

# Carrick Primary School



## Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Policy

November 2023

## **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Policy**

‘Education is not just about learning cognitive skills. It is also about helping children to learn about themselves, to be able to live peaceably with themselves and with others and to help them to develop into competent, mature, self-motivated adults’.

Dennis Lawrence, ‘Enhancing Self-Esteem in the Classroom’.  
[2006]

## **Carrick Primary School**

### Vision Statement

Forward Together: Ar aghaidh le chéile

### Mission Statement

In Carrick Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment, in which to realise and celebrate the academic and non-academic potential of all our pupils. We expect our pupils to work hard and encourage parents to assist us in laying the important foundations for future learning.

### School Aims

#### **In our school we aim to:**

- Create a safe, enjoyable learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- Implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- Help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- Value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- Encourage pupils to respect themselves and others, and to support and care for one another;
- Equip our children with the necessary life skills, to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- Develop and strengthen each pupil's understanding and love of Catholic values, by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- Endorse the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention;
- Involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school, and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

## **The Rationale for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) is an area of learning which focuses attention on children's emotional development, health and safety, relationships with others and development of moral thinking, values and actions.

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding encourages each child to become personally, emotionally, socially and physically effective to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding concentrates on the development of children's:

- Knowledge;
- Attitudes;
- Skills;
- Relationships;
- Behaviour that can be utilised within and outside of the classroom;
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities;
- Emotional Awareness;
- Values;
- Life Skills.

### **Aims of PDMU**

Through PDMU we aim to:

- Create a more open relationship between the staff and children in our school;
- Raise standards of achievement by children who feel secure, motivated and confident and who are independent learners;
- Improve the health and well-being of children in our care;
- Provide a more inclusive environment where all are valued and have a voice;
- Contribute to our local community, responsible citizens who have a sense of personal and social responsibility, have positive and healthy behaviours, including a concern for others and the environment, are open to new ideas and have integrity and moral courage.

### **Objectives**

Through the delivery of the PDMU learning area, our children will be able to develop knowledge and understanding of themselves and others as individuals-their strengths and limitations, abilities, skills, personal qualities, potential, needs, attitudes and values. This includes developing:

- Self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Insight into emotions and attitudes;
- Moral thinking, values and actions;
- An understanding of the benefits and importance of a healthy lifestyle;
- Skills for keeping safe;
- An ability to cope with difficult situations;

- An understanding of learning characteristics;
- An ability to work effectively with others and take responsibility for themselves;
- Insight into society and other cultures, our interdependence and need for mutual understanding and respect;
- An ability to contribute to relationships, family life, the local and global community and the environment;
- An awareness of the immense value of personal and interpersonal skills in future life and employment;
- Knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities they may encounter in an increasingly diverse society;
- Skills, attitudes and values necessary for independent living, informed decision-making and responsible action throughout their lives;
- An understanding of their role in working for a more inclusive, just and democratic society.

### **Implementing Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**

From Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding will be delivered through two interconnected strands and teachers will use these strands to deliver the nine statutory Statements of Minimum Requirement.

Pupils will acquire skills and knowledge of the following nine statutory statements within the two strands:

#### **Strand 1 Personal Understanding and Health**

(Addresses personal and emotional issues as well as health, well-being and safety matters.)

- Self-awareness
- Feelings and emotions
- Learning to learn
- Health and safety

#### **Strand 2 Mutual Understanding in the Local**

(Examines issues relating to personal and social relationships, interdependence and the need for mutual understanding and respect in the community and in the wider world.)

- Relationships
- Rules, rights and responsibilities
- Managing conflict
- Similarities and differences
- Learning to live as members of the community.

These areas will be built up in a cumulative manner as they will be revisited in each Key Stage. The children's skills will develop and progress through each year band.

