



Cherry Trees ECC HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025 - 2026



Cherry Trees Early Childhood Centre
The Barony Campus
Auchinleck Road
Cumnock
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Twitter:	@
Glow:	https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/cherrytrees
Denominational Status (if any):	
Centre Roll:	Co-educational centre with capacity for 119 full time places Stages Covered – Age 2 – 5 years

Dear Parents/Carers,

On behalf of our staff team, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your child as you join Cherry Trees ECC. We are delighted to have you as part of our community.

Our centre is a place where children are encouraged to explore, play and discover in a caring and nurturing environment. Every child who walks through our doors is valued as an individual, and we are committed to supporting their wellbeing, curiosity and confidence as they grow.

At Cherry Trees we believe that strong relationships are at the heart of high-quality early learning. We work closely with families to build trusting partnerships that help every child feel safe, included and ready to learn. Together, we celebrate children's achievements, support their development and create meaningful experiences both indoors and outdoors.

I hope you will find the information in this handbook helpful, however if you require any additional information, please do not hesitate in contacting myself or any other member of the team

Kind Regards

Claire Jones

Acting Head of Centre

Our Vision, Values and Aims

As part of the larger Barony Campus we share the campus vision

“Where we belong... where we reach our potential.”

This vision was created five years ago in partnership with our pupils, parents and community members during the creation of our campus.

Our shared campus aims **(ARE)**



This vision and these values inform our practice and actions to ensure that every child in our ECC is **Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included.**

Our aims and objectives reflect the key principles of the
Health and Social Care Standards (2017)

Dignity and Respect – Compassion- Be Included – Responsive Care & Support –
Wellbeing

We believe that children thrive best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met. By promoting **achievement**, we ensure that every child is supported to learn, grow and reach their full potential. Our commitment to **respect** demonstrates the expectation that every child is treated with dignity, their voice is valued, and their individuality is recognised. Our focus on **equity** reflects the principles of fairness and equity which are at the heart of what we do. Ensuring that all children have equal access to opportunities, support and high-quality care. Together these aims help us create a nurturing environment where children feel safe, valued and empowered.

Section 2

Meet Our Wonderful Team

Supporting children with care, creativity and curiosity every day

Management



Claire Jones
Acting Head of Centre

Teri Jones
Equity and Excellence
Lead

Joanna Fullarton
Depute Manager

Management



Ashleigh Focas
Senior ELCP

Kelly Copeland
Senior ELCP

Karen Clotworthy
Senior ELCP

The Wee Forest Room



Amy Withers
ELCP

Karen Cairns
ELCP

Carly Chidwick
ELCP

The Wee Forest Room



Cassie Hodge
ELCP

Cheryl Scott
ELCP

Donna Shirkie
ELCP

The Wee Forest Room



Jackie McCallum
ELCP

Julie Kennedy
ELCP

Julie Walker
ELCP

The Wee Forest Room



Katie Ritchie
ELCP

Kirstie Grossart
ELCP

Lesley Colville
ELCP

The Wee Forest Room



Louise McPheator
ELCP

Lynne Vacca
ELCP

Mandy McGowan
ELCP

The Wee Forest Room



Marion Walker
ELCP

Abby Templeton
ELCP

Lindsay Gray
ELCP

The Sunshine Room



Keryn Teece
ELCP



Cori Flood
ELCP



Emma Lawson
ELCP

The Sunshine Room



Evonne Robertson
ELCP



Fiona Morrison
ELCP

Support Assistants



Sharon Stobbs



Jacqui Blackhurst

Admin



Laura McCurdy
Senior Clerical Assistant



Michelle Kirkpatrick
Clerical Assistant



Barbara Goudle - Bradford
Senior Clerical Assistant

Transitions

Effective transitions in early years are essential to supporting children's wellbeing, continuity of learning, and sense of security, as outlined in *Realising the Ambition*. We aim for all transitions to be carefully planned, child centred and responsive, building on children's strengths, interests and prior experiences.

Our hope is that transitions are positive and nurturing experiences, where children feel safe, confident and valued, supported by warm, trusting relationships with practitioners and families.

We expect the process to be inclusive and collaborative with clear communication and shared understanding between all involved, ensuring each child is supported at their own pace and that transitions promote equity, emotional wellbeing and a strong sense of belonging.

Home-ECC

Prior to your child starting at the ECC, you will be notified by email of your child's confirmed allocation and an enrolment date. During our enrolment session you will be well informed about the Centre and all its processes, during this session we wish to answer all questions you may have. After you have your enrolment, you will be informed of your child's start date. This is normally for one hour. Your child's keyworker would then discuss further with you on how to build this at a pace that best suits your child's needs ensuring they feel safe, secure and confident as they begin their ECC journey. Please ensure that you are available and contactable throughout the first couple of weeks of your child's placement.

