



PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At The Grove, the happiness of each and every child is paramount. We believe that unless a child is happy and feels secure, he/she will not be ready to benefit from all we provide- no matter how exciting and stimulating the environment is! Lots of educational research links emotional well-being to a child's ability to concentrate and to learn effectively.

The experienced staff are sensitive to the emotions, fears and anxieties of such young children. This is our main focus for Term 1. We have a well-established settling in period which allows all staff to get to know each individual child, having already met the child on several occasions before, and having made ourselves aware of their families and interests (the importance of 'Getting to Know You' sheets.) The children are given time and individual attention to adjust to a new setting, routines and lots of new friends, before becoming relaxed and confident to stay for dinner. A longer day is introduced after Hallowe'en.

It is during this important period that we most need the support, advice and trust of the parent. We regard parents as our 'partners' in the education of every child.

The emphasis that we place on this area of the curriculum, especially by recently introducing 'Shine Time' daily (when the children's achievements are recognised and celebrated by the class) have been recognised as exemplary by ETI, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir and the Children's Commissioner for NI, who all visited us in school.

Throughout the year the children are encouraged to become independent in all areas. e.g. putting on coats and boots, selecting and making snack, tidying up, toileting, choice of play activities, registration, clearing their plates, pouring drinks, selecting paint colours and materials, care of their belongings, etc. In fact, this is the one area most visitors remark on - the autonomy of the children in The Grove.

We discuss 'emotions' and the feelings of others during classroom discussions, using such materials as 'Circle Time', puppets, soft toy props and relevant stories. We have extensive policies on all aspects of Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Behaviour Management and Health and Safety, which are available to all persons on request and available in the reception area at all times. We have input from a number of outside agencies e.g. PSNI, Road Safety, ABC Council Environmental Officer, local Health Visiting Team, community Dentist, Doctor or Nurse for a 'Well Teddy Clinic' etc.

We always ensure healthy eating routines, having won awards for our 'Boost Better Breaks' initiatives and participate in other health promoting initiatives e.g. Tooth Brushing Programme, Love Your Heart as and when they arise.

We have, in the past number of years established a link with Sunnymead Residential Home. A small group of children visit weekly during the Summer Term and the benefits of this inter-generational programme are far reaching for both the residents and our children. It is heart-warming to see the relationships that quickly develop. We had plans to extend this by accepting an invitation to another setting. However these plans have been put on hold due to Covid restrictions.