

# St Mark's Primary

School Handbook 2024 - 2025



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## SCHOOL INFORMATION

Address: ST MARK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ROEBANK DRIVE  
BARRHEAD  
G78 2JA

Telephone: 0141 570 7400  
Fax: 0141 570 7401

Email address: [schoolmail@st-marks.e-renfrew.sch.uk](mailto:schoolmail@st-marks.e-renfrew.sch.uk)

Web address: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/StMarks/>

X (previously Twitter): @StMarksPrimary1

Head Teacher: Anthony Hutcheson  
Depute Head Teacher: Julie Neil

St. Mark's Primary is a Roman Catholic, co-educational school covering Primary 1 through to 7. The present roll of the school is 366 pupils organised into fourteen classes. Parents should note that the working capacity of the school may vary dependent upon the number of pupils at each stage and the way in which the classes are organised. An up to date list of our staff and their responsibilities is available on the school website.

St. Mark's has served the community of Barrhead and St. John's Parish since September 1961. Over the years our school building has been extended and adapted to accommodate the growing population. Our learning environment now consists of fourteen classrooms, a gym hall (which doubles as a dining hall), an art room, a learning centre, a nurture room and a range of open areas. The outdoor space is a mixture of soft and hard landscaping, including a multi-use games area (MUGA).

### Concerns, Compliments and Complaints

Please use the contact details provided above to pass on any concerns, compliments or complaints. In the first instance, your enquiry will be directed to the most appropriate member of the management team. They will arrange to discuss your enquiry with you either over the phone or in person.



## HEAD TEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

The purpose of this handbook is to give you an insight into the ethos and life of St. Mark's Primary School. The Charter for Catholic Schools sets out the importance of "honouring the life, dignity and voice of each person, made in the image of God". This defines our mission as a school and underpins our approach to relationships with every member of our school community.

We care deeply about the children. We recognise what a privilege it is to play our part in their education and formation, in close partnership with you as the first educator of your child. We are wholly committed to enabling the children to "flourish in a climate of high expectations, innovation and creativity". This commitment shines through in our curriculum design, with careful consideration given to what we teach and how we choose to teach it. The children's views and interests are central to this process. We make time to listen to their thoughts on learning to ensure that we truly understand what motivates and inspires them as learners. We take our responsibility very seriously and, at the same time, remain open to the children's great capacity for joy, humour and laughter.

We are blessed with a warm, welcoming school environment with a range of excellent resources to support the children's learning. However, our most important resource is our human resource and our whole staff team are committed to ongoing professional learning and school improvement initiatives. We work with colleagues across our St. Luke's Cluster and beyond in a mutually supportive way to ensure that we are getting it right for the children at every stage of their educational journey.

None of the above would be possible without the trust, support and partnership of our parents and carers. We will continue to look for creative ways to strengthen this partnership with you and to involve you meaningfully in the work and life of the school.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Hutcheson

Head Teacher





# Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland



The mission of the Catholic school is to develop as a community of faith and learning, providing the highest quality of education, and offering formation through the promotion of Gospel values, through celebration and worship, and through service to the common good.



**All Catholic schools in Scotland**, in honouring Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, will feature the following characteristics:



- a commitment to the integrated education and formation of the whole person, in close partnership with parents as the first educators of their children;
- an inclusive ethos which aims to honour the life, dignity and voice of each person, made in the image of God;
- a commitment to the search for wisdom in life and to the pursuit of excellence, through the development of each person's unique God-given talents;
- a commitment to the spiritual formation of the school community, through the shared experience of prayer and liturgy, and in partnership with local parishes;
- the provision of religious education programmes which will enable young people to develop their understanding of Gospel values and of how to apply them to life;
- a commitment to uphold the moral teaching, faith tradition and sacramental life of the Catholic Church;
- a commitment to communicate Catholic social teaching and thereby to promote social justice and opportunity for all;
- a commitment to ecumenical action and the unity of Christians;
- the promotion of respect for different beliefs and cultures and for inter-faith dialogue;
- a commitment to support the continuing professional and spiritual development of staff.

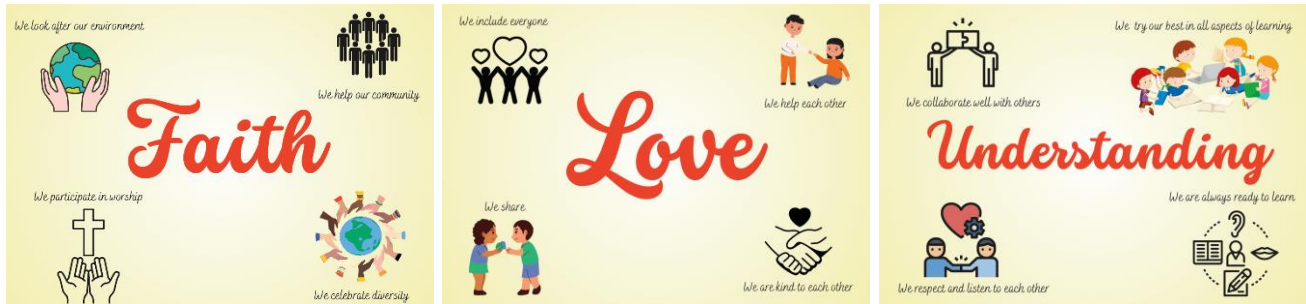


**All staff appointed to a Catholic school** are expected to support and promote the aims, mission, values and ethos of the school, as illustrated in this Charter.



## OUR ETHOS

Our school ethos is built upon the Gospel values of faith, love and understanding. We are committed to Catholic social teaching and aim to develop a caring, Christian attitude in all of our pupils. Our values based approach ensures that every child's God given talents are nurtured to enable them to flourish in a climate of high expectations, innovation and creativity.



In St. Mark's we are committed to providing all pupils with a range of relevant and engaging learning experiences that match their needs and interests. Play and outdoor learning are important aspects of our learning provision - including opportunities for learners to be physically active, to enjoy and learn about their natural environment, and to relax, meditate and pray. Music and singing are linked to positive physical and mental health. Our aim is to include as much music and song as we can in the daily life of the school to bring about an atmosphere of hope, joy and creativity.



### Parish Links

St. Mark's supports parents in nurturing the faith of their children. We enable our students to grow in love of God, to deepen their understanding of creation, to pray and celebrate the sacraments. We provide opportunities to explore values and beliefs, to recognise the rights of others and respect those who have different beliefs. We have close links with St. John's Church. The parish priests, Monsignor John Tormey and and Father Joe McGill regularly visit the school to celebrate Mass and support the children on their spiritual journey.

Parish information can be found on the church website: [www.stjohn-barrhead.org](http://www.stjohn-barrhead.org)

### Community Links

We work with a range of partners to support parents, pupils and the school community. These include Families First, Money Advice and Rights Team, Credit Union, Uniform Bank and St. Vincent De Paul Society. We are always looking to develop partnerships and welcome the opportunity to work with local businesses and community groups.

## **East Renfrewshire Education Department Vision**

Everyone attaining, everyone achieving through excellent experiences.

We are fully committed to the vision of the Education Department and strive to provide our learners with a wide range of stimulating and challenging learning experiences that foster creativity and curiosity, build resilience and inspire a lifelong love of learning. Our children are given regular opportunities to learn outdoors and engage with a range of partners from the local community and industry to ensure that they develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.



St. Mark's is part of a wider learning community known as the St. Luke's Cluster. This includes St. Luke's High School, St. John's Primary, St. Thomas' Primary, Arthurlie Family Centre and McCready Family Centre. Together we share the vision, values and aims below. Staff across these establishments work closely to ensure that there is continuity and consistency in learning from nursery through to secondary education.



### **Vision**

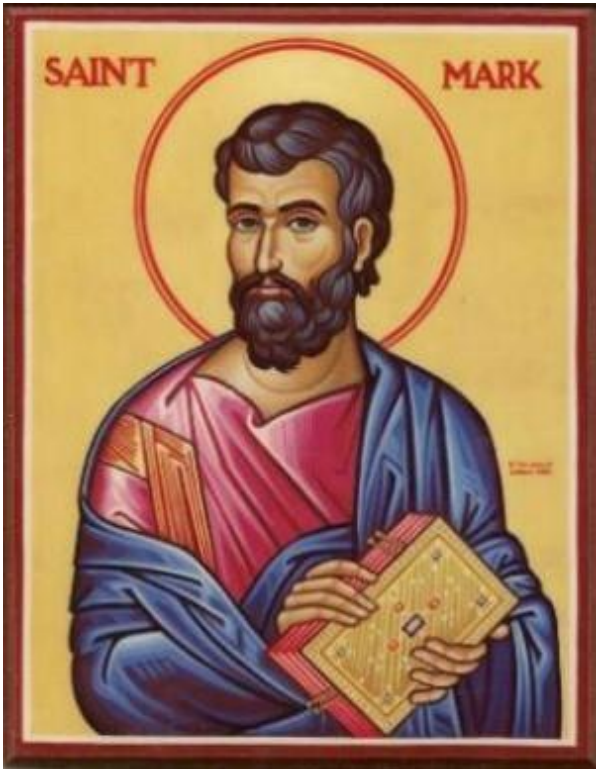
In St. Luke's Cluster we nurture every child's unique God given talents to enable them to flourish in a climate of high expectations, innovation and creativity.

### **Values**

We value love, faith and understanding.

### **Aims**

To inspire the moral purpose of learning and teaching to; unleash potential, raise attainment, promote equity and transform the life chances of each and every learner, especially those most in need of support.



Our patron saint is **St. Mark the Evangelist**. He was the author of the first Gospel and one of the four evangelists who wrote about Jesus' life.

He was born in Cyrene, which is now present day Libya. His Hebrew name was John and his Roman name was Mark so he was sometimes called John Mark. His mother, Mary of Jerusalem (*Acts 12:12*) was one of the first people to follow Jesus and her home was a regular meeting place for the apostles.

In his lifetime he spread the good news about Jesus not only in writing but by travelling great distances as a Christian missionary alongside Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas.

