

# Birkhill Primary School



**2022-2023**

**This document is available in alternative formats, on request  
(Please contact Mrs Hutchison, Head Teacher)**

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## **Welcome to Birkhill Primary School**

A warm welcome to Birkhill Primary School! This Handbook is written for parents and carers in order to give some relevant information about our school and a child's day in it. You may be reading this Handbook as your child is moving from our Pre-School to our Primary School: it may be that this is your first link to our school, either because you are thinking about moving, or have already moved into this area. Whatever the reason, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you. I hope that you find the information helpful; however I am more than happy to discuss or meet with you to provide further information. If you have not had the opportunity to visit our school, I would recommend that you do so by simply contacting us to find a mutually convenient time.

Finally on behalf on the school community, we hope that this Handbook will support the positive links that will be forged over the coming years.

Natasha Hutchison  
Head Teacher

## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Birkhill Primary School was built in 1993 as a single storey, open plan building. It has since been extended with three classrooms added in 2003 and a further classroom and cloakroom added in 2015. We now have eleven teaching areas, ten classrooms and a pre-school class. The pre-school class was situated one mile away in the original school building in Coupar Angus Road. An administration suite contains the school office, the head teacher's office, the staff room, medical room and staff toilets. We have a large, bright and inviting hall which is used for P.E., school dinners and assemblies. We are lucky to have a cooking kitchen which supplies dinners to the children and some of our neighbouring schools. Adjacent to the hall we have two gallery areas which are used for storage space.

We have a Parent Council who have been instrumental in raising money and gaining funding to enhance learning within the school over the years. Parents and pupils from all classes serve on the Learning Council, Reading Council and Eco Committees. We also have citizenship groups including our Community Collaborators in P1-3 and our Community Café, Dronley Delights. We have a wildlife garden, playground equipment and an outdoor classroom. We have also gained three Eco Schools Green Flag Awards and are working towards our next one.

Pupils take part in many competitions throughout the year. These include Fun in Athletics, Glee and Scottish Primary Maths Challenge. Teams from the school compete in cross country, swimming, netball and football. Our parents are very active in supporting this. Parents are also involved in a range of activities both within and out with the school day. An Out of School Care Club operates out with the school at present through Tiddlywinks Nursery who can be contacted on 01382 581581

## CONTACT DETAILS

Address: Birkhill Primary School  
Dronley Road  
Birkhill  
Angus  
DD2 5QD

Telephone: 01382 768094

Web Site: <http://www.birkhill.angus.sch.uk/>

E-mail: [Birkhill@angusschools.org.uk](mailto:Birkhill@angusschools.org.uk)

Head Teacher's name: **Mrs Natasha Hutchison**

### School Roll

The present school roll is 246, this number incorporates Primary 1 to 7. The Nursery has recently been expanded and now has the capacity for 56 children. It runs between 9AM to 3PM.

The chair of our Parent Council can be contacted on [chairbirkhillpc@gmail.com](mailto:chairbirkhillpc@gmail.com)

## ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL DAY

### School Hours

Morning Session	P1 - P7	9.00 am to 12.20 pm
Morning Interval	P1 - P7	10.30 am to 10.50 am
Lunchtime	P1- P7	12.20pm to 1.20 pm
Afternoon Session	P1 - P7	1.20 pm to 3.20 pm
Reduced Contact	P1 – P2	2.15 pm to 2.30 pm

### Nursery Class Hours

Nursery Session	9AM to 3PM
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Parents should take note of prevailing weather conditions when sending their children to school but should not send their children to arrive any earlier than ten minutes before normal commencement of the school day. Please note there is a Breakfast Club, currently run offsite, from 8am run by Tiddlywinks Nursery.

## **STAFFING**

### **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is Mrs Natasha Hutchison. She has overall responsibility for the day to day administration and organisation, management of curriculum, general pastoral care and guidance, discipline and the maintenance of close links with external agencies, parents and the community.

