



ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Revised September 2020

“We will work in collaboration with other educational institutions and in partnership with parents and pupils to maximize academic and creative potential of pupils, enabling them to achieve the highest educational standards, thereby enriching their lives, the community and the economy”.

St Mary's Mission Statement

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and others cultures, and the environment.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 29

Rationale:

As a Catholic, Rights Respecting (Gold) and Welcoming School, all members of our school are valued and have equal opportunities to the curricular, extracurricular and pastoral provisions enabling them to be fully engaged and supported in their learning, able to achieve their full potential. Through our whole school ethos, values and mission statement all pupils are treated with respect and dignity and have equal access to all the opportunities that the school offers. The teaching strategies equip our pupils with the knowledge, skills and attributes to enable them to make informed choices allowing them to contribute positively to their community, to society as a whole and the economy. We believe that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone within an inclusive environment where diversity is nurtured and celebrated.

Inclusion is achieved by:

- Designing a curriculum to promote a full range of learning, thinking and life skills
- Providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets the needs and career aspirations of students
- Using flexible and responsive teaching and learning styles with additional pupil support strategies
- Equipping pupils with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to succeed as individuals and as responsible and valued members of society
- Having a pastoral ethos that promotes inclusion and celebrates diversity
- Developing a close partnership with the whole community, particularly parents/guardians to address the individual needs of every pupil

Aims:

Through the establishment of a caring framework as a Rights Respecting School we aim to:

- Encourage all pupils to exercise self-discipline, self-respect, respect for others, the environment and local community and develop a sense of personal responsibility in line with Article 29 of UNCRC *‘Education must encourage the child's respect for human rights as well as respect for others’*.

- Provide a systematic, consistent and appropriate response to behaviour management in school;
- Ensure pupils recognise the need to have rules in school and to fulfil their responsibility as outlined in the School Charter;
- Foster mutual respect, understanding, sensitivity, open mindedness and generosity towards others so as to enrich both personal and community life;
- Support the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils;
- Foster a learning culture that celebrates and reward positive behaviour, achievement and success;
- Create a stimulating learning environment which encourages and rewards personal endeavor and achievement;
- Support the personal development of all pupils by recognising and rewarding high standards of behaviour and effort.

Principles:

As a Rights Respecting and Welcoming all ability School, we provide an education system that offers equality of opportunity to all groups of pupils within the school.

These groups include:

- Pupils from Ethnic backgrounds including Irish Travellers;
- Pupils who have English as an additional language (Newcomer Pupils);
- Pupils relocated to Northern Ireland through the resettlement programme;
- Pupils who have Special Educational Needs;
- Pupils who have Physical Disabilities, Medical Issues and/or Emotional Needs;
- Pupils who are Gifted and Talented,
- Pupils who are School Age Mothers,
- Pupils who are Looked After Children;
- Pupils who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion, young guardians, sick children, children from families under stress,
- Pupils who experience difficulties with sexual identity and orientation.

We aim to provide differentiated teaching in an all ability setting and a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, individuals and groups by:

- Setting high expectations;
- Establishing individual targets for all subjects which attainment is matched against;
- Creating suitable learning challenges for all pupils;
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- Support pupils to overcome potential barriers to learning;
- Liaising with relevant agencies to support pupils.

We aim to provide a happy, healthy and safe school by:

- Recognising, reflecting and celebrating the skills, talents, contributions and diversity of all our pupils;
- Providing high quality pastoral care, support and guidance;
- Safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of pupils;
- Listening and responding to the concerns of children and parents/guardians;

We provide inclusive education for our pupils by reviewing and evaluating our school provisions to ensure that each pupil achieves to the best of their ability, ensuring early identification of underachievement and use of appropriate support strategies. We work in partnership with pupils, parents/guardians and external agencies.

All school policies support inclusion and are reflected in the school development planning. These include Pastoral Care, SEN, RSE, Ethos Statement, CRED, Bullying, e Safety and Acceptable Internet Use, Attendance, Learning and Teaching, Behaviour and Health Education.

Principles into Practice:

As a Rights Respecting School, we promote inclusion through the school ethos which permeates all aspects of school life and through the taught curriculum and the pastoral system.