Saint Mark's Gospel is based upon the teachings of Saint Peter. Mark was Peter's travel companion and interpreter and was responsible for writing down Peter's sermons. He was able to use these along with Peter's preaching to help him to compose his Gospel.

After a while, he left Saint Peter to travel to Alexandria, Egypt. Saint Mark lived there for many years, establishing the Church of Alexandria while he was there. He died as a martyr on April 25, 68 A.D., from being dragged through the streets of the city. His feast day is celebrated on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April each year.



Saint Mark is often symbolised as a winged lion, like the one on our school badge. Early Christians used creatures as symbols of the four Gospels and compared the Four Evangelists to the Bible's original creatures as described in *Revelations 4:7*

*“And the first living creature resembled a lion, and the second living creature resembled a calf, and the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature resembled a flying eagle.”*

The lion also symbolises the resurrection of Christ the King. We look upon the lion as the king of beasts and as courageous. As Christians we too are called upon to be courageous and to spread the good news of Christ.



In St. Mark's, we work in partnership with all parents/carers to ensure that our children are supported and able to achieve their full potential. We value the contribution that parents make to the life of the school and encourage all families to take part in the many activities and special occasions that take place throughout the school year.

We keep parents up to date with the learning and achievements of our pupils through our school newsletters, class blogs, website and X account. Teachers provide oral reports during parents' evening twice a year and provide a written report at the end of the school year. Jotters are sent home periodically so that pupils can share their learning with parents. We welcome feedback and regularly seek parents' views on the learning provision within the school.

There are many different ways to get involved with the school, if you have any ideas or suggestions on how we can further improve our partnership, please contact us.

### **SCOTTISH SCHOOLS (PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT) ACT 2006**

School Boards were replaced in August 2007 by a new system of Parent Councils. The Act makes provision for all parents to be members of the Parent Forum at a school, and to have their views represented to the school, education authority and others, through a representative Parent Council for the school. The legislation supports parental involvement in a much wider sense than before.

It aims to help all parents to be:

- involved with their child's education and learning;
- welcomed as active participants in the life of the school;
- encouraged to express their views on school education generally and work in partnership with the school.

The Parent Council also has a role in the appointment of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers.

The Head Teacher and local councillors may attend all meetings as advisors to the Parent Council and have the right to speak although, not being members of the Parent Council, no right to vote.

At St. Mark's we are keen to work with you to provide your child with the best education possible. As a parent of a child in attendance at the school, you are automatically part of what is called the Parent Forum for the school. All members of the Parent Forum are eligible to serve on the Parent Council. The current office bearers are:

Chairperson	Marie Sweeney
Vice Chairperson	Kari Pearce
Treasurer	Louise Kennedy
Secretary	Kirsty Cameron
Church Representative	Liz New

Our Parent Council is known as 'St. Mark's Parent Partnership'. Its aim is to represent the views of all parents in the school therefore we would encourage as many parents as possible to get involved.

The Parent Partnership can be contacted at any time by emailing: [stmarksparentpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:stmarksparentpartnership@gmail.com)

## SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Each year the dates for registration of pupils are advertised in the local press and online, usually about mid-January. Parents who wish to enrol their children during the course of the year should contact East Renfrewshire Council Education Department on 0141 577 3578

Before a child enrolls in St. Mark's Primary School, the Education Department will seek documentary evidence to validate a child's entitlement to a catchment place at this school. If appropriate evidence is not submitted the Education Department will withdraw the offer of a place. Documentary evidence can be submitted to the Education Department via the school office. Further detail on required documentary evidence and change of circumstances is available in the Education Department's school admission policy which is accessible on the Council's website via the web address below:

<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/1383/School-admissions>

When a child who was enrolled in the school as a catchment pupil ceases to reside within the St. Mark's Primary delineated catchment area and his/her parents wish the child to continue to attend the school the parent must submit a placing request to remain. Where it is found that a child is no longer entitled to a catchment place in St. Mark's Primary since they no longer reside in a property in the delineated catchment area associated with the school, and a placing request to remain has not been submitted and approved, the Council may seek to exclude that child from the school.

A child's parents(s)/carer(s) is/are responsible for providing the Education Department with full and correct information about their child(ren) and any changes to that information which may affect their status as a catchment child. In the event that parent(s)/carer(s) fail to do this, the Education Department will view this as a refusal to comply with the rules and regulations of the school; this lack of cooperation will result in the Council seeking to exclude the child(ren) from St. Mark's Primary School.

If information that is submitted is found to be fraudulent the Council may pass the matter to the Procurator Fiscal's Office. The Council will use all means available to it in order to investigate suspicions or allegations of fraud, including but not limited to, surveillance in cases where it is necessary and proportionate to do so.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

Starting time	9.00 am
Interval	10.40 - 10.55am
Lunch	12.35 - 1.20pm
Dismissal	3.00pm

To allow the children to be settled and ready for the school day, we operate a 'soft start' in the morning. Our doors are opened at 8.45am to give the children time to unpack and organise themselves so that they are ready to begin their learning at 9.00am. Pupil Support Assistants and members of the leadership team (Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher and Principal Teachers) are on hand to supervise during this time.

### Breakfast Club

Bishopton Out of School Care run our breakfast club service from 8am each morning. Children must be registered with them before they are allowed to attend. Should you wish your child to attend please contact Bishopton Out of School Care directly using the contact details below.

- Shona Carse: 07453320431
- [bishoptonoutofschoolcare@outlook.com](mailto:bishoptonoutofschoolcare@outlook.com)

### After School Care

MACS Carlibar can provide after-school care for our children from school closure to 6.00pm. Families who require this service should contact MACS directly to register their child(ren).

- Carly Martin 07802728563
- <https://www.macs.uk.com/>

### Supervision of playground and break times

An adult presence is provided in playgrounds at break times in terms of the Schools Safety and Supervision of Pupils (Scotland) Regulations 1990. At St. Mark's Primary, our janitor, pupil support staff and leadership team supervise the playground during intervals and lunchtimes. Please note that prior to the start of the school day, there is no supervision in the playground.



In St. Mark's Primary we recognise the benefits that learning and playing outdoors has on our children's health and wellbeing. Unless there is adverse weather, our pupils will always be outdoors during playtime and lunchtime. Therefore, please ensure your child has suitable clothing for all types of weathers, for example: a warm/waterproof jacket, boots, gloves and a hat. When the weather is exceptionally poor, the children will have indoor breaks, supervised by staff.

### Security

Your children's safety and wellbeing are our prime concern whilst they are in our care. In the interests of security all parents and visitors must report to the main office when visiting the school. The office staff will be happy to help you.

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

In St. Mark's Primary we value school uniform because it can:

- encourage a strong community ethos and pride in the school;
- promote a positive work ethic, which can lead to raised attainment;
- ensure children wear appropriate, economical and practical clothing to school;
- help to reduce the overall cost of living for families and minimise visible differences in socio-economic status;
- nurture cohesion and promotes good relations between different groups of pupils;
- foster a spirit of partnership among pupils and staff, between home and school, and between the school and wider community;
- contribute to security and personal safety.

We consulted with our school community to ensure that the views of all pupils, staff and parents/carers were taken into account when setting the standards and expectations in relation to our school uniform. Feedback from these consultations highlighted the important role of uniform in promoting equality, creating a positive ethos and nurturing a sense of belonging. It was agreed that a consistent approach to uniform is an effective way of protecting children from social pressures to dress in a fashionable or expensive way and helps to reduce the overall cost of living for families.

We are committed to reducing the cost of the school day for all families and have designed our uniform to ensure that it is practical and affordable for all. The table below details the approved items that constitute St. Mark's school uniform. Items with the school badge and coloured trim are available from local school wear outlets however this is not compulsory. The curriculum in primary school involves a range of practical and outdoor activities therefore clothing should be robust and suitable for all weathers.

As a Rights Respecting School, we are mindful of children's right to space and privacy therefore pupils should wear the approved PE uniform below to school on their assigned days. Class PE days will be posted on the school website at the start of the academic year.

School Uniform	P.E. Uniform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• white shirt</li> <li>• school tie</li> <li>• black skirt, pinafore, shorts or trousers</li> <li>• black school jumper or cardigan</li> <li>• plain black shoes</li> <li>• black or white socks, or black tights</li> <li>• black blazer (optional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• yellow polo shirt</li> <li>• plain black tracksuit trousers/shorts</li> <li>• plain black sweatshirt</li> <li>• plain black trainers</li> </ul> <p><i>For health and safety reasons fingernails should be short and well-trimmed (false nails are not permitted in school), long hair must be suitably tied back. All jewellery, including earrings, must be removed.</i></p>



### Where can you buy school uniform?

School uniform is practical and economical and there are many options for purchasing it.

- Supermarkets - most of the large chain stores and supermarkets stock items in our school colours at affordable prices.
- 'Nearly New' uniform sales will be held each term in school.
- AC Schoolwear, 48 Aurs Drive, Barrhead, G78 2LW

We are always keen to support our families and if we can be of any assistance in helping you to access uniform and clothing, please contact us via [SchoolMail@st-marks.e-renfrew.sch.uk](mailto:SchoolMail@st-marks.e-renfrew.sch.uk).

Clothing grants (under certain conditions) are available to help with the cost of school uniforms. To apply please go to <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/free-school-meals>.

### Outdoor Coats

In line with Curriculum for Excellence guidelines, pupils participate in learning outdoors and outdoor PE lessons each week. Pupils will also play outdoors at break and lunchtime every day unless our dynamic risk assessment concludes that adverse weather makes it unsafe to do so. Therefore, please ensure that your child comes to school dressed appropriately for the weather. This is particularly important in the winter. All pupils should bring a waterproof jacket each day. Children are also encouraged to wear wellies or winter boots on wet or snowy days and are welcome to bring a change of footwear to wear indoors.



## ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

East Renfrewshire has a clear policy on attendance, which is listed below.

“Section 30 of the 1980 Education Act lays a duty on every parent of a child of “school age” to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Attendance must be recorded twice a day, morning and afternoon.

