



St Mary's Primary School Banbridge

Pastoral Care Policy



May 2025

Our Vision

“Safe. Valued. Empowered to Thrive.”

Our Mission

We are dedicated to creating a **safe**, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every individual feels **valued**, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

We inspire a love of learning, foster a sense of belonging, and cultivate the skills, values and resilience needed to **thrive** in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Core Values

Family
Community
Respect
Resilience
Kindness
Tolerance
Perseverance
Responsibility

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), embodies the idea that every child should be recognised, respected, and protected as a unique and valuable human being. The staff in St Mary's Primary School strive daily to implement the values of this agreement into our school policies and practices.

Article 2 (without discrimination)

Every child must be treated equally no matter of race gender, nationality or religion and treated fairly whatever their ability or need.

Article 3 (best interest of the child)

The best interest of the child must be a top priority in everything we do.

Article 12 (respect the views of the child)

Every child has the right to say what they think in matters affecting them.

Article 19 (protection from all forms of violence)

Every child must be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and mistreatment.

Article 24 (Health and Health Services)
Every child has the right to good health care.

Article 31(leisure, play and culture)
Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 29 (goals of education)
Every child has the right to develop their personality, talents, and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own cultures, and the environment.

Our School's **Mission** and **Vision** reflect these rights, and our school/home partnership works to ensure all our children enjoy these rights.

Our Mission Statement

We are dedicated to creating a **safe**, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every individual feels **valued**, respected, and **empowered** to reach their full potential. We inspire a love of learning, foster a sense of belonging, and cultivate the skills, values and resilience needed to **thrive** in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Our mission statement is a statement of the key principles and values promoted and supported by the entire school community. It is an expression of our school's aspirations on behalf of the pupils in its care. It is our school's active commitment to the development of the attributes and abilities of all its pupils and to the fulfilment of their potential. It is reflected in our school's policies, and in the full range of our provision and practices.

Our pastoral care fosters an atmosphere in our school environment where our children feel secure (free from emotional and physical harm), know they are valued as individuals, can discuss their interests, voice their fears and concerns, and feel confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response in times of need. Parents/carers should be assured that their children are encouraged and supported in their learning growth and social development; in a healthy, safe, and caring environment.

Aims of Our Pastoral Care Systems

Pastoral Care in St Mary's encompasses and pervades the whole life and work of the school in which:

- all the pupils and staff feel valued as individuals, feel safe and secure and are encouraged to develop their gifts and talents.
- the staff work well together, as an effective team keeping the pupils' interests and welfare as their focus.
- there are good relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils within and outside the classroom.
- the pupils are safe and are protected from emotional and physical harm.
- the pupils' opinions are valued, and their worries and concerns are dealt with sympathetically and appropriately.
- the self-esteem of the pupils is promoted, and they have opportunities to develop independence of thought and expression.
- the pupils are taught to collaborate with their peers and to value and respect the opinions of others.
- the parents/carers are actively involved in and knowledgeable about the life and work of the school.
- the school has clear lines of communication and good, flexible relationships with relevant external advice and support agencies, for example, CCMS, EA, DENI, School Medical Services, Social Services, Water NI, police, etc.
- the school strives to promote and sustain good standards of behaviour and discipline which reflect an appropriate balance between rewards and sanctions.
- disciplinary procedures are implemented consistently by all staff in a fair and positive manner.

Relationships

Good relationships are paramount to generating a positive climate within our school community. Every individual should feel respected and valued. We understand that when our pupils have positive relationships with their teachers and other supporting adults, they are more likely to be motivated, have a higher self-esteem, and achieve better academically. We strive to build positive relationships with our pupils by actively listening, showing empathy, and providing support and guidance. Good relationships will be fostered between:

- Staff and Pupils
- Pupils and their Peers
- Members of Staff
- Senior Leadership Team and Staff
- School and surrounding Community

Our **core values** permeate every aspect of our school life and demonstrate how we will work together to achieve our school's vision and conduct its mission and place the needs and well-being of our pupils at the heart of the learning and teaching cycle.

We strive for the highest standards in academic and personal achievement. We focus on the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of students and staff. We share and model empathy, kindness, and concern for the well-being of others and expect our pupils to reinforce these values in their daily interactions and communications with staff, friends, peers, families and within the community.

Our pastoral care system ensures the wellbeing of the pupil so that they can thrive in every aspect of their life and achieve their potential. We believe that self-esteem is central to the development of the whole child and promotes learning.

