

# Gairloch Nursery Handbook

## Leabhran-fiosraichaidh

## Sgoil-àraich Gheàrrloch

## 2025-26



Gairloch Nursery  
Achtercairn  
Gairloch  
IV21 2BP

Head Teacher : Strav McDonagh  
Nursery Staff: Wendy Powell, Morag McNeil, Melissa Macleod,  
Penny Paterson, Alison Cockburn

[gairloch.primary@highland.gov.uk](mailto:gairloch.primary@highland.gov.uk)  
<https://sites.google.com/highlandschools.net/gairlochprimary/home>



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to Gairloch Nurseries - Gaelic and English mediums.

We are active, friendly and approachable, proud of our open door policy and very pleased to be working alongside you from the very earliest stage of your child's education. At Gairloch Nurseries we believe in putting every child at the centre of their own play and education, and we aim to develop close working relationships with you to ensure that your child is safe, secure and happy in their learning environment.

It is our aim to provide you with useful information about the day to day running of the nurseries. We are always very happy to answer any questions you may have, so if you can't find the answer you are looking for in this booklet, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

We offer nursery placements in both English and Gaelic mediums. Split placements are also possible.

We all look forward to our time together and hope that your child enjoys their time with us at Gairloch.

Strav McDonagh  
Head Teacher

## CONTENTS PAGE

AIMS.....	Page 4
CURRICULUM.....	Page 5
THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY.....	Page 6
ENROLMENT.....	Page 7
NURSERY HOURS.....	Page 7
ATTENDANCE AND ILLNESS.....	Page 8
ADVERSE WEATHER / CLOSURE.....	Page 8
CALENDAR.....	Page 9
CLOTHING.....	Page 10
TOILETING.....	Page 10
SNACK.....	Page 10
LUNCH.....	Page 11
LINKS WITH OTHER CENTRES.....	Page 12
VISITS.....	Page 12
STAY, PLAY, LEARN .....	Page 12
INDUCTION.....	Page 13
TRANSITION TO SCHOOL.....	Page 13
LEARNING JOURNEYS.....	Page 14
NEWSLETTERS.....	Page 14
HEALTH VISITOR.....	Page 14
CHILD PROTECTION.....	Page 14
COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS.....	Page 15
VOLUNTEERING.....	Page 16
PARENT COUNCIL.....	Page 16

# Our Aims at Gairloch Nurseries

At Gairloch Nurseries we follow a child-centred approach to learning and aim to develop the child as an individual

We aim to:

- Encourage the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of the children.
- Promote the welfare of the children.
- Encourage positive attitudes to self and others and develop confidence and self esteem.
- Create opportunities for play.
- Encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment.
- Provide opportunities to stimulate interest and imagination.
- Extend children's abilities to communicate ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.
- Encourage the children to have fun and enjoy themselves.

SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS, CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS,  
RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS, EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS



# CURRICULUM

## *Curriculum for Excellence*

Our nursery curriculum is delivered thorough the experiences and outcomes set out in a Curriculum for Excellence. During your child's time in school and nursery we aim to provide them with opportunities which enable them to reach their full potential in 4 key areas:

*Successful  
Learners*

*Confident  
Individuals*

### **Curriculum for Excellence 4 capacities**

*Responsible  
Citizens*

*Effective  
Contributors*

You can find out more information about these four capacities and the nursery curriculum by asking a member of school staff, on the school and nursery notice boards, school website and on the Education Scotland website: <https://education.gov.scot/>

# Why Play?



- Through activity based learning the brain and body are stimulated and active.
- It provides pleasure and enjoyment which in turn will motivate children to further their learning by persevering, overcoming difficulties and concentrating for longer periods of time.
- It helps to build confidence in themselves and their abilities.
- It allows the child to tackle new experiences in a non-threatening situation.
- It can provide an escape, relieve boredom, allow for relaxation and the opportunity for solitude.
- It helps the child to judge the many variables within social interactions and develop perceptions about other people.
- Skills can be practised and repeated as many times as is necessary for confidence and mastery.
- Opportunities for sensory experiences, which are the foundation of intellectual development, are provided.
- It provides reasons children can understand for acquiring the skills and knowledge adults value.
- Play creates context for language development