Regulation 7 of the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Amendment, Etc. Regulations 1993 requires each child’s absence from school to be recorded in the school register in four different ways:

- as authorised i.e. approved by authority and this includes sickness, religious observance, bereavement etc.;
- as extended leave with parental consent i.e. when the family moves abroad for a short time;
- as unauthorised i.e. unexplained by the parent (truancy) or most family holidays during term time;
- as temporarily exclusion from school.

Every effort should be made to avoid family holidays during term time. School holiday dates for this session and next are available on East Renfrewshire Council’s website.

<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/1203/School-holidays>

Parents from ethnic minority religious communities may request permission for their children to be absent from school in order to celebrate recognised religious events. Only written requests detailing the proposed arrangements will be considered. Appropriate requests will be granted on not more than three occasions in any one school session.

If you have a question about the categorisation of attendance or absence please contact the school.

### **Notification of Absence**

It is essential that the school is notified prior to 9.30am on the first morning of a child’s absence from school. A telephone call or email to the school office detailing the reason for the absence and estimated length of non-attendance is required so that class registers are accurate and up to date.

Our office staff check all registers by 9.30am each morning to ensure that all absences and late-comings are recorded. If a child is not in attendance, and no phone call or message has been received, the office staff will call parents/emergency contacts to determine the reason for the absence.

The school will monitor attendance on a monthly basis and will contact parents and/or the local authority if there are any concerns about individual pupils.

### **Appointments**

All routine appointments must be made outside of the school day. It is disruptive for learners to miss out on any aspect of the school day and this should only happen in the very unusual situation where non-routine appointments are issued to families (e.g. hospital appointments). In this case, the school should be notified in advance by telephone, letter or email.

### **Emergency Closure**

We make every effort to maintain a full educational service, but on some occasions, circumstances arise which lead to disruption. Schools may be affected by, for example, severe weather, temporary interruption of transport or power failures. In such cases we shall do all we can to let you know about the details of closure or re-opening. Parents will be contacted by email, text or telephone and updates will be posted on the school X (formerly Twitter). We shall keep in touch by using our school website, letters, notices in local shops and community centres, announcements in local churches and announcements in the press and on local radio.

### **Emergency Closure of Schools – Severe Weather Conditions:**

<http://intranet.erc.insider/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4193&p=0>

During your child's school life a number of checks are available. They may be carried out by the School Nurse, School Nurse Assistant or Community Paediatrician (School Doctor).

Eyesight – P7 and at other times if there is a concern  
Hearing – If required  
Height – P1 and at other times if required  
Weight – P1 and at other times if required  
Health Interview – P7 and at other times if required

### **Immunisation**

Flu immunisation by nasal spray is given by the Health Board in October. Parents/Carers receive a consent form before this is carried out.

Hygiene - routine inspections are no longer carried out. Information leaflets are available.

### **Dental Inspection**

Primary 1 and Primary 7 children are examined by a school dentist. A form is sent to parents if treatment is required.

### **Eyesight Test**

Primary 7 children are tested by a school optometrist.

### **Medicines**

Parents and children must inform the school of any medicine required to be taken during school hours.

The medicine should be handed in to the office with the parent's written request for the medicine to be given on the parental request form. Oral information from the pupils will not be acted upon. The original pharmacy container must be clearly labelled with:

- The child's name;
- The date of dispensing;
- The name of the medicine;
- The dosage and frequency; and
- The expiry date.

It is important that we have up to date records of parents' (home and work) telephone numbers so that they may be contacted at any time, it is especially important in connection with medication administered in school.

### **Emergency**

If a child is unwell during school hours every effort will be made to contact the parent, should it be considered necessary. In the case of an accident, should urgent medical aid be required and a parent is not immediately accessible, the child will be taken to the QUEH Tel. No.0141 201 1100. Every effort will be made to contact the parents. Parents are requested to inform the school of any particular medical requirement relating to their children.

### **Reducing the Risk of Transmission of Infection**

Children who have an infectious disease should not be at school or nursery. They should only return after the risk of spreading infection to others has passed.

It should be noted that certain infections, if caught by a pregnant member of staff or parent, can pose a danger to her unborn baby. You are therefore asked to notify the school office if your child has one of the following infections: German Measles (Rubella), Chickenpox, Slapped Cheek (Parvovirus), Measles, Shingles.

East Renfrewshire Council operates a cashless lunch system, which reduces queuing times and has helped to increase the uptake of school meals.

All meals include:

- a starter and dessert of the day
- choice of hot meal, baked potato or sandwich/bagette
- a drink option including milk or water
- crudities of mixed peppers, baby corn, cucumber, carrot batons and cherry tomatoes
- a selection of fruit

Further information and menus are available on the East Renfrewshire Council website (<https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/1225/Primary-1-to-7-lunch-menu>).

### **Making Payments**

Parents/carers should make payment on line via the Parent Pay system. If you do not have access to a computer to make online payments, a bar code for PayPoint payments will be issued.

### **Free School Meals**

All pupils in P1-5 will receive a free school meal. Information on how to apply for free school meals for children in Primary 6 and 7 is available on East Renfrewshire Council's website, <https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/free-school-meals> .

### **The Dining Experience**

Lunchtime begins at 12.35pm. The infant pupils are first to be served in the dining hall, followed by P4 and P5 and then P6 and P7. Pupils in P1 – P3 enjoy table service from the catering staff and their meals are brought to the tables. The dining hall operates on a self-service basis for the middle and upper school pupils.

### **Packed Lunches**

Children who prefer to bring a packed lunch to school will be accommodated in the dining hall or, on some occasions, may eat their lunch in the classroom. When the weather allows, P4 – P7 pupils may choose to eat their lunch outdoors at our picnic tables.

When preparing your child's packed lunch please ensure that there are no nut-based products in it, this includes Nutella chocolate spread, as this can have a serious impact on the health of pupils and staff who have nut allergies.

The website below has lots of easy-to-prepare ideas and useful tips on what to put in your child's lunchbox. <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes>.

### **Tuck Shop**

A variety of healthy snacks are sold in the tuck shop at morning interval. The tuck shop operates the same cashless catering system as school lunches.



## TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL

The majority of our pupils live within walking distance and travel to school on foot or by bike/scooter. We would encourage parents to support children in walking to and from school to reduce the pressure on busy roads around the school. The school has a number of access gates and pupils are encouraged to use the one that has been allocated to their class/stage. Members of staff supervise the playground in the mornings at the end of the school day therefore, to avoid congestion in the playground, we encourage parents to drop their children at the school gate.

### PUPIL ACCESS POINTS



### Transport

The Education Authority has a policy of providing free transport to all primary pupils who live more than two miles from their local school by the recognised shortest walking route. This policy is more generous than the law requires. This means that the provision of transport could be revised at any time. Parents who consider that they are eligible should obtain an application form from the school or council offices.

These forms should be completed and returned before the end of February for those pupils beginning school in August to enable the appropriate arrangements to be made. Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year, but may be subject to delay while arrangements are made. Where there are vacant seats on a dedicated school vehicle these can be offered as privileged places to pupils not eligible for free school transport. There is a charge for this and full details and an application form can be obtained from the Education Department Offices, Main Street, Barrhead (0141 577 3258/3279). These places are normally allocated in September once it has been established if there are any seats available. Should there be more applications than places available a ballot will take place.

### Pick Up Points

Where free transport is provided, it may be necessary to walk a certain distance from home to the pick-up point and from the drop-off point to the school in any one direction. This distance will not exceed the authority's limits (see paragraph 1 above). It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child behaves in a safe and acceptable manner while boarding, travelling in and alighting from the vehicle. Misbehaviour could result in your child losing the right to free transport.

Children are normally transported to and from school to allow arrival before 08:55 and return after 15:00.

More information on can be found at:

<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/free-school-transport>

Scotland's curriculum places learners at the heart of education. At its centre are four fundamental capacities.



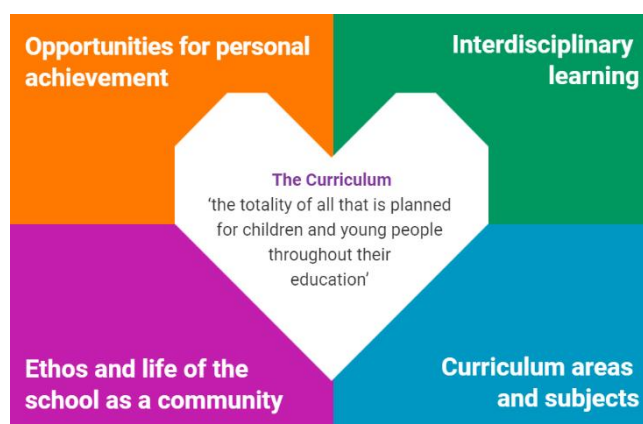
These capacities reflect and recognise the lifelong nature of education and learning.

They:

- recognise the need for all children and young people to know themselves as individuals and to develop their relationships with others, in families and in communities;
- recognise the knowledge, skills and attributes that children and young people need to acquire to thrive in our interconnected, digital and rapidly changing world;
- enable children and young people to be democratic citizens and active shapers of that world.

As part of their learner journey, all children and young people in Scotland are entitled to experience a coherent curriculum from 3 to 18, in order that they have opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to adapt, think critically and flourish in today's world.

Curriculum is defined as the totality of all that is planned for children and young people from early learning and childcare, through school and beyond. That totality can be planned for and experienced by learners across four contexts:



There are eight curriculum areas within Curriculum for Excellence:

- Expressive arts
- Health and wellbeing
- Languages (including English, Gaidhlig, Gaelic learners and modern languages)
- Mathematics
- Religious and moral education
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies.

Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are recognised as being particularly important – these areas are seen as being the 'responsibility of all' staff.

Our curriculum reflects the context of our school and the circumstances of our children and families at any given time. Relationships are at the heart of all that we do. Planning our curriculum is a continuous process where the children's needs and interests are central. All staff take the time to get to know the learners by providing safe and structured opportunities for them to talk about their wellbeing and interests.



