SPRINGHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Supporting our Pupils to Succeed

Helping Children SHINE since 1959

Pastoral Care Policy

Mainstream and Specialist Provision

"Treat other people the way you want to be treated."

The Golden Rule | Matthew 7:12

Ethos:

In Springhill we work together to create a welcoming, nurturing and supportive environment where individuals in school and the wider community are all included, valued and respected equally. As global citizens we appreciate and strive to help sustain our world and its resources. We endeavour to build confidence, develop curiosity and foster creativity through organic and digital learning environments that will grow happy, resilient and independent life-long learners.

Vision:

Our vision is rooted in a desire to see our pupils flourish through a globally connected community where well-being and respect is cultivated and pupils are encouraged, enabled and expected to reach their full potential.

Our commitment

Pastoral care is the lived expression of our vision, ethos and values. It helps every pupil to feel safe, respected, included, heard and supported to succeed.

Policy owner	Springhill PS
Approved by	Board of Governors
Date approved	September 2026
Review date	September 2029, or sooner if guidance or circumstances change
Applies to	All pupils, staff, governors, volunteers and relevant visitors across mainstream and specialist provision
Status	Whole-school policy; to be read with the policies listed in section 4

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out Springhill Primary School's whole-school approach to pastoral care. It applies consistently across mainstream and specialist provision, while recognising pupils' differing ages, developmental stages, communication profiles, additional needs and lived experiences.

Pastoral care is integral to learning, safeguarding, inclusion, attendance, positive behaviour, emotional health and wellbeing, personal development and achievement. It is delivered through relationships, curriculum, daily routines, early identification, targeted support and effective partnership with families and other agencies.

Safeguarding distinction
Pastoral support does not replace child protection procedures. Any concern that a pupil may be at risk of harm must be reported immediately in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The welfare of the child is paramount.

2. Vision, ethos and values

Our mission is Supporting Our Pupils to Succeed. We encourage, enable and expect every pupil to flourish within a welcoming, nurturing, globally connected and inclusive community.

Our Value Tree is rooted in respect and the Golden Rule: "Treat other people the way you want to be treated." The values of kindness, honesty, empathy, resilience, creativity, inclusivity, determination, independence and generosity are taught, modelled, recognised and reviewed across school life.

- Every pupil is known, welcomed, valued and treated with dignity.
- Positive, dependable relationships create readiness to learn.
- Pupil voice informs support, provision and school improvement.
- Equity may require reasonable, individualised adjustments rather than identical provision.
- Behaviour is considered in context and may communicate an unmet need.
- Families are respected as essential partners, without reducing the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

3. Policy and inspection context

The policy has been reviewed with regard to current Department of Education requirements and the Education and Training Inspectorate's improvement-focused approach. In particular, it reflects:

- DE Circular 2026/17 and Child Protection and Safeguarding in Education: Guidance for Schools and Education Settings (27 August 2026), including child-centred practice, early identification, clear accountability, timely action, effective records and multi-agency working.
- The ETI Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework, including the interconnected evaluation of outcomes for learners, quality of provision, leadership and management, care and welfare, governance and safeguarding.
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Relevant duties under the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, special educational needs and disability legislation, equality duties and health and safety requirements.
- The Northern Ireland Curriculum, including Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, online safety, preventative education and relevant curriculum reform as implemented.

This policy is not a substitute for the detailed statutory and operational requirements contained in the school's safeguarding, anti-bullying, attendance, special educational needs, positive behaviour, intimate care and related policies.

4. Links with other school policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Special Educational Needs and Inclusion
- Intimate Care
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use
- Use of Reasonable Force / Restrictive Practices
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Visitors and Volunteers
- Educational Visits
- Health and Safety
- Administration of Medication and Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
- Complaints
- Data Protection and Records Management
- Misuse of Drugs
- PDMU and preventative education

5. Aims

Springhill Primary School aims to:

- provide a safe, nurturing, inclusive and stimulating environment in which pupils can learn and flourish;
- promote emotional health, wellbeing, resilience, belonging, independence and positive relationships;
- ensure pupils are heard, taken seriously and supported to participate in decisions affecting them;
- identify concerns, vulnerabilities and barriers to learning, attendance, participation or wellbeing at the earliest appropriate stage;
- provide proportionate, needs-led support and review its impact;
- promote positive attendance, behaviour, personal safety, digital citizenship and healthy choices;
- ensure equitable access to learning, leadership, enrichment and the wider life of the school, as far as reasonably practicable;
- work transparently and respectfully with parents/carers and, when appropriate, external agencies;
- build staff confidence, consistency and accountability through training, supervision, communication and self-evaluation; and
- use evidence to celebrate strengths, identify priorities and improve outcomes for pupils.

