



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

North Ayrshire Council: Communities and
Education Directorate

St Mark's Primary School and Early Years

School Handbook

Session: 2024/2025



Contents

Head Teacher's Welcome	4
Introduction.....	5
Communities & Education Directorate	6
▪ Directorate Aims and Priorities	
Section 1: School Information	7
▪ School Aims, Values, Ethos	
▪ School Contact Details (Address, Telephone, Email, Fax)	
▪ School Staff	
▪ School Calendar/Holidays	
Section 2: School Procedures.....	10
▪ School Security	
▪ Positive Relationships	
▪ Playground Supervision	
▪ Absence from School Premises at Breaks	
▪ School Dress Code	
▪ Dress Code for PE	
▪ Personal Belongings	
▪ School Meals	
▪ Mobile Phones	
▪ Information in Emergencies	
▪ Listening and Learning	
Section 3: Footwear, Clothing, Free School Meals and Transport	14
▪ Footwear and Clothing Grants	
▪ Free School Meals	
▪ School Transport Policy	
Section 4: School Registration, Enrolment and Attendance.....	16



- Registration and Enrolment
- Attendance at School/Lateness
- Structure of Classes
- Transfer to Secondary School

Section 5: Curriculum for Excellence	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum for Excellence ▪ The Capacities ▪ Extra-Curricular Activities ▪ Assessment and Reporting ▪ Homework 	
Section 6: School Improvement	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S&Q Report and Establishment Improvement Plan 	
Section 7: Support for your Child	23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equalities ▪ Equality Act 2010 ▪ Child Protection ▪ Inclusion ▪ Additional Support for Learning ▪ Main Provisions of the Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Duties under the ‘Additional Support for Learning’ legislation ▪ Dispute Resolution Procedures ▪ Further Support ▪ GIRFEC ▪ Psychological Services ▪ Data Protection ▪ Medical and Health Care 	
Section 8: Parental Involvement.....	31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parental Engagement and Involvement ▪ Parent Council ▪ Early Years Partnership with Parents ▪ Parentzone Scotland ▪ Home School Links to Parents ▪ Homework 	
Section 9: Pupil Data Collection and Protection Policies	33
Appendix 1: Important Contacts	35

Head Teacher's Welcome

Dear parents and carers,

I am delighted to welcome you and your child to St Mark's Primary School. This handbook contains helpful information regarding all aspects of school life. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to clarify any points mentioned in the handbook or discuss any issues relating to your child's education.

At St Mark's Primary School, our aim is to ensure that all children achieve success in a wide curriculum and leave the school with skills for lifelong learning. We also try to ensure that each child attains, to the best of their ability, the objectives set out for the areas of the curriculum. To this end we celebrate all successes and achievements across the curriculum and in life.

The staff work very hard as a team to maintain a positive ethos in the school within which the children will work in a happy and nurturing atmosphere, where they will learn to be independent, to be responsible for themselves and to carry out their tasks with a spirit of co-operation, courtesy and respect for others.

The role of parents/carers cannot be stressed too greatly. There will be opportunities for you to speak with your child's teacher throughout the session. Teachers will be contactable via Seesaw, our online platform, and telephone.

Please feel free to contact me if I can assist you in any way. I look forward to working with you and your child.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Gemma Strain

Head Teacher

Introduction

St Mark's Primary School is a semi-open plan school which opened on 5th January 1976. It is a Catholic co-educational school situated in the north east corner of Irvine and its catchment area includes the old town area of Irvine.

The present school roll is 224 pupils and there are 31 children in the Early Years class. The school staff comprises a Head Teacher, a Depute-Head, two Principal Teachers, a team of teaching staff including Class Teachers, a Nurture Teacher, and an Additional Support for Learning Teacher. Teaching staff work in close partnership with a team of Education Assistants, Classroom Assistants and Early Years Practitioners. The school also benefits from the expertise of two visiting music specialist, one who teaches brass to senior pupils, and the other teaches percussion to Primary 5. In addition there is a janitor, catering and cleaning personnel.

Our Early Years playroom is entered via a separate secured entrance to ensure the safe entry and exit of all children. All visitors are requested to report to the school office and sign in upon entry. The children also have their own outdoor play area to ensure they have opportunities to play and use the outdoor environment to learn.

We have capacity for 32 3-5 year olds, with 16 in each session. St Mark's Early Years Class is a term time establishment with one morning and one afternoon session. In accordance with 1140 hour provision funded by the Scottish Government, children may also attend a North Ayrshire Council approved provider to receive their full entitlement.

The school also enjoys and appreciates the generous support of parents who work in partnership with us to enhance the education of their children. We are fortunate to have a dedicated and hardworking Parent Council who are keen to be involved in the life of the school and organise fund raising activities to improve resources and experiences available for the children.

As a denominational school, we have close links with Father Boyd and St Mary's Parish community. Parishioners, parents and members of the community support our daily breakfast club, which benefits a large number of our pupils every day. We are fortunate to have good relationships with all other schools in the area.

Pupils participate in educational visits to enhance their learning experiences including working with Arran Outdoor Centre for our Primary 7 pupils.

