school booklet, Pastoral Care and Child Protection Policies shall be given to each staff member, as will details of the fire evacuation and complaints procedure.

Fostering Pastoral Care Amongst School/Board of Governors

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of St Mary's shall meet 3 times each year. On each of these occasions the Principal shall furnish each governor with a report of the preceding terms business.

Where possible, the governors are involved in the life of the school and are invited to any special events, e.g. Parents' Night.

In the case of urgent business, an emergency Board of Governors meeting may be called.

Formal complaints are directed to the Board of Governors in accordance with the complaints procedure.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings shall be held on a regular basis in our school, and we aim to do this twice a week. All staff attend. During these meetings the staff come together as a team to share information, good practice and make decisions. We plan the curriculum, make evaluations and consider our observations and assessments. Staff Development is also on the agenda regularly.

Minutes are kept and are available to staff if requested.

Complaints Procedure

A complaints procedure operates in St Mary's in the event of any staff member or parent feeling dissatisfied with some aspect of their working environment.

Fostering Pastoral Care Between Parents and Staff/School

Open Enrolment

During the months of December and January the staff at St Mary's get ready for Open Enrolment.

The school environment is made inviting and attractive and a warm welcome is extended to each prospective parent entering the school. Contact is made with those parents who have previously placed their child's name with us. Notices are placed within the local community to advise parents of the Open Enrolment period, ie dates, procedures and inviting them to visit the school.

An Open Enrolment evening is held and notices placed in local Parish bulletins. It is through these means that the people within the local community become aware of the service we have on offer.

A warm welcome is extended to every new parent visiting our school. Staff are always aware of the need to create a positive first impression and to encourage parents to choose our nursery setting.

Open Night/School Booklet

An Open Night is held each year for the parents of the children who are coming to St Mary's in September.

The parents have an opportunity to visit their child's new classroom, meet the teachers and receive important information. The parents' booklet is distributed on this night and uniforms may be ordered.

When September arrives parents are welcome to settle their child for as long as he/she needs. Tea and coffee may be made in our staff room.

Throughout the school year our parents receive a monthly newsletter which informs them of the day to day business of the school and of the aims we have for each month's curriculum. A curriculum evening is held during the Settling in Period and throughout the year Mrs Hoy holds monthly curriculum meetings for parents.

The Audio Visual screen greets the parents in the hall with photographs of their children involved in their learning. A monthly keynote is prepared featuring each child and giving a synopsis of that month's learning.

A notice board is updated regularly to complement the newsletter. Parents are invited to a meeting with their child's teacher three times per year and they receive a:

- Settling in document in October
- Progress report and meeting in March
- CCEA Transition document in June

Parents Course

It is our aim to invite facilitators into our school to run parenting courses for our parents.

We will endeavour to accommodate as many parents as wish to undertake the course. The course will be held during the evening time. We currently have links with facilitators from Families First and have offered basic parenting courses as well as the Parents as Co-educators Course. At St Mary's Nursery School we have very close links with Abbey Surestart.

Parents Association

Each year a parents association is set up from amongst our current year parents. During the year they may be asked to become involved in fund raising efforts, parent evenings, or making sandwiches for trips etc.

As a small Nursery School we rely heavily on our parents support during these times and are most appreciative of the help offered.

Any parent is free to join our Parents Association.

Parent Volunteers

At St Mary's we frequently take the children on trips to enhance the curriculum we offer.

To do so we require a higher adult to pupil ratio and therefore our parents are an integral part of these outings. Subject to vetting procedures and reference checks, our parents accompany on these outings.

Parent volunteers often assist in the classroom setting and can spend parts of the school day involved in a range of activities. This help is always welcome.

At the beginning and end of each day parents are free to enter their child's classroom to engage in an activity, view work or chat with the teacher. In this way regular and positive contacts are maintained.

Fostering Pastoral Care Amongst Staff/Parents/Outside Agencies

Visitors to St Mary's are welcomed. We extend the warm and caring ethos prevalent within our school to all who enter.

Visitors are greeted by or directed to the Principal in all cases.

The staff of St Mary's may sometimes be required to meet personnel from outside agencies, eg social worker, health visitor, speech therapist. This contact may take the form of letter, telephone or be face to face. Brief notes of any such contact shall be kept.

Where visitors or outside agencies staff are working within the school, our child protection policy shall be strictly adhered to.

In the case of an individual child receiving external support, the parents should be enabled to meet up with the link worker.