### Understanding the learners

- Knowing children and young people and where they are on their individual learner journeys
- Listening to learners and being informed by their motivations and aspirations
- Empowering learners to have **agency** in their learning with opportunities for personalisation
- Using observations, assessments and feedback to design and develop the learning

In St Mark's Primary, our aim is to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are equipped with the skills needed to be successful. We are committed to ensuring that all learners are provided with a nurturing environment which promotes creativity and curiosity, and encourages them to lead their own learning. For this reason we adopt a playful approach in our infant department. This playful approach promotes communication and problem solving skills through active, hands-on learning whilst supporting the transition from nursery to primary school.

*"Play creates a brain that has increased flexibility and improved potential for learning later in life"*  
(Lester & Russell, 2008).

Through a range of professional development opportunities, staff have developed skills, knowledge and understanding of play and are able to plan and implement high quality play experiences in the classroom and outdoors. Teachers will respond to children's interests, prior learning, experiences and needs with carefully planned provocations and play experiences. Learning is continually reviewed and adapted based on skilful assessment. A range of approaches contribute to the regular assessment including observations, learner discussions and learners work.

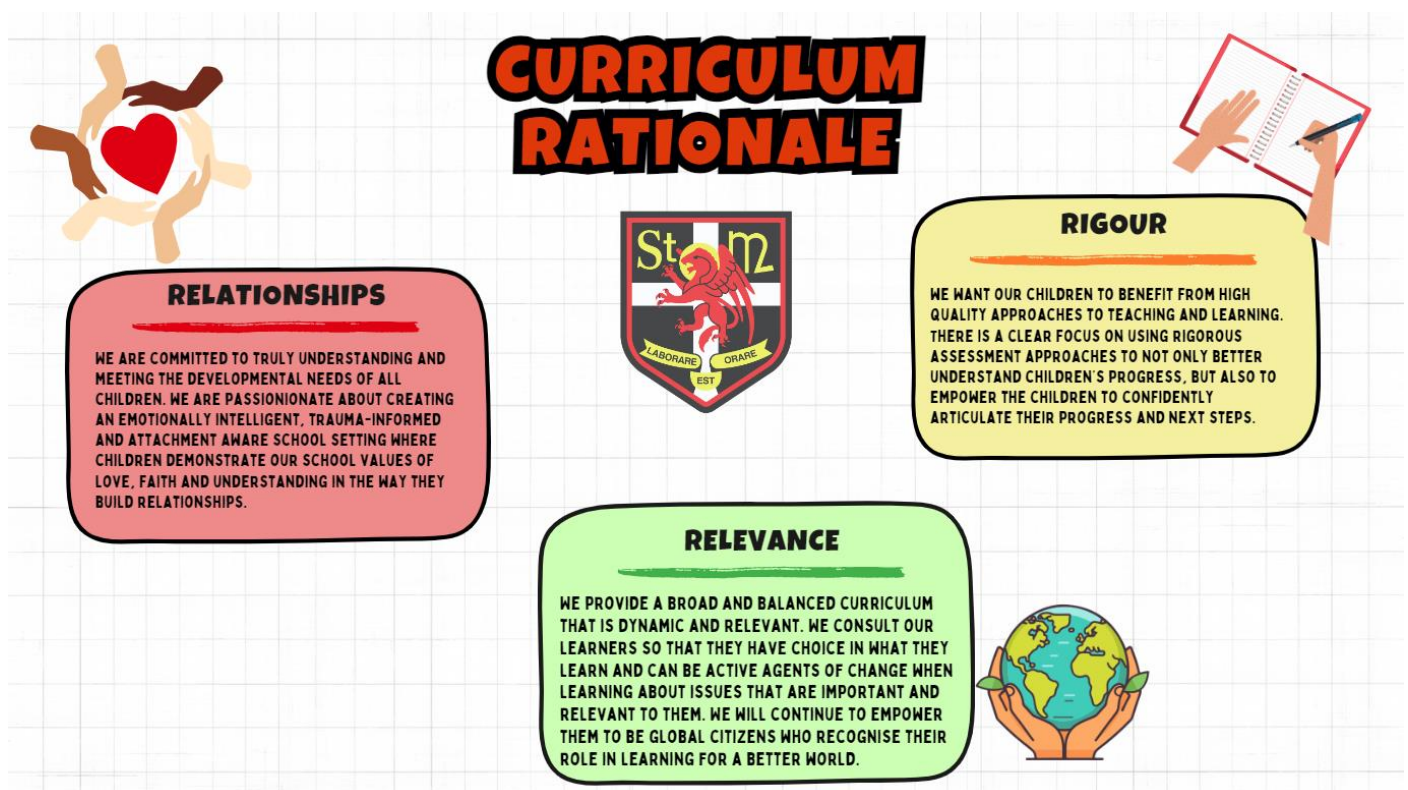


When a school has a rationale for its curriculum, it means that everyone involved with the school can answer the question:

**"What do we want for our children and how will we work together to achieve this?"**

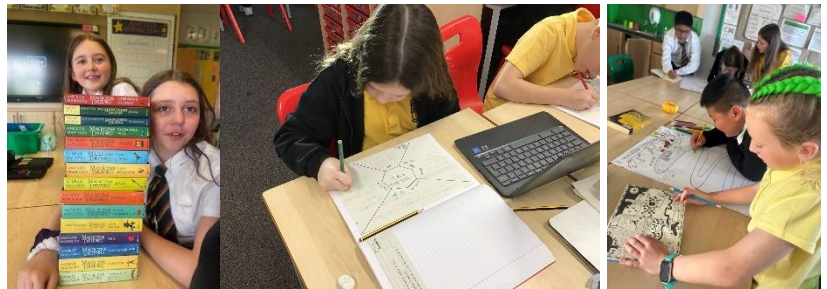
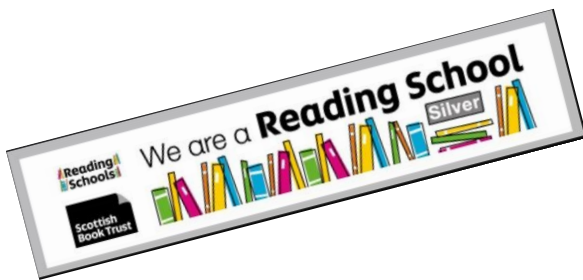
In May 2023, the Scottish Government published 'All Learners in Scotland Matter'. This report summarised the findings of the National Discussion on Education and set out the above vision for the future of Scottish education. Our school curriculum rationale is aligned with this ambitious, inclusive and supportive national vision. Our ongoing consultation and evaluation with our children and families, our staff and our partners has highlighted three key factors that they believe are essential to the ongoing growth and success of the school. These areas can be summarised as the **three Rs: relationships, rigour and relevance**.

Our Curriculum Rationale is available to read on our school website and is summarised in the graphic below.



### Literacy and English

The development of literacy skills plays an important role in all learning. Children develop and extend their literacy skills when they have opportunities to enrich their vocabulary through listening, talking, reading and writing. We encourage children to engage with and create a wide range of texts in different media, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by technology. They develop appropriate skills that allow them to communicate, collaborate and build relationships. At all times, teachers are active in developing listening skills with children through taking part in discussions, reporting back on experiences in oral and in written form and the teaching and reinforcement of reading skills. Children engage with a wide range of texts and develop an appreciation of the richness and breadth of Scotland's literary and linguistic heritage.



### Numeracy and Mathematics

Mathematics continues to play a crucial role in everyday social interaction and in the commercial, scientific and business sectors. Our broad aim is to encourage the effective use of mathematics as a tool in a wide range of activities within the school and into adult life in the world beyond the classroom. Our learners are encouraged to ask questions, take risks, solve problems, explore alternative approaches and explain their thinking.

Through a range of carefully planned, relevant learning experiences, our children will:

- develop speed and accuracy in the use of number both mentally and through the use of calculators;
- have the ability to use their knowledge of numbers and other mathematical ideas in problems involving money, weight and measure, and shape, position and movement;
- be able to find their own method of carrying out a mathematical task;
- acquire the knowledge and understanding necessary to handle and make sense of information;
- be able to carry out investigations and solve problems.



### Health and Wellbeing

By participating in a wide range of activities which promote a healthy lifestyle, our children will develop a better understanding of what they eat, how active they are and how decisions they make about behaviour and relationships affect physical and mental wellbeing. Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. We work with partners and take a holistic approach to promoting health and wellbeing, one that takes account of the stage of growth, development and maturity of each individual. Through the health and wellbeing curriculum, children will also come to understand that adults in their school community have a responsibility to look after them, listen to any concerns and involve others where necessary.

Our Active Schools Coordinator works closely with the staff and pupils to support Physical Education in the school. All children have a minimum of two hours of P.E. each week as well as a wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities

### Religious Education

St. Mark's is a Catholic School that works in partnership with parents and the local parish of St. John's to contribute to the social, moral and religious education of our children. *'This Is Our Faith'*, the syllabus for Catholic religious education in Scotland, ensures that children develop their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, nurture respect for other world faiths and experience opportunities for spiritual growth.

*'God's Loving Plan'* is the resource used to plan how children will learn about themselves as God's children, about their bodies, personal relationships which are respectful, responsible and loving towards others and about their capacity for creating new life as parents. An information evening for parents of primary 6 and 7 children will be held to share the content of *'God's Loving Plan.'*



In St. Mark's we recognise the important role of parents as the first educators of their children. Parents are encouraged to play a key role in the religious education and faith development of their children and are invited to join us to celebrate Mass in school and in the local parish. Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation involves parents working co-operatively on the curricular, spiritual and practical aspects.

The parish also plays a vital role in the religious education of our children. Our parish priest, Father Joe Balmer regularly visits the school to celebrate Mass and to support staff, pupils and parents on their spiritual journey.