The children of St Mark's PS respond well to our happy, stimulating atmosphere and to the efforts of our skilled, dedicated and hardworking staff team. A welcoming, friendly, caring ethos exists within the school which makes our pupils feel safe, happy, respected, nurtured and included.

Communities & Education Directorate

What we want to achieve

Our Overall Aim

Ensuring our children and young people experience the best start in life.

Our Priorities

- We will create the conditions for our children and young people to access the highest quality learning experiences from ages 3-18.
- We will support our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We will offer opportunities to our young people, and their families, to play a more active role in school life and encourage more participation in learning.
- We will work with all young people to build their resilience, supporting their mental health and physical well-being.

Section 1: School Information

St Mark's PS – Our Vision, Values and Aims

Our Vision

Healthy bodies, healthy minds,
fit for learning, fit for life.

Our Values

Our values are at the heart of everything
we do and are REAL values:

Relationships
Expectations
Achievement
Love

Our Aims

- To provide a safe and caring environment where staff, pupils, parents/carers and other agencies work together in productive partnerships.
- To support and motivate children to take part in all aspects of school life and become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- To provide challenging and enjoyable teaching and learning experiences that are relevant and enable pupils to achieve success and develop skills for learning, life and work.

School Contact Details

Address	St Mark's Primary School Clark Drive IRVINE KA12 0NS	Telephone	01294 271167
		Option 1	School
		Option 2	Early Years

Email stmarks@ea.n-ayrshire.sch.uk

Website blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/na/stmarksirvine

X [@StMarksIrvine](#)

[@st_marks_eyc](#)

Our Staff

Head Teacher	Gemma Strain
Depute Head	Clare Fallon
Principal Teachers	Lisa Shearer, Claire McKie, Louise Griffin (Acting)
Teaching Staff	James McQuillan, Jennifer Reid, Louise Griffin, Hannah Tipping, Hannah Singleton, Carol Crozier, Marie Bruce, Angela Gallagher, Antonia Gibson, Chris Kilpatrick, Mhairi McEvoy,
Senior Early Years Practitioner	Michelle Abbott
Excellence and Equity Lead	Carly Montgomerie
Early Years Practitioners	Rachel McDonald, Caitlin Morton, Trudy Pickering
Education Business Assistants	Nicola Devlin, Lindsay Morrison
Classroom Assistants	Michele Ridley, Frances McGlone, Tracey Byrne, Nicole Lambert, Amanda Logue, Nicole Reid, Susan Atkinson, Jacqui McInnes
Janitor	Peter Blair

School holidays and in-service dates 2024/25 (all schools except Arran) (text alternative)

August 2024

- Thursday 1st August to Friday 16th August: pupils on holiday
- Monday 19th August: staff only in-service days
- Tuesday 20th August to Friday 30th August: children in school

September 2024

- Monday 2nd September to Friday 20th September: children in school
- Monday 23rd September: staff only in-service days
- Tuesday 24th September to Monday 30th September: children in school

October 2024

- Tuesday 1st October to Friday 11th October: children in school
- Monday 14th October to Friday 18th October: pupils on holiday
- Monday 21st October to Thursday 31st October: children in school

November 2024

- Friday 1st November to Friday 22nd November: children in school
- Monday 25th November: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 26th November: staff only in-service day
- Wednesday 27th November to Friday 29th November: children in school

December 2024

- Monday 2nd December to Friday 20th December: children in school
- Monday 23rd December to Tuesday 31st December: pupils on holiday

January 2025

- Wednesday 1st January to Friday 3rd January: pupils on holiday
- Monday 6th January to Friday 31st January: children in school

February 2025

- Monday 6th February to Friday 14th February: children in school
- Monday 17th February: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 18th February: staff only in-service days
- Wednesday 19th February to Friday 28th February: children in school

March 2025

- Monday 3rd March to Monday 31st March: children in school

April 2025

- Tuesday 1st April to Friday 4th April: children in school
- Monday 7th April to Monday 21st April: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 22nd April to Wednesday 30th April: children in school

May 2025

- Thursday 1st May to Friday 2nd May: children in school
- Monday 5th May: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 6th May to Friday 16th May: children in school
- Monday 19th May to Thursday 22nd May: children in school
- Friday 23rd May: staff only in-service day
- Monday 26th May: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 27th May to Friday 30th May: children in school

June 2025

- Monday 2nd June to Friday 27th June: children in school
- Monday 30th June: pupils on holiday

July 2025

- Tuesday 1st July to Thursday 31st July: pupils on holiday

Section 2: School Procedures

School Security

North Ayrshire Council has introduced procedures to ensure the safety and security of children and staff when attending or working in a school. A number of security measures are used including the use of a visitors' book, badges and escorts while visitors are within the school building. Any parent/carer or visitor at a school for any reason will be asked to report to the school office. The school staff will then make any necessary arrangements in connection with the visit to the school.

It is the policy of the school that any member of staff will approach a visitor and ask for verification of identity. This measure ensures that children work in a safe and protected environment. We appreciate your support in carrying out all the above measures.

