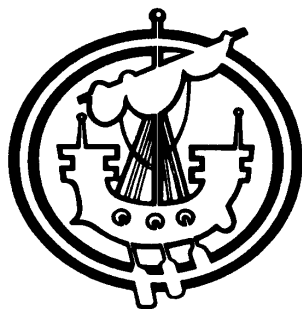


Revised August 2023



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Sgoil Araich Loch a' Tuath Parent Handbook



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FAILTE/WELCOME



Dear Parents/Carers, We understand that starting nursery is a whole new experience for you and your child. As a result, we make every effort to make Sgoil Araich Loch a' Tuath a warm and welcoming environment for your child. We hope that all the information in this Handbook is interesting and helpful but if you require any additional information – please do not hesitate to contact a member of staff at any time. We look forward to welcoming you and your child.

Welcome to Sgoil Araich Loch a' Tuath. There are two rooms within the setting, one which delivers the curriculum solely through the medium of Gaelic. The other room delivers the curriculum through the medium of English with some Gaelic input. The nursery's opening hours are 8.30am – 4.30pm, Monday - Friday. We hope that you and your child will enjoy the time that you spend here with us at Sgoil Àraich Loch a' Tuath.

Fàilte gu Sgoil Àraich Loch a' Tuath, far am bheil dà rùm ann. Tha aon rùm a foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig aig na tràth ìrean agus a rùm eile a foghlam tro mheadhan Beurla le ion-chur Gàidhlig. Tha an leabhar seo airson fiosrachadh a' thoirt dhuibh mu dhiofar nithean co-cheangailte ris an Sgoil Àraich agus mu fhoghlam fo aois sgoile.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is dedicated to promoting and developing the Gaelic language which is a vital part of the culture and heritage of the Outer Hebrides. The Comhairle's provision of bilingual education is a key feature in the Comhairle's Gaelic Policy. The aims of formal education are to enable children who go through Gaelic Medium Education to become equally literate and fluent in the use of Gaelic and English and to make provision for all other children to have access to Gaelic in the curriculum.

The Comhairle also aims to enhance young people's awareness of the heritage and culture of their community through the formal and informal curriculum, aspiring to provide Gaelic Medium Education as the principal means of tuition in the first two years of primary school whilst maintaining a capacity for English Medium Education on an area basis. This is along with pupils entering early learning and childcare centres in the Western Isles having access to Gaelic Medium Education by actively promoting and supporting the availability of GME in every school catchment area, developing it in response to demand.

The aim is to increase the numbers of children entering GME by encouraging more parents to choose Gaelic education for their children, raising the importance of the home for acquiring Gaelic, ensuring practical support, resources and advice is available and that links are strengthened for passing Gaelic on to children in the home and in Gaelic early years' provision.

The nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate, under the Regulation of Care Scotland Act 2002 and meets the National Care Standards. The Care Inspectorate inspects the premises on average every 3 years and the nursery is subject to a joint HMIE/Care Inspectorate inspection.

The reports are available on the following web sites:
<https://www.careinspectorate.com/> or <https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports>

The following adult child ratios apply:	
2 - 3 year olds	1 adult to 5 children
3 - 5 year olds	1 adult to 8 children
<i>A minimum of 2 members of staff are present at all times</i>	

The nursery works closely with the following documents:

- ❖ [The National Care Standards](#)
- ❖ [How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?](#)
- ❖ [Curriculum for Excellence](#)
- ❖ [Realising the Ambition](#)
- ❖ [Care inspectorate Quality Framework](#)

Staffing and Who to Contact

The nursery is managed by the Childcare Manager/Head of School/Head Teacher, with the day to day running of the nursery delegated to Play Leader.

All nursery workers are required to register with the [Scottish Social Services Council](#). This regulatory body ensures that staff members have appropriate qualifications for their role and continue to update their knowledge and skills. All staff members are required to go through an enhanced Disclosure Scotland check or more recently through the 'Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme' (PVG)

For the general day-to-day running please contact:

Childcare Manager/
Head Teacher/Head of
School

Kirsteen J Maclean
01851 820230

Play Leader
Sgoil Araich (Gaelic)

Dawn MacLennan
01851 820230
dmaclennan1s@gnes.
net

Any enquiries please contact:

Early Years Office
Education Development Centre
6 Kenneth Street
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2DR
01851 822655

Telephone Number:



In order to provide you with a good quality of early learning and childcare we have set ourselves the following aims.