Catholic schools follow the customs and practices of the Church in order to nourish the spirituality and faith of pupils and staff. Our Catholic tradition is enriched by ancient rites, prayers and devotions which help young people to become aware of, and show reverence to, the sacred presence of the living God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Catholic Liturgy largely shapes the nature and frequency of religious observance activities in the classroom and in the wider school community. Pupils are invited to pray with their teachers at times in classrooms and assemblies, as well as in liturgical services. In addition, our school chaplains will lead our school community in the celebration of Mass and other forms of liturgical celebration to honour particular occasions or feasts. Some pupils, at certain stages, may be able to participate in retreats and pilgrimages to places of special significance within the Catholic tradition.



In terms of pupil participation in religious observance, Scottish Government guidance is clear that it makes an important contribution to pupils' development and that it promotes the ethos of a school by bringing pupils together and creating a sense of community. However, it also makes clear that parents have the right to withdraw children from participation in religious observance and that this right should always be made known to parents and their wishes respected.

The Scottish Government also recognises that:

*"Where a parent chooses a denominational school for their child's education, they choose to opt in to the school's ethos and practice which is imbued with religious faith and religious observance. In denominational schools, it is therefore more difficult to extricate a pupil from all experiences which are influenced by the school's faith character."*

Curriculum for Excellence - Provision of Religious Observance in Schools, Scottish Government, 17 February 2011

### Modern Languages

Children at all the stages P1 –P7 are taught French by trained members of the teaching staff, often supported by French language assistants or teaching staff from St Luke's. In primaries 5, 6 and 7, pupils will also learn Italian. This is part of the Scottish Government's policy, Language Learning in Scotland: A 1 + 2 Approach. This opportunity to develop skills in a second additional language should help pupils to play their full part as global citizens.

### Sciences

Within our science programme of study, children follow structured investigations in:

- Planet Earth
- Forces, Electricity & waves
- Biological systems
- Materials
- Topical science

They are presented with a range of different contexts for learning which draw on important aspects of everyday life and work. Children are encouraged to develop curiosity and understanding of the environment and their place in the living, material and physical world. Through practical, interesting and fun investigations children are made more aware of the impact the sciences make on their lives, the environment and on society.



### Social Studies

Social studies is essentially concerned with, "the study of how people live and adapt to their environment in different places and at different times." A further aim is to assist in acquiring knowledge and skills which will help children to make sense of their own and other environments. This approach to learning and teaching is achieved through active learning, problem solving, finding and recording and reporting information and may be approached individually, in a series of lessons or form the basis of a theme or topic which can vary in duration.

At the early stages, children might learn more about themselves or their surroundings, building on their previous experiences and by primary 7 the focus may have moved to global issues, researching other cultures and developing an understanding of the principles of democracy and citizenship. Learning within social studies will also enable children to develop their understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, and an appreciation of their local and national heritage within the world.



### Technologies

Technology is the application of knowledge and skills to extend human capabilities and to help satisfy human needs and wants, and it has had profound effects on modern society. Learning in the technologies enables children and young people to be informed, skilled, thoughtful, adaptable and enterprising citizens.

The technologies curriculum area includes the study of:

- digital literacy;
- food and textile technology;
- technological developments in society and business;
- craft, design, engineering and graphics; and
- computing science.

Children will gain the confidence and skills to embrace and use technologies now and in the future, at home, at work and in the wider community. It is important to remember that as children and young people play and learn about technologies, they will also develop an interest, confidence and enjoyment in digital skills that can be transferred and applied in different learning contexts. In so doing they will develop an understanding of the role and impact of technologies in changing and influencing the society of the future.



St. Mark's has a wide range of digital devices available for use in school. Pupils use Laptops, Chromebooks and iPads to enhance their learning across the curriculum and develop vital digital skills. They have access to a range of software and apps through Glow and develop coding skills by using a range of programmable toys. We are fortunate that all classes have interactive display panels in their classrooms which allow teachers to deliver engaging, interactive lessons. In addition, we have a set of Virtual Reality headsets which allow us to provide a range of immersive learning experiences across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to use their digital skills in all areas of learning.

### Expressive Arts

Expressive Arts includes Art and Design, Drama, Dance and Music. Through topic work and as subjects in their own right, we aim for balance, progression and coherence in these aspects of the curriculum. We work within our cluster group to ensure that a balanced programme is available in each area. We have programmes of work at each stage and assessment and recording sheets, which give teachers, and in turn parents, a clear picture of each child's ability in various aspects of Music, Dance, Drama, and Art. A wide and varied range of resources are available to encourage development in this important part of the curriculum.



From Primary 4 onwards, pupils have the opportunity to receive instrumental tuition in music provided by the Local Authority Music Service in brass, woodwind & string instruments from peripatetic music instructors.

Although the areas of the curriculum are illustrated individually, they are in fact inter-related. Within the varied curriculum we provide equal opportunities for all of our children, regardless of ability, gender or race. Multi-cultural and anti-racist education is actively promoted in St. Mark's.

In general, when enrolling a child at this school, a parent accepts that they will receive the curriculum offered, which meets the national guidelines. This means that, with very limited exception, pupils cannot be withdrawn from particular subjects/parts of the curriculum or specific activities forming part of the curriculum at the school. The limited exceptions, when a pupil may be withdrawn by parental request, exist in relation to (i) religious observance and instruction and (ii) sex education programmes.



Pupils are regularly given homework to support their learning and to encourage them to become more organised and self-supporting in their learning. The homework will be organised according to the stage and ability of each child, it can arise from all curricular areas, and it may include written, oral or practical activities. The tasks set will be interesting, worthwhile and challenging for the child.

Our aim in setting homework is as follows:

- to reinforce current learning and teaching;
- to develop confidence in applying their knowledge to tasks;
- to develop organisational skills and responsibility for managing homework tasks around other commitments, for example sports clubs;
- to set the habit of independent study;
- to keep parents aware of their child's progress.

From the start of P1, parents will often be asked to hear reading, help with new words or reinforce new skills recently learned. This provides children with extra practice and starts to build the homework habit. Parental approval gives great encouragement to young readers and provides an early link between home and school.

Parents are encouraged to help pupils with their homework as a means of keeping them up to date with the work of the class and the child's progress and to promote partnership between the school and parents. Homework provides an opportunity to consolidate what has been learned in class and gives parents an insight into the curriculum and the skills their children are developing.

We would expect homework to take approximately 15 minutes per night in the infant department, building gradually to 30-35 minutes in upper stages.

Please help by trying to establish a regular place and time – not near the TV. Please be supportive and sign all homework. If homework becomes a "battleground", there's something wrong, please contact the school immediately.

We make use of digital resources, such as Google Classroom, Literacy Planet and Education City, for homework. These activities can be completed on any desktop, laptop or mobile device. If you have difficulty accessing online homework, please contact the school for support.

### Parentzone

Parentzone Scotland is a unique website for parents and carers in Scotland, from early years to beyond school. The website provides up-to-date information about learning in Scotland, and practical advice and ideas to support children's learning at home in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and science. Information is also available on Parentzone Scotland regarding additional support needs, how parents can get involved in their child's school and education. Furthermore, the website has details about schools including performance data for school leavers from S4-S6; and links to the national, and local authority and school level data on the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.



Parentzone Scotland can be accessed at <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

In St. Mark's, we recognise that assessment is integral to the learning and teaching process. We have a policy of continuous assessment from Primary 1 to Primary 7 that ensures that we are meeting learners' needs and fulfilling our responsibilities in Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). The wide range of assessment strategies we use allows teachers to plan high quality learning experiences and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the resources and methods used. Each child's progress is regularly assessed in order to identify difficulties and to discover their capabilities.

Assessment of children's progress and achievement during their broad general education to the end of S3 is based on teachers' assessment of their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities. Children will progress through the following levels from pre-school to secondary education:

Level	Stage
Early	the pre-school year and P1 or later for some
First	to the end of P4, but earlier or later for some
Second	to the end of P7, but earlier or later for some
Third and Fourth	S1 to S3, but earlier for some The fourth level broadly equates to SCQF level 4
Senior phase	S4 – S6 and college or other means of study

East Renfrewshire Standardised Assessments in reading and mathematics are carried out in Primaries 3, 5 and 7 as part of the target setting activities which take place in the school. Baseline Assessment takes place in Primary 1, alongside Developmental Milestones assessment. The main purpose of this assessment is to provide information for teachers on how well children are doing and to help guide learning and teaching.

Formative Assessment techniques are also employed in order to fully involve children in their own learning and to challenge and motivate them as masters of their own learning.

Research shows that children learn best when they:

- understand clearly what they are trying to learn;
- know what is expected of them;
- are given feedback about the quality of their work;
- are given advice about how to improve their work;
- are involved in deciding what needs to be done next;
- know who can help them if they need it.

All classes from P2 to P7 have a class blog which can be accessed via our school website. The purpose of this is to allow pupils to reflect on their learning, achievements and the progress they are making. It is designed to challenge, motivate and support all children. The class teacher will regularly post updates after dialogue with the children about what they have learned and the skills they have developed. The blogs will also record achievements in and out of school.

At the end of each academic year you will receive a copy of your child's report. Parents' evenings will be held in November and March to give an update on your child's progress including strengths and development needs. Parents can make an appointment at any time to discuss a child's progress. In addition curriculum evenings, open afternoons, regular homework activities and other opportunities will be used to share information on pupil progress and achievements.

Parents can keep up to date with their child's learning and achievements in the classroom by checking the class blogs. Furthermore, our school X (formerly Twitter) page is regularly updated with examples of our pupils' successes and wider achievements.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/StMarks/curriculum/pupils/class-blogs/>  
<https://x.com/StMarksPrimary1>

## What is SNSA?

In session 2017/18 the Scottish Government introduced a new system of standardised assessments, called the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA), which take place during a 6 week period from April to June. The system will be delivered by all East Renfrewshire schools and will involve all children at the P1, P4, P7 and S3 stages of their education, focusing on aspects of reading, writing and numeracy.

## What will SNSA involve in my child's school?

The assessments are completed online and will be automatically marked by the system, providing teachers with immediate feedback. The assessments do not have any pass/fail mark, as results are used to help teachers plan the next steps in learning for each child in order to help them make the best possible progress.

