



Helmsdale Primary School



School Handbook 2023-2024

Old Caithness Road

HELMSDALE

Sutherland

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Thank you 😊

December 2022



Dear Parents & Carers,

Welcome to Helmsdale Primary School

Please accept this copy of our School Handbook, which is designed to tell you all about what happens in our lovely little school. Whether your child is coming up from nursery, you have moved into the local area or, using the handbook as a reference tool while your child is at our school, we hope that this booklet provides you with the information you require to make the transition to Helmsdale Primary School a smooth, concern-free and happy one.

You will see that we strive towards providing a range of engaging, enjoyable curricular experiences to meet each individual child's interests and needs. We aim to nurture every child's interests, skills and abilities so that they can develop the four capacities – successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors - as set out in A Curriculum for Excellence.

There will be more opportunities for you now; post Covid to visit the school and meet the staff, but particularly on Parents' evening and Open Days. Even if you have no real concerns regarding your child, we will still be happy to see you for a chat. It is important that lines of communication are kept open, and I would like to think that you will feel confident and happy about contacting us, whether by phone, email or face-to-face visit.

We are a very community minded school; actively involved in many village projects throughout the year, ranging from the river opening, craft fairs to links with the hub and various local volunteer groups.

Visitors to our school often comment that we are a great team and that there is a welcoming ethos- each member of staff is highly committed to doing their very best for your children.

If you wish to arrange a visit to our school or find out any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are always happy to talk or meet with you. We look forward to working together and to building a long, happy association with your family.

Yours sincerely
Mrs S Taylor
(Acting Head Teacher)

e-mail: shelly.taylor@highland.gov.uk

About Helmsdale Primary School

Helmsdale Primary is a non-denominational school, which is part of the Golspie ASG. It serves a large catchment area from Forsinard to Loth. Helmsdale like many rural settings, is a relatively small school. The school is comprised of a Nursery and three main composite classes. We offer an early years/childcare setting for 3- and 4-year-olds for the expanded 1140 hours (one of the first schools in the area to pilot this 3 years ago).

We have a visiting Additional Support Needs Teacher (ASNT) for 2 days per week. Children with additional support needs are supported mainly within the mainstream classes. Staff consult with ASNT and other agencies such as- Occupational Therapist (OT), Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) to ensure strategies are in place and needs are met to the best of our provision and ability.

We value the good working relationships with families and the wider community. We take pride in being an integral part of the community and make good use of a wide range of local resources. Our expanded outdoor provision continues to be a focus for us in school in terms of use and learning development.

Current school roll :57 (48 pupils in Primary 1-7 and 9 in nursery)



Our School Day

We are an asymmetric week in line with Golspie High School...

Primaries 1, 2 and 3

9.00am – 2.55 pm (Mon/Tues)

9.00am - 2.50pm (Wed/Thurs)

9.00am – 12.15pm (Fri)

Primaries 4, 5, 6 and 7

9.00 am – 3.30 pm (Mon-Thurs)

9.00am – 12.15pm (Fri)

Morning Break

10.30am - 10.45am

Lunch

12.30pm – 1.15pm

Friday: Grab & Go only

Meet the Team...



Teaching Staff

Acting Head Teacher
Primary 1/2/3
Primary 4/5

Primary 6/7
Additional Support Needs

Mrs S. Taylor
Mrs A. Henderson
Mrs S. Taylor (Mon/Fri)
Miss R. Buckley (Tue/Wed/Thurs)
Mrs D. Kingston
Ms C. Ross (Wed/Thurs)

Early Years Staff

Nursery EYPs

Nursery Support Worker

Mrs R. Taylor
Miss L. Keith
Ms K. McConnach

Support Staff

Pupil Support Assistants

Miss A. Cormack
Mrs M. Mackay
Miss T. Rapson
Mrs F. Cowie

Visiting Specialists

Physical Education
Drumming
Chanter and Bagpipes
Strings

Mrs P. Sutherland (visiting Tues)
Mr R. Hamilton (visiting Tues)
Mr S. Murray (visiting Wed)
Mr D. Adams (visiting Fri)

Day-to-day superheroes

School Clerical
Cook in Charge
Cook
Playground Supervisor
Road Crossing Patroller
FM Team

Ms M. Ross
Mrs A. Whitehead
Mrs U. Henderson
Mrs F. Cowie
Mr M. Jamieson
Mr D. Rose/ Mr A. Cameron

Helmsdale Primary: Facilities

The main school building is comprised of 3 main classrooms- infant, middle and upper. There is a library/music room, recently refurbished gym hall and an ASN base- comprising of the 'learning zone', sensory room and regulation station.

The playground space is vast, and we have recently received funding which went towards our fantastic polycrub- outdoor classroom.



Early Learning

The nursery is part of the main school building and welcomes all children from the age of 3 up to school age.

There are 3 intakes per session August, January and April, information on which intake your child is eligible for can be found on the Highland Council website or obtained from the school office.

Here children can develop their motor and co-ordination skills, their social interaction and their concepts and knowledge of the world in an informal atmosphere through a play-based approach.

Each child is entitled to 30hours per week during term time should their parents wish for them to do full days.

Nursery have their own specific handbook which can be found here-

[Helmsdale Nursery Information](#)



School Vision/Values & Aims

Helmsdale Primary school recognises success both within and out with the school- at assemblies and through class displays and parent pages/profiles.

