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WELCOME TO STRATHCONON SCHOOL

The staff and pupils would like to welcome you to our school.

We aim to create a happy atmosphere where children can learn many kinds of 'lessons' which will help them develop the skills necessary to live a contented, useful and fulfilling life wherever they may choose to do so.

Strathconon is a single-teacher school in the centre of the scattered village of Strathconon in one of the most beautiful glens in the Highlands. The school has an elevated position, enjoying excellent views to the hills of the west.

The main primary classroom is in a stone and slate building dating back over one hundred years. There is also a demountable unit housing the nursery/general purposes room, toilets, kitchen and office. Both buildings provide a bright stimulating environment in which learning can take place.

Our playground has been a focus for development over the past few years. Work continues to be carried out thanks to the concerted efforts of parents, staff, children and members of the local community. It is a great achievement and we are very proud of it.

It is our hope that your child's experience here will be enjoyable and memorable.

For this to happen it is crucial that you, too, feel part of the school.

Constructive and productive liaison between school, home and the community is vital and we look to you as parents to help us build a successful, happy and well disciplined school.

As the parent is the most important role model, if your child sees the value you place on education then they are almost certain to adopt similar values for themselves. As a parent you play a vital part in your child's learning process.

Spend time with your child, talk about a range of issues not just connected with the school. Play various games with them, such as board games, card games, charades etc... Read to your child (whatever their age) daily if possible and encourage a love of literature. Take your child to a variety of places to develop their interests e.g. walks, the beach, museums, galleries.

Encourage your child to keep fit and healthy by taking regular exercise and eating healthy foods. Impress upon your child the importance of having respect for both themselves and other people.

All the staff at Strathconon School work very hard as a team to ensure that your child receives quality education in a happy and secure environment. Education is a partnership between home and school. If either you or your child is unhappy about an aspect of school life then please discuss your concerns with the Head Teacher.

Hopefully you will find this booklet informative and helpful. If there is anything you are uncertain of or if you have any ideas or suggestions as to other items which need to be included in the future, please let the Head Teacher know.

The information contained in this booklet is as accurate as possible at the time of writing but can be subject to alteration to accommodate changing circumstances.

Please keep this information and add any amendments or additions which may be issued in the future.

Aileen MacQueen

HEAD TEACHER

Strathconon School, Strathconon, By Muir of Ord, Ross-shire IV6 7QQ

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Blog

VISION

**Strathconon School – an active, caring, encouraging
and special place for all to learn**

AIMS

We will meet this through our aims of:

**Staff and parents/carers working together
to help children develop into:**

Confident Individuals, who ask questions, manage their feelings, are active and get along with all kinds of people

Responsible Citizens, who appreciate and look after the local environment, have an interest in, and understanding of, the wider world, and respect the rights and belongings of others

Effective Contributors, who can communicate well, work as part of a team, be creative and enterprising, and set a good example

Successful Learners, who are enthusiastic and motivated, always aim high and try their best, learn independently and with others, and can use their skills and knowledge in different situations

(Vision and Aims were reviewed in consultation with pupils, parents and staff in Oct 2008 and will be reviewed once more in 2010)

STAFF:

HEAD TEACHER	Ms. AILEEN MACQUEEN
POINT 5/MANAGEMENT TEACHER:	Mrs. HEATHER BROCKMAN
NURSERY CO-ORDINATOR TEACHER:	Mrs. PATRICIA RICHARD
VISITING P.E. TEACHER:	Mrs. TRISH FRASER
VISITING MUSIC TEACHER:	Mrs. ALISON BROUGH
NURSERY ASSISTANT:)	
CLASSROOM ASSISTANT:)	Mrs. SUSAN McLENNAN
COOK:)	
CLERICAL ASSISTANT:	Mrs. ANNE FRASER
CLEANER:	Mrs. JACKIE CAMERON

THE SCHOOL DAY:

PRIMARY:

Monday:	P1-P7:	8-50 am - 3-15 pm
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday:	P1-P3:	8-50 am - 2-30 pm
	P4-P7:	8-50 am - 3-15 pm
Friday:	P1-P7:	8-50 am - 12-45 pm

There is a 20 minute morning interval and 45 minute lunch break.

NURSERY:

Monday - Thursday: 8-50 am - 11-20 am

With prior notice this may occasionally change - e.g. to allow participation in visits or whole school activities.

ENROLMENT:

The catchment area extends from Scardroy in the West to Garramatic in the East. Parents who would like to place their children in Strathconon School are invited to phone and arrange a suitable time to visit. Pupils living outwith the area will be given places should they be available.

