

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL



# GERGASK PRIMARY SCHOOL



## School Handbook 2022/23

GERGASK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Laggan

INVERNESS-SHIRE

PH20 1AH

Tel: 01540 544272

Head Teacher: Mrs Sarah Fraser

e-mail: [gergask.primary@highland.gov.uk](mailto:gergask.primary@highland.gov.uk)

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome to Gergask Primary School.

I hope this booklet will provide you with some background information about our school, but please do not hesitate to get in touch should you wish further details.

At Gergask Primary the whole school community works together to provide a supportive and stimulating environment where our pupils are actively engaged in their learning. The school offers children from Nursery to P7 a broad curriculum within the framework of A Curriculum for Excellence.

Our school is non-denominational, provides equal opportunities for all pupils and promotes an ethos of inclusion, achievement and attainment.

At Gergask, education is a partnership between home and school. Consequently, parents and the wider community make a valuable contribution to many areas of school life. We have an active Parent Council and I am always pleased to explore new ideas with parents.

Mrs Sarah Fraser

Head Teacher

The ongoing pandemic continues to affect the normal running of schools in many ways. This Handbook reflects the way the school *usually* runs but does not cover all of the changes that we have made because of the pandemic. Our arrangements have changed in many ways since March 2020, and may well change again, depending on how the pandemic develops. For the most up-to-date information about any aspect of the work of the school, please make contact and we will be able to tell you about our current arrangements. For the latest information about how the pandemic affects children, young people and families across Scotland, please visit the [Scottish Government website, which has helpful information about Coronavirus and its impact on education and children](#).

## Location and Building

At Gergask Primary School our pupils come from the widespread area of Glentruim to Glenshero and from Moy Lodge to Craigdhu. The school is located within the hamlet of Laggan on the banks of the Gergask, from which the school takes its name. Opened in 1873, the school is a traditional granite building consisting of an entrance hall and three classrooms. An office and a general purpose room which also used as a dinner canteen is located in Spey Lodge, a spacious demountable building which was installed in the playground in 2007.

Around the school, we have a tarred playground with grass borders, flowerbeds and tubs. There is a covered bike shelter at the entrance to the playground. We are also lucky to have a playing field with a trim trail and football/shinty goals. Pupils work together to maintain the playground and take responsibility for the toy shed, wendy house and bird hide. They also take care of the flowerbeds and litter pick regularly. The playground has playground games painted on the tarmac and has several picnic benches, a sand pit, a basketball net and a traverse wall. There is also a stone storage shed in the car park, which is currently being developed to be used as a school library.

The full postal address of the school is:

GERGASK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Laggan

INVERNESS-SHIRE

PH20 1AH

Tel: 01540 544272

Email: [Gergask.primary@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Gergask.primary@highland.gov.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Gergask-Primary-School-205038690051124>

## Our school vision, values and aims

At Gergask Primary we aim to:

- create a welcoming and inclusive school environment where pupils engage, achieve and enjoy their learning
- provide a curriculum which ensures opportunities to achieve breadth, depth, and use knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar contexts
- support pupils in achieving their potential as individuals and citizens - through challenge and choice
- ensure opportunities for pupils to understand, engage with and contribute to the Gergask community and recognise its place in Highland, Scotland and the world
- promote the health and wellbeing of the whole school community and respect for the local environment and the wider natural world
- work in partnership with parents, agencies and the wider community to promote children's development and ensure equal opportunities for all
- encourage ongoing staff development and celebrate its value in enriching the quality of learning and teaching

## Staff

Head Teacher	Mrs Sarah Fraser
Class Teacher	Mrs Lisa Ross
Clerical Assistant	Mrs Barbara Cross
Early Years Practitioner/Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs Agnes Richardson
Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs Maureen Croft
Visiting Teacher of PE	Mrs Jacqueline Douglas
Cook	Mrs Elizabeth MacDonald
Cleaner	Mrs Agnes Richardson
Facilities Manager	Mr Keith Hunter

## The School Day

Open	9.00am - 3.30pm (Mon to Thu)	9.00am am till 12.15 pm Fri
Break	10.30am - 10.45 am	
Lunch	12.30pm - 1.30 pm	
Nursery	8.40am - 3.20pm Mon to Thurs	8.40am - 12.20pm Friday

## School Office

The school office is staffed from 8.30am-12.30pm from Monday to Thursday.