### **Depute Head Teachers**

Mrs J Athey and Mrs C MacDiarmid

### **Principal Teachers**

Mrs A Milne and Mr M Johnston

### **Class Teachers**

P1A	(22 Pupils)	Mrs Milne/ Mrs MacDiarmid
P1B	(21 Pupils)	Mrs McLaughlin/ Mr Johnston
P2	(24 pupils)	Mrs Tugman
P2/3	(19 pupils)	Mrs Todd
P3	(23 pupils)	Mr Giles
P4	(32 pupils)	Mr Garden/Mrs Leonard
P5B	(24 pupils)	Mrs Bell
P5H	(25 pupils)	Miss Higgins
P6	(31 pupils)	Mrs Thompson
P7	(25 pupils)	Mrs Grubb/Mr Johnston
ASN/RCT Teacher		Mrs K Ferrier
ASN Teacher		Mrs R Henderson

### **Support/Nursery Staff**

Senior Early Years Practitioner	Mrs S Hughes
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs P Christie
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs J Hamilton
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs J Anderson
Early Years Practitioner	Miss B Thomas
Early Years Practitioner	Miss A McLeod
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs L Gilchrist
Early Years Practitioner	Miss N McDonald
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs H McIntosh
Early Years Assistant	Mrs R Arun Bharrat
Early Years Assistant	Miss K Campbell

School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs M Czerek
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs E Ingram
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs V McKelvie
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs A Ferguson
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs A Ogilvie

### **Ancillary Staff**

Senior Clerical Officer	Mrs L Percy
Janitor	Mr S McGurn

## **VISITS OF PROSPECTIVE PARENTS**

[Choosing a school: a guide for parents \(Scottish Government\)](#)

### **Primary One Intake**

We want every child to have a smooth transition into school and this is especially important in Primary one. Children in Birkhill nursery get the opportunity each Friday throughout the year to mix with their friends and with staff in Primary one. This is a fantastic opportunity, however we recognise that children come from many nurseries to Birkhill Primary School. With this in mind Mrs Milne (Principal Teacher) aims to visit every child in their pre-school leading up to the summer. We then invite parents alongside the child's present pre-school staff and any other professionals to a meeting with a member of the schools management team and Primary one teacher. During this meeting we will discuss the child's learning so far, explore any needs that need to be addressed in order for the child to leap into Primary one! The children will be given the opportunity to mix with their new class members during our transition morning. Parents will also be invited to attend our informative Primary one transition meeting.

### **Transfer**

Where parents are considering a possible transfer to Birkhill they are very welcome to visit to find out more about Birkhill Primary School and to share information about their child.

Once your child has been allocated a place we will invite you to meet the staff and children, find out more about the curriculum and share information about your child.

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

We love our school uniform and feel that it encourages a standard of neatness, tidiness, self-discipline and pride in the school. School uniform also helps the pupils identify themselves as pupils of Birkhill Primary. It has the added benefit of being fairly economic and eliminating the pressures to dress in fashion garments. Although the wearing of uniform is not compulsory, most parents recognise its importance. We do not have a blazer. It should be noted that we do encourage outdoor learning and children should be dressed appropriately with coats, hats and gloves in winter and sunhats, sun screen etc. in summer. We have added a fleece to our uniform during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All clothing brought to school should be named or marked in some way. It is difficult for children to distinguish their clothing from others.

### GIRLS:

Blouse - white or grey

V-necked pullover or cardigan - grey

Skirt, pinafore or trousers - grey

Dark shoes or sandals

School tie

Light cotton dress in summer (if desired)

School Tie

(Ties may be purchased from the school at the cost of £4.00)

### BOYS:

Shirt - white or grey

V-necked pullover - grey

Grey trousers or shorts

Dark shoes or sandals

School tie



## PE KIT

We have recently made changes to our PE kit and children are wearing their kit all day on PE days. This allows for more teaching time in the day. PE kit consist of a white t shirt, black short or black leggings, with black joggers and a school fleece. Children should wear black gym shoes/plimsolls for indoor PE or trainers for outdoor PE. For reasons of safety and hygiene the wearing of personal jewellery such as ear studs, ear-rings, necklaces etc. is not allowed in gymnastic lessons and they should not be encouraged in general as all children are active at playtimes. No football colours are encouraged.

