

Orphir Community School

Term 3 Newsletter

Friday 16 January 2026

NEWS

	JANUARY			
15	Swimming at Stromness Swimming Pool			
22	Swimming at Stromness Swimming Pool			
23	Burns' Supper, 6pm for 6.30pm at the school			
29	Swimming at Stromness Swimming Pool			
	FEBRUARY			
2	Parents of P7 pupils - tour of KGS at 3.45pm. P7 pupils are welcome too.			
5	Swimming at Stromness Swimming Pool			
12	School closed to pupils			
13	School closed to pupils			
16	School closed to pupils			
17	School closed to pupils			
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Music	PE		Strings	Art
			Netball	
			Orphir Youth Activity Group	Football

Welcome

What a start to the year that was last week wasn't it! Thanks to you all for your patience and for keeping an eye on the communications that came out. Also, thanks on behalf of the staff for sending your children to school in this weather dressed according to the conditions. This makes a huge difference to not only their comfort and warmth but ensures that whilst it is here, they can enjoy the white stuff properly. We want to add an extra thanks for your vigilance at pick up times by ensuring you are in the playground to physically take your child(ren) at hand over. This is making the end of day transition so smooth we are very grateful. We also hope that by us as staff changing where we park (based on parental feedback) it is giving you more space.

Staffing

Mr Darby, our Support for Learning Assistant, will be leaving us at the end of next month. Mr Darby has been with us since back in August 2021 and has played a key role in supporting individual children and groups of children across both classes. We wish Mr Darby every success with his next move and thank him for what he has done here for us. Mr Darby's last day will be Friday 27th February and recruitment for his replacement will begin in due course.

Four Contexts of Learning

The four contexts of learning are a framework for teaching and learning that help define our curriculum, what we do, how we do it and why we do it. They are nationally recognised and all

schools across Scotland should have them at the forefront of their practice. They are as follows:

- **Curriculum areas and subjects**

The curriculum areas and subjects are the organizers for the experiences and outcomes from Early, First and Second level from Nursery to P7.

- **Interdisciplinary learning**

This is the space in the curriculum for learning that goes beyond subject boundaries, allowing students to make connections between different areas of learning.

- **Ethos and life of the school as a community**

This is the positive climate of respect and trust based on shared values across the school community.

- **Opportunities for personal achievement**

These are the opportunities for students to achieve both in and beyond the classroom, which can help build confidence, motivation, and resilience.

Examples of how the Four Contexts of Learning have been demonstrated at Orphir over Term 2 will come out over the next week or two.

School Meals

Thank you to everyone for ordering the meals via ipayimpact.

- Where possible, please do these by the Thursday of the preceding week.
- Please remember that if any changes are to be made to a child's order, they **must** be made before 9.00am of that day. This gives the technology contingency time for data to transfer to the school meals system. The cooks do check the numbers just before 10.00am at Stromness Academy. Any changes made after that time are too late.

Hi-vis Amnesty

Our tub is empty of medium sized hi-vis waistcoats. If you have any at home, please pop them in with the children. We got a lovely lot back the other day which helped but I am sure there are some more squirreled away in Orphir somewhere.

Active Play Booklet

Active play isn't just fun - it's a key part of helping children grow up healthy, confident, and happy. Whether it's climbing, chasing, jumping, or exploring, this booklet is packed with easy ideas, step-by-step guides, and local park listings to turn everyday moments into playful adventures. Designed for local parents and carers, it's your go to guide for getting kids moving, laughing, and learning - right in Orkney.

https://www.orphircommunityschool.co.uk/_files/ugd/06eb82_d769641541f6407fbf99de96e6e36a79.pdf

Term 2 Attendance

At the end of term 2 we continued to monitor pupil attendance and for all pupils from P1 to P7 we calculated their percentage attendance so far from August and for term 2 alone. Our overall attendance for term 2 was 94% and overall for the year so far is sitting at 93%. Although our target is 95% this is not bad considering how many bugs were flying about on the run up to

Christmas. It may sound like we keep banging on about this but attendance monitoring remains a priority for all schools across Orkney (and Scotland) and actually has many positives.

