

The Robert Burns Academy School Handbook 2025



"Where we belong...."

Welcome

Welcome to the handbook of The Robert Burns Academy. Our school motto, "Where we belong, where we reach our potential" captures the essence of what we stand for as a community. We are committed to improving outcomes for all of our children and this is reflected in our school improvement priorities:

Our vision – where we belong. Where we reach our potential.				
Our Attainment, Achievement and Destinations	Our Attendance and Belonging	Our Skills Development		
To improve our ethos of inclusion, equity and equality to support attainment and achievement for all young	To improve Health and Wellbeing to enable our children and young people to thrive focusing on increasing school attendance and	To improve our approaches to learning, teaching and assessment		
people. To raise overall standards in	readiness to learn.	To develop and improve our curriculum offer.		
attainment at all levels and stages with a campus wide focus on improving standards	To develop our approaches to school connectedness.	Support all school learners to develop skills for learning, life and work.		
in literacy and numeracy. There will be an additional focus on ensuring we work towards closing the poverty related attainment gap	To improve Health and Wellbeing of our young people, families and overall school community with a focus on developing better approaches to promoting positive	Develop a comprehensive professional learning framework to support leadership development at all levels including collaborative		
телатей апапплетт дар	relationships	enquiry, practitioner enquiry, evidence-based practice and pedagogies		
Underpinned by our Values of				
Achievement	Respect	Equity		

It is our desire that all parents/carers, pupils, staff, and partners will also take great pride in being members of our school community. We have a large school community and welcome pupils from Cumnock, Auchinleck and surrounding villages: Our associated primary schools are:

Auchinleck Primary	Catrine Primary	Drongan Primary
Dalsalloch Road	Fourfields	Millmannoch Avenue
Auchinleck	Catrine	Drongan
KA18 2BU	KA5 6PS	KA6 7BY
Hillside Primary	Lochnorris Primary	Logan Primary
Hillside Primary Barony Campus	Lochnorris Primary Barony Campus	Logan Primary Logan Avenue
•	•	

Mauchline Primary Muirkirk Primary Netherthird Primary

Burns Avenue The Loan Craigens Road

Mauchline Muirkirk Cumnock

KA5 6AN **KA18 3RH KA18 3AN**

New Cumnock Primary Ochiltree Primary Sorn Primary

Castle Main Street 14 Main Street

New Cumncok Ochiltree Sorn

KA18 4AH KA18 2PE KA5 6HU

East Ayrshire Council's website contains a section on school handbooks with links to various legislative guidance relevant to all schools. For matters pertaining to this legislation, please visit East Ayrshire Council Handbooks.

Contact Details

The Robert Burns Academy

Auchinleck Road

Cumnock

KA18 1FQ

01290 427 280

School email address: earobertburns.ac@eastayrshire.org.uk

Website: THE ROBERT BURNS ACADEMY - The Barony Campus

School App: Download 'Safer Schools Scotland' from the App store and search for The Robert Burns Academy. Office staff can provide the joining code.

Our email address should be used to make contact with school staff in the first instance.

General Information

Head Teacher: Tracy Stewart

Status: Non-Denominational

Roll: 1665

Capacity: Around 1700

Number of Teachers (full time equivalent) 103.9 FTE

Gaelic Medium: No

Senior Leadership Team

Our Senior Leadership Team is comprised of:

- 1 Head Teacher/Head of Campus
- 1 Depute Head Teacher (Primary and Secondary Transition)
- 5 Depute Head Teachers (Secondary)

Details of remits can be found in Appendix 1.



Tracy Stewart

Head Teacher of The Robert Burns Academy

Head of the Barony Campus



Michelle Anderson

Depute Head Teacher Primary/Secondary Transition

Year Group Head for S1

Michelle's main strategic remit is to lead on Primary/Secondary Transition. This involves her working with all of our associated primary schools getting to know our children and their families as early as possible to ensure that we are ready for their transition to the academy. Michelle is also the Year Group Head for all pupils in their S1 at The Robert Burns Academy and Supported Learning Centre.



Amanda McPheator

Depute Head Teacher

Year Group Head for S2

Amanda's main strategic remit is to have the overview for our Support for Learning procedures and processes. This involves her leading on the improvements at universal, targeted and enhanced targeted levels of support for young people with additional support needs. Amand is also the Child Protection Coordinator for The Robert Burns Academy and all safeguarding concerns should be reported to her in the first instance. Amanda is also the Year Group Head for S2 pupils.



Jennifer Macara

Depute Head Teacher

Year Group Head for S3

Jennifer's main strategic remit is to lead on all developments regarding to pupil wellbeing. As part of her remit, she is the lead for the Principal Teachers of Guidance and has the strategic overview for all matters pertaining to wellbeing for example, school ethos and culture, attendance and relationships. She is instrumental in working to refresh our school identity. Jennifer is also the Year Group Head for S3 pupils.



Paul McGurn

Depute Head Teacher

Year Group Head for S4

Paul's strategic remit is to lead on developing our school curriculum in line with the national developments. He also leads on our partnership working and links with a number of subject departments within the school. Paul is the SQA coordinator which means he ensures that all processes and procedures relating to the Scottish examination system are followed. His year group head responsibility is for S4.



Ruth Sheppard

Depute Head Teacher

Year Group Head for S5

Ruth's strategic remit is to develop a strategic overview for learning, teaching and assessment. This includes developing a system to record, track and recognise positive achievements both in and out of school. She links with a number of departments and has the year group head responsibility for S5 pupils.



Vicky Grove

Depute Head Teacher

Year Group Head S6

Vicky's strategic remit is to develop policies and procedures pertaining to the national agenda "developing the young workforce". This means that Vicky is responsible for ensuring our curriculum maintains a focus on skills development. She also leads on ensuring our young people all leave school into a positive and sustained destination. She is our school timetable maker and has an overview of staffing. She is the year group head for S6.

Parent Council

Welcome to The Robert Burns Academy's Handbook.