A notice in the local press will indicate the dates and times of enrolment. You are most welcome to visit the school at any time prior to a placement being made for your child. An appointment can be made by telephone. The child's birth certificate should be brought along. The Head Teacher should be alerted about any health problems or any other circumstances which affect the child's well-being.

PRIMARY

Children who are four by 29th February may start primary 1 in August. They will be enrolled in February.

NURSERY

Start dates for nursery as follows:

<u>January:</u>	children with a third birthday between 1 st September - 31 st December
<u>April:</u>	children with a third birthday between 1 st January - 29 th February
<u>August:</u>	children with a third birthday between 1 st March - 31 st August

Children may now also start nursery a week after their third birthday. In this case parents will pay for the sessions until the official starting date.

The following information is given in alphabetical order:

ABSENCE:

A child should not be sent to school if he/she is unwell. The school must be notified of their absence officially by phone call, letter or in person by the child's parent/carer, by 9-15 am on the first day of illness and kept updated thereafter. The school should also be notified in this same way re: doctor and dental appointments as far in advance as possible.

Please try to ensure that holidays are taken within the set school holidays as periods of absence can disrupt your child's education as well as giving the message that holidays are more important than school! Each year every school is required by the Scottish Office to supply details of absences - both authorised and unauthorised.

Parents must inform the school in writing if their child is going to be taken out of school during term time for reasons other than medical.

ASSEMBLIES:

An assembly is held regularly. This takes different forms e.g. a story which highlights a moral issue which is then explored; discussion of important local or global issues; reinforcement of school rules and behaviour, and recognising children's achievements. There is regular input from the local Church of Scotland minister.

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE:

Children are encouraged to be responsible, reliable, sensible, trustworthy and honest and to respect and consider other people, and their property. We expect them to be well mannered and courteous. If a child appears to have a problem with our discipline code parents will be invited to discuss their child's behaviour.

We endeavour to treat children fairly and make them fully aware of their responsibilities within the school. A balanced outlook provides them with security and as a result they feel much happier in their learning situation.

Bullying of any description will not be tolerated. The school has an anti-bullying policy in place. Please ask to see a copy of this policy.

SCHOOL RULES

There are not many school rules, but the ones that we have should help us to be safe, have a good learning environment, enjoy coming to school and have fun! All school rules are carefully explained to the children, pointing out the reasons behind them,

- Pupils will spend playtimes in the playground in fine weather, and in the classroom in bad weather.
- When inside, pupils must not run about, in case they knock things over, or worse, hurt themselves or other people.
- During school time no one should be out of school without permission.
- Pupils must not climb trees or on to the walls.
- Respect for other people and their property is expected at all times.
- Pupils should care for the school and put their litter in a bin.

CHILD PROTECTION:

From time to time incidents can occur within the school setting which cause concern and could indicate that a pupil is suffering some form of abuse.

In terms of Highland Child Protection Committee inter-agency Protection Guidelines, Education Service staff must report such incidents to Social Work Services which can lead to a joint Social Work/Police investigation.

All agencies involved in Child Protection are obliged to make the welfare of children their paramount consideration and this will be the priority for Education Service staff.

More information about Child Protection Procedures within Highland can be obtained from:

*Child Protection Development Offices, Mrs. Susan MacLaren, Highland Child Protection Committee, Kinmylies Building, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NN
Telephone (01463) 703 483, Fax (01463) 713 237.*

CURRICULUM:

A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE/5-14 PROGRAMME

Most parents will by now be familiar with the term 'A Curriculum for Excellence' which has been developing over the past few years and is gradually being implemented. Its values and principles are based on enabling all our children to become:

Successful Learners
Confident Individuals

Effective Contributors
Responsible Citizens

The Curriculum for Excellence recognises the need for children to access a broader range of achievements, as well as striving for high attainment. The school curriculum is split into eight main areas which are:

- Languages
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Expressive Arts
- Religious & Moral Education
- Health & Well Being
- Technologies
- Science

The school is adopting Curriculum for Excellence guidelines, while continuing to refer to the 5-14 Guidelines previously issued by the Scottish Education Office. The curricular guidelines offer a range of targets and learning outcomes which children should meet at various stages.

Current attainment levels for the 5-14 programmes are defined as:

Level A - should be attainable in the course of P1 - P3 by almost all pupils.

Level B - should be attainable by some pupils in P3 or even earlier, but certainly by most pupils in P4.

Level C - should be attainable in the course of P4 - P6 by most pupils.

Level D - should be attainable by some pupils in P5 - P6 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P7.

Level E - should be attainable by some pupils in P7-S1 but certainly by most in S2.