Positive Relationships

The school is committed to developing a nurturing approach and promoting positive relationships. Like every community, our school is built on the relationships within it, across it and its connections with others. Every member of staff is responsible for establishing and maintaining positive relationships with each other, with parents and with partners and most importantly with the young people in their care.

Our expectations of behaviour for children and young people are high. Some children may require additional support in relation to their behaviour, and the school will work positively with the young person and the parents, and other partners, as appropriate, to ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

North Ayrshire Council is committed to the principles of restorative practices. This is a solution-focused approach to managing behaviour and resolving difficulties and which promotes healthy relationships that enable better behaviour and better learning.

The school has a code of conduct to ensure the safety and well-being of all and parents are asked to support the school fully in this matter.

Playground Supervision

The Council meets the terms of the legal requirement that pupils be supervised in the playground by at least one adult during the interval or lunchtime if there are fifty or more pupils at the school. Our policy reflects that of North Ayrshire Council in terms of the Schools (Safety and Supervision of Pupils) (Scotland) Regulations 1990.

An adult presence is provided in playgrounds at break times. Pupils who travel by contracted school transport and arrive at school more than ten minutes before the start of the school day have accommodation allocated to them within the school during inclement weather.

Absence from School Premises at Breaks

Schools have a duty to look after the welfare of their pupils. This means that the staff should take the same care of pupils as a sensible parent would take, and this includes taking reasonable care of pupils' safety during intervals and lunchtimes.

It is the policy of North Ayrshire Council that pupils should not leave the school grounds at intervals. Primary pupils should only leave school grounds at lunchtimes when they are going home for lunch with their parents' agreement. Parents should put this request in writing to the Head Teacher. Pupils will leave and return through the main entrance door of the school.

Parents should encourage their children to follow these rules in the interests of safety.

School Dress Code

It is the policy of North Ayrshire Council to support the introduction of a reasonable and flexible dress code in schools in its area. The Council encourages each school to adopt its own code, after consultation with parents and pupils.

The Council believes that establishing a school dress code has many benefits. These include improvements in safety, security, positive behaviour and community spirit and a decrease in bullying and in expense for parents.

The Council will support schools in encouraging and helping pupils to conform to the chosen dress code. Some types of clothing will not be allowed at school in any circumstances, for reasons of safety, decency or wellbeing.

Types of clothing which will **not** be allowed include:

- Clothes which are a health or safety risk
- Clothes which may damage the school building
- Clothes which may provoke other pupils
- Clothes which are offensive or indecent
- Clothes which encourage the use of alcohol or tobacco

All items of clothing should be clearly labelled with the child's name in case of loss. It is appreciated that parents and pupils are distressed over the occasional loss of pupils' clothing and/or personal belongings. Parents are asked to assist in this area by ensuring that valuable items of clothing or personal belongings are not brought to school.

Dress Code for PE

For health and safety reasons all children must wear suitable clothing for PE. This consists of shorts and t-shirts with soft shoes for indoor activities.

We adhere strictly to health and safety guidelines and pupils must remove any item that may cause danger, i.e., metal buckles, jewellery. These items are the responsibility of the pupil. Long hair should be tied back.

Personal Belongings

It is appreciated that parents and pupils may be distressed over the occasional loss of pupil's clothing and/or personal belongings. Parents are asked to assist by ensuring that valuable items of clothing or personal belongings are NOT brought to school.

Parents should note that the authority does not carry insurance to cover the loss of such items.

School Meals

Meals are served daily from the multi-choice cafeteria. The meals are planned to offer a healthy diet for the children. Please inform us if your child has any specific allergies. Parents of children who require a special diet can arrange this by contacting the school or Early Years Class.

There are arrangements in place for children who would prefer to eat a packed lunch.

Mobile Phones

While the benefits of mobile phones are recognised, they can be a serious distraction to work. Mobile phones are required to be switched off and put in the "phone box" at the start of the school day. They are given out at the end of the day.

Inappropriate use of text messages and/or photographs/recordings (video and audio) whilst in school may be treated as a breach of the school's code of conduct or a serious incident, which could be referred to the police.

Information in 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 and temporary interruption of transport, power failures or difficulties of fuel supply. In such cases, we shall do all we can to let you know about the details of closure or re-opening. We will keep in touch by using letters, texts, NAC website, notices in local shops and community centres, announcements in the press and West FM.

Should you have doubts about deteriorating conditions during the day, it may be advisable to contact the school. Parents should ensure that the school is aware of the emergency arrangements made for their child and have responsibility to update us with contact numbers.

Listening and Learning

The North Ayrshire Council Education Service encourages feedback from parents and pupils and forms part of the Council's overall commitment to providing the best possible service and to support partnership working.

We are therefore very interested in feedback of all kinds, whether it be compliments, suggestions or complaints. If you wish to raise a comment of any type about the school you can do this in writing, by telephone or by making an appointment to see someone. All feedback is welcome and helps us keep in touch.

If, in particular, you have a complaint about the school, it is better that these things are shared openly so any damage to the home/school relationship can be minimised. There are no negative consequences arising from making a complaint and we will deal with the issue sensitively and confidentially if required. If we have made a mistake we will apologise and try to put things right.