My name is Jillian D'Agostino, and I am the current Chairperson of the school's Parent Council.

Starting at a new school is an exciting chapter in the lives of our young people. As parents and carers, we all want it to be the best possible experience for them and it is important that we, as parents, are represented.

Your Parent Council is involved in shaping the immediate and longer-term priorities of our school and participate in the recruitment of senior staff and pupil leaders.

Our annual Parent Council Annual General Meeting (AGM) usually takes place in the September of each year. The AGM is a time also when new parents and carers are formally invited to join the Parent Council. However, I want to let you know that all carers and parents are welcome to attend any meeting should you wish to. We all have one common goal; to support the whole school community to be a success. The success of our Head Teacher and all staff is the success of our children. We are here to help.

We also have a very active fundraising committee within the Campus and would welcome your input there.

You can view the minutes of all of your Parent Council meetings on our school website.

Although the Head Teacher is not a member of the Parent Council, she has the right to attend and participate in all Parent Council meetings.

If you have an interest in attending a meeting or joining the Parent Council, you are welcome! If you simply want to have a chat about school with another carer/parent, you are also welcome to drop me a message. I can be contacted via therobertburnsacademy@gmail.com

Connect Scot

The Robert Burns Academy Parent Council is a member of Connect, this gives us access to resources, information and online sessions as well as public liability insurance for any events we hold.

All parents and staff at the school are eligible to register for a Connect account online which will give them access to the full benefits of membership. Details of how to register can be found below. I would encourage all members of the Parent Council to register an account with Connect and to help us spread the word on this membership amongst the wider parent forum.

To register you just need to visit https://connect.scot/register

Jillian

Parent Council Chairperson

Primary to Secondary Transition



A robust Primary Transition Programme is vital so that all of our Primary 7 pupils have a smooth transition to secondary school.

To ensure this happens here at The Robert Burns Academy, we work closely with our associated primary schools: Lochnorris Primary, Catrine Primary, Auchinleck Primary, Logan primary, Drongan Primary, Mauchline Primary, Sorn Primary, St Patrick's Primary, Muirkirk Primary, Netherthird Primary, New Cumnock and Ochiltree Primary, to gather relevant pastoral and attainment information.

This work is led by our DHT Michelle Anderson.



Our universal (open to all) transition programme includes two bump up days, an activity evening that all pupils and parents/carers are welcome to attend, a Primary 7 information evening and school tour, and the offer of a parents/carer drop-in session prior to starting S1. We are also offer a Universal Support and Literacy Evening to give parents/carers and pupils the opportunity to ask questions and meet our Support for Learning Team. Mrs Anderson also visits all P7 pupils in our associated primaries, once in October to introduce

herself and again in March where she spent time with them talking about their hopes and dreams for the future. All of this work helps us to get to know our pupils and prepare better for their arrival.



This session we developed a 'Transition Newsletter' to issue to Primary 7 pupils and parents/carers. The newsletter details upcoming transition events as well as information about is happening in the school, specifically with regards to our current S1s. One of our senior pupils has been supporting the production of the newsletter by liaising with staff members

about what has been going on in the school.

You should receive a copy of this newsletter termly directly from your child's primary school.



We also work closely with our Primary 7 pupils from Lochnorris as part of our 'Ambassador Project.' This training project includes all Primary 7 pupils giving them leadership opportunities to support other Primary 7 pupils from associated schools. This further supports our Primary 7 pupils when they visit The Robert Burns Academy prior to starting in August.

Enhanced Transition

Transition can look different for everyone and some pupils may require Enhanced Transition. Enhanced Transition is there to support young people with the highest level of need or who may require an alternative provision when they come to The Robert Burns Academy. Our Enhanced Transition programme includes five additional visits to The Robert Burns Academy and bespoke plans for our children requiring additional support. Staff at The Robert Burns Academy work closely with primary colleagues to arrange Transition 1 and 2 meetings for pupils who have an additional support need or may require alternative provision in secondary school. Transition meetings are a good opportunity for our Pastoral Support and Support for Learning Team to meet young people and parents/carers, to get to know them and discuss possible supports.

In some cases, our associated primary schools may have in place a Child's Plan. Where it becomes clear that the plan is functioning as a means by which ongoing monitoring is in place, with no known need, our staff will arrange a review meeting during S1 to determine if there is still a requirement for a Child's Plan in the context of secondary schooling. In the past, some of these plans have rolled on without clear established need. This process will be explained in full to parents/carers during P7/S1 transition meetings.

Creating S1 Classes

We generally have an intake of around 300/320 S1 pupils annually. One of the tasks of the Primary Transition DHT is to work with the Principal Teachers of Guidance and the Primary 7 Staff and Primary colleagues to gather as much information as possible to ensure that we create classes for our new S1. The following guidelines apply:

- Matching brothers and sisters if your child have a brother or sister already attending The Robert Burns Academy we will ensure they are placed with the same Principal Teacher of Guidance.
- We ensure as much as possible that there is a 50/50 split of boys and girls per class.
- 3 We ensure that we create mixed ability classes.

Details of S1 classes will be published around May of the school entry year.

Our Transition Policy is currently in development and will be available from August 2025.

What are our current S1 parents saying about The Robert Burns Academy?

94% of S1 parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their Child Likes School **92% of S1 parents** surveyed agreed or strongly agreed they feel their child is safe in school

94% of S1 parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their Child Likes School

86% of S1 parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that staff really know their child as an individual

94% of S1
parents
surveyed
agreed or
strongly
agreed that
their child is
making
good
progress

Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Care staff are your first point of contact and have a specific remit for working with young people and families. All parental requests and queries should be directed to Pastoral Care staff in the first instance. We have recently changed our house structure reducing from six houses to five and increasing the number of Principal Teachers of Guidance from nine to ten in order to better support our young people. At the moment our houses are identified through colours however, there is work underway to rename our houses and to promote house identify as a mechanism to increase a sense of belonging.