Level F - should be attainable in part by some pupils, and completed by a few pupils in the course of P7-S2.

There will be changes to this levelling system when the Curriculum for Excellence is fully implemented.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If it is felt that a child has particular learning needs, then Support for Learning staff are contacted and if necessary the Educational Psychologist may be consulted. If a child should require additional support, parents would be invited to a discussion about the needs of their child and advised of the level of support that may be required. The Support for Learning Teacher will also work from time to time with particular children on individualised educational programmes of work.

ASSESSMENTS/REPORTING/MEETINGS

Each pupil's progress is carefully monitored by the teacher. The teacher continually assesses children's work (formative assessment) through questioning, discussion, observation. Self and peer assessment is also encouraged. The results of this type of observation are used to plan the next piece of work or to decide on how best to help a child if difficulties arise. Work is planned yearly, termly and daily. Some examples of the children's work are kept each year as part of the pupil's profile. Children take samples of their work home on a regular basis to share with parents. The reports are issued annually to parents in the summer term and a copy is retained in the school. Parents are encouraged to provide a written comment on their child's report. When the pupils are deemed ready they will sit National Assessments in Mathematics, Reading and Writing.

Individual parent meetings are held each term to discuss children's progress, to give more insight into their learning, and to give parents ideas of how to help at home. Parents are welcome to make an appointment to see the Head Teacher with regard to any aspect of their child's school life at any time. An Open House is held at least once a year, where parents are invited into the class to watch their children at work. An Information Evening is held at least once a year to give all parents the chance to learn more about and discuss particular areas of the curriculum and aspects of school life. A meeting for P1 parents is held in the first term to familiarise them with the materials used, inform them of aspects of the curriculum and to explain the teaching and learning process.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Art, Music, Drama and P.E. make up the Expressive Arts curriculum. These areas draw from the children's personal experiences and feelings and from their project work. Aesthetic subjects are recognised and promoted as essential parts of a balanced curriculum. At present we have visiting teachers of Music and P.E. The village hall and local Games Field are used for P.E. activities.

The pupils successfully present entertainment at Christmas and at the end of the summer term. These events are open to the community. We endeavour to enrich the curriculum through visits to Eden Court Theatre and other venues, and by inviting specialist groups such as Feis Rois to work with the pupils whenever possible.

HEALTH/WELL-BEING/PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the course of a school year, all pupils are encouraged to look at the three areas encompassing health education:

Emotional Health - this explores emotions, feelings and relationships - how they affect us.

Social Health - this explores the interaction of the individual, the community and the environment in relation to health and safety.

Physical Health - this explores the physical factors in relation to our health and looking after ourselves.

Schools have responsibilities to help each child develop personally and socially. This is a very important part of education. We aim to enable the children to have a positive regard for the needs of self and others, develop skills to enable them to participate effectively and safely in society, and take increasing responsibility for their own lives. We try to develop a high self esteem in each child by consistently praising their efforts and achievements.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Research evidence shows that homework does have a positive effect on learning.

"Where children were set homework, were encouraged by parents to do it and had it regularly marked in school there was a steady and consistent association between that and the level of performance."

(Research carried out by Jordanhill College of Education)

The school has recently updated the policy for homework which can be seen below:

We recognise that in its broadest sense homework is any kind of learning which takes place out of school. However, for our purposes we will consider homework to be:

- Work set by teachers and completed at home in a given time
- Work which reflects or develops class work and has clearly understood expectations regarding standards.

AIMS

Through setting homework we aim to:

- Encourage independence and good learning habits
- Consolidate work taught in school and therefore raise attainment levels.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for parents to become involved in children's learning.

In addition we feel that homework will provide opportunities for:

- Assessing progress

- Making use of a wider range of resources
- Building pupil confidence by discussion of work with parents.
- Providing for parents a specific learning activity in which they can closely participate with their children.

MAIN FEATURES OF HOMEWORK TASKS

The content of the task set may vary from stage to stage and at different times throughout a session but should always be:

- Clearly understood by the pupil and closely related to ongoing class work.
- At an appropriate level of ability for the child.
- Able to be completed without specialised resources
- Reflect a variety of activities although generally concentrating on basic skills.
- Marked promptly with some feedback given.
- Given with a specific return date clearly communicated.