## School Roll

We currently have 4 pupils on the school roll and 2 children in nursery.

## Enrolment

The school year starts in mid-August and finishes at the end of June or early July. Children who will reach their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday by the end of February are normally enrolled to start school in August the same year. However, parents may defer entry until the following session if their child is born later than August, especially in the case of a child who is very young, with a birthday falling towards the end of February. Prospective parents are very welcome to visit the school by arrangement.

## Placing requests – parental choice

Each school serves its own particular catchment area. Pupils whose homes are located in that area will have priority in being allocated a place in the school. However, parents have the right to specify the school in which they wish to place their child. Application must be made to the **Area Education Manager, Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX**, and placing request forms can be obtained from

[www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/887/enrol\\_your\\_child\\_for\\_school/2](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/887/enrol_your_child_for_school/2) Transportation to and from school, for placing request pupils, is a parental responsibility. Parents of prospective pupils are welcome to visit the school by contacting the school to arrange a visit.

## **Transition to Secondary School**

Pupils will normally transfer to Kingussie High School. Enquiries should be directed to:

**Rector - Mr I Adamson, Kingussie High School, Ruthven Road, KINGUSSIE, Inverness-shire  
PH21 1ES, Tel- 01540 661 475**

A close liaison exists between Kingussie High School and its associated primary schools and regular meetings take place to discuss matters concerning us all. Throughout the year, High School staff and Primary Head teachers and Primary 7 class teachers work closely together to ensure continuity of education by providing adequate information about pupils in Primary 7 at the transfer stage.

In the winter term, P7 pupils take part in a three-day residential trip with pupils from other local schools as part of the preparation for transition. In the Spring and Summer terms, English, Mathematics, Guidance and Support for Learning Staff from the High School visit the school for discussion, observation and assessment which will highlight pupils likely to have support needs in the secondary school. There are also enhanced transition opportunities for children who have additional needs.

In June, there is a five day visit to the High School by the Primary 7 pupils. In addition, Primary 7 parents are invited to a Parents' Evening at the High School.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We are an equal opportunities school and our pupils are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school through various opportunities to join groups that make valuable contributions to the school. Access to all subjects is provided to all pupils without reference to the gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, disability, ASN or home language.

Further information on this subject can be found at:

Equal Opportunities Commission Scotland - [www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

Highland Council Equal Opportunities Officer - [rosemary.mackinnon@highland.gov.uk](mailto:rosemary.mackinnon@highland.gov.uk)

## **Curriculum**

Curriculum for Excellence is Scotland's curriculum for children and young people aged 3 to 18. It aims to raise achievement for all enabling young people to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed in learning, life and work. It aims to raise standards, prepare our children for the future they do not yet know and equip them for the jobs of tomorrow in a fast changing world. It brings real life into the classroom, making learning relevant and allows the children to make connections and link knowledge in one subject area to another. This encourages children to develop skills to enable them to think for themselves, make informed judgements, undertake challenges with confidence and find solutions.

Curriculum for Excellence provides greater personalisation and choice for learners so that learning is more challenging, enjoyable, and relevant to each child's needs, strengths and interests. Curriculum for Excellence enables professionals to teach subjects creatively, to work together across the school and with other schools, to share best practice and explore learning together.

## **Experiences and Outcomes**

Each learning experience will provide the opportunity for children to learn a number of outcomes throughout a range of curriculum area. We use detailed planning to ensure that the full and broad curriculum is delivered.

Teaching staff use a wide range of Learning and Teaching methodologies to maximise the children's learning. The ability to transfer knowledge and skills over a wide range of learning experiences from the different curriculum

areas is desired.

- The **Experience** describes the Learning activity taking place.
- The **Outcome** describes what the Learning will achieve (e.g. knowledge, skills, understanding, awareness and attitudes)

Further information about Curriculum for Excellence and supporting your child can be found on

<https://education.gov.scot/>

**Curriculum for Excellence Levels** provide a very broad indication of a child's progress in their learning from ages 3 to 18 in Scotland. These levels are 'open-ended', allowing learners to work and progress in different ways.

Level	Stage
Early	The pre-school years and P1, or later for some
First	To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some
Second	To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some
3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup>	S1 to S3, but earlier for some

The curriculum is divided into 8 main areas:

Languages, Mathematics, Health and Wellbeing, Social Studies, Sciences, Technology, Religious and Moral Education and the Expressive Arts.