The role of Pastoral Care staff is sometimes referred to as Pupil Support or Guidance. The remit of Pastoral Care staff is extensive. Each Pastoral Care teacher has a caseload of around 170 young people.

Green House Miss Smith and Mr Elliot

Blue House Mr Kyle and Mrs Jagadowski

Violet House Mr Tickner and Mrs McGuire

Red House Miss Naismith and Miss Mitchell

Yellow House Mrs Burgoyne and Mr Dempster

The role of Pastoral Care staff is summarised below.



Miss Mitchell

Provide pastoral, curricular, social and vocational guidance for all young people in their charge

Manage attendance, timekeeping, general progress and the welfare of their caseload in line with the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

Maintain pastoral notes, pupil records and agency referrals/reports as required in line with GIRFEC principles.

Liaise with parents / carers, teachers and relevant partners to

create support packages for young people as required.

Complete references and reports, including UCAS and College references for current and former pupils.

Carry out a planned programme of pupil wellbeing interviews throughout the academic year.

Carry out a range of wellbeing assessments with/for individual young people as appropriate.

Prepare for, contribute to, and lead internal Staged Intervention Meetings, Team With the Family Meetings (TWFs) and parental meetings.

Attend external and multi-agency meetings such as Children's Panel hearings, Social Work Meetings and Child Protection meetings as required.

Liaise with external partners such as Social Work, Psychological Services, Skills Development Scotland, CAMHS, School Nurse, Campus Police Officer, Vibrant Communities, and School Counselling services as appropriate.



Miss Naismith

Liaise with our Principal Teacher of Support for Learning to develop, implement and review Child Plans for young people with additional support needs.



National and local project/initiative implementation, such as: Mentors in Violence Prevention, No Knives Better Lives, I am Me, Nurture, Equally Safe in School, Respect Me, Mindful Mentors etc.

Attend P7 Transition meetings

Co-ordination of Developing the Young Workforce events.

Plan, develop, deliver, and review our Personal and Social Education (PSE) curriculum for all year groups.

Personal and Social Education (PSE)

All pupils have one period of PSE per week, and this is usually taught by their Pastoral Care teacher. PSE addresses and/or consolidates a large proportion of the Health and Wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes.

The Health and Wellbeing curriculum is organised into six key areas.

- Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing
- Planning for Choices and Changes
- Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport
- Food and Health
- Substance Misuse
- Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood

Pastoral Care staff recently updated our PSE curriculum for S1 – S6. Our PSE curriculum incorporates the necessary benchmarks, experiences and outcomes, health and wellbeing indicators and equalities material. Our revised offering aligns with the sixteen recommendations of the most recent government review into PSE provision.

Our Pastoral Support Team engage with our partners to ensure that our pupils receive the best support available to supplement their achievements or to support them to move onto a positive destination. Here are some of the activities they have been involved in the 2024/25 session.

UWS Foundation Academy

A cohort of S6 students recently completed their UWS Foundation Academy course which they have been working on since June. Students attended a campus day and then had weekly sessions with UWS staff and then had to complete university related tasks in order to gain accreditation. The students will receive 20 SCQF points at level 7 for undertaking this and it has also helped prepare them for university life.

Duke of Edinburgh Award



We have recently enrolled a new cohort of students for their Bronze DofE award following a successful year with record numbers out on silver expeditions. We have enrolled over 100 S3 and S4 students and again this is a record amount for us. Training for the summer expeditions will start in January and all pupils will be involved in volunteering in our local communities.

Focus West Higher Education Support

Tutors from Focus West based at Strathclyde University recently came into school to have a meeting with every S6 student to explore options for college and university. This was of great benefit to our students and has helped them look at pathways for the future. They will come back in January to work with S5 students.

Focus West Focus on Four

In January forty S4 students will be attending Strathclyde University for the second part of the Focus on Four programme. This is aimed at showing students what university life is like and also helps them with study skills and organising workloads. The first part was held in June and was well received by all.

Routes For All

A selection of S6 students recently completed the Routes For All programmes designed to help students enrol at college and also look at articulation from college to university. Students will attend a campus visit at Ayrshire College in January to meet with college staff to give them further insight.

Wider Pastoral Team



Campus Police Officer

PC Aitken is our Campus Officer. PC Aitken works with young people across our campus and provides advice and guidance to pupils, staff and parents/carers.

PC Aitken's role includes, but is not limited to:

- improving relationships between young people and the Police
- engaging with young people and developing their role within the community
- problem solving in the school and the community
- delivering and developing specific projects such as internet safety, young crime prevention and personal safety
- providing a visible presence in and around the school community
- supporting and developing activities to address challenging behaviour
- liaising with departments and organisations already involved in delivering programmes for young people (mentoring, street working, youth groups etc)
- promoting a restorative justice approach to encourage young people to take responsibility for their decisions within school and in the community

Please note that you should still contact 101 if you want to report a crime or to ask for a possible crime to be investigated. You should not contact the Campus Police Officers directly.

PC Aitken

School Counselling

The Exchange are our local authority counselling service and started working with us in 2021.

Pastoral Care staff refer pupils to school counsellors. Pupils can also self-refer by speaking with their Pastoral Care teacher. More information is available from Pastoral Care staff and is shared with pupils via our PSE curriculum.

Educational Psychologist

Blake Kilean is our allocated Educational Psychologist. Blake works closely with our staff and families to ensure that we are trained and supported to help young people manage a range of behaviours and emotions that they may exhibit when in school or at home. Blake provides regular training for our staff, with this session's focus as detailed below.

- Trauma Informed Practice
- Autism in Girls
- Nurture

Support for Learning



Mrs Devine is our Principal Teacher of Support for Learning. Should you have a concern that is related to additional support needs, please contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance in the first instance.

We have an established Additional Support Needs overview for each year group. Pupil profiles (based on information from primary school, parents, pupils, and other agencies) give all staff information on individual pupil needs. Furthermore, support strategy reference materials are also shared with staff. These give teachers a comprehensive overview of various additional support strategies that can used when working with specific pupils.