### **Relationships and Sexuality Education**

An integral part of the PDMU curriculum is the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). As a Catholic school, Carrick Primary School advocates the promotion of a 'Personal Development' approach to RSE, whereby children in our care are equipped with the life skills to help make informed decisions based on their own intrinsic self-respect and self-esteem. The Rights Respecting work, in which Carrick Primary School is engaged, complements both the PDMU

Curriculum and the RSE Curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their individual needs, wants and responsibilities, in relation to the needs, wants and responsibilities of others. RSE is a lifelong process which involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values.

### **Links Across the Curriculum**

Provision for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding will involve links across the curriculum to other Areas of Learning.

**The Arts:** Help children to find a range of ways of communicating and expressing feelings and emotions through art and design, music and drama.

**Language and Literacy:** Help children to develop a vocabulary to discuss emotions and feelings through talking and listening, reading, writing, drama and role play.

**Mathematics and Numeracy:** Use statistical data to inform children about PDMU issues.

**Physical Education:** Help children to develop self-esteem, confidence and an understanding of the relationship between physical activity and good health.

Allow children to work with others and develop an understanding of fairness and how to treat others with respect.

**The World Around Us:** Help children to develop insights into their own talents, thoughts and feelings by comparing and contrasting these with experiences and feelings of people in other places and times. This should involve the use of local and global examples.

### **Healthy Me**

As part of our PDMU curriculum, the school's uses "Healthy Me" materials. "Healthy Me" is a vibrant and engaging mental health promotion programme for children, which explores emotional/mental health, healthy lifestyle choices and pathways to effective support through imaginative and interactive play and song.

The programme positively promotes mental health and social and emotional well-being in children and has a strong focus on prevention and self-help.

The Healthy Me Project aims to:

- Promote social and emotional well-being through problem-solving, coping skills, conflict management and managing feelings;
- Improve the emotional and social well-being and resilience of children;
- Encourage help-seeking behaviour in children and help them identify sources of support;
- Improve children's emotional literacy;
- Challenge stigma and discrimination in relation to mental health and social and emotional difficulties;
- Promote the equality of mental health with physical health;
- Encourage joined up, multi-agency working in relation to the support of children with mental health needs;
- Improve knowledge of sources of advice and support for children regarding mental health;
- Enable early identification of children experiencing mental distress;
- Support the transition from primary to secondary school;

- Encourage adults to think about their own mental health needs.

All staff members in Carrick Primary School actively support every child in making positive decisions and we will use all areas of the curriculum to enhance the pupils' self-esteem and thinking skills and personal capabilities.

### **Learning Approaches and Methodologies**

As Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is very much about the development of values and attitudes, it is extremely important that children have an opportunity to develop these naturally, as a consequence of their investigations and guided critical reflection on issues. To ensure children at Carrick Primary School benefit as much as possible from Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, we use Active Learning approaches to foster self-confidence, self-discipline and self-control.

The main benefits of Active Learning are:

- It places children at the heart of the learning process;
- The teacher acts as a facilitator who guides and directs learning;
- Children learn more when they can make sense of what they are learning;
- It can be carried out by groups or individuals;
- It promotes action and generates high levels of interaction and stimulating discussion;
- It encourages collaborative ways of working;
- It engages all children at different levels.

The teacher will use a wide variety of active learning methodologies to support PDMU lessons. These will include:

- Brainstorming;
- Role play;
- Visitors in class;
- Drama;
- Co-operative games;
- Using photographs/pictures as a stimulus;
- Using media e.g. television advertisements;
- Open-ended questions and statements;
- Agree or disagree continuums;
- Circle Time;
- Storytelling;
- Collage work;
- Freeze Frames;
- Hot Seating;
- Questionnaires and Surveys.

We also include enquiry-based learning approaches to allow children to develop a greater understanding of the complexity of certain issues, to express their own and others' opinions, and to make choices about their own learning. This approach is a valuable means of incorporating current local and global issues into classroom enquiry activities.

