

Firth Primary School



LEARNING TO BE OUR BEST TOGETHER

School Handbook

2024/2025

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Welcome from the Head Teacher

Welcome to Firth Primary School and Nursery. We strive to be a happy and welcoming school with confident, achieving and motivated pupils who are included in all aspects of their learning and school improvement.

As Head Teacher, I aim to ensure that the children achieve their full potential in developing their knowledge and understanding, skills and creativity in a safe, supported and nurturing environment.

We continue to embed our Vision, Values and Aims and have begun a review of our Curriculum Rationale. We are enthusiastic to be delivering high-quality learning and teaching experiences by engaging in professional learning focussing on our shared vision. We aspire to be a genuine part of our wider school community, and we value the partners who support us to deliver a great curriculum.

We very much appreciate parental involvement in the learning and life of Firth Primary and Nursery and use the opportunity to work with our Parent Council to realise the shared aims and ambitious vision.

We also work closely with our linked school and our cluster schools who are part of our Learning Community in the West Mainland and across Orkney. We liaise with our associated secondary school, Stromness Academy, and we have also forged links with Kirkwall Grammar School.

I very much look forward to working in partnership with you and implementing new and innovative ideas, to create a positive school environment for all our children.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Emma Jane Rendall

Vision, Values and Aims

Our Vision:

We strive to be a happy and welcoming school with confident, achieving and motivated pupils who are included in the entirety of the curriculum.



LEARNING TO BE OUR BEST TOGETHER

Our Values:

KINDNESS
HONESTY
RESPONSIBILITY
ACCEPTANCE
FRIENDSHIP

Our Aims:

To ensure that the children achieve their full potential in developing their knowledge and understanding, skills and creativity in a safe, supported and nurturing environment. For everyone in our school to be:

READY
RESPECTFUL
SAFE

Our Staff

School Staff

Head Teacher	Emma Jane Rendall
Principal Teacher	Christina Allnutt
P7 Class Teacher	Lucy Clements
P5/6 Class Teacher	Hannah Cheyne
P1-4 Principal Teacher	Christina Allnutt
P1-4 PT Management Cover (Wednesdays)	Jenny Rosie
P1-4 Class Teacher (Monday - Tuesday)	Emma Drever
P1-4 Class Teacher (Wednesday - Friday)	Emma Moodie
Educational Psychologist	Imogen Kerr
Support for Learning Teacher	Kelly Wilson
Support for Learning Assistant	Shona Clouston
Support for Learning Assistant	April Copeland

Nursery Staff

Senior Early Years Practitioner	Erica Drever
Lead Early Years Practitioner	Kayleigh Marcus
Early Years Practitioner	Chloe Flett
Early Years Practitioner	Emily Dennison
Early Years Practitioner	Mollie Atkinson

Itinerant Staff

Art	Kirsteen Murray
Physical Education (PE)	Diane Currie
Music	Matthew Mellor
Choir	Matthew Mellor
Strings	Lynn Procter
Cello	Lilian Kelly
Brass	Russ Murray
Woodwind	Russ Murray

School Assistants

Clerical Assistant and Auxiliary	Rachael Brammah
Janitor	Bruce Moar

Kitchen Staff

Head Cook	Jenna Stevenson
Kitchen Assistant	Fiona Pirie
Kitchen Assistant	Karen Sinclair

Cleaning Staff

Cleaner	Nicole Harper
Cleaner	vacant

Contact Information



Head Teacher: Emma Jane Rendall
Principal Teacher: Christina Allnutt
Clerical Assistant: Rachael Brammah

Firth Primary School
Firth
Orkney
KW17 2ES

Please use the office hours for all standard communications by phone:

Office Hours 9am – 12 noon

phone: 01856 761 212

fax: 01856 761 101

Emergency contact will be possible out of office hours between 12 noon and 3:30pm, but the office is not officially manned after 12 noon.

Other communications can happen using email or Seesaw messages.

email: admin.firth@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk

website: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/or/firth/>

School Hours



Primary School Hours

Children are supervised from 9:15am and we ask respectfully that children are not on school grounds before this time, as it leaves the children and school vulnerable if an accident were to happen.