There are some things which you should note in relation to making a complaint:

- The Council has a Two Stage procedure when handling complaints from parents and members of the public. More details on the two stages can be found in the Council's complaint page here:
<https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/contact-us/complaints-and-feedback/make-a-complaint.aspx>
- It is helpful if complaints are made initially to the school's Head Teacher. This ensures the school is made aware of what is going on and has an opportunity to investigate and try to resolve the issue at Stage One first.
- We try to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible but if a complaint is complex more time may be needed to investigate. It is therefore helpful if you can provide full details of the issue at the outset and ask for an early appointment to discuss it.
- If you are not satisfied with a response you receive at Stage One, you can ask that your complaint is escalated to Stage Two. Should you wish to do this you should contact Education Services at Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE or by telephone on (01294) 324400.
- If, after receiving the Stage Two final response letter you remain dissatisfied you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to consider your complaint and we'll tell you how to do this in the Stage Two response letter.
- Parent Councils have an important role in developing links between the school and the wider parent body and can often be helpful in dealing with issues of general concern. However, parents are advised that individual, personal complaints are not appropriate for raising via Parent Councils due to the possible need for confidentiality.
- Please note you can also raise concerns you may have with your local Councillor, MSP or MP but these will be handled under a different process to the Two Stage complaint process.

Section 3:

Educational Grants: Footwear, Clothing, Free School Meals, and Transport

Footwear and Clothing Grants

Parents receiving Universal Credit will normally be entitled to grants for footwear and clothing for their children. Universal Credit claimants' monthly income must not exceed £660.00, however, some parents earning more than this may still be eligible.

Parents who receive Income Support, Income based Job Seeker's Allowance, any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance, Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit only (with income under £17,005), both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit (with an income up to £7,920) may also still be entitled to grants for footwear and clothing for their children.

Parents who may be unsure whether they can apply should contact the Council Contact Centre on 01294 310000 or the Council's Welfare Reform Team on 0300 99 4606 for further advice. Information and application forms may be obtained from schools.

Free School Meals

Children of parents receiving Universal Credit (claimants' monthly income must not exceed £660.00), Income Support, Income based Job Seeker's Allowance, any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance, Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit (with an income up to £7,920) are entitled to a free midday meal and free milk. Parents and Carers should contact 01294 310000 for further information.

Please Note: **All** pupils in Primary 1 to 5 are entitled to a free school meal, which includes milk.

Other than Primary 1 to Primary 5 pupils, only those children whose parents receive job seeker's allowance or income support will be entitled to free milk. Milk may however be available for purchase in the school during the lunch period.

Further information can be found on the [Grants and Allowances](#) webpage.

Pupils are supplied with a menu in advance, and we encourage you to discuss this with your child before school and pre-order their lunch options on the iPay site.

You are welcome to provide your child with a packed lunch if you prefer and we encourage pupils to make healthy choices and eat a balanced diet. We request that pupils do not bring in cans or bottles of fizzy or isotonic juice to drink and that take-away food is not provided as a packed lunch.

School Transport

North Ayrshire Council has a policy of providing free transport to all pupils who live more than two miles walking distance from their catchment primary school or three or more miles from their catchment secondary school using the shortest suitable walking route. In addition, free transport may also be provided for whole or part of the journey between a pupil's main address and school (or other educational establishment) when the criteria outlined in section 4 of the [School Transport Policy](#) is met.

Applications for mainstream transport are made by parents and carers using North Ayrshire Council's Transport Hub [transport system](#). Applications may be submitted throughout the year and should be made as soon as confirmation of a place at a catchment establishment has been received. Please note free school transport will not be provided following a successful placing request. If you believe your child may require transport for another reason, please review the entitlement criteria in the School Transport Policy under Section 4 before discussing this with the school.

If places are available and no additional costs is incurred by the local authority, it may be possible to apply for privilege seat in transport provided by the authority, please liaise with North Ayrshire Transport Hub for further information (transporthub@north-ayrshire.gov.uk / 01294 541613). Where free transport is provided it may be necessary for pupils to walk a short distance to the vehicle pick-up point. Walking distance in total, including the distance from home to the pick-up point and from the drop-off point to the school in any one direction, will not exceed the Council's limits (see above section). It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child arrives at the pick-up point on time. It is also the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child behaves in a safe and acceptable manner while boarding, travelling in and leaving the vehicle. Misbehaviour can result in children losing the right to free transport.

Section 4: School Registration, Enrolment and Attendance

Registration and Enrolment

The date for registration of school beginners is advertised in the local press and is normally in January each year. Pupils will be registered in the school for their catchment area.

Parents are provided with information about the school and procedures for making placing requests, if required. Arrangements for meetings with parents and induction days for pupils will be notified during the spring and summer terms.

Parents of pupils who have moved to the area or who wish their child to transfer to the school should contact the school office for information about appropriate procedures and to arrange a visit to the school.

Parents are welcome to contact the Head Teacher at any time by visiting or telephoning the school.

Attendance at School/Lateness

It is the responsibility of parents of children of school age to educate their child(ren). Most do this by ensuring that their child(ren) attend(s) school regularly.