We continue to celebrate positive citizenship and build on the recently developed school values, formed alongside second level learners and parents post-Covid...

‘It Takes A Village To Raise A Child’

HPS Vision-

Our Vision is to work in partnership with pupils, parents, and the wider community.

Our Vision is to create an inclusive and welcoming environment where learning is exciting, challenging, and relevant and everyone is valued and encouraged to achieve their potential.

HPS Values-

- To be kind
- To be respectful
- To be resilient
- To be motivated to achieve our potential
- To be curious
- To be creative



HPS AIMS

- ❖ To provide a safe, happy and caring environment for learning.
- ❖ To provide stimulating and challenging teaching and learning experiences both within and out with the classroom.
- ❖ To foster effective partnerships between pupils, staff, parents, outside agencies and the wider community, working together to create a cohesive learning environment.
- ❖ To encourage pupil achievement and attainment by developing skills and positive attitudes encouraging successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- ❖ To deliver a broad balanced and differentiated curriculum encouraging children to progress at their own pace with appropriate support promoting and encouraging appropriate level of independence and learning skills for the future.
- ❖ To work closely with the schools in the Golspie ASG fostering links with colleagues, monitoring standards, and developing transition.

School Improvement Focus

Staff engage in regular self-evaluation using quality indicators from HGIOS4 'How Good is Our School'. This document provides a framework for staff to evaluate performance and identify ways to improve throughout the year.

An annual 'Standards and Quality' report details the main achievements of the school and highlights areas for improvement.



Helmsdale Primary School: Parent & Child Friendly School Improvement Plan 2022-2023

Each year school staff must identify areas to focus on within the school, these are linked to Quality Indicators (QI's) & gives us areas to improve on throughout the year. (QIs are set out in 'How Good is Our School?' 4th Edition which is created by Education Scotland & used for self-evaluation of the school and for inspections.)

Focus 1: Health & Wellbeing	Focus 2: Attainment	Focus 3: Moderation
<p>Why? We require support to build confidence and resilience post covid.</p> <p>❖ Helmsdale Primary school is signed up to be a pilot school for 'Do-Be Mindful' (resilience based recovery programme)-</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Staff will complete training throughout term 1 & 2. ✓ We will complete a survey on motivation & wellbeing. ✓ We will complete daily sessions on mindfulness. ✓ We will participate in guided lessons both indoors and out-from term 3 onwards. <p>❖ Helmsdale Primary school is now signed up to be a Rights Respecting School-</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will become familiar with the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child document (UNCRC). ✓ We will discuss rights at assemblies. ✓ We will form a pupil led steering group. ✓ We will create a whole school display. ✓ We will participate in focus lessons looking at some of the rights and related articles. 	<p>Why? We need to make improvements in literacy & maths.</p> <p>❖ Helmsdale Primary P1-7 learners will complete Highland Numeracy baseline assessments. (ELC- observations)</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will complete numeracy baseline assessments in term 1 to identify any gaps in learning. ✓ We will complete literacy screening (reading/spelling age). ✓ We will revisit baseline assessments in term 3/4 to review progress. <p>❖ Helmsdale Primary families will be consulted and kept up to date on learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will discuss targets and participate in learning conversations with staff. ✓ Our families will be kept up-to-date with our learning through class page updates, regular newsletters and meetings. 	<p>Why? We need our teachers to build back links with others.</p> <p>❖ Helmsdale Primary staff will work with staff across all primaries within the Golspie associated schools group (ASG).</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teachers & Early years staff will use the benchmarks more effectively. ✓ Teachers will get together with colleagues in other schools to share practice. ✓ We will have fairer awarding of achievement of a level in literacy & numeracy (Early/First/Second level).

 Our Values-In Helmsdale Primary school we are growing to be- *kind, respectful, resilient, motivated, curious, and creative.*

All family- friendly versions of the school improvement documents with hyperlinks can be viewed on our website-

<https://helmsdaleprimary.wordpress.com/school-improvement-focus/>

A full version of the current 'Helmsdale/Brora Cluster improvement plan' can also be viewed upon request- by contacting Mrs Taylor, should anyone wish.

School Uniform

Our school colours are navy blue top and black/grey trousers/skirts-



Embroidered uniforms are available to order via the school office.
A limited amount of stock is held within the office.

Sweatshirt, navy	from £8.75
Cardigan, navy	from £9.50
Hoody, navy	from £10.95
School polo shirt, navy / white	from £7.50
T-shirt, navy / white	from £5.00
School Fleece, navy	from £12.00

Please encourage your child to wear school uniform at all times as it creates an image of the school, it gives the children a feeling of belonging to the school, it gets round constant negotiation and argument about choice of clothes between child and parent and prevents peer-group one-upmanship with other children but, most of all, it makes the children look smart, well-kept and tidy.

Wearing school clothing also helps to act as a 'buffer' against commercial and media pressure on your child to always wear the latest and expensive fashion clothes. That pressure will always be there, but school dress helps to make this more manageable for parents.

Footwear

Another thing to be kept in consideration is footwear, the playground can become very wet and muddy in bad weather, also the long grass can be difficult to negotiate so warm, sturdy footwear is essential.