Playground Supervision from 9:15am

School goes in at 9:30am

School ends at 3:30pm

Nursery Hours

Morning Session begins at 9:30am

Morning session ends at 12 noon

Afternoon session begins at 1pm

Afternoon session ends at 3:30pm

Office Hours

Office Administration 9am - 12 noon

Term Dates

2024 – 2025

Education, Leisure and Housing

School term dates - 2024 / 2025 (all dates are inclusive)

Term 1 2024	Tuesday 20 August – Friday 11 October. (39 days)
October holidays	Monday 14 October – Tuesday 29 October.
Term 2	Wednesday 30 October – Friday 20 December. (38 days)
Christmas holidays	Monday 23 December – Friday 3 January.
Term 3 2025	Monday 6 January – Friday 4 April. (61 days)
Schools closed	Thursday 13 February – Tuesday 18 February.
Spring holidays	Monday 7 April – Monday 21 April (Easter Monday 21 April)
Term 4	Tuesday 22 April – Friday 4 July. (52 days)
Schools closed	Monday 5 May (May Day holiday).
Schools closed	Monday 2 June.
Staff Only, In-service days are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday 19 August.• Monday 28 and Tuesday 29 October.• Tuesday 18 February.• Monday 2 June.

Registration and Enrolment



The date for registration of new school entrants is advertised in our nurseries and on our school website. The OIC website also displays the relevant information:

School website: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/or/firth/>

Local Authority website: www.orkney.gov.uk

Registration tends to be open from January. Pupils should be registered in the school for their catchment area. For Firth Primary School the areas are Finstown and Firth Parish.

Parents will be provided with information about the school when they register their child.

Parents who want to send their child to a school out with the catchment school, must make a placing request. It is important to note that a successful placing request into a primary school does not guarantee a successful placing request when a child is transferring to secondary school.

Parents of pupils who have moved into the catchment area, or who wish their child to transfer to the school, should contact the school office for information.

Travelling to School

Children at Firth Primary travel to school by a variety of means – school bus, car, walking, cycling or by scooter. To support children to cross the busy Kirkwall – Stromness road, which runs through the village, there is a School Crossing Patrol Officer to help before and after the school day. Children in P1 and P2 are kept at school until they are collected unless they are on the bus. From P3 children can walk home if parents allow them to do so.

Many children are entitled to the provision of school transport depending on the distance you live from the school building and the capacity of the bus.

Qualifying distance from school		
School Pupil	Easter to October	October to Easter
Age 7 and under	Over 2 miles	Over 1.5 miles
Age 8 and over	Over 3 miles	Over 1.5 miles

For further information about school transport please contact the education Transport Officer on 01856873535, extension 2427.

Further details of various aspects of school transport provision including the School Transport Policy, newsletters and advice to and the responsibilities of parents/carers is available at www.orkney.gov.uk. Alternatively, for updates there is an OIC school transport Facebook page.

The school bus has a designated bus parking lane directly in front of the school. Pupils are required to wear seatbelts during their journey.

For information on OIC guidelines please view the School Transport Policy at [School Transport Policy](#)

Pupils are encouraged to walk or cycle to school as part of a healthy lifestyle choice. Their skills for travel are supported by the school through the delivery of lessons about crossing roads, safe walking routes, visibility, cycling, safety clothing and cycling helmets and sharing the road with other users. This is delivered through JRSO led groups learning actively together, class lessons and whole school initiatives including Bikeability training.

Junior Road Safety Officers organise every pupil in the school with a hi-vis vest after the October holidays when the day light is shorter. These will be collected in after the February break.

Visiting the School



Orkney Islands Council have procedures to ensure the safety and security of pupils and staff at school.

We use a number of security measures including a visitors' sign in book and badges while visitors are within the school building.

Anyone visiting the school is asked to report to the school office at the main entrance where school staff will welcome you. Please make sure the main gate is closed behind you.

Children are asked not to open the door to visitors, so please don't think they are being rude. However, they can go and get an adult if there is no-one in the office.

During school hours the playground and playpark are for the use of our children and for them to enjoy. Members of the public, families of pupils and family pets are not permitted to be within the playground boundary without permission during the school day.

For nursery collection, there is a separate entrance to the side of the building. We ask for you to be mindful to close the nursery gates when entering and exiting.

We will only release our nursery children directly to the nominated pick-up adult and we must have a handover in the nursery setting to their key worker.

School Meals



There is a wide selection of choices available for lunch every day including, hot dinner, sandwiches, soup and baked tatties. The menu will be sent to you via email every term, and it can also be found on the school website.

School dinners are ordered and paid for online using iPayimpact and can be accessed here - [Welcome to iPayimpact](#)

If no selection is made children will be provided with a hot main meal and dessert.

