

Árd-Sgoil MhicNeacáil
The Nicolson Institute

Sequámur
Leánámaid



School Handbook 2021

**The Nicolson Institute
School Handbook 2021**

Welcome to our School

I would like to welcome you and your son/daughter to The Nicolson Institute. This handbook contains a range of information that you might find helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact the school or check the school website if you need more information.

I hope that this handbook gives you a glimpse of life at The Nicolson Institute. We look forward to having you and your child work with us and hope that this will be the start of a strong partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frances Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr F Murray
Rector



Our School Vision & Values

We seek to build a school community based on respect, hard work and fairness, in which all members are safe and secure. Through high quality teaching and learning, we aim to challenge and motivate all learners to fulfil their potential, whether in academic or vocational study, sport, culture or service to others.

We value our island heritage, our community and our environment, and strive to prepare our pupils for the world beyond school and the challenges of modern life.

Our Values:

- Respect, hard work, fairness.
- Potential, quality, service.
- Heritage, community, environment.



School Information

You can cut out the following information and have it on your fridge, purse or work desk for ease of finding the numbers required.

The Nicolson Institute
Sandwick Road
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2PN
Phone: 01851 707000
Email: nicolsoninstitute@gnes.net
Website: www.nicolsoninstitute.org
Facebook: The Nicolson Institute/ Sgoil Mhic Neacail

Background Information:

- Co-educational
- Non-denominational
- Stages taught: S1-S6
- **Current Roll:** 1070
- GM Education

Our School Staff

A full list is available on our school website and parents will be updated on any changes as required.

Our Senior Management Team is as follows:

Rector: Dr F Murray
Depute Rectors: Mr A Mackay
Mrs F Cunningham
Mr D I Macaulay
Mr M MacLeod
Business Manager: Ms A Young

To contact any of the above, in the first instance please use the details on page 2.

Moving from Primary to The Nicolson Institute

We recognise that the move from primary to secondary is a very important event for young people. We have a close and effective partnership with each of our partner primary schools. This ensures that the move from primary to secondary is as smooth as possible for young people, including enhanced transition arrangements where necessary.

Any parent seeking a place for a child at The Nicolson Institute should contact the School Office to organise a meeting with the relevant Depute Rector.

Our School Day

Session 2020-2021

Monday - Thursday

Period 1	08.50 – 09.40
Period 2	09.40 – 10.30
Interval	10.30 – 10.45
Period 3	10.45 – 11.35
Period 4	11.35 – 12.25
Period 5	12.25– 13.15
Lunch	13.15 – 13.55
Period 6	13.55 – 14.45
Period 7	14.45 – 15.35

Friday

Period 1	08.50 – 09.40
Period 2	09.40 – 10.30
Interval	10.30 – 10.45
Period 3	10.45 – 11.35
Period 4	11.35 – 12.25
Period 5	12.25 – 13.15
Lunch	13.15

THE NICOLSON INSTITUTE "THE SCHOOL YEAR AT A GLANCE" 2021 - 2022

MONDAY 9 AUGUST 2021	School Opens for Staff - Inservice
THURSDAY 12 AUGUST 2021	School Opens for Pupils
THURSDAY 7 OCTOBER 2021	School Closes
FRIDAY 8 OCTOBER 2021	Local Holiday (National Mod)
WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2021	School Opens for Staff - Inservice
THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER 2021	School Opens for Pupils
FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2021	Local Holiday
MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2021	Local Holiday
TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER 2021	School Closes
THURSDAY 6 JANUARY 2022	School Opens for Staff and Pupils
TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2022	School Closes for Pupils
WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2022	Inservice (School-Based)
THURSDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2022	Local Holiday
FRIDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2022	Local Holiday
MONDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2022	Local Holiday
FRIDAY 1 APRIL 2022	School Closes
TUESDAY 19 APRIL 2022	School Opens for Staff and Pupils
FRIDAY 29 APRIL 2022	Local Holiday
MONDAY 2 MAY 2022	Local Holiday
TUESDAY 28 JUNE 2022	School Closes
MONDAY 15 AUGUST 2022	School Opens for Staff - Inservice
THURSDAY 18 AUGUST 2022	School Opens for Pupils

Pupil Absence

At The Nicolson Institute excellent attendance is encouraged at all times to ensure pupil success. Parents are asked to inform the school if their son or daughter is going to be absent. This should be done as early as possible on the first day of absence. If the young person is going to be absent for some time, it would be helpful to know at the earliest opportunity. Our school uses Group Call to inform parents and carers of a young person's absence if no contact is made. All unexplained absence is investigated by the school and appropriate action taken.

