

Dumfries and Galloway Education Services

Saint Columba's Primary School Handbook

Contents

1. Letter from Head of Service, Education Services
2. Welcome from the Head Teacher Mr McIntyre
3. Education Services Aims
4. School Aims
5. School Ethos
6. School Information
 - 6.1 Name/Address/Telephone No/Website(if any) / Email Address
 - 6.2 Headteacher details
 - 6.3 Roll of School / denominational status (if any)/ Status of Gaelic
 - 6.4 Nursery (if any)
 - 6.5 School Staff
 - 6.6 Terms and Holidays
7. Contact Us
 - 7.1 If you need to find out something
 - 7.2 If you have concerns
 - 7.3 If you have a complaint
8. How the School Works?
 - 8.1 Enrolment
 - 8.2 Moving from Nursery
 - 8.3 School Day
 - 8.4 School Uniform/Dress Policy
 - 8.5 School Meals
 - 8.6 School Transport
 - 8.7 Class organisation
 - 8.8 Playground Supervision
 - 8.9 Positive Behaviour and Celebrating Success

9. The Curriculum
 - 9.1 Curriculum for Excellence
 - 9.2 Subject Information
 - 9.3 Health and Well Being Education
10. The Wider Curriculum
 - 10.1 Extra Curricular Activities
 - 10.2 Pupil Council
 - 10.3 School Trips
 - 10.4 The Community
 - 10.5 Eco Schools etc.
11. Home/ School Partnership
 - 11.1 Parent Council
 - 11.2 Communicating with Home
 - 11.3 Attendance
 - 11.4 Homework
 - 11.5 How is my child doing? (Assessment and Reporting)
 - 11.6 Pupil Profiles
 - 11.7 Helping the School
 - 11.8 Helping your child
 - 11.9 Useful Information
12. Support for All
 - 12.1 Pupil Support
 - 12.2 Pastoral Care
 - 12.3 Additional Support for Learning
 - 12.4 Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
 - 12.5 Child Protection
 - 12.6 Anti -Bullying
 - 12.7 Educational Psychology Service
 - 12.8 Home School Link Worker Service
13. Moving to Secondary School
 - 13.1 Catchment Secondary School

13.2 Transition Activities

13.3 Induction Days

13.4 Support Available

14. School Improvements

14.1 Improvement plan and priorities

14.2 Achievements

14.3 More information

15. Health and Safety

15.1 Emergency Arrangements

15.2 Severe Weather and School Closure Arrangements

15.3 Health Care

15.4 Data Protection

15.5 Images of Pupils

15.6 Use of the Internet

16. Other Useful Information

16.1 Pupil/Parent Support Unit

16.2 Catholic Schools

16.3 Policies

Welcome to St Columba's Primary School



Dear Parents,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you and your family to St Columba's Primary. This handbook is written to provide you with information that you may find helpful while your child is with us, here at St Columba's.

Your child's school years are so important to you as parents and to us as teachers. When we all work together to achieve the best conditions for learning, our children will accept the challenge and reach their potential. At St Columba's your child will be encouraged to be himself / herself, to find his/her talents and awaken interests. It is an exciting time and we aim to enable every young person to become independent, responsible, successful and confident. This is best achieved through positive, open and working partnerships between school and home.

This handbook will be informative but there may well be times when you require more information. We are always willing to discuss any issues affecting your son/daughter's education.

We trust your child will be happy and benefit fully from his/her schooling at St Columba's Primary School. Our school motto is Live, Love, Learn.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Barry McIntyre

Head Teacher

Dear Parents,

Dumfries and Galloway Education Services is committed to delivering a high quality education for your child/ren. As part of Dumfries and Galloway Council's overall vision we aim to provide all children and young people with a good start in life and prepare them for adulthood and employment. Education Services cannot deliver this alone for children and young people but work together with others and, as parents, you are one of our key partners. The research tells us that when parents are involved in their child's education the child will do better. The school handbook is one of the ways in which we inform parents, not just about how the school works, but also about how you can help us help your children to succeed in school and life. It gives me pleasure as Head of Education to commend this handbook to you as an invaluable source of information about your school and Education Services.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Brydson, Head of Education

2. About our school

St Columba's Primary School celebrates over fifty years of serving Catholic and non-Catholic families from the Annandale area. We are particularly proud of our school as we reflect upon the many years of fun, excitement and learning that has taken place in this school building since 1962. Our school motto is Live, Love, Learn.

I am delighted to welcome you to our school on Shawhill Road. In this handbook you will find useful information about the school, the staff, the young people and the community which makes up the St Columba's family. We have strong links with the parish of St Columba's and Father Donnelly, Parish Priest. The information contained within will provide a background and an overview to St Columba's Primary but by simply stepping into our school, you will become aware of much more than facts and figures. The ethos of mutual respect, care and love of learning has been commented upon by so many visitors and parents. Indeed the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere of this school was given high praise by HMIE inspectors following a successful school inspection.



St Columba's Primary School

May you find this handbook interesting and informative. Please contact the school office if you have further questions and we will be only too happy to welcome you to St Columba's Primary.

Mr Barry McIntyre, Head Teacher

3. Education Services Aims

Our Aim is to raise levels of attainment, achievement and participation in all our children and young people.

Our Objectives

1. We will ensure that children and young people will be at the centre of our plans.

This means planning by schools and support from Education Services will be focussed on delivering to all our children and young people the entitlements embedded in Curriculum for Excellence and Getting It Right for Every Child.

2. We will improve our partnership working

This means an emphasis on Cluster working, training on Getting It Right For Every Child themes, parental involvement, multi-agency working, partnership with Community Learning and Development (CLD); Professional Learning Communities and collaboration with Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and Further Education colleges.