During the initial settling in period, your child's keyworker will observe your child closely as they play. After 3-4 weeks, you will have the opportunity to chat with your child's keyworker to hear how your child is settling and complete an initial personal plan, you will also receive a copy of your child's settling in report. This will be preferably done face to face or if this is not possible via a telephone call. Should your child transfer to our establishment from another centre, or vice versa, it is best practice for establishments to share assessment information to ensure a smooth transition and continued progress. If possible staff may visit your child prior to them starting with us.

ECC- Primary

We enjoy a close working relationship with Lochnorris Primary School. We have transition champions within the ECC who lead and implement a transition programme from October each year running weekly until June. Our transition champions work collaboratively with ECC staff, school staff and parents making meaningful use of P6 buddies and a range of planned experiences throughout the academic year, including playground visits, shared learning opportunities and events such as Easter Egg hunts. These experiences help children to become familiar with the school environment, build positive relationships and develop a strong sense of belonging, supporting a smooth and successful transition

In accordance with East Ayrshire Council's policies and procedures, we assist in a range of ways to ensure an effective transition from our ECC to Primary School for children who have been identified as requiring Additional Support for Learning. Transition and support planning takes place at an early stage, involving parents/carers, key staff from the ECC, Primary School and other professionals who may provide support to your child. All information is given to parents at the earliest time involving school transition plans each year.

Section 3

School Holidays and In-service Days



School holidays 2025/26

Please note that all dates are inclusive.

Date	Holiday
August	
Monday 18 August 2025	In-service day
Tuesday 19 August 2025	In-service day
Wednesday 20 August 2025	Pupils return
September	
Friday 19 September to Monday 22 September 2025	Local holidays (Ayr Gold Cup weekend)
Tuesday 23 September 2025	Pupils return
October	
Monday 13 October to Friday 17 October 2025	October holidays
Monday 20 October 2025	In-service day
Tuesday 21 October 2025	Pupils return
December/January	
Monday 22 December 2025 to Friday 2 January 2026	Christmas and New Year
Monday 5 January 2026	Pupils return
February	
Monday 9 February 2026	Local holiday
Tuesday 10 February 2026	In-service day
Wednesday 11 February 2026	Pupils return
April	
Friday 3 April to Friday 17 April 2026	Easter holidays (Good Friday – 3 April 2026)
Monday 20 April 2026	Pupils return
May	
Monday 4 May 2026	Local holiday (May Day)
Tuesday 5 May 2026	Pupils return
Thursday 7 May 2026	In-service day
Friday 8 May 2026	Pupils return
June/July/August	
Monday 29 June to Friday 14 August 2026	Summer holidays
Monday 17 August 2026	In-service day
Tuesday 18 August 2026	In-service day
Wednesday 19 August 2026	Pupils return

ECC Session Times

AM 8.00am – 12.45pm (lunch provided) 48 week provision

PM 1.15pm – 6.00pm (high tea provided) 48 week provision

2.5 days 2 full days either 8:00am – 6.00pm plus one half day 48 week Provision
(either 8:00am – 12:45pm or 1:15pm – 6:00pm)

9:00am – 3:00pm (lunch provided) term-time provision

There is a soft start and finish for all sessions provided, further information will be shared with you at enrolment.

Attendance / Reporting an Absence

If your child is ill or going to be absent then please let us know as soon as possible by calling the centre on 01290 427280 (option 4) before their session is due to start, please highlight the details of their illness/reason for absence and when you think your child will return to the centre. Your co-operation regarding this important matter is greatly appreciated. Failure to make contact will result in staff in the centre contacting you to ascertain the reason for your child's absence.

Staff will advise you of exclusion periods (if appropriate). Please ensure that your child does not return prior to the end of the exclusion period as this may place our staff and other children at risk of infection.

If your child becomes unwell during their time within the ECC, a member of staff will stay with your child in a quiet, comfortable space. The member of staff will wait with your child until you have collected them.

Respectful Relationships

In Cherry Trees we promote positive behaviour through a restorative approach that is rooted in nurturing, respectful relationships. We understand that children are learning how to manage their emotions and interactions with others, and we view behaviour as a form of communication. Staff support children to recognise and talk about their feelings, understand the impact of their actions and find positive ways to resolve difficulties. By focussing on repairing relationships rather than punishment, and by offering calm, consistent guidance, we help children develop empathy, self-regulation and a strong sense of wellbeing. We work in partnership with families to ensure a shared, supportive approach for every child.

Updating personal information

Please ensure that you inform staff at the ECC of any change of personal information as soon as possible, this allows us to keep all records accurate and up to date. It is essential that we have the correct phone number and details to contact you in the event of an emergency. Please also ensure that any adult that may be collecting your child is registered on the enrolment form as staff will not allow your child to leave with anyone who is not listed.