The following strategies and support are available and are used where appropriate:

- The Pastoral Care System, Rights Respecting School Council, Mentoring Programmes, delivery of Religious Education, Personal Development, LLW, Citizenship and Drama;
- ‘Bee Positive Bee Kind’ ethos
- Vibrant Student Voice groups;
- After School Study;
- Health Education Policy and Practice;
- CRED, RSE, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies;
- Special Needs Policy and arrangements;
- Use of IEPs (Individual Education Plans) and Access Arrangements
- Use of CEFRs to track Newcomer pupil progress;
- Systematic follow-up to serious incidents – Pastoral Structures and Behaviour Policy;
- Effective ‘Every Day Counts’ Attendance Policy’
- Referral to the Education Welfare Service for persistent non-attendance and other concerns;
- Mixed Ability Learning and Teaching Groups;
- Curriculum pathways at KS4 and Post 16;
- Mentoring Programme in KS4;
- Learning Partners Programme in KS3;
- School Counselling Service (one Counsellor – 1 day per week);
- Working with external support services including: Social Services, EWO, EA, Behaviour Support Team, Pupil Personal Development Service, EA Youth Service, Educational Psychologist, LAC Team, CAMHS etc
- Professional Development and Training programmes for staff;
- A wide ranging programme of extra-curricular activities accessible to all pupils;
- Key Stage Transition programmes and arrangements;
- Welcome pack in place for all pupils who join the school community during the academic year;
- Taster Days, Induction and Transition support programmes in place at key times;
- Participation in and links with other schools in the Newry and Mourne Area Learning Community

A pupil can be referred for pastoral or curriculum support by any member of staff or by parents through their daughter’s Form Teacher, Year Tutor or a member of SLT.

Equality of Provision

The Curriculum and Pastoral system in St. Mary's is relevant and accessible to all pupils regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, perceived or actual sexual orientation, disability and religion. The school ensures pupils with SEN and Newcomer pupils have appropriate, accessible and relevant education within a differentiated learning environment.

Confidentiality

Pupil concerns or personal issues are treated in a secure, trusting, respectful environment where pupils feel reassured that their well-being is being promoted and cared for. The right to privacy is respected at all times, no one should be expected to ask or answer personal questions. Pupils are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their parents or guardians.

In relation to child protection and safeguarding, teachers cannot promise confidentiality. Both parents and pupils should be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained. The school also provides information on sources of support outside the school and how they can be accessed. Teachers play a significant role in identifying potentially 'at risk' pupils and are alert to pupils who are experiencing distress and/or changes in their behaviour.

The Principal or Designated Teacher must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that sexual abuse is suspected. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Departments booklet '**Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools**' (2020) and the school's **Child Protection Policy**.

Teachers can provide general educational advice to pupils as part of the curriculum. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of parents/carers and reflects the ethos of the school. Teachers recognise it is the role of Health Professionals to offer medical advice to pupils.

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Good relationships are essential when ensuring pupils feel secure, safe and included in school. Learning takes place in a safe, secure, respectful and inclusive environment where pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and opinions and participate confidently and freely without embarrassment or judgement. The adherence to the Rights Respecting School Charter (RESPECT) helps pupils to feel more at ease exploring and discuss sensitive issues.

Preventative Curriculum - 'Keeping Safe Messages'

The Personal Development Programme together with the wider RSE curriculum offers a safe and supportive environment for pupils to explore sensitive issues in an age-appropriate way to help them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional and health issues, developing pupils' confidence, resilience and coping skills. The school also offers early intervention support when pupils are experiencing difficulties.

Responding to Sensitive Issues

On occasions, certain sensitive issues may be explored by teachers. Such issues need to be presented in a non-judgemental way, free from prejudice and bias. The messages received by the pupils should be compatible with the morals and values framework of the school.

Teachers are particularly sensitive to the personal circumstances and cultural backgrounds of their pupils when dealing with sensitive issues eg same-sex parents/carers. Pupils' views and values are influenced by their informal learning experiences and by the views of family peers, community and the media.

Through the delivery of RSE, there may be sensitive issues which different individuals hold strong opinions on, based on their values and beliefs. Pupils have opportunities to explore such issues in an age-appropriate way, enabling them to deal with the diverse and complex range of challenges facing them in society today. In dealing with such issues teachers will follow the Personal Development curriculum framework to help pupils develop an understanding of their feelings, thinking and behaviour and to develop strategies to manage these feelings together with respecting those of others. It may be more appropriate to deal with certain issues or questions on an individual basis or to arrange time for group discussions outside class time. Through staff development, teachers are supported to deal with sensitive issues contained within the Personal Development Programme.