## **Languages and Literacy**

Language is split into four teaching areas: Listening, Talking, Reading and Writing. These four areas often interact and complement each other. However, carefully planned lessons allow focused learning opportunities.

### **Listening and talking**

We try to expose children to a variety of learning contexts. Audio-visual resources, use of the telephone and contact with visitors to the school enhance both listening and talking skills. Opportunities created through drama and Religious and Moral Education, for example, help to develop the skills targeted in our language programme.

### **Reading**

We actively promote reading as enjoyable and hope pupils will choose to read of their own accord, whether for a specific purpose or for enjoyment. Whatever their age, children enjoy and benefit from sharing books with adults and parental input is invaluable. The school implements a structured reading programme and as soon as enough fluency has been acquired, reading books will be interspersed with novels at the appropriate level. Reference and comprehension skills are developed through textbooks, teacher prepared materials and books chosen by the children. Pupils in P4-7 enjoy extending their range of reading materials through the services of Highland Council's mobile library.

### **Writing**

Creative, personal and functional writing are complemented by the teaching of content, style, spelling and grammar rules at appropriate stages. Given the use of information technology and electronic mail in today's society, both handwriting and word processing are complementary elements of our language programme.

## **1 + 2 Languages**

Pupils learn French from Primary 1 and are introduced to Mandarin in P5. Oral work is complemented by games and activities and pupils have opportunities to read and write.

## **Mathematics and Numeracy**

For teaching purposes, Mathematics consists of four specific areas in the primary school:

1. Information Handling
2. Number Money and Measurement
3. Shape Position and Movement.
4. Problem Solving

Practical work is an integral part of learning and teaching. Concepts and competencies are also developed using computer software, board games and audio-visual resources, while opportunities to apply skills to investigative work and problem solving are created. Simulated and real life situations will be used to demonstrate the relevance and practical use of mathematics in daily life so that children leave primary school with knowledge of how to apply their mathematical skills in the real world.

## **Interdisciplinary Learning**

Through interdisciplinary learning, pupils learn within a context, which draws from a range of curricular areas and thereby ensures deeper learning.

## **Expressive Arts**

The Expressive Arts: Art and Design, Drama, Music and Dance

"promote distinctive ways of understanding self, developing individual abilities and finding personal satisfaction and enjoyment."

## **Art and Design**

In Art and Design, pupils have the opportunity to explore the world around them using a variety of materials and media. Pupils are able to express ideas and feelings through their work and in discussion will build a vocabulary to match. Techniques and visual perception are developed throughout, while pupils' imagination and aesthetic awareness are extended through various stimuli and oral evaluation.

## **Drama**

By investigating and experimenting with movement, mime and language pupils can enjoy exploring human behaviour, relationships, values and the world around them.

## **Music**

Pupils are encouraged to investigate, create and appreciate a wide variety of music. Initially young pupils experiment with percussion instruments before moving on to tuned instruments. Simple songs and rhythms become



progressively more complicated.. Feis Spe tutors deliver sessions in tin whistle and Gaelic song and the Kodaly voice tutor provides lively sessions of singing games.

## **Religious and Moral Education**

It is important to make children aware of the importance of the customs and values which underpin our society. It enables them to make sense of the world around them while a code of conduct, which they consider just, provides them with security. As they grow up, children may then make informed personal choices whilst respecting values and customs, which differ from their own. The school is well resourced for the study of major world religions. Younger children discuss and make simple moral deductions from stories. Older pupils are encouraged to identify moral dilemmas, offer an opinion on them and draw parallels between story situations and real life. In keeping with all the main world religions, pupils are encouraged to foster a positive attitude towards the beauty and diversity of the natural world. Common values such as fairness, honesty and respect for others are reinforced through stories, drama, day-to-day incidents and weekly assemblies.

Arrangements will be made for children whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from Religious Education.

## **Assessment & Reporting**

As a school, we seek to provide information to pupils, parents and staff to assist in the effectiveness of the learning and teaching process and in raising attainment.

Teachers will use the assessment process as an evaluative, diagnostic and formative tool to provide evidence of pupil attainment and progress to inform learning and teaching approaches and pupil targets.