The Support for Learning Department is responsible for:

- supporting young people with literacy difficulties including dyslexic difficulties and other additional support needs.
- empowerment of teachers to meet the needs of their pupils.
- dyslexia friendly learning environments (designed to help all learners).
- early identification of young people at risk of developing literacy difficulties
- ensuring consistency in using the Staged Intervention Model embedded within East Ayrshire's Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties Assessment Guidelines.
- effective monitoring and tracking systems to record pupil's literacy development.
- Implementation of SQA AAA Guidance for SQA exams (see further information below)
- organisation of CLPL opportunities for staff.
- development of young people's empathy towards and awareness of additional support needs.
- work in partnership with EAST to assess pupils for visual stress, Dyslexia and Dyscalculia.
 Assessments are carried out in line with the East Ayrshire Assessment Policy.

Our Inclusive Practice Policy is under construction and will be available from August 2025.

Mrs Devine is supported by our pupil support team:

IT Technician

Mr Blair is our IT Technician. Mr Elliott is available to staff and pupils to ensure that they can access and use the various IT equipment and systems needed to complete and set schoolwork.

Mr Blair's office is located on the top floor in the Art Department. Mr Elliott also supports Mrs Devine and SfL and subject department staff in ensuring that digital papers and access to ICT are provided where required against SQA AAA.

SQA – Additional Assessment Arrangements/Additional Assessment Requests

The school are bound to operate within and against SQA policy when providing Additional Assessment Arrangements for SQA exams.

Identifying the possible assessment needs of a learner

- Assessment arrangements are only for learners identified as having a physical (including medical or sensory), behavioural, mental health or learning difficulty.
- Information on the learner's needs and strategies are often shared by Support for Learning to aid teaching and learning. Knowing this is key to identifying any difficulties the learner may or may not have in accessing assessments.
- A learner's needs and difficulty accessing an assessment is often identified before they begin study. It may also become apparent during study

Above is extracted from SQA guidance for centres.

In light of the above, the onus on the school is to evidence need, not to evidence absence of need. Where a young person does not qualify against the above, they cannot be considered by the school for SQA AAA/AAR.

The SQA also operate against four key principles when advising schools on how to determine need in light of a body of evidence.

Principle 1:

Assessment arrangements are intended to enable learners to demonstrate their attainment, not to compensate for lack of attainment.

Principle 2:

Assessment arrangement must not compromise the integrity of the qualification.

Principle 3:

Assessment arrangements must be tailored to meet a learner's individual needs.

Principle 4:

Assessment arrangements should reflect, as far as possible, the learner's usual way of learning and producing work.

Where the school are of the view that providing AAA/AAR contravenes any of the above, we cannot in good faith request AAA/AAR. Similarly, where parents/carers believe that the arrangements put in place either do not allow pupils to demonstrate attainment against their established need, or that the arrangements are not being tailored to individual needs against said need, you should make direct contact with your child's Pastoral Care teacher.

Assessment

For a variety of reasons, school staff may have need to conduct further assessment in advance of coming to a decision as to whether a pupil qualifies for AAA against SQA policy. Without conducting further assessment, usually by means of providing additional arrangements in either prelims or class assessments, we will not meet the SQA threshold for evidence gathering in advance of a final decision. Please note, providing additional arrangements for class tests or prelims is not an indication that analysis of evidence will result in AAA/AAR, it is simply the process we need to follow to meet the guidance we are duty bound to work within for SQA purposes.

Should you have a concern around SQA AAA/AAR, please contact your child's Pastoral Care teacher in the first instance.

Understanding the distinction between opinion and evidence

School staff are bound to act within SQA guidance, as to act outwith is in direct contradiction of their responsibilities, but do understand that SQA AAA evidence gathering, and the final decision, can be a stressful time for young people and families. While acutely aware of the above, school staff do not have the freedom to act outwith SQA guidance and provide AAA/AAR as a result of pressure or opinion that does not alter the various thresholds that requests must meet against SQA policy.

Transitions at key stages

(S2 into S3, S3 into S4, S4/5 into S5/6)

We work in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and Ayrshire College to deliver input at the point where our young people make subject and course choices. Our published advice will be updated annually, with the most recent version found on our website.

Transition to Employment, College, Training or University

Skills Development Scotland (S DS) is the national skills body, and we deliver Scotland's careers service. Our Careers Advisers deliver career information, advice, and guidance in our school to pupils from S1-S6. SDS colleagues are there to help you understand the world of work and develop the Career Management Skills you need as you progress through school and beyond.

Your Careers Adviser can speak to you about:

- Finding out about yourself, your strengths and skills
- Making subject choices
- Different types of careers
- Developing the types of skills that are useful in a job
- Routes into careers including apprenticeships, college and university
- Building and developing your networks
- Creating CVs
- Making job applications and applying for courses

At The Robert Burns Academy we have two Careers 'Advisors



Elaine Whates

Elaine.whates@sds.co.uk

Elaine's Link Principal Teacher of Guidance

Mr Kyle

Mrs McGuire

Miss Mitchell

Mr Dempster

Mrs Burgoyne



Gillian McMahon

Gillian.mcmahon@sds.co.uk

Gillian's Link Principal Teacher of Guidance

Miss Naismith

Miss Smith

Miss Jagodowski

Mr Tickner

Mr Elliot

My World of Work

My World of Work | My World of Work

My World of Work is Scotland's career information and advice website. <u>Skills Development Scotland</u> (<u>SDS</u>) – the national skills agency have created this resource to use in school and at home.

Through our PSE programme and through subject careers discussion the website is used to explore careers which match pupils' skills, personality and strengths. It is also a great resource to introduce our pupils to the huge range of jobs that they could get into.

It is not just for pupils! No matter what stage you're at in your career, My World of Work will help you develop <u>career management skills</u>. These will allow you to stay in control of your career as the job landscape changes around you.

SCQF Ambassadors



We also have SCQF Ambassadors who support parents and pupils during the option process.

