

Merkinch Primary School Handbook 2024-2025



Head Teacher's Welcome

Dear Parent

I hope you will find this booklet interesting and informative; it contains information about the school and the work that we do. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

A copy of the booklet can be made available to the parents of all children entering the school for the first time or to any parents who are considering placing their child in school.

At Merkinch Primary we have 3 rights; the right to learn, the right to respect and the right to be safe. These three rights are the basis of all we do in our school and ELC.

Culture of kindness, warm, welcoming, ambitious, and above and beyond are words our community use to describe our school. We have high expectations of our learners, and we are relentless in our commitment to provide high quality teaching and learning at Merkinch Primary School.

At Merkinch we really value our parent community and aim to respond to community needs. We hope that you will find this handbook useful in encouraging and enhancing your involvement in the partnership between home and the school.

We aim to make starting school for the first time or transferring from another school as smooth as possible. We work hard to help the children settle into the routine of the class and school.

Yours sincerely

Jillian Kean HT
November 2023



Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of the handbook is to:

- communicate the ethos of our school and provide a welcome for parents to our school
- help parents to choose a school
- prepare your child for school
- act as a reference tool while your child is at Merkinch School.

Our handbook will also provide you, as parents and carers, information about your child's learning journey and, in doing so, encourages parental involvement in the school, learning at home, home/school partnership, family learning and helps parents support their children.

A hard copy of this handbook is available, on request. Please see the school office. If you need a copy in an alternative format e.g. Braille, or translated into another language we would be happy to help.

We value your feedback towards this handbook, please let us know if there is anything you wish to be included or changed.

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

Contact Details

Address

Merkinch Primary School
Carse Road
Inverness
IV3 8QB

Telephone

School Office: 01463 221382
Absence: 01463 245920

Email Merkinch.Primary@highland.gov.uk

Online

We regularly post updates and information on our social media platforms. Please like our Facebook page Official Merkinch Primary School.

School Information

Merkinch Primary School provides early learning and childcare and primary education for children aged 3-12. Our current pupil roll is 342. We are a non-denominational school; however, we do enjoy links with the local churches and use them as venues to celebrate significant events such as Christmas, Easter, and Leaver's Assemblies.

In October 2020 we moved into our beautiful purpose-built building and in October 2021 we opened our refurbished dinner hall, dance studio and music room. The Merkinch Family Centre have joined us at the Merkinch Community Campus. We will also welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the family centre.

Practical Information

<u>School Day</u>	P4-7 9.00-3.00	<u>Lunch times</u>
ELC offer flexible hours.	<u>Break times</u>	ELC-P1 11.45
8-4:30	P1-7 10.30-10.45	P2-4 12.15
P1-3 9.00-2.30		P5-7 12.45

All children in P1-5 (from Jan 2022) are entitled to a free school lunch. However we ask that if you are eligible, you still fill in the form for free school meals, to ensure that you receive your school clothing grant. Children in P6-7 should pay for their meals, however if you believe you are eligible for Free School Meals please fill in the form here [http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/899/schools -
grants and benefits/10/free school meals and assistance with clothing](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/899/schools-_grants_and_benefits/10/free_school_meals_and_assistance_with_clothing)

School Meals cost £2.30 for pupils and just keep getting better, with better quality food, healthier meals, larger portion sizes and a variety of choices. If a pupil has special dietary needs, please inform us.

Classes and Staff

Head Teacher: Miss Kean

Depute Head Teacher: Miss James

Principal Teachers: Mrs McDermid, Miss Watson

We currently have 9 classes in our 2023/2024 session, this is subject to change, but gives you an idea of the structure of our school.

P1A Miss Twomey

P1/2 Miss Healy

P2 Miss Gilmour/Mrs Black

P3 Mrs Brock

P4 Mr. Mathie

P4/5 Mrs McDermid

P5/6 Mrs McCallum

P6/7 Miss MacQueen

P7 Miss Meikle

CCR~ Miss James, Miss Gilmour

PE Miss Barclay

PSAs support class teachers across our school.