Safe. Valued. Empowered to Thrive.

Staff are working hard to **embed our new vision and mission** into every aspect of school life. From classroom teaching to assemblies, displays, and daily routines, our shared values are being actively promoted and lived out. Teachers are using the vision to guide planning and decision-making, while pupils are encouraged to reflect on how their actions align with our school's aims. By consistently modelling and reinforcing these principles, staff are helping to create a strong, unified culture where everyone understands and contributes to our collective goals.

Safe. We aim to create a safe, caring, and inclusive environment where every child can thrive. (UNCRC Alignment: Article 3).

We have robust child protection policies in place, underpinned by a dedicated safeguarding team committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every child. Our team is trained to identify and respond to concerns promptly and

effectively, working closely with staff, families, and external agencies. Regular assemblies play a key role in our safeguarding approach, providing age-appropriate guidance on topics such as staying safe, recognising trusted adults, and understanding personal boundaries. These sessions help to empower children with the knowledge and confidence to speak up and seek help when needed.

We encourage children to be responsible for their own personal safety. We help them to acquire skills, so they can make informed decisions, know where to get help, if or when they are in danger.

The children are aware of the school's **Safeguarding Team** (assemblies take place throughout the year to inform pupils of the role of this team). The whole school community is made aware of the identity and role of the designated teacher and deputy designated teacher, who are responsible for dealing with cases of child protection issues which become known. Children can speak to their class teacher/classroom assistant/other trusted adult if they need help or are concerned.

Bullying - the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else through physical, verbal, emotional or psychological aggression. Children must realise that any form of bullying type behaviour is unacceptable and that such behaviour will be dealt with appropriately by the staff of the school.

Our staff are alert, both inside and outside the classroom. Children are aware that it is the responsibility of everyone to report acts of bullying type behaviour as soon as they arise.

Safety on Arrival to or Departure from School: Parents are encouraged to walk to and from school, when possible. If it is necessary to take a car, children should be dropped off to school in a safe manner. The car park is for staff only. Cars parked in disabled bays must display a valid Blue Badge. If parking is the only option, it must be done in the available parking bays. Parents are advised to use St. Therese car park opposite school. Children should not walk through the car park but use the pedestrian gates and zebra crossings appropriately. **Parents** are advised to enter school via reception area.

Behaviour Management System: Our school's positive approach to behaviour focuses on reflection and goal setting, rather than just punishing poor behaviour.

Our children participate in creating a set of **class rules** in September of every academic year. **Class Dojo** Class/individual point system is well-established - in P3 to P7 and encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions and rewards desirable behaviours.

Medication: At the start of the school year parents are requested to inform school of any medication that child takes regularly. Staff can only administer medication when specifically trained to do so. Medication will only be administered in an emergency only. Parents/carers are expected to keep the school informed of a child's medical situation.

Management and staff work hard to ensure a safe, clean, comfortable, and pleasant environment throughout the school for work leisure.

We celebrate **Internet Safety Week** with a range of engaging activities and workshops designed to help our children stay safe and responsible online. Through interactive lessons, assemblies, and age-appropriate discussions, pupils learn about key topics such as cyberbullying, privacy, digital footprints, and how to identify and respond to online risks. We also host workshops led by experts, which provide practical advice and empower children to make smart, respectful choices in the digital world. These initiatives reinforce our commitment to promoting digital wellbeing and equipping our pupils with the knowledge and confidence to navigate the online environment safely.

As a school, we are deeply committed to teaching our children how to **recognise danger and stay safe** in a variety of situations through a range of thoughtfully planned programmes and events. These include Anti-Bullying Week, where pupils explore the importance of kindness, respect, and standing up against bullying; and Children's Mental Health Week, which focuses on emotional wellbeing and the importance of talking about feelings. We also mark Mental Health Yellow Day to raise awareness and show support for mental health initiatives. Our partnership with the NSPCC includes assemblies and workshops that empower children to speak out and stay safe, while e-Safety Week and Safer Internet Day provide vital lessons on navigating the digital world responsibly. These events are woven into our school culture, helping children build the knowledge, confidence, and resilience they need to stay safe both in and out of school.