## **PARENTAL CONCERNS**

Contact the school immediately if you have a concern. We want to deal with all matters as early as possible. Contact your child's class teacher in the first instance. If you would prefer to discuss the issue with a member of the management team contact:

- Mrs Milne Nursery to P2
- Mrs Hutchison/Mrs Athey P3 to P5
- Mrs MacDiarmid P6 to P7

The staff will listen to your concern and agree a way forward with you. They will usually follow-up the initial conversation with a telephone call to ensure all matters have been resolved satisfactorily. We use Restorative Practices in school to deal with disputes between children.

## **THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

[Angus Council complaints procedure](#)

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

### **BECOMING INVOLVED IN SCHOOL**

At the school we have a Parent Council and we encourage any member of the Parent Forum to attend meetings. We usually hold our AGM in October and meet regularly throughout the year to discuss school issues and organise fund raising events. Please feel free to attend meetings which are noted in our diary of events. Although these meetings are happening remotely we encourage you to participate.

We also encourage parents to volunteer to help out at school. We have parents helping with our Community Cafe, Class Outings, Gardening, Eco Committee, Reading Council and Sports Clubs. If you wish to be a regular parent helper, PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) checks have to be completed. Please discuss this with our office staff.

Parents are invited to attend the school on a regular basis throughout the year. We hold 'Meet the Teacher Evening' early in the first term to allow Primary one and Primary seven parents to visit their child's class where they are given the opportunity to find out what happens in the school year. In November we hold Parent Contact Evenings, this takes the form of individual appointments. The format varies depending on the stage your child is in, in Primary 1-3, this takes the form of a meeting with parents. In Primary 4 -7, pupils have the opportunity to share their progress and next steps with their parents. We use Seesaw to share your child's learning throughout the year. This alongside curricular overviews will make you aware of what the children are learning in school and how you can support them at home. We frequent make two way contact with home through Seesaw. Our move to Seesaw has been warmly received by parents and children. We share children's Assessment Folios each term.



## **Progress Reports:**

In the last term of each year parents will receive a progress report relating to Numeracy, Literacy, Health and Wellbeing. This report also focuses on learning which links across different curricular areas and achievements throughout the year. At this time we do not have formal meetings but if a parent wishes to discuss this further then an appointment can easily be arranged.

## **Homework**

Homework is given at every stage in the school and is usually given out on a Monday with the expectation that it is completed by Thursday. This allows children to organise their work to take account of any clubs or out of school activities they attend. We give homework for a variety of reasons. Firstly, to allow parents to see a little of what is happening and to encourage discussion about school work. Secondly, to help the children to understand that school is part of the world outside. Thirdly, to allow children to research some topics in a manner most suited to their own circumstances giving them the opportunity for personalisation and choice. Fourthly, to reinforce class work and finally to prepare the older children for the extra work which they will find themselves doing at secondary.

Time spent doing homework should not be too long. If a child is having difficulties with any homework then the school should be informed as soon as possible so we can help. Homework is not a punishment and prolonged sessions with distress on the part of the pupil or parent should be avoided.

As in all aspects of schoolwork the active interest and co-operation of parents is very important. It must be mentioned that parents should not accept work which is below a standard which could be considered as reasonable bearing in mind the age and ability of their child. We ask that parents sign homework jotters. If homework is not being completed then parents are informed by the class teacher.

Holiday Homework Changing work patterns mean that one feature of modern society is that holidays are taken throughout the year and are not confined to the summer break. While I would urge all parents to try to avoid taking holidays during term time I realise that this is not always possible. Parents are asked not to request any holiday homework at this time. Each teacher will arrange for extra work, if required, to be done after the holiday, rather than during it.

The above will not apply to illness, particularly of a long term nature.

## **SCHOOL ETHOS**

In our school we are committed to providing appropriate opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values through both the ethos and the curriculum. This will be undertaken in partnership with parents and will take account of the individual needs of pupils and the views of parents.

