

# Helmsdale Primary School



## Nursery Handbook

2023 - 2024



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## 2023-2024

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The aim of this booklet is to welcome you and provide you with information you may need while your child is attending Helmsdale Nursery. If there is anything else, you would like to know please contact the school.

This booklet is reviewed annually, and your comments are always welcome.

#### Contact Details

Helmsdale Nursery,  
Helmsdale Primary School  
Old Caithness Road,  
Helmsdale,  
Sutherland  
KW8 6JW



**01431821244**

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

## Helmsdale Nursery Aims

- To provide a challenging, stimulating learning environment indoors and outside which encourages every child to develop curiosity, inquiry, creativity, and communication skills while ensuring every child is safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and involved.
- To provide a quality service underpinned by How good is our early learning and childcare, Health and Social Care Standards, Curriculum for Excellence, Building the Ambition and the SSSC.
- To be proactive in maintaining and improving effective links with our children's families, our school/s community, other Early Learning and Childcare settings, the Health Visiting team and other associated health professionals. Also, to further develop links with the groups in the community of Helmsdale.
- Develop family engagement in their children's learning and in our setting's community.
- Provide high quality learning by ensuring our staff members are well qualified and up to date with relevant knowledge and skills through training and collaboration.



## Staffing

The Acting Head Teacher of Helmsdale Primary School and Nursery manager is,  
**Mrs Shelly Taylor.** [shelly.taylor@highland.gov.uk](mailto:shelly.taylor@highland.gov.uk)

The Early Years Practitioners are:

- ❖ **Mrs Racheal Taylor**- who holds a National Certificate in 'Childcare and Early Education' and a SVQ Level III in 'Social Services children and Young people'.
- ❖ **Miss Leonnie Keith**- who holds SVQ Level III Social Services children and Young people.

Both EYPs are registered with SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council).

The nursery also has a support worker,

**Ms Kareen Mcconnach** who works 7 hours/week in the nursery and helps with the day to running of the setting.



**Mrs S. Taylor**



**Mrs R. Taylor**



**Miss L. Keith**



**Ms K. McConnach**

The Early Education and Childcare Manager for Sutherland is,

**Mrs Carla Gallon**

The Early Education Support Officer for Caithness & Sutherland is,

**Mrs Maria Aitken**

The Nursery is part of a cluster in the Golspie Associated School Groups (ASGs). Occasionally students from North Highland College and Inverness College are allocated placements in the Nursery.

## Nursery Hours

In line with the school, we operate an asymmetric week...

### Helmsdale Nursery opening times:

**Monday/ Tuesday/ Wednesday:**

8.30am-3.30pm

**Thursday:**

9.00am-3.00pm

**Friday:**

9.00am-12.00pm

### 3-5 Provision

Each child is entitled to 30hours per week during term time should their parents wish for them to do full days. The current role is 9 children (3 x N4 and 6 x N3). Entry dates for funded places are available in February each year and this information can be found on the nursery notice board and in the local press. Children who will not have the full two-year entitlement can access the provision for a small fee after the child turns three until the funded date comes into effect. This applies to children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 28<sup>th</sup> February only. An additional form for this must be completed online/at the school office and invoicing will be through Early Education Services, Clachnaharry, Inverness.

### Accommodation

The nursery class is located within Helmsdale Primary School and is an integral part of the school. Access is via a separate secure entrance. The nursery premises consist of a cloakroom, playroom with kitchen area, toilets, and disabled toilet. The playroom includes numeracy and literacy around the room, a messy area for painting and sand/water play, a story corner, role play corner and computer area.

The children also use the school gym hall on a regular basis- the area has recently been refurbished.

There is an enclosed outdoor area with a variety of loose parts play, water/mud kitchen, and various large- and small-scale outdoor play equipment also including bikes, scooters and trikes.

Thanks to the hard work of parent council members and the generosity of the local community we also now have our very own nursery polycrubb which is great for all weathers-



## Parental Involvement

We recognise that as parents, you are the first educators of your child. We respect, understand and value the role you play in your child's learning and aim to work in partnership with you to support and enhance your child's development.

Nursery staff are available at the start of each session, to chat to parents informally, however a private appointment can be arranged should you require to discuss anything further.

The parent noticeboard provides you with information on children's activities, planning, general reminders and newsletters. All parents are emailed monthly newsletters-if you would prefer a paper version of the newsletters please let staff know.

Home packs are offered later in the year, to the preschool children, for you to enjoy with your child. Your views are sought of various aspects of the nursery provision throughout the year by "Tell Us About ..." slips and parent questionnaires.

You are encouraged to visit nursery to just stay and join in the fun or share a skill ie talk about your job, bring in a new baby, read stories or help with craft activities- we truly value partnerships and have a welcoming ethos.