6. Whole-school pastoral provision

6.1 Universal provision for all pupils

- warm, respectful relationships and predictable routines;
- explicit teaching and modelling of school values;
- PDMU, preventative education, online safety and age-appropriate personal development;
- assemblies, class discussion, rights and responsibilities, and opportunities for reflection;
- positive behaviour support, recognition of effort, progress and contribution;
- transitions into school, between classes and settings, and onward transfer (appendix 1 Transition Map);

- pupil voice through class and school councils, ECO Council, Digital Leaders, surveys and accessible consultation;
- inclusive access to play, clubs, visits, outdoor learning, community and cross-community experiences;
- regular communication with parents/carers; and
- safe, accessible ways for pupils to seek help, including communication supports where required.

6.2 Additional and targeted support

Where universal provision is not sufficient, support may include nurture approaches, check-ins, mentoring, sensory or environmental adjustments, visual supports, TEACCH-informed strategies, Zones of Regulation approaches, attendance support, individual plans, small-group work, school counsellor, agency advice or coordinated multi-agency intervention. Any approach will be selected according to assessed need, staff competence, available evidence and school policy.

Support will be recorded (appendix 2) proportionately and reviewed using a simple cycle: identify need, plan action, implement support, gather the pupil's and family's views, assess impact, and adjust or conclude. Where concerns indicate possible harm, safeguarding procedures take priority.

6.3 Recognition and celebration

Achievement, effort, progress, improved attendance, positive choices and contributions to school life are recognised in ways that are inclusive and meaningful. These may include verbal feedback, class recognition, assemblies, Stars of the Week, Pupils of the Month, displays and school communications. Staff will avoid systems that unintentionally exclude pupils whose needs affect communication, regulation, attendance or behaviour.

7. Pupil voice, participation and rights

Pupil participation is an entitlement and a source of evidence for improvement. Staff will use age-appropriate and accessible methods so that pupils, including non-speaking pupils and those with additional needs, can express views through speech, symbols, visuals, observation, supported communication or other suitable means.

- Pupils will know who they can approach for help and how concerns will be handled.
- Their views will be sought about learning, safety, relationships, support and participation.
- Feedback will be provided, where appropriate, about what changed, what could not change and why.
- No pupil will be promised confidentiality. Information will be shared only with those who need it to keep the pupil or others safe and to provide support.
- Pupil voice will be triangulated with observation, records, family views and professional judgement. It will not be treated as a one-off survey exercise.

8. Inclusion, equality and additional needs

Springhill promotes belonging and removes barriers across mainstream and specialist provision. Staff will make reasonable and proportionate adjustments, consider communication and sensory needs, and avoid assumptions based on diagnosis, disability, language, background, attendance or behaviour.

Pastoral responses will be individualised, strengths-based and trauma-aware without staff attempting to diagnose trauma or provide interventions beyond their role and competence. The SENCo, safeguarding team and external professionals will be involved as appropriate. The school's School of Sanctuary principles support welcome, inclusion and respect for all.

9. Promoting wellbeing, resilience and independence

Pupils are supported progressively to recognise feelings and risk, use regulation and coping strategies, solve problems, make safe choices, take responsibility, seek help and recover from setbacks. Expectations will be appropriate to age, stage, communication profile and individual need.

Balanced approach
Resilience is not understood as expecting a pupil to cope alone. Adults remain responsible for creating safe conditions, removing barriers, teaching strategies and providing timely support.

10. Attendance, behaviour and barriers to learning

Attendance, punctuality, behaviour and engagement are considered important indicators of wellbeing. Patterns will be explored rather than viewed in isolation. Staff will seek to understand underlying factors, listen to the pupil and family, implement support, and involve the Education Welfare Service or other agencies when appropriate.