AT P1-2/3 typical tasks will be:

- Discussing/reading of reading books and related activities
- Reinforcing new words - often using a game
- Reinforcing phonics
- Practising handwriting skills
- Maths activities
- Finding out something or bringing in items for a class activity
- Spelling games or activities
- Personal research
- Learning a poem or song
- ICT skills (if a child does not have access to a computer/internet at home, time will be given for such pupils to do this work at school)

AT P4-7 typical tasks will be:

- Spelling games or activities
- Maths activities including problem solving
- Language activities
- Word puzzles

- Reading activities
- Research e.g. gathering information for class project
- Preparing for a presentation
- ICT skills (if a child does not have access to a computer/internet at home, time will be given for such pupils to do this work at school)

PHONICS

During the Early Stages of school, children will be developing their phonics skills mainly using the 'Jolly Phonics' programme. Reinforcement of phonic work covered in class will be given as homework. This may include word making, sound reinforcement, looking at simple sentence structure and practising the actions for specific sounds.

SPELLING

At all stages we use the **LOOK COVER WRITE CHECK** method. The child looks at the word carefully, covers it up and tries to write it from memory, then checks to see if it is correct. Children are always encouraged to have a go at spelling a word themselves rather than just being told how to spell it. Spelling games/activities will also be sent home to help reinforce skills taught in class.

READING

During the Early Stages of school, children will regularly take home their reading book to share with parents and to use as a basis for a variety of activities. Older children's reading book will generally be kept in school. All children are encouraged to read a wide variety of texts at school and at home.

FREQUENCY AND LENGTH OF TASK

We are conscious of the fact that many children are involved in activities in the evening which are valuable to their education and overall development and well being. Therefore, you should find that homework set should take no longer to complete than about 20-30 minutes per night at any stage. Younger children will generally be given one or two nights to complete tasks. They may respond best to working in two or three short bursts rather than longer periods of concentration. Older children will generally be given a week to complete tasks.

It is the pupil's (with support from parents) responsibility to time the tasks to ensure that work is balanced out over the week.

HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THE HOMEWORK POLICY

- By ensuring homework is done while your child is alert.
- By trying to provide a calm atmosphere with as few distractions as possible such as T.V, games consoles etc...
- By discussing the work with your child and working along with him/her, especially at the early stages.
- By signing the homework, to indicate that you are aware that the homework has been completed. If you have any comments to make regarding content or presentation please feel free to do so.
- Encouraging research to be undertaken for topics being explored in school.
- By modelling a positive attitude towards the completion of homework.
- **ABOVE ALL BY SHOWING INTEREST AND PRAISING GOOD EFFORTS.**

Help your child to develop an organised routine for ensuring they have all they require to take back to school on the given date (this may be homework jotter, homework diary, book, worksheet, word cards etc.).

HOW CHILDREN SUPPORT THE HOMEWORK POLICY

- By ensuring that the homework is taken home and shared with parents.
- By taking responsibility for completing homework.
- By taking a pride in how the homework is completed including both content and presentation.
- By bringing homework back to school on a given date.

It is appreciated if homework jotters are covered and kept in a clean and tidy condition i.e. no graffiti, food or drink stains.

Homework is considered to be important and therefore expected to be taken seriously by pupils, parents and staff. Feedback will be given promptly and may sometimes take the form of a group or whole class discussion over a particular task. Points may be given for bringing in homework and for completing tasks well.

It is understood that home circumstances may occasionally make it impossible for homework to be completed on time. If this should arise, an explanation should be given and whatever work has been started should still be brought in to school on the given date. If pupils should fail to do work set without having a reasonable excuse or produce work of unacceptable standard, the following steps will be taken:

- Teacher will emphasise why the work is being set and may offer another chance to complete it at home.
- Teacher may send home a note or reminder to ask for support in this matter.
- Teacher may arrange a meeting between home and school to discuss this matter further.

LANGUAGES

Language is at the heart of all children's learning. Though literacy they receive most of their knowledge and many of their skills.

Language enables children both to communicate with others effectively, for a variety of purposes, and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving them order and meaning. It is central to children's emotional and social development, and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

It is also important that children learn to present written work in a way that can be easily understood, paying attention to punctuation, grammar and spelling.

The school is currently taking on board many aspects of the Highland Literacy Project.

There are four main areas of English Language to be developed:

Listening

Talking

Reading

Writing

LISTENING

This is a very important skill which needs to be developed if pupils are to be enabled to utilise it fully. Pupils are given opportunities to listen for information, instructions and directions, to listen to each other and in groups, to develop their critical faculties and to listen to different forms of texts e.g. poems, plays and stories so that they can gain knowledge about language and its uses.

TALKING

Pupils are encouraged to acquire a vocabulary and familiarity with oral language which enables them to talk fluently yet concisely for different purposes and in different contexts. Thus they can take an influential part in such activities as conveying information in the form of oral reports, debating topics, expressing their own feelings and ideas talking to different audiences and talking in groups within a framework of a growing understanding of the uses and delivery of speech.