- Maria Finnis
- Kerry Cooper
- Julie MacLeod
- Susanne Holmes
- Heather Wallace
- Ilze Laksa
- Mel Peters

- Amanda Nicoll
- Claire McKenzie
- Charlie Anderson
- Samantha Morrison
- Jenny Roy
- Lorna Denoon
- Nicola Mitchell
- Morgan Kinghorn
- Sarah MacKintosh

Early Learning and Childcare Team:

- Bethany Robertson (SEYP)
- Carley Blandford – Early Years Practitioner
- Laura McNally – Early Years Practitioner
- Nicole Nicholson – Early Years Practitioner
- Lisa Addison – Early Years Practitioner
- Mairi MacPhail – Early Years Practitioner
- Courtney Gavin – Early Years Practitioner
- Christina Macdonald – Early Years Practitioner
- Lindsay Dunlop – Early Years Practitioner
- Carol-Anne Macphail – Early Years Practitioner
- Katelyn Mackenzie – Early Years Practitioner
- Nicola O’Hara – Early Years Practitioner
- Shaun Hunter – Support worker
- Shannon Thomson – Support worker
- Aga Malolepsza – Support worker
- Ilze Laksa OOSC Auxiliary
- Nim MacMillian OOSC Auxiliary
- Mel Peters – OOSC Assistant

Office Staff: Mrs Creighton and Mrs Reed

CSW: Miss M MacKenzie

Positive Relationships Coordinator (PEF funded): Jenny Cuthbert

FM: Jimmy

Homework

We are currently consulting with our children and parents about homework in Merkinch.

Wider achievements

Throughout the year children will be invited to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs. Information regarding these activities will be given to you when the opportunities arise. These offer fantastic experiences for children, and we encourage children to make the most of these opportunities. These are 'staffed' by volunteers who kindly offer their time. We also use PEF funding to support our wider achievement.

School Uniform

We pride ourselves on good presentation at Merkinch. When we wear the badge on our jumper, we know we belong to the school community and it reminds us to responsibly uphold our three rights. Our school uniform consists of a green sweatshirt, white or bright green polo-shirt and dark trousers/ skirt.

No denim is to be worn by any child or member of staff with the exception of non-uniform days.

Information regarding School Clothing grants can be found here

[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)

Term Dates

Information regarding term dates can be found here on the Highland Council's website https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/school_term_dates

Emergency Arrangements

In case of emergency, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If a school closure is required, we will use the text messaging service and support from MFR. It is not always possible to contact every parent by phone in the case of a whole school closure. We will try our utmost to get accurate information to you as soon as possible. It is therefore essential that you keep us up to date with your phone number and contact information.

Communication with Parents and Parental Involvement

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

We work very hard to keep parents informed regarding their child's progress throughout the year and any key decisions being made about your child's education.

In addition to Google Classroom and social media we also email home letters with information about important dates and events. These include school menus, permission slips and annual update forms. Please check your emails and your child's bag regularly to ensure that you receive the letters. We will also post an update online if there is a letter to look out for. We operate a youngest and only policy of sending home letters. If you do not receive a letter or think your child may have been missed, please see your child's teacher.

Parents Evening is held twice yearly in the autumn term and in the summer term. You will be invited to attend and are requested to choose an evening and time which suits you best. We do our best to accommodate all requests. Parental information is obtained at Parents evenings, but we welcome feedback at any time.

In term 1 and 3 we enjoy our achievement assemblies. Each class will also perform at these assemblies, and we encourage you to come along and support your child.

Parental engagement

At times throughout the year, you will be invited to hear about your child's learning. We look forward to welcoming you and partnering with you on your child's learning journey.

The support of you as parents in your children's education is key to the success of your child. Taking time with them, discussing their day, practicing skills, helping them manage their home learning and encouraging responsibility are important ways of supporting children's learning and development.

As a school we always seek to involve parents in any key decisions about your child's education and we keep parents informed about your child's progress.