Withdrawal from Education

If a parent wishes to remove a pupil from school for reasons other than illness, a Withdrawal from Education form should be completed at least 24 hours in advance and submitted to the Rector. Forms can be obtained on the website or from the School Office.

Medical & Healthcare

If a young person becomes ill during the course of the school day, he/she may require to be sent home. Please ensure that you keep the school informed of **all** contact details.

Parents and carers should inform the school of any medical requirements relating to their child. If a young person requires medication during the school day, parents must complete the appropriate medical form. This is available on request from the school office.

Emergencies

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, or power failures.

In such cases, we shall do all we can to let you know about the details of our closure or re-opening by using Group Call, social media and local radio.

School Dress Code

Our school uniform promotes a real sense of school identity, shared values, self-confidence and a shared sense of community. Our uniform is actively supported by our pupils, parents and the Parent Council and is an important part of our ethos.

The school uniform is:

- School blazer
- School tie and white shirt
- Black V-neck jersey with school crest (Senior school)
- Royal or Navy Blue sweatshirt/hooded top

- White polo shirt
- Black trousers (not jeans, leggings or tracksuit trousers)
- Black skirt
- Royal or Navy Blue sweatshirt/hoody
- Black shoes (no trainers) for formal occasions

Uniform can be purchased from the school. Further information can be obtained from our school office.

PE Kit

It is important that pupils come prepared to learn and for PE this requires appropriate clothing. All jewellery should be removed. Pupils who are not participating in PE must have a note or a medical certificate. Pupils who are unable to participate in practical PE should still bring their kit to allow them to assist in the lesson by refereeing, keeping scores or assisting with the distribution of equipment. This ensures that they are still able to take part in some way in the work of the class and do not miss out on the knowledge and understanding of the course.

There are forms of dress that are unacceptable in school, such as items of clothing which:

- Potentially encourage factions (such as football colours)
- Could cause offence (such as anti-religious symbolism or political slogans)
- Could cause health and safety difficulties (such as loose fitting clothing, jewellery or flammable material)
- Could cause damage to flooring
- Carry advertising particularly for alcohol or tobacco
- Could be used to inflict damage on other pupils

Currently, changing rooms are out of use because of Covid-19 restrictions. Pupils may wear PE kit (tracksuit trousers/leggings on days they have PE only).

Clothing & Footwear Grants

Parents/Carers receiving Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based), Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, or Council Tax Benefit will normally be entitled to monetary grants for footwear and clothing for their children. Information and application forms may be obtained from the school office or the Education and Childrens' Services Department at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

School Meals

Our school provides a lunch service which offers a variety of meals and snacks within the Canteen, Nice Bites, and the Grab 'n Go. Terminals are available in the building where pupils can place an order for lunch from 1300 for the following day. The school operates

a cashless system where money can be put on the account electronically and a finger scan or PIN used to identify the pupil. More information can be obtained from the school office or The Education Department at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

A mid-morning service is also available within the Canteen. Special diets for pupils and staff with medical requirements can be provided. Please inform the school office.

Young people who prefer to bring packed lunches are accommodated in our dining area.

Children and young people of parents/carers receiving Income Support, income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and income-related Employment and Support Allowance maybe entitled to a free midday meal. Information and application forms for free school meals may be obtained from the school office or the Education Department at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

PEF

The school currently benefits from involvement in the pupil Equity Fund which allows additional support to be provided to pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Transport

The education authority has a policy of providing free transport to all pupils and young people who live outwith a certain radius from their local school by the recognised shortest walking route. Parents/Carers who consider they are eligible should obtain an application form from the Education Department at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. More details are available from our school office.

Communication with Parents

At The Nicolson Institute we strongly encourage all parents to become involved in the education of their children whether that be through supporting pupils' learning helping with key choices, or becoming involved in the Parent Forum or Council (see page 15). We are always ready to listen to suggestions for new ways of stimulating parental interest. We contact and involve parents in many ways. For example:

Letters – further information which requires a response may be sent out in letter form.

School Website/Facebook – will contain a great deal of information about our school. It is a good idea to check this regularly.