Orkney Islands Council provides assistance with free school meals and clothing allowances to families on a low income who meet the eligibility criteria. To be awarded this assistance, proof must be provided that you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

The current clothing allowance is £120.00 per eligible primary child and £150.00 per eligible secondary child. This is paid once per year, normally between August and 31 March, depending on when you submit your application.

Eligibility

You can apply for free school meals and clothing allowances if you are receiving:

- Universal Credit and your monthly earned income is under £660
- Income Support
- Income-Based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (contributions-based is not accepted)
- Child Tax Credit **but not** Working Tax Credit, and your annual household income is less than £17,005
- Child Tax Credit **and** Working Tax Credit, and your annual household income is less than £7,920
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

If you are aged between 16 and 18 years old and receive any of these benefits in your own right, you can claim free school meals and a clothing allowance for yourself.

You may also be eligible for assistance if you are caring for a formally 'Looked After Child' (LAC).

Please note that the above criteria may be subject to change.

Nursery

Children in nursery (aged two years and up) will be automatically entitled to a free school meal where they attend their setting over the middle of the day. Clothing allowances are not payable for nursery children.

Primary 1 to 5

All children in Primary 1 to 5 are automatically entitled to a free school meal (known as universal entitlement). However, you will need to complete an application to apply for the clothing allowance.

Primary 6 and 7

If you are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed above, you should complete an application form to apply for free school meals and clothing allowances.

Please use the following link to [Apply for Free School Meals and Clothing Allowances](#).



Being Prepared for School

Everyone should bring along a school bag which is big enough to hold an A4 folder, a snack for break time, a water bottle and a pencil case, which fits in a tray if it is to be left at school.



Children are welcome to wear school uniform if they wish. The school uniform is in the form of sweatshirts (navy), polo shirts (red) and cardigans (navy). These are all available to order at Logo Orkney. P7 children can wear a red leadership sweatshirt with their name and class on the back.

Children will need a change of footwear and a pair of shorts or suitable leggings for PE lessons. They can keep their kit on their peg in a PE kit bag with their name on it.



It is advisable to take wellie boots to school on wet days as we go outside in all weathers and the surfaces do get muddy.

During very bad weather, the pupils have an indoor break with recreational resources provided in their classrooms



There is a lost property box in the school where items are placed if they are unidentified, and this will be available to look through when you visit the school. (Please label everything!)



Our Safe & Healthy School

NUTS

Bring along a snack at break time, this can be your choice but we encourage a healthy option. We also ask if you can avoid nuts so we reduce the risk of allergic reactions.



SWEET TREATS



Although it is very kind and thoughtful for parents to provide a birthday cake or sweet treats to celebrate their children's birthday at school, we are sorry to say that we can not accept this donation. There are different reasons for this decision, one being that we could end up with 92 cakes a year!

TOOTHBRUSHING

We all know how important it is to brush our teeth regularly and we try to help with learning these skills at school through our Childs Smile toothbrushing programme. This begins in nursery and continues through to P4. We have a toothbrushing assistant who visits the school most days and the children brush their teeth with supervision. This is not to replace brushing at home but to add an extra opportunity during the day.



GATES



Please remember to close all school gates as you enter and leave the grounds. These are barriers for young children to keep them safe from the road but also to prevent entry of loose dogs and to maintain a secure boundary for our school children.

FIRE ALARMS

Every term we practice our fire plan by having drills. This means the fire alarms will be set off at random times and the whole school has to evacuate in good time. Each drill may be different with obstacles in the way to recreate real life scenarios. Evaluations of the drill will support our efficiency in everyone leaving the building safely, if there were to be a real emergency.



The Learning Experience

For all the up-to-date information about your child's learning experiences you can log onto Seesaw, your child's online learning journal. Here you will be able to find lots of information about what is happening in class and how your child is getting on, as well as being able to privately message the teacher with any questions or concerns.

The class teacher will update your child's Progress & Attainment folder on Seesaw with pieces of work which have been evaluated. This means you will be able to see your child's attainment level for different curricular areas; such as maths, reading and writing, and you will be able to comment on their progress. We hope you will add your thoughts and encouragement for your child to see.

There will be an End of Year Report which is a record of the levels attained and progress made for the year. This will also be an opportunity to hear about Expressive Arts: Music, Art, Drama and PE.

