

Dúnghaois Tréadchúraim

Policy For Pastoral Care

Principles

Pastoral Care involves looking after children's whole development in a positive way, thus enabling them firstly to cope more effectively with their learning in school, and secondly to develop skills and attitudes which enable them to understand themselves and to develop relationships with others. This policy should be regarded as an extension of the aims of Naíscoil an Chaistil and as a preface to our Child Protection Policy. In fact, Pastoral Care elements may be found in all areas of the curriculum.

Statement of Intent

We will strive to create a friendly open environment where positive relationships are given prominence. Staff's strengths and interests will be acknowledged and utilised for the benefit of the nursery. Training courses will be undertaken to further develop each staff member personally and professionally. Knowledge about issues such as Child Protection, their legal responsibilities and the contents of relevant Department/ Board circulars will be shared with all staff members and students/volunteers. As a follow-up to any training each staff member will be given opportunity to disseminate new information amongst all staff.

All staff will work together as an effective team to ensure that the children's self-confidence is promoted and they are provided with the opportunity to develop as an independent thinker and communicator. Relationships will be developed between staff and children in which the child feels secure and valued as an individual. Children will be encouraged to participate in the full range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, on offer in the nursery curriculum; these activities will be planned to ensure that children experience a degree of success, challenge where necessary and find nursery an enjoyable experience. They will be encouraged to work co-operatively towards common objectives. Every opportunity will be taken to praise children for their achievements and their contribution to the life of the nursery.

Staff will work consistently to promote a positive attitude to behaviour throughout the nursery, expecting high standards of behaviour (refer to Positive Behaviour Policy). They will build upon an understanding and knowledge of each child as an individual and take an interest in their all round development. Mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and there will be a positive approach to discipline. The use of rewards and sanctions will be implemented consistently by all members of staff. The approach taken by all staff will be fair, firm, consistent and compassionate.

Staff will provide opportunities to consult with children in order to gather their views and feelings about the nursery and how it affects them. This will be recorded and used in planning and evaluations when appropriate.

Purposes of Pastoral Care Provision

- To support the child's personal needs
- To identify areas and issues which are likely to adversely effect a child's learning and to bring about early intervention
- To facilitate the development of good relationships between staff, between staff and children, between children and between staff and parents
- To involve parents as positively as possible in the nursery environment
- To contribute to the provision of a climate which will facilitate learning
- To develop effective communication and record systems

Parental Liaison

The nursery recognises the prime importance of regular effective communication with all parents as a sound basis for Pastoral Care. Parents and visitors to the nursery will be welcomed and made aware of the pastoral care arrangements. Parents will be provided with the opportunity to suggest or make comments in relation to their personal experience within the nursery. These comments will be brought to the attention of the Governors and any necessary modification of existing provision will be considered.

The needs and interests of the child will be of paramount importance. There will be planned intervention when an issue or problem is affecting the welfare or progress of an individual child. Daily information conversation at the beginning and end of the session will provide an opportunity for staff to speak to each parent about their child. Where a parent wishes to speak to a member of the teaching staff in relation to their child, an appointment will be arranged at a time that is suitable to both parties and is not disruptive to the normal nursery routine.

Children's personal, social and emotional development will be promoted through the daily curriculum. A wide range of strategies and materials will be used to ensure that a variety of learning styles is catered for. Formal interviews will be arranged for every parent during the school year. The focus for these interviews will be the progress of the child in terms of personal, social and emotional development as well as all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The end of year transition form will be discussed with each parent in term 3 before it is forwarded to the relevant primary school.

Community Links

Members of the caring services – dental staff, fire fighters, police officers etc will be invited into the nursery to further develop the curriculum in relation to people in our community. Our children will be taken on educational visits to local places of interest and 'vetted' parents will be invited to accompany us on these trips. The number of educational visits will depend each year upon the amount of nursery fund available to pay for buses etc.

We liaise with the local Sure Start teams in the area from where some of our children might transfer and with local primary schools to where a number of our children will transfer. The majority of our children transfer on into Gaelscoil an Chaistil's Rang 1 and there is a comprehensive transition partnership already established. Joint activities are planned with Foundation Stage teacher and children throughout the year to maintain this partnership and to ensure that children will make the transition smoothly. We will seek to establish partnerships with other primary schools in the area to which our children transfer.

It will be school policy to liaise with other professionals and support staff whose advice and support will enhance the services on offer to the children attending our nursery.