



Onthank Early Childhood Centre

Meiklewood Road
Kilmarnock
KA3 2ES

Tel: 01563 534660

Headteacher: Fiona Kellett
fiona.kellett@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Parent Handbook

2018/19

*This document is available to read in alternative formats.
Please contact your head of establishment for details.*

Please note:

- *Throughout this handbook, the word “parent” is intended to mean the guardian or any person who has parental responsibilities (within the section 1 (3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) for the care of a child, or young person.*

Emergency Contact Information

In the event of an emergency affecting your child’s school/centre, we have well-established procedures in place to cope with almost all situations:

- **Group Texts** are sent out to parents to advise of an emergency. Parents should provide the head of establishment or school/centre office with an up to date mobile phone number to enable automatic contact via text messaging.
- In the event of an emergency, the Council’s Communications Team work quickly to update the Council website, Facebook and Twitter with the latest developments and advice on what to do.
- The team also work closely with **Westsound Radio** (DAB 11B, MW 1035) and **West FM** (96.7, 97.5 and 106.7) and statements and updates are issued frequently.

We understand an emergency can be a very stressful time and phone lines are often used by emergency services, so it’s important that we try and keep lines clear.

As parents, you are advised that **before** telephoning your child’s educational establishment, you should first check the Council webpage, for news and announcements: www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

You can also check the **Facebook** page: www.facebook.com/eastayrshire/
or, **Twitter**: [East Ayrshire Twitter](#)

Thank you for your co-operation.

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Welcome

Linda McAulay-Griffiths, *Head of Education*

Welcome to your school handbook.

In the following pages, we aim to give you the information you and your child might need to benefit fully from the wide range of educational services and facilities available.

We aim to ensure every child or young person, regardless of background, has an equal opportunity to enjoy a first class education, equipping them with the skills, experiences and opportunities to succeed in school or centre, further education, work and life.

For this to happen successfully, we need a genuine partnership with parents, making sure your child can fulfil their potential.

Just like you, we want the best for your child, for them to be the best they can be.

If you want to know about your child's progress or their entitlement to a service and you cannot find the information you need here, please contact your school, or Early Childhood Centre directly – the contact details are on the front cover of this handbook.

Our staff are happy to explain anything of concern to you and will assist you in every way possible – please just get in touch.

I know your child will enjoy their time with us as they grow, learn and progress every day.

By working together, we will ensure your child will benefit from a great education and, if you are interested in how you might contribute to school life, possibly on the Parent Council or by volunteering, please let us know.

Kindest regards,

Linda McAulay-Griffiths



East Ayrshire Council

Community Plan

The Community Plan (2015/30) is the strategic planning document for the delivery of all public services in East Ayrshire.

Our vision is:

East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable and meet people's needs.

In partnership and through consultation with our communities, we have identified three themes which we will focus on during the life of our Community Plan: Economy and Skills; Safer Communities and Wellbeing. www.eastayrshirecommunityplan.org/Our-Themes/KeyThemes.aspx

Service Improvement Plans

Service Improvement Plans are an essential element of the Council's performance management and improvement framework. They set out the key issues for delivering services in support of the Community Plan Vision and priorities, aligned to the National Improvement Framework (2017); provide a focus on performance improvement aligned to the Single Outcome Agreement; and describe the service specific risks that may impact on the delivery of the Service. *A brief summary of your school/centre plan is at the back of this handbook, with a web link for additional information.*

[The Education Standards and Quality Report](#), published in accordance with Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, identifies the services key successes and areas for improvement.

Children and Young People's Service

Our vision for children and young people is set out in our Children and Young People's Service Plan:

We want to ensure that each young person in East Ayrshire, including those who are not yet born have the best start in life. Therefore our commitment to children and young people, their families and carers is to provide them with the support they need, when and where they need it in order to help them achieve their aspirations and potential.

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/C/Children-and-Young-Peoples-Service-Plan-2015.pdf>

Section 1

Education in East Ayrshire

Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence is Scotland's national curriculum. It provides a coherent and inclusive curriculum from 3-18 years, wherever learning is taking place including: Early Childhood Centres, schools, colleges and community learning.