Useful information for parents on how to get involved in your child's education, how to support the school, information on curriculum developments can all be found at Parent zone:

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

Parent Council

The Parent Council is a group of parent volunteers who represent all parents of children at the school. We are in the process of forming a new parent council. If you would like to join or get involved, please get in touch. Joining the Parent Council is a fantastic way to meet others in our school community, meet other parents and support our school.

Concerns and Complaints

We wish that all will go well while your child is at Merkinch and our 3 rights (learn, respect and safe) help us to achieve it. However, if you have any concerns or complaints, you should contact our Head Teacher, or the Senior Leadership Team and we will do our utmost resolve your issue fairly and quickly.

Our school will always endeavour to resolve issues by listening to parents and seeking solutions in partnership. Should a situation not be resolved, parents can contact the Area Education and Learning Manager.

Further information can be found regarding this at:

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

Pupil Absence and sickness procedure

Good attendance is vital if pupils are to achieve their full potential. But if a pupil is absent from school, a parent or guardian should phone the school on the first day of absence, on either the school message number: 01463 257660 or the school number 01463 221382. When returning to school after an absence, the parent or guardian must give written reason for the time absent.

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 or guardian. Pupils must report to the school reception and 'sign out'. If returning the same day, they must report again to the reception and sign in. Where at all possible, medical, and dental appointments should be made out with 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 day time contact numbers and emergency contact numbers for all pupils.

We are required to keep an attendance register by law. We have a responsibility for the care and welfare of all our pupils during the school day therefore need to know the whereabouts of absent pupils.

When parents are considering whether 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 assessments with consequential impact on pupils and teachers.
- could result in the 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 considerations when making decisions on planning holidays during term time. We have enclosed a link to the school term dates on the Highland Council website to aid parents in planning any holidays they may be considering:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/school_term_dates

If parents decide to make holiday arrangements during school term, this should be confirmed in writing to the Head Teacher.

Transport

Most of our families walk to and from school. ELC-P3 children should be accompanied by an adult. P4-7 children may walk to and from school on their own.

Entry to the school can be from Carse Road, Telford Road or Benula Road at the back of the school. Our Carse Road entrance has a large carpark which can be used by staff visitors and families.

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.

School Placing Requests

Each school serves its own catchment area. Pupils whose homes are in our area will have priority in being allocated a place in our school. However, as parents you have the right to specify the school in which you wish to place your child. Applications must be made to the Area Education and Learning Manager.

Placing request forms can be obtained from:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/11/school_enrolment/2

Transportation to and from school, for pupils who have made placing requests, remains a parental responsibility.

If you live out with our school catchment area and you wish your child to join us at Merkinch you can contact our school office to arrange a visit.

Parents of children with additional support needs, (including those that have Coordinated 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.

School Ethos

Our school is a vibrant and exciting learning environment. As a community we believe in our three rights:

- The right to learn
- The right to respect
- The right to be safe

We call these three rights “The Merkinch Way”

Our Vision - At Merkinch we promote an above and beyond attitude and inspire each other to do our best. We offer a warmth of welcome and create a culture of kindness. We are #MarvellousMerkinchers

These are embedded into our school culture and ethos. Our goal is that all children can achieve their dreams and we celebrate our achievements and successes regularly at assembly and in class.

Please see the school office to obtain a copy of our Equality and Diversity Policy.

We value our local community and work hard to create partnerships with local businesses and groups. Our links include:

- Jenny our Positive Relationships co-ordinator
- Community Centre
- The Bike Shed
- Merkinch Community Centre
- Merkinch Nature Reserve
- Trinity Church
- Robertson’s
- Bible Alive
- Police Scotland
- MFR
- Active Schools
- John Muir Trust
- Merkinch Free Church

Positive relationships are vital to the success of our school. We have been working with Pivotal to enhance our skills and practice to develop effective relationships. Our staff have been through enhanced training to ensure that they can support your children to be safe, respected and able to learn. We celebrate achievement and build relationships by thanking each other, awarding Marvellous Merkincher tokens, holding Hot Chocolate Friday’s and working hard to meet all children’s needs.