Our gym has recently been refurbished and we would ask that all indoor/PE shoes are either white soles or non-marking trainers- to keep the flooring fresh.

Children of parents on Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance may receive funding towards uniform.

['Free school meal and assistance with clothing'](#)

The Curriculum

At Helmsdale Primary we aim to ensure that all our pupils develop the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future. Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) provides a coherent, flexible and enriched curriculum for our pupils.

The Curriculum encompasses learning through:

- the ethos and life of the school
- curriculum areas
- interdisciplinary projects
- opportunities for personal achievement

The eight curricular areas in a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) are:

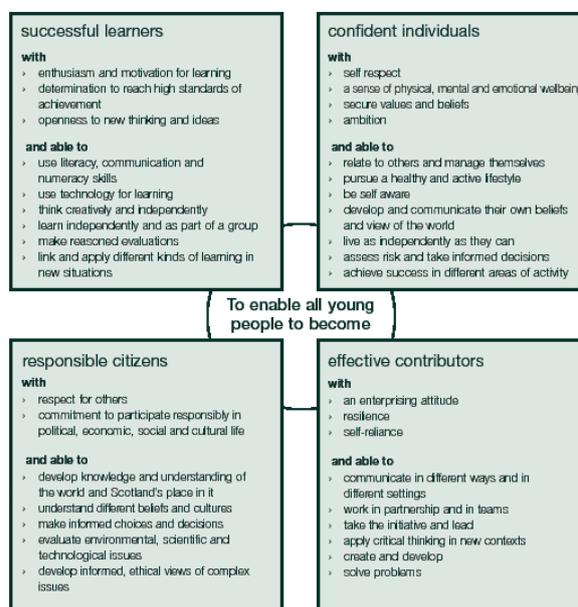
- Literacy and Languages
- Numeracy and Mathematics
- Sciences
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Studies
- Expressive Arts
- Religious and Moral Education
- Technologies

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels of Achievement

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
Third and Fourth	S1 – S3 but earlier for some
Senior Phase	S4 to S6 and college or other means of study

A Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) encourages schools and parents to work together to help all children become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors



Literacy & English

Our aim in our literacy work is to develop in a child, language, as a tool or medium to be used in all school curricular areas and for the enrichment of life through the development of the varying uses of our language in society through listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Along with most other schools in Highland, we have implemented a revised approach to the teaching and learning of Reading, entitled the *Highland Literacy Project*.

The aims of Highland Literacy are:

- To develop more competent and competent readers
- To increase pupils' enjoyment of reading
- To create independent learners
- To foster lifelong learning skills

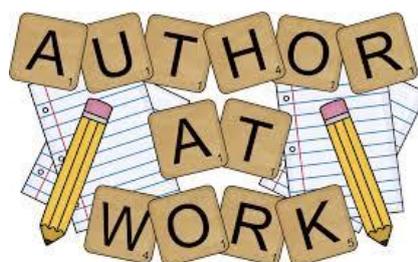
Written skills need to be highly developed to meet the demands of the increasingly complex society in which we live.

When we talk about 'writing' we are talking about two things. One is the ability to use a pen or a pencil – the secretarial skills - and the other is what the child is trying to communicate through their writing – the composing skills. We aim to teach our children to write legibly, with fluency and speed at all stages of instruction.

Children, throughout the school, are given opportunities to write in different ways for different purposes. Each class has a structured, weekly writing lesson, taught by the class teacher. At all stages writing is presented as a meaningful and purposeful activity and children are given many opportunities to practise their writing skills.

Today SPOKEN LANGUAGE is given a central place in the primary school curriculum. Society no longer holds the view that children should be seen and not heard. We encourage children to talk as we believe that it is important that children can express themselves clearly and intelligibly in an acceptable form. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their work, in all subjects. They are invited to present prepared talks to their classmates. They are encouraged to put forward their views and opinions on varied topics and issues and are given opportunities to question other speakers and the validity of what is being said to them.

Listening is also important and pupils are encouraged to look for meaning in what they hear and to be critical of what is expressed in vague terms. They are encouraged to hold polite conversations and discussions and are taught the techniques of good listening.



Numeracy & Mathematics



Mathematics is an integral part of the environment in which we live and children are taught appropriate work within realistic contexts geared to their age, aptitude and abilities.

Children learn best by being involved in many mathematical activities dealing with number, money, measurement, shape, position & movement, handling information and problem solving. Material for the study of mathematics is found everywhere in the child's environment – the children count real things, they weigh out real objects, they go out and measure real distances, use money in realistic situations and use clocks and timetables to understand how time is important in our lives. Working through practical activities, the concept of number, shape, volume, weight, time, length, etc. are established.

At the same time, we recognise the importance of developing the mental agility of pupils and whole class or group interactive teaching forms a major part of a child's work in this curricular area.

Health & Wellbeing

Physical Education: provides experience for the children in body and space awareness, gymnastics, apparatus work, swimming, games skills both indoors and outdoors, athletics and sporting activities. They may do creative movement to music, learn national dances or compose their own routines. Mrs Sutherland attends each Tuesday for P4-7.

Food & Health: children are taught about a healthy diet and nutritional needs. WE encourage healthy eating habits at break and lunchtimes.