3. We will encourage innovation, creativity, collaboration and a culture of sharing and learning in all our staff

This means a focus on transformational leadership, professional autonomy and local solutions and building capacity in all our staff.

4. We will streamline our business processes

This means empowering our schools and staff to find better ways of working, with an emphasis on professional autonomy, local solutions, developing leadership, capacity building, effective Continuing Professional Development and implementing Getting It Right for Every Child processes.

4. The Ethos of St Columba's

St Columba's is a Roman Catholic primary school which aims to provide a secure and happy environment in which every pupil can develop God-given talents and grow spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially. Christian values are evident through the way we interact and consider the needs of others.

As teachers we value pupils as unique individuals and encourage them to the utmost in their development of their own personal gifts and creative qualities. We, therefore, concern ourselves not only with the imparting of knowledge and acquisition of skills but in drawing out what is already within each child.

Since "the heart and the human spirit have needs as well as the mind and body" we are also concerned with the development of our pupils' personal growth, their ability to form relationships and to be part of a living and loving community.

We believe that this can be achieved by developing the school as a lively, stimulating and caring community in which there is mutual concern and respect among pupils, teachers and parents and for the environment in which we live. Since parents play a crucial role in the education of their children, we feel it is essential that the partnership between home and school is fostered so that our children can develop to their full potential and achieve personal wholeness.

5.School Aims

We aim to provide every child with the opportunities to develop their God-given talents and express themselves through creativity, critical thinking and achievement.

Our curriculum aims to encourage our children to:

- *acquire the basic tools for learning - literacy, oracy, numeracy
- *apply as well as absorb information
- *think critically and communicate effectively
- *develop the capacity to reason and act independently
- *develop lively, enquiring and imaginative minds
- *develop personal gifts and inspire creativity
- *appreciate the arts
- *develop physical skills and an understanding of healthy lifestyles
- *become more aware of and reflect upon their experience of living in a world with others, acknowledging shared responsibilities for communities, cultures and our environment
- *empower our children as independent learners

The Scottish Government's lifelong learning strategy aims to ensure that everyone develops the attributes, knowledge and skills they will need for life, learning and work. Our curriculum is all the experiences that are planned for learners to support the development of these skills.

Curriculum for Excellence aims to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18.

6. School Information

St Columba's RC Primary School, Shawhill Road, Annan, DG12 6JX

Telephone 01461 202752 email gw08officest@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

Head Teacher - Mr R Barry McIntyre

The current school roll is 58 students and St Columba's Primary does not have a nursery provision.

Teaching staff – Miss Catriona Gilfillan, Mrs Lynn Maxwell, Mrs Yvonne Panczak, Mr Barry McIntyre, Mr Michael Brown (Additional Support for Learning Teacher), Mrs Ruth Foster (Physical Education Specialist Teacher), Ms Gillian Davis (Music Specialist Teacher) and Mrs Bowman (Art Specialist Teacher)

Support staff - Mrs Lesley Brown (Clerical Assistant), Mrs Margaret Nordon, Mrs Karen Smart, Mrs Alison Savage, Mrs Fiona Houston (Learning Assistants) Mrs Andrea Keenan (Playground Supervisor and Learning Assistant), Mrs Jane Ferguson (Janitor), Mrs Maria Dalgliesh (Cook), Mrs Kath Anderson (Kitchen Assistant), Mrs Christine Thorburn (Cleaner)

Term dates available on the council website

7. Contact Us

You may contact school staff in a number of ways. In the first instance you can call the school office and speak with Mrs Brown. The school office also has a separate email address which parents are welcome to use. If you wish to speak with Mr McIntyre, Head Teacher then you arrange a meeting or a call back through the school office. Teaching staff are always available for a chat at the end of the school day and they will be at the school gates at 3:05pm. If you wish to speak with staff in a more private setting then please request an appointment through the school office or directly with the member of teaching staff. We firmly believe that the education of your child is a partnership and we welcome discussions with parents. While we provide set times throughout the year for parental consultations, we have an open door policy and regularly meet informally to discuss the needs of children and families.

If you have a specific concern this should be directed to the Head Teacher in the first instance.

In St Columba's we have a clear complaints procedure and all complaints should be directed to the Head Teacher. We record any complaints and make clear our planned next steps in response to a complaint.

Education Services operate within the complaints handling procedures for Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Education Services aims for enquiries, concerns and complaints to be dealt with at as local a level as possible, where possible at individual school level. Individual schools are supported to ensure that matters of complaint are recorded, acknowledged and responded to within normal complaints handling timescales, normally response within 10 working days. Normally issues arising at a school level should be brought to the attention of the class teacher and senior school staff, such as Head or Depute Headteachers as appropriate. Further support and advice can be provided to individual

complainants or teaching staff through contacting either the complaints handler within Education Services or to the Councils Corporate Complaints Unit.

8. How the School Works?

8.1 Enrolment

In the first instance parents seeking a place in St Columba's should speak with the Head Teacher.

Parents may opt for a place in any school they wish, at any time, but priority for a place will be granted to children from the recognised or 'delineated' catchment area. Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website. Full details on how to enrol or move school are available from the school or on the Council's website (see Section 16). If you have any queries about enrolment please come and speak with the Head Teacher.

8.2 Moving from Nursery

Primary teachers work closely with nursery staff and parents to ensure that information about each child's learning and achievements is passed on. This will help ensure that their learning and development continues without interruption. Staff will also share other information which will help the teacher to support each child's learning – for example relevant health issues, friendship groups and preferred ways of working.