Attendance is recorded twice a day, morning and afternoon. Absence from school is recorded as authorised, unauthorised or temporarily excluded.

Parents are asked to inform the school by letter or telephone if their child is likely to be absent for some time, and to give the child a note on his or her return to school, confirming the reason for their absence. If there is no explanation from a child's parents, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised.

Every effort should be made to avoid family holidays during term time as this both disrupts the child's education and reduces learning time. Parents should inform the school by letter, before going on holiday, of the dates. Such absence will be authorised only where certain and very specific family circumstances exist. The majority of family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as unauthorised absence.

Parents may request that their children be permitted to be absent from school to make an extended visit to relatives. Only written requests detailing the destination, the duration and the provision that will be made for their continuing education will be granted. Such extended absences will be recorded separately from the normal attendance and absence information.

The School Inclusion Worker investigates unexplained absence, and the authority has the power to write to, interview or prosecute parents, or refer pupils to the Reporter to the Children's Panel, if necessary.

Structure of Classes

Primary schools educate pupils at seven broad year stages, Primary 1 to Primary 7. A year stage is defined as a group of pupils entering primary education at a common date. Schools are staffed based on the total number of pupils. However, the numbers of pupils at each year stage will vary. This means that Head Teachers are required to organise classes to make best use of available staff, resources and space to the benefit of all children in the school.

Pupils may, therefore, be taught in a single stage class or a composite class where two or more year stages are grouped together. This may also change as pupils move from one year to the next.

National guidelines on the curriculum indicate that pupils should progress through learning experiences tailored to their own needs and abilities. This means that pupils in all classes follow programmes designed to help them progress at their own level. This applies to all pupils regardless of whether or not they are in a composite or single year stage class.

The National agreement on class sizes states that the maximum number of pupils in a class is 25 in P1, 30 in P2 – P3, and 33 in P4 -7. In a composite class the maximum number is 25.

Transfer to Secondary School

Pupils are normally transferred between the ages of eleven and a half and twelve and a half, so that they will have the opportunity to complete at least 4 years of secondary education. Parents will be informed of the arrangements no later than January of the year preceding the date of transfer at the start of the new session.

**St Matthew's Academy,
Jack's Road,
Saltcoats
Tel No: 01294 606680**

During their time in P7, pupils are taken to St Matthew's Academy as part of the induction programme. Teachers from local primary schools and their secondary colleagues have worked together to create a Pupil Profile of Achievements which will be completed in Primary 7 and passed onto the secondary school. Teachers from both schools liaise to ensure a smooth transition which focuses on progression for pupils. Parents will be informed of the details of the visits when appropriate.

Section 5: Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence is the national curriculum for Scottish schools for learners from age 3 to 18. It aims to raise standards; prepare our children for a future they do not yet know and equip them for the jobs of tomorrow in a fast-changing world.

Curriculum for Excellence enables professionals to teach subjects creatively, to work together across the school and with other schools, to share best practice and explore learning together. Glow, Scotland's unique, world-leading, online network supports learners, teachers, and families in this.

Teachers and practitioners will share information to plan a child's "learning journey" from 3-18, ensuring children continue to work at their own pace whilst providing challenge upon which they can thrive.

Curriculum for Excellence balances the importance of knowledge and skills. Every child is entitled to a broad and deep general education where every single teacher and practitioner will be responsible for literacy and numeracy – the language and number skills that unlock other subjects and are vital to everyday life. There is emphasis too on health and wellbeing – to ensure that the school is a place where children feel safe and secure.

Curriculum for Excellence develops skills for learning, life and work to help young people go on to further study, secure work and navigate life. It brings real life into the classroom, making learning relevant and helps young people apply lessons to their life beyond the classroom. It links knowledge in one subject area to another helping children understand the world and make connections. It develops skills so that children can think for themselves, make sound judgements, challenge, enquire and find solutions.

Children's progress is assessed using a broad range of approaches to ensure children achieve their potential. Ultimately, Curriculum for Excellence aims to improve our children's life chances, to nurture **successful** learners, **confident** individuals, **effective** contributors, and **responsible** citizens, building on Scotland's reputation for great education.

The Capacities



Further Information about Curriculum for Excellence and the Experiences and Outcomes can be found on the Curriculum for Excellence website.

Extra-Curricular Activities

A wide and varied range of extra-curricular activities are provided by members of staff, Primary 7 sports leaders, North Ayrshire Active schools team and Young Sports Leaders, visiting specialists and the Family Learning Team. These can vary from term to term to ensure all children are offered a wide range of opportunities across the calendar year. They can take place before school at breakfast club, during lunch time, or after school. Often these include badminton, dance, athletics, dance, gymnastics, football and netball.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching for children and young people. Evidence of progress is gathered on an ongoing and informal basis through asking questions, observing children working together and making formative comments on their work. Children may also assess their own work or that of their classmates; this is called self and peer assessment. Some assessment is more formal such as projects, investigations and standardised assessments.

The assessment of children's progress throughout the BGE (Early Years – end of S3) is based on teachers' professional judgement. Teachers draw on their professional knowledge and understanding of the child; on the benchmarks for literacy and numeracy, which provide clear information about what children and young people should be able to do and demonstrate by the end of a Curriculum for Excellence Level; and on a wide range of assessment information.