Our school welcomes and encourages diversity and individuality, while emphasizing our common commitment to moral values such as honesty, respect for others, compassion and justice. It is a fundamental principle of our school that all who are involved in the life of our school both has the right to be respected as individuals and carry the responsibility

to act in a considerate and respectful manner towards others. We implement the Council policy for Equal Opportunities and Racial equality and ensure that all pupils have access to the full range of educational experiences available within the resources of the school. We are firmly committed to the elimination of any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender or disability.

We have recently reviewed our school Vision, Value and Aims through discussion with our staff, pupils, parents and school community. We discuss our vision, value and aims with our children regularly through class activities, school assemblies and informal chat.

**Our School Vision is to provide a safe, nurturing and effective learning environment where all children and staff are supported to achieve more than they thought they could.**

Our School Values are Respected, Ready and Safe.

Our School Aims are linked to the skills we believe our children need to be successful learners. We have chosen characters linked to the aims to make them memorable.



## SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LINKS

We have strong links with the local community and are eager to continue to develop these links further.

Donna Hayes, the School Chaplain, visits the school on a regular basis, she takes regular assemblies in the school hall and visits classes to help with the teaching of religious education.

Our school Glee club sings in the local community and performs to parents too. Pupils entertain the residents in the Servite housing association and invite them to school performances

We call upon the school nurse service, police and fire services who work alongside us to deliver our health and wellbeing education

Many members of the local community have helped with the outdoor learning classroom and wildlife garden. We are lucky to have the support of our parent council to help us maintain our outdoor learning areas.



### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

At Birkhill Primary we run a selection of extra-curricular activities before the school day, during break and lunchtimes times and at the end of the school day. These include football, Netball, cross country running, athletics, recorder and Glee Club. Pupils taking part in these clubs have the opportunity to take part in competitions where they have been very successful on many occasions.

The school swimming club, Muirhead Minnows, meets on Monday nights at St Johns RC High School. Muirhead Minnows hold their Gala in June and it is open to all pupils in the school.

Each year the Primary 7 pupils are given the opportunity to attend a residential course where they can take part in various outdoor activities, including abseiling, raft building, survival training and team building activities. We are very grateful to parents and teachers who without their support we would be unable to offer this range of activities.



**Our Netball Team**



**Our Football Team**



**Fun in Athletics**

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

[Angus Council anti-bullying policy](#)

Good behaviour is essential to good learning. The general aim of the school is to provide an atmosphere of mutual respect and collective responsibility. Pupils, parents and staff all have an important part to play in producing and sustaining this positive ethos. Each class has goals and expectations and they are fundamental to ensuring an Ethos of mutual respect. We have recently reviewed our Positive Behaviour Policy.

## **CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT**

Children work hardest when they know their work will be appreciated and praised. All staff encourage pupils at all times and in all activities to give their best. We are encouraging children to talk about their learning, identifying where things have gone well and what their next steps in learning are. Achievements from out with school are celebrated during assemblies/together times and are regularly shared on our Birkie Bulletin.

### **LEARNING COUNCIL:**

We have an active and highly effective pupil Learning Council in our school which includes representatives from all the Primary 4 to 7 classes. The members are selected at the beginning of session and they hold office for the duration of one year. Throughout the year they will meet regularly with a member of the management team. They are involved in taking forward school improvement priorities and undertaking learning visits to each class several times a year to support moderation.

## **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

In line with National Guidance we aim to give each child at Birkhill a broad general education from Nursery to Primary 7. We plan using the experiences and outcomes as noted in Curriculum for Excellence to support each child to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing permeate all areas of the curriculum and when planning lessons and experiences for the pupils teachers take this into account. The curriculum is divided into eight areas which include Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Languages, Mathematics, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, Social Studies and Technology.

Pupils progress within these broad levels with emphasis being placed on the seven principles of curriculum design which are breadth, progression, depth, challenge and enjoyment, coherence, relevance and personalisation and choice. At Birkhill we promote Active and Co-operative Learning.