8.3 School Day

Our school welcomes pupils into class at 9.00am. Playground supervision is available from 8:30am. Morning interval begins at 10:40am and classes resume at 11:00am. A healthy tuck shop operates each day and pupils can bring a small amount of money to purchase a snack. Mid-morning milk is also offered and distributed at 10:40am. Children wishing to order milk can do so on Thursdays.

Lunch begins at 12:30pm and all meals are prepared and cooked on site. We have a very high uptake for school meals and the feedback from pupils is consistently high. Classes resume at 1:15pm. The school day finishes at 3:05pm and class teachers accompany pupils to the school gates where parents can collect their children. This is always a good chance to share information with your child's teacher.

8.4 School Uniform/Dress Policy

Our school colours are yellow and blue. The school uniform is fully supported by all our parents and pupils. Uniform order forms are sent home twice a year and requests for further order forms can be made through the school office. Our uniform consists of a white or blue shirt / polo-shirt, blue sweater with a school badge, black or grey trousers for boys / black or grey skirt for girls. In summer many girls wear the school summer dress and many boys prefer black or grey school shorts.

All Dumfries and Galloway schools must have a dress code which encourages pupils to dress in a way appropriate to attendance at school. Clothing which is unacceptable in school under any circumstances would include items which:

- Could potentially encourage factions (eg football colours).
- Could cause offence (eg anti-religious or political slogans).
- Could cause health and safety difficulties such as loose fitting clothing, dangling earrings.
- Are of flammable materials which may be a danger in certain classes.

- Could cause damage to floors.
- Carry advertising, in particular for alcohol or tobacco.
- Could be used to inflict damage on other pupils.

Parents in receipt of a grant for footwear and clothing from the authority will be encouraged to purchase items which are in accordance with the school dress code. Guidance is available on Clothing Grants from Pupil / Parent Support Unit.

While it would not normally be the policy of the authority to exclude a pupil from school solely on the basis of his/her dress, persistent refusal to respond to a reasonable dress code could be deemed to be a challenge to the Headteacher's authority and thus be detrimental to the well-being of the whole school community. In such circumstances, a headteacher could justify the use of the school disciplinary procedures.

8.5 School Meals

Our school lunches are very popular and Mrs Dalgliesh and Mrs Anderson prepare and cook all meals on site. We have one of the highest uptakes in school lunches across Dumfries and Galloway.

Free school meals are available to support families who live and attend a school in Dumfries and Galloway and who are in receipt of qualifying benefits. All Primary 1 -3 pupils currently receive free school meals. Any questions about Free School Meals can be directed to the Pupil/Parent Support Unit (See Section 16).

8.6 School Transport

Who is entitled to school transport?

- Pupils who live 2 miles away from their catchment school if they are under 8 years old
- Pupils who live 3 miles away from their catchment school if they are 8 years and over
- Roman Catholic children attending the denominational school for their address and live the above statutory distances from that school.

How do I find out if my child will receive school transport?

When school transport is required for a pupil, the school will contact the Parent/Pupil Support Unit. If your child is eligible, details of the transport arrangements will be communicated to you in time for the new academic year. You can check whether your child is entitled to school transport using 'Find My Nearest' on the Council's website.

Any alterations to transport arrangements that occur during the school year will be communicated prior to any changes being made. If school bus passes are required these are issued at school.

There is a Policy on School Transport and a Guide for Parents, and also Guidance for transport of children and young people with Additional Support Needs. These are available from your school or on the Council's website or from the Pupil/Parent Support Unit (see Section 16).

8.7 Class organisation –

This year we have three composite classes. Primary 1,2,3 are taught by Mrs Panczak, Primary 4,5 are taught by Mrs Maxwell and Primary 6,7 are taught by Miss Gilfillan.

The maximum number of pupils allowed in any composite class is twenty-five. We currently have three classes of 18, 19 and 21 pupils.

8.8 Playground Supervision

Morning interval and playtime after lunch are supervised by Mrs Keenan. Playground supervision is also available from 8:50am every morning by Mrs Ferguson our janitor.

8.9 Positive Behaviour and Celebrating Success

Good behaviour and effort is rewarded and each class uses a points chart which reflects the school values. At the end of every term we hold a celebration day which marks the achievement and success for all pupils. These events are decided by our Pupil Council and supported by our Parent Council. Weekly assembly also provides a time to celebrate success and the wider achievement of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to bring in awards, medals and certificates gained outside school to celebrate their success. Each pupil has a reward card based on our school values. These are Having Our Say, Success in Learning, Honesty, Kindness and Love, Challenged and Respect. These values were determined by teachers, parents and pupils. We do stress to all pupils that effort is celebrated and awards are not simply granted for being good at something - it is about the effort put in.

9. The Curriculum

9.1 Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is bringing learning to life in the way education is delivered for all 3-18 year olds – in nursery, primary, secondary, at college, workplace or community learning. It takes a fresh approach to what, how and where young people learn. It aims to raise standards, improve knowledge and develop skills, closing the gap between the lowest and highest performers. Ultimately it aims to nurture young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

How does Curriculum for Excellence work?

- The 'learner journey' will be joined up from 3-18 to avoid gaps and overlaps in learning and to make the most of achievements outside school.
- Learners will work at a pace that suits, with enough challenge and support to stretch them.
- Lessons will be more engaging, inspiring and relevant to everyday life.
- Teachers will make connections between subjects, helping children make sense of the world.
- Children will learn *how* to learn and how to use their learning, not just memorise information to pass tests. This will help them adapt in an uncertain future with the ability to think for themselves, make sound judgements, challenge, enquire and find solutions.
- There's more focus on knowledge *and* skills – including vital skills: literacy and numeracy, which underpin all learning and are critical in life.
- There are changes to assessment and how progress is reported to give learners, parents and employers better information on potential and achievement.