Pupils should view the assessment process as a motivating experience, which takes place within the overall context of a supportive school. Pupils should make use of feedback, in all its forms to inform next steps for the improvement of their own learning.

Formative assessment - seeking and interpreting evidence so that learners, parents/carers and teachers can decide through high quality dialogue where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there - is embedded in the school curriculum and staff and pupils are continuously assessing their teaching and learning through various strategies. Pupils are being encouraged to take a greater responsibility for their learning by self and peer assessing their work.

Assessment recognises and celebrates all achievement wherever it takes place at home, in school and in the community.

## **Pupil Progress Reports**

As part of Highland Council's reform of reporting to parents, we have implemented many different approaches recently to ensure a process of continuous profiling and reporting.

Your child will bring home **4 key assessment tasks** over the course of the school session. These key assessments will

- describe children's strengths and areas for development
- describe progress in achievement across the eight [curriculum-areas](#)

- describe progress in achievement within the [curriculum-levels](#) in a curriculum area (for example Literacy) or in part of a curriculum area (for example reading, writing)
- describe achievement in different contexts and settings
- describe next steps in learning and how parents can help
- describe support for individual children to ensure continued support and how parents can help.

The key assessment tasks will form part of your child's Pupil Profile, which will be a record of your child's learning journey in primary school. Please spend time with your child looking at the key assessment tasks. Discuss the assessment tasks and success criteria with them.

We also send 'Snapshot Jotters' home twice a year. These jotters show your child's work over one week at school and their progress from year to year.

Parents wishing to enquire about a pupil's progress are invited to get in touch with their child's Class Teacher.

## Support for Pupils

All children need support to help them learn. Some children require more help than others. We follow The Highland Practice Model staged approach to assessing, identifying and supporting additional support needs. In this model every child has a 'named person' who is responsible for making sure that the child or young person has the right help to support/his/her development and well-being.

If you have a concern about your child in primary school please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance or the 'named person' who will usually be the head teacher. In a secondary school, the named person will usually be the Principal Teacher Guidance/Pupil Support.

Sometimes a Child's Plan may be put in place to help organise, monitor and regularly review a child's progress. Parents and pupils will be involved in these procedures and in reviews.

If you wish to find out more about The Highland Practice Model or the Child's Plan you can access more information at:

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2/chip\\_information\\_sheets\\_additional\\_support\\_for\\_learning](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2/chip_information_sheets_additional_support_for_learning)

There are also information sheets available at: [www.chipplus.org.uk](http://www.chipplus.org.uk) click on Education.

Under The Additional Support for Learning (Sources of Information) (Scotland) Amendment Order, the following agencies can provide advice, further information and support to parents of children and young people with ASN.

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning which provides information on the framework for supporting children who require additional support for learning and to encourage positive partnerships between families, schools and local authorities to ensure children get the right support. Enquire offers independent, confidential advice and information on additional support for learning Enquire also provides a range of clear and easy-to-read guides and factsheets including The Parent's Guide to additional support for learning.

Telephone Helpline: 0845 123 2303

Email Enquiry Service: [info@enquire.co.uk](mailto:info@enquire.co.uk)

Advice and information is also available at [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk)

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Scottish Child Law Centre

## Parental and community involvement in school

At Gergask, we foster very effective partnerships with parents and the wider community to support children's learning. Parental involvement is invaluable to support the life of the school. As parents, you play an important part in your child's learning and development. We keep parents informed as to what is happening at school via regular newsletters notice boards, homework diaries, open afternoon, and invite them into school regularly for curriculum and information sharing events and social gatherings. Parents' views are very important to us and we value your input when making any decisions or changes. We make use of surveys and questionnaires to gather information about preferences and ideas as well as encouraging parents to visit the school website at:

<http://gergaskprimary.moonfruit.com>

## Parent Council

Our school has an active Parent Council, which supports the school in a variety of ways. The Parent Council meets at regular intervals during the year. The current Office bearers are:

Mrs Kelly Wainwright (chair)

Mrs Cathy Slimon (Secretary/treasurer)

All parents are welcome to come along to any of the meetings and receive copies of the minutes and the agenda for upcoming meetings.

Useful information for parents and how to get involved in your child's education, how to support the school, information on curriculum developments can all be found at Parentzone: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/>

## Parents' Evenings and Meetings

A variety of parent meetings are arranged throughout the school year usually in the form of information evenings or workshops.