External Examinations

The Equality Act 2010 extends the application of the Equality Act to general qualifications. The school ensures that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law maintaining equality of opportunity for all students. The SENCO leads the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment process including application for access arrangements, collection of supporting documentation to support the request for access arrangements, allocation of readers, examination rooms and any extra provisions to ensure all candidates have equal access to public examinations.

Teenage Pregnancy

In the event of a student informing a teacher that she is or may be pregnant the teacher must refer the pupil to the Designated Teacher who will follow Child Protection guidelines. Any school age mothers will be referred to and supported by SAM (School Age Mums) and an education plan of support will be agreed between the school, agency and home. Pupils will be encouraged to continue to attend school, before and after the birth of their baby.

Abuse

A member of staff may be able to play a significant part in the early detection of abuse. Correct procedures as outlined in DENI's Circular (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools – 2017/04) should be followed as outlined in the Child Protection Policy:

- the member of staff should immediately inform the Designated Teacher
- the Designated Teacher must inform / consult with Social Services and / or the PSNI
- no member of staff should take on the role of investigator. This is the responsibility of Social Services and the PSNI
- staff should give the pupil time to talk without probing, record exactly what the pupil says and not promise to keep secrets.

Confidentiality cannot be promised to any student when abuse is suspected. The pupils will also be reassured that she will be supported.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

We are aware that as young people are growing up they can experience sexual identity and orientation issues. In keeping with Catholic teaching it is important that abstinence is promoted for all pupils regardless of their sexual orientation. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment, to be treated with respect and dignity and not be treated any less favourably on grounds of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Relationships and Sexuality Education will help to promote positive views regarding sexual orientation and gender identity which in turn will help to raise the self-esteem of young people who may feel different. The school will handle all issues of sexual orientation and gender identity in a sensitive and reassuring way. As a Rights Respecting School, all negative and prejudice attitudes and behaviours will be challenged to create an inclusive learning environment.

Bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation, is as unacceptable as it is on any other situations where someone is mistreated. All issues relating to homophobic language and bullying will be dealt with appropriately in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy. Use of unkind language will be challenged and deemed as unacceptable.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons. The procedure is also referred to as 'cutting', 'female circumcision' and 'initiation'. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

FGM is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. If any member of staff has a concern that some pupil young may be at immediate risk of FGM they should report this immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and an immediate referral will be made to the HSCT Gateway Team.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. If a member of staff has knowledge or is suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a pupil, they must report this immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and an immediate referral will be made to the HSCT Gateway Team.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Governors

- Ensures that the school complies with Race Relations, Disability and SENCO related legislation;
- Ensures that the relevant Pastoral Policies and related procedures and strategies are implemented

The Principal

- Ensures that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented;
- Ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy and are given appropriate training and support;
- Takes appropriate action and if necessary, disciplinary action against staff or pupils who discriminate or contravene the policy;
- Ensures that issues of respect for diversity, equality and inclusion are addressed within the learning areas of Religious Education, CRED, Personal Development and Citizenship

Vice Principal

- Liaises with Year Tutors, Form Teachers, Behaviour Management Coordinator and SENCO to provide support for pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties that are creating a barrier to learning;
- Liaises with Year Tutors, Form Teachers, Behaviour Management Coordinator, SENCO and Newcomer Coordinator and parents/guardians to refer and support pupils who are at risk of disaffection or suspension to external agencies where appropriate;
- Ensures that the School Development Plan identifies areas for development to maintain a welcoming, diverse and inclusive learning environment.
- Ensures that the Student Voice is represented by a diverse group of pupils that provides a forum for pupil opinions and concerns.

SENCO

- Ensures that pupils with Special Educational Needs are identified and that their needs are met including access arrangements;
- Coordinates the work of Classroom Assistants in the support of pupils with SEN in the classroom;
- Liaise with staff to ensure every subject teacher contributes to IEPs to monitor and assess the progress of pupils with SEN;
- Works with a range of external agencies to provide effective and appropriate support to individuals and groups of pupils and advice on career opportunities;
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of pupils with SEN, reporting to parents and other stakeholders at set times throughout the year;
- In consultation with the Vice Principal, Year Tutors, Form Teachers, Behaviour Management Coordinator, SENCO and Newcomer Coordinator, co-ordinates the support given to pupils by outside agencies