There are five levels and these are flexible, depending on pupils' needs and abilities.

- **Early** - the pre-school years and P1 or later for some.
- **First** - to the end of P4, but earlier or later for some.
- **Second** - to the end of P7, but earlier or later for some. We work closely within our Education Groups and P7 pupils and parents to facilitate the transition from primary to secondary school.
- **Third and Fourth** – S1 to S3. S3 marks the end of the broad general education phase and is a time when pupils choose courses which will lead to national qualifications. The fourth level broadly equates to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 4. The fourth level experiences and outcomes are intended to provide possibilities for choice and refine your child's education.
- **Senior phase** - S4 to S6, and college or other forms of study. In S6, pupils will have opportunities to study programmes involving independent and blended learning with partners from Higher and Further Education and the business community.

Learning and Teaching

S1 – S3 Curriculum

From pre-school to the end of S3, pupils receive a broad general education, giving them the skills and experiences to become:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens
- effective contributors in school, their community and in life.

These are known as the **four capacities**.

Learning experiences outside the classroom are also encouraged, helping to link lessons to real life. Most learners at the third level will progress into the fourth level before the end of S3, laying strong foundations for more specialised learning.

Learners are provided with a broad, balanced set of experiences designed around the curriculum areas of:

- Languages and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Health and Wellbeing
- Religious and Moral Education
- Social Studies
- Sciences
- Technologies
- Expressive Arts

The core curriculum consists of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. These permeate and underpin learning in all other curricular areas. Attainment and achievement in these areas are regularly assessed and reviewed by the school to ensure standards are maintained or improved.

Senior Phase: S4 – S6 Curriculum

Those in the senior phase will have options to study that reflect their abilities and aspirations. These include or combine staying on at school, going to college, or university, work or community-based learning and volunteering.

These options offer the opportunity to study for qualifications and enhance skills important to their success in learning, life and work.

In addition to new qualifications developed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) which support the Curriculum for Excellence, young people can achieve qualifications from a wider range of providers and more flexible study options now include:

- being able to take qualifications over one or two years
- taking National 4 and 5 qualifications in S4, S5 and S6 or, possibly
- bypassing these and working directly towards Highers.

Qualification Levels and Progression

| SCQF Level | Current Level | Progression |
|------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Level 1 | National 1 | National 2 (N2) |
| Level 2 | National 2 | National 3 (N3) |
| Level 3 | National 3 | National 4 (N4) |
| Level 4 | National 4 | National 5 (N5) |
| Level 5 | National 5 | National 6 (N6) |
| Level 6 | National 6 (Higher) | National 7 (N7) (Advanced Higher) |
| Level 7 | National 7 | National 8 (N8) |

Learners are given opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work with a continuous focus on:

- Enterprise and Creativity
- Citizenship and International Education
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Health & Wellbeing
- Sustainable Development
- Digital Technology

Personal Support / Career Planning

Throughout the Junior and Senior Phases, pupils are supported to achieve their best and to plan and prepare for further study or the world of work.

Vocational learning, including work experience, careers advice and business, university and college links all complement the work done through Mentoring for Effective Learning classes and by Guidance and subject teachers to develop skills for learning, life and work.

Assessment and reporting

Assessment is an important part of the Curriculum for Excellence and, at all levels, pupils' progress is closely monitored by teachers and staff.

In turn, teachers and staff will work with pupils reflecting on their results, looking at their strengths and learning needs and agreeing next steps and action based on these.

As they progress, pupils become more involved in this process, as they develop the skills to make effective judgments on their own learning – developing personal expertise that will be important to them throughout life.

Testing and assessment also helps teachers plan learning experiences which are motivating and challenging.

Children who may have additional support needs, or who require a co-ordinated support plan, will be assessed in a way suited to their individual requirements.

Further information is available from the head of establishment at your child's school.

Class size policy

Currently, the maximum number of children in classes is:

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Primary 1 | 25 |
| Primary 2 and Primary 3 | 30 |
| Primary 4 to Primary 7 | 33 |

The exception to this is a composite class, which has a maximum size of 25.