A **Stranger Danger** programme is designed to teach children how to stay safe around people they don't know. It helps students recognise potentially dangerous situations and understand the importance of staying alert and

trusting their instincts. Through interactive lessons, role-playing, and discussions, children learn practical safety tips such as not accepting gifts or rides from strangers, always informing a trusted adult of their whereabouts, and knowing how to seek help if they feel unsafe. The programme empowers pupils with the confidence and knowledge to protect themselves in everyday situations.

The **Helping Hands programme**, developed by Women's Aid Northern Ireland, is a preventative education initiative aimed at primary school children. It focuses on empowering children with the knowledge and skills to feel safe, understand their emotions, and build healthy relationships. Through engaging activities and discussions, children learn about personal boundaries, safety planning, and how to identify trusted adults in their support network. The programme also promotes self-esteem, emotional expression, and respectful behaviour, helping children navigate social situations with confidence and care.

Valued. Encouraging Pupil Voice: (UNCRC Alignment: Article 12: Children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them. Article 13: Children have the right to freedom of expression).

Our pupils from Primary 7 complete a response survey which is used to inform our School Development Plan.

Circle Time is a valued part of our weekly routine, providing a safe and respectful space where every child's voice is heard. During these sessions, pupils sit together in a circle to share thoughts, feelings, and ideas on a range of topics, from friendship and emotions to school life and problem-solving. This inclusive approach helps build trust, empathy, and communication skills. It also strengthens our commitment to **pupil voice**, empowering children to express their opinions, contribute to decisions, and feel that their views truly matter in shaping our school community.

We actively encourage the development of a **growth mindset** by helping pupils understand that effort, perseverance, and learning from mistakes are key to success. Through positive reinforcement, reflective discussions, and classroom displays, we teach children that their abilities can grow with practice and resilience. We celebrate progress as much as achievement and use phrases like "You can't do it yet" to promote a belief in continuous improvement. By creating a supportive environment where challenges are seen as opportunities,

we empower pupils to become confident, motivated learners who embrace new experiences.

We develop leadership qualities within our school through various initiatives: Our **Eco Council** plays a vital role in promoting environmental awareness and sustainability. Made up of enthusiastic pupil representatives from each class, the council meets regularly to plan and lead eco-friendly initiatives such as recycling drives, energy-saving campaigns, and school garden projects. They help educate their peers about caring for the planet and encourage everyone to make greener choices both in school and at home. Through their efforts, the Eco Council empowers pupils to take responsibility for their environment and make a positive impact on their community.

The **Digital Leaders Team** is a group of tech-savvy pupils who support the use of technology across the school. These pupils are selected for their enthusiasm and responsibility in using digital tools and are trained to help classmates and staff with basic tech tasks. They assist with setting up devices, promoting online safety, and even leading digital assemblies or coding clubs. The team plays a key role in encouraging responsible and creative use of technology, helping to build confidence and digital skills throughout the school community.

The **Playground Buddies** are a friendly and caring team of pupils who help make playtimes safe, fun, and inclusive for everyone. They are trained to support their peers by helping solve minor disagreements, encouraging fair play, and inviting others to join in games. Easily recognised by their special badges or vests, Playground Buddies are always ready to lend a hand or offer a kind word. Their role helps build a positive playground atmosphere where all children feel welcome and supported.

The **Reading Partners** programme pairs older and younger pupils to share books and develop a love of reading together. This child-to-child approach not only supports reading fluency and comprehension but also builds confidence, communication skills, and positive relationships across year groups. Older pupils take on a mentoring role, while younger children benefit from one-to-one attention and encouragement. These sessions create a warm, supportive environment where reading becomes a shared and enjoyable experience for all involved.

The **School Council** gives pupils a real voice in shaping their learning environment and school community. Made up of elected representatives from

each class, the council meets regularly to discuss ideas, raise concerns, and help make decisions on matters that affect all pupils. From organising charity events to suggesting improvements in the playground, the School Council empowers children to take responsibility, develop leadership skills, and work collaboratively. It's a vital part of promoting active citizenship and ensuring that every child knows their opinions are valued and respected.

Celebrating Achievements: (UNCRC Alignment: Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full).

We aim to boost self-worth and motivation by highlighting individual strengths and achievements, providing constructive feedback to pupils and celebrating efforts. At our primary school, we use **Kindness Awards** as a meaningful way to celebrate and encourage positive behaviour, empathy, and emotional literacy among our pupils. These awards are given weekly to children who demonstrate acts of kindness, such as helping a friend, showing patience, or including others in play. By recognising these moments, we reinforce the value of compassion and create a classroom culture where kindness is noticed and appreciated. The awards not only boost the confidence of the recipients but also inspire others to act with empathy and care. Over time, this simple practice has helped foster a more supportive and emotionally aware school community.