Ethos

We aim

- to create a caring climate of mutual respect and confidence, encouraging positive relationships among staff, parents and children.
- to establish effective partnership with parents where we can join with them in furthering their child's development and learning.

- to establish and maintain effective two way communication with parents giving frequent opportunities for exchange of information including written reports about children's progress.

Support for Children and Families

We aim

- to establish care routines which are flexible and responsive to children's emotional and physical needs, reflecting familiar routines at home.
- to be vigilant about health and safety.
- to provide high quality early learning and childcare.
- to support development and learning through carefully selected well organised activities appropriate to each child's needs.
- to provide information on the benefits of Gaelic medium education.

Development and Learning through Play

We aim

- to create a stimulating and challenging environment providing appropriate opportunities for learning through play in each of the key aspects in children's development and learning to ensure that childcare and learning are effectively integrated to meet children's needs.
- to support children to discover new Gaelic words and phrases which they can use to express their thoughts and feelings.

Curriculum

We aim

- to provide children with a varied balance of high quality experiences according to their individual needs.
- to provide a good balance between activities chosen by children and those chosen by adults.
- to be responsive to their needs and interests and to ensure progression in children's learning and development.

Resources and Accommodation

We aim

- to provide a safe, secure, hygienic, pleasant and stimulating environment.
- to ensure that resources are well matched to the needs and interests of the children and provide appropriate support and challenge.



ADMISSION, ENROLMENT, BOOKING, CONTRACTS AND CHILD FEES

Admission

The nursery aims to ensure that the admission of children is fair and equitable and responsive to the needs of children, their parents and carers. Intakes of children are done throughout the year when space becomes available.

The nursery is open to children aged 2 – 5 years and is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children. Children aged 2 years can be enrolled at the group if they meet the requirement for statutory provision or if there is sufficient space. If demand for places outweighs supply priority will be given to children eligible for an early learning and childcare funded place. Children aged 2 years who are not eligible for a statutory place will only be able to attend as long as a space is available.



Application Form, Parent Pack and Care Plan

An ELC application form will be issued on enquiry for a placement. A Parent Pack will be issued to parents on confirmation of a place at the nursery. Parents will also be issued with a Care Plan which will be completed along with a member of staff from the nursery. It is essential that all forms are completed by parent/guardian prior to the child attending the setting.

Enrolment and Eligibility for Early Learning and Childcare

Early Learning and Childcare enrolment usually takes place throughout the year, however there is an official enrolment in January/February on a date notified to parents by local press advertisement. Parents should be encouraged to enrol at this time for a place in the nursery during the coming year. Children who enrol in the nursery will be invited to spend an induction session in the nursery to experience a little of the nursery atmosphere and to meet the nursery staff.

Criteria:		Eligible From:
Where a child's 3rd birthday falls on or between these dates:	1st March - 31st August	August (Autumn Term) of that year
	1st September - 31st December	January (Spring Term) following their birthday
	1st January - last day February	April (Summer Term) following their birthday
Or where a 2 year old child's parent(s)/carer(s) are receiving out of work benefits or certain tax credits (see Appendix 1 for full list)		The term following the child's 2nd birthday (for those already on benefits/tax credits) or the term following the date when the parent(s) become eligible for out of work benefits/tax credits
Or where a 2 year old child is Looked After, is in a Kinship Care placement, or lives with an appointed guardian (or has been since their 2nd birthday) Or a Parent was themselves Care experienced e.g. Looked After		When arrangements are agreed and recorded as part of the Child's Plan. Please contact Early Years Office for more information 01851 822655

An advanced booking system operates to enable staff to make well planned provision for all children using the service.

All 4 year olds and eligible 2 and 3 year olds are entitled to 1140 hours per year. High quality is at the heart of our ELC provision, as is providing the flexibility parents need to work, train or study.

Childcare Fees

Parents who use any wrap-a-round care will be invoiced monthly in arrears. The preferred method of payment is by Direct Debit, or for CNES employees by payroll – relevant forms are available from the Education and Children's Services Department, Early Years Office. If you have any queries regarding methods of payment you are asked to contact the Early Years Office (01851 822655). Failure to pay can result in the service no longer being available to your child.