Dress Code

Please dress your child in comfortable clothes as it is likely that they will engage in a variety of “messy” play activities throughout the session, for this reason we advise against wearing their “best” clothing to the ECC. Polo shirts and jumpers with the ECC logo can be purchased however this is a personal choice, please do not feel under any pressure to purchase these. We also have a selection of previously owned polo shirts/jumpers free to a good home situated in the foyer.

The outdoor area is fully accessible to children every session, therefore please ensure your child brings appropriate outdoor clothing. We do have a selection of puddle suits and wellies, however many children prefer to use their own. If using own suit and wellies, please put your child's name on all of their belongings to ensure they do not get lost.

Security and Visitors

We are very aware of security in and around the campus. During sessional times our gates and internal access doors will remain secure at all times. Any visitors must report to the office on arrival to sign in. Any visitor unknown to staff members must show evidence of identity before entering the building. Visitors will also be expected to enter their details into the record book which is placed in the main corridor area. All staff working in our ECC wear name badges for identification. It is expected that a responsible adult (over 16 years) will bring your child to and from the ECC. Parents and carers bringing and collecting children will be expected to sign their child in and out - sheets with details are positioned in the corridor aligned with their key worker group peg. In the interest of your child's safety, you should make a point of telling the Head of Centre or keyworker if he or she is to be collected by someone not known to the Head of Centre or staff members. This is essential as children will not be allowed to leave with someone unknown to staff. You will be asked to identify a password when completing your child's personal plan. This will be used in emergencies when the collector is unknown to staff.

Complaints Handling

1. Should you have a complaint about the care or education your child receives while attending Cherry Trees Early Childhood Centre please do not hesitate to contact the Head of Centre, Claire Jones or the Depute Manager, Joanna Fullarton. We try to keep an 'open door' policy at Cherry Trees which means we will try to respond to your concerns immediately. However it may be a good idea to make an appointment to ensure time is set aside for you.
2. If the Head of Centre is unable to provide a satisfactory resolution to your complaint, you can raise a formal complaint via the council's complaints procedure. Details on this can be found on the East Ayrshire Council website where you can fill out an online form, or email the council at the.council@east-ayrshire.gov.uk, you can call on 01563 554400 or write to them. Your complaint will be reviewed by a manager within education and a response provided within five working days. In exceptional circumstances an extension may be granted for a further five working days, to conclude the response.
3. If you are not satisfied with the response received, you can ask for a further review of your complaint by senior management, who will aim to respond within 20 working days.
4. If you have completed the council's complaints process and you are still unhappy, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to look at your complaint

EAC follow the [SPSO's Child Friendly Complaints Handling Principles \(PDF 114KB\)](#) when dealing with complaints that involve children.

You have the right to contact the Care Inspectorate with any complaint that you have about the Early Childhood Centre. The Care Inspectorate is responsible for regulating the service we provide.

You can make a complaint to the Care Inspectorate:

Online at: www.careinspectorate.com

By email enquires@careinspectorate.com

By phone 0845 600 9527

Emergency Procedures / Medical Matters

At enrolment, please inform your child's keyworker or a member of the management team of any allergy, dietary or medical needs. If this changes throughout the year or your child develops any allergy, dietary or medical needs please inform your child's keyworker and SMT.

Our main registered First Aiders in the centre are Ashleigh Focas (SELCP) and Katie Ritchie (ELCP) who can provide advice to you regarding administration of medication and provide you with the necessary consent forms to complete. A number of staff have completed their emergency first aid training.

Cherry Trees ECC and Barony Campus as a whole is a NUT FREE ZONE – we actively discourage anyone from bringing in these products due to allergies. Please be aware that a number of children suffer from many different allergies and for this reason we ask children not to bring food from home into the centre.

Sun Lotion

We ask that it is your responsibility to ensure that your child is protected from the harmful effects of the sun. During warmer weather, please ensure that you apply sun lotion to your child prior to them arriving at the ECC. We will then apply a second coat of cream prior to your child going outdoors and again throughout the day as required. It would be beneficial in the warmer weather to dress your child in appropriate clothing and provide your child with a sunhat. This can be worn or stored in their bag.

Section 4

The Curriculum

We hope that everyone attending or visiting Cherry Trees Early Childhood Centre enjoys the fantastic experiences that we have on offer. Your child will have access to various planned experiences and opportunities that they can explore indoors, outdoors and within the local community, this will support their learning and development across all the curriculum areas of Scotland's national "Curriculum for Excellence":

- Health and Wellbeing
- Literacy and English
- Numeracy and Maths
- Expressive Arts
- Sciences
- Religious and Moral Education
- Technologies
- Social Studies

Your child will follow the same curriculum, working through the different levels from their early years' experience, through primary and into secondary school. We look forward to supporting and nurturing your child's unique talents, interests and abilities.