Group Call – You will also receive e-mails or texts about events, school closures and attendance. A weekly briefing will be sent via Group call every Friday.

Nicolson Notes – appear regularly in the Stornoway Gazette and celebrate pupil

achievement.

Parents' Meetings – Parents and carers are welcome in the school to discuss any aspect of their child's development and progress. To avoid disappointment, it is advisable to make an appointment using the on-line booking system. There are various opportunities throughout the year when parents can discuss their child's progress with school staff.

Parents and carers are very welcome at other events throughout the school year e.g. workshops, information evenings, class performances and award ceremonies. We will keep you informed of all events.

Strong communication links between home and school ensure parents and carers are confident to address any concerns they may have about their child's education with Pupil Support staff and our Senior Management Team.

Currently, parents' reporting events are being held electronically as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

Mobile Phone Policy

We have recently updated our mobile phone policy to ensure pupils avoid distractions during the school day and use mobile phones responsibly outwith class time. To see the full policy, please follow this link to the school website.

<http://www.nicolsoninstitute.org/images/stories/downloads/Mobile%20policy.pdf>

Emergency Contact Information

At the start of each school session, parents and carers will be issued with the annual data check form. Please ensure that this is completed and returned to the school. It is also important that you let us know if there are changes to your telephone number(s) or to those of your emergency contacts throughout the year, and keep email addresses up to date.

Privacy Statement and Data Protection – Use of Information about Children and Parents/Carers

Our school processes information about young people in order to provide education and care. In doing so we must comply with the Data Protection Act (1998). This means, amongst other things, that the data held about children and young people must only be used for specific purposes.

However, you should be aware that we may use this information for other legitimate purposes and may share this information where necessary with other bodies responsible for administering services to children and young people, or where otherwise required by law. We may also use any information for research purposes. However, all personal data is treated as confidential and used only in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the Information Use and Privacy Policy approved by the Comhairle.

For further information please see the CNES full privacy statement at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/privacy.asp>

Comments & Complaints

In The Nicolson Institute we aim to have positive relationships across our school community. However, if you have a concern or complaint about any aspect of school life, please contact the relevant Depute Rector or the Rector in the first instance.

If we are unable to help, or if you are unhappy/dissatisfied with our response Comhairle nan Eilean Siar complaints procedures are available at:

<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints/>

Education Department & Childrens' Services
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Sandwick Road
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2PN

Curriculum

Curriculum for Excellence 3-18

Curriculum for Excellence has been introduced to raise standards of learning and teaching for all 3 to 18 year olds. It aims to help prepare children and young people with the knowledge and skills they need in a fast changing world. As part of Curriculum for Excellence, all children from pre-school to the end of S3 will receive a rounded education known as the **Broad General Education (BGE)**. Curriculum for Excellence aims to bring real life into the classroom and take lessons beyond it.

In line with their **Curriculum for Excellence** entitlement, pupils learn in all 8 curricular areas until the end of S3.

In S3, pupils must continue with one subject from each of the curricular areas.

Expressive Arts	Health & Wellbeing	Languages	Mathematics
Religious & Moral	Sciences	Social Studies	Technologies

There is also a focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills across every subject area as well as Skills for Learning, Life and Work as young people prepare for their adult lives. Gaelic Medium Education is available in up to 10 subjects in S1 and S2, and in 4 in S3.

In addition, learning takes place in the following ways:

- Inter-disciplinary experiences (working across a range of subjects to link learning)
- Learning through the ethos and life of our school
- Opportunities for personal achievement
- Charity Work

Our Senior Phase S4-S6

Our Senior Phase offers opportunity for specialisation leading to qualifications. Young people aged 15 plus will have a wide range of opportunities to experience learning and achieve qualifications to the highest possible level during their senior phase.

Throughout S3, there is a programme of Pupil Support to assist pupils and their parents and carers with course choices for **National 4** and **National 5** awards. The Pupil Support programme seeks to advise pupils about:

- The range of courses available
- The pupil's own aptitudes, interests, strengths and weaknesses
- The importance of individual subjects
- Entrance qualifications & career opportunities

The schools partners in SDS (Skills Development Scotland) and LCC (Lews Castle College) and CNES are available to assist with choices.

Our Pathway is:

S4: 7 Subjects at National 4 or National 5

S5/S6: 5 Subjects at National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher or Foundation Apprenticeship.