A values-based approach is used to encourage children to take responsibility for their own values and actions. By using human rights instruments such as "The Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child”, pupils will be encouraged to explore the impact of human rights’ principles on their own lives and on the classroom/school community (e.g. implementing a classroom charter and school charters and participating in our School Council). Carrick Primary School has a very active School Council which is well established and embedded into the ethos of our school. Members are elected by their peers in Year 4-Year 7. They meet regularly and consult with all classes Year 1-Year 7, during Circle Time sessions. They make a significant contribution to making ‘the voice of the child’ heard in our school. The school also has an Eco Council and was awarded Green Flag Status in 2013. The staff and pupils work hard to develop the ECO Project. The Eco Council places particular emphasis on respect and care for our environment.

In September 2014, Carrick Primary School enrolled in the Rights Respecting Schools Project which is coordinated by UNICEF. It focuses on the rights of children and the development of children’s understanding about their rights. In March 2015 we were awarded the Recognition of Commitment Certificate and in June 2016 Carrick Primary School was awarded the Silver Award as a Rights Respecting School. Since then the School Council has been working with pupils, staff, Governors, parents and the community to further develop the Rights Respecting School Project.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding issues may occasionally result in conflict. Pupils will be encouraged to explore ways of managing conflict, their own emotions and showing sensitivity to the emotions of others.

### **Teaching, Learning about and Assessing Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding planning takes into account our school ethos as a warm, caring and supportive community, in which all pupils, staff and parents know they are valued.

The creation of trust between children in our school and members of our staff is fundamental to the success of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding. Children will work harder and work better when they are with people who care about them and that they trust. Our school aims to foster an environment in which children feel:

- Fairly treated;
- Safe both physically and emotionally;
- Close to others;
- Part of the school.

Each member of our staff has a role to play in developing relationships with children at our school. Our staff aims to convey care and support to children by:

- Listening to them;
- Validating their feelings;
- Demonstrating kindness;
- Showing them compassion and respect.

In Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, a positive learning climate and environment is absolutely essential. In our school we employ a number of useful strategies for creating a safe, secure environment. These encourage participation and model democratic values and include:

- Circle Time;



- Active Listening Activities;
- Cooperative Games;
- Classroom Charters;
- School Council;
- Eco Council.

### **Assessment**

Assessment in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding is unlikely to show linear progression. Personal rates of development are not and cannot be standardised. Assessment and reporting should take account of and reflect each child's current strengths and developmental needs. Assessment will be concerned with:

- Knowledge and understanding;
- The child's ability to demonstrate the skills that are being learned and practised.

Self-assessment is also extremely important and this skill will be developed through encouraging children to talk about and reflect upon activities and situations in which they are involved or have been involved.

Some areas of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding should never be formally assessed. The 'worth' of any child should never be quantified, nor should there be final or simple judgements made about values and decisions that children appear to favour.

Opinions can be expressed, information gathered, debate can ensue, but final decisions on personal matters must remain the responsibility of the individual concerned.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Carrick Primary School recognises and accepts the importance of monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the PDMU curriculum. To this end, staff plan and evaluate this area of the curriculum on a half-termly basis.

### **Links with Other Policies**

This policy is set within the broader school context of the School's Curriculum and Care and Welfare Policies and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy;  
 Care and Welfare Policy;  
 Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy;  
 Positive Behaviour Policy;  
 Anti-Bullying Policy;  
 Health Education Policy;  
 Eco Schools Policy;  
 Road Safety Policy;  
 Drugs and Alcohol Policy;  
 E Safety Policy;  
 Religion Policy;  
 School Council Policy.

## Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Policy which has been updated following consultation with pupils, staff, parents and Governors. It will be reviewed and updated every three years, or sooner if required, in consultation with the pupils, parents, Governors and staff.

Signed: Dr A Cassidy (Principal)

Signed: Mr G Murdock (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: November 2023

Review Date: November 2026