Newcomer Coordinator

- Liaises with all staff to share information and support Newcomer pupils;
- Ensure statutory requirements are met to support Newcomer pupils;
- Lead whole staff training in relation to assessment arrangements for Newcomer pupils;
- Liaise with staff to ensure every subject teacher contributes to the CEFR process to monitor and assess the progress of Newcomer Pupils;
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of Newcomer pupils, reporting to parents and other stakeholders at set times throughout the year;
- Works with a range of external agencies to provide effective and appropriate support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- In consultation with the Vice Principal, Year Tutors, Form Teachers, Behaviour Management Coordinator and SENCO co-ordinates the support given to pupils by outside agencies

Year Tutors

- Collate information from Form Teachers and subject teachers regarding pupils with barriers to learning or inclusion;
- Liaise with the SENCO and Behaviour Management Coordinator to provide support for pupils with emotional/behavioural difficulties;
- Coordinate weekly Year Group Assemblies and meetings which discuss the needs, concerns and views of pupils in the year group;

- Ensures that reported incidents of racism, racial harassment, bullying and verbal and physical abuse are recorded and reported to the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and that appropriate disciplinary action is taken

Form Teachers

- Inform the Year Tutor, Behaviour Management Coordinator, SENCO or Vice Principal when they become aware of potential barriers to learning;
- As a Rights Respecting School, develop a sense of community and belonging within the Form group, school and wider community;
- Liaise with Senior Prefects to carry out their roles and responsibilities with their Form Class;
- Encourage pupil participation in the Rights Respecting School Council and in the many Student Voice groups.
- Through the delivery of the Personal Development Programme allow pupils to explore in a positive way issues surrounding inclusivity, diversity, discrimination and challenge stereotypes and the use of discriminatory language

Subject Teachers

- Understand pupils as learners and consider a variety of learning styles in the classroom and use differentiation to support pupils and meet their needs;
- Promote race equality, disability, equality and diversity through teaching and through relations with pupils, staff, parents/guardians and the wider community;
- Are aware of potential barriers to learning and refer pupils with difficulties to the Form Teacher who will liaise with the Year Tutor;
- Create a learning environment where pupils can contribute fully and feel valued;
- Take account of pupils' cultural background, disability and linguistic needs in classroom practice;
- Deal with incidents of discrimination and challenge stereotypes and the use of discriminatory language;
- Work with Classroom Assistants (where appropriate) to ensure that the diverse needs of pupils are met

Classroom Assistants

- Understand pupils as learners and consider a variety of learning styles in the classroom and use differentiation to support pupils and meet their needs;
- Are aware of barriers to inclusion and communicate concerns to teaching staff;
- Report incidents of discrimination and the use of discriminatory language to a member of Pastoral Care Team

Pupils

- Inform a member of staff if they witness any incidents of discrimination;
- Inform their Form Teacher or Year Tutor if they become aware of any barriers to learning

Parents/Guardians

- Inform their daughter's Form Teacher, Year Tutor, Vice Principal or Principal if they have knowledge of any discrimination;
- Inform the Form Teacher, Year Tutor, Vice Principal or Principal of any barriers to learning;
- Work in partnership with the school in promoting inclusion

Use of External/Support Agencies:

We acknowledge the importance of a range of external groups in promoting inclusivity within the school but also the importance of ensuring that such agencies adhere to the values and ethos of our school.

Current external/support agencies include:

- Inclusion Diversity Service (IDS)
- Traveller Liaison Coordinator
- Social Services
- Education Authority
- School Counsellor
- Educational Psychologist
- EA Youth Service
- School Age Mums (SAM)
- xL Princes Trust
- Women's Aid
- Work 4 U
- Start 360
- Religious Retreat Teams/Programmes
- PSNI
- STEPS Programme
- CARA Friend
- EWO Service
- Ready4Anything
- PIPS Care and Support
- Behaviour Support Team

Related School Policies:

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- ✚ Pastoral Care Policy
- ✚ SEN Policy
- ✚ CRED Policy
- ✚ Child Protection Policy
- ✚ Drugs Education Policy
- ✚ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ✚ Behaviour Policy
- ✚ Personal Development Policy
- ✚ RSE Policy
- ✚ Health Education Policy
- ✚ E-Safety and Acceptable Internet Use Policy

Dissemination of the Policy:

Pastoral Policies are available on the school's website and on request. Year 8 parents receive key Pastoral Policies in August with information pack. An overview of Pastoral Policies is sent to all parents at the start of each academic year.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

Mr Fitzpatrick, Vice Principal is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

Date of Review: __September 2023____

