



Papay Community School Handbook 2025-26

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1. Useful Information

Address	Papa Westray Community School Papa Westray Orkney KW17 2BU
Telephone & Email address	(01857) 644 226 admin.papawestray@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk
Headteacher	Mr Timothy Ross
Headteacher Relied Teacher	Mrs Marian Groat
Expressive Arts Teachers	Ms Sheila Moodie (Art) Mr Wayne Duncan (Music) Mrs Amy Smith (PE)
Early Years Lead Practitioner	Miss Daryl McLeod
Auxiliary/Clerical Assistant	Mrs Marina Cursiter
Cook	Mrs Jane Rendall
Janitor	Mrs Anne Hourston
Cleaner	Mrs Kirstin Hourston and Mr Paul Baker
School Transport	Papay Community Co-op 644 321
Education Department:	Council Offices Kirkwall (01856) 873535
School Health Service School Dental Service	01856 885 400 01856 875 415
Parent Council Chair	Mr Jamie Lischke Milne

2. Vision, Values and Aims



**We are Doondies.
Proud of Papay and our Learning.**

Our Vision: We are Doondies. Proud of Papay and our Learning.

Our Values are:

- We show kindness to each other and our world
- We take pride in our learning
- We are at the heart of our community
- We are welcoming and inclusive

Our Aims:

- To create bespoke opportunities for learning which are stimulating and supportive to enable every child to succeed.
- To value and nurture each child as an individual.
- To promote curiosity, independence and excitement for learning.
- To work together with families, partners and the Papay community for the benefit of our young people.
- For our staff to feel valued as part of a team focused on Papay's young people.
- For our young people to become independent, respectful doondies at the heart of our community and beyond.

3. Papay School: Introduction

Papay School is a peedie (small) school on one of the northernmost islands of Orkney, off the North coast of Scotland. Children attend our school between the ages of 5 and 12, with nursery children between the ages of 3 and 4. There are about 30 houses on our island and our families make a living through farming, fishing and craft work as well as running the island shop, post office and all the things that keep island life going.

We get quite a lot of summer visitors who come to enjoy our beautiful island, to see the bird life and to visit our historic sights – the Knap of Howar is the earliest standing house in Northern Europe and St Boniface Kirk is one of the oldest Christian sites in the North of Scotland.

To reach us you would travel by boat from Kirkwall (2 ½ hours) or Westray (15 minutes), or you could fly in the 8-seater plane from Kirkwall (20 minutes). On our island there is a small airport and two piers – the old pier and the new pier. The ferry comes to the new pier and it is loaded and unloaded by a crane.

Children come to our school starting with nursery when they are 3 or 4 years old. Then they start in Primary 1 when they are 4 or 5 years old. Then they go through Primary 2, Primary 3, etc until they finish in Primary 7, aged 11 or 12 years old. After Primary 7 children transition to secondary school in Westray. To get to school in Westray they travel by boat.

In our school we have one main classroom and one smaller classroom leading off it. There is also a nursery. We have a hall for lunch, PE, drama, games and activities. Families can use facilities, including, the hall when the school is closed, through membership of the Community Association. We also have a school kitchen where our cook makes tasty school lunches. Outside we have a playground, a garden and a greenhouse where we grow flowers and vegetables. We are developing a shed area for nursery and school use so that we can do more outside activities. There is also a community play-park and a football field just across the road.

4. School Schedule

Monday - Friday

Children arrive at approximately 8:55 a.m.
School starts at 9:00 a.m.

A morning break of 15 minutes is taken every day. The timing of this is flexible to fit in with activities but is usually at 10:45 -11:00 a.m. Lunch break is 12:30 -1:15 p.m.

Monday – Thursday
Friday

School finishes 3.15 p.m.
School finishes at 2.00 p.m.

Where appropriate, an afternoon break may be taken to fit in with our learning activities and the weather!