In collaboration with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), we will assess National 1-4 qualifications. Individual courses at National 1-4 levels will not be graded but marked overall as pass or fail.

Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels will continue to include work assessed in school, but for these qualifications, students will also have to pass an additional assessment (usually a question paper or assignment) which will be marked externally by SQA.

In advising pupils about course choices, we adhere to national guidelines and ensure that pupil choices result in their best chance of success.

The SQA document

https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Guide_to_Scottish_Qualifications.pdf

contains useful information to help you understand national qualifications.

Courses Available in S5 & S6

As an inclusive school, we aim to meet the needs of all pupils in S5 and S6. We have strong partnerships with the local college and employers. It is extremely important that senior students are set challenging and realistic targets. To that end, we offer a rigorous options programme to support and inform student choice. Opportunities for personal development continue within and beyond the taught curriculum. S6 in particular offers senior pupils a range of opportunities to build leadership, communication and team working skills through involvement in a wide range of school and community events.

Encouraging excellence is central to our aspirations and expectations for all young people.

SDS, Colleges, Universities and other community partners are regularly available to assist our young people made the right choices as they move into the world beyond school. We aim to assist all our leavers into positive and sustained destinations.

Chaplain Team

We are fortunate to work closely with our school chaplaincy team, Rev James Maciver and Rev William Hennan. Time for Reflection assemblies are organised regularly for all groups, but are not currently taking place as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

All pupils from S1-S5 receive Religious and Moral Education on a weekly basis. The courses are broad based and explore a range of moral and ethical issues, examining world religions and faiths. Parents may request to withdraw children from RME.

Parents who wish to withdraw pupils from religious observation should contact the relevant Depute Rector in writing.

Assessment & Reporting

All pupils are assessed both formally and informally throughout the school year. This allows young people and their teachers to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. A variety of assessment methods are used to enable staff to pass on information to parents and carers about the progress of their child. Assessment records are kept by teachers and form the basis of discussion at parents' meetings throughout the year.

Dates of all parents' meetings and the schedule for issuing written reports is included on our school website and in regular communication throughout the year.

If you have any concerns about your child's progress do not hesitate to contact their Pupil Support teacher at any time.

Pupil Profiles

All S3 learners have a profile which reflects their progress in learning and achievement and emphasises their strengths. The profile documents their key achievements in school, at home and in the community and the content is decided by the young person. The profile provides a valuable way for learners to share information about their achievements with their parents, teachers and in the future, staff in colleges, universities and employers. The profile also supports the move from S3 into the Senior Phase of our school.

Support for Pupils

Our school has a duty to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, with appropriate support for their needs if required. This applies to the content of lessons, teaching strategies and minor adaptations to the school environment. There are a wide range of factors which may act as a barrier to learning. We are committed to working closely with parents and carers to ensure that they are fully involved in any decisions about support for their children's needs.

Any parent or carer seeking further advice regarding this policy should contact the Principal Teacher of Support for Learning, Mrs C Graham, in the first instance.

Further information relating to Additional Support Needs is available from the Education and Childrens' Services Department.

Pupil Support Staff

All staff in The Nicolson Institute have a clear responsibility for the welfare of young people. In addition, all young people are allocated a House and Guidance teacher on entering the school. This provides a vital link between home and school as the Guidance teacher has an 'all-round' picture of a pupil's progress and general health and well-being. In most cases, a parent's first point of contact with the school will be the Guidance teacher.

The Principal Teachers of Guidance and their houses are:

Addison House	Mrs M I Anderson
Forbes House	Mr G Mackenzie
Gibson House	Miss C A MacLeod
Macrae House	Mr D Neally
Sutherland House	Miss T Gordon

Other support for pupils is provided by class tutors in Tutor Group classes, our House Team in the senior school and by our Support for Learning Team if required.

We are fully committed to meeting the needs of all pupils and hold regular meetings at which we plan for those who might benefit from additional support. Full discussion is held with parents and carers and outcomes are planned and agreed in partnership.

Guidance teachers and Sfl staff can be contacted through the School Office.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Children's Rights as outlined in the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) are fundamental to a good school ethos. Adults in our school will work with young people to ensure they are aware of their rights and fully respect the rights of others. Therefore, the approach within The Nicolson Institute is to build a positive ethos that demonstrates care and respect for all.

The smooth running of The Nicolson Institute requires a high standard of behaviour from all within it. We appreciate the support of parents and carers in helping us to achieve this. All pupils are required to behave well and respect their own safety and that of others. This is also vital on journeys to and from our school and on school trips.