At Cherry Trees, we carefully plan and provide a range of learning opportunities in line with the Curriculum for Excellence, supporting children's development both indoors and outdoors. Learning is play-based, child-centred and responsive to children's interests, allowing them to explore investigate and make sense of the world around them. Our indoor and outdoor environments are thoughtfully designed to promote curiosity, creativity, independence and wellbeing, while offering opportunities to develop skills across all areas of learning.

Practitioners observe children closely and use these observations to plan meaningful experiences that support each child's individual needs and next steps, ensuring learning is enjoyable, engaging and relevant. These observations are documented through your child's learning journal for you to see and comment on. Displays and floorbooks are used throughout the [playroom that give you an insight into what the children are learning and their achievements. There will also be opportunities to view and discuss children's progress through parent's progress meetings throughout the year.

Additional Support for Learning

Cherry Trees Early Childhood Centre provides an inclusive learning environment for all children. Every child has the right to be included and supported. With the prior consent of parents/carers, staff may discuss the support needs of individual children with a range of professionals in order to ensure that individual support/learning plans are appropriate to the specific needs of the child. In line with legislation, parents/carers will be fully consulted at all stages. Other professionals, may include, Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Health Visitor, Community Paediatrician, Visual Impairment Team and Audiology.

The Educational Psychologist visits the centre regularly to work with staff to ensure we provide the most effective support possible to children who are experiencing barriers to their learning. Their role is often in giving advice and sharing expertise with staff. When concerns are raised, relevant assessments are carried out and a Team with the Family (TWTF) meeting may be convened. You will be fully informed throughout. If you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing or development, then please speak to your child's keyworker or any member of the management team.

Section 5

Improvement Priorities for 2025 -2026

Our Leadership	Teaching and Learning Together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to develop knowledge and understanding on the quality framework. • Consistent and purposeful self-evaluation and quality assurance will be used to identify areas of strength and development collaboratively with all stakeholders. • Parents/carers views will be regularly gathered and reviewed to drive forward improvements. • Continue to develop leadership opportunities which empower staff to drive forward change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will focus on eight numeracy milestones to provide tailored experiences and gather data that is used to plan targeted intervention. • Training will take place to moderate tracking and ensure a consistent approach to assessing children's achievements within numeracy. • Increase in stay and play opportunities throughout the year with a focus on developing awareness of numeracy development with parents and care givers. • A minimum of one planned numeracy focus in each planning cycle.
Our wellbeing and belonging	Our Attainment, Destinations and Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition programme will be further developed with a focus on improving transitions from home to ECC and room to room. • Parents will be provided with workshops to improve interactions and contributions through learning journals. • Transition programme to Lochmorris will be further built upon and continued collaboratively. • Transitions within the day will be carefully managed and supported. • Social stories will be introduced to support children's emotional wellbeing and mental health. • Consistently updated personal plans will ensure timeous and appropriate support in meeting children's health, welfare and safety needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive approach to learning and teaching will be embedded throughout the ECC. • Teaching Talking assessments will be used to plan targeted support which will be individualised and specific to children with identified need. • Small group times will be utilised to provide targeted experiences which provide support and challenge based on data gathered from learning journals. • ASN champion will continue collaboration with community practitioner to provide ASN PEEP sessions with the aim of reducing the isolation felt by parents and improve outcomes for those children.

SECTION 6

Assessment

Staff are skilled in assessing children's learning and development through ongoing observation as they play, explore and interact with others. Assessment is continuous, holistic and child-centred, focussing on what children can do across the whole curriculum. Practitioners use professional judgement, informed by observations, conversations with colleagues, to identify strengths, interests and next steps in learning. The Head of Centre, in conjunction with keyworkers, tracks and monitors the progress of every child.

Reporting to parents and carers

We schedule a short, informal discussion with parents/carers 3-4 weeks after your child starts at our ECC, to discuss how they are settling in and to complete an initial personal plan. However, please do not hesitate to speak to your child's keyworker or Head of Centre prior to this if you have any concerns you wish to raise.

Appointments will be made available for you face to face to discuss your child's progress with his/her key worker twice a year, these are usually in November and May. With your permission, your child's record of progress, known as the Transition Profile, is then passed on to the appropriate primary school. This information helps your child make a smooth, well informed, transition from the ECC to Primary 1.

Personal Plan /Learning Journals

Evidence of your child's learning and development will be provided through our Learning Journal system, where over the course of the month every child should have between 4-8 observations detailing your child's individual learning and development. Your child will also have a personal plan and these are reviewed every 6 months or sooner if required.