



Pastoral Care Policy

Introduction

At **Shaftesbury Nursery School**, we pride ourselves on being a warm, family-orientated setting where every child is recognised as a unique individual. We value the experiences and foundations already laid before joining our Shaftesbury family and are committed to nurturing each child's confidence, self-belief and potential. Our ethos places children at the heart of everything we do. Through strong partnerships, we create a child-centred, fun-filled environment where learning is joyful, relaxed and memorable. We strive to ensure every child feels safe, supported and respected as they take their first steps on their educational journey. Together— children, staff, parents, governors and the wider community, we embark on a shared journey of growth, development and discovery. By the end of their time with us, we hope each child leaves with happy memories, a sense of achievement, and the confidence to continue to flourish beyond Shaftesbury.

Ethos

Our pastoral care approach is rooted in the belief that every young child is taking step after step towards their full potential. We nurture the children to have a respect for themselves, others and the world around them within the caring and supporting ethos which permeates our School. We promote strong partnerships with parents to support children in realising their full potential.

At Shaftesbury, we:

- Encourage trust, curiosity and belonging.
- Want to promote the development of resilient, secure, confident children who are motivated to be independent in their learning. We will promote this through warmth, nurturing relationships and active meaningful learning experiences.
- Want children to develop into happy, capable learners ready to thrive in their next stage of their educational journey.

Motto

The motto of our school is '*Little feet taking giant steps.*' This reflects the fact that we believe young children are very competent learners and a high-quality play-based, early years experience will enable each child to move forward with confidence.

Policy Statement

Pastoral care at Shaftesbury Nursery School is central to our ethos and practice. We are committed to creating a nurturing, inclusive, and safe environment where every child feels valued, supported, and happy. This policy reflects the principles outlined in the Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education and the Education Authority's safeguarding and child protection standards.

Pastoral Care Aims

Shaftesbury Nursery School provides a child-centred pre-school experience that is:

- Warm and welcoming
- Inclusive and respectful of diversity
- Focused on holistic development
- Supportive of positive relationships and emotional well-being

We value:

- Approachable staff who build trusting relationships with children and families.
- A welcoming environment for parents, carers, and children.
- Parental involvement in school life and learning.
- Inclusivity, regardless of need, ability, gender, religion, or ethnicity.
- A nurturing atmosphere that encourages fun, curiosity, and positivity.
- Flexible, play-based learning that supports individual development.
- The development of confident, resilient and happy children ready for primary school.

Curricular Integration

Pastoral care is embedded across:

- The whole curriculum: All six areas of learning are delivered through play and meaningful experiences. The curriculum document is laid out in discrete areas however, this is delivered in an holistic manner as young children do not compartmentalize their learning.
- The hidden curriculum: School ethos, staff-child relationships, and the physical Environment.
- The preventative curriculum: Promoting emotional well-being, resilience, and through the implementation of a fair behaviour management policy (*see separate policy for detail.*)

Developmental Aims

Children are supported to:

- Develop at their own pace through progressive, challenging play.
- Learn to share, cooperate, and build friendships.
- Practice empathy, kindness, and social skills.
- Deepen concentration through natural spontaneous curiosity and exploration.
- Choose and explore a wide range of materials which allow him/her to express himself/herself appropriately and creatively.
- Become aware of his/her body's capabilities and limits in a safe environment.
- Build self-esteem through success and encouragement.
- Enjoy purposeful outdoor learning.
- Communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings clearly to both adults and other children.
- Experience the wonder and excitement created by books, stories, songs, rhymes, music and the natural environment.

These experiences reflect our commitment to the **vision** of our school to provide a safe, happy, inclusive, nurturing and stimulating environment in which we aim to meet the unique needs of each child.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children are entitled to a broad, balanced curriculum adapted to their needs. Staff are trained to implement the Code of Practice, identify needs early, and work with external agencies when necessary. SEN provision is planned in partnership with families.

Addressing Bullying

Bullying is not tolerated. Any concerns are addressed promptly by staff, parents/carers, and the principal. Anti-bullying messages are promoted through:

- Circle Time
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development curriculum
- Preventative curriculum strategies

See the Addressing-Bullying Policy for further details.

Parental and Community Engagement

We value the role of parents/carers and the wider community. Strong home-school links are fostered through:

- Regular communication
- Opportunities for involvement (*e.g. Stay & Play, Celebration Board, trips*)
- Collaborative decision-making (*e.g. pathways of support for individual children*)

Activities serving the community

Some specific activities which show how the pastoral dimension permeates all aspects of school life are listed below. The school helps support charities through a range of events involving parents, children and the local community having recognised the needs of those less fortunate. The children can understand and make links with key curricular messages.

They know *'we are kind and helpful.'*

- Spring **Coffee morning** with donations to a local cause (*e.g., North Belfast Foodbank or local church foodbank.*)
- **Harvest Giving Boxes** with groceries and toiletries (donated to local charity outreach workers E.G. *North Belfast Foodbank, The Welcome Organisation, and Storehouse in North Street*). These charities use these resources to help the homeless and the vulnerable in our local community.
- **Dress up Fairytale/Superhero Day** – donations have been given to a charity chosen by the staff, governors or parents. For example – *MND charity, Dementia N.I. or The Princess Trust.*
- **Family Fun Day** – links with local church. Family fun day and BBQ served by the church.

Well-being and Safeguarding

- Illness: Children are made comfortable, and parents/carers are contacted. In emergencies, medical advice is sought, and staff remain with the child until help arrives.
- Infectious Disease: Parents/carers are informed of PHA exclusion periods and must notify the school of any infectious conditions.
- Trauma Support: Staff are sensitive to children experiencing bereavement, separation, or other trauma. Outreach services may be engaged in partnership with families. One member of staff is trained in *Mental Health First Aid* and can help with signposting to support services.
- Intimate Care: Staff are trained in child protection and provide care professionally and respectfully. All care is recorded and shared with parents/carers.
- Medication: Parental consent is required. Medical Action Plans are created for children who require these and they will be shared with all relevant staff. EA and DE guidance is followed.

Shaftesbury Nursery School is an *Allergy Awareness Zone*. All families are informed during induction if issues are present. (This would be year-year specific.)

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the school's policy review schedule and updated to reflect current EA and CCEA guidance.

Policy: Reviewed September 2025

Signed by Principal:

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Policy reviewed:

Little Feet Taking Giant Steps