5. Nursery Schedule

Nursery sessions start at 9:00 a.m. each morning and finish at 12.30. The afternoon session starts at 1.15 p.m. If nursery children are staying for the full day, school lunch is provided and eaten alongside the school pupils. Please get in touch if you think you may be eligible for Early Learning and Childcare provision. More details can be found on the Orkney Islands Council website: <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/P/Early-Learning-and-Childcare.htm>

6. Organisation of classes

Our school has a single multi-composite class for Primary 1-7 pupils. Within this class setting there will be opportunities for group and individual work. Work is differentiated to ensure that it is challenging and exciting for all pupils. We work closely alongside the nursery to share learning experiences where possible. Nursery children may join in with classroom activities and at times during the day, P1/2 children may join in with nursery activities. This provides plenty of opportunity for developing social skills as well as providing greater variety of experience.

7. Playtime arrangements

Before playtime each day we have a healthy snack, often fruit. This is currently funded and has no cost.

If the weather is fine the children are encouraged to be outside. During unfavorable conditions the children stay in school. We try to ensure that the children have an opportunity for active play, even in bad weather, as this is an important aspect of their day. Please let us know if your child needs to stay inside.

8. Insurance

Public liability insurance is held in respect of all school children.

9. Transport

Free school transport is provided in line with OIC policy and is provided by the Papay Coop. Please contact the school for more details.

Parents may, of course, take their children by car or allow them to go by bicycle. We ask that when cycling, children wear a cycle helmet and have passed their Cycle Proficiency Test. We work alongside the Orkney Active Schools Team to provide Bikability training in school when it is required. If you wish to make any alteration in your child's method of transport, please make sure that both the driver and the school are informed in advance

10. Early Closures

In exceptional weather conditions the school may close early. The Education Department contacts the school transport service and consults with the Headteacher to decide if school should be cancelled for the day. If so, a message is put on Radio Orkney at 7.30am. In case of school closures, we do our best to contact all parents individually.

Sometimes closure is necessary after school is in session. If the children are to be sent home early, each home will be contacted in order to ensure that no child is sent out to an empty house.

11. Excursions

During the school year there are sometimes visits and excursions both within and out with Papay. These form an integral part of our curriculum and have many benefits to the children. The authority guidelines are followed regarding pupil safety.

Trips within Papay are within the schools Extended Boundary and are sometimes planned at short notice to fit in with class learning. We will not always send home a letter for short trips within Papay.

For trips that are extended, or off Papay, we will always send home a trip letter with a consent form.

We work with partners to ensure that costs for all school trips are minimised.

12. Safety

Children are not allowed outside the school grounds during the school day unless they are supervised or have special permission. Within the school and the school grounds great emphasis is placed on safety. A Fire Drill will be held once a term and all the firefighting equipment is regularly serviced.

13. Medicines, Medical and Dental Treatment

Teachers are not permitted to prescribe any medicines but will cooperate by administering any medicine prescribed by a doctor. OIC guidelines will be followed should the need for arise for staff to administer medicine, which will require parents to fill in a form at the time stating the medicine, dosage etc.; alternatively, some parents may prefer to call into school themselves to administer the dose.

Dental inspection takes place annually and parents are informed by letter of the results. Parents are also encouraged to make arrangements themselves for a more detailed inspection, etc. We take part in a tooth-brushing scheme whereby children are given a toothbrush and toothpaste and encouraged to brush their teeth once per day as part of the school day.

Please make sure the school is informed of any medical condition such as allergy, asthma or epilepsy. Hearing and eye-sight are tested at intervals throughout the child's primary schooling. Vaccinations are offered according to current guidelines and parents will always receive advance notice of this.

Qualified members of staff carry out minor first aid treatment. In cases of emergency we contact the island nurse or doctor.

14. Admissions

In Scotland, there is one intake to Primary School in August of each year.

If your child's birthday is on or between 1 March and the first day of school in August, your child will start school the beginning of the Autumn term when they are 5. If your child's 5th birthday is between the second day of the autumn term and the end of February your child can start school. However, you have the option to defer your child's entry to school. If you choose to defer your child, please confirm this with your Early Learning and Childcare setting and your child will automatically be carried forward for an additional year. You will not need to complete a registration form for Primary One.

To register your child for primary one, please use the [Primary One registration form](#).

Information concerning nursery enrolment can be found here:

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/P/Early-Learning-and-Childcare.htm>

15. Attendance

The school is legally required to maintain a record of school attendance including both authorised and unauthorised absences. If a child is absent, a letter or phone call to the school is expected. If we haven't heard about an absence by 9:30 a.m. we will phone home. If there is no answer we will call your emergency contact number.