EVENTS

From the Orphir Community School Forum:



Burns' Supper

23rd January 2026, 6pm.

Please use the following link if you want to book 'virtual' tickets - donations on the night for ticket price, plus a raffle. Music by Ronald Anderson, John Dearness and Jim Marwick.

[Family Burns' Supper Tickets 23 January 2026, 6.00pm Orphir Community School - Fill in form](#)

P4-7 Swimming

P4-7 start their block of swimming lessons this week on a Thursday PM. They will take part in 8 sessions at Stromness pool and will be accompanied by Mr Dearness and Claire. If anyone has any issues supplying kit or goggles then please reach out to Shona.

Holiday

A reminder that school is closed for pupils on the following days:

- Thursday 12th February
- Friday 13th February
- Monday 16th February
- Tuesday 17th February (in-service training)

World Book Day

Word Book Day will be recognised on Thursday 5th March 2025.

Reporting Progress Evenings

Term 3 Reporting Progress Evenings are scheduled for the following dates:

- Tuesday 11th March.
- Wednesday 12th March.

Shona will be in touch nearer the time but if you have a preference for a date and time then please contact her at your earliest convenience.

P7 Hoy Residential

Mrs Williams will be the staff member accompanying our P7s to the Hoy residential this year. They will be in Hoy from Tuesday 5th May to Friday 8th May. More information will follow to P7 families when available.

Parent Council

The next Parent Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 4th March here at the school at 6 PM. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings. If you have anything you would like to add to the agenda for the meeting please contact Liz Johnston (Chair) or contact Shona here at the school.

Class Assemblies

Both classes will present their class assemblies on Monday 30th March at 2:30 PM.

From School Nurses:
Dear Parents/Carers

The Parenting Toolkit

We would like to inform you of an upcoming parenting course being delivered by the School Health Team. This course is for parents and carers of school aged children.

The course is 'The Parenting Toolkit by Caroline Penney', which is an evidence-based programme designed to help parents to be more reflective and intentional in their parenting approaches. The Parenting Toolkit supports parents and carers to build positive family relationships, understand their child's behaviour, develop effective parenting strategies and feel more confident in their parenting role.

This programme may be particularly beneficial for families who would benefit from support around behaviour, communication, and emotional wellbeing.

The course will commence on 26 February and will run for 5 weeks and can be book via the following link - [NHS Orkney School Health Team - The Parenting Toolkit 5 week course Tickets, Thu 26 Feb 2026 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#) or by contacting the School Health Team.

For further information regarding course content or future dates, please contact the School Health Team via email or telephone – 01856 888262.

Kind regards,



School Health Team
School Health
The Balfour | Foreland Road | Kirkwall | KW15 1NZ
Email: ork.schoolnurses@nhs.scot

Finally from me...

Just a peedie thank you for supporting us so fully in all that we do here. On a daily basis I overhear the staff making comment on how great our families are here and I fully agree. As much as I love the dark nights and mornings (believe it or not) I am looking forward to the lighter ones returning and the changes that brings.

Grant Thomson

Grant Thomson
Head Teacher

Education, Communities and Housing

School term dates - 2025 / 2026 (all dates are inclusive)

Term 1 2025	Tuesday 19 August* – Friday 10 October. (39 days)
October holidays	Monday 13 October – Tuesday 28 October.
Term 2	Wednesday 29 October – Friday 19 December. (38 days)
Christmas holidays	Monday 22 December – Friday 2 January.
Term 3 2026	Monday 5 January – Friday 3 April. (61 days)
Schools closed	Thursday 12 February – Tuesday 17 February.
Spring holidays	Monday 6 April – Friday 17 April. (Easter Monday 6 April).
Term 4	Monday 20 April – Thursday 2 July. (52 days)
Schools closed	Monday 4 May (May Day holiday).
Schools closed	Monday 1 June.
Staff Only, In-service days are: - Monday 18 August. - Monday 27 – Tuesday 28 October. - Tuesday 17 February. - Monday 1 June.	