READING

In our largely literate society, reading is the fundamental tool, which children must acquire if they are to fully participate in the modern world. In this school a mixture of methods is used which provide the best means of individual pupils gaining this essential tool. 'Look and Say' is combined with phonics as a basic for word attack skills. It is intended that whilst 'Look and Say' provides an initial working vocabulary, phonic skills enable new words to be built up through the association of sounds with a single or blend of letters.

Once the basic skills have been mastered, a variety of texts (both fiction and fact) are provided to maintain pupils' interest in reading and to provide them with interesting sources of information. These are graded for difficulty and as the pupils' ability to cope with more complex texts is noted these are supplied. Higher order reading skills (comprehension, inference, anticipation of outcome, extraction of the main idea from a text, skim reading and distinguishing between fact and opinion) are progressively developed.

WRITING

Along with the manual skills necessary to develop legible handwriting, the school considers that writing is a means of communication and has to be developed along similar lines to that of the other language skills. Self expression is encouraged but not at the expense of more formal skills. Spelling is an important part of the writing programme along with the growth of vocabulary. The purposes of pieces of writing must always be considered with form and function playing an important part.

FRENCH

French is taught on a regular basis to P4/P7 pupils. Younger pupils have an opportunity to learn French incidentally and are occasionally involved in French activities.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

All teachers use a variety of methods when teaching. Children may be taught as a whole class, in groups, and at times, individually. Teachers ask a range of questions requiring children to think. Teachers organise work to cope with the range of ability and development of each child. A high degree of importance is placed upon interactive teaching where the children will be actively involved in learning.

MATHEMATICS

The learning and teaching of mathematics is divided into a number of areas:

Number, Money and Measurement

Pupils learn to add, subtract, multiply and divide in a variety of contexts. They also learn to use money, work with time and investigate length, weight and volume.

Information Handling

This is concerned with gathering, organising, displaying and interpreting facts and figures and will involve the pupils in doing surveys, graphs, using spreadsheets and databases.

Shape, Position and Movement

Children learn about geometric shapes and develop an understanding of symmetry, angles and compass directions.

An emphasis is placed on practical and problem solving activities to give the children a better understanding of the concepts involved and to enable them to apply their knowledge. Interactive mental maths is regarded as vital and regular sessions occur. Learning interventions and success criteria are shared with the children.

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION

This takes account of knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other World Religions and to recognise religion as an important expression of human experience.

We encourage the children to appreciate moral values such as honesty, liberty, justice, fairness and concern for others and to investigate and understand the questions and answers that religions can offer about the nature and meaning of life. It deals with the development of self-awareness and relationships with others, and as such, makes an important contribution to the personal and social development of the pupils. Discussion of religious and moral issues is open with pupils being encouraged to express their own views and take account of the feelings of others. The local minister comes into the school on a regular basis to talk with the children.

It is recognised that parents have the right to withdraw their child from R & ME - in it's entirely or in part. If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from R & ME then alternative arrangements would be made in consultation with the Head Teacher.

SCIENCE

Through science, children and young people develop their interest in, and understanding of the living material and physical world. They can engage in a wide range of investigative group tasks which allow them to develop important skills to become creating and enterprising adults. Children are encouraged to investigate their environment by observing, investigating, exploring and recording.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies are taught on a discovery basis throughout the school. Topics are balanced to provide children with an appreciation of enterprise, history, geography and eco sustainability. Teachers and children are involved in planning these studies, bearing in mind appropriate levels for composite classes. As children work on themes, they develop an extensive range of progressive skills and experiences.

TECHNOLOGIES

The school has begun to use the ICT Passport recently developed by Dingwall Academy and its feeder schools. It provides a progressive range of skills to be taught from nursery through to secondary. Pupils are taught skills in context wherever possible. ICT is integrated into all areas of the curriculum. We have an ever-increasing range of ICT equipment in the school.

ECO-SCHOOL:

In May 2007 the school achieved it's first Eco-schools Green Flag Status, and it's second flag in January 2010. This is an on-going commitment with developments/activities regularly being planned.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE/FIRE PRACTICE:

Occasionally the school has to close early due to unforeseen conditions (e.g. bad weather). Parents or emergency contacts are notified in person. An Adverse Weather Information letter is issued annually. If a major incident occurred in the school (e.g. fire) the children would be evacuated to the school gates in order to check if all can be accounted for. They would then be taken to the Strathconon Public Hall to wait for parents/guardians. Hopefully we will not have to face such an event. Fire practices are held regularly.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Strathconon is an Equal Opportunities School with access to all subjects by all pupils.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