Orkney Islands Council have an expectation that pupil attendance is greater than or equal to 95%. If attendance falls below this level, we will contact you regarding how we might support increased attendance.

When parents have to take their children on holiday at a time other than during the school holidays, it helps if the school is informed in advance, so that some steps can be taken to

minimise disruption to education. Absences due to family holiday are automatically recorded as 'unauthorised' in line with OIC policy.

16. Transition to Westray Junior High School

Children at Papay transfer to Westray Junior High School ([Westray Junior High School](#)) after completion of Primary 7. WJHS offers secondary education between S1 and S4. For S5 and S6, pupils attend Kirkwall Grammar School ([Kirkwall Grammar School - HOME](#)) and stay at the Papdale Halls of Residence ([Papdale Halls of Residence](#)) during the week.

Relationships are developed with Westray throughout the children's time at school, starting in nursery. We aim to create particular links, both formally and informally, as part of the Primary 7 transition during the Spring and Summer terms of Primary 7.

In order to ensure a smooth transition:

- Primary 7 pupils have the opportunity to attend transition days at the High School.
- Primary staff meet with Secondary staff to ensure information about both wellbeing and academic progress is shared.
- Online tools such as Microsoft Teams or Glow Email may be used to share information with the transition P7 and family.

Children travel to Westray Junior High by boat daily. Transition days allow an opportunity to get used to this.

17. Clothing

The school colours are red and yellow and there are a variety of clothes that can be purchased from local retailers which have the school logo on them. Uniform is not mandatory every day, although some of us wear it daily. Clothing with the school logo embroidered on can be purchased from Trek and Travel in Kirkwall.

We are enjoying doing lots of outdoor learning at present and children should keep a pair of wellington boots in school. Please also provide a change of shoes available for indoor use only. The school aim to provide waterproofs for each child but a coat should be worn each day so that it is available for break times.

For P.E. children need T-shirt, shorts and suitable footwear; these can be kept in a PE bag, in school all week and taken home for washing periodically.

There is a clothing grant available for eligible families, please see Section 27 for more information.

18. Behaviour

Our school functions based on clear, fair, high expectations, with first attention being given to best practice. The children enjoy an environment where they are given the responsibility to make decisions and where necessary are supported to acknowledge their behaviour, to discuss it and if required to consider a possible next step.

Three keywords are used in school to represent the school rules and expectations.

Safe – Ready – Respect

The school has an Anti-Bullying policy in line with the Orkney Islands Council policy.

19. Getting in touch with School

The Parent-Teacher relationship is an extremely important one in your child's life. In a peedie school like Papay, our children *and their families* are at the centre of everything we do. Strong family connections with the school will lead to happy children and motivated learners. This year the following are all available as methods of getting in touch. Getting in touch for a catch-up is also very welcome!

A – Pop-in

You are of course most welcome to either pop-in or phone school. The best time to do this would be between either 8am and 9am or 3.15 and 4.30pm.

B – Come to an open afternoon or event

We have regular parents' afternoons, often towards the middle and end of a term, when we invite you to join us to look together with the children at some aspect of school life. This sometimes involves seeing something the children have been working on, or it may be a family workshop session.

C – Parents Evening and End-of-year Report

More formal parent meetings are held twice during the year to discuss your child's progress. At the end of the school year you will receive a written report on the progress of your child.

D – Email

Please check your email regularly. *All* notices of importance will now be sent out by email rather than paper and we ask that you check you provide us with an email address that you check regularly. We have a school notice board which is also regularly updated to help keep you informed of the various school activities.

20. Parent Council

The Parent Council is another important channel of communication. All parents are currently members of the Parent Council by default with an additional two co-opted members. The Headteacher takes part in Parent Council meetings in an advisory capacity. Parent council meetings take place on a termly basis and more often if there are issues arising. The OIC Education Department representative is Service Improvement Officer Morag Miller and the clerk is Mike Jones.

21. Complaints Procedure

Complaints relating to any matter should be made direct to the Head Teacher. If this approach is not suitable, then contact should be made with our Service Manager for Primary Education, Morag Miller, (Morag.Miller@orkney.gov.uk).