In the first term parents have the opportunity to meet with class teachers to discuss their child's progress and achievements and future targets.

**The current pandemic has affected the way in which we are able to engage with parents, and this may change further depending on how the pandemic progresses. For the latest information, please contact the school.**

## Links with the community

As a small rural school, we are very aware of the importance of our school within the community. Our pupils are very aware of their role as responsible citizens and make a sizeable contribution to the life of the community during the school year. The community very much values the local school and lends support and encouragement in many different ways. We regularly extend events in the school calendar to the wider community, and make strong links with outside bodies and organisations to further promote children's development and citizenship. We make as much use as we can of local resources, which are available to us such as the local village shop, the local church, and farms. The children become involved in local activities such as picking up litter and contributing towards maintaining the picnic area. We make a quarterly contribution to the local paper 'Laggan Matters'. We foster strong links with our cluster school and other small schools in the area to facilitate the development and confidence of the pupils

Our sustained activity as an Eco-school and involvement with projects in developing countries ensure our pupils are practised in sustainability and global citizenship. We have well established links with global and local charities and

work with national bodies including commercial ventures to extend pupils' awareness of social and environmental issues.

We use bodies such as the **The Laggan Forest Trust** <http://www.lagganforest.com/> who have in consultation with the school put together a programme of events for the children to engage in during our 'eco' week and we have recently been involved in the Cairngorm National Park 'Food for Life' programme.

## Homework

Our homework policy was formed in consultation with parents. Pupils receive homework throughout the week during term time at a level appropriate to their age and stage of development. It is important that parents encourage a positive attitude towards homework.

Homework is considered beneficial for the following reasons:

- to consolidate work already covered in class
- to engender a responsible attitude towards learning
- to develop pupils' self-discipline, independence and organisational skills
- to inform and enable you to support your child in his/her school work.

## School Funds

Gergask Primary School is always generously supported by both parents and the wider community. Funds raised for the school provide the children with additional resources and opportunities, which enrich their learning experiences. Suggestions for and help with fund raising and distribution of school funds are very welcome.

## School Uniform

The school encourages pupils to wear school uniform. Wearing school uniform not only looks great but also helps pupils to identify and feel part of Gergask Primary School. Our purple school sweatshirts may be ordered through the online shop at any time.

<https://www.schoolwearthemadefree.com/badged-school-uniform/e-h/g/gergask-primary-school>

Grey trousers or skirt, a white polo shirt and grey or white socks complete our uniform. Please make sure your child's uniform is named. In the interest of hygiene and safety, pupils are asked to leave jewellery at home and to bring separate soft indoor shoes for the classroom. Shorts, T-shirt and gym shoes are required for PE and should be brought to school on Monday for use during the week. As we walk to the village hall for P.E. it is preferable that pupils have a tracksuit to wear over their shorts and T-shirt in colder weather.

Assistance with school clothing is available to families in receipt of certain benefits.

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/10/free\\_school\\_meals\\_and\\_assistance\\_with\\_schoolwear](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/10/free_school_meals_and_assistance_with_schoolwear)

## Personal property

Highland Council does not provide cover for the loss of pupil's personal property or money. We ask pupils not to bring toys, jewellery or personal items to school. Please make sure your child's uniform and lunch box are clearly named.

## **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 online from [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1361/childcare\\_and\\_family\\_care/438/child\\_protection](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1361/childcare_and_family_care/438/child_protection)

## **Accident/Illness at School**

First Aid equipment is available at school, and a number of members of staff have had basic First Aid training. Minor cuts and bruises are treated by members of staff. If a child has an accident or becomes ill at school it may be necessary to take him/her to a doctor or to hospital. Every effort will be made to contact the parent so that he/she may be present. If both parents are out at work it is essential to have a work telephone number and the name of the family doctor. It would be appreciated if parents informed the school of any change in work telephone number, family doctor etc.

If a child is feeling unwell, we will normally try to send him/her home. In the event of the parent not being at home we would welcome an alternative address e.g. a relative, friend or neighbour with whom the child can be left.

It is important that the school is informed about any medical condition that a child may have. This information will be treated as confidential.