These are activities which children can be involved in at lunch-time or after school. The type of activities varies, depending on the interests of the children and the expertise available. An after school Computer Club is held for P4-P7 pupils in terms 2 and 3, and an Eco-club is held for all pupils in term 4. If any parents have a special interest or expertise, and would like to help with the organisation of an activity, we would be only too pleased to hear from you.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF PUPILS:

Minor accidents are treated by staff and first aid is administered where necessary. In normal circumstances, parental consent is sought before administering medical care but situations may arise where a pupil requires urgent emergency medical treatment and parents/guardians cannot be contacted. In such circumstances, after attempts to contact the parent/guardian have been exhausted, the Head Teacher would sanction medical treatment where delay would have serious implications for the pupil concerned. These instructions are Highland Council Policy.

The School Nurse visits the school regularly and can be consulted by parents and staff as required. It is normal for a child to have a medical in Primary 1.

The dental Hygienist visits the school at least twice a year. Nursery pupils brush their teeth after snack and primary pupils brush theirs after lunch. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. A healthy snack is provided for nursery pupils. It has recently been agreed by the Pupil and Parent Councils that all primary children will bring a healthy snack with them for break-time.

The school has attained Health Promoting Status.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL:

In the event of children being unwell at school, parents (or emergency contacts) will be asked to collect them. Parents are requested to ensure that the school is kept regularly informed regarding updates on their children's medical history and that emergency contact numbers are current. Written permission must be given by parent/carer before medication (including non-prescription) can be administered by a member of staff. Permission slips are held at school or copies can be sent home.

If your child suffers from a medical condition of which the school should be aware, please pass on all the relevant information to the Head teacher. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

INTERVALS AND LUNCHTIMES:

Primary children are expected to spend intervals outdoors unless weather conditions are such that this is not possible. Midges can also occasionally prevent children from going outside. Pupils must remain within the school grounds and are expected to behave responsibly with due care and consideration for other children, the grounds and equipment. Where pupils are required to remain indoors at interval, on medical grounds, parents should advise the school.

LIBRARY:

A selection of books in primary and nursery are available for children to borrow. A Highland Council Library van calls at the school every three weeks.

LUNCHES:

We are very fortunate to have our meals cooked on the premises. They are available from Monday - Thursday. This will continue as long as there is sufficient uptake. Pupils may bring a packed lunch or you may request for your child to return home for lunch.

Meals cost £1-70p per day. Parents who receive Income Support or Income-based Job-seeker's allowance are entitled to free meals for their children. Application forms for free meals (form FM1) are available upon request from the Head Teacher.

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:

Letters are regularly issued to all parents with information about various aspects of school life e.g. dates of activities, trips and meetings. Letters are sent home in a wallet which includes a jotter to be signed and this ensures that the school knows the letter has

reached home and has been seen. A monthly calendar showing important dates is sent home and one is displayed in the cloakroom along with a weekly plan.

Strathconon Primary has a School Improvement Plan, which outlines our development priorities over the coming year and in the longer term. A copy of this is available on request. A Standards and Quality report will be given to all parents annually - this will reflect on the impact of the Improvement Plan.

NURSERY:

Strathconon Nursery is seen very much as part of the Primary School. It is located in the demountable unit which also serves as the Canteen/General Purpose Room. From the outset the nursery and primary children are encouraged to mix on an informal, and as appropriate, more formal basis. We have joint P.E. lessons, parties, sports and concerts. The nursery children visit the classroom and primary children regularly come to the nursery for stories, games and activities. The aim of the nursery is to provide a caring, happy, safe and stimulating environment in which the children will be guided through the early stages of the development process of becoming a thoughtful, caring, responsible member of society.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Nursery education is about the development of the individual child. We hope to promote the child's ability to:

- develop strategies for learning
- seek out and respond to learning opportunities
- choose and plan own activities
- collaborate and play together
- develop 'listening' skills
- think, share ideas and reflect with others
- acquire knowledge, skills and understanding
- communicate and socialise with peers and adults
- express themselves through the medium of art, craft, music, drama and movement
- develop self-esteem and be tolerant of others

Your child is at a very crucial stage in their development, as it is now accepted that children learn more rapidly in the first seven years of life than at any other time. Therefore it is very important that children are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. As a parent you will play a vitally important role in the process. In the nursery we will play our part by treating your child as an individual and offering him/her a variety of experiences and activities which are designed to further the developmental process. Most theories about learning stress the importance of communicating with others and

consequently we will encourage your child to co-operate and work with other children and the various adults with whom the child comes into contact.