## Parent Council

By enrolling your child at Nursery you automatically become a member of the Helmsdale Primary Parent Forum.

The Parent Council represents the interests of all parents on the Forum.

The role of the parent council is to work in partnership with the setting, provide a voice for all parents, help make links with the wider community, fundraise in collaboration with the setting, contribute to school inspections etc.

Further information about being involved in the Parent Council can be obtained by contacting-

[helmsdale.primary@highlandpc.co.uk](mailto:helmsdale.primary@highlandpc.co.uk)

Alternatively speak to Mrs Taylor or Mary-Anne Ross, the school secretary for further assistance/explanation.



## Additional Support Needs

We aim to work in partnership with parents in order to meet a child's additional physical, medical, intellectual, emotional and behavioural needs.

We may ask for information on additional needs through the Nursery Enrolment form, 'All about Me' sheet and informal discussions. This will enable staff to plan in advance how children with additional needs can fully access the curriculum and support them to reach their potential. Highland Council is committed to 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) and believes that every child should be 'Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected and Responsible, and Included' (SHANARRI). It is Highland Council policy to integrate children with additional needs wherever possible. In some cases a child may require a 'Needs Identified' form, 'Individualised Education Programme' or a 'Child's Plan'. Using these documents the Nursery team will work with parents and other relevant professionals to ensure that children with additional needs participate and progress. This may involve adapting play activities to ensure equal access to equipment.

We will support the needs of children and families whose first language is not English, working with parents and children to ensure their needs are met.



In our nursery we are committed to creating an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is responded to promptly and appropriately. All those involved in the nursery have the responsibility to adopt good practice throughout their work. In order to achieve this, we will seek to work in partnership with parents, carers, other agencies and Highland Council to promote good practice in the area of Child protection.

### **Working together: Statement for parents**

All pre-school education centres work closely with NHS Highland and other agencies so that the resources and information we have will bring the most benefit to families. The aim is to ensure we have the right services for your child at the right time.

Early Education services and NHS Highland collaborate to plan services and offer interventions, such as the Childsmile Oral Health Programme and the Pre-school Vision Screening Programme. To assist the administration of these programmes, we confirm your child's name, date of birth and address to NHS Highland.

We have a Link Health Visitor, who visits the centre at least once a term. Their main role is to offer advice on children's health and development. They will also liaise with your own Family Health Visitor if necessary.

**Our centre's Link Health Visitor is:** **Sally McCourt: 01408 635 360**      [sally.mccourt@highland.gov.uk](mailto:sally.mccourt@highland.gov.uk)

If your child would benefit from help from other agencies, you will be asked for permission so that relevant information can be shared. This enables staff to get a rounded picture of your child and means you won't keep being asked for the same information by different people. If your child's immediate safety or welfare is at risk, information may legally be shared without your consent.

*This statement is available in Gaelic and Polish and can be provided in other languages and formats, on request to Childcare & Early Education Service.*

## Curriculum

The children's needs are planned for and assessed by the staff through regular observations in the three core areas of the curriculum (numeracy, literacy and health and well-being). The other curricular areas include Expressive Arts, Sciences, Social Studies, Technologies, and Religious and Moral Education. Further information can be found at [www.curriculumforexcellence.gov.uk](http://www.curriculumforexcellence.gov.uk) and [www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk).

All activities aim to build on previous learning experiences and planning is responsive to children's interests.

The emphasis is on developing positive attitudes to learning so children can become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors, and responsible citizens.

### Learning Through Play

It is through play that preschool children discover the vital learning skills they will use later in life for more formal learning. A wide range of play resources are available every session and encourage development in the eight curriculum areas in the 'Curriculum for Excellence 3-18'. The play activities on offer reflect the children's interests and allow for a curiosity approach to be adopted.



### Planning and Assessment

Planning for every child involves creating rich, challenging and meaningful learning experience, building on individual talents and needs. A weekly learning plan reflects children's needs and interests and an overview of this plan is posted on the parent noticeboard. It outlines the children's current interests, aspects of the curriculum, and any special activities or visits/visitors.

High quality learning activities will be provided for all children through learning, teaching and assessment. Assessment provides an emerging picture of your child and their achievements and shows progress in learning. Each child has a 'My Learning Journey' folder. The folder contains three sections: An 'All About Me' sheet - completed by you when your child starts nursery, steps on 'My Learning Journey', and Evidence of Learning - staff observations, photos, drawings, child and parent comments. This folder is maintained by your child's key worker in partnership with you and your child. The folder is a working document which provides a way of involving your child in discussions about their learning. You are encouraged to view your child's folder regularly, add comments on your child's learning target and record achievements from home.