9.2 Subject Information

St Columba's Primary School - High Level Curriculum Map

Mathematics & Languages	The learning and teaching of the progression of core literacy and numeracy skills. Wherever appropriate these skills will be contextualised in interdisciplinary learning. However at times the necessary progression of skills may need to be taught as stand alone subjects. In P6 & P7 this would also include the programme of Modern Languages in Primary Schools.
Health & Wellbeing	This will include two hours of PE for all pupils. The approaches to these learning experiences will need to be differentiated dependant on the age and stage of pupils. It may include specific areas of Health & Wellbeing such as Sex Education, Drug & Alcohol Awareness or Stranger Danger, or may be part of a health & wellbeing based context for learning. It may be at class or whole school level. A progressive framework has been created by staff following pupil consultation.
Subject Specific Learning Experiences	This would include any curriculum subject area that are not being covered at any given time in a context for learning, or may even be an in-depth study of one particular subject area from a context for learning. For example a P4 class studying Scotland – Inventors & Inventions may want to look in-depth at one particular aspect of Technologies. This will be very fluid and the subjects will change/evolve to complement other aspects of learning.

Citizenship	This would relate directly to teaching school behaviour routines, respect for self, others and our community. It would give time to discuss and developed informed views, opinions and values regarding and current personal, local, national or international issues. It would have strong links to the Curriculum for Excellence four capacities. <i>Effective Contributors, Successful Learners, Responsible Citizens, Confident Individuals</i>
Interdisciplinary Learning	This is our 'Contexts for Learning' which will be referred to as organisers of learning – bundles of Es and Os from across areas Opportunities for pupils to contextualise their subject specific learning & use/develop their skills & attitudes. These contexts can be as short as a few days – up to 4-6 weeks maximum (research shows after this interest & learning tails off). A class should not be limited to studying one context for learning at a time. It is very possible and appropriate for instance a P3 class to be studying a health & wellbeing context around things we eat as well as a RME based context on Islam. They would both be independent of each other, developing different focused outcomes. This is particularly important for multi-composite classes like ours.
Self Evaluation / Personalised Learning Planning / Reflection	As we work towards meaningful Personalised Learning Planning & pupils taking greater responsibility for the planning & evaluation of their own learning time will be given to teach the skills required and for pupils to develop their ability to undertake this independently. My Learning Journey will develop and incorporate great target setting opportunities as well as provide a useful source of information for parents. P7 profiles will support self-reflection and evaluation for P7s. Time to discuss strengths and needs should be timetabled with class teacher. This model will be extended to younger pupils and the Learning Journey will be the focus for this guided self-reflection on learning. We are aware that pupils may need to develop vocabulary and phrases around the area of self-evaluation.
Celebration Days Whole School Assemblies	As part of our Promoting Positive Behaviour and Putting Values into practice we organise a Celebration Day in consultation with our Pupil Council. At present we have weekly whole school assemblies (Mondays 1.20-2pm]
Development of the Life & Ethos of the School	All pupils and staff have the responsibility to contribute effectively to the life and ethos of the school. Some examples of this may be in the form of undertaking school committee work, preparing to present at an assembly, planning whole school events or community involvement.
Opportunities for Personalised Learning & Achievement	Many valuable learning experiences happen out with school. This time is for pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills & attitudes towards an area of study or interest from out with school of their own choice. Wider Achievement is celebrated regularly and hobbies and interests are tracked and can feed into planning for teaching and learning. Opportunities for outdoor learning are being developed and these can be included in planning.

There are specific aspects of personal safety and healthy living which classes will cover over a three year cycle. These are deemed important and planned for independent of class topics. Other aspects of health and well being are incorporated into class themes or contexts for learning which link to current world events, for example the London Olympics provided useful opportunities to discuss with pupils the benefits of exercise, sleep and healthy eating.

10. The Wider Curriculum

10.1 Extra Curricular Activities

We offer a wide range of after-school clubs throughout the academic year. Swimming club is every Monday 3:30pm to 4:15pm. Football club is on Tuesdays, Golf and Baking Club on Wednesdays and Craft Club on Thursdays. Gardening club is held on Fridays 3:05pm to 4:15pm. Other clubs such as bikeability, netball, school band take place at other times throughout the year. There is no charge for pupils attending extra curricular activities and we seek to ensure a balance for all ages and interests. As you can imagine, a small school offering so many extra curricular activities is indebted to staff and parent volunteers who give up their time for the children.

10.2 Pupil Council

The St Columba's Primary School Pupil Council was founded in 2011 and makes a valuable contribution to school improvement planning and the school life in general. Members are voted in by classes and representatives attend monthly meetings. We currently have up to twelve pupil councillors.

10.3 School Trips

The Parent Council organise an annual Christmas trip for the whole school as well as part fund the summer trip. These trips have included Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, the Science Museum in Glasgow and Mabie Farm Park in Dumfries.

In the upper school pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential outdoor learning experience. Outdoor activities are provided by fully trained council staff and include rock climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, sailing, orienteering and hill walking.

Classes regularly arrange topic related trips to local places of interest. The river at Annan and Dumfries museum are recent examples. Operation Safety is an important excursion which our older pupils look forward to every year.

Parental permission is always sought prior to school trips and information evenings are arranged as appropriate.

10.4 The Community

St Columba's values partnership working and forging positive links with the community. St Columba's parish church is very much part of the life of our school and pupils are taken to Mass regularly to celebrate feast days and other special occasions. Sometimes Mass is held in school with parishioners attending. We work closely with our cluster schools to offer our pupils chances to mix and compete in quizzes and sporting events. Our school benefits from links with local businesses and the Annan Police. Every year we visit residents in Annan Care Home to entertain and share our Christmas cheer. Community events are planned throughout the year and these are always well attended.