A composite class is one in which children from two or more years are grouped together (for example, P2 and 3) or, in some small schools three years may be grouped together. More information on composite classes is available at:

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/C/CompositeClasses.pdf

Early Childhood Centres are registered with the Care Inspectorate for a maximum number of children in specific age ranges and this varies from centre to centre.

Section 2

Useful information

Your role as a parent

We want the best start in life for every young person in East Ayrshire, including those who are not yet born.

Your role as a parent is vital and we know you will want to play an active part all through your child's educational journey.

You are automatically part of the Parent Forum at your child's school/centre which can form a smaller body called the Parent Council to represent them.

Some Early Childhood Centres may have a Parents' Committee. The Parent Council represents parents' views and supports the school/centre in its work with pupils, reporting back to the Parent Forum.

In addition, the Parent Council organises fund-raising events and encourages links between the school/centre, parents, pupils and the wider community.

Parent helpers/volunteers are welcome and your school/centre will be able to advise on the opportunities available to assist at events and activities.

To get involved as a volunteer, you will have to undergo a Disclosure Scotland PVG check before you can help out in school/centre.

Communication

We are keen to maintain excellent and open communication links with parents and have a number of ways in which we do this:

- Newsletters which are posted on the school/centre website throughout the year.
- We will contact you by telephone if there is every anything specific that we wish to discuss with you. Should you ever wish to discuss any aspect of your child's development, please phone the school/centre and an appointment to meet will be arranged at a mutually convenient time.
- The school/centre homework diary is another means of communication where we can share information about your child. In addition to homework, your child will also bring home samples of work for you to see and discuss with them.
- We will keep you informed of your child's progress in terms of learning and achievement. This may include telephone calls, letters, emails, written reports, parents' workshops and/or parents' evenings. Your child's teacher may also share ideas about how you can help your child's build on their strengths as well as working on progress and development needs.

Starting school

When you enrol your child, their original birth certificate will be needed. A copy of this will be taken and the original will be returned to you.

We do this to comply with the terms of the Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 (see Section 3 of this handbook) and to help determine who has parental rights for a child.

For children born *after* May 2006, if both parents are named on the birth certificate, then both have parental rights and we will record both names on our system.

Parental rights are different for children born *before* May 2006.

In this case the father will only have parental rights if he is named on the birth certificate *and* if he was married to the mother at the time of the child's birth.

A child's name cannot be changed and a parent cannot be removed from the system without written consent from all parties with parental rights for the child.

Early learning and childcare admissions

Local authorities require to provide a minimum of 600 hours of free early learning and childcare to all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. Information leaflets are available for parents and carers in all local authority Early Childhood Centres and in partner centres.

Transition

Transition arrangements for Early Childhood Centres, Primary Schools and Special Educational Needs schools are managed by each individual establishment.

Please refer to your school/centre's own section at the back of this handbook, or contact the school/centre directly for more information.

Early entry to primary school

If you want to discuss whether your child should start primary school early, then please contact the school directly for more information and advice on your options.

Deferred entry to primary school

If your child is aged between four and a half and five, you can choose to enrol your child in school early, or defer entry until the following August. However, you can only do this if your child's birthday falls between February and September.

You will need to register your child at the school in your catchment area, during enrolment week (dates will be publicised on the Council website) and the option to defer entry can be discussed.

You can also discuss deferred entry with staff in an Early Childhood Centre or partner centre (if attending). If your child does not go to an Early Childhood Centre, or partner centre, you can get an application from us at: Education (Early Years), London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU, or by calling 01563 576004.

For children with September to December birthdays, application forms need to be completed and returned to the above address before the last day in February.

Placing requests and appeals

If you want to send your child to a school outside your catchment area, you need to complete a school placing request form. However, if you do this, please remember that your child will not be entitled to free school transport to and from school.

Placing requests are decided by the Council's Head of Education. If you wish to appeal a decision, you must do so, in writing, within 28 days of receiving it.

An Appeal Panel will be arranged, made up of a Councillor and two parent council representatives. An officer from the Council's Legal Services team will also attend the hearing to provide advice to the panel. The panel will either grant your appeal, or agree with the original decision.