## **Medicines at School**

Administration of Medicines

National Guidance on the Administration of Medicines in Schools has been issued by the Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-children-young-people-healthcare-needs-schools/>

This guidance is based on a number of common principles that will be consistently applied when identifying, supporting and reviewing the healthcare needs of children and young people in Highland schools to enable them to make the most of their learning.

Under Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children have a right to the highest attainable standard of health and to health care services that help them attain this. Article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them. The arrangements for each individual will therefore take account of the health professionals' advice, the pupil's views and, where appropriate, their parent's views.

NHS Highland, Highland Council and school staff will work collaboratively to ensure that pupils receive the service they need in the way most appropriate to their personal circumstances.

We will work with pupils and parents/carers to support the healthcare in our school, making reasonable adjustments

that children and young people with healthcare needs might need and require.

Where appropriate, we will make arrangements for staff providing healthcare to pupils to receive appropriate training from a health professional, or other accredited source in the care they are providing.

Assistance with intimate care may be needed by children in any school and this will be provided if required to support these needs quickly and with respect for children's privacy, dignity and rights.

If your child requires medication, please note that this will only be administered by staff when there is clear written guidance from a parent/carer, providing:

- The name of the medicine, the quantity of the medicine to be given, the time it has to be given.
- As far as possible prescriptive medication should be given at home by parents/carers. If it is required to be given in school, the medication should be unopen, clearly marked with the directions from the pharmacist and administered as part of an agreed medical protocol.

## **Minor injuries**

School will only deal with minor cuts and bruises, these will be cleaned and a plaster applied. If your child is injured, falls or becomes unwell during the school day you or the emergency contact you have provided, will always be contacted and you may be advised to collect your child from school.

## **Health Care**

The Education Service provides, through the agency of NHS Trust, the assistance of a School Doctor, aided by a School Nurse and a School Dentist.

The school nurse visits the school to check on various aspects of health - eyesight, hearing etc. Parents will be informed immediately if their child is found to have a hearing problem, or may require spectacles.

## **Attendance/Absence**

Good attendance is vital if pupils are to achieve their full potential, but if your child is to be absent or late for school parents must inform the school first thing in the morning. Unexplained absence will be followed up by a phone call from our clerical assistant. Prolonged unexplained absence will be reported to the authority. If your child is likely to be absent for a prolonged period then it is helpful to let the teacher know. When returning to school after an absence, the parent or guardian should give a written reason for the time absent. Where at all possible, medical and dental appointments should be made out-with school hours.

It is strongly recommended that parents should avoid withdrawing their children from school for family holidays during term time. It would be helpful if parents could plan family holidays during the 12 weeks annual holiday allocation. Holiday dates for the next two years are available from the school.

During the current pandemic we may need to amend our approaches to recording attendance, for example if it becomes necessary for pupils to work from home. For more details please contact the school.

## Permission to Withdraw Pupils

The Head Teacher must be informed in advance, in writing, of any need to withdraw a child from school during school hours.

## School Meals

We offer a school meal service to pupils. Pupils in P1-P4 are entitled to a free school meal and this will be extended to P5 pupils in January 2022 and P6 and P7 pupils in August 2022. The cost of each School lunch is £2.30. A free school meal application form is available for anyone who needs it. This can be obtained from school or accessed at [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/899/schools\\_-\\_grants\\_and\\_benefits/10/free\\_school\\_meals\\_and\\_assistance\\_with\\_clothing](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/899/schools_-_grants_and_benefits/10/free_school_meals_and_assistance_with_clothing)

Otherwise payment should be made weekly. Parents and carers should indicate on the envelope which days their child will be having lunch that week. Children will be asked each morning for their lunch choice from the menu.

School lunch menus can be accessed via the Highland Council's website at:

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22860/primary\\_3-choice\\_menu](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22860/primary_3-choice_menu)

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22853/early\\_years\\_2-option\\_menu](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/22853/early_years_2-option_menu)

## Free School Meals

Free School Meals are provided on the basis of the applicant being in receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.

1.Primary 1 to 4 Free School Meals are a Scottish government funded initiative. From January 2022 P5 will be eligible and from August 2022 P6 & P7 will also be eligible.

2.Primary 1 to 4 children are only entitled to a school meal at lunchtime - parents and carers need to provide pupils with money for any other service provision in school such as morning break or breakfast.

3.There is no application process involved.

4.Parents and carers of Primary 1 to 4 children still need to apply for clothing grants where applicable.