To find out about what is happening across the school community you can log onto the school website.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/or/firth/>

From the website you can access the **CLASS BLOGS** where we showcase a sample of our school highlights to share with the world:



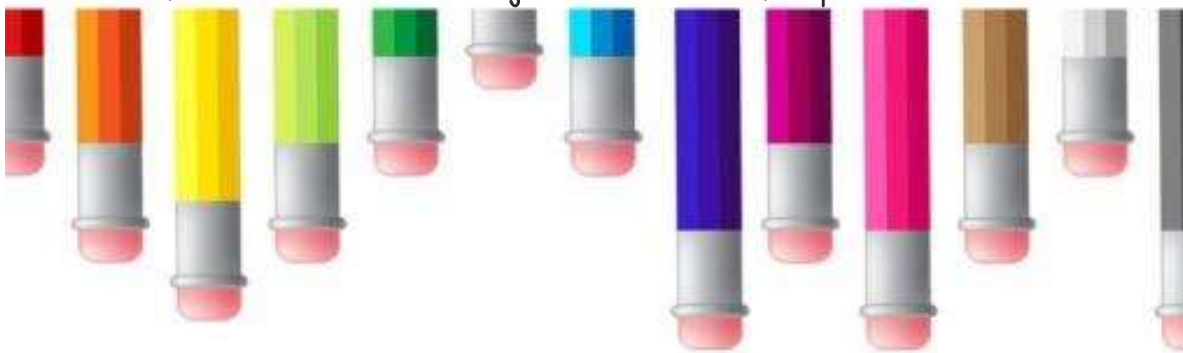
Homework

Homework is often something that divides opinion. There has been research to show that homework does not have a direct impact on a child's achievements in school, however, there has also been research to show that homework in the first years of school does help support progress. It is also widely considered good practice for older primary children to build the habit of doing homework, so they are better prepared for secondary school.

Parental involvement has been shown to be a major contributor to the successes of children in school generally. This can take many forms, of which homework is just one.

Homework is often seen by parents as an opportunity to be involved with their child's learning and to know what they are doing at school. A great opportunity for individual help.

It can sometimes be seen as a chance to support your child with any misconceptions and practice areas of the curriculum which just need a bit of repetition.



At Firth Primary we support the provision of choice, as one rule does not fit all.

As a result, we would like to share the policy we worked on with our Parent Council:

HOMEWORK

- All activities should reinforce learning done in class.
- There should be a reading, writing and maths activity provided each week.
- There should be one digital element each week to support digital readiness.
- Pupils should have a week to complete the activities and teachers should value it.
- Paper copies should be provided for ease of management and less screen time.
- There are no repercussions for not completing homework set.

Pupil Equity Fund



The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is being provided as part of the Attainment Scotland Fund.

The PEF is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap. Every council area is benefitting from the fund and is based on the number of pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible for clothing allowances or free school meals so by applying for free school meals, not only will your child be receiving nutritional benefits, but you will also be supporting the school. For every pupil that registers for free school meals, the school will receive funding through PEF. This funding can be used to support a wide range of initiatives and can help those who experience barriers to learning.

We strongly encourage all parents who are eligible for free school meals to apply for them.

The funding is to be spent at the discretion of the head teacher working in partnership with parents, pupils and staff to devise plans which focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Firth Primary School has benefitted from purchasing some great new resources which have assisted in creating a motivating and enriched learning environment. We continue to work with the Parent Council to identify priorities and focus the PEF funding for the coming year.

Firth Primary Parent Council

The main objectives of our Parent Council are:

1. To create a welcoming school which is inclusive to all parents.
2. To promote a partnership between the school, its pupils and all its parents.
3. To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils.
4. To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters.

The Parent Council is the "go between" the School and the Parent Forum. (Every parent is automatically a member of the Parent Forum), we have the important role of maintaining and improving the links between the school and all parents ensuring that information is shared and the school gets feedback.

We have a general committee who have meetings once per term plus our AGM, these meetings are not too formal and are open to any member of the Parent Forum, we always welcome new faces. We also have parent representatives for each class, who can be contacted, and the minutes of the meetings are made available on the website.

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in different ways, for example, helping to organise a fundraising event, baking a cake, giving up some of your spare time to assist with school trips, or simply coming along and giving your support at one of the organised events.

We want to offer as many families as possible the opportunity to contribute in some way to their school and the education of their children.

You can raise any issues, ideas or concerns directly to the Chairperson by contacting us via friendsoffirth@hotmail.com or by contacting the appropriate class representative, who will ensure the matter is passed on and raised at the next meeting.

The Parent council also have a Blog on the school website where they will share some of their actions throughout the year.



NOTES