If you remain unhappy with the decision, you have the right to make a final appeal at the Sheriff Court within 28 days of the appeals panel's decision.

Secondary schools

We work hard to make sure that every pupil benefits from an education best suited to their needs, helping them to succeed in school, in their community, in work and in life.

To do that, we will offer an education that provides specialisation and depth, preparing pupils to gain the best possible level of achievement. We also offer a wide range of activities and opportunities for pupils to develop skills for learning, life and work.

Our aim is for all pupils to leave school with an offer of a meaningful, appropriate, relevant and attractive prospect for further training, learning or employment.

All secondary schools work closely with a range of further education colleges, local businesses, third parties and the Council to offer a host of different training, education and experience opportunities to enhance their skills and prospects.

Looked after and accommodated children and young people

Sometimes, a child is unable to live at home and if this happens, we have a legal responsibility to care for them. This care can be provided in foster families, residential houses, residential schools, or with relatives (Kinship Care) depending on their needs and circumstances.

Where possible, children will continue to go to their original school to minimise disruption to their lives. All schools/centre have a staff member who will be aware of any looked-after child at their school and they will help support any issues or concerns that the child might have, making any other person involved in the child's care aware of this.

Foster carers and residential care staff who act in place of a child's parents also have exactly the same access to support and advice that we would give to any other parent.

In these situations, a child's teacher will usually be made aware of the circumstances and they will be supported by school management and social workers, if appropriate.

Children who are looked after and accommodated will be supported, included and treated no differently in school than their peers.

Attendance and absence

Attendance and absence

The law requires all parents to provide an education for their child.

We take attendance at school/centre seriously and follow up on unauthorised absences, or continued absence from school/centre, involving other partners if necessary.

You are responsible for ensuring that your child attends school/centre regularly and arrives on time. You are responsible for ensuring the safety of your child on their journeys to and from school/centre, except when they are on any school/centre transport we provide.

Regular and punctual attendance is linked closely to achievement and staff will work with parents to ensure that children can achieve their full potential.

The law requires that educational establishments maintain an accurate record of attendance and absence of each pupil. Parents are requested to assist in this process by informing the school or centre if children are to be absent for any reason.

This is how absence is recorded in our school/centres:

- Primary schools note attendance twice a day - morning and afternoon. In secondary schools attendance is recorded each period rather than morning and afternoon only and texts are sent to parents if their child is absent from school.
- In Early Childhood Centres, parents are required to sign a register when dropping a child off at the centre and when collecting them.
- Where your child's absence is approved, for example a medical appointment or the school or centre is notified of a sickness absence, it is marked as an **authorised** absence.
- Where an absence is unexplained by the parent the absence is marked as **unauthorised**.
- If your child is not going to be attending, please let us know by 9.15 am on the first day of absence, explaining the reason. When your child returns, please send them with a note, confirming the reason for absence.

Where a child exhibits a pattern of absence which may warrant investigation – and if we cannot contact you, or your other emergency contacts – then other appropriate support services may be contacted.

This might include other family members, a social worker, a health visitor or other concerned party, requesting that they visit your home to investigate and report back on their findings.

Illness or accident during school hours

If your child feels unwell during class they should tell the class teacher/practitioner and, where necessary, a first aider will be called to attend. If we do need to send your child home, we will contact you to make arrangements.

Your child should not go home without permission and pupils who are being sent home due to illness must be picked up by a parent, or other responsible adult (eg. a relative)

In the event of an accident or illness which requires referral to the local Medical Practice and/or to the Accident and Emergency Services, parents or the designated emergency contact will be informed.

Holidays in school/centre time

The Scottish Government requires that holidays taken during term time should be recorded as unauthorised absence unless there are special, exceptional circumstances.

Should you wish to remove your child from school/centre to attend a family holiday you must inform the head of establishment. This will be recorded as unauthorised absence, though there may at times be exceptional family circumstances, which should be discussed with the head teacher well in advance.

Parents are advised to limit the number of holidays taken during term time, to minimise disruption to a child's education. For annual holiday dates for East Ayrshire schools/centres, please visit the following website, or contact the school/centre office.