Achievement Boards are a vibrant and motivating feature in every classroom and shared space. They showcase our pupils' successes, big and small, across all areas of learning and personal development. Whether it's a beautifully written story, a creative piece of art, or an example of teamwork or resilience, children's work is proudly displayed for everyone to see. These boards not only celebrate individual and group accomplishments but also inspire others to aim high and take pride in their efforts. They help create a positive, encouraging atmosphere where every child feels seen and valued.

At our primary school, **Weekly Achievement Awards** are a key part of celebrating pupils' efforts, progress, and personal growth across all areas of school life. These awards recognise a wide range of accomplishments—from academic improvement and creative thinking to teamwork, perseverance, and positive behaviour. By highlighting different types of success, we ensure that every child can shine and feel valued. The awards help to build self-esteem, motivate pupils to set personal goals, and foster a culture of encouragement and celebration throughout the school community.

PATHS Pupil of the Day. A social and emotional learning schools programme for 4 -11-year-old children. This programme is implemented in every class to empower our pupils to develop the fundamental social and emotional learning skills which will enable them to make positive choices throughout their lives. Pupil of the Day is an opportunity for all the pupils to receive positive affirmations.

Empowered to Thrive. Our school is committed to empowering every pupil to thrive and reach their full potential by fostering a supportive, inclusive, and inspiring learning environment. We nurture each child's unique talents and strengths through a broad and balanced curriculum, high-quality teaching, and a strong focus on personal development. By promoting confidence, resilience, and a growth mindset, we encourage our pupils to embrace challenges, celebrate their achievements, and aspire to be the best they can be—both academically and personally.

We aim to **foster a lifelong love of learning** by creating a stimulating, supportive, and engaging environment where curiosity is encouraged and celebrated. Through a rich and varied curriculum, hands-on experiences, and opportunities for exploration and discovery, we inspire our pupils to ask questions, seek answers, and take pride in their progress. By nurturing a sense of wonder and achievement, we help children develop a positive attitude towards learning that stays with them throughout their lives.

Our pupils are actively involved in their own target setting through regular discussions with teachers and support staff, particularly when working towards Individual Education Plan (IEP) SMART targets. These targets are designed to be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound**, ensuring that goals are clear and tailored to each pupil's unique needs and abilities. By participating in the target-setting process, our pupils gain a better understanding of their learning journey, take ownership of their progress, and develop self-awareness and motivation. This collaborative approach not only empowers our pupils but also helps staff to align support strategies more effectively with each learner's aspirations and challenges.

Our children actively engage in **project-based learning** and thematic units of work, which help them develop key skills and deepen their understanding of important concepts. These approaches encourage curiosity, creativity, and collaboration, allowing pupils to make meaningful connections across different subject areas. By exploring real-world topics through hands-on projects and

integrated themes, children are empowered to take ownership of their learning, think critically, and apply their knowledge in purposeful and engaging ways.

Our pupils are actively involved in **creative areas of learning** such as art, music, drama, and creative writing, which play a vital role in developing their emotional intelligence and self-expression. These experiences provide a safe and supportive space for children to explore their feelings, build empathy, and communicate their thoughts in imaginative ways. Through creative activities, pupils learn to understand and manage emotions, appreciate different perspectives, and express themselves with confidence and authenticity—skills that are essential for their personal growth and wellbeing.

We actively encourage our children to participate in **speech and drama activities** to build confidence, enhance communication skills, and foster creativity. These opportunities allow pupils to express themselves, explore different perspectives, and develop their voice in a supportive and engaging environment. Through performances, storytelling, role-play, and public speaking, children learn to articulate their thoughts clearly, listen to others, and work collaboratively—skills that are valuable both in and beyond the classroom. We celebrate and participate in the annual Banbridge Performing Arts Festival.

We value strong partnerships with families and actively foster these through our open-door policy, **annual parent-teacher interviews**, and **comprehensive written reports**. Our approach encourages ongoing communication, allowing parents to speak with staff about their child's progress or wellbeing at any time. Each year, we hold dedicated parent-teacher meetings to discuss achievements, set goals, and strengthen the home-school connection. Our annual reports provide a clear picture of each child's academic progress, personal development, and next steps. Together, these practices ensure that parents feel informed, involved, and supported in their child's learning journey.