We hope that your child finds out that learning can be an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum follows guidance given in the Highland Council Early Years document and The Scottish Executives Child at the Centre. The five main areas are:

Communication and Language

Emotional and Personal Development

Expressive and Aesthetic Arts

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Physical Development

HOMEWORK

A sheet is sent home each week to let you know what your child has been doing and also what we aim to do the next week. It also gives ideas on how you can help at home: whether there is something to bring in, or occasionally an activity requiring your involvement, such as using the story sack.

PARENTS

By doing the following, you will help fulfil your vital role in your child's development:

- spend time with your child talking about a range of issues and playing various games as this lets the child know that you think he/she is really important to you
- explain to your child why you have taken certain courses of action - both rewards and punishments. This helps the child to understand why he/she should do or not do certain things, and should lead to fewer problems in later life
- read to your child regularly (daily if possible) and encourage him/her to read for pleasure. This will help to develop a love of literature, which will help them both socially and educationally
- take your child to a variety of places to develop their interests - e.g. castles, museums, the beach, the theatre, the library, walks,
- encourage your child to keep fit and healthy by taking regular exercise and eating healthy foods

- show an interest in what your child is doing in nursery as this lets him/her know that you value education
- encourage your child to share with you, rhymes, songs and stories that they have learned in nursery
- encourage your child to be independent e.g. to change their own shoes and put on/off their own jacket etc
- encourage your child to complete their simple 'homework' activities and to return it to school as required

PLAY

Much of the children's learning will be through play where children are offered a range of activities each with an underlying educational purpose.

Play is the means by which humans explore a variety of experiences in different situations for a variety of purposes. It is a process which provides a way of learning therefore it should be seen as a means of teaching and learning rather than a separate entity.

So Why Play?

- through activity based learning the brain and body are stimulated and active
- it provides pleasure and enjoyment which in turn motivates the children to further their learning by persevering, overcoming difficulties and concentrating for longer periods of time
- it helps to build confidence in themselves and their abilities
- it allows the child to tackle new experiences in a non-threatening situation
- it can provide an escape, relieve boredom, allow for relaxation and the opportunity for solitude
- it helps the child to judge the many variables within social interactions and develop perceptions about other people
- skills can be practised and repeated as many times as is necessary for confidence and mastery
- opportunities for sensory experiences which are the foundation of intellectual development are provided

- it provides reasons children can understand for acquiring the skills and knowledge adults value
- play creates context for language development

Through their play children learn to:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • co-operate with each other | • become more independent |
| • share | • develop self-confidence |
| • listen | • control their body |
| • measure | • develop their creative skills |
| • weigh | • use appropriate vocabulary |
| • organise | • behave appropriately |
| • think | |

Children will also be given opportunities:

- to listen to stories
- to sing and take part in a range of musical activities
- to learn poems and rhymes
- to visit their local environment
- to care for plants

Activities offered to the children range from:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| • sand and water play | • construction toys |
| • baking | • imaginative play |
| • playdoh | • building blocks |
| • painting | • outdoor activities |
| • colouring | • dressing up |
| • junk modelling | • computer |
| • gluing | |
| • jigsaws | |
| • tracing | |
| • board games | |

SNACK

The children will be given a snack every day. The snacks provided are nutritious and varied. The main purpose of this activity is to develop a range of social skills associated with eating and to encourage a healthy diet. There is a 40p per day charge for this.

USING BOOKS

Sharing books with your child will:

- build up confidence
- provide you both with an opportunity for togetherness
- increase enjoyment of pictures and the written word

You should try the following:

1. To set a regular time (with no distractions!) to look at the book together.
2. Chat to your child initially, discuss the cover and try to predict what the story might be about.
3. Discuss the content by pointing things out, asking questions, (Who is in the story? What happened? Why did it happen? How did they feel?), naming things, showing sequence, discussing the pictures, characters etc.
4. Help stimulate interest and enthusiasm by showing that you too enjoy reading a variety of materials: e.g. newspapers, magazines, books etc.
5. Enjoy laughing together about a book.

Children are encouraged to borrow books from the Nursery Library and the Library Van visits the school every three weeks. At various times throughout the year, children will be given 'Story Sacks' home containing books and related activities.

VACCINATIONS

Is your child up-to-date with his/her vaccinations?

Children receiving out-of-home care, including at nursery and playgroup, have more opportunities to come into contact with infections, so it is especially important to make sure that they have had all the vaccinations due.

It is never too late to have your child immunised. If they have missed one, you don't have to start the course from the beginning again. Contact your health visitor/G.P. for further advice.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

Outside agencies such as the speech therapist and psychologist can be invited into school to see particular children. This can be initiated by teachers or parents, but only after discussion and agreement, between the school and the parents.