5.Parents and carers of children in Primary 5 to 7 if entitled still need to apply for Free School Meals following the usual process. If you wish to apply for free meals please visit the following link

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/9/school\\_meals](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/9/school_meals)

6.For medically confirmed special diets, applications need to be completed and returned to the Head Teacher.

## PEF Pupil Equity Funding

The Scottish Government awards Pupil Equity Funding per pupil to our school each year. The allocation awarded to our school is based on the number of eligible and registered applications for free school meals. Although all P1-P3 children are entitled to free school meals, if you do not register your child for Free School Meals, the school will not be allocated the money eligible to it, via that pupil. Please register your child if you are eligible as it has a direct impact on the amount of funding the Scottish Government releases to the school each year.

## School Transport

Council transport to school for pupils, whose homes are distant from the school, is available under the usual regulations. Information can be obtained from the Area Education Manager. Transport is normally available free if children under eight live in excess of two miles from the school and for children aged eight and over who live three miles from the school. There are different arrangements outside the delineated catchment area for children who wish to attend the Gaelic Department. Please note that transport is not a school responsibility and

any queries should be addressed to the Local Transport Officer, Transport Office,  
[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/12/school\\_transport](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/12/school_transport)  
Tel: 01463 644703

## School Improvement

This year, because of the pandemic, all schools in Highland are focusing on certain key priorities as followings:

1. Health and wellbeing
2. Recovery of learning, teaching and assessment
3. Attainment in session 2020/21 (focusing on identifying new or widened gaps caused by the Covid-19 situation)

We continually strive to improve the quality of our pupil's education using the Highland Council model of improvement planning. The School Improvement Plan and Standards & Quality Report can be found on: [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) or a copy can be requested from the school office.

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/highland>

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-school/school-information-dashboard/>

The school's [Standard and Qualities Report](#) is distributed to parents and summarises the strengths of our school and what needs to improve, and how we will move forward to ensure that those needs are met. It is available on our school website as is our [school improvement plan](#)

### School inspection

Our most recent inspection from HMI was in May 2010. Reports were circulated to parents and can be accessed from the website:

[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/GergaskPrimarySchoolIns20100820\\_tcm4-702813.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/GergaskPrimarySchoolIns20100820_tcm4-702813.pdf)

## Data Protection

Any information you have supplied/any information gathered from or about pupils will be used only for the purpose for which it was provided and any relevant procedures following from this.

This data will be maintained in accordance with the Act and will not be passed onto any other organisation without your prior approval unless this is a legal requirement.

## Your data protection rights

The collection, transfer, processing and sharing of ScotXed data is done in accordance with data protection legislation. We also comply with the National Statistics Code of Practice requirements and other legislation related to safeguarding the confidentiality of data. Data protection legislation gives you the right to know how we will use your data. This note can give only a brief description of how we use data. Fuller details of each individual ScotXed survey, including the purpose of each and the published data, can be found on the ScotXed website

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed/SchoolEducation>

Scottish Government works with a range of partners including Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the SQA. On occasion, in order to help meet our aim of improving the life of young people in Scotland, we may make individual data available to partners such as the National Registers of Scotland to carry out research relating to the national population census and also academic institutions and organisations to carry out additional research and



statistical analysis to meet their own official responsibilities. Any sharing of data will be done under the strict control of Scottish Government, and will be consistent with our data policy. This will ensure that no individual level data will be made public as a result of the data sharing and that these data will not be used to take any actions in respect of an individual. Decisions on the sharing of data will be taken in consultation with relevant colleagues and individuals within and outwith Scottish Government. At all times pupils' rights under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation will be ensured.

## Concerns

If you have any concerns about the ScotXed data collections you can email the Head of Schools Analysis at [ScotXed@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ScotXed@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to The ScotXed Support Office, Area 2D, Victoria Quay, Leith, EH6 6QQ. Alternative versions of this page are available, on request from the ScotXed Support Office, in other languages, audio tape, Braille and large print.

## Complaints and Requests for Service

If a parent has any concerns they should contact their child's teacher in the first instance, or the Head Teacher for more serious issues.

The school will always endeavour to resolve issues by listening to parents and seeking solution in partnership. Should a situation not be resolved, parents can contact the Area Education Office.