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/SchoolHolidays.aspx

Spiritual, social, moral and cultural values

Occasionally, parents from different religious communities may wish their children to be absent from school to celebrate religious events and we will support this.

We believe that religious and moral values help children become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

However, you can choose to withdraw your child from religious observance and we will respect your wishes, making arrangements for your child to undertake an alternative activity. Your child will never be disadvantaged as a result of withdrawing from religious observance.

School/centre trips and outdoor learning

It is important for children to learn about the world beyond the classroom or playroom and we will offer regular opportunities for your child to learn in the school/centre grounds, in the local community and beyond.

At the start of the school/centre year, we will ask you to consent to regular outdoor learning sessions for your child, with medical and emergency contacts being requested. If your child has any conditions we should be aware of, please let us know.

When trips are planned we will tell you in advance, saying where and when these will take place and you can let us know if you don't want your child to take part. Your child will need suitable outdoor clothing and, for any visits that are further afield, residential or of a more adventurous nature, we will again ask for your consent.

Opportunities for All

Opportunities for All focuses on young people in the 16-19 age group. It provides increased opportunities to those young people most at risk of not entering education, employment or training when they leave school.

We offer these pupils an Activity Agreement – a programme of activity tailored to their needs which aims to re-engage them and equip them with skills to progress into more formal training or learning.

It is based on partnership working between a wide number of partners, businesses, training and voluntary agencies.

School uniform

Early Childhood Centres

Children have the best fun when they are doing creative and activity-based work. We always try to make sure they wear aprons but it can be messy fun, so please dress your child in suitable clothing.

Please also make sure that your child has suitable outdoor clothing as outdoor learning takes place on a regular basis.

Other schools

Our schools have a dress code. For more specific information, please contact your school/centre. There are forms of dress and footwear which are unacceptable in school/centre such as clothes which:

- might encourage rivalry/offence (such as football colours, photos, wording)
- could cause health and safety difficulties (loose-fitting, dangling earrings)
- are made of flammable material (such as shell suits)
- might cause damage to flooring (high heels)
- carry advertising, particularly for alcohol, tobacco or drugs,
- could be used to inflict damage on other pupils, or be used by others to do so

In addition, earrings or other body piercing jewellery should not be worn for any PE-related activity. However, your child will never be deprived of any educational benefit as a result of not conforming to the dress code.

Help with clothing and footwear costs

If you get Universal Credit, or other benefits, you may be entitled to grants for free school meals, footwear and clothing.

You can get more information and an application form from your school, or from local Council Offices. You can also download an application form here:

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/C/ClothingGrantFreeSchoolMealsApplicationForm.pdf

The clothing grant is £100 per eligible child. Please note that if your child is starting in fifth year of school, the grant will not be paid until your child starts that year.

School meals

Primary, Secondary and Special School Meals

All children in primaries 1 to 3 are entitled to a free school meal.

This is a great opportunity for children to enjoy the social interaction of eating in an environment where they can try different foods every day and it can also help to increase their concentration for their afternoon classes.

Our award winning meals service offers nutritionally balanced, well-presented food in an environment that is sensitive to the needs of pupils.

We are the only Council to have achieved nine consecutive Gold Soil Association Food Awards since 2008. We also back using valued local suppliers for our fresh ingredients.

School meals provide a good lunchtime experience with an important break in the day away from the classroom, while still being in the safety of the school.

School lunch breaks should be an interesting and enjoyable time and our philosophy is to help children towards a good diet by providing an attractive and interesting range of wholesome, cooked food, made from excellent, fresh, quality ingredients.

Menus and other information can be found at: www.eac.eu/schoolmeals.

The management of the Catering Service in your school is provided by the Council through Onsite Services. The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Act 2007 sets out in detail the national nutritional food standards we follow.

Free school meals and milk

The Nursery Milk Scheme entitles children under five to free milk. Water can be provided as an alternative if your child does not want milk, or has a milk allergy.

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit, or other benefits, your child may also be entitled to free school meals.