Complaints are managed in line with the Orkney Islands Council policy. [Complaints Procedure](#)

22. School Meals

School meals are funded and are therefore free from Nursery through to the end of Primary 5. In Primary 6 and 7, a book of 10 dinner tickets can be purchased by contacting the school office. If you are on a low income, your child/children may be entitled to free school meals, see section 27 Financial Support.

23. Curriculum

The school follows the Scottish Government guidelines for the Curriculum for Excellence ([Parentzone Scotland | Education Scotland](#)). We are in the process of creating a 'Papay Community School Curriculum and Learning Rationale' which outlines our curriculum offer. This will be available later this year.

Broadly the subjects taught are:

Literacy and Language - English

Modern Foreign Languages – French and opportunities to experience a second language.

Over the last 18 months this has included: German, Orcadian dialect and British Sign Language

Mathematics and Numeracy

Health and Wellbeing

Social Studies

Technologies

Sciences

Religious and Moral Education

Expressive Arts

Once a week an itinerant specialist visits the island to provide lessons in Art, Music or PE on a rolling basis. In-service training and professional meetings ensure that school staff are abreast of the best of current teaching techniques.

Much of the teaching is done in an active and practical way to encourage the children to be independent learners and to achieve the Four Capacities ([What is Curriculum for Excellence?](#)). Where appropriate we use a topic-based approach so that children develop and use their skills and knowledge in a variety of contexts. Children work as a class, in groups or individually depending on the activity.

In P1, P4 and P7, children complete online standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy as part of everyday learning and teaching. The assessments help to identify children's progress, providing diagnostic information to support teachers' professional judgement. The assessments are as inclusive as possible to accommodate the needs of children and young people who require additional support. There is no pass or fail and children and young people do not have to revise or prepare for these assessments.

24. Learning Through Play

Many of the learning experiences of young children come through their own play, whether the materials are made for the purpose, or simply those things found at hand. The imagination is nurtured by stories, construction, dressing up, painting, modeling and play with sand and water. Playing with others gives children the opportunity to share and co-operate. All of this is vital to the development of early language development and mathematical ideas.

25. Homework

In addition to encouraging children to read at home, children will sometimes be set activities which are intended to support and extend school learning at home.

Help from parents to complete homework tasks is valuable, both in supporting children to create successful routines, and in encouraging them to complete tasks to the best of their ability. We welcome your input and would ask that you contact us if you are unsure or concerned about anything to do with homework.

26. School Fund

The school sometimes raises money through coffee mornings, sales and concerts etc. to fund excursions or buy equipment. The assistance and support of the parents and community are greatly appreciated in these fund-raising attempts.

The school receives funding from the Cost Crisis Isles Fund to support participation in school. This fund can be used in a variety of ways to ensure that finance is not a barrier to taking part in any of our activities. Across Orkney this fund has supported the purchase of coats, wellies, shoes and school trips. Should you feel that you are in need of support, please contact the headteacher directly.

27. Financial Support

Orkney Islands Council do their best to provide information of financial support which is available to families. We encourage all families to look at the following link to confirm eligibility for financial support towards the cost of school clothing and schools meals.

[School Meals and Clothing Allowances](#)

Scotland's Best Start Grant payments are available through Social Security Scotland, primarily aimed at children throughout pregnancy, Early Learning and upon entering Primary 1. More information can be found here: [Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods - mygov.scot](#)

Throughout the school year, we often provide information about other financial support as information/opportunities arise. We will do this by email.

28. Data Collection and Transfer

Transferring Educational Data About Pupils: OIC Policy

In order that the Council can comply with statutory regulations in respect of supporting children's education, the Council will share pupil data with certain organisations. The sharing of this data is done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The main collector of data is the Scottish Executive Education Department.

The Council also passes pupil data to NHS Orkney to allow them to comply with their legal duties. NHS Orkney are under a duty to provide for the medical and dental supervision of pupils at school in. Data shared will include name, date of birth, school and class name.

Each year data related to academic attainment is collected by Orkney Islands Council. It is used to ensure education quality control and to support schools in targeting areas for development.