### Reporting

An essential part of record keeping in the nursery involves the taking of photographs. During enrolment you will be asked to sign a form giving permission for your child to be photographed by staff. There is also a private Nursery Dojo page which updates you on what's going on and is regularly updated- if you use social media please ask to become a member.

Staff will complete an end of year Progress Report for parents and the receiving centre. The report comments on Literacy, Numeracy and Mathematics, and Health and Wellbeing. It also reports on some other curriculum areas and may identify one or two next steps, as well as include staff and children's comments on their learning.

## **Practical Information**



### **Delivering and collecting children**

Children should be brought to nursery and collected by a known adult. If there is any change to the collection arrangements, please let staff know. Please note that no child will be handed over to an adult not authorised by the parent/carer, anyone under the age of sixteen or to an individual who the staff consider is under the influence of drink or drugs. In this instance the Social Work department and, if necessary, the Police will be contacted. Please ensure your child is collected promptly at the end of their session.

### **Car parking**

Parents are asked not to bring cars into the school grounds, with the exception of those dropping off or collecting children with additional support needs.

### **Clothing**

For messy activities aprons are provided but please do not let your child wear their best clothes as they might use glue, paint and pens and have regular opportunities for outdoor play. All personal items should be labelled with your child's name. Please leave a named spare set of clothes in nursery at all times in case of accidents or spillages. All-in-one waterproof suits and wellies are supplied by the nursery for outdoor wet activities. However, please ensure children wear appropriate outdoor clothing for the weather - coat, gloves, hats for cool weather and sun hat for hot days. We also ask that you apply sun cream before coming to nursery on hot days. Indoor shoes are required and we prefer black gym shoes, elasticated or velcro tie.

### **Illness**

Should your child become injured or ill while attending Nursery we will make every attempt to contact you immediately. If you cannot be contacted we will telephone the emergency contact number you have given us. Please make sure you inform staff of changes to telephone numbers and emergency contact details. Where a child needs immediate treatment it may be necessary for him/her to be seen by the local G.P. A member of staff will accompany your child.

Please keep your child at home if they have any infection. Parents should inform nursery as to the nature of the infection so that staff can alert other parents and make careful observations of any child who seems unwell. Parents are asked not to bring any child into nursery who has been vomiting or has had diarrhoea until at least 48 hours has elapsed since the last episode.

### **Medication**

Should your child require medication during nursery hours, please inform staff. We are required to follow procedures regarding the administration of medication in schools/nurseries according to Highland Council Guidelines.



## **Immunisation**

Children receiving out-of-home care, including at nursery and playgroup, have more opportunities to come into contact with infections, so it is especially important to make sure they have all their vaccinations up-to-date. Contact your health visitor/GP for further advice.

## **Absence**

Parents are requested to inform nursery staff if their child is to have a planned absence. Parents should telephone the school on the first day of an unexpected absence. If a situation arises such that a child misses nursery for 2 days without explanation, then staff will phone to enquire about the absence. This is to ensure the welfare of all children attending nursery.

## **Snack**

Snack time is an important part of the nursery routine as it helps to develop social skills and reinforces children's understanding of healthy eating. In nursery we have a healthy eating policy and provide a selection of healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, breadsticks, cheese and yoghurts. We offer children milk or water to drink. Parents are asked to provide details of any allergies or health problems which may affect their child's diet. Due to food handling regulations it is not possible for Nursery staff to distribute home-made food brought in by parents/carers, e.g. birthday cakes, party food. Snacks are around 10.30am & 2.00pm daily.

## **Lunch**

Your child may bring in a packed lunch or order a meal through the canteen- this is funded by the Government and includes a choice of 2 healthy hot meals and either a starter or dessert.

The latest Early years menu can be found here:

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/9/school\\_menus](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/9/school_menus)

Nursery children have their lunch together in the main school canteen at 11.50am.



## **Donations**

Donations towards Nursery resources are always welcome.

We are currently aiming to include more loose parts, both indoors and out, a list of items which may be of use to us can be found here- [PlayScotland](#)

## Toys.

Children can take a toy in from home to show the other children.

All children are asked to look after all toys and to be careful with other people's property.

## Transitions

Transitions occur throughout early childhood. They happen at different times as your child moves from home to nursery, from one nursery to another and when your child moves from nursery to primary school. Nursery enrolment forms are completed online or at the school office. Visits are also arranged before your child starts nursery and you will be informed about times and dates by letter. Staggered intake dates and times for the term will be given out soon after your visit. When your child attends nursery for a second funded year you will need to enrol your child again for their pre-school year.

Nursery has links with the infant class throughout the year to ensure children are familiar with both the staff and classroom. Prior to your child commencing school you will be invited to a meeting with the P1 teacher (Mrs Henderson). Enrolment for Primary one is also carried out online or through the school office. When your child transfers from nursery to primary school they will have a primary six buddy to support them.