SNSA is an adaptive system, which means that all pupils are challenged and receive an assessment suited to their ability. It is designed so that if a child is struggling with the initial questions being asked, it will make subsequent ones easier. Similarly, if the child copes well with the initial questions, it will make subsequent questions more challenging.

Children do not have to revise or prepare for the assessments. They are designed to be used as part of normal teaching and learning and the information that they provide will be used in the same way as other assessment information which arises from day to day teaching and learning activities.

The assessments do not have a time limit attached to them, however, the majority of children will complete an assessment in no more than 45 minutes. Pupils in P1 will take 2 assessments (one in literacy and one in numeracy) and pupils in P4, P7 and S3 will take three assessments (in reading, writing and numeracy).

The assessments are designed, as far as possible, to be appropriate for use with all children. Children who require additional support will be able to receive the support they normally receive in the classroom when completing the assessments.

## What does SNSA mean for Parents/Carers?

The information that is generated from SNSA adds to the range of other assessment information arising from normal teaching and learning activity. As such, it is primarily designed to be used by teachers to assist them in identifying strengths and areas for development and for planning next steps in learning. As part of the range of assessment information available, SNSA will also assist teachers in assessing when key stages in learning, such as when a Curriculum for Excellence Level has been achieved.

The information arising from SNSA will also play a role in informing the normal engagement processes with parents/carers (Parents' Evenings, Reporting processes etc.) about their children's learning, which will take place in each school.

## Where can I find out further information about SNSA?

Scottish Government website

<https://standardisedassessment.gov.scot>

Information for Parents/Carers

<https://standardisedassessment.gov.scot/parents-and-carers/>

Questions and Answers

<https://standardisedassessment.gov.scot/questions-and-answers/>

### **Early Years Establishments to Primary**

Curriculum for Excellence provides a valuable opportunity to enhance the transitions between early years establishments and primary schools. The Early Level spans pre-5 to the end of primary one (for most children) and naturally promotes collaborative working between the primary and nursery sector. St. Mark's has a well-established transition programme in place with our local family centres. School staff visit Arthurlie and McCready Family Centres during the pre-school year to get to know the pupils and their individual needs. Whenever possible, Primary 1 staff work alongside the family centre staff to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

The curriculum in primary schools will build on what your child has learned before starting school. Play will still be important in Primary 1, but some approaches to learning will gradually change - for example, your child will begin to read and write more independently. The Family Centre will pass on a copy of your child's summative report, so that the teacher in Primary 1 can plan the next stages in your child's learning.

Pupils normally transfer to primary school between the ages of four and a half and five and a half years. Information on registration/enrolment procedures for primary school will be given in the local press and our school website early in the calendar year.

### **Primary to Secondary**

St Mark's has strong links with our associated high school, St. Luke's. Pupils are visited by high school staff early in the third term where they are presented with information about the school and have the opportunity to ask questions. Towards the end of the final term, our pupils visit St. Luke's to become familiar with their new school and its routines. Parents are invited to St. Luke's early in the summer term to familiarise themselves with the building and gain valuable information on how they can support their child.

We work closely with staff members from our associated primaries and St. Luke's High School to ensure that there is a common approach to learning. During the transition process, Primary 7 class teachers share information with staff in St. Luke's to ensure that the needs of all children are met.

Pupils normally transfer to secondary school at the end of Primary 7. Pupils living within the catchment of St. Mark's Primary transfer to St. Luke's High School, however a placing request can be made to attend any other school. Pupils who do not live within the catchment of St. Luke's will be expected to attend their local catchment secondary school. A placing request must be made if you wish your child to attend any school other than your local catchment secondary school. A placing request is also required if you wish to move your child from a denominational school to a non-denominational school (or vice versa). Parents will be advised of the transfer arrangements in December of the pupil's Primary 7 year.

To find out more about St. Luke's High School, please access their website at the link below.  
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/StLukes/>

All children need support in order to learn, but some require support that is additional to what is normally provided. Additional support for learning is applicable at some time to most children, particularly those who are experiencing difficulty or require additional challenge.

Our methods of planning learning, teaching and assessment ensure that strengths and areas for development are quickly identified. Support for learning is essentially the responsibility of the class teacher who will ensure that a suitably differentiated curriculum is planned and delivered. Where a child is identified as requiring additional support, the class teacher would meet with the Additional Support Needs Coordinator to discuss the child's learning profile and devise appropriate intervention. Usually this help will be provided within the classroom situation but additional input from a support teacher or Pupil Support Assistant may be necessary. Occasionally we call upon the services of the Educational Psychologist appointed to the school or other agencies, such as Behaviour Outreach, Social Work or health professionals to diagnose and help support a learning or behaviour difficulty. This is only done after consultation with the parent.

### **Joint Support Team**

The school has a Joint Support Team, which can consist of representatives from a range of agencies including Health, Social Work and East Renfrewshire's Psychological Services. This team meets every month to discuss a holistic approach to provide the best support available for individual pupils. Parental permission is agreed before referrals are made to any support agency.

### **Dyslexia**

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty in its own right. We use the term where a child is having difficulty with aspects of reading or writing when there's a clear difference between these and the way they perform in other areas of schoolwork.

If you think your child may be dyslexic your first step is to approach the school. Our ASN Coordinator will be happy to give you advice on the schools procedure for assessment and intervention.

You can find more information at

<http://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/curriculumlinks/inclusion/>

Further advice is available from Enquire - the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning.

Enquire offer independent, confidential advice and information on additional support for learning through:

- a telephone help line - 0845 123 2303
- an email enquiry service - [info@enquire.org.uk](mailto:info@enquire.org.uk)
- an online service - [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk) (for parents/cares/practitioners) and [www.enquire.org.uk/yp](http://www.enquire.org.uk/yp) (for children and young people)

They also provide a range of clear and easy-to-read guides and fact sheets explaining everything from 'additional support in the early years' to 'what planning should take place for moving on from school'.

The ethos within St. Mark's provides a supportive, positive and secure environment for every child to develop their skills and talents and flourish as individuals. We employ a number of approaches, including nurture, to help support children experiencing challenges in their lives. While not all children experience significant adversity and trauma, it is important that all children learn to be compassionate and empathise with others who have had these experiences. For that reason, we make use of a range of resources, including PATHS and The Compassionate and Connected Classroom, to help children to develop strong nurturing relationships and a sense of belonging and acceptance.

In addition to our whole school approach, we have a number of other initiatives which target specific groups or individual children.

### **Nurture Group**

Most of our children start life in primary school with confidence and enthusiasm. However, for a variety of reasons, some children do not settle easily into the routine. They may require help with self-esteem and social skills, including acceptance of rules and limits; these children can benefit from becoming part of a nurture group within our school. The group has around six children in attendance and is led by the nurture teacher and a pupil support assistant who provide targeted interventions for social, emotional or behavioural needs. To ensure maximum benefit and continuity, the class teacher and nurture teacher work closely together in the best interests of the child.

### **Seasons for Growth**

Some pupils may also benefit from our Seasons for Growth group. Seasons for Growth supports young people in understanding and managing the issues they experience through significant loss or change. It develops skills in coping, problem solving and self-confidence.



We actively seek the views of our pupils on a wide range of topics. We have a range of pupil groups for children to give them additional responsibilities and opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Examples of some of the opportunities available to pupils to develop leadership skills are below.

### **Pupil Council**

Our Pupil Council has representatives from each class who have regular meetings. This forum offers pupils the chance to raise issues of concern and for the whole pupil population to have a voice in the running of the school. The Council has tackled issues such as the playground, recycling, charities and school resources. The minutes of meetings are shared in classes and the representatives have to seek the views of other children to bring to the meetings.

### **Eco Committee**

Our Eco Committee has worked hard over the years to maintain our commitment to being an Eco School. We have been awarded four consecutive Green Flags which resulted in us achieving permanent Green Flag status.

### **Playzone Buddies**

Playzone Buddies are children from P7 who want to improve the playground experience. They are responsible for organising the play resources in each playground zone. They also help the P1 and P2 pupils to build friendships and teach them new games. They also take feedback from the children and look for ways to refresh the equipment.

### **Digital Leaders**

Our Digital Leaders are a group of pupils from Primary 6 and 7 who are tasked with ensuring digital technologies is a central part of our curriculum. Their role is to use their skills to support both pupils and teachers in class to use a range of software and electronic resources to enhance learning and teaching. They are responsible for the safe use and storage of technology around the school and making children aware of online safety.

### **Young STEM Leaders**

St. Mark's is a Young STEM Leader delivering centre. The Young STEM Leaders are pupils from P6 and P7 who lead whole school STEM activities and events, allowing them to become positive role models, build employability skills, confidence and resilience.

### **Mini Vinnies**

Mini Vinnies is a child friendly version of the Society of St. Vincent De Paul group where children from P4 to P7 can come together to help others in need in their school community and beyond. It is about doing good work in the community, but it is also about young people meeting to talk, to share ideas and concerns, to have fun and to support each other. The SSVP model of faith in action is a great way to get young people thinking and talking about their spirituality. Connecting their beliefs and values with service activities and issues in their community can help to make their faith real, meaningful and relevant.



## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year there are various activities arranged for class or year groups. These include educational, cultural and social activities related to the children's work in school. Staff also organise and run a variety of after-school clubs including: football, multi-sports, netball and running to name just a few. From April to June each year we run a Drama Club for P4 – P7 which culminates in our summer show. As well as a variety of sports clubs some of the teachers also provide supported study classes to support pupils in various areas of the curriculum.

The children are regularly involved in fund raising for worthwhile charities particularly during Advent and during Lent.

During the summer term we organise a Sports Day, which is very well attended by parents and friends. Throughout the year, children may be taken to various sporting and cultural events in the local community.