Our expectations are clearly communicated to young people and breaches of discipline are dealt with in line with school policy. In most cases, a quiet reprimand is sufficient but in more serious or persistent cases parents will be invited to the school to discuss the issue and agree a course of action.

Homework

Regular, effective homework is an important part of our school day. To this end, every young person in the school has been provided with a Homework Diary in S1. **Parents are asked to check this on a regular basis.** Homework has many advantages:

- It reinforces work done in class
- It develops good study habits and a sense of personal discipline
- It develops areas of interest that can be followed up later in life and become a leisure pursuit
- It allows parents to see, help and become involved in their child's work

The amount of homework varies in length, nature and frequency depending on the subject. The amount of homework will increase as your child progresses through our school, and may take many different forms.

Supported Study

This is an important initiative which allows pupils to attend additional classes after school and during some holiday periods. Large numbers of our staff give generously of their time in this area. Subjects on offer will depend on the staff available to deliver. Pupils will be kept informed of the arrangements via the Announcement Sheet which is displayed in the social areas on the screens, and by tannoy announcement.

This programme is currently affected by Covid-19 restrictions.

Parent Council

We have a very active and supportive Parent Council that aims to represent the views of all parents. All parents are welcome to attend Parent Council meetings and can become members at the AGM in September. Parent Council minutes are available on request from our school office. The chair of our Parent Council, Mrs Caroline Maciver, can be contacted via our school office.

All parents are automatically members of the Parent Forum. Parental views are also gathered at Parents' Reporting Evenings.

Pupil Council

Our Pupil Council is made up of two representatives from each year group. This is an important group which ensures that the views of pupils are heard. Meetings are chaired by the relevant Depute Rector.

Whilst the Pupil Council is suspended during Covid-19 restrictions we have been collecting pupils' views via the Pupil Parliament, which allows all pupils to vote at PSE classes.

Prefects

S6 pupils can apply to stand for election as prefects. These positions are elected by S6 peers and staff. Prefects participate in many ways around the school, learning leadership skills as they do so. All S6 pupils are eligible to act as buddies for incoming S1 pupils.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We have a wide range of activities that run throughout the week to extend the learning experience. The list constantly changes but our young people are kept fully informed. Good links with a wide number of community organisations and our Active Schools Co-ordinator are vital for the success of these programmes.

Unfortunately, Covid restrictions currently affect many clubs.

Useful websites

<https://education.gov.scot/>

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/getting-involved/parent-councils/about-parent-councils>

<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/policies-procedures-and-guidelines/policy-documents/>

<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/>

School Improvement

On an annual basis, our **Standards and Quality** report is produced. Copies are available from the School Office on request and on the website. Our Standards and Quality report is used to share the overall performance of our school and highlights progress in key curricular areas such as literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing. Our priorities for improvement are detailed in our **School Improvement Plan** which is discussed with our Parent Council. Any parent or carer seeking a copy of our School Improvement Plan can contact the school office. The current priorities include:

- Attendance, Engagement and Pupil Voice?Parental Involvement
- Literacy and Numeracy at leaving stage
- Recovery from Covid

Overall Attainment: SQA Examinations	2017	2018	2019	2020
End S4				
5@National 4	88%	84%	85%	87%
5@National 5	55%	49%	54%	55%
7@National 5	23%	24%	26%	33%
End S5				
1@Higher	73%	71%	73%	77%
3@Higher	51%	48%	51%	55%
5@Higher	17%	20%	19%	18%
End S6				
3@Higher	77%	71%	81%	83%
5@Higher	57%	45%	59%	58%
1@Advanced Higher	39%	29%	33%	31%

Positive Destinations

2015/16	98.2%
2016/17	96.8%
2017/18	95.6%
2018/19	98.36%
2019/20	98.26%

- Our Young People also achieved in:

- *SQA Leadership Qualification*
- *Deasbad*
- *Youth Achievement Awards*
- *Charity Fundraising*
- *Film G*
- *Dileab*
- *Ceangal*
- *Local and National Mod*
- *Youth Philanthropic Initiative*
- *SQA Employability Award*
- *Personal Development*
- *Scripture Union*
- *Sports Leadership Award*
- *Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver & Gold Award*
- *School sports teams*
- *Classroom assistants programme*