Child tax credits

You may be able to claim help with childcare costs through the [Childcare Tax Credits](#) - 0845 300 3900.

Tax free childcare

- You can get up to £500 every 3 months (£2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the costs of childcare.
- If you get Tax-Free Childcare, the government will pay £2 for every £8 you pay your childcare provider. This is paid via an online childcare account that you set up for your child.
- You can get Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as 30 hours free childcare if you're eligible for both.

If you've already registered, you can [sign in to your childcare account](#).

What you can use Tax-Free Childcare for

You can use it to pay for [approved childcare](#), for example:

- childminders, nurseries and nannies
- after school clubs and play schemes
- home care agencies

Your childcare provider must be signed up to the scheme before you can pay them and benefit from Tax-Free Childcare.

Check with your provider to see if they're signed up.

Bookings and Cancellations

Priority will be given to children who are eligible for early learning and childcare funding. On enrolment parents will be asked to sign a parent contract and to indicate what days and hours are required. It is important that you read this contract carefully prior to signing as it outlines the conditions attached to your early learning and childcare place.

As detailed above, parents will be expected to pay for the days their child is booked in to the nursery whether they attend or not. This includes absence through sickness and holidays. The nursery does however have the discretion to reduce fees in the event of a child's long term sickness. The nursery manager will liaise with parents with regard to this.

Please note: Parents must give a 4 weeks' notice in writing when leaving the nursery or changing their contract. You may continue to be billed for your child's place if you fail to do so.

Late fees

If you collect your child over your contracted hours the nursery will charge £15.00 over and above the normal fee.

Holidays

For children on Term-time contracts their holidays will follow CNES [school holidays](#) calendar. No fee will be charged on these days.

For children on all-year contracts, holiday entitlement runs from 1st August – 31st July. For full-time and part-time places, parents are entitled to two weeks holiday leave which can be taken as and when required during the year, provided one month's notice is given, childcare fees will not be charged.

All year settings are closed for the Christmas/New Year holiday and for all Comhairle public holidays. No fee will be charged for these days.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Snack & Lunch

Staff raise awareness of healthy eating by purchasing healthy options for daily snack and promoting the healthy eating policy during lunchtimes. The children are encouraged to help in the preparation and serving of their snack. There will be no charge for snack for the duration of the child's time in Early Learning and Childcare settings.

Clothing

Please ensure that your child attends the nursery in clothes and shoes suitable for playing indoors and out (hat, mittens, wellies and spare clothes). We operate a free flow environment where children have access to the outdoors throughout each session. While every effort will be made to protect clothes nursery staff cannot guarantee that children's clothes will remain clean. Clothing labels are also advisable.

Nappies

For children in nappies, a supply should be provided; this may be in bulk and left in the nursery or brought in every day in the child's bag. Parents are asked to supply nappies, baby wipes, cream (if used) and nappy sacks. Parents will be advised by staff when nappies etc. need replenishing.

Photographs

We use photographs to record evidence of participation in activities and progress of child's development. In line with Local Authority policy parents will be requested to give permission in writing allowing their child to be photographed.

Illness

Your child should not attend the setting if they are unwell. Please refer to the Policy Handbook for guidance.

Security

We are very conscious of security in the nursery. During our sessions our doors are locked. Visitors must ring the bell before being admitted by a member of staff. Before entering the establishment, a visitor who is unknown to the member of staff must first show proof of identity and then sign in to the visitor's book.

Notice Board

We maintain an information notice board for parents. **Please check the notice board regularly** and **read the nursery policies** which are also on display for your interest and information.

Signing in System

Parents are asked to sign their child in on arrival at nursery and sign out on departure. Adults, not the children, are required to sign the sheet. Parents must notify nursery staff if/when another adult is to collect their child. To ensure the nursery meets the required adult child ratios, please ensure your child does not arrive at the nursery until the time they are booked in.

Outings

We frequently visit places of interest and attend events in the wider community. At such times we may need more adult supervision. Parents are sometimes invited along to enjoy the learning experience.

Use of Volunteers

The nursery occasionally needs parent volunteers to help within the nursery as well as for outings/trips. Where volunteers are used regularly and are left on their own for short periods of time with the children it is necessary for those volunteers to have a PVG check. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the nursery, please speak to the play leader. Extra help is always appreciated.