This is a pupil leadership role and interested pupils are trained by Mr McGurn DHT to be able to discuss the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework and our curriculum.

Find out more about the qualification's framework at <u>SCQF levels:</u> Understand Scotland's qualifications

Communication

Safer Schools Scotland App

Our School App is updated with key information for Parents/Carers. For general information about school life, extra-curricular provision, supported study and events pertinent to an entire cohort or year group, all parents/carers should use the school app as the primary means of receiving communication.



Our school app can be downloaded for free from your app store, under the title 'Safer Schools Scotland'. We will send a joining code to you when your child enrols. Should you require the joining code at a later date, please contact the school office using the email address shown below. Parents/Carers can also report pupil absence via the app.

School Social Media

Our Instagram and LinkedIn account are updated fairly regularly and provides an insight into the life of the school. Please note, we do not respond to messages on these platforms, it is an outward facing system only.

Instagram @theRBA_2024

LinkedIn The Robert Burns Academy

SMS

SMS messages are sent to the main contact held on SEEMIS to provide daily attendance updates. Occasionally, we will also issue SMS messages directing parents/carers to specific information on the school app, or if providing updates on matters such as return times from residential trips. Some department Principal Teachers will share homework updates via SMS on occasion.



Communication Turnaround Times

If you either call the school directly or email earobertburns.ac@eastayrshire.org.uk, we aim to acknowledge contact as soon as received. Staff then work to a turnaround time of **three** working days. This is because staff have teaching commitments and cannot account for contact from parents/carers in advance. Pastoral Care staff are your first point of contact.

Please note that staff will always endeavour to make contact as soon as possible, and that most contact will be on the same day. Please also note that immediate return contact would be made in the case of an emergency or a Child Protection concern.

In the rare event that after three working days you are yet to receive a call or email, please notify us of this via the head teacher's email address shown below.

tracy.stewart@eastayrshire.org.uk

If your enquiry necessitates the gathering of input from several different staff, it is likely that it will take a few additional working days to collate all responses. Pastoral Care staff are experienced in managing this and, following an initial discussion, will make contact again as soon as they have all requested information from staff.

Contact Details - Parental Responsibility

All parents/carers will be asked to complete an annual data check. This allows us to double check contact and emergency contact details for all pupils. At all other points in the school year, we ask that you contact us if any of the following change.

- Home Address
- Telephone Number(s)
- Email address
- Name and details of emergency contacts

If we are unaware of changes to any of the above, we may not be able to pass on important information or make contact in the case of emergency. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that we hold accurate contact details.

Communication Protocols

We understand that not all parents/carers reside together. Please note the following in terms of communication with parents/carers residing apart.

Against resource, the school hold a reasonable expectation that the main contact held on SEEMIS will pass on details of daily attendance and any informal communication received from school. This applies universally, in that even where parents/carers reside together, the school SEEMIS system holds one main contact only. There is no distinction made on SEEMIS as to the living arrangements of parents/carers. Regardless of where the other parent/carer resides, SEEMIS will send daily attendance notifications to the main contact only. It is not possible against the limitations of the system to generate the automated message necessary to inform all parents/carers.

Likewise, for informal communication, such as general updates around behaviour, attainment and progress, Pastoral Care and school staff will call or contact the main contact only. For obvious reasons against time and resource, it is not practical to call two different parents/carers about the same matter. In this regard, no pupil is treated differently, as only the main contact for each child will receive attendance updates and/or informal communication. However, should a parent/carer not residing with the main contact have cause to be concerned that the main contact is not passing information on, they should contact their child's Pastoral Care teacher who will engage with the main contact to request that they do so. The school's position is that as adults with shared responsibility for a child, parents/carers should work together to take a shared interest in the learning journey of their child.

Formal Communication – Parental Rights

As long as the school are made aware, we will always send on formal communication to parents/carers residing apart from the main contact. The main challenge in this regard is internal tracking, as parental and family arrangements can change without our knowledge, as can the administrative staff managing contact lists. Where you know that you should have received something from the undernoted list that you have not received, please make contact with office staff as soon as practically possible, and we will ensure that you receive that which you are entitled to.

- School Reports
- Parents' Night invitations
- Prelim Results and formal change of level for SQA/national courses
- Invitations to Team with the Family or Child's Plan meetings
- Communication pertinent to formal exclusion

Meetings and Parents' Nights

On occasion, there may be need for school staff to meet with parents/carers in person. This may be because school staff, parents or a partner agency has called a Team with the Family meeting, or to review a child's plan. For all meetings, staff will host one meeting only, whereby all parents/carers are invited to attend. Against available school resource, and the fact that almost all staff have teaching commitments and a high caseload, it is not practical or necessary to host different meetings for different parents/carers. This is well established standard practice. The only exception is in cases whereby legal limitations prevent this, e.g. a restraining order or similar.

While empathetic, school staff have no role to play in mediating between parents/carers who may not otherwise communicate with one another often. Hosting separate meetings presents many unworkable challenges, mainly around securing attendance against resource at different times/on different dates and securing attendance of partner agencies where relevant. As the meeting concerns the needs of a pupil, and is not a meeting about parents/carers, it is viewed as reasonable and appropriate to host one meeting only, as is the case in almost all public sector services for children.

The same is true of Parents' Evenings. Staff have a finite number of appointments, and in a secondary school context, may not be able to see all families (albeit staff often go beyond time to do so). We cannot reasonably schedule two separate parents' night appointments for the parents/carers of one child at the expense of offering appointments to parents/carers of all children. Similarly, we cannot reasonably ask staff to duplicate work unnecessarily against all of the above.

General Information

School Day

We share our Campus with Lochnorris Primary and Supported Learning Centre, Hillside School and Cherry Trees Early Years Centre.. The various opening hours of all establishments contribute to the need for our school to run an asymmetric week, with four longer days than most schools and one shorter day on Fridays.