Teachers of P1, P4, P7 and S3 are asked at the end of every school year whether children have achieved the relevant Curriculum for Excellence level for their stage in reading, writing, talking and listening (literacy), and their ability to understand and work with numbers (numeracy). Most children are expected to have achieved the early level by the end of P1, first level by the end of P4, second level by the end of P7 and third or fourth level by the end of S3.

The government has also introduced new national standardised assessments (SNSA) which cover some aspects of reading, writing and working with numbers. These assessments are completed online and are automatically marked by the online system giving teachers immediate feedback to help plan next steps and support children's progress.

Teachers remain best placed to know how the children in their class are progressing. Their professional judgement will continue to be the most important way of assessing your child's progress at school.

Parents, families and carers have a key role in helping children to learn. Your child's teacher will keep you informed about their progress. Please contact us if you have any concerns about their learning, assessment or for more information on how you can support your child's learning at home.

Homework

Families have a very important role in helping children get the best out of school and it is important to take an active interest in your child's progress at school. This can be done by:

- encouraging hard work and high standards at all times
- stressing the importance and relevance of what is learned at school

This year our focus for homework is on reading. The amount given will vary depending on the age and ability of individual pupils. Learning to read can be challenging and the process is made easier if families read with their child and discuss the story and pictures in a way that encourages enjoyment and a love of books and stories.

In the early and middle stages oral reading should be practiced regularly at home whereas in the upper primary, where children are competent in the mechanics of reading, a greater emphasis may be placed on silent reading and comprehension. Reading for enjoyment should be encouraged at all stages.

From time-to-time pupils are given assignments and personal projects which may involve research, investigation, preparing a speech, learning a poem or a similar activity.

We really appreciate the involvement of families and are very grateful for the support.

Section 6: School Improvement

Standards & Quality Report and Establishment Improvement Plan

Schools in North Ayrshire follow a Quality Improvement process designed to highlight strengths and identify areas for improvement. The process is based on the school's self-evaluation process with Heads of Service and Senior Managers involved in formal validation visits each session.

This validation process involves talking to pupils, staff and parents about learning and improvements made by the school. This results in actions for improvement for the school to take forward in their planning process.

In addition, themed reviews are undertaken from time to time e.g. to look and report on the quality of the Broad General Education (3-18) and Senior Phase Education within secondary schools. This process is based upon standards and expectations contained within the following National Standards documentation:

- National Improvement Framework
- How Good is Our School? 4
- How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?
- How Good is OUR School?

A Standards and Quality Report and Establishment Improvement Plan are produced on an annual basis by every school and centre. Staff, Parents/Carers, Young People and School Partners will play an active role in the development of these key school documents. Documents are available on request from the school.

Section 7: Support for your Child

Equalities

In line with North Ayrshire Council policy, educational provision is open to all pupils, regardless of sex, age, religion, race, disability or any other potential barrier and all reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that the curriculum is available to every child. Schools also have a duty to promote equality and to eliminate racist and other discriminatory behaviours.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 has been drawn up to tackle inequality and prevent discrimination against people on the basis of protected characteristics. It brings together several existing laws and aims to make understanding the law simpler and also introduces a new single public sector equality duty, which requires public bodies to actively advance equality.

The duties set out in Chapter 1 of Part 6 of the Equality Act apply to all schools. These provisions protect pupils at the school and in the case of admissions, those applying or wishing to apply for admission. Former pupils are also protected from discrimination or harassment.

Guidance on the Act and its requirements for schools in relation to the provision of education can be accessed via the Scottish Government website.

Child Protection

Education Services has a fundamental duty to contribute to the care and safety of all children and young people in North Ayrshire. In fulfilling this duty, the service must engage in close partnership with parents/carers and relevant agencies, primarily the Health and Social Care Partnership and where appropriate the Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration. The Service will work in partnership with a number of levels within the establishment or school within the cluster or local area and through Integrated Children's Services and Community Health Partnership.

The Standard Circular entitled, "Protecting and Safeguarding North Ayrshire's Children" provides guidance for policy and practice within all educational establishments. The Council is one of the key partners in the North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee, a multi-agency group which takes the lead role in ensuring that our children and young people are cared for, protected from harm, and grow up in a safe environment.

Each school has a named Child Protection Co-ordinator who is the main point of contact for school staff and for external agencies seeking contact with the school on child protection matters. There is an extensive staff-training programme available to staff and, in addition, at

the beginning of each school session all staff receive an update on child protection policies, safeguarding and procedures.

Inclusion

North Ayrshire Council is committed to supporting the well-being and educational progress of *all* learners including those with additional support needs. Including learners requires all staff to demonstrate commitment, innovation, and flexibility in order to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality learning opportunities and experiences. Our Inclusion Strategy states that:

An inclusive approach to education supports an ethos of achievement and high expectation, recognises difference, respects these differences, and sees differences between learners as opportunities for learning.

An inclusive approach to education promotes tolerance and a positive understanding of diversity.

An inclusive approach to education alleviates the barriers to learning, supports the achievement of all and has positive relationships at its heart.