PUPIL AND PARENT COUNCILS:

Pupil Council/SNAG (School Nutrition Action Group)/Eco-committee.

All pupils are members of this, with the oldest taking a lead role. Meetings are held approximately once a month. They help with or take responsibility for a variety of decisions concerning school life and the organisation of activities such as fund raising/charity events, a recent Highland Games with other schools and the programme for the Eco-club.

Parent Council (known as The Friends of Strathconon School)

This is a very supportive group and contributes enthusiastically in many ways to the life of the school. It meets on a regular basis. All parents and staff are members.

Chairperson:	Ms. Rebecca Waldron
Secretary:	Mrs. Morven Fleming
Treasurer:	Mrs Sarah George
Co-opted Members:	Miss Amanda MacLennan; Mrs Margaret Kirkman

The objectives of The Friends of Strathconon School are:

- to work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school that is inclusive for all parents
- to promote partnership between the school, it's pupils and all it's parents
- to develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils
- to raise funds, apply for and receive grants, and accept gifts for the benefit of the school.

P.E. KIT:

For most of the year P.E. is held in the village hall. Children should wear shorts, tee-shirt and suitable gym shoes/trainers (not ones they have been wearing outside). When P.E. is held in the local games field outdoor trainers should be worn. Long hair should be tied back. No ear-rings or jewellery should be worn. Each child should have a bag to carry their P.E. kit to and from the Hall/Field.

SCHOOL, HOME AND COMMUNITY:

Strathconon School is a very vital part of life in the Glen. We are fortunate in the support given to us by our small parent body and the local community, in the form of fundraising, practical help, sharing experiences and skills. We produce a bi-annual newsletter and invite everyone to our Christmas Party and Concert. There is a notice board in the village hall with a regularly changed display of children's work. The school now also has a [Blog](#):

SCHOOL FUND:

A School Fund exists to meet all or part of the costs of school expenditure which are not met by the Local Authority. The Fund is supported by contributions and very successful fund raising activities, including the production of calendars, selling flower bulbs and events such as a Craft Evening and a Silent Auction. Each summer the school has a stall at the Strathconon Highland Games. With such a small school population the success of these events relies on the whole-hearted support of all parents, pupils, staff and friends of the school.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT:

Primary children under the age of eight years old will receive free transport if living two or more miles from the school. For children over eight years old free transport is provided if living three or more miles from the school. Pupils who are able to are encouraged to walk or cycle to school. 20 mph signs and lights have been installed on either side of the school. Pupils are encouraged to wear helmets and luminous vests. A cycle shed is provided in the playground.

SECONDARY EDUCATION:

At the end of their primary education, children will normally transfer to Dingwall Academy. A school bus is provided to transport them on a daily basis.

Rector: G. A. MacKenzie

Address: Dingwall Academy, Dingwall, Ross-shire IV15 9LT Tel: 01349 869 860

Staff from the Academy visits the school to meet the P7 children and to discuss aspects of their work with the Head Teacher. During the summer term pupils have the opportunity to visit the Academy for three days to meet some of the staff, see round the various departments and follow their new timetable. They will also have the opportunity to take part in two days of activities with P7's from neighbouring small schools and with P7's from all feeder schools during the summer holidays. Liaison meetings are held throughout the year between secondary and primary staff to help improve link.

SWIMMING:

Primary pupils usually have a block of five weeks swimming lessons at Dingwall Swimming Pool. Depending on numbers nursery pupils may be included as well.

TRIPS:

Trips enhance and extend the children's learning experiences and broaden their outlook.

Trips may be within close proximity of the school (within walking distance), or can extend further afield, where transport is required.

Parents are asked to sign a permission slip at the start of each term and are informed if trips are to be taken out-with the glen.

The cluster of small schools which feed to Dingwall Academy aim to meet twice a year for shared activities. Previous events have included sports, a drumming work-shop and a celebration of World Book Day.

Each year the primary children take part in a residential trip (which may last 3-5 days). This has proved very successful in building children's confidence and independence and is deemed to be the highlight of their school year.

The school often relies on the goodwill of parents to help with transporting children. They will be required to give a copy of their insurance certificate to the school.

When being transported all children must wear seat belts and have booster seats if required.

UNIFORM:

This has to be ordered through the school. The uniform consists of a bottle green sweatshirt, tee-shirt and fleece with the Strathconon logo. Children and staff are encouraged to wear the uniform which helps foster a spirit of unity within the school. 'No uniform' days are held once a month. Children are asked to wear 'indoor' shoes in the classrooms - these should be shoes that stay securely on their feet but not take too long to put on and off.