We have recently reviewed our Vision, Values and Aims. Our House Captains supported the gathering of this information from our parents. We considered the feedback we received from parents, staff, partners and children and have now updated our sketch note. This sketch note also serves as our Curriculum Rationale.





when we invite parents to learn more about certain aspects of the curriculum. Previous events have included an open afternoon showcasing how we use Digital Learning within the classroom.

## **EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE**

In Scotland all three and four year olds, and some two year olds, are eligible for up to 1,140 hours a year of funded early learning and childcare (ELC). Our ELC class offers sessions between 9am-3pm, 5 days a week. Other attendance patterns are available in other Angus Council settings and in our wide range of partner nurseries, playgroups and childminders. To find out more about the benefits of ELC and the options available, visit our dedicated ELC web pages at [www.angus.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.angus.gov.uk/earlyyears).

## **LIAISON WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL**

The school maintains close links with Monifieth High and other primary schools within the Angus area. Our teachers and in some cases, our pupils visit other schools and establishments and other teachers and pupils visit us. This process is necessary for the professional development of staff, reciprocal understanding and the establishment of curricular consistency.

At the time of printing Birkhill pupils have three options open to them. They can transfer to Monifieth High School, Forfar Academy or Baldragon High School in Dundee. Transport is available to these schools for children living in the Monifieth High School Catchment area.

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**

The continued use of our Birkie Bulletin has been very successful in sharing the wider achievement of the school with parents and partners. We continue to hold Reading Circles in the Primary One and Two, four days a week from 9.00 to 9.30am. During this time we engage the help of parents and older pupils to read with the children. Since beginning this initiative, we have seen pupils making considerably better progress than would have been expected. Primary Three onward are using a Reflective Reading approach and this is also showing positive results.

We use the House System throughout the school year. Each session the Primary 7 pupils are given the opportunity to apply for the position of House Captain.

### **IMPROVING STANDARDS**

We have undertaken a considerable amount of improvement work throughout the school year which has resulted in us refreshing our Vision, Values and Aims. We consulted widely and have incorporated our Learning Dispositions into our Vision, Values and Aims.

We have recently undertaken training on outdoor learning from Angus Alive, each class received 3 sessions in the aim to build staff confidence taking this forward. Early evaluations shows positive results and we aim to take this forward this year through our inclusion in the pilot Learning Through Forests award scheme run by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

We continue to promote collaborative planning and provide effective learning, teaching and assessment and to ensure all learners are supported and challenged. This work was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic so has been a key focus this school year.

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Our priorities for session 22/23 are:-

- To support high quality learning and teaching through moderation activities.
- To create a learning environment that promotes reading for pleasure through engagement with Reading Schools Accreditation.
- To review the needs of our school with the aim of providing quality family learning opportunities.
- To develop a shared understanding of effective learning, teaching and assessment in listening and talking.

## **HEALTH CARE**

**You can contact your school health staff at: -**

School Nurse - Carol Paterson  
School Nurse Team  
Whitehills Community Care Centre  
Forfar  
DD8 3DY

## **DOGS IN SCHOOL GROUNDS**

We understand walking your child(ren) to and from school/nursery is an ideal opportunity to walk dogs. However, the safety and wellbeing of our pupils, families, staff and community is paramount. Also, some children feel intimidated or unsure of dogs.

So, please ensure dogs (except for service dogs) are not brought into school grounds.

And if you are walking your dog to and from school, please remain at a reasonable distance from the school gate.

This will enable children and adults to enter and exit safely. We'd ask you to pass this information on to other adults who bring and/or collect your child(ren) from school.

## USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Angus Council  
Angus House  
Orchardbank Business Park  
FORFAR  
DD8 1AN  
Tel: 03452 777 778  
Email: ACCESSSchoolsLearnBSU@angus.gov.uk

## ANGUS COUNCIL WEBSITE

Visit [angus.gov.uk/schools](https://angus.gov.uk/schools) for information that applies to schools across Angus on topics including:

- holidays
- meals
- school payments
- attendance and absence
- assessment and reporting
- transport
- drugs education
- religious and moral education
- transitions
- ...and more

## OTHER WEBSITES

Find useful links to other websites at [angus.gov.uk/linksforparents](https://angus.gov.uk/linksforparents)