**Children are given a wide range of opportunities to:**



- Listen to stories and rhymes
- Sing and take part in a range of musical activities
- Draw and write
- Visit and explore the local environment
- Investigate the properties of sand and water
- Model with play dough and clay
- Paint
- Create pictures, collages and junk models
- Play board games
- Build with construction toys eg. Duplo, Lego, Bricks etc.
- Engage in a variety of role play activities eg. home corner, hospital, shop etc.
- Take part in physical play and games





## Nursery Enrolment:

This usually takes place in February. Parents will be notified of dates by way of the local press and notices in the Gairloch and District Times and the school. More information on nursery enrolment and links to the enrolment form may be found at:

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/11/enrol\\_your\\_child\\_for\\_early\\_learning\\_and\\_childcare/2](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/11/enrol_your_child_for_early_learning_and_childcare/2)

We offer nursery education in both English and Gaelic Medium. These nurseries are run separately but have the same learning experiences, just one in Gaelic and one in English.

There are three nursery intake dates - following the Summer, Christmas and Easter holidays. Your child may start nursery as soon as they turn three, but their place will only be funded from the intake date following their birthday. Until then, Highland Council will charge for nursery hours. If you would like your child to attend nursery before they are entitled to their funded place, please contact the school and we will be happy to provide further information.

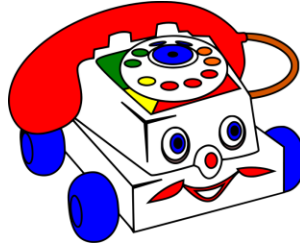
## Nursery Hours

We provide nursery sessions for both English and Gaelic mediums from 9.00am to 3.30pm Monday to Thursday and on Friday from 9.00am until 1.00pm.

We ask that all children are brought to the nursery and collected by an adult. If collection arrangements change during the course of the session, please contact the school to let us know.



## **KEEPING IN TOUCH**



### **Attendance and Illness**

It can be a difficult decision to keep your child off nursery due to ill health especially when many children feel they want to come anyway. However, it is important that children do not come if they are unwell so that infections do not spread to other children or to staff. If your child has been vomiting or had diarrhoea, please be aware that they must be clear of these symptoms for 48 hours before coming back to nursery. If your child is absent for any reason, it is important that you contact the school office to let us know. This ensures the safety of the children. If your child becomes ill, or has an accident while attending the nursery, we will contact you by telephone. If there is no reply, we will ring your emergency contact number. Please ensure these are always up to date.

### **Early Closure / Adverse Weather**

Should the nurseries need to close earlier than usual and no prior warning has been given, you will be contacted by telephone. Please ensure your details are always up to date and any changes are notified to the school office. In the event of extreme weather, parents may visit the school closure page on the Highland Council website:

[www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures](http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures)

Information will also be posted on the school's Facebook page, which can be found at: [Gairloch Primary School | Facebook](#)

NOT COMING IN?

CHANGE OF PLANS?

Tel: 01445 712165

LET US KNOW.....





## NURSERY CALENDAR

Autumn term starts -	19 August 2025
Autumn term ends -	10 October 2025
Winter term starts -	27 October 2025
Winter term ends -	23 December 2025
Spring term starts -	7 January 2026
Mid term break -	16 & 17 February 2026
Spring term ends -	2 April 2026
Summer term begins -	20 April 2026
Summer term ends -	2 July 2026

## **Casual Holidays and Staff In-Service Training**

18 August 2025  
15 & 16 September 2025  
18 February 2026  
4 May 2026  
7 May 2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SCHOOL TERM TIMES GO TO...