When children find upholding the rights difficult, we operate a restorative, solution focused approach to find ways to support them. The health and wellbeing of our pupils is paramount to us. If further support is required, we utilise the skills of our staff to meet their needs.

A copy of our Positive Relationships policy can be obtained from the school office, which includes information on bullying.

Curriculum

Our school uses the Curriculum for Excellence which is the Scottish Curriculum. There are eight curricular areas which all children experience each year:

- Literacy and English
- Maths and Numeracy
- Social Studies
- RME
- Technology
- Science
- Health and Wellbeing
- Expressive Arts

Class teachers work to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered over the course of a year. We use the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence to ensure that all experiences and outcomes are planned for and achieved. Learning experiences will vary and pupils are involved in making decisions about their learning in each area. In P1 and P1/2 we are following a play-based learning approach.

A year at Merkinch is full of a variety of learning experiences including class work, school trips, interdisciplinary learning, outdoor learning, and community partnerships. Your child's learning journey will be exciting, engaging and enjoyable. We strive to ensure that all subjects are:

- Challenging
- Personal to your child or child's class and include an element of choice
- Relevant to your child
- Coherent
- Broad, but offer a deep level of learning
- Enjoyable

Children will develop skills for life, learning and work as they progress through the school and class work is planned to enhance the development of these skills. We pride ourselves on seeking pupil voice about children's learning and they will experience opportunities throughout the year to share their views and opinions about their learning. Class teachers use these views and ideas to plan exciting learning opportunities for their classes so no class will ever be the same.

As parents you can find out more about the Curriculum for Excellence online at <https://education.gov.scot/curriculum-for-excellence/> and Skills Development Scotland.

Health and Wellbeing is an essential part of the curriculum, but we do understand that at times it can be of a sensitive nature. Topics include relationships, sexual health, and drug awareness. You will be informed by letter when this part of the curriculum is covered. If you have any questions please see your child's teacher, who will be happy to help and advise on what will be covered.

We are delighted to have many children of different faiths at our school. We do observe Christmas and Easter and use Trinity Church for these experiences. As a parent you have the right to withdraw your child from these experiences and if you wish to exercise your right, please contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will make special arrangements for your child.

Assessment and 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.

We regularly carry out assessments of children's learning to ensure that they are making progress and understand what has been taught. Assessments are necessary to ensure that we are making progress and inform learning.

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.

As parents you will receive feedback on your child's progress through pupil reports and class work.

Pupils will reflect on their progress and achievement throughout their time in class.

If, as a parent, you wish to enquire about a pupil's progress you are invited to get in touch with your child's class teacher.

Transitions

Transitions include into our ELC, early years- primary, going into the next year group and primary-secondary.

All children are supported by staff to ensure that transition along their learning journey is smooth and successful. Where a child needs an Enhanced Transition arrangements will be made, and you will be fully involved in the planning of this.

We aim to let you know your child's next teacher as soon as possible, this is normally in June, a letter will be sent home with your child.

Our Secondary school is Inverness High School and P7 pupils are involved in several exciting opportunities to ensure a successful transition into high school. You will be notified of all opportunities and invited to a Parents Information Evening to learn more about this journey.

If you wish your child to attend a different secondary school, please see the information regarding Placing Requests.

School Improvement

Our main areas for improvement for this year are:

- 1- High quality learning at Merkinch
- 2- Equality and diversity plan
- 3- ASG moderation

This information can be found in our Standards and Quality Report if you would like a copy of this document, please see the school office. We offer a Parent Friendly and the full document.

We were last inspected in 2010, a copy of this report can be found online at:
<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/find-an-inspection-report/>

We are constantly evaluating our school and we make a commitment to developing our practice especially in Literacy, Numeracy and health and wellbeing. As part of our assessment policy, we have made significant changes to these areas to ensure that our children are progressing in each of these areas.

- Literacy- emerging literacy, talk for writing,
- Numeracy- abacus
- Health and Well-being- pivotal
- Poverty-related attainment gap

Each year we are required to put together a School Improvement Report and Plan if you would like a copy of this document, please see the school office.