You can get an application form at your school, or during school holidays, from Kilmarnock and Cumnock Registration Offices. There's also a web link here:

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Benefits/Benefits-EducationAndSchool/FreeSchoolMeals/FreeSchoolMealsMilk.aspx>

Some children who attend Early Childhood Centres may also receive a meal – please ask at the centre regarding eligibility and local arrangements as the service may depend on the age of your child and the hours attended.

Online School Payments

A safe and secure system of online school payments is being introduced to all primary and secondary schools, removing the need for your child to carry cash. The payment service is being provided by ParentPay: <https://www.parentpay.com/>

ParentPay is a secure online payment system allowing parents to pay for school meals, trips, uniforms and much more.

Parents who do not have access to online facilities or wish to continue to pay in cash can do so by paying through Paypoint facilities at local shops.

Benefits for parents:

- make payments whenever and wherever you like
- no need to worry about your child carrying cash to school
- monitor and make payments by instalments for larger items such as school trips
- a single login for all your children regardless of which school they attend
- alerts for low balances via email and/or SMS text

Further information on online school payments is available online at:

www.eac.eu/onlineschoolpayments

Cashless catering

Cashless catering systems are also being introduced to all primary and secondary schools in East Ayrshire in conjunction with the introduction of Online School Payments. Cashless catering will be provided by Nationwide Retail Systems Limited.

It means you will be able to pay for school meals and snacks using the Online Payments system and will be able to view your child's menu choices, as well as track their spending.

Primary 1 to 3 pupils and other pupils who are entitled to free school meals will have their meal allowance added to their account every day.

A biometric thumb image will be used in the majority of schools to identify pupils and link them to their record on the cashless catering system.

To access the service, you need to consent for your child's biometric data to be stored on the cashless catering system. It's incredibly safe and anonymous.

Further information on online school payments is available at:

www.eac.eu/onlineschoolpayments

Additional support, health care and emergencies

Additional Support for Learning

Occasionally, a child may face difficulties preventing them from effective learning. We identify them as having additional support needs, which may be short term, or for their whole school journey.

Our Early Childhood Centres have a variety of procedures to assist in the early identification of children with additional support needs and planning will take place at the earliest possible stage.

Children and young people who have been identified as having additional support needs will be supported through an Action Plan (AP), Individual Learning Plan (ILP) or in some cases a Coordinated Support Plan (CSP).

You and your child will be fully involved in developing these plans at all stages.

Additional and more specific information on Additional Support Needs can be found on our website:

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/SupportForPupils/AdditionalSupportforLearning.aspx

Medical conditions

It's essential that you let us know of any particular medical conditions or requirement(s) your child might have. Written parental consent is also required for the administration of medicines.

Please let the school/centre know of any change in your contact information, any change in a child's medical condition and of arrangements we should make should your child become ill, or need to be taken home.

Dental health

The Childsmile Nursery and School Programmes provide preventive oral health advice and support for children aged three and upwards.

Free oral health packs containing a toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste and oral health information is given to all children in Early Childhood Centres, partner centres and in Primary 1. This programme follows on from the Early Years baby pack, given out during baby's first year. You can find out more here: <http://www.child-smile.org.uk/>

Daily supervised tooth brushing takes place in all Early Childhood Centres and partner centres. Additional preventive care is offered with the application of fluoride varnish twice a year. Every year, all primary 1 and 7 pupils are offered a free dental inspection in school.

This helps to make sure you and your child are receiving all the support needed to maintain your child's dental health - and take any steps required to remedy any problems that may have arisen. The data collected is also useful for planning and evaluating dental health care initiatives directed towards improvements.

Hearing impairment service

The Ayrshire Hearing Impairment Service supports hearing impaired children and their families from diagnosis until school leaving age.

Our Teachers of the Deaf and our Sign Language Assistant also visit children at home and in educational establishments throughout North, South and East Ayrshire.

The Service will listen to you, your thoughts and ideas and help you to learn about your child's hearing loss.

It will help explain your child's hospital audiograms and reports and advise on your child's language development.

It will also work with you to provide the best possible support for your child, from diagnosis of a hearing loss until they leave school.

They can