ANTRIM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Health & Wellbeing Policy

Next Review Date: Sept 2030

Health & Wellbeing Policy

Rationale

In Antrim Primary School we recognise and value the importance of health and well-being in child development and the need to encourage healthy lifestyle habits from an early age, to help children reach their full potential.

It is important we consider all elements of our work to ensure that awareness of healthy living and well-being is promoted to all members of the school and wider community. Our school not only promotes but teaches health and well-being through a broad and balanced curriculum, school assemblies, pupil participation, Shared Education and dedicated events.

We believe that the school, in partnership with parents and carers, can make a major contribution to improving children's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of what a healthy lifestyle is and helping them to make healthy choices. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's suite of safeguarding and pastoral care policies.

Aims and Objectives

In Antrim Primary we aim to:

- Promote the physical, social, mental and emotional health and well-being of all pupils within the school environment.
- Work with outside agencies in meeting the health and well-being needs of the whole school.
- Provide Health Education throughout the curriculum.
- Encourage parents to become actively involved in Health Education within the school.
- Ensure that children get the recommended time for P.E and take part in active learning opportunities where possible.
- Encourage healthy eating habits among the children in our school.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

In Antrim Primary School the children are taught about healthy living in order to equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to live positive, successful and healthy lives.

The children are taught about health and well-being through PDMU lessons and assemblies. Teachers use displays in school to celebrate the children's work in this area as well as portray important messages on health and well-being. PDMU displays are evident in classrooms.

Throughout the various year groups, children receive visits from various community members in order to promote good health such as the Fire Service NI, PSNI, Nurse, Sustrans etc. to educate on lifestyle choices or dangers presented e.g. stranger danger, road safety, firework safety etc.

There are many dimensions to Health Education. These include:



Physical Health:

- Physical Wellbeing
- P.E lessons
- Sustrans activities (Walking bus, cycling proficiency etc)
- Extra-curricular activities
- Huff and Puff activities at break and lunch
- Outdoor Play

Nutrition:

- PDMU (Healthy Eating)
- WAU/ Thematic
- Healthy eating initiatives within the school (Healthy Breaks etc.)

Personal Development:

- PDMU (Social and emotional development)
- Circle Time
- Pupil Voice E.g. School Council
- Positive Behaviour
- Health and safety
- Road safety, stranger danger etc.

Mental Health:

- PDMU (Mental health)
- Ensuring that pupils and families can access information about where additional help is available, if they need it
- Encouraging a problem-solving approach across the curriculum
- Encouraging discussion about feelings and behaviour
- Developing links with the educational psychologist, with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and with any counselling services that are available
- Involving the support available from statutory services, and the voluntary and community sector
- Helping to build a culture where asking for help is a strength and not a weakness.

Wellbeing and Mental Health in the Northern Ireland Curriculum

'Wellbeing describes a state of feeling healthy, happy, and that life is going well. Good mental health is a state of wellbeing in which we realise our own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life and work productively, and are able to contribute to our community. Wellbeing and mental health are central to the aim and objectives of the curriculum. Distinct Areas of Learning address wellbeing and mental health explicitly and specify the teaching of social and emotional skills, as well as physical health and safety.' (Education Authority, 2020)

Research shows that schools matter greatly in terms of children's emotional health, well-being and resilience, as well as their academic achievement. The effects can be long-lasting and can be an important part of a child's supportive and protective processes. Early intervention in childhood can help reduce physical and mental health problems and prevent social dysfunction being passed from one generation to the next.

In Antrim Primary School we believe that we have a valuable role to play in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with respect to emotional health and well-being and that school-based activities have the potential to make significant and lasting positive impacts on our pupil's well-being.

The emotional health and wellbeing of everyone in the care of Antrim Primary School is fundamental to our ethos, policies and daily running. Emotional health and wellbeing promotes school success and improvement in a multitude of ways, namely:

Teaching and Learning

- Pupils who are more engaged in the learning process.
- Pupils who can concentrate and learn better.
- Improved standards in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy.
- Improved attainment.
- More effective teaching.
- Parents and carers more involved in school life and learning.