We implement **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC)** across the curriculum to help pupils become confident, independent learners. These skills—such as problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, working with others, and self-management—are embedded in everyday teaching and learning activities. Teachers plan lessons that encourage pupils to ask questions, explore ideas, reflect on their learning, and work collaboratively. By integrating TSPCs into all subject areas, we support children in developing the

critical thinking and personal skills they need to succeed both in school and in life.

Shared Reading and Discussion: Story books are shared to help create a nurturing and supportive environment in the classroom by teaching important values and encouraging positive behaviour. These books teach our children about kindness, empathy, the importance of caring for others, responsibility and safety.

We follow a **structured PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) programme** that supports pupils' emotional, social, and moral development. Carefully planned and delivered across all year groups, the programme helps children explore topics such as self-awareness, relationships, health, safety, and respect for others. Lessons are interactive and age-appropriate, encouraging discussion, reflection, and real-life application. By embedding PDMU into our weekly timetable, we ensure that pupils develop the skills and values they need to become confident, caring, and responsible individuals.

We conduct **daily emotional check-ins** to support pupils' wellbeing and help them develop emotional awareness. Each morning, children are invited to share how they're feeling using tools like emotion charts, feelings jars, or digital check-in boards (P7). This simple routine allows teachers to quickly identify pupils who may need extra support and encourages children to reflect on and express their emotions in a safe, supportive environment. Over time, these check-ins help build trust, strengthen relationships, and promote a classroom culture where every child feels seen, heard, and valued.

We model and teach **self-compassion and resilience**: we teach children strategies to cope with challenges and setbacks. PATHS – what should I do if I have a problem? – 'turtle technique.'

The adults in the school environment model self-compassion and resilience. We provide a supportive environment for practicing these skills. We model vocabulary related to mindfulness and resilience. We encourage positive self-talk and affirmations.

The adults in our school environment consistently **model empathy** through their daily interactions with pupils, parents, and each other. Staff take time to listen actively, respond with understanding, and show genuine care for how others are feeling. Whether it's comforting a child who is upset, supporting a

colleague, or working with families, adults demonstrate compassion and patience in every situation. By showing empathy in action, they help create a nurturing school environment and teach children the importance of kindness, respect, and emotional awareness through example.

Mindfulness Exercises: we incorporate mindfulness, movement breaks and relaxation techniques into the daily timetable/routine.

Each class begins the academic year by **co-creating a set of class rules**, giving pupils a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning environment. Through guided discussions and collaborative activities, children reflect on what makes a classroom safe, respectful, and supportive. They share ideas, listen to one another, and agree on a set of shared expectations that everyone can follow. This process not only helps pupils understand the importance of positive behaviour but also empowers them to take pride in their role as active, respectful members of the school community.

We are committed to supporting the emotional wellbeing of all pupils, and we offer **counselling services** to children identified as needing additional support. Priority pupils are sensitively identified by staff through observation, pastoral care systems, and communication with families. Once identified, these children are offered access to a trained school counsellor in a safe, confidential setting where they can talk about their feelings, experiences, and challenges. This targeted support helps pupils build resilience, develop coping strategies, and feel more secure and understood in their school environment.

Our **Religious Education programme**, *Grow in Love*, plays a central role in nurturing the moral, spiritual, and ethical development of our children. It encourages them to explore key values such as compassion, honesty, forgiveness, and justice, while fostering a deep sense of empathy and respect for the beliefs and traditions of others. Through engaging lessons, reflective activities, and meaningful discussions, children are supported in developing their own faith and understanding of the world around them. Complementing this, the **Flourish** programme enhances the spiritual and emotional dimensions of our curriculum by promoting wellbeing, resilience, and a positive sense of self. Together, these programmes create a rich, inclusive environment where children are inspired to grow in love, live out their values, and appreciate the diversity of the global community.

Developing Links with our Community

We are committed to **fostering strong links with our local community** to enrich learning and promote a sense of belonging. We actively seek opportunities to collaborate with local organisations, businesses, and families through events, educational visits, and community projects. Whether it's inviting guest speakers, supporting local causes, or participating in neighbourhood initiatives, we aim to build meaningful partnerships that benefit both our pupils and the wider community. These connections help children understand their role in society and develop a sense of pride in where they live.