10.5 Eco Schools

Our school Eco group has looked at safer routes to school as well as been influential in the creation of an Eco garden within the grounds of the school. We were awarded the Green Flag in 2014!

11. Home/ School Partnership

11.1 Parent Council

Parent Council meetings are open to all parents and are welcoming and informal. To find out more or to become a member of the Parent Council you should contact Mrs Maria Capstick, Parent Council Chairperson. We are very keen that parents feel able to be involved in their child's education and learning, that they are active participants in the life of the school and they feel able to express their views on school education generally.

"I can still remember the first time we came to visit St Columba's ahead of my son starting school. We were really nervous and knew few people. We were given such a warm welcome by both staff and pupils and other parents that we immediately felt at home. He could not wait to start and, when the time came, settled in immediately. It has been like that ever since. The wonderful community atmosphere envelopes you when you step through the door. It is full of infectious enthusiasm from everyone to "Live, Love, Learn" and our children thrive in body, mind and soul within a Catholic ethos of respect, manners, morals and values, led by teachers that go the extra mile. They bring out the best in each child.

"I joined the parent council to see what I could contribute to enhance all the children's experience of primary school. We strive to provide all the extra treats and events we can for the children, working closely with parents, carers and families for the benefit of our children and school, as well as showing the local community and parish what a great place our school is."

Sharon Jackson, ex-Parent and ex-Chairman of St Columba's RC Primary Parent Council

Every parent who has a child at our school can become a member of the Parent Council. The parent council is a group of parents who have chosen to represent the parent forum. As a member of the Parent Forum, each parent can expect to:-

- Receive information about the school and its activities;
- Hear about what partnership with parents means in our school;
- Be invited to be involved in ways and times that suit you;
- Identify issues you want the parent council to work on with the school;
- Be asked your opinion by the parent council on issues relating to the school and education it provides;
- Work in partnership with staff; and
- Enjoy taking part in school life in whatever way possible

The type of things the parent council may get involved in include:

- Supporting the work of the school;
- Gathering and representing parents' views to the Headteacher, Education Authority and Education Scotland;
- Promoting contact between the school, parents, pupils and the local community;
- Fundraising and organising events;
- Reporting to the parent forum; and
- Being involved in the appointment of senior promoted staff.

11.1 Communicating with Home

A monthly newsletter is designed to keep parents up-to-date with school developments and upcoming events. Newsletters are emailed to families unless a hard copy is specifically requested.

It is important that parents keep their contact details up-to-date with our school office as we use mobile numbers to send text messages. Parental consultation meetings are arranged for November and May. School reports are sent home twice a year. Each pupil keeps a Learning Journey and this document records progress. When barriers to learning are identified or particular concerns arise, staff will arrange a meeting with parents over and above these set meetings. Likewise, parents can request a meeting with teaching staff as and when the need arises.

A School Facebook page is used to share information with the school community.

11.2 Attendance

It is your responsibility as parents to ensure that your child/children attends school regularly. For the safety of all children it is important for you to telephone the school office prior to/at the beginning of the absence. Absences are recorded in class registers and frequent or irregular absences not supported by a reasonable excuse, will be notified to parents and the matter may be referred to the Attendance Officer. If possible please try to make dental/medical appointments outwith school hours. However if this is not possible please inform us in writing or by telephone of the appointment and arrange to collect your child from class.

Unexplained Absences / Lateness

In light of the tragic case in West Lothian in 2005 we have been advised to put procedures in place to ensure the safety of all the children in our care. In order that our procedures work efficiently and effectively we require your cooperation in the following matters:

Parents are asked to ensure that:

1. The school is informed if the family is running late.
2. Any legitimate absence is notified to the school by telephone before 9am on the first day of the absence without fail, and that further calls, before 9am, are made on every subsequent day of the absence.
3. Contact telephone numbers, whether for home, for parents at work or for other emergency contacts, are kept up to date and are genuinely numbers where a response will be received. This is particularly important with mobile phone numbers.
4. The school is kept informed of the absence and the likely return date.
5. Any planned absences are officially notified to the school, in writing, in advance.
6. School would be informed before 1.15pm if a child was not returning to school after lunch as a result of becoming unwell over that period.
7. Latecomers report to the school office on arrival at school.

Staff will ensure that absences are checked every day and follow up the whereabouts of any child for whom we have no explanation. Due to the amount of extra work involved and necessity of having the correct information I would ask you to make note of the above requirements and ensure that you follow through the procedures to ensure the safety of all our children.

Holidays

The Government has highlighted the importance of school attendance to a child's development and has required schools to set targets for improved attendance. Against this background, there is considerable concern at the increasing number of term-time holidays being taken by children at the request of their parents. The Head teacher is not in a position to refuse permission to parents for such holidays but it is the view of Education Services that these holidays should be officially recognised as "unauthorised".

Education Services recognises that some parents have difficulties in arranging their own holidays to suit school holiday periods and parents remain free, within reason, to remove their children for holidays during term time. They should, however, appreciate that prolonged absence from school at any stage is harmful to a child's education and it is not possible – not fair to other children – to direct teaching time to assist a child who has been on holiday to catch up on what they have missed. This means that, whilst parents are at liberty to remove children from school for the purposes of family holidays, such absences will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Parents should continue to inform the school, in writing, of any such holiday plans. The exception to this is when a family holiday is judged to be important to the well-being and cohesion of the family following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events.

11.3 Homework

The purpose of homework is to

- Practise and consolidate class work and skills
- Encourage positive work habits
- Develop research skills
- Involve and inform parents as their children progress

The amount and type of homework will vary throughout the year. There may be research projects, preparation for presentations and finishing-off tasks.