Positive behaviour is promoted through clear expectations, consistent routines, relational and restorative approaches, explicit teaching, reasonable adjustments and proportionate consequences. Bullying concerns are addressed under the Anti-Bullying Policy and statutory recording arrangements. Incidents that raise safeguarding concerns are managed under safeguarding procedures.

11. Safeguarding, confidentiality and information sharing

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff and volunteers must know how to recognise, respond to, record and report concerns, and must act promptly in accordance with the current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and DE guidance.

- Concerns are reported immediately to the Designated Teacher or a Deputy Designated Teacher. If unavailable, staff follow the school's published safeguarding route.
- Staff listen calmly, do not investigate, do not ask leading questions, do not promise secrecy and make an accurate, timely record.
- Information is shared lawfully, proportionately and on a need-to-know basis. The pupil's safety and best interests guide decisions.
- Pastoral records are factual, dated, attributable, securely stored, retained and transferred in accordance with current guidance and school procedures.
- Low-level concerns or concerns about adult conduct are managed under the Staff Code of Conduct and safeguarding procedures, not informally within pastoral systems.

12. Roles and responsibilities

12.1 Board of Governors

- approve and periodically review this policy;
- provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders;
- assure itself that statutory safeguarding, care and welfare responsibilities are fulfilled;
- consider evidence of pupil outcomes, inclusion, attendance, behaviour, participation and wellbeing; and
- ensure improvement priorities and resource decisions are informed by evaluation.

12.2 Principal and Senior Leadership Team

- set and model a culture of care, safeguarding, inclusion and high expectations;

- ensure coherent links between pastoral care, safeguarding, SEN, attendance, behaviour, curriculum and school improvement;
- maintain clear systems for referral, recording, information sharing, escalation and review;
- monitor patterns, groups, provision and impact, including across mainstream and specialist settings;
- ensure staff induction, training and support; and
- report appropriately to governors while protecting confidentiality.

12.3 Pastoral Care Team

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Mrs J Lyness & Mr C Allen
Deputy Pastoral Care Co-ordinators: Mr C Wilson, PDMU Co-ordinator, and Miss D Fryer, SENCo/Nurture.

- coordinate universal and targeted pastoral provision;
- support staff to identify need and select proportionate responses;
- liaise with families, safeguarding leads, SEN staff and agencies;
- monitor referrals, interventions, pupil voice and emerging trends;
- evaluate the reach, quality and impact of provision; and
- contribute evidence and priorities to school development planning.

12.4 All staff

- build safe, respectful and professional relationships;
- know pupils and remain alert to changes in presentation, attendance, behaviour, communication or engagement;
- follow safeguarding and reporting procedures without delay;
- implement agreed supports and reasonable adjustments consistently;
- maintain objective, proportionate records;
- seek advice when concerns exceed their expertise; and
- protect confidentiality while sharing relevant information appropriately.

12.5 Class teachers and specialist provision teachers

- create supportive, structured and inclusive classrooms;
- know pupils' strengths, needs, communication methods and agreed plans;
- identify emerging concerns and coordinate first-line support;
- communicate with parents/carers and relevant colleagues; and
- support effective transitions and information sharing.

12.6 Pupils

Pupils are encouraged and supported to demonstrate school values, contribute to school life, respect themselves, others and the environment make safe choices, take increasing responsibility and seek help when needed. Responsibilities will always be interpreted in light of age, development and individual need.

12.7 Parents and carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to share relevant information, promote attendance and punctuality, support agreed approaches, raise concerns early and work collaboratively with school. Partnership does not prevent the school taking safeguarding action or seeking statutory advice where required.

13. Partnership with families and external agencies

The school communicates through meetings, consultations, annual reports, Just2Easy and approved digital platforms, newsletters, workshops, transition events and appropriate informal contact. Communication will be respectful, accessible, timely and recorded where necessary.

Depending on need, consent and/or safeguarding requirements, the school may work with a range of internal and external supports, including the **school counsellor**, Education Authority services, Educational Psychology, Education Welfare, Behaviour Support and ASD services, health professionals, School Nursing, Social Services, PSNI and relevant community or voluntary organisations. Roles, actions and review points will be clearly agreed and communicated where appropriate. Referrals to support services will not delay immediate safeguarding action where a child may be at risk.