Parents can also visit the following link for advice: <https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/>

Please note that transport is not a school responsibility and any queries should be addressed to the Transport Development Officer, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX, or [public.transport@highland.gov.uk](mailto:public.transport@highland.gov.uk).

## Voluntary Help

A number of people help the school in a voluntary capacity. In this way the pupils gain considerably and the school benefits in innumerable ways. Children have benefited enormously over the years, acquiring skills in music, singing, biology, knitting, shinty, baking, swimming, calligraphy and Gaelic, etc. These skills would not be provided to the same extent if we did not have our volunteers.

Any voluntary helpers have to comply with the Child Protection Procedures set by the Council.

## Adverse Weather

It is the responsibility of parents or carers to decide if a pupil should attempt to travel to school, by transport or on foot, in adverse weather conditions. The Education Authority encourages full attendance at school but in severe weather conditions the safety of pupils is much more important.

**The school updates its procedures for adverse weather closure annually, therefore:-**

- **parents** should advise schools of an alternative address, as close as possible to the school, which may be used by their children in emergencies.
- **the school** will advise parents of normal local arrangements for school transport and any special arrangements in the event of adverse weather.
- **the school** will establish a system of communication with parents and transport operators and ensure that parents are fully informed of the arrangements. This may include an 0800 telephone information service, details of which

will be issued separately. School Closures Online [www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures/](http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures/) will also be updated with information for individual schools.

## **Military Families**

Our school welcomes and supports families, their children and young people from Forces families: serving, veteran and reservists.

We understand some of the challenges that mobility of service life can bring and we look forward to working with you to ensure a smooth transition for your child/young person coming into or moving on from our school. Please get in touch with us as soon as you can so we can work with you to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

Highland Council have proudly committed to the Armed Forces Covenant and as such support our veteran and reservist families as well as those currently serving. There is a dedicated Highland Council Military Liaison Group (MLG) which has been formed to promote and ensure equality and equity for your children and young people in their education.

Visit the Highland Council Armed Forces Website for lots of helpful information and support [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools - additional support needs/833/armed forces - support for families and schools](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs/833/armed_forces_-_support_for_families_and_schools)

Please get in touch with your child's named person or the Head Teacher if you have any concerns.

## **When Your Child Leaves**

Please try to inform the school as soon as possible when your movement date is known.

On the last day of school, your child will bring home an envelope containing:

- current workbooks, which illustrate the type of work being undertaken with the child in this school;
- a "Transfer Report" which gives the new class teacher the basic information (e.g. reading scheme, mathematical topic, etc.), on which to base an educational programme.

This envelope should be handed to the Head Teacher of the next school when you go to register your child. The contents are not confidential and you may wish to look through them.

You will appreciate how important it is that this envelope reaches the next school as soon as possible.

Highland Council's policies for schools can be found on:

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/893/schools - general information/29/school policies procedures and guidelines](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/893/schools_-_general_information/29/school_policies_procedures_and_guidelines)

Paper copies can be requested from the school office.

## Highland Council, Care and Learning Service

The education service is administered through a system devolved under the control of Highland Council Education, Culture and Sport Committee. Local control is vested in Area Committees.

The officers of the Council relevant to Newtonmore School are:

### Area Education Manager

**Mrs Fiona Shearer**

**Highland Council Headquarters**

**Glenurquhart Road**

Inverness

IV3 5NX

### Head of Education

**Ms Nicky Grant**

**Highland Council Headquarters**

**Glenurquhart Road**

Inverness

IV3 5NX

**Tel: 01463 702750**

**Tel: 01463 702750**

The community of Newtonmore (Ward 20: Badenoch & Strathspey) is represented on Highland Council by Cllrs: John Bruce, Muriel Cockburn, Pippa Hadley and Bill Lobban.

### THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL SCHOOL CALENDAR SESSION 2022/23

OPEN	CLOSED
16/08/2022	8/10/2022
24/10/2022	23/12/2022
09/01/2023	01/04/2023
17/04/2023	30/06/2023

#### In-Service Closures

15/08/2022

12/09/2022, 13/09/2022

22/02/2023

05/05/2023

There are also casual holiday closures on;

21/02/2023, 22/02/2023

01/05/2023

This version of Gergask Primary School Handbook was reviewed in November 2021.

Whilst information provided in this handbook is considered to be true and correct at the time of publication, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the information.