Community Projects: Involvement in local community projects helps our pupils understand the importance of giving back and builds a sense of responsibility.

We support and receive advice for pupils from local and global charitable causes: foodbanks, Trócaire Campaign, Diabetes, Autism Awareness, RNIB, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue, Northern Ireland Police.

We participate in the Shared Education Programme P2 to P7 with local schools.

We have strong links with St Patrick's College, Newbridge, Banbridge Academy, St Colman's College, The Abbey, Our Lady's Grammar and Sacred Heart.

We have strong parish links with our faith community – we celebrate Catholic Schools week annually; sacramental preparation with the Parish Council – Do this in Memory of Me programme (P4).

Our active and vibrant **PTA** plays a vital role in supporting our school's vision by organizing a variety of fundraising events throughout the year. Their dedication and creativity help provide valuable resources and enriching experiences for our pupils, from new learning materials to extracurricular opportunities. Through strong collaboration with staff and families, the PTA fosters a sense of community and shared purpose, ensuring that every event not only raises funds but also brings people together in support of our children's education and wellbeing.

Our **whole school events and educational visits** play a vital role in providing rich, real-world experiences that enhance learning and personal development. Whether it's a themed celebration, a cultural day, Sports Day or a trip to a museum or local landmark, these opportunities allow children to

explore new environments, connect classroom learning to life beyond school, and build lasting memories. They also promote teamwork, curiosity, and confidence, helping pupils to develop socially and emotionally while deepening their understanding of the world around them.

We work closely with a range of **external agencies** to support and enhance every aspect of our children's wellbeing. This collaborative approach ensures that children receive the right help at the right time, whether it's through health services, educational psychologists, social care, or specialist support teams. By sharing information, expertise, and resources, we create a holistic support network that addresses each child's individual needs—promoting their emotional, physical, and educational development in a safe and nurturing environment.

We encourage the development of the children's **physical health and mental well-being**.

We promote physical wellbeing through a wide range of activities that encourage healthy lifestyles and active participation. Our PE classes, the Daily Mile Challenge, our participation in Sustrans Active School Travel programme and extracurricular sports help children build fitness, coordination, and teamwork skills in a fun and inclusive environment. From P4 to P7, pupils also benefit from weekly swimming lessons, which support physical development and water safety. Alongside this, our healthy eating initiatives—including a nutritious school canteen menu, healthy break policies, and lessons on balanced diets—ensure that children understand the importance of making healthy choices for both body and mind.

Extracurricular Activities: we offer a wide and diverse variety of inclusive clubs and activities to cater to different interests/ages.

- Gaelic Skills (Feeney Gaelic Coaching)
- Soccer Skills (Evo Soccer)
- Fun fit
- Athletics Afterschool Club
- Dance
- French
- Music – Guitar/Woodwind/African Drums/Brass
- Ukelele
- Netball
- Choir

- Chess
- Table Tennis
- Coding Club (Impact)
- Swimming
- Archery
- Irish Dancing
- Badminton
- Girls Activ Initiative (ABC Council)

Transition: We understand that transitions can be significant moments in a child's life, and we are committed to preparing and supporting our pupils through each stage with care and sensitivity. Whether it's starting school, moving between year groups, or preparing for post-primary education, we provide tailored support to help children feel confident and secure. This includes transition days, buddy systems, information sessions, and close communication with families and receiving schools. By addressing both the emotional and practical aspects of change, we aim to ensure that every child experiences a smooth and positive transition.

Newcomer Pupils: Our school staff work hard in helping newcomer children feel welcomed, safe, and supported as they adjust to a new educational and cultural environment. The first step is creating a warm and inclusive atmosphere where diversity is celebrated, and every child feels valued. We greet newcomer pupils and their families with kindness and patience, offering translated materials or interpreters where possible to ease communication. A welcome pack that includes key school information, routines, and visuals helps our families understand expectations and feel more at ease.

The WellComm Programme, a speech and language toolkit designed to help early years and primary school practitioners identify and support children with speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) is available to staff. It is particularly valuable in our school setting where early intervention is key to helping newcomer and language-delayed children thrive.