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/24301/highland\\_school\\_calendar\\_2023\\_to\\_2024](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/24301/highland_school_calendar_2023_to_2024)



# What to Bring?



## Clothing

The children should come to nursery in comfortable play clothes and bring a suitable pair of indoor shoes. Please make sure that all the children's shoes and clothes are labelled clearly with the child's name. As learning opportunities outside are given daily, we ask that the children always come prepared for the weather - warm waterproof jacket /sunscreen on etc. Highland weather means that the school grounds are often wet. A pair of wellies for outdoor play each day is a great idea!

## Toileting

We understand that in some cases young children are not fully independent when it comes to toileting or may still be in nappies/ training pants. Please let us know as soon as possible if this is the case, so that we can discuss the best way of supporting your child. Your child's dignity and privacy will be ensured at all times and consent for personal care is always sought. As far as possible, we ask you to help by keeping fastenings on clothes very simple and to the minimum. If children have zips or buttons on trousers, please practise with them so that they can fasten these unaided. In this way, we can help the children to become independent.

Children of this age often have little accidents. Please provide a labelled bag full of spare clothes to be kept on your child's peg in case they need to be changed.

## Snack

A healthy snack is provided every day and usually consists of milk/water to drink and fruit, toast or crackers. Children will be given the opportunity to help with the preparation of snacks. This time is also used to encourage

independence, social skills, healthy eating and cultural awareness. If your child has any allergies, please be sure to let the nursery staff know.

## **Lunch**

Nursery pupils take lunch in the High School canteen. A wide choice of meals tailored to Early Years pupils is offered over a three week menu. Nursery staff will make the current options at Gairloch known to parents, but further information may be found here:

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

If your child requires a special diet to allow for allergies, intolerances, diabetes etc, you should complete a Special Diet Request Form, available from the school office. The request will be considered in consultation with the school meals service and where appropriate, advice will be sought from a dietician. If you are requesting a diet for health reasons but this has not been prescribed by a dietician or doctor, we recommend that you inform your GP so that they may provide any necessary supervision or advice.

### **Packed Lunches**

Nursery pupils are welcome to take their own packed lunches, which again will be supervised in the High School dining hall. The Education Authority has issued advice regarding packed lunches:

- All food to be carried in a semi-rigid container with a secure lid and separated from school books, Chromebooks etc.
- No fizzy drinks.
- Glass bottles or containers and vacuum flasks containing hot liquid are not permissible in school.

## **Links with other centres**

We currently have good, strong links with other centres and often visit the children in the Primary School. We also take part in events organised by the primary schools feeding into Gairloch High School, including attendance at shows and workshops. We value these links as they provide opportunities for our small group of children to socialise with others.

## **Visits**

Visits are an important aspect of life in the nursery. The details of any planned visit will be given to you in writing and your written consent will be required.

On all visits, children will be accompanied by an adequate number of adults. We will also ask you to sign a consent form annually for occasions when your child leaves the school grounds for walks and visits to places of interest in Gairloch.

We also like to invite people into the nurseries to share their skills and knowledge with the children. This gives the children opportunities to broaden their horizons and interact with other adults.

## **Stay, Play, Learn**

Each term, you will be invited into the nursery for a Stay and Play session. This will give you the opportunity to observe how your child interacts with their peer group, staff and the nursery surroundings. It also allows for you to have a chat with your child's key worker about how your child is progressing and to share any ideas or concerns you may have.

However, you do not need to wait for a Stay and Play invitation to chat with us. If ever you wish to speak with the nursery staff or with the Head Teacher, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We operate an open door policy, and informal discussions take place before and after the nursery session on a daily basis.

# GET TO KNOW US

You are more than welcome to come and have a look around the nurseries and Gairloch Primary School before your child starts to see the kind of activities your child will be involved with and the environment in which they will play and learn. Once you have made the decision to enrol your child, you and your child will be offered stay and play sessions alongside others joining the nursery. These will give your child a chance to become familiar with the nursery, the staff and the other children. You are welcome to stay for all or part of these sessions. Details about these sessions will be provided and are completely flexible to allow you and your child to build confidence and relationships.



## TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Children usually spend up to two years in nursery and will then transfer into Primary 1 in school. Nursery works closely with school throughout the year, taking part in activities alongside the older children such as playtime breaks, assembly, performances, World Book Day activities, Christmas play etc. In this way, nursery children feel part of Gairloch Primary School from the very start. In the Summer term, before children transfer into school, P1 class teachers will spend time in the nurseries and the children will also visit the primary classrooms. The younger primary children will work alongside the nursery children on a shared learning topic. The children's 'Learning Journeys' are shared and discussed with the P1 class teachers so that learning targets and other information about the children are available before they enter Primary 1.

Visit the school website to find out more about nursery and school life.....  
<https://www.gairlochprimary.net/highlandschools.net/gairlochprimary/home>



### LEARNING JOURNEYS AND STEPPING STONES

You are always very welcome to come in to nursery to see how your child is progressing. Each child has a 'learning journey' file. Examples of the children's work are contained within these files, including observations, comments and photographs. A digital profile is also maintained and your child's keyworker will show you how to access and interact with this. We very much encourage shared learning between home and the nursery. Every child also works towards personal targets which we call stepping stones. These will be discussed and shared with you on a regular basis.

### NEWSLETTERS

Regular newsletters are sent home. These contain information about events and learning in school and nursery. Newsletters and information can also be found on the school and nursery notice boards and on the school website.

<https://sites.google.com/highlandschools.net/gairlochprimary/home>

### HEALTH VISITOR

The local Health Visitor is the 'Named Person' for your child until they enter school. The Health Visitor for our area is Becca MacDonald. Tel. 01854 613 169

### CHILD PROTECTION

The school follows the national strategy known as 'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC). GIRFEC places children's and young people's needs first and provides co-ordinated help where this is required. Services involved could be Social Work, Health and Police. The named person with overall responsibility for children in nursery is the Health Visitor, but all nursery staff have had training in GIRFEC and are aware of their role in supporting children. The designated child protection officer for the nurseries is Strav McDonagh, Head Teacher, who can be contacted at [strav.mcdonagh@highland.gov.uk](mailto:strav.mcdonagh@highland.gov.uk) 01445 712165.

Copies of Child Protection policies are available at:

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



## COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

We hope you will enjoy your child's time at our nursery and welcome comments or suggestions, which could help us to improve our service. However, we are aware that difficulties can occur from time to time and if you feel you have reason to complain, please follow the procedure outlined below. Please use the open door policy and speak to the person in charge of the nurseries, either at the beginning or end of a nursery session. If you prefer, an appointment can be made to speak to the Early Years Practitioner 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. Should you feel unable to speak to the person in charge of the nursery, please make an appointment to speak directly with the Head Teacher.

### AREA EDUCATION OFFICE:

FAO: Mhairi MacDonald  
Fingal Centre,  
Viewfield Road,  
Portree  
Isle of Skye  
IV51 9ET  
Tel: 01478 613697

The Nurseries are regulated by The Care Inspectorate  
<http://www.careinspectorate.com/>

WANT TO SEE OUR LAST INSPECTION REPORT? GO TO ...  
<http://www.careinspectorate.com/>



## VOLUNTEER

We welcome volunteers in the school and nurseries. All volunteers undergo a police disclosure check to ensure the safety of your child. If you would like to help out in nursery, please speak to a member of staff and we will be happy to arrange this for you.

## PARENT COUNCIL

The Parent Council is very supportive of the work of the school and nurseries. It helps with fundraising, enabling us to purchase equipment and fund activities and excursions.

Meetings are held at least once a term and provide a forum for discussion on a variety of school and nursery related issues. **All** parents are invited to attend meetings and minutes are posted on our website. The Parent Council is a most helpful vehicle for gathering parental opinion and sharing views and it supports our aim to work in partnership with all stakeholders.

CHAIR: Terri Hendry  
SECRETARY: Scarlet Trevett  
TREASURER: Gemma King

EMAIL: [gairlochprimarypc@gmail.com](mailto:gairlochprimarypc@gmail.com)  
WEB PAGE: [Gairloch Primary Parent Council \(google.com\)](http://Gairloch Primary Parent Council (google.com))