14. Staff learning, support and wellbeing

Staff receive induction and ongoing professional learning appropriate to their role, including safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, medical awareness, inclusion, SEND, positive behaviour, online safety, nurture and wellbeing. Training needs are informed by policy change, incidents, evaluation and pupil need.

Staff wellbeing supports safe and effective practice. Leaders promote reasonable workload, professional trust, access to support, clear expectations and opportunities for reflection. Staff wellbeing does not override pupil safety, accountability or professional responsibilities.

15. Recording, monitoring and evaluation

Pastoral care will be evaluated as an impact-led aspect of whole-school self-evaluation, not as a collection of activities. Leaders will systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of pastoral care through a range of evidence sources. The views and experiences of pupils, parents and staff will be gathered regularly and considered alongside attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing information. Findings will be used to identify strengths, address emerging needs and inform ongoing school improvement, ensuring that all pupils, including those in specialist provision, are supported to achieve positive wellbeing, engagement and learning outcomes.

Evaluation question	Possible evidence	Frequency	Use of findings
Do pupils feel safe, included, heard and ready to learn?	Accessible pupil voice, safeguarding/wellbeing surveys, focus groups, observations, feedback from parents, school ethos which includes positive rapport between all members of the school community and nurturing and transparent adult-child dialogue	At least annually and after significant change. Ongoing	Identify strengths, groups requiring attention and actions

Evaluation question	Possible evidence	Frequency	Use of findings
Are barriers identified and addressed early?	Attendance, punctuality, assessment data, PLPs, behaviour, safeguarding and SEN patterns; referral timelines, P1 baseline	At least half termly	Target support, training and resources
Does support improve outcomes?	Baseline, review notes, engagement, assessment data, attendance, participation and pupil/family views	At agreed review points	Continue, adapt, step up or conclude support
Is provision equitable across settings and groups?	PLPs, differentiation, provision mapping, CEFR, mainstream and specialist provision collaboration, targeted children (underachievement).	Ongoing At least half termly	Remove barriers and improve reasonable adjustments
Are systems understood and applied consistently?	Record audits, staff feedback, training records, PLPs and Staff evaluations, training	Ongoing At least annually	Improve guidance, supervision and accountability
How effective is leadership and governance?	SDP evaluation, governor minutes, challenge, resource and training decisions	At least annually	Set priorities and report progress

16. Success indicators

Implementation will be considered effective when evidence shows that:

- pupils, using accessible methods, report that they feel safe, respected, included and know how to seek help;
- pupils can describe and increasingly demonstrate the school's values;
- pupil views can be linked to identifiable decisions or improvements;
- attendance, behaviour and wellbeing patterns are identified, explored and acted upon promptly;
- targeted support has clear intended outcomes, review points and evidence of impact;
- pupils across mainstream and specialist provision have equitable, needs-appropriate access to participation and wider opportunities;
- parents/carers understand routes for communication and report that concerns are heard and handled appropriately;
- staff understand their pastoral and safeguarding responsibilities and apply agreed procedures consistently;
- records are timely, factual, secure and support continuity of care and accountability; and
- Governors and leaders can explain strengths, priorities, actions and resulting improvements in outcomes for pupils.

17. Complaints, concerns and escalation

Parents/carers should normally raise pastoral concerns with the class teacher or relevant member of staff, then with the principal if further action is required. Formal complaints are handled under the school's Complaints Policy. Safeguarding concerns must follow the routes published in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. A complaint or disagreement will not prevent the school from taking action required to safeguard a child.

18. Policy approval and review

The Board of Governors will review this policy every three years, or sooner following legislative or guidance changes, a significant incident, self-evaluation findings or changing school needs. Review will include appropriate consideration of pupil, parent/carer, staff and governor views. The policy will be accessible to the school community and staff will be made aware of changes.

Appendix 2: Pastoral Care Support Record

Confidential: Store securely in accordance with the school's record-keeping procedures.
Where concerns indicate possible harm, safeguarding procedures take priority.