### East Renfrewshire Instrumental Music Service

Our pupils have the opportunity to enjoy tuition on a wide range of musical instruments from staff from the East Renfrewshire Instrumental Music Service. Instruments outlined below are taught with pupils coming out of class on a rotational basis for their weekly lesson. Where instrumental groups are oversubscribed, classes can be offered at the Saturday Music Centre held at Williamwood HS. For those pupils wishing to learn percussion, bagpipes or pipe-drumming, they have the opportunity to learn these at the Saturday Music Centre held at Williamwood HS during term time.

Music lessons are free of charge. If your child is interested in learning an instrument please contact the Instrumental Music Service ([instrumentalmusicservice@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:instrumentalmusicservice@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk))

Tuition in the various instrument families commence at the following times with recruitment taking place in Term 3 in the prior session:

Strings P4    Guitar P6    Woodwind    P6 Brass P6

Bagpipes/Pipe Drumming at the Saturday Centre P5

Clarsach at the Saturday Centre P5

Percussion at the Saturday Centre P7

Membership of authority bands and ensembles is free of charge, with residential courses being the only extra charge possible in addition to the annual tuition fee.

If you require fuller details please contact the Instrumental Music Service Manager on 0141 577 3835.

While all this information is correct at the time of printing there may be changes throughout the school year due to unforeseen circumstances.



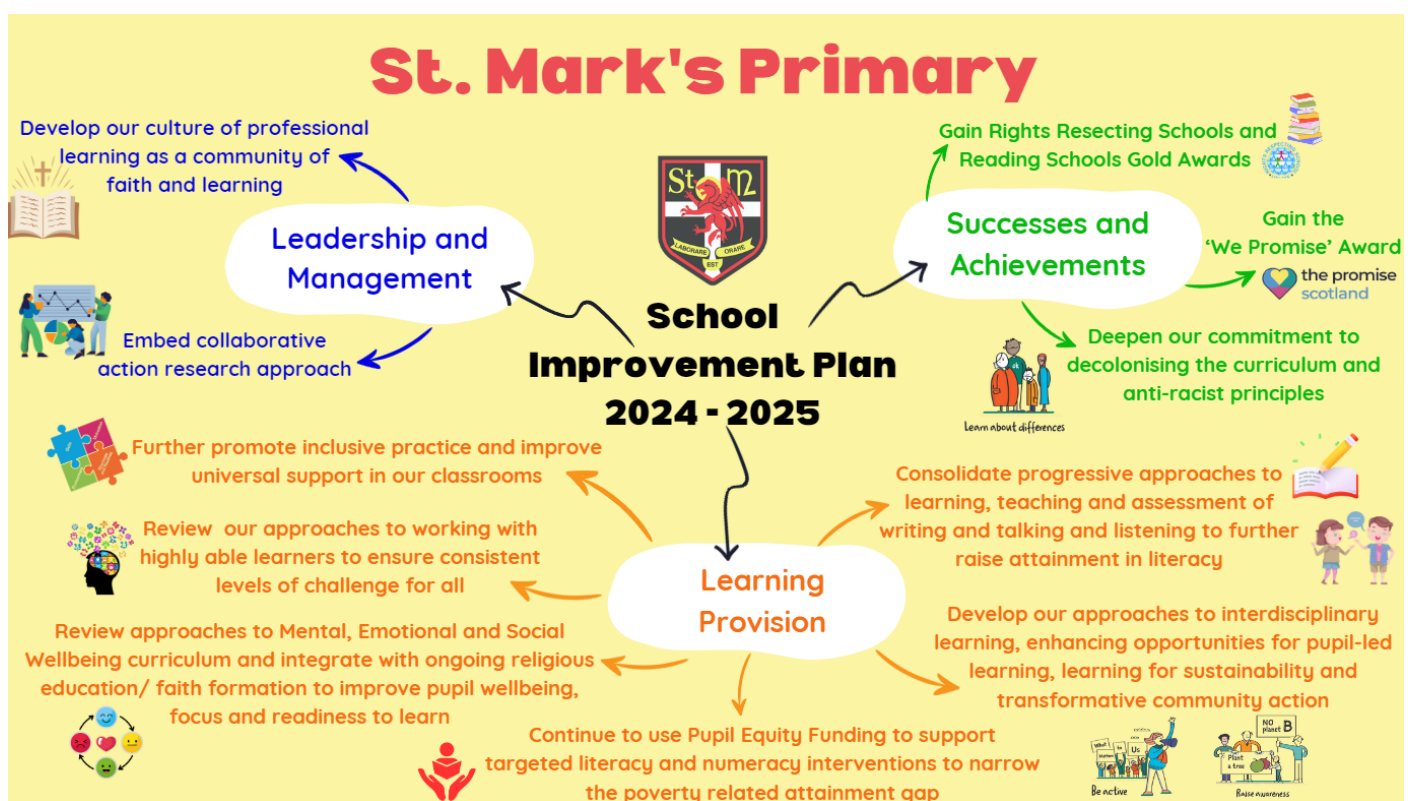
## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The school, through its self-evaluation processes, has identified a continuous programme of review and development which will ensure that we move forward with a clear vision. It is our intention to provide the highest quality of learning and teaching experiences for our pupils that shall be achieved through strong leadership and the commitment and dedication of all staff. The views of all stakeholders will be taken into consideration in order to achieve our aims and objectives.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is designed to be a working document that outlines the improvement agenda of the school each session. For a copy of this year's Improvement Plan please visit the school website at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/StMarks/aims-and-achievements/school-improvement-plan/>

In addition to our School Improvement Plan, at the end of the year we produce a Standards and Quality report which outlines the achievements of the school and its pupils over the preceding twelve months. This document is also available on the school website.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/StMarks/aims-and-achievements/standards-and-quality-report/>



At St Mark's we take the care, welfare and protection of our children very seriously. We believe all children have a right to feel safe within the school, home and community.

Within our school we strive to provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our pupils, which promotes inclusion and achievement.

All education staff have a statutory and professional responsibility to take action if we have reason to believe a child is suffering, or is at risk of abuse.

Our child protection policy and procedure sets out what we will do if we have reason to believe a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse, either within the home or the community. These policies are designed to ensure that children get the help they need when they need it.

Every staff member undergoes child protection training activity every session. Many of our staff are more extensively trained in specific areas of child protection to support and identify potential child protection concerns.

All schools in East Renfrewshire have comprehensive pupil support systems in place and we work closely with our partners in Social Work, Health and the Police. The school operates a multi-agency joint support team to ensure that the best possible supports are available to pupils when they need them.

The Child Protection Coordinator for our school is the Head Teacher, Mr Anthony Hutcheson. If you wish any further information or a copy of the school policy, please contact the school office. If you wish to discuss this important matter further, please make an appointment to see Mr Hutcheson.

A full copy of our Child Protection Policy is available on our school website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/StMarks/curriculum/policy-and-procedure/>

If you are worried, or know of a child who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, please speak to our Child Protection Coordinator or contact Social Work at the following numbers:

Social Work Request for Assistance Team (children and families): **0141 577 8300**

For out of hours assistance, contact:

Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Services: **0300 343 1505**



East Renfrewshire  
Child Protection  
Committee

### PROMOTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

All staff and pupils at St. Mark's have a shared understanding of the importance of promoting positive relationships at all times. This enables us to create a nurturing learning environment for the children in our care. We promote Gospel Values, which are reflected in our school's Vision, Values and Aims, in all aspects of school life and are committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all.

We recognise that effective learning and teaching is dependent on positive relationships established at school and classroom level, through interactions between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Our school improvement plan prioritises a whole school approach to nurturing communication. Nurturing and trauma-informed approaches are an essential component of how we view behaviour, in line with the nurturing principle of "all behaviour is communication".

Our policy is based on mutual respect for one another. This positive caring aspect is emphasised in order that all children feel safe and secure and are able to progress and develop in their work and play activities. The co-operation of all parents is essential in this regard. As a Rights Respecting School, each class has developed a classroom charter which demonstrates the rights every child has as part of their Right to an Education (article 28 of UNCRC). We also have a charter for our playground and lunch hall. These are enforced in all areas of our school. Our rights and values permeate all areas of school life. We encourage and recognise good behaviour by use of praise, stickers and certificates.

We use restorative practice to resolve issues of conflict in our school. This methodology seeks to explore what happened and how those involved felt about the situation. We then look at a solution and ways of repairing the hurt caused and preventing a similar situation happening again. It should be stressed that good standards of behaviour are displayed by the vast majority of children in the school who reach the ultimate aim of self-discipline. Some pupils do however need additional support in forming good relationships with their peers and staff. It is only through close partnership working between home and school that success can be achieved.



Our school is committed to the educational and social values of sustainability, equality and justice. We seek to support our community through fair, transparent, inclusive and sustainable policies and practices in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, gender and gender identity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

We take a values based approach to our work with children, staff, parents and the wider community. We respect all learners' rights and our work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The school regularly gathers and reflects upon the views of children, families and community partners in order to continually improve our approaches to promoting equality and equity. We work to remove or minimise all forms of disadvantage suffered by our learners, including economic disadvantage.

We value the diversity of the St. Mark's Primary school community and wish for all parents to be involved in the life and work of the school.

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 we seek to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equalities Coordinator is Mrs Nicola Harvey.  
She can be contacted by telephoning or emailing the school.

### **Anti-bullying**

At St. Mark's, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all. Following the guidelines set out in East Renfrewshire's policy, we are able to monitor and log any incidents as they occur. We take a pro-active approach to anti-bullying and our staff are supported by the leadership team to deal with any issues in the appropriate way.

### **Policies**

Our school policies are regularly revised and updated to ensure that they are in line with local and national guidelines and meet the needs of our school community. These are available to view on the school website.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/StMarks/curriculum/policy-and-procedure/>

## PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT AND DATA PROTECTION

The consent of parents/carers (and young people of appropriate age and capacity) will be sought before any photos or videos are taken and displayed. This will be obtained at the beginning of each session and will cover the following categories:

- Photography and display in school
- Public display (local and national press, TV and media)
- Personal photography at school events
- Online within the school website, Glow and Social Media

When consent has not been given the school will consider how best to manage arrangements to ensure this is respected and dealt with sensitively while enabling others to take authorised photos. Photos should only be taken by an authorised person who has a suitable reason, i.e. they are a parent, a relative or member of staff. Personal photos taken by parents/carers of school activities such as sports day, concerts, trips and the like should be used for individual purposes and not shared on social media.