The presumption of mainstream as outlined in Standards in Scotland's Schools (2000) sets out that children will be educated in a mainstream setting unless exceptional circumstances apply. North Ayrshire has a duty to ensure clear assessment outline the additional needs of a child or young person which may require support in an alternative provision.

Where this is the case, North Ayrshire has a clear process that supports the Team Around the Child (TAC) to make a recommendation for consideration of alternative provision. This is outlined in the Standard Circular E19 and requires establishment staff to work with parents and carers to ensure all supports have been put in place for a child or young person in their mainstream context before submitting clear evidence before requesting alternative provision. North Ayrshire council staff will then make a recommendation based on the evaluation of this evidence, a review of the needs of the young person and the current peer group in each setting.

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act, October 2002, requires local education authorities to prepare and implement accessibility strategies to improve, over time, access to education for young people with disabilities. Access covers:

- The physical building and grounds
- The curriculum (both formal and informal)
- Information on any educational planning that might affect the child or young person's education.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) (2009) Act sets out certain duties on local education authorities and confers certain rights on children and their parents. These duties include the need to:

- Identify, assess, and address the need for additional support for any child or young person failing to benefit from school education, for whatever reason.
- Seek and take account of the views of the child or young person on issues relating to their education.
- Engage in helpful partnership working with parents/carers and staff from other agencies.

Additional Support for Learning

Any child who needs more or different support to what is normally provided in schools or early years is said to have 'additional support needs'. This includes children who may need extra help with their education as a result of issues arising from social and emotional difficulties, bullying, physical disability, having English as an additional language, a sensory impairment or communication difficulty.

The Additional Support for Learning Act

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 came into force in November 2005. In June 2009, the Act was amended. These amendments form the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 and came into force on November 2010.

Main provisions of the Act

- The Act provides the legal framework underpinning the system for supporting children and young people in their education, and their families.
- This framework is based on the idea of additional support needs. This broad and inclusive term applies to children or young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education and to be included fully in their learning.
- The 2009 Act automatically deems that all looked after children and young people have additional support needs unless the education authority determine that they do not require additional support in order to benefit from school education.
- In addition, education authorities must consider whether each looked after child or young person for whose school education they are responsible requires a co-ordinated support plan.

Duties under the 'Additional Support for Learning' legislation

North Ayrshire must assess any pupil with additional support needs and provide any support necessary for them to benefit fully from their education. All the evidence says that it is best to intervene early to prevent difficulties developing and taking root. For example, by making sure reading is well taught and that all pupils gets encouragement and support at home we

can hopefully reduce the likelihood of the young person encountering literacy difficulties later on.

Whatever the type of challenge that arises, it is important to detect it early, develop a shared understanding of what is needed (the establishment may request extra specialised help to do this) and take action to help to pupil achieve. Whenever we start this process for any child or young person, we will always explain to them and to their parents or carers our concerns and what we will do to help.

The establishment can get support from a range of visiting professionals including educational psychologists. Each establishment has a link educational psychologist and staff can ask for informal advice on supporting learners. If more detailed individual help is required, they will talk to you about formally involving the educational psychologist. The educational psychologist can only be involved in consultation, collaborative assessment, and planning interventions for your child with your agreement.

Staged Intervention

A young person's need for support is addressed through a cycle of identification, assessment, planning, support and review. This process is called Staged Intervention.

In North Ayrshire we organise support under the following headings:

- Enhanced Universal Support
- Stage 1
- Stage 2

Universal support is a fundamental element of the service provided by all educational establishments. There may be times when a child or young person needs some additional support to help them achieve their full potential and this is where the stages of support need to be identified and explained.

Enhanced Universal

Some supports are considered as **Enhanced Universal**, reflecting that they are provided within universal services but are planned and delivered with enhancement to day-to-day practice.

Within **Enhanced Universal** a young person may require a higher level of support due to concerns surrounding their wellbeing or learning, or a combination of both.

The needs of the child or young person are met within their classroom or playroom with some adjustment to their environment, curriculum, and/or approaches to learning and teaching. Some aspects of work may be planned individually or as part of a group however this will be recorded as part of playroom or classroom planning. Class teachers and keyworkers will monitor and record progress.

Stage 1

This stage applies to children and young people whose support needs cannot be met through Enhanced Universal services. They require additional support available within their own establishment which may include Support for Learning and/or targeted pastoral support.

Stage 2

This stage signifies that the needs of the young person are significant and/or exceptional and are not being fully met through Enhanced Universal or Stage 1 supports and services. The young person requires more specialist and/or intensive support.

At both Stage 1 and 2, a Team Around the Child discussion will review the learner's strengths and needs, agreeing appropriate interventions and supports. The learner and their parent/carer must be fully involved in this process and the young person's targets and progress will be recorded using the North Ayrshire Staged Intervention planning format.

Where a child or young person has additional support needs, extra planning is required when they move to a new class, new school or when they are moving on from secondary school. How far ahead this transition planning needs to start depends on the young person's individual needs, but for most children and young people with Additional Support Needs transition planning should start at least one year before the date of the planned move.