Teachers and classroom assistants support newcomer children by using visual aids, gestures, and simplified language to aid understanding. Our classroom and playground Buddy systems are implemented and effective: by pairing our newcomer pupils with empathetic peers helps them navigate the school day, models the used language, and offers friendship. We incorporate multicultural resources into the curriculum, such as books, music, and celebrations that reflect the backgrounds of newcomer children, helping them see their identity

represented and respected. The Amazing People collection is available in our school library and staff and pupils are encouraged to become familiar with this series, as the stories are about people from Around the World and include representatives of diverse cultures and communities.

We build strong relationships with newcomer families by hosting informal meetings, offering language support, and involving parents in school life. When families feel connected to our school community, the children are more likely to thrive and flourish socially and academically. We strive to fostering a sense of belonging.

Data Handling Forms: Parents are requested to complete a form for each child upon enrolment. This data form contains the details of the necessary information including contact priority telephone numbers. Parents are to advise the school of any changes in circumstances as they become apparent.

Nursery and P1 Admissions: During the summer term prior to starting school, parents are invited to an induction meeting. Nursery and P1 children are invited to a 'stay and play' induction session in June. The purpose of induction is to help familiarise children with their new Primary 1 classroom environment and their Primary 1 teacher. On these induction afternoons parents/carers have an opportunity so that parents can meet the teacher on an individual basis. Our Nursery and Primary 1 intake are staggered to enable children feel more comfortable during this transitional phase.

Non – Class Time Supervision: Breaktime and lunchtime outdoor play sessions are supervised by teachers, classroom assistants or supervisory assistants on a rota basis.

Sickness or Injury: During school hours this will be dealt with by the class teacher/classroom assistant. Parents or carers will, if necessary, be contacted by telephone as soon as possible to arrange for the child to be further examined or taken home. Significant accidents are recorded on the appropriate pupil accident form and forwarded to EA if required. If a child sustains a head injury parent/carer will automatically receive a phone call and a head injury form will be completed by the adult who dealt with the incident; this form explains what happened and how the head injury was treated.

Absences: Parents should complete the absence JotForm or contact the school and explain a child's absence on the first day of illness and keep the school regularly informed thereafter. Unexplained absences will be followed up, in the

interests of the child and absences will be monitored, as per school policy. Referrals to the EA's Education Welfare Service will be made in accordance with our school Attendance Policy.

We offer a range of **wraparound school services** designed to support families and enhance the school experience for our pupils. Our Breakfast Club provides a welcoming and nutritious start to the day, helping children settle into learning with energy and focus. After School Club offers a safe, structured, and enjoyable environment where pupils can take part in a variety of activities, complete homework, and build friendships. These services not only support working families with flexible childcare options but also contribute to the overall wellbeing and development of our children in a caring and familiar setting.

Summer Scheme: Our Summer Scheme operates for 6 weeks during summer holiday period and is organised by staff from our Afterschool Club and school. Children have opportunities to participate in various sporting activities including swimming, tennis, football, basketball, volleyball, archery and water sports at Craigavon Water Sports Centre. Throughout the summer trips will be organised to the library, farm and zoo; as well as take part in art and crafts, ICT and various learning activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors, Principal and senior management have primary responsibility to promote and ensure the care and welfare of staff, Pastoral Care is a shared responsibility involving the whole staff in co-operation with parents, pupils, and others.

The Pastoral Care Coordinator collaborates with staff to ensure teaching resources and current thinking in this area is disseminated, and that staff are professionally trained/advised on new initiatives to promote Pastoral Care effectively. The Pastoral Care Co Ordinator ensures staff and pupils are well supported.

The promotion of Pastoral Care works as a cycle to ensure the provision provided is child centred and one of nurture and growth. This cycle aims to establish strong relationships/connections, offers continued review and it aims to foster improvement.

Each member of staff will work to build up pupils' self – esteem and encourage children to be assertive and resist negative peer pressure. They will help them

to celebrate success and develop the ability to make informed decisions and choices, to know the difference between right and wrong.

The Pastoral Care Team is comprised of Mr Mackle, the Principal, Vice Principal, and members of SLT. Pastoral Care in our school is viewed as a cycle. Everyone in our school is actively involved in the provision of Pastoral Care.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to contact their child's teacher or the principal if they have any concerns or worries. To do this they will have to use the appropriate procedure. Urgent concerns will be given immediate attention. We encourage parents to share concerns about home circumstances or medical matters which may affect their child's work or behaviour in school. Any information disclosed is treated as confidential. Staff meet regularly to discuss and review the pastoral care policy. The opinions of parents and children are valued and where appropriate action will be taken.