Personal & Social Education: includes, on the one hand, developing pupils' independence, self-awareness and self-esteem, and on the other, promoting amongst the pupils a growing realisation of their inter-personal relationships and inter-dependence with those round about in school, the community and the wider world. Rather than being taught as a separate subject, emotional wellbeing and a growth mindset is embedded in the curriculum through the life and work of the school.



Interdisciplinary Learning

Usually called IDL or topic work, involving Science, Social Subjects (History, Geography and Modern Studies) and Technology (designing and making).

Children need to learn about the world in which they live – its history and geography and the scientific aspects which affect it. We aim to foster in the children a desire to learn more about the world they live in and teach them the skills they need to interpret it.

Much of the work is approached through themes. This is sometimes referred to as 'project work' or 'topics'. Content includes local studies together with the history and geography of places near and far. The study of these themes obviously presents meaningful opportunities for work in other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Mathematics and English Language.

When making choices, teachers bear in mind the need for balance within the curriculum at each stage, and from stage to stage. Wherever possible, pupils are provided with first hand experience working outside the classroom as well as inside it. Children are encouraged to make physical contact with their surroundings:

- living things – plants, animals and people;
- inanimate object of the physical environment – buildings, rocks, soil, etc.;
- learning about the man-made world;
- Investigations of how things work.

Expressive Arts

An appreciable part of the school curriculum is devoted to the expressive arts; namely music, art & design, drama and physical education (which includes dance). These are integrated where appropriate into other areas of the curriculum to provide a rich and varied experience for the pupils. Other subjects in the curriculum can be brought to life through the media of Expressive Arts.

During **Music** lessons children will frequently sing songs linked to a theme being studied. They will also listen to music and compose their own pieces, using untuned and, in the later stages, tuned percussion, which can be performed in front of an audience.

Art and Design work is always included in any area of study and children are taught various techniques using a wide variety of materials. Activities range from drawing, painting, modelling and printing to collage, pen and ink work, marbling and fabric dyeing.

Drama is an important part of the curriculum. Pupils can identify themselves with people, real or imagined, by acting out situations within their experience or their imaginative range. By expressing in movement and/or speech the feelings of themselves and others, the children can enlarge their experience and learn in ways natural to them. Imagination is stimulated and powers of discrimination, observation and awareness are increased.

Religious and Moral Education

Through Religious Education we aim to foster an interest in religion and to help children appreciate that religion is concerned with relationships which have implications for the value one sets on people for personal behaviour. Religion is explored both implicitly and explicitly.

In all aspects of school life, we encourage our pupils to be sensitive towards and tolerant of others.

In explicit studies we explore the ways in which Jesus is central to Christian belief and worship. We also endeavour to develop some understanding of the place of religion in the development of Scotland's history, society and culture, while acknowledging the wider social and cultural impact of various religions on our own multi-cultural society. Other principal world religions (Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism) are also studied, often with a comparative angle which explores common themes between these and Christianity, e.g. birth, marriage and death rituals, harvest and light festivals, key figures of each religion, etc.

Fortnightly assemblies and end of term services are usually supported by the local ministers-both Free Church & Church of Scotland.

Please note that parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education. Any parent who wishes to do so should contact the Head Teacher who will make the necessary arrangements.

Technologies

The school recognises that ICT (Information and Communications Technology) plays an increasingly significant role in all aspects of society. Pupils therefore need opportunities to develop confidence and competence in this area. High priority is given to ensuring that ICT is stimulating, challenging and a creative experience for all pupils.

Pupils in P6 & 7 now have chromebooks which are used in class and at home for various research, coding and homework activities.



Before issue a contract is issued between Highland Council and the P6/7 learner/learner's family and it is the learner's responsibility to look after their device and ensure the device is charged and ready to use in class each day.

Homework

As a school we believe homework has a valid place in your child's progress.

- It encourages children to be responsible for their independent learning.
- It allows parents to see what kind of work their child is doing at that particular time.
- It provides extra practice for the child.
- We value and promote parental involvement in supporting their children at home in a range of contexts, including reading for enjoyment and reading for information.

However, we also fully appreciate the benefits of extra-curricular activities and indeed the value of play so as a staff we strive to find a balance for our families.

Our aim is to make things manageable and beneficial- if for any reason homework is problematic do, please let us know. From time -to-time surveys are issued by class teachers to try to strike a balance for the wants/needs of various groupings.

At present homework is-

	Reading	Literacy	Maths
P1/2/3	Given daily with instructions written in their Reading Record.	New Sounds (Jolly phonics) given weekly to P1 Spelling/phonics for P2&3	Maths given when appropriate to enhance learning in class
P4/5	Given regularly with instructions written in their Reading Record.	Spelling on a Monday returned on Friday in preparation for a spelling quiz.	Maths given weekly- to further develop work done in class.
P/6/7	Reading given out dependent upon which group. Individuals are encouraged to read for enjoyment.	Spelling activities issued on a Tuesday via Google Classroom to be completed by Monday.	Chromebook activities.



Extra-Curricular Activities

Swimming Instruction

By the time each child leaves our school we aim to have them a competent swimmer.

The more able swimmers aim at developing their skills and probably would receive some life-saving instruction. It is most helpful that parents should encourage their child in learning to swim, especially those who are apprehensive of water.