Further advice and guidance around supporting needs can be found on the [ENQUIRE website](#).

Section 8:

Parental Involvement

Parental Engagement and Involvement

[NAC Parental Involvement Strategy](#)

All schools have clear systems in place for communicating with everyone in the parent forum. Communications with parents are clear, jargon-free, specific and easily accessible. A variety of methods and approaches are used by schools to communicate with the parent forum including face to face, traditional communication methods and digital media for example, X, Facebook. Considerations will always be given when communicating with parents who have literacy, language and communication challenges.

Schools ensure that parents know who to contact when they wish to discuss their child's learning or wellbeing and will seek to provide a private space for such discussions and make sure parents are given adequate time and support. Consideration will be given to family circumstances.

Parents are welcome to contact the school at any time to arrange an appointment to discuss any matter with the class teacher, Depute Head, Head Teacher or Head of Centre. New families are welcome to contact the school and request a suitable visiting time at any point throughout the session.

Parents are given opportunities to understand the way learning and teaching takes place in the classroom. This may be in the form of class visits to take part in the learning experience alongside their child or attending events which share the learning. Frequent invitations are issued to parents to participate in school activities such as open days, class assemblies, workshops and to assist with outings and visits, sports and concerts. There will be a series of early meetings for the parents of Primary 1 pupils and parents are kept informed of events with a range of newsletters, website updates, texts, invitations and social media sites.

A variety of methods will be used to ensure information about your child's progress is shared. Schools are encouraged to provide parents/carers with information on their children's progress at regular intervals throughout the year through a range of activities. There is an expectation that part of this will be in a written format.

Reporting Examples:

Individual Learners

- Written reports/ tracking reports
- Learning conversations with pupil/teacher/parent/carer
- Pupil reflections on their learning in logs

- Parent/ carer consultation / parents' meetings involving parent/teacher/pupil, as appropriate.
- Home/school diaries
- Profiling activities
- Learning walls and displays.

Groups of learners

- Assemblies
- Open day events
- School concerts/shows
- Social media
- Curriculum workshops led by children, young people and staff
- Parent Council meetings
- School/class newsletters

Parent Council

St Mark's is privileged to have a supportive Parent Council. They represent the parents, take an interest in a wide range of school issues and contribute sensibly to discussions in relation to these. In addition they are proactive in raising funds for the school, organising and running events for adults and children. Examples of the activities they have organised include bingo nights, family nights, school fayres, bag packing, Christmas raffles and school discos. They have supported trips to the pantomime, bought equipment such as playground toys or treats to welcome Primary one pupils or leaving gifts for Primary seven pupils, helped with social events for pupils such as leaving parties and discos and supported the school breakfast club.

Early Years Partnership with Parents

We acknowledge parents as the first educators of their children and recognise importance of a collaborative approach where staff and parents work together to support their child's learning.

We encourage good relationships with parents in the following ways:

- Invite them to school and Early Years events
- Involving them in settling in periods/transitions
- Discussing previous experiences/achievements and working together on new learning each term
- Parent newsletters
- Parent groups/workshops
- Stay and play sessions

Parentzone Scotland

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>

Section 9:

Pupil Data Collection and Protection Policies

The Scottish Government and its partners collect and use information about pupils through the *Pupil Census* to help to improve education across Scotland. This note explains why we need this information, how we use it and what we do to protect the information supplied to us.

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 Skills Development 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
- plan and implement targeted approaches to reducing the poverty-related attainment gap
- share good practice
- conduct teacher workforce planning
- target resources better
- enhance the quality of research to improve the lives of young people in Scotland
- provide a window on society, the economy and on the work and performance of government by:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/>

Data policy

Information about pupils' education is collected through our statistical surveys in partnership between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities through the ScotXed Programme which aims to help schools and Local Authorities by supporting efficient collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information. The Scottish Government then provides analysis of the data to support research, planning, management and monitoring of education services as well as to produce National Statistics publications.

Education data within Scottish Government is managed effectively by secure systems on secure servers 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 made publicly available by Scottish Government.

The individual data collected by Scottish Government through the Pupil Census is used for statistical and research purposes only.

Your data protection rights

Any sharing or linkage of data will be done under the strict control of Scottish Government, and will be consistent with their data policy and the National Data [National Data Linkage Guiding Principles](#) Guiding Principles. Decisions on the sharing or linkage of data will be taken in consultation with relevant colleagues and individuals within and outwith Scottish Government as part of a Data Access Panel. At all times the rights of the individual (children or adults) under the GDPR and other relevant legislation will be ensured. Further information can be found on:

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-exchange-of-data-scotxed/>

Concerns

If you have any concerns about the ScotXed data collections you can email the Data Protection & Information Assets Team on dpa@gov.scot or the Head of Education Analytical Services, Mick Wilson, at mick.wilson@gov.scot or by writing to Education Analytical Services, Area 2A-North, 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.

Alternatively complaints may be raised with the Information Commissioners Office at casework@ico.org.uk.

Appendix 1

Important Contacts

Head of Service

Andrew McClelland
North Ayrshire Council
Cunninghame House
IRVINE
KA12 8EE
01294 310000