Additional Educational Support Needs

Some children can have short- or longer-term additional needs and support in the early years could make life easier for the child in school. We welcome any children who might be considered to need any extra support and are more than willing to work alongside any other agencies involved. Such agencies could include, e.g., Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Educational Psychology.

Partnership with Parents

Parents are welcome to come in and discuss their child's progress. Please speak to the Playleader to discuss a mutually convenient time. Parents are the primary educators of their children and have an important role to play in their children's development. Parental contribution is invaluable and greatly appreciated and encouraged at nursery. We welcome support from parents at all times.

ASSESSMENT



Nursery staff will assess your child's learning by

- Observing your child play and interact with others
- Listening to your child
- Talking with your child

They will build a record of your child's progress which will include

- Examples of your child's work
- Photographs
- Observations of your child's learning – developmental overviews

Profiles/Seesaw

Child profiles provide a record of your child's development during their time at nursery. Children are encouraged to contribute to the content of the profile and children are fully involved in deciding the next steps in their learning. The profiles will be made available so parents and children can have access to their own profile at any time. Prior to your child starting at the nursery parents will be asked to contribute to the first part of the profile e.g. their child's likes and interests. The contents of the folder i.e. children's progress and achievements, will be shared with the class teacher during a transition meeting with nursery staff before being forwarded to parents at home.

Developmental Overviews

Developmental Overviews highlight where your child is currently at in terms of their development of fine/gross motor, social/interactive skills etc. This record of your child's learning follows your child from the Nursery to P1. The Developmental Overviews will be shared with you at a parent appointment with nursery staff and then forwarded to the receiving school.



HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD

You can help your child to learn by playing together at home and;

- Encouraging them to be independent, for example, in getting dressed and washing their hands before meals, and to share and join in with other children, encouraging them to develop healthy habits in diet, exercise and hygiene.
- Reading to them every day, talking about books with them and reading familiar words to them, for example, the labels on their favourite foods.
- Talking with them and answering questions and playing remembering games and guessing games like "I Spy."
- Helping them to match and sort things, for example, putting together forks and knives or cups and saucers, and pairing up socks, sorting out big tins and little tins, putting packets in order of size.
- Encouraging them to count and use numbers in everyday situations and in nursery rhymes.
- Encouraging them to listen to music, songs, stories and rhymes.
- Encouraging them to express their ideas and feelings, for example, using crayons, pens, pencils, paint, music and play.
- Giving them the chance to use their fingers and hands, for example, building with bricks, cutting out with scissors, helping with baking and fastening zips and buttons.

There are many Gaelic books which your child will become familiar with in the nursery which have been made into audio books. Some of these, along with many other resources that you can use to support you child, can be found on the [Gaelic4Parents](#), [GoGaelic](#), [Orain na cloinne bige](#) ,[Learn Gaelic](#) and [Gàidhlig nan Òg](#) websites.





Learning through play is the main principle within the nursery.

Gaelic early learning and childcare is a very important stage of Gaelic medium education. All children entering Sgoil Àraich will experience the usual activities that children do in a nursery setting through the principles of **immersion**. Children learn Gàidhlig by being immersed in the language within the playroom and while outdoors. Our nursery staff aim to use all available opportunities to develop the children's understanding and acquisition of Gaelic through our local context, songs, games, stories and through play. Helpful detailed guidance on total immersion is contained within the [Education Scotland Advice on Gaelic Education](#).

Young children learn very naturally through play and they enjoy learning. In their play they may find out about materials, use and develop language, act out situations, ask questions, look for information in books, make friends, see how their actions affect other people, try out ideas, learn rules or read stories.

Staff plan the learning experiences for the children based on observations and tracking information gathered in the nursery. Parents and children are consulted regularly and parents have the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning.

Nursery staff ensure that they make the best use of space to provide play opportunities within the eight curriculum areas indoors and outdoors. Staff ensure that there is a good balance between children's choice and planned group activities. Nursery staff also encourage all children to become independent and responsible through following daily routines such as assisting at snack. All children also have daily opportunities for active, physical play both indoors and outdoors making use of a variety of equipment e.g. balance bikes, balls etc.