There will however be a core homework programme which will continue throughout the year. Parents and pupils will be informed of the homework timetable during the term. Homework tasks may include reading, spelling, handwriting, times tables and topic related worksheets.

A record of homework received from each pupil will be kept and staff may bring to the attention of the Head Teacher any concerns regarding completion of homework tasks.

11.4 How is my child doing? (Assessment and Reporting)

Children's progress is continually assessed in a number of ways:

- Day to day activities like talking, writing, questions, drawings, behaviour, making things.
- Set tasks where the teacher will observe, listen as children explain and note children's scores in specific end of topic activities.

Accelerated Reading progress is recorded in Individual Learning Journeys as children complete online tests following completion of a reading book. Primary one pupils are assessed within their first seven weeks of school and then again in their final weeks of primary one. This computer based test is known as PIPS. From primary two upwards every pupil will be assessed using CAB (computerised, adaptive and benchmarked) online assessments. P2 to P6 pupils will take their CAB assessments in November and Primary Seven pupils will complete their CAB assessment in March of each year. Formal writing assessments will take place three times a year and using a criterion scale every child will be awarded a grade and given next steps to improve. From Primary two upwards children will be

assessed in March for spelling. A standardised score as well as an individual spelling programme for each pupil will be prepared. This allows teachers to track progress accurately.

Assessment is necessary to ensure progress and to identify any area where a child may need extra help. Although reports are issued twice a year, you are welcome to discuss your child's progress at any time.

My Learning Journey folders will help inform parents of their child's progress and help to encourage self-assessment and personal target setting.

11.5 Pupil Profiles

A profile is a snapshot of a child's or young person's best achievements at a given point in time. Profiles are primarily aimed at children and their parents and draw together a range of information about a child or young person's learning. It is one of the ways in which a child's achievements can be recognised. Nationally it has been agreed that profiles will be produced at the P7 and S3 stage. The profiling process gives your child the opportunity to talk about their learning and achievements with yourself and others and can challenge, motivate and support all learners. The intention is to give a rounded picture of your child, his/her achievements and progress in learning to date. There is a Guidance note for parents on profiling which is available from your school.

11.7 Helping your child

There are many things which as a parent you can do to support your child's learning in school:-

- **Listen, talk, and encourage** – this can have a big influence on children's learning
- **Encourage your child to talk** to you about their learning, what learning is happening at school and do what you can at home to build on that
- **Talk** to your child about their strengths and interests and how they are progressing
- **Encourage your child to talk** to you about their next steps in learning and find out how you can work with the school to support this
- **Ask for help** if you think your child needs it for any reason.
- **Praise** your child if he/she is working hard at something or has achieved something within or out of school
- **Encourage any reading**
- **Look for opportunities at home** to develop literacy and numeracy skills: money, number problems, time, measuring, matching, size, reading, writing, understanding instructions, questioning information
- **Encourage your child to take part in activities** e.g. hobbies, clubs which will provide opportunities to develop a range of skills
- **Help them work on tasks on their own** and then talk about it with you afterwards
- **Do things together where appropriate** – learn together e.g. if your child has a project or task to do, take an interest and discuss with them what he/she is doing or offer support if this is needed.
- **Help prepare for change** particularly at [key transitions](#) – talk about the change together.
- **Talk** to them about how they are feeling
- **Work together with the school** by taking part in discussions about your child's learning and progress e.g. at parents nights, reviews

Information provided by Education Scotland – Parentzone

11.6 Helping the School

There are many ways in which parents and grandparents can be of help to the school. The Parent Council plays an important role in the life of the school. If however, commitment to meet regularly proves difficult you may wish to offer your help at Parent Council events like school discos or trips. Parents also show support by attending Christmas shows, school masses and end of term services.

11.9 Useful Information

For more information on parental involvement or to find out more about parents as partners in their child's learning, please contact the school or visit the Education Scotland website.

12. Support for All

12.1 Pupil Support – when staff or parents feel there is a barrier to a child's learning, an initial record of concern is completed and the matter is discussed with Mr Brown our Additional Support for Learning teacher. Parents are involved in discussions at this stage. An outcome of this meeting may be a short term programme of work to support a child in a particular area. If there is a need for ongoing support then an Individual Education Programme will be set up, IEP. In some cases the additional support may be minimal and advice from Mr Brown may suffice, with a pupil competing extra tasks in normal classroom settings.

12.2 Pastoral Care - St Columba's is a RESPECT school and pupils are encouraged to share concerns with teachers and support staff. At all times, pupils and staff should conduct themselves with respect for others' feelings and property. A Respect handbook for pupils has been created by staff and pupils. We have clear guidelines for behaviour and an updated Anti-bullying policy. These documents are available on our website and are displayed in the school's main entrance.

The school is a community which relies on each member playing his/her part.

Pupils

Pupils have a vital role in creating a pleasant atmosphere and a good working environment. It is expected that pupils will:

- Show respect and care for school buildings, property and grounds
- Show courtesy and respect for each other
- Show courtesy and respect for teachers and visitors to our school
- Come to school in appropriate school wear
- Come to school with the appropriate equipment for the day's lessons
- Work quietly without distracting others
- Contribute to group tasks with enthusiasm and sensitivity to others
- Arrive in school on time
- Only leave the school grounds with permission
- Always complete homework tasks
- Walk when moving around the school
- Only enter the school building at break times with permission from Mrs Keenan or a class teacher
- Place coats, bags and shoes tidily in the areas provided
- Only enter the school car park with permission

Teachers

Teachers will:

- Treat pupils with courtesy and respect
- Set simple, positive class rules
- Praise appropriate behaviour and effort
- Be consistent
- Document incidents and problems
- Have high expectations of all pupils

Parents

The school recognises the vital part to be played by full cooperation between parents and school as each can:

- Reinforce the good work and behaviour habits
- Build up responsible attitudes and self-discipline in children.