Such a child may make substantial progress in their 6-week spell only to again start at the beginning during the swimming block the following year.

It is a very important skill to have in the area in which we live- by the sea.

Instrumental Tuition

All pupils will be offered the opportunity to present themselves for assessment of their suitability to play a musical instrument. This normally starts around the P4/5 stage. Instruments offered include violin, chanter, and drumming.

Information and sign up is through the highlife highland website- <https://www.highlifehighland.com/music-tuition/>

After school Clubs



Tuesday- P4-7 football sessions
Wednesday P1-3 football sessions
Friday- YASS club (held at Timespan)

Community involvement

We have close links with many local bodies including the Free Church and the Church of Scotland, the local Minister and Reverend will often participate in school assemblies throughout the session. Pupils will also visit the Churches for special services i.e. Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

Timespan offer workshops and excursions to the pupils from time to time, depending upon their current topics.

From time-to-time classes also visit the local health and wellbeing hub in the local community centre.

Assessment & Reporting

As a school, we seek to provide information to pupils, parents and staff to assist in the effectiveness of 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 and 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.

Parents will receive feedback on their child's progress through pupil, reports, progress checks and target setting information. Pupils will reflect on their progress, achievement and best work through their learner profiles. Parents wishing to enquire about a pupil's progress are invited to get in touch with their child's class teacher in the first instance.

Each term there is a literacy assessment, numeracy assessment and an IDL assessment carried out in class. Further to this the class teacher gives more formal assessment of progress through teacher-generated tests, set tests and on occasions, standardised tests. We currently use Scottish National Standardised Assessments computer generated testing at P1, P4 and P7.



Pupil's Progress

Children's progress is monitored by the teacher and information on this is given through the child's termly progress report form and also their formal report after Easter. Work is sent home regularly for parents to comment on and be part of the assessment process. As a school we are working on recording and profiling and having parents involved.

All children are treated as individuals with views and opinions which are listened to respectfully by staff and peers alike. We wish our pupils to be responsible, to think, to make decisions and to act upon them. We wish every child to have independence, to have the ability to work on his/her own and to share ideas with others.

We wish our pupils to have inquiring minds and encourage this through practical activities in all areas of the curriculum. We encourage a lively curiosity. Children learn through doing, through questioning – they make discoveries and are keen to learn. Much use is made of the wider environment in helping pupils learn.

Additional Support Needs

Class teachers, in conjunction with Additional Support Needs Teachers monitor the progress of pupils with additional support. The needs of such pupils are generally catered for within the normal curriculum but with specialist advice and support as required.

If necessary, a child's plan may be put in place to help plan, organise, monitor and regularly review a child's progress. Parents and pupils will be involved in these procedures and in reviews. More information can be found about the Highland Council model for support and child's plan at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/230/highland_practice_model_-_delivering_additional_support_for_learners

www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11/co-ordinated_support_plan

Sometimes a Children's Service Worker will be involved in supporting a child. They will:

- work in collaboration with the support team in school
- work to support families in their own communities
- work with individual pupils and small groups – offering a further level of support

Parents/Carers will always be involved in discussions about any additional support being suggested for their child and any need may be identified within the school. Highland Council would seek to work in partnership with parents at all times, but sometimes you will have a concern that you don't feel is being addressed, or will want to talk to someone outwith the school.

Should you have any concerns that your child's additional needs are not being met, you should contact your child's named person- Mrs Taylor, in the first instance. If your concerns continue, there are a number of means of resolving difficulties and disputes and information on this can be found at:

www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools-additional_support_needs/1/support

Here at Helmsdale Primary Ms Ross is with us on a Wednesday and Thursday and provides learning support for both children who are experiencing difficulties in the learning process and those whose work will benefit from extra individual time.

Support for each child can be short term or longer term depending on the degree or nature of the difficulty encountered. The work Ms Ross does is usually focussed around literacy.

Ms Ross also provides support for the school by carrying out assessment tests which helps the staff obtain objective feedback on a child's or children's progress.

Within the school we have recently developed a sensory area and 'regulation station'



Support

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 is the head teacher.

Sometimes a Child's Plan may be put in place to help organise, monitor and regularly review your child's progress.

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

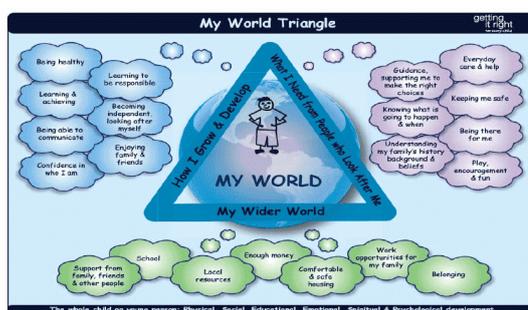
<http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/5-practiceguidance/high-pract-model.pdf>

There are also Information sheets available at: www.chipplus.org.uk click on Education. Organisations specified by Scottish Ministers which provide advice, further information and support to parents of children and young people with ASN. These organisations are identified under The Additional Support for Learning (Sources of Information) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 as:

(a) Children in Scotland: Working for Children and Their Families, trading as "Enquire – the Scottish advice and information service for additional support for learning", a charitable body registered in Scotland under registration number SC003527; <http://enquire.org.uk/>

(b) Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance, a charitable body registered in Scotland under registration number SC033576; and

(c) Scottish Child Law Centre, a charitable body registered in Scotland under registration number SCO12741."



