

**ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL  
MEADOWBROOK  
DUBLIN 16**



**PASTORAL CARE**



**SCOIL SHINSIREACH NAOMH ATHRACHT  
CLUAIN GHLAISE  
ÁTH CLIATH 16  
UIMHIR ROLLA: 19716B**

*Scoil Shinsireach Naomh Athracht, Cluain Ghlaise, Áth Cliath 16*

*Pastoral Care*

*St. Attracta's Senior National School, Meadowbrook, Dublin 16.*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Attracta's Senior National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school which provides a happy caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential.

St. Attracta's Senior National School promotes excellence in teaching and learning. The school community that we create is welcoming, collegial, safe, respectful and inclusive of all its members. All aspects of the child, academic, spiritual, moral and cultural are cherished.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In keeping with our mission statement, St. Attracta's Senior National School is committed to providing a happy, caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential. We value the individuality of all our children and respect their right to access all areas of learning. We work to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary for their development into active and responsible adults.

This policy was prepared in the light of our observations of pupils who were coming to terms with changes in their lives and whose education in school was suffering as a result.

## **RATIONALE**

An effective Pastoral Care system is required as a result of the rapid changes which are taking place in society. Children require all the skills necessary to deal with the rising pressures of media, family, education and peer pressure that they encounter in their daily lives.

We in St. Attracta's Senior School believe that effective Pastoral Care should contribute to the creation of a supportive atmosphere for the whole school community.

## **VISION**

We in St. Attracta's Senior School envisage that each child will be encouraged to develop personal, social and academic skills to prepare them for the 'outside world'.

Pastoral Care is composed of different policies, programmes and procedures which encourage each individual child to develop their full potential by catering for their spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual, physical and social needs, in a safe and secure environment.

The school motto *Ar aghaidh le chéile* sums up the spirit of co-operation that exists among pupils, teachers, parents, management and the local community, who all play an active part in the life of the school. All members of the school community work together to support the children particularly when they need support to deal with particular events in their lives.

## **AIMS**

The staff of St. Attracta's Senior School are aware of the need to help our children manage their present lives, as well as to help them prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, so we endeavour to provide for the development of the pupil as a person as well as a learner. Our aims are

- ✚ to develop our pupils' 'life skills' - critical thinking, decision making, effective communication, learning from mistakes, which are so necessary for their health and safety in today's society
- ✚ to provide a caring commitment to guide and advise our pupils on both personal and educational matters as we seek to build up a community of children who care about each other and show respect for themselves and others
- ✚ to build a special relationship with, and a knowledge of, the children in our care and thus endeavour to raise pupils' social awareness, promote positive attitudes and build their self-esteem
- ✚ to promote a partnership and close working relationship with parents/guardians whose views and wishes as prime carers will be heard and respected to enable us to support their children's learning
- ✚ to offer a framework of values and positive behaviour enabling our children to be self reliant, motivated, self-disciplined and to make choices in a moral context

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Contributions to the pastoral work of the class teacher will come from their partnership with colleagues, local parishioners, members of the community and outside agencies.

Many people are interacting daily within the school and consequently a wide range of relationships exist. As a school we endeavour to promote positive, open relationships in both formal and informal situations.

The school recognises that regular, effective communication is crucial in Pastoral Care and positive relationships will be promoted between:-

- Board of Management - School
- Principal - Staff
- Staff - Staff
- Staff - Pupils
- Pupils - Pupils
- School - Parents
- School - External Agencies/Community

## THE EXPERIENCE OF PASTORAL CARE FOR ALL

### For our Children

*The adult school personnel will:*

- encourage respect for self and others
- promote courteous behaviour to everyone
- develop positive relationships among peers and adults
- be consistent and fair so that children will feel secure and know the parameters within which they must behave
- be an instrument for advice and guidance
- be a support in times of difficulty
- accept and empathise with unique experience of each child

### For our Staff

*All staff will be accorded consideration and respect at all times.*

- respect for their individual dignity
- a supportive affirming community of fellow workers
- a supportive network of staff for times of personal crisis
- opportunities to develop personally and professionally
- an understanding that all of us have good days and bad days
- a sharing of strengths and talents
- an opportunity to meet with one another in a social environment

### For our Parents/Guardians

*Our parents/guardians will*

- be involved fully in the pastoral care of the school community
- enjoy positive relationships with all school personnel
- be made aware of the arrangements whereby they may meet with staff
- be confident of a welcoming spirit and mutual support
- be partners with staff
- have an opportunity to meet with staff in a more informal setting e.g. the Thank You Evening organized by staff for parent helpers
- be invited to a "welcome" morning in September (for new parents to the school)
- support and involvement by staff for Parent's Association in the school

## **VALUES**

Every opportunity will be taken to praise our pupils for their contributions to the life of the school. Through positive daily experiences, in addition to curricular activities, we aim to communicate the following positive values and beliefs:

- Self-respect
- Honesty
- Tolerance and Understanding
- A celebration of the fact that everybody is unique
- Respect for others and their property
- Independence
- Co-operation
- Positive behaviour
- Reconciliation

## **SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

School plays an important role in many aspects of the development of the young person and to that end, supportive programmes have been put in place over and above the academic curriculum.

Such programmes include Social, Personal and Health Education ( SPHE), Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE), The Stay Safe Programme, Web-Wise and E-Safety, Circle Time activities and added to that are the various extra-curricular programmes which the students engage in, such as sport, drama, cookery and many other personal and social development activities.

Teachers, both in mainstream classes and in learning-support settings enhance the social skills of children, especially those children with Special Education Needs, by having specific social skills programmes available in our school, such as Alex Kelly's Talkabout, The Reasoner Manual, the SALT programme and many others.