12.3 Additional Support for Learning

“A new law, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, replaced the law relating to Special Educational needs in November 2005. This new law introduced a single structure for meeting the needs of children who require additional support to ensure they can make the most of their education.

Any child who needs more or different support to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools is said to have ‘additional support needs’. This includes a larger group of children who may need extra help with their education for a wider variety of reasons. These reasons include issues arising from e.g. social and emotional difficulties, bullying, a physical disability, having English as an additional language, a sensory impairment or communication difficulty.

Support therefore may need to come from health professionals and/or social work as well as from within education. Your child’s needs may last for a short time or they may be complex and need additional support for a number of years. For some children it may be appropriate to have a Co-ordinated Support Plan which sets out annual targets that may require input from other agencies, e.g. speech and language therapist.

The level of support needed will vary from child to child and allocation of support is organised equitably across all schools in the Authority in consultation and agreement with the schools themselves.”

12.4 Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is an approach from The Scottish Government that sets out how schools and other services should work with children and their families. GIRFEC is all about ensuring that children get the help they need when they need it – the right help at the right time. For you and your child, GIRFEC means that:

- You are the expert on your child and what you think matters. Getting it right for every child means that the School will always seek to involve you, to listen to your opinions and take them seriously.
- From April 2013 your child will have a Named Person in the School. If you or your child need any advice or any support, the Named Person is your first point of contact and will make sure you get the help or advice that you need. Having a Named Person means that if there is anything that could affect your child’s wellbeing, he or she will receive support as quickly as possible so that problems do not develop.
- If your child has complex needs and needs help from several different services, GIRFEC means that all these services must work together for you and your child. You should never have to keep telling your story to lots of different staff in the School or the Education Department or the NHS. Your child will have a single plan that everyone works to and everyone is clear about what they are doing. When your child moves to secondary school there will be a Transition Plan in place for them in good time.

12.5 Child Protection

All children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect. Every adult in Scotland has a role in ensuring all our children and young people live safely and have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The vision for all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that they should be: **safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected** and **responsible** and **included**. Schools and front-line education and child care services will play an important role in ensuring all children and young people are safe and well. Further information is contained within the [Child Protection Policy for Schools, Pre-School and Child Care Services](#) which is available from the school and the on the Council website.

12.6 Educational Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists aim to improve the life chances of all children and young people. Working in partnership with families and other services, we use applied psychology and knowledge of child development to address inequalities, support vulnerability and enhance inclusion. We seek to ensure that young people realise their potential to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

We do this by:

- Working with others in a consultative way to help them make sense of difficulties and make informed choices and decisions
- Sharing knowledge about 'what works' and promoting evidence informed approaches to develop the policy and practice of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in our educational establishments and communities
- Raising awareness of the crucial role of communication, relationships and nurture in children's lives
- Training and developing the skills of other professionals to improve children's attainment and achievement
- Highlighting the interactive nature of assessment, teaching and learning
- Designing and implementing interventions in partnership with others which support individuals and communities to develop resilience and ensure that children are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.
- Supporting effective transitions (early years into primary, primary to secondary and secondary to post school) to improve the life chances of young people

The Psychological Service is based in offices in Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Annan, and each school has an identified Educational Psychologist. Further information about the service is available from the school.

12.7 Home School Link Worker Service

A Home Link Worker can meet with parents/carers, children or young people to offer advice or help with the sorts of things that can affect a child's learning. These could be connected to a child or young person's home or school life. The service aims to provide help and advice early and prevent something small from growing into a problem. A Headteacher can ask for this support on a parent's/carer's behalf.

Please note – this service is under review at time of writing and an update will be required following decisions in December 2015.

13. Moving to Secondary School

13.1 Catchment Secondary School

Transfer from primary to secondary school will be dealt with by direct approach to parents from individual primary schools. Our catchment secondary school is Annan Academy, or St Joseph's College, Dumfries (for Catholic pupils) . Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website. Parents can opt for any secondary school and full details on how to enrol or move school are available from the school or on the Council's website.

13.2 Transition Activities

In the summer term primary seven pupils will have opportunities to mix with pupils from other schools and transition activities include inter-school quizzes and meetings with staff from Annan Academy. The Catholic secondary in Dumfries is St Joseph's College and the Head Teacher Mrs E B Jones arranges events throughout the year to bring together primary seven pupils from all the Catholic primaries in Dumfries and Galloway. The highlight of these experiences is a retreat to Whithorn where the pupils, teachers and priests celebrate Holy Mass on the beach.

It may be necessary to provide some pupils with additional support during the transition to secondary and extended transition programmes are available following consultation with parents and secondary support staff.

13.3 Induction Days

Primary seven pupils will have three and a half consecutive days at Annan Academy in June and those choosing to attend St Joseph's College will have four full induction days.

13.4 Support Available

Enhanced transition is the term used to describe special arrangements put in place to support pupils who we might expect to find the move to secondary difficult. The nature of that support depends upon the individual and is very much a joint decision following discussion with parents, primary staff, secondary staff, outside agencies if applicable and of course the pupil.