School Hours Monday - Thursday

Period	Starts	Ends
PS	8.45	8.55
1	8.55	9.45
2	9.45	10.35
Interval	10.35	10.50
3	10.50	11.40
4	11.40	12.30
5	12.30	1.20
Lunch	1.20	2.00
6	2.00	2.50
7	2.50	3.40

School Hours Friday

Period	Starts	Ends
PS	8.45	8.55
1	8.55	9.45
2	9.45	10.35
Interval	10.35	10.50
3	10.50	11.40
4	11.40	12.30

School Holidays and Inservice Days

East Ayrshire Council has published school holiday and Inservice information here:

https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schoolholidays.aspx

Attendance and Timekeeping

Absences should be reported by using the facility within the school app or by calling the school on

01290 427 280

We monitor attendance closely, with two group calls per day sent to main contacts to pick up on anomalies and ensure that we are aware of any transient absence. Where a young person is not marked as present and we are unaware of any valid reason for their absence, parents/carers will generally receive text message notification of absence.

Dress Code

We work hard to foster a sense of community and identity. Promotion of school uniform helps us to create unity and togetherness. Given that we welcome pupils from a vast geographical area, we feel that this is an important feature of our school and ensures that our pupils can be recognised across East Ayrshire. Please be assured of the fact that we will always assist families for whom uniform costs are a barrier to following our dress code. Our uniform is as follows.

- School blazer
- White shirt/White polo shirt
- School tie
- Plain black jumper, plain black cardigan or plain black hoodie
- Black school trousers, black shorts, black skirt or thick black leggings
- Black footwear (without colourful logos)

While we appreciate that jackets and alternative footwear may be necessary during inclement weather, we encourage pupils to make use of locker facilities to store outdoor clothing when on site. Young people know that they will be asked to remove non-uniform items when inside the school building and this is a well-established feature of our desire to maintain a sense of equity and pride.

Security and Visitors

All visitors should report to the school office and sign in. Office staff should issue a visitor lanyard and provide a brief overview of our Child Protection procedures.

School Catering

Our catering staff provide break and lunchtime sustenance for pupils and staff across the Campus.

The links shown below provide more information in respect of catering.

Cashless Payment using ParentPay

Current Menu

Allergies and Specific Dietary Requirements

Please note, responsibility for use of the canteen or otherwise on a pupil-by-pupil basis does not sit with school staff. On occasion, we will take requests from parents asking that we prevent pupils accessing the canteen. On a practical level, we do not have the resource to do so, albeit we can provide advice on your behalf where possible. Given pupils are of secondary school age and understand well that use of a canteen will incur a cost (unless free school meals), it is important that parents/carers have these conversations with their children. School staff will not be held accountable for pupil-by-pupil use of the canteen, nor will any debt accumulated be waived on retrospective advice from parents/carers that their child should not have used the canteen service. The above is a matter for parents/carers to discuss and manage with pupils.

Free School Meals and Clothing Grants

We strongly encourage parents/carers entitled to apply for Free School Meal (FSM) or Clothing Grants to do so. In recent years, we have noticed an emerging trend whereby some parents/carers who do qualify are not applying. Naturally, this prevents pupils from accessing provision that they

are entitled to. Our priority in this respect is to make sure that no young person is prevented from accessing support that is in their best interests, and school staff are always available to help with the application process.

In addition, it is important to note than an accurate overview of Free School Meal status at school level impacts on Pupil Equity Funding and our Virtual Comparator. Our Virtual Comparator is used by Scottish Government to compare attainment in our school to that elsewhere. Where FSM and Clothing Grant uptake is not accurate, we may not receive additional PEF we would otherwise be entitled to.

Find out if you qualify

Apply for Free School Meal or Clothing Grants

School Transport

Many of our pupils use School Transport to get to and from school. East Ayrshire Council's website provides parents/carers with the criteria for free school transport.

East Ayrshire Council – School Transport

In addition, all young people in Scotland can now use their National Entitlement Card to travel on bus services across Scotland for free. National Entitlement Card applications will be managed in school on an annual basis.

Building and Site Maintenance

We work closely with East Ayrshire Facilities Management (FM) to ensure that all matters pertaining to building maintenance and cleanliness are taken seriously and acted on. We have a very close working relationship with colleagues in FM. Should any member of our community have a concern in relation to building maintenance, please report it to the Head Teacher.

Complaints Handling

It is natural that throughout the course of an academic year, Parents/Carers will have reason to contact the school to seek assurance on a wide range of matters. School staff understand this. Given that the nature of a complaint is indeterminable before it comes to our attention, we cannot know in advance who would be best placed to manage the complaint or query in hand.

For this reason, we request that formal complaints be directed to Depute Head Teachers or the Head Teacher only. The Head Teacher will be notified of all complaints and has responsibility to delegate management of the complaint to the promoted member of staff best placed to deal with the issue. In some cases, this may mean that the Head Teacher deals with the totality of a complaint raised, but more commonly, complaints will be managed by Principal Teachers, Pastoral Care Staff or Depute Head Teachers.

The promoted member of staff dealing with the matter will outline potential turnaround times and will communicate next steps as soon as possible. If you do not believe that the matter has been addressed, you should notify Miss Stewart. Miss Stewart would then follow up with you and take the matter on internally.

On rare occasions, you may feel it necessary to escalate a complaint to local authority level. In almost all cases, complaints that reach the local authority will be referred to Miss Stewart for an

overview of the issue from the school's perspective. Any actions or next steps would be communicated to you and taken from there.

An overview of East Ayrshire Council's complaints handling procedures can be found here.

Positive Relationships/Anti-bullying

Staff have a legal responsibility to record every instance of perceived bullying and investigate the matter thoroughly. We are not naïve to the fact that not all perceived or actual bullying is reported to school staff or family members. For this reason, it is essential that you do not hesitate to bring concerns to our attention.

Our curriculum and general staff vigilance allow us to promote appropriate conduct with young people regularly. Pupils can report any perceived bullying via their Principal Teacher of Guidance and know that all staff within the school are available to discuss concerns at any time.