Children from ethnic and religious minorities have ample opportunities to share special festivals and celebrations with the children in their classes.

## **PASTORAL CARE INITIATIVES**

In St. Attracta's Senior School, pastoral care is a priority and we support the pupils in a great many ways including

- Access to extra-curricular activities for M15 pupils
- Access to breakfast, lunches for needy pupils
- Art Initiative for Children touched by Cancer
- Attendance at TUSLA conferences regarding support for families and children
- Attendance Strategies for poor attenders
- Book Rental Scheme
- Buddy Reading system for new pupils
- Buddy system for children with social needs in particular
- Children with specific 'jobs' in the school.

- Circle Time
- Free after school sports lessons
- Free use of books to those in need
- Friendship Week
- Happy Day
- Homework club
- IEPs and IPLPs
- Jobs around the school for children
- Kindness Counts
- Liaison with Church and Community
- M15 pupil support programme
- Pastoral Care 'Go To' Room
- Personal hygiene support for pupils
- Play Therapy
- Quiet Space
- Rainbows
- Resource teaching
- Social skills for certain pupils,
- St. Vincent de Paul support
- Stay Safe programme
- Subsidisation of school trips/outings
- Free Uniforms
- Worry Box in classrooms

### **SELF-ESTEEM**

St. Attracta's Senior Primary School recognises that the most important aspect of education is the wholeness of the child. As a school we encourage children to think positively about themselves and accept their own individuality. We believe that when a child's self-esteem is boosted then they feel valued in all aspects of school life.

The school aims to promote positive self-esteem and confidence as these promote learning. Pupils are involved in a range of activities to experience success allowing the teachers an opportunity to praise each child. Children are themselves allowed an opportunity to evaluate and assess their own performance by using self-assessment folders.

### **PERSONAL SAFETY**

Our Child Protection and Welfare Policy aims to keep children safe from harm so they can grow up to reach their full potential. It is central to our pastoral care programme for all children but in particular for those who are vulnerable or who are at risk in any way.

Childhood is a time of joy and discovery when children should be nurtured and loved so they can grow into caring adults. Part of the process of discovery and growth must also help children to learn how to cope with potential dangers. The safe use of technology is an increasing challenge e.g. internet and mobile phones. St Attracta's aims to equip children with the knowledge and skills to make them less vulnerable and more self-confident.

Our Acceptable Internet Usage Policy contributes to creating awareness in this area but the school cannot control the children's usage of the internet outside of school hours and is therefore dependent on parents to monitor safe usage of the cyber world which is very much a part and parcel of children's lives.

### **HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

Home and school work in co-operation with one another and it is our view that parents are the primary educators of the child. However, we also believe that

- School should be seen as an extension of the family.
- School and home should be committed to a common ideal, namely the holistic development of each individual
- Adults at home and in school will be a positive role model for our children by working to the same end and displaying respect for each other at all times
- Links with other schools will be fostered to ensure the easy transition from Junior School to Senior School and from Senior School to Secondary School.

### **THE SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY**

Our aim is to foster in our children an awareness of the wider community. To achieve that aim

- we will involve children in the support of charities and care for others which is displayed in a charity chain display in our school corridor,
- we will encourage participation in community activities, for example:
  - ✚ Tidy Schools in the Community Award
  - ✚ Green Schools
  - ✚ Credit Union Table Quiz
  - ✚ Sporting activities involving parents and past pupils (Sport for all Day, End of Year Soccer Match, etc.)
  - ✚ Links with Ballinteer St. John's GAA club
  - ✚ Dundrum Credit Union
  - ✚ Links with our local Community School
- we will encourage our children to become involved in the life of the community by
  - ✚ reading at Mass
  - ✚ becoming involved in the Parish Choir
  - ✚ becoming Altar Servers
  - ✚ inviting parishioners to participate in school events such as Book Week
  - ✚ celebrating Grandparents' Day
  - ✚ joining in with local Tidy Towns initiatives
  - ✚ spreading the Kindness Counts message in the local community

- the school will enhance the pastoral care in the community
  - ✚ by the fact that St. Attracta's Senior School is a Rainbows Site involving many of the school staff
  - ✚ by liaising with the local St. Vincent de Paul to support children and families in our school

### **PASTORAL CARE FOR STAFF**

The school, being a caring environment is cognisant of the pastoral care of staff. We take turns being on the Social Committee which consists of two teachers who are instrumental in organising the following:

- ✚ Social outings on average twice a term
- ✚ Celebrating Birthdays of staff members
- ✚ Bigger celebrations when there is a significant birthday
- ✚ Acknowledgement and celebration of new babies, engagements, weddings, retirements etc.
- ✚ Flowers sent to staff member when hospitalised or on a long period of sick leave
- ✚ Attendance at funerals of staff member's relatives
- ✚ Team-building staff days outside of the school environment

### **FUTURE PLANS**

During the formulation of this plan, the following ideas were put forward by teachers for development:

- ✚ Providing some form of support to children who have very ill parents - this has already been organised with an implementation date of January 2015
- ✚ Possible provision of a Breakfast Club
- ✚ Consider what else can be done to facilitate transition from junior to senior school and from senior school to secondary school
- ✚ Initiatives for pastoral care of staff!
- ✚ Friendship bench at yard time
- ✚ Active and on-going liaison with concerned parties
- ✚ Buddy System in yard for children with special needs (senior children 'minding' or teaching games to children from junior classes who find yard time difficult)

### **EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

All members of the teaching staff have contributed to the formulation of this policy, along with parents, pupils and the Board of Management.

This policy on Pastoral Care is available to school personnel and will be published on the school website. The views and opinions of the partners in education are welcome at all times.