Some useful links;

[Support for Learners Website](http://enquire.org.uk/)

<http://enquire.org.uk/>

Support from other Agencies

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Staff will support the emotional development and wellbeing of pupils through formal and informal curricular activities. Any concerns about a pupil's wellbeing can be discussed with the named person.

School have access to Highland Council's Primary Mental Health Worker Service and consultation and advice may be sought if there are concerns that might require more targeted support. Parents are generally involved in discussions beforehand, however a young person over the age of 12 can ask for support themselves.

Psychological Service (Education)

The Council helps the staff in a supportive role by providing further assessment for any child we feel may have learning difficulties, through the Psychological Services. With the help of our Additional Support Needs Teacher, we now carry out various specialist assessment techniques to pinpoint particular difficulties. We are always in close contact with our Psychological Service to discuss the review test results and child progress.

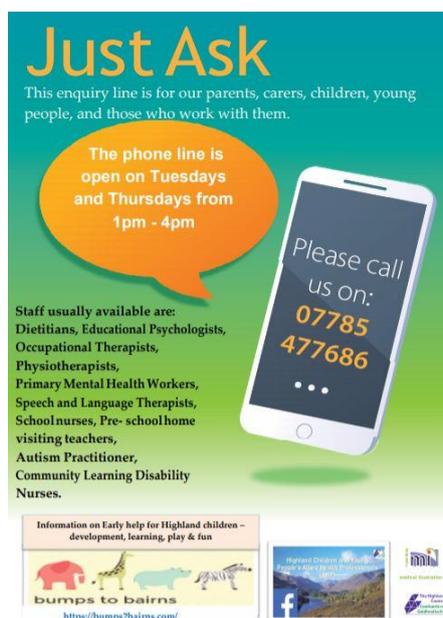
Speech & Language Therapy (Health Board)

In the Nursery and school we have the services of Ms Sharon Philip, our Speech and Language Therapist, who provides screening and follow-up of our children. She works closely with Class Teachers and PSAs.

Just ASK support service

Useful advice and support helpline for parents looking for advice on child development- Operates Tuesday/Thursdays- more info below

<https://www.thepineshighland.com/news/just-ask>



Just Ask

This enquiry line is for our parents, carers, children, young people, and those who work with them.

The phone line is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1pm - 4pm

Please call us on:
07785 477686

Staff usually available are:
Dietitians, Educational Psychologists,
Occupational Therapists,
Physiotherapists,
Primary Mental Health Workers,
Speech and Language Therapists,
School nurses, Pre- school/home visiting teachers,
Autism Practitioner,
Community Learning Disability Nurses.

Information on Early help for Highland children - development, learning, play & fun
bumps to bairns
<https://bumpstobairns.com/>

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Partnerships

We believe that much of the strength of the school lies in the positive relationships between staff, pupils and their parents. These relations must be nurtured by a healthy exchange of information between teachers and pupils, between home and school. We always welcome parental interest in the welfare of our pupils. Whatever the nature of the issue, you can be assured of our help.

The school works very hard to keep parents informed regarding their child's progress and any key decisions being made about their education. This includes:

- Monthly newsletters
- Website & school Facebook page updates
- Parents' evenings – November and May
- Progress checks/reports

Details of where information regarding the school's performance at local and national level can be obtained by visiting Education Scotland website-

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

The support of parents in their children's education is key to the success of young people. Taking time with them, discussing work, practicing language, helping them manage their homework and encouraging responsibility are important ways of supporting children's learning. The school always seek to involve parents in any key decisions about their child's education and keep parents informed about progress.

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>

Helmsdale Primary Parent Council



All parent/carers are automatically members of the Parent Forum and are free to attend Parent Council meetings. The Parent Council is a vital part of school life and where parents are able to raise issues that concern them.

We currently have a drive to attract more parents to our meetings and would really like to see you there! The meetings are held termly, usually on a Thursday evening.

Chairperson – Vacant

Secretary – Vacant

Treasurer - Rachel Shaw

Committee – *Caroline Cowie, Kelly Booth, Racheal Taylor, Terri Rapson, Amy Withey, Yvonne Grant, Aimee Macleod.*

We hope that in time, you too would have something to offer within this body.

PC Email address- helmsdale.primary@highlandpc.co.uk

Policies & Procedures

Enrolment/Placing Requests

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 and Learning Manager, **Annika Jansson**. Placing request forms can be obtained from:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/887/enrol_your_child_for_school

Transportation to and from school, for placing request pupils, is a parental responsibility. Parents of children with Additional Support Needs, including those who have Co-ordinated Support Plans, can make placing requests to any school in Scotland including schools outside of the local authority area they live in. All appeals about placing requests to special schools will be referred to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal.

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 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. Copies of Child Protection Policy Guidelines are available from:

www.highland.gov.uk/info/1361/childcare_and_family_care/438/child_protection

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 the Child Protection Officer, **Yvonne Ross**, Highland Child Protection Committee, Kinmylies Buildings, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NN.

Telephone 01463 703483.

Complaints and Requests for Service

Complaints should initially be brought to the attention of the class teacher or the child's named person – who is usually the Head Teacher. The school will always endeavour to resolve issues by listening to parents and seeking solutions in partnership. Should a situation not be resolved, the matter can be raised with the Parent Council or ultimately the Area Education and Learning Manager, **Annika Jansson**.

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.

Arrangements for parents to record concerns and how these concerns will be dealt with. Also link to Parentline:

<https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland>

Attendance/Absence

Good attendance is vital if pupils are to achieve their full potential. If a pupil is absent from school, a parent or guardian should phone the school on the first day of absence. When returning to school after an absence, the parent or guardian must give written reason for time of absence.

Permission to leave during the school day: If a pupil needs to leave during the school day for an appointment etc, pupils need to bring with them a note from parent/guardian. Where at all possible, medical and dental appointments should be outwith school hours. If pupils fall ill during the day, parents are contacted for them to collect their child, therefore it is essential that we have up-to-date daytime contact numbers and emergency contact numbers for all pupils.

When parents are considering whether or not to remove their children from school for a family holiday, they should be aware that such a decision:

- will result in a significant loss in classroom experience
- will result in a pressure to 'catch-up' on missed work by pupils
- could result in pupils missing assessment with consequential impact on pupils and teachers
- could result in loss of curricular activities
- will affect school attendance records and efforts to raise standards of attendance
- under the guidance issued at a national level, most family holidays will be coded as unauthorised absence, only in exceptional cases will the absence be recorded as authorised

In conclusion, we would ask parents to be aware of these consideration when making decisions on planning holidays during term time. If parents decide to make arrangements during school term, this should be confirmed in writing to the Head Teacher.



Attendance and school data

Information on the above is available at the school office on request.

Access to Pupil Records

The Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003 extend to parents the right of access (within certain specific exceptions) to any record held by the Authority in relation to their child. Parents may make application to the Head Teacher.

Equality and Inclusion

For up-to-date information please see:

www.highland.gov.uk/info/751/equality_diversity_and_citizenship/313/equal_opportunities

In summary, our activities in school should ensure that we:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, promote good relations. Activities should not discriminate against any of the following 'protected characteristics' - age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

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

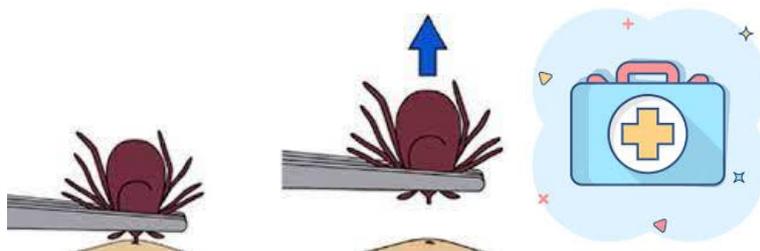
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs/833/armed_forces_-_support_for_families_and_schools

First Aid

Within the school our Nursery Early Years Practitioners are trained in first aid. There is also a nominated 'First Aider' within the school.

Cuts, bumps and grazes will be dealt with in house. More serious issues will always be dealt with by a professional and parents will be contacted as soon as possible- you may be requested to take your child home or to see a GP.

We have a fairly unique rural school issue of having ticks in our playground in the Summer, from the red deer- consent forms for these to be removed are issued annually. As a school we believe it is best to remove these as soon as possible.



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.

Where a pupil has had sickness or diarrhoea they must stay at home for 48 hours after the final episode, this is to restrict the spreading of illnesses.

If a pupil becomes ill, informs a member of staff they feel unwell or has an accident at school, parents or the emergency contact will be notified immediately.

We are involved in the Childsmile programme, children have regular visits from Childsmile staff about dental hygiene, good practice and tooth brushing, as well as fluoride varnishing. Any parent who wishes to opt out of any part of the health provision for their child must contact the Head Teacher.



We have nurses who visit our setting, and families are offered flu immunisations for school aged children. Consent forms are sent home annually.



Data Protection Legislation

Information on pupils, parent and guardians is stored on a computer system and may be used for teaching, registration, assessment and other administrative duties. The information is protected by data protection legislation and may only be disclosed in accordance with the codes of practice.

Transferring Educational data about pupils

The Scottish Government and it's partners collect and use information about pupils through the *Pupil Census* to help to improve education across Scotland. This note explains why we need this information, how we use it and what we do to protect the information supplied to us. Further information can be obtained from: www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed

Data Policy

Information about pupils' education is collected through our statistical surveys in partnership between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities through the ScotXed Programme which aims to help schools and LA's by supporting efficient collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information. The Scottish Government then provides analysis of the data to support research, planning, management and monitoring of education services as well as to produce National Statistics publications.

Education data within Scottish Government is managed effectively by secure systems and is exploited as a valuable corporate resource, subject to confidentiality restraints. As part of it's data policy, Scottish Government will not publish or make publicly available any information that allows individual pupils to be identified, nor will data be used by the Scottish Government to take any actions in respect of individuals. Data is held securely and no information on individual pupils can or would be made publicly available by Scottish Government.

The individual data collected by Scottish Government through the Pupil Census is used for statistical and research purposes only.

Information on why we collect data about pupils and who we share this data with can be found in Highland Council's Privacy Notice which is available at:

www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1095920/enrol

Why do we need your data?

In order to make the best decisions about how to improve our education service, Scottish Government, education authorities and other partners such as the SQA and Skills Development Scotland need accurate, up-to-date data about our pupils. We are keen to help all our pupils do well in all aspects of school life and achieve better examination results. Accurate and up-to-date data allows us to:

- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of all pupils
- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of specific groups of pupils
- better understand some of the factors which influence pupil attainment and achievement
- share good practice
- target resources better
- enhance the quality of research to improve the lives of young people in Scotland

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: 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 this 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 out with 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 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.

Practical Information

School Transport

Children residing more than 3 miles from the school and children under 8 years of age living more than 2 miles from the school, are provided with transport to and from the school. Information on applying can be found on the Highland Council website.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/12/school_transport



Guidelines regarding adverse weather conditions are included in this booklet. Please familiarise yourself with them to prevent any problems when any of these conditions prevail. We will also update parent pages at the earliest convenience to alleviate any anxieties.

TELEPHONE INFORMATION SERVICE

Schools now have a dial-in service if there is a risk of closure due to adverse weather. This allows parents to listen to a recorded message from the Head Teacher.

When severe weather warnings are received your school will endeavour to keep the system updated. It is an enhancement to the present service and does **not** replace existing methods of giving out information, such as radio broadcasts, described in the schools Adverse Weather Guidelines.

How to use the service.

- Dial Highland Council's access number - 0800 564 2272
- Now enter your own school's pin number **04 2180**

You have two attempts to enter the pin number and you will be disconnected after a second failed attempt. If this happens, check the number and redial. If you still have a problem check with your school.

- You will now hear the school's name. Ensure that this is correct before going on.
- You will now be taken to the MAIN MENU where you will be given 4 options:

Press 1 to hear your school's message about the adverse weather for example whether or not the school is to close or if transport arrangements have been affected.

Press 4 to enter the pin number for another school within the authority. Parents may have children who attend different schools. This option allows you to move from one school's messaging service to another without having to dial in again.

Where possible we will update the school Facebook page. MFR will also have information being broadcast if the school has to close as well as the information being available online at Highland Council website. <http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures>

School Meals

In line with the Scottish Government initiative all children in Primary 1-5 are entitled to a free school meal. All classes have a choice of the same menu. This is £2.30 per day for P6&7 pupils and can be paid for weekly. There is always staff on duty in the canteen to help children who have difficulties. We try to encourage the children to have a healthy eating outlook.

The school meals facility is run with set menus, rotating through 4 weeks, providing meals which are considered well balanced.

At Helmsdale Primary Anne and Ula, our lovely dinner ladies operate the ['3 choice grab & go' menu](#)

Children are encouraged to aim towards eating a balanced diet, fresh fruit, raw and cooked vegetables and salads are always available.



Children of parents on Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance may receive free lunches. Applications can be made online.

['Free school meal and assistance with clothing'](#)

Snacks like toast, scones, bagels and fresh fruit are also on sale at the morning interval. Staying hydrated boosts brain power- children should bring a freshly filled water bottle to school each day. We ask that there is no juice in class in case of spillages. Healthy drinks are permitted at breaks/in packed lunches- no fizzy.

Helmsdale Primary Children's Councils

During some of the school session we run Pupil, Eco, Health and other various committees. These give children a chance to have a say in the life of their school. Primary 5/6/7 also run a Rotakids group.

We have also recently signed up to gain accreditation to become a Rights Respecting School and are in the process of forming a steering group to take this forward.



Transitions

Nursery-Primary 1



Transition is very important to us- nursery staff and the Primary 1 teacher work together throughout the year- for example with Kodaly music sessions and 'Safe, Strong & Free' puppet sessions.

There is always an opportunity for the nursery children to spend a full day/days in the P1 composite class, prior to beginning school- where they can be involved in the lunchtime experience and outdoor play at breaks.

Associated Secondary School



Secondary Education

Our children normally transfer to Golspie High School at the end of Primary 7.

In the months leading up to the transition, much communication takes place between the P7 Class Teacher and both the Pastoral Care Department and Support for Learning Departments of the High School.

In the summer term, P7 pupils will have a visit from a member of the Guidance Team and a visit from senior pupils, before spending 3-5 familiarisation days in the High School.

We organise transition activities along with Secondary Departments.

There is also a 'transition class' on google classroom.

Any pupils with additional support needs will have extra transition arrangements put in place.

Telephone **(01408) 633451**

Term Dates

2022-2023 Session

Highland School calendar 2022/23

Please note - Dates may be subject to change

August 2022							September 2022							October 2022							November 2022													
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su			
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December 2022							January 2023							February 2023							March 2023																			
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April 2023							May 2023							June 2023							July 2023															
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																								32	31											

School holidays
School days

In-service days

2023-2024 Session

Highland School calendar 2023/24

Please note - Dates may be subject to change

August 2023							September 2023							October 2023							November 2023										
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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34	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	38	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	42	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	47	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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April 2024							May 2024							June 2024							July 2024										
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School holidays
School days

In-service days

I hope you have found the information in the brochure useful. It is reviewed and revised periodically and although the contents are correct at the time of publication, there may be subsequent changes as the year progresses.

If you are unsure of anything or would like further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Mrs Shelly Taylor

Acting Head Teacher

(Last Update December 2022)