All schools in East Ayrshire follow the guidance outlined within the council's <u>Anti-Bullying – Respect for All Policy</u>.

Managing Pupil Conflict

It is not uncommon across a young person's teenage years to encounter situations whereby conflict or difference of opinion exist between two or more pupils, very often pupils who are part of the same broader friendship group.

In our extensive experience of dealing with issues that are open to interpretation/perception, we encourage parents/carers to consider that school staff simultaneously fulfil the roles of investigator, jury and counsellor. It is completely natural for parents/carers to emotionally invest in any such circumstance and school staff understand this. Unfortunately, and given that school staff are often the first person these issues are discussed with, there are occasions where the emotional strain associated with these situations is misdirected at staff before staff have had an opportunity to investigate an issue.

There can often be difficulty in unpicking the intricacies of inter-personal relationships amongst a group of peers, particularly at a time when young people are still developing the social skills necessary to manage conflict and change. School staff will take decisions based upon the evidence available to them and will do so in good faith. It is always necessary to consider the views of all pupils and families involved, and very often school staff hear an almost identical view from both parties in respect of what one pupil may have said or did to another.

Please know that when managing situations of this nature, staff will offer support to all pupils involved and will update parents/carers as to actions taken.

Please also note that school staff are not at liberty to discuss any actions or interventions put in place for pupils other than those for whom you are the parent/carer.

Emergency Procedures Medical matters

General First Aid and Illness

In situations where a young person feels unwell staff trained in first aid will speak with the young person and make a judgement as to the best course of action. On occasion, this will mean calling home to request that a young person is collected from school.

Administration of Medication

For some pupils, it will be necessary to facilitate the administration of medication on a regular basis. Parents/Carers of those pupils will be aware of an individual plan that has been discussed with school staff. Trained staff will offer support in line with the terms of the plan agreed with parents/carers.

Emergency Situations

In the case of an individual emergency, school staff will contact parents/carers or emergency contacts immediately. In the case of an emergency that impacts the campus, East Ayrshire Council follow protocols which can be accessed here.

Mobile Phones in School

We are always looking for ways to improve the learning experience and wellbeing of our students. After careful consideration and feedback from staff and young people, we will be introducing a new mobile phone procedure called "Bag It or Box It", starting from Monday 12 May 2025.

This aims to reduce the negative impact of mobile phones during lesson times, while still allowing responsible use during break and lunchtimes.

Why are we doing this?

Our young people and staff have increasingly spoken about issues caused by mobile phone use during the school day, including:

- Disruptions in class, particularly when pupils make or take calls during lessons;
- Recording teachers or other pupils without their permission;
- Reduced focus and engagement with learning activities;
- Social media distractions and online safety concerns including bullying comments and unkind images being sent

To address this, pupils will be expected to either:

- Bag it keep their phone switched off and stored in their school bag during lessons, or
- **Box it** place their phone in a classroom box at the start of the lesson, to be returned at the end of the lesson

Mobile phones may still be used during break and lunchtime, provided usage is respectful and does not disrupt others.

We piloted this approach with our S2 pupils, who reported a number of positive outcomes, including:

- Improved concentration in class
- Less pressure to check phones constantly
- Less anxiety and fear which was generated by constant texts/calls
- More meaningful conversations and interactions with peers and teachers during the lessons

We believe this policy strikes a fair balance between promoting focus and encouraging responsible mobile phone use. Your support at home in reinforcing these expectations is very much appreciated.

However, where pupils take mobile phones out without permission during class time, school staff will correctly ask that the phone is put away. Young people will always be given an opportunity to put their phone away. If a young person refuses to do so, phones will be held in the school office for collection by the pupil at the end of the school day.

Where there is a habitual pattern of young people using their phones during class time without the permission of staff, we will ask that families keep the device at home for a time limited period. On some occasions, families request that young people hand their phone in to the office in the morning and collect it at close of day. We would only facilitate this request if there is a pattern of phone use outwith break and lunch.

We are grateful to parents/carers for recognising that the above approach is both correct and proportionate. There is ample opportunity at break, lunch and when at home to use mobile devices for social purposes. Any pupil doing so habitually during class time has no reason to do so and we have a duty of care to ensure that they neither fall behind in their learning nor develop a dependence on their phone that is potentially unhealthy in the long term.

The Curriculum



Fig:5.0: Scotland's Curriculum Framework (Education Scotland, 2019a)

Scotland's Curriculum is evolving and through engaging with the work carried out by our Local Authority and Nationally we are reviewing our model.

Developing our curriculum is part of our improvement journey and we are currently working through year one of our three-year cycle.

Our Collective Actions	Our Desired Outcomes
3.1 Development of our Curriculum All departments will be supported to	Our curriculum rationale has a clear purpose understood by all.
explore alternative opportunities on the SCQF Framework to meet the needs of all young people. This will lead to the	All staff, pupils, parents/carers have a shared understanding of SCQF Level 5 to Level 7.
review of the Senior Phase curriculum. Increase understanding of the Ayrshire/Scotland wide employment	We are on the pathway to achieve SCQF Ambassador School Gold Status
landscape throughout engaging with the Ayrshire Growth Deal and national	Pupils from all year groups are SCQF ambassadors.
curriculum developments. A cross-curricular writing team will be established to further develop and design our approaches to the development of a skills framework. Departments will map skills progression through Broad General Education.	Improved attainment at SCQF Level 5 and Level 6.
	We have better progression opportunities for young people within the curriculum which enrich S5 and S6 purpose and experiences.
	The skills framework enables all young people to be able to articulate their learning.

Religious Education and Religious Observance

As a non-denominational school, all pupils will attend one periods of RE per week in S1 to S4.

Assessment and Reporting

Young people will be assessed regularly through a mixture of formative and summative assessment. Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels still include work that is assessed by teachers and lecturers, but pupils will also have to pass a course assessment for these qualifications – usually an examination paper and/or coursework which will be marked by SQA.