### DATA PROTECTION

Information on parents and guardians is stored on a computer system and may be used for teaching, registration, assessment and other administrative duties. The information is protected by the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and may only be disclosed in accordance with Codes of Practice. For further information please contact the school. East Renfrewshire Council's Privacy Notice can be found on pages 38 – 40.

## TRANSFERRING EDUCATIONAL DATA ABOUT PUPILS

Education authorities and Scottish Government have collected data about pupils on paper forms for many years. We now work together with schools to transfer data electronically through the ScotXed programme. Thus Scottish Government has two functions: acting as a 'hub' for supporting data exchange within the education system in Scotland and the analysis of data for statistical purposes within Scottish Government itself.

The Scottish Government will report annually on schools' Curriculum for Excellence attainment data.

### Why do we need your data?

In order to make the best decisions about how to improve our education service, Scottish Government, education authorities and other partners such as the SQA and Careers Scotland need accurate, up-to-date data about our pupils. We are keen to help all our pupils do well in all aspects of school life and achieve better examination results.

Accurate and up-to-date data allows us to:

- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of all pupils,
- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of specific groups of pupils,
- better understand some of the factors which influence pupil attainment and achievement,
- share good practice,
- target resources better.

### Data Policy

The ScotXed programme aims to support schools and Local Authorities by supporting the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information required for planning, management and monitoring of Scottish education services.

A subset of this information is passed to Scottish Government for research and National Statistics publications. Education data within Scottish Government is managed effectively by secure systems and is exploited as a valuable corporate resource, subject to confidentiality restraints. As part of its data policy, Scottish Government will not publish or make publicly available any information that allows individual pupils to be identified, nor will data be used by Scottish Government to take any actions in respect of individuals. Data is held securely and no information on individual pupils can or would be published by Scottish Government. The individual data collected by Scottish Government is used for statistical and research purposes only. We hope that the explanations contained on the ScotXed website will help you understand the importance of providing the information.

### Your Data Protection Rights

The collection, transfer, processing and sharing of ScotXed data is done in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). We also comply with the National Statistics Code of Practice requirements and other legislation related to safeguarding the confidentiality of data. The Data Protection Act gives you the right to know how we will use your data. This message can give only a brief description of how we use data. Fuller details of the uses of pupil data can be found on the ScotXed website ([www.scotxed.net](http://www.scotxed.net)).

Scottish Government works with a range of partners including HM Inspectorate of Education and the SQA. On occasion, we will make individual data available to partners and also academic institutions and organisations to carry out research and statistical analysis. In addition, we will provide our partners with information they need in order to fulfil their official responsibilities. Any sharing of data will be done under the strict control of Scottish Government, which will ensure that no individual level data will be made public as a result of the data sharing and that these data will not be used to take any actions in respect of an individual. Decisions on the sharing of data will be taken in consultation with relevant colleagues and individuals within and outwith Scottish Government.

### Concerns

If you have any concerns about the ScotXed data collections you can email the Senior Statistician, Peter Whitehouse, at [Peter.Whitehouse@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Whitehouse@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to The ScotXed Support Office, Area 1B, Victoria Quay, Leith, EH6 6QQ. Alternative versions of this page are available, on request from the ScotXed Support Office, in other languages, audio tape, Braille and large print.

### Want more information?

Further details about ScotXed are available on the ScotXed website, [www.scotxed.net](http://www.scotxed.net).

Data Protection Act 1998 Information on parents and guardians is stored on a computer system and may be used for teaching, registration, assessment and other administrative duties. The information is protected by the Data Protection Act 1998 and may only be disclosed in accordance with the Codes of Practice. For further information please contact the school.

**Who will process your information?**

The personal information you give to us through any of our forms relating to Education and any other pupil administrative information we hold about you in this context will be processed by East Renfrewshire Council, Eastwood Park Giffnock, G46 6UG for the administration of Education and any additional support you or your child may require.

**Why do we process your information?**

Your information is processed to help us administer education provision and related functions within East Renfrewshire. Your information may be shared with other departments within the council and other organisations for the same purposes and also to check the information we have is accurate; prevent and/or detect crime; and protect public funds. Other organisations may include bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, other councils, public sector agencies, government departments, exam bodies and other private companies or partners we use to process information and distribution services for the issue of correspondence.

**What is the legal basis for us to process your information?**

The council processes your information in order to perform a task carried out in the public interest and also to fulfil its legal obligations to ensure proper administration of the council's financial affairs in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The law gives certain types of information special significance because of its sensitivity e.g. health information. If we process this type of information about you in relation to Education we do so on the basis that it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

**Do you have to provide your information?**

Education needs your information to allow us to carry out public tasks in the public interest that is set out in law such as teaching in primary and secondary schools. It allows us to organise and administer classes, lunches, exams etc.

**How do we collect information about you?**

Most of the information the council holds about you will come from you as an individual and it provided at your first encounter with education whether it is applying for a place in an early learning and childcare establishment, support in the early years or applying for a place in one of our schools.

Such information includes:-

Child's Forename	Date of Birth of Brother/Sister
Child's Surname	School stage of Brother/Sister
Child's gender	Additional Information Support Application
School Stage	School applying for
Details of child's medical condition	Preferred Alternative School
Any other name child is known by	Early Learning and Childcare place applied for
Child's date of birth	Council Tax Evidence
Address including postcode	Mortgage Statement
Mother's/Carer's Name	Rental Agreement
Father's/Carer's Name	Rental Agreement End Date
Mother's/Carer's address including postcode	Landlord Registration Number
Father's/Carer's address including postcode	Birth Certificate
Mother's/Carer's telephone number	Baptism Certificate
Father's/Carer's telephone number	Date of Baptism
Mother's/Carer's email address	Name of Church venue
Father's/Carer's email address	Child Benefit Statement
Single Parent/Carer family	Utility Statements
Name of Brother/Sister	Other Catchment Evidence

### **How long will we keep your information?**

The council will hold your information from when your child first has contact with one of our services through to five year beyond them leaving school.

### **Who is your information shared with?**

Your information will be accessed by council staff who need to do so to administer education and the many services that run alongside it. If such administration is provided on the council's behalf by an external agency, that agency will also have access to your information. The information will be shared with SEEMiS, CRB, ParentPay, the Diocese of Paisley (in Roman Catholic schools), Scottish Government including their Analytical Services, Education Scotland, Glow (Scotland's national education network), SQA, 2Cqr, BAM FM (Carlibar Primary, Barrhead Mearns Castle, Williamwood, Woodfarm High Schools), Bellrock FM (Mearns Primary and St Ninian's High), Skills Development Scotland, Scholar (Heriot Watt University) and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

The council also needs to ensure proper administration of its funds so details will be checked internally for fraud prevention and verification purposes. Information is also analysed internally in order to provide management information and inform future service delivery. Your information may also be shared with other departments within the Council. The council also generally complies with requests for specific information from other regulatory and law enforcement bodies where this is necessary and appropriate.

### **Do we transfer your information outside the UK?**

In general we do not transfer personal information outside the UK but on the rare occasions we do we will inform you. We will only transfer information outside the UK when we are satisfied that the party that will handle the data and the country it is being processed in have adequate safeguards for personal privacy comparable to those which are in place in the UK.

### **Profiling and automated decision-making**

The Education Department does not use profiling or automated decision-making for administration.

### **Your rights**

You have the right to be informed of the council's use of your information. This notice is intended to give you relevant information to meet this right.

#### **Access personal data held about you**

You have the right to access personal information the council holds about you by making what is known as a subject access request. You can receive a copy of your personal data held by the council, details on why it is being held, who it has been or will be shared with, how long it will be held for, the source of the information and if the council uses computer systems to profile or take decisions about you.

1. Request rectification of your personal data

You have the right to request that the council corrects any personal data held about you that is inaccurate.

2. Request that the council restricts processing of your personal data

You have the right to request that the council restricts processing your personal data if you think the personal data is inaccurate, the processing is unlawful, the council no longer need the personal data but you may need it for a legal purpose or you object to the council processing for the performance of a public interest task.

3. To object to the processing of your data

You have the right to object to the council's use of your personal data. The council will have



to demonstrate why it is appropriate to continue to use your data.

### **Complaints**

If you have an issue with the way the council handles your information or wish to exercise any of the above rights in respect of your information you can contact the council's data protection officer by post at:

The Data Protection Officer  
East Renfrewshire Council  
Council headquarters  
Eastwood Park  
Giffnock  
G46 6UG

or by email at [DPO@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:DPO@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

You have the right to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's office (ICO).

The address of their head office is:

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5EF  
Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Alternatively, you can report a concern via their website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

The ICO also have a regional office at:

45 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HI  
Telephone: 0303 123 1115 e-mail: [scotland@ico.org.uk](mailto:scotland@ico.org.uk)

While you can go directly to the ICO, the council would welcome an opportunity to address any issues you have in the first instance.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Director of Education

Mark Ratter  
East Renfrewshire Council  
211 Main Street  
Barrhead  
East Renfrewshire  
G78 1XB

### Customer First

East Renfrewshire Council  
211 Main Street  
Barrhead  
East Renfrewshire  
G78 1SY

General Enquiries: 0141-577-3001  
Email: [customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

Opening Hours  
Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm

### School Lets

East Renfrewshire Council  
Corporate and Community Services Business Support Section  
Council Headquarters  
Eastwood Park  
Rouken Glen Road,  
Giffnock  
G46 6UG

Tel: 0141-577-3900  
Email: [community.facilities@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:community.facilities@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

### Local Councillors

Located at: East Renfrewshire Council  
Council Headquarters  
Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road  
Giffnock, East Renfrewshire  
G46 6UG

Tel: 0141-577-3000  
Email: [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

