

School Policy Guidance for Newcomer Parents

This booklet will give you some idea of the content of policies in schools. You can ask for a copy of the booklet in your own language. The booklet is available in the following languages:

Arabic, Filipino, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malayalam, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition

Bullying is repeated behaviour that causes physical or emotional hurt to an individual or their family.

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

- Physical assault
- Damaging belongings
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Excluding or isolating someone
- Cyberbullying – via mobile phone or online

Purpose

The purpose of an Anti-Bullying policy is to create an ethos within the school which makes bullying unacceptable. An atmosphere of mutual respect should be developed by the school, and, where bullying occurs, it should be addressed immediately and effectively.

Attendance Policy

Definition

Attendance regulations legally require that a pupil attends school for a minimum of 190 days per year.

Purpose

The purpose of an Attendance policy is to promote good attendance and punctuality patterns which will continue into the world of work. Poor attendance can seriously affect a pupil's performance.

Schools aim to improve the overall attendance of the pupils by exploring and identifying the reasons for absence and thereby devising and implementing whole-school strategies to encourage better attendance.

Child Protection Policy

Definition

Child protection is about protecting children and young people from abuse such as ill-treatment or neglect, which leads to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm.

Purpose

A Child Protection policy aims to provide guidance to schools on action required where abuse or neglect of a pupil is suspected. The welfare of the pupil is paramount at all times.

Behaviour Management Policy

Definition

Behaviour Management is about developing a sense of self-discipline in pupils and an acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. It is essential for effective teaching and learning. It is important to encourage and praise positive behaviour and attitudes. Behaviour management is the responsibility of all members of the school community, staff, pupils and parents.

Purpose

The purpose of a Behaviour Management policy is to foster self-discipline, self-awareness, independence and a sense of responsibility. It encourages positive relationships among all members of the school community so that effective learning can take place.

Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy

Definition

Education about drugs and substance abuse is about raising pupil awareness of the effects of drugs and other substances on emotional, physical and social well-being.

Purpose

The purpose of a Drugs and Substance Abuse policy is to provide pupils with accurate information about drugs and other harmful substances and the health risks associated with the misuse of these. It also aims to develop pupils' ability to reject the drugs culture in society and inform them about where to access help and support.

Health Education Policy

Definition

Health Education aims to prepare pupils for life outside school by improving their understanding and appreciation of a healthy lifestyle. Health Education covers a wide range of topics appropriate to age and may include drugs awareness (e.g. alcohol and tobacco), eating disorders and sexual behaviour.

Purpose

The purpose of a Health Education policy is to enhance pupils' self-esteem by encouraging them to make informed choices and take responsibility for their own health and the health of others.

ICT Safety Policy

Definition

ICT can include the use of computers, laptops, iPads, cameras, DVD players and mobile phones.

Frequently used facilities in school include the World Wide Web, emails, multimedia, messaging and voice calls/video calls.

Purpose

The purpose of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) safety policy is to ensure that ICT is used in a safe, responsible, ethical, legal and intelligent manner to avoid the use of material which may be unsuitable or harmful.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Definition

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) aims to develop attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships in life. It should take place within the moral and social environment of the school and community.

Purpose

The purpose of a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy is to enhance the overall personal, social and moral development of all children and young people. It is about developing self-esteem, a sense of moral responsibility and the skills to make informed choices about relationships. The delivery of RSE should take place within an environment of mutual trust, respect and confidentiality.

Safe Handling of Medication Policy

Definition

The safe-handling of medication is about ensuring that medication for pupils is stored and administered safely in accordance with parental instructions.

Purpose

The purpose of a Safe Handling of Medication policy is to ensure that all staff and parents are aware of procedures regarding the handling of medication for pupils in the school.

Special Education: Stages of the Code of Practice

Definition and purpose

The Code of Practice is a five-stage approach used in identifying and supporting a pupil who has special needs. Stages 1 and 2 are carried out by the pupil's school and parents should be kept informed of what is happening. At Stage 3 the school may request outside help, for example, from an educational psychologist. At Stage 4 a statutory assessment of the pupil's needs could be necessary. At Stage 4 the Special Education Section of the Education Authority becomes involved.

If you are aware that your child has a special educational need you should let the school know so that help and support can be provided.

Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy

Definition

Reasonable force and safe handling is about providing a safe and secure environment for the entire school community (pupils and staff) and promoting and sustaining appropriate behaviour.

"Reasonable force" is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming himself, herself or another or from seriously damaging property. Reasonable force should be used in a manner to preserve the dignity of all concerned, to resolve the situation and calm the pupil.

Purpose

The purpose of a Reasonable Force and Safe Handling policy is to create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe and are protected from harm. It aims to ensure that pupils are protected against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful. It should inform staff about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied.

Other documents for parents are available from the Department of Education website

Child Protection in Education leaflet

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/child-protection-education>

Good Behaviour at School leaflet

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/good-behaviour-school-leaflet-parents>