Pupil details	**Information**
Pupil's name	
Class/Year group	
Date record opened	
Staff member responsible	

1. Identify the need	**Record**
Concern or identified need	
How was the need identified?	☐ Pupil ☐ Parent/carer ☐ Staff observation ☐ Attendance ☐ Behaviour ☐ Learning/wellbeing information ☐ Other: _____
Safeguarding consideration	☐ No indication of possible harm ☐ Possible harm identified and safeguarding procedures followed
Reported to, if applicable	Name: _____ Date: _____

2. Plan the support	**Record**
Intended outcome for the pupil	
Agreed support or action	
Person responsible	
Target/review date	

3. Implement the support		
Date	***Support or action provided***	***Staff initials***

4. Gather views	**Record**
Pupil's views	
Parent/carer's views	
How these views informed the support	

5. Assess impact	**Record**
What has improved or changed?	
Evidence considered	☐ Pupil's views ☐ Parent/carer's views ☐ Staff observations ☐ Attendance ☐ Behaviour ☐ Engagement/learning ☐ Other: _____
Was the intended outcome achieved?	☐ Fully ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

6. Adjust or conclude	**Record**
Outcome of review	☐ Conclude support ☐ Continue support ☐ Adjust support ☐

	Seek further advice/referral ☐ Follow safeguarding procedures
Next steps or adjustments	
Next review date, if required	
Reviewed by	
Signature and date	

Appendix 3: Graduated pastoral response

Stage	Typical need	Response	Record/review	Escalation
1 Universal	Everyday wellbeing and development	Classroom routines, school values, relationships, curriculum, recognition, accessible help-seeking,	Routine planning and whole-school monitoring	Move to Stage 2 if concern persists or increases
2 Emerging	Change or early barrier	Listen, gather information, reasonable adjustment, parent contact where appropriate, brief planned support, school counsellor Friendship group	Concise record with intended outcome and review date	Seek pastoral/SEN/safeguarding advice

Stage	Typical need	Response	Record/review	Escalation
3 Targeted (use of pastoral care record)	Persistent or significant barrier	Coordinated plan, named lead, pupil/family voice, targeted intervention and/or agency advice, school counsellor, PLP	Baseline, actions, review and impact	Refer or escalate according to need and policy
4 Safeguarding/urgent	Risk of harm or immediate safety concern	Follow safeguarding or emergency procedure immediately	Statutory/school safeguarding record	Designated safeguarding route; emergency services where required

Important
Stages are not a waiting list. A pupil may move directly to an urgent or safeguarding response. Pastoral enquiry must never delay reporting a safeguarding concern.

Evaluation of Pastoral Care and Policy Implementation

Appendix 4: Pastoral support review prompts

- What has been noticed, by whom, and over what period?
- What are the pupil's strengths, views and preferred communication methods?
- What do parents/carers and relevant staff understand about the concern?
- Could this indicate harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or an adult-conduct concern? If yes or uncertain, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.
- What barriers, triggers, patterns, protective factors and reasonable adjustments have been identified?
- What specific outcome is intended, how will progress be recognised and when will it be reviewed?
- Who is responsible for each action and what information needs to be shared?
- What changed as a result of the support? What should continue, adapt, step up or conclude?

Appendix 5: Annual ETI-aligned self-evaluation summary

Area	Key evidence	Evaluative finding	Next action / success measure
Outcomes for learners			

Area	Key evidence	Evaluative finding	Next action / success measure
Quality of pastoral provision			
Leadership and management			
Care and welfare			
Safeguarding			
Governance			
Mainstream/specialist equity			
Pupil and parent participation			

Appendix 4: Key references

- Department of Education, Child Protection and Safeguarding in Education: Guidance for Schools and Education Settings (27 August 2026).
- DE Circular 2026/17, Child Protection and Safeguarding in Education: Guidance for Schools and Education Settings (27 August 2026).
- Education and Training Inspectorate, Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework and Empowering Improvement: New Framework for Inspection.
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.
- Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
- Relevant current Department of Education guidance on pupil health and wellbeing, attendance, special educational needs, positive behaviour, online safety and preventative education.

Operational policies and named personnel must be checked annually and updated whenever staffing, structures or statutory guidance change.