Related Policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of pastoral care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti Bullying
- Intimate Care Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection /Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Playground Buddy Policy
- Attendance Policy
- E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Head Lice Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy

- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- RSE Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Staff Welfare Policy
- Transition Policy
- Newcomer Policy
- Period Dignity Policy

Conclusion

Our pastoral care policy reflects our unwavering commitment to nurturing the emotional, social, and personal development of every child. We strive to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where all pupils feel valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

Through strong relationships, early intervention, and close collaboration with families and external agencies, we ensure that each child receives the care and guidance they need to flourish both in school and beyond.

This policy will be **updated** in **May 2028**.

APPENDIX 1

Here is a sample of story books we use in our classrooms:

"Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" by Carol McCloud -

"The Invisible Boy" by Trudy Ludwig - A touching story that highlights the importance of inclusion and recognizing the feelings of others.

"Wonder" by R.J. Palacio - Although aimed at slightly older children, this book promotes empathy, kindness, and acceptance.

"The Colour Monster" by Anna Llenas - A delightful book for helping young children understand and talk about their emotions.

"The Lion Inside" by Rachel Bright - This story encourages children to be brave and kind, and to understand that everyone has their own strengths and fears.

"The Kindness Quilt" by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace - A story that encourages acts of kindness and community building.

"Enemy Pie" by Derek Munson - Teaches children about friendship, resolving conflicts, and understanding others.

"A Sick Day for Amos McGee" by Philip C. Stead - Highlights the importance of caring for others and being there for friends in need.

"Last Stop on Market Street" by Matt de la Peña - Promotes empathy, gratitude, and seeing the beauty in everyday life.

"Each Kindness" by Jacqueline Woodson - A powerful story about the impact of kindness and the consequences of missed opportunities to be kind.

"The Name Jar" by Yangsook Choi - Encourages acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity.

"The Dot" by Peter H. Reynolds - Inspires creativity, self-expression, and confidence in children.

"Mistakes help us learn" encourage a positive mindset.

APPENDIX 2

We incorporate **growth mindset stories** and discussions into the curriculum. These stories highlight characters who overcome obstacles through perseverance.

What Do You Do With a Chance? by Kobi Yamada

This story follows a child who learns that taking chances can lead to incredible experiences, even if it requires courage and persistence.

Jabari Jumps by Gaia Cornwall

Jabari is almost ready to jump off the high dive. Through his journey, he learns to face his fears and take the leap, showing that overcoming challenges is part of growth.

The Book of Mistakes by Corinna Luyken

This beautifully illustrated book teaches that mistakes can lead to unexpected and wonderful outcomes, emphasizing the creative process and patience.

My Strong Mind: A Story About Developing Mental Strength by Niels Van Hove

This story is filled with practical tips to help children build mental strength and resilience.

When Sophie Thinks She Can't... by Molly Bang

Sophie learns that with patience and perseverance, she can solve any problem she sets her mind to, transforming her frustration into determination.

I Can't Do That, YET by Esther Cordova

This tale highlights the importance of the word "yet" in developing a growth mindset, showing that with hard work and dedication, any goal is achievable.

Salt in His Shoes by Michael Jordan

Michael Jordan's story teaches that practice, determination, and giving your best are more important than innate talent.

The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes by Mark Pett

Beatrice learns an important lesson about making mistakes and how they are a natural part of learning and growing.

What Do You Do With a Problem? by Kobi Yamada

A young boy learns to face his problems head-on, discovering that they can lead to growth and new opportunities.

Everyone Can Learn to Ride a Bicycle by Chris Raschka

APPENDIX 3

Involvement with Outside Agencies

Throughout the year we have a range of outside agencies to help support Pastoral Care in school. These agencies offer support and guidance to help upskill staff on emotional health and well - being strategies and offer children a nurtured approach to helping our children cope with the challenges of everyday life. These outside agencies include:

- PATHS Coach
- RISE
- REACH
- Behaviour Support Team
- PIPS
- AWARE
- Educational Psychologist
- Clann Na Banna CLG staff
- Evo Soccer – Paul Evans Coaching
- Feeney's Gaelic Skills
- EA Literacy Support
- PATHS mentor/coach
- School Nurse Service
- Pony Therapy
- Local Shops – Spar/Tesco/Lidl
- EWO
- Parish Priest – Fr McMahon
- Pastoral Council
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Services