Further information regarding our school improvement can be found at
<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-school/school-information-dashboard/>

Support for Pupils

We seek to help and support all pupils to achieve their dreams. Parents wishing to enquire about a pupil's progress or who have concerns about progress are invited to get in touch with their class teacher, in the first instance. Class teachers generally have the most up-to-date knowledge of your child. If they cannot help or you require further information, please see the school office who will be able to help.

In partnership with you, as parents, class teachers, Additional Support Needs teachers, Children Services Workers and the Senior Leadership Team we support all pupils. Where there is a possibility that your child may have an additional support need you will be informed and invited to a meeting to discuss your child's progress and any concerns. We use several strategies to identify ASN and you will be fully informed at each step of the process.

If your child is identified as having an additional support need, we will work with them and you to ensure that their needs are met. This will look different for every child and at times we may seek the guidance of other professionals including social work, child and adolescents' mental health service (CAMHS), primary mental health worker (PMHW).

At Merkinch Primary we do not offer enhanced provision for children, and we therefore strive to meet children's needs within their class.

All children in Scotland have a Named Person. Whilst at primary school it is usually the Head Teacher, you will be informed if this is not the case for your child. This person has information regarding your child's overall picture of their learning. Any concerns regarding your child should be raised with them. If you wish to contact the Head Teacher, please get in touch with the school office. Information regarding the Named Person can be found on the Support for Learners Website:
[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools -
_additional_support_needs/1/additional_support_for_learning](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs/1/additional_support_for_learning)

Important Links and organisations for children with additional support needs

a) Enquire – the Scottish advice and information service for additional support for learning <https://enquire.org.uk/> This website provides important information regarding the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009

(b) My Rights, My Say – an advocacy and advice service for young people over 12 with additional support needs <https://myrightsmysay.scot/>

(c) Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance - an advocacy service to support parents and children: <https://www.siaa.org.uk/>

(d) Scottish Child Law Centre - an organisation providing free legal advice to young people: <https://sclc.org.uk/>

Child's Plans

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 plans at:

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

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

Sometimes a CSW will be involved in supporting a child. A CSW is often based at the school and will generally focus on more social and emotional needs rather than issues about the curriculum or classroom learning. They:

- 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 that may be identified within the school.

Highland Council would seek to always work in partnership with parents, but sometimes you will have a concern that you don't feel is being addressed or will want to talk to someone out with 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 in the first instance and/or the Head Teacher. If your concerns continue, there are a number of means of resolving difficulties and disputes and information on this can be found at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs/1/support_for_learners

School Policies

A list of school and authority policies can be obtained at the school office. If there are any policies you would like a hard copy of we would be happy to provide them to you.

Health Promoting School

As a Health Promoting school, we encourage pupils, staff, and parents to think about healthier lifestyles. Healthy living is a regular topic in classes and we value all the activities that make up a healthy and happy community.

School Aged Childcare

At Merkinch we are pleased to offer breakfast and after school club.

Breakfast club ~ 8-9am £5.05 per session

After School club 2.30-5.30pm ~£5.05 per hour or £13.10 for over 2 hours

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.

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. There is a website managed by Highland Council that supports a variety of information relating to mental health and emotional wellbeing that can be accessed [here](#). Schools 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. Counselling is also available for all pupils from age 10. Information on your school's service can be accessed from your child's teacher. Alternately, there is a completely confidential, online counselling service called Kooth for children and young people from age 10 that can be accessed [here](#). Parents would generally be involved in discussions beforehand, however a young person over the age of 12 can ask for support themselves.

Adverse Weather

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

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.

You can also access the highland school closure website on:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures>.

Access to Pupil Records

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

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 its 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 <http://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 Local Authorities 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 its 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 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 here:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1095920/enrol_your_child_at_a_school

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:

<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 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.

Equality and Inclusion

For up-to-date information please see:

http://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.

Protection of Children

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.

COPIES OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY GUIDELINES are available online at:

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

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

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