14. School Improvements

14.1 Improvement plan and priorities

In May each year, the school publishes a Standards & Quality Report providing all stakeholders with a comprehensive summary of the school's work and learners' achievements over the last year. The first part of this report provides an overview of the school's progress in addressing its key priorities, while the second part gives information about, for example, how well pupils are learning and achieving; how well the school is supporting children/young people to develop and learn. In June, we publish a School Improvement Plan which outlines the key priorities for the school during the year ahead, following due consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The plan indicates the expected impact of priorities on pupil learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward. Both the report and the plan are published on the school's web-site and are also available in hard copy, on request.

A copy of school improvement planning documents are available from the Head Teacher upon request.

14.2 Achievements

Our school is proud of so many achievements. There are now two trophy cabinets in the school dining hall and we are looking to purchase a third. For a small school we have much to celebrate in terms of first place trophies for swimming, football, school choir, speech making and Highland dance.

At the end of every academic year special awards are presented to children who have shown outstanding commitment and achievement. The categories for these awards are:

Artist Talent

Musical Talent

Most Improved Swimmer

Sports Champion Boy

Sports Champion Girl

Swimmer of the Year

Literacy Award

Pupil of the Year

As stated earlier in this handbook, we celebrate and reward effort rather than natural ability thus providing an equal playing field for everyone to meet out high expectations.

15. Health and Safety

15.3 Emergency Procedures

If your child feels ill during the school day and we feel that he/she would be better at home, we will telephone you or your emergency contact. Minor accidents, e.g. cuts, bruises, are dealt with by the school staff. Serious accidents are few, but should one occur your child will be immediately taken either to your doctor or to hospital, if necessary, and you or your emergency contact will be notified. We cannot stress enough the importance of supplying the school with the relevant information we require in such a situation, i.e. your own home and work number and a telephone number of an emergency contact.

We will request such information at the beginning of each new school year. Please update this as necessary

15.2 Severe Weather and School Closure Arrangements

Headteachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it absolutely necessary in the best interests of the pupils. In these circumstances parents will be communicated with in a variety of ways including text messages/ phone calls and emergency contact arrangements. All school closures will be notified on the Council Website.

15.3 Health Care

Education Services is committed to ensuring that all children are able to fully participate in the life of the school. Many children will require their health care needs to be met at sometime within the nursery/school environment, for most children this will be for short periods of time only, but for some children this may require more long term planning and support. If your child has any health care needs please contact the school to discuss arrangements. Full details of the support available and your role as a parent and the role of your child are contained within [The Nursery and School Policy on Health Care Procedures Sept 2012](#) which is available from the school or on the Council website.

15.4 Data Protection

Your child's personal data will be held by the school. All personal data is held on our secure school management information system. We will ensure that the information we hold is accurate and up to date and each year you will be sent an Update Form detailing the information held by the school for you to check and update as required. Access to the school management information system is by individual user and is password protected. Furthermore, access to confidential data is restricted to staff in school as appropriate.

15.5 Images of Pupils

We keep a photographic record of events at the school and this is used for a number of purposes. From time to time we also feature in the local press and we have also appeared on television. The authority has a policy on the use of images of pupils. You will be asked to read this when your child enrolls and to clarify your consent with regard to the publication of images of your child. This permission will be obtained when your child starts school or at a new school, but you can amend your permission at any time by contacting the school office.

15.6 Use of the Internet

As part of the process of learning we allow our children supervised access to the Internet and e-mail. The authority runs its own filter system to ensure that young people are not at risk from exposure to inappropriate material. This filtering system is regularly being upgraded. We have a policy for use of the Internet and a contract for responsible use, which we ask parents and young people to sign up to.

16. Other Useful Information

16.1 Pupil / Parent Support Unit

The Pupil /Parent Support Unit is there to help parents and pupils and can be contacted on the numbers shown below regarding any aspect of Free School Meals/Clothing Grants, Education Maintenance Allowance, School Transport, Home Education, Parent Council administration, school transfers and enrolment, school catchment areas, performance licences, insurance matters and financial support for those pupils entering higher education.

(01387) 260437

(01387) 260498

(01387) 260433

(01387) 260493

16.2 Catholic Schools

ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

St Andrew's, Craigs Road, Dumfries	01387 273001
St Columba's, Shawhill Road, Annan	01461 202752
St Joseph's, Lewis Street, Stranraer	01776 703460
St Ninian's, Church Lane, Newton Stewart	01671 402210
St Teresa's, Lochside Road, Dumfries	01387 255732

Before applying for a place in a Roman Catholic school, please contact the Head Teacher of the school.

16.3 Policies

There are a number of National, Education Services and school policies which will provide information on a range of issues. Further details of all of these are available from your school or on the Council website. The following is a list of the policies which may be most relevant to you and your child/ren although this is not an exhaustive list:-

- Acceptable Use of Dumfries and Galloway Council's ICT Facilities In Schools (2009)
- Child Protection Policy for Schools, Pre-Schools and Childcare Services -
- Children Absent from School through Ill Health – Guidance (2011)
- Curriculum Swimming Policy (2012)
- Digital Images Policy (2012)– Taking and Using Images of Pupils
- Dumfries and Galloway Equal Opportunities Policy and related Equality Schemes
- Enrolling in Schools – Placement Policy(2012)
- Exclusion from Schools – Policy and Procedures (2010)
- Inappropriate Use of Social Networking Sites (2011)
- Parental Involvement Strategy (2006) – *this is under review*
- Primary School Class Organisation (2011)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme (2011)
- Providing Intimate Care for Children and Young People with Disabilities – National Guidelines for Schools
- Providing Intimate Care for Children – Procedures for Schools and Nurseries (2011)
- Nursery and Schools Policy on Health Care Procedures (2012)
- Respect for All – Anti-Bullying Procedures (2011)
- School Transport Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones and/or Internet Bullying – Procedures for Schools when drawing up policies (2007)
- Volunteer Policy and Procedures for Schools (2012)