Behaviour and Attendance

- Pupils with high self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils who have a say in what happens at school.
- Fewer disaffected pupils, disengaged from learning.
- Improved behaviour and attendance.

• Less bullying-type behaviour.

• Lower rates of truancy.

Staff Confidence and Development

• Improved morale.

• Lower absenteeism.

• Better recruitment level.

• Positive and effective relationships with pupils.

We believe emotional health and wellbeing creates happier, more motivated staff and pupils who aim to get more out of life.

Physical Wellbeing

Physical wellbeing is strongly linked to mental wellbeing, and it's important that children and young people learn about the role of exercise, healthy eating and healthy habits as part of good health.

'Teachers should give their pupils opportunities to understand the importance of recognising and managing factors that may influence physical and mental health. They should encourage them to explore the range of influences that can have both a positive and negative impact on all aspects of their health and safety.' (Education Authority 2020)

Physical Education is an important area of learning in the curriculum. It focuses on children's physical development, health and wellbeing. The Department of Education recommends that schools should provide pupils with at least two hours of curricular Physical Education each week. Exercise not only brings physical benefits but psychological ones too. Research has shown that it can help combat depression and raise self-esteem.

All children in Antrim Primary are encouraged to actively participate in Physical Education. We also offer a variety of extra-curricular activities including hockey, football, rugby, cross-country and multi-sports sessions. Some classes in school participate in the Daily Mile initiative, whereby children from each class walk, jog or run with their classmates in the safety of the playground. This helps children improve their physical, emotional and social health and well-being by doing at least 15 minutes of physical activity each day.

Spiritual Wellbeing

Spiritual wellbeing is promoted though our Christian ethos, RE lessons and maintaining close links with our local churches and clergy. Children enjoy two assemblies every week. These assemblies may be taken by a member of staff or local minister and may promote a spiritual and moral theme.

Online Safety

We regularly use the Internet in school. In order to minimise the risk of children coming across unsuitable material, we provide constant supervision and we use only the managed ICT service provided by C2k. Pupils are responsible for using the school digital technology systems in accordance with the Pupil Acceptable Use Agreement. We also seek parental permission before using photographs of children or their work on the school's website, or in newsletters and other publications. Pupils receive age-appropriate online safety messages that are relevant and engaging. The school actively promotes online safety messages for pupils on how to stay safe; how to protect themselves online; and how to take responsibility for their own and others' safety. We also participate in events such as Safer Internet Day and associated competitions organised by agencies such as EA/C2k.

Positive Behaviour/ Addressing Bullying-Type Behaviour

Good behaviour is an essential pre-requisite for effective teaching and learning. It is vitally important and ensures that every child attending Antrim Primary School has the potential to achieve to the maximum of his/her ability. The Staff at Antrim Primary School strive at all times to create an environment promoting mutual respect where pupils are valued and pastoral care is integral.

Bullying-type behaviour is not tolerated in our school and any incidents of bullying-type bahaviour will be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with our Addressing Bullying Policy. Anti-bullying is addressed frequently throughout the year in assemblies and also in PDMU sessions in class. Anti-Bullying week is promoted in school every year and relevant information is also shared with parents.

Food and Drink

Antrim Primary school aims to encourage healthy eating during the school day and guides pupils and parents in choosing a variety of foods to ensure a balanced intake in line with the National nutrition guide and nutrition standards.

The importance of Health Education in the curriculum is reinforced by the canteen staff, who serve nutritious meals. All kitchen / school staff value positive relationships with the children and there is a happy atmosphere amongst pupils and staff during lunchtime.

Research indicates that school children do not drink enough water during the school day and that this affects their concentration and behaviour. The school recognises that children concentrate better, are healthier and more comfortable if they are not dehydrated, and the best way of ensuring adequate fluid intake is to provide access to water as needed. All children are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school each day.

All individual pupil allergies or special diets and their needs are entered into the health register and are updated regularly. Canteen staff are alerted of these individual needs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The whole school Health and Wellbeing Policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. The Board of governors will also monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy as part of a timetabled, on-going review process. Any amendments will be updated throughout the school year.