The purpose of reporting is to support and improve learning. It should be an on-going process which provides clear information on a learner's strengths, areas for development and specifically what needs to be done to ensure continued progress. As much as possible, learners should be involved in the reporting process through on-going reflection and dialogue about their learning. It is also important that reporting fully involves and values the role of parents and carers. We know that parental engagement has a significant impact on learners' progress.

Full reports contain in-depth comment on a learner's progress and next steps in learning, along with strategies to support learning at home. Reports are often issued around the time of option choices for the next session to ensure young people can make informed choices about future pathways.

All reports will be issued by bag drop and a text will be sent home to parents/carers to let them know that the report is in their child's bag. It is always our intention to ensure that reports are issued to all parents/carers who should receive reports. We understand that some family circumstances necessitate the issuing of report to more than one parent/carer separately. We make every effort to retain an accurate list of those pupils for whom we need to issue two reports separately. Where your family circumstances change and you require separate reports, please notify us as soon as possible.

Information to help clarify the meaning of the terminology used in reports is sent out at the time of reporting. Parents' Evening and Reporting dates for session 2025/26 will be released in August 2025 via the school app. The app also provides ongoing access to a parent/carer calendar.

Information

If you would like further information on any of the content covered within this handbook, please contact us using the on our website

You may also find the undernoted links useful.

East Ayrshire Council

Education Scotland

SQA

Data Protection

Head of Campus

Strategic responsibility for

- attendance, attainment and culture and ethos (behaviour)
- communication strategy
- quality improvement across campus self-evaluation for self-improvement
- leadership of change and learning
- · leadership and management of staff
- management of resources to promote equity

Operational

- · School budget including school fund
- HR link
- School handbook
- · Standards and Quality Report

Link

- English
- Mathematics
- Physical Education

Wellbeing Team

Mrs Anderson

Year head S1 (P6 and P7 transition)

- Overall responsibility for behaviour, attainment and attendance
- Overview of Child Plans/Interventions

Strategic responsibility for:

- Universal and Enhanced Transition QI 2.6 Transitions.
- Early and First level curriculum development (literacy and numeracy)
- Strategic lead for parental engagement and family learning QI 2.5 Family Learning
- Whole family wellbeing

Operational

- S1 Parent events
- S1 Reporting
- Parent volunteers

Mrs McPheator

Year Head S2

- Overall responsibility for behaviour, attainment and attendance
- Overview of Child Plans/Interventions

Strategic responsibility for:

- Design lead for a continuum of ASN support through a staged intervention framework
- Strategic responsibility for Child Plans/Interventions
- QI 2.1 Safeguarding

- QI 2.4 Personalised Support
- QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, equity and inclusion
- Strategic responsibility for support staff

Operational

- S2 Parent events
- S2 Reporting

Link

- Support for Learning
- Home link
- Classroom assistants

Mrs Macara

Year head S3

- Overall responsibility for behaviour, attainment and attendance
- Overview of Child Plans/Interventions

Strategic responsibility for:

- Leadership of Staff/Professional Learning
- Leadership of Pupils
- Design approaches to wellbeing as a responsibility of all including overview of PSE programme
- QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, equity and inclusion
- QI 3.2

Operational

- S3 Parent events
- S3 Reporting
- S3 profile
- Professional Review and Development
- Achievement of a Level (ACEL)

Link

Pastoral Support (Guidance)

Curriculum, Learning and Assessment Team

Mr McGurn

Year head S4

- Overall responsibility for behaviour, attainment and attendance
- Overview of Child Plans/Interventions

Strategic responsibility for:

- Design Lead for Curriculum and Learner's Pathways
- Communication Strategy
- Strategic Lead overall for Partners including Ayrshire Growth Deal initiatives
- Strategic Lead for Qualifications (SCQF/SQA)
- QI 2.7 Partnerships
- QI 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

Operational

Health and Safety including approval of trips

- S4 Parent events
- S4 Reporting
- Parent Council
- S4 Prelim

Link

- Technical
- PE
- Art and Design
- Facilities Management

Mrs Sheppard

Year head S5

- Overall responsibility for behaviour, attainment and attendance
- Overview of Child Plans/Interventions

Strategic responsibility for:

- Planning, tracking and monitoring (BGE) and Senior Phase
- Effective use of assessment (BGE) (ACEL) including overall Literacy and Numeracy
- Digital Strategy
- Design and manage a system to tracking the participation pillar of inclusion i.e wider achievement and pupil participation.
- QI 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement
- QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

Operational

- S5 Parent events
- S5 Reporting
- Supported Study/Easter School
- Celebrating Achievement (Prize Giving)
- IT Resources

Link

- Social Subjects
- English
- Music
- Business Education

Mrs Grove

Year head S6

Overall responsibility for behaviour, attainment and attendance

Overview of Child Plans/Interventions

Strategic responsibility for:

- Developing the Young Workforce including Careers and College Link
- Design lead for employability including work experience
- Improvements in sustainable positive destination statistics
- Design Lead for Timetable
- QI 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement
- QI 3.3 Increasing creativity and employability

Operational

- S5 Parent events
- S5 Reporting
- S5/6 Prelim Planning
- College Liaison
- Skills Development Scotland

Link

- Science
- Mathematics
- Modern Languages
- Home Economics

National Documents

- Education reform Schools gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: review and key recommendations gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Skills review published gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Education: National Improvement Framework and improvement plan 2024 gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Wider achievement SQA
- The Moderation Cycle | Resources | National Improvement Hub (education.gov.scot)
- Strategic Framework for Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement, Family Learning and Learning at Home | Resources | Education Scotland
- Support for Learning: All our Children and all their Potential (www.gov.scot)
- School Ambassador Programme | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (scqf.org.uk)
- Professional Recognition The General Teaching Council for Scotland (gtcs.org.uk)
- Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Physical intervention in schools: draft guidance gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Preventing and responding to gender based violence: a whole school framework gov.scot (www.gov.scot)