Curriculum for Excellence

The 'How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?' documentation provides the benchmark of quality in the early years' sector.

The nursery provides a flexible and stimulating environment to engage children in their learning through well planned and challenging play. We believe that children learn best when they have scope for active involvement in a wide range of learning experiences. 'Curriculum for Excellence' provides statements of the aims of education in Scotland. By providing structure, support and direction to children's learning, the curriculum should enable all children to become:

Successful learners

Confident individuals

Responsible citizens

Effective contributors

'Curriculum for Excellence' has 8 curricular areas which are all delivered in Gaelic. The following summarises some aspects of learning which will take place within each area.

Language/Literacy

- Listen with enjoyment and respond to stories, songs, rhymes, and poems.
- Listen and talk to children and adults.
- Explore books/texts and understand some of the language, layout.
- Develop an awareness of letter names and sounds.
- Have fun with language and making stories.

Mathematics/Numeracy

- Explore numbers; develop understanding of counting, number processes, order, money, time, and measure.
- Collect objects, ask questions to gather information, organise and display, share findings with others.
- Investigate shapes and objects.

Health and Wellbeing

- Develop confidence, resilience, self-awareness, and self-worth.
- Form positive relationships, take turns, and share resources, follow rules.
- Take part in physical play and activities, develop body control, use equipment safely.
- Develop awareness of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles, fitness, hygiene, safety.

Expressive Arts

- Choose and explore ways to create images and objects using a variety of media.
- Explore line, shape, form, colour, tone, pattern and texture.
- Make music by singing, clapping, playing musical instruments and music technology.
- Explore role play and drama.

Social Studies

- Explore the importance of special occasions and important people in our lives.
- Explore places of interest in local and wider environment and the role of people in it
- Develop an understanding of the weather.
- Make choices and take responsibility in play experiences.

Technologies

- Play with and explore technologies; communication methods, audio/visual, electronic games.
- Show care for the environment through recycling methods.
- Explore a wide range of resources, materials, software and tools.
- Explore ways of presenting ideas

Sciences

- Develop an understanding of sustainable materials, plants, animals, climate and earth, outer space.
- Explore healthy eating and healthy bodies.
- Develop an understanding of electricity, sound and ways of communicating.
- Develop an awareness and an understanding of the senses.

Religious and Moral Education

- Explore Christian beliefs.
- Become familiar with religious beliefs all over the world.
- Raise an awareness of festivals and celebrations.
- Develop beliefs and values.

Realising the Ambition

Realising the Ambition is new guidance issued in February 2020 which reflects the original principles and philosophy of Building the Ambition. It aims to support nursery staff in delivering what babies and young children need most and how we can most effectively deliver this in order to give children the best start in life. The nursery will be using this to help further develop key information about the characteristics of child development and what we need to provide for babies and young children as they learn and grow. Staff will be looking again at pedagogy and practice and extend the connections to across the whole of the early level of Curriculum for Excellence (CFE). Staff will retain and expand the focus on the learning environment in terms of interactions, experiences, and spaces to raise our expectations of what high quality may look like in different settings.



POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policies and Guideline information provides clear advice to staff, students and parents about the procedures and practice at the nursery. Well written policies ensure that all staff and service users are provided with up to date, relevant information about their respective roles and responsibilities. The Manager, in consultation with staff, review and update policies regularly and these are displayed outside the nursery room. Further information is available on the school web site and on the nursery notice board. Paper copies are also available on request. Our complaints policy is detailed below.

Complaints Policy

We believe:

- that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt attention to their needs and wishes.
- that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage.
- that in the best interests of the nursery and parents, concerns should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way that respects confidentiality.

The Comhairle's Complaints procedure governs the nursery. This policy is available on line at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/complaints.asp>, paper copies are also available on request. Complaints will be dealt with speedily, within an agreed time limit. We will keep a register of oral and written concerns. The register will be available to HM Inspectorate of Education, the Local Authority and the Care Inspectorate.

If the issue has not been resolved parents may wish to contact the Care Inspectorate

Should parents or staff wish to make a complaint about the service they can contact the Care Inspectorate **at any time**.

Contact details as follows:

Email: concerns@careinspectorate.gov.scot

Phone: 03456009527

Address: Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY

Contact	Title	Contact Details	Responsibility