## Adverse weather conditions

In times of severe weather, the safety of pupils is our prime concern. If conditions are such that you feel your child may be put at risk in attempting to come to nursery, please keep them at home.

In the event of the nursery not opening in the morning the Head Teacher will post information on the school Facebook page and staff will also update the nursery Dojo page at their earliest convenience.



The Headteacher will also relay this information to Moray Firth radio. Information will also be posted on the winter weather website: [www.schoolclosures.highlandschools.org.uk](http://www.schoolclosures.highlandschools.org.uk) and the Highland Council telephone messaging service:

**Telephone- 0870 054 6999, then the school number when prompted- 04 1890.**

If the school has to be closed during the day parents will be informed, so please keep all contact numbers up to date and let staff know as soon as there are any changes to details.

## Nursery Improvement

Staff engage in regular self-evaluation using quality indicators from HGIOELC 'How Good is Our Early Learning & Childcare'. This document provides a framework for staff to evaluate performance and identify ways to improve.

Local Authority nurseries are included in whole school HMIe/Education Scotland inspections and all staff are involved in this process. A report including gradings on the findings from the Quality Indicators will be sent to the school. The staff team will work together to implement any recommendations.

The Nursery receives regular visits from the Care Inspectorate (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland - SCSWIS) to ensure National Care Standards are being met. The most recent report is available on the parent noticeboard and can be viewed online at [www.scswis.com](http://www.scswis.com).

An annual 'Standards and Quality' report details the main achievements of the school and highlights areas for improvement. A copy of this is on the Helmsdale Primary School website, along with a family friendly version of the school improvement plan- <https://helmsdaleprimary.wordpress.com/school-improvement-focus/>

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

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

A nursery specific improvement is also to build back more links within the local community post-covid. We intend to get library visits and links with the local Hub re-instated.

## Nursery Policies & Procedures

### The following policies are in place in Helmsdale nursery:

- ❖ Child Protection Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Comments and Complaints Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Confidentiality Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Intimate Care Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Administration of Medication in Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Administration of Medication forms Appendix 1
- ❖ Administration of Medication forms – Appendix 2
- ❖ Administration of Medication forms – Appendix 3
- ❖ Family Engagement Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Settling In Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Transition Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Animals in Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ No Smoking Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings
- ❖ Volunteering in Early Learning and Childcare
- ❖ Risk Assessment in Early Learning and Childcare
- ❖ Guidance Notes for School Meals Special Diet Requests
- ❖ Deferred and Early Entry to School – January 2020

The policy folder is available for parents and carers at any time.

All policies can also be located online: <https://elchighland.com/policies/>

### Intimate Care

Highland Council has an equal opportunities policy and children cannot be refused admission to nursery because they are not toilet trained. Please discuss your child's toilet needs with staff if required.

Accidents will occasionally happen. You will be asked to give permission for staff to deal with the situation or else you will be contacted to come into nursery to deal with it yourself. This may involve helping your child or taking them home. Whatever your preference the staff will follow the Intimate Care policy, deal with the situation and sensitively and discreetly as possible and keep you informed.

## **Behaviour Policy**

Our aim is to encourage tolerance, co-operation and respect and to help children develop self-discipline and self-esteem. In nursery, clear consistent boundaries are set regarding behaviour, taking children's age and level of understanding into account. Positive methods of guidance are used, good behaviour is rewarded with praise, and respect for others is encouraged.

Children who show unacceptable behaviour are given one-to-one adult support to help them understand what went wrong and support them in establishing a better behavioural pattern. Recurring behavioural problems are dealt with by all staff - using objective observation records and in partnership with the child's parents - to establish an understanding of the cause. Staff will always make it clear that it is the child's behaviour they are unhappy with and not the child him/herself.

Helmsdale Nursery use -



### **Comment and Complaints policy**

We hope you are satisfied with the provision at our nursery and welcome comments or suggestions, which may help to improve our service. We are, however, aware that occasionally issues may arise and should you wish to make a complaint then please follow the procedure detailed below.

Please use the open-door policy and speak to the EYP, either at the beginning or end of a session. If you prefer, an appointment can be made to speak in private. It will then, in consultation with the parents/carers, be decided if the matter needs to be taken further, in which case the Head Teacher will be informed and a meeting arranged.

From here, if necessary, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Area Education Manager who will decide what the next steps should be. Parents will be kept fully informed at each stage and will be invited to attend any meetings being held.

Parents/carers are also able to contact the Care Inspectorate directly with a complaint, if they wish. The local address and telephone number for our centre is:

**SCSWIS,  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Castle House,  
Fairways Business Park,  
Inverness, IV2 6AA.**

**Tel No. 01463 227630;  
Fax 01463 227649**

The SCSWIS publication "How to Complain" is also available.  
You will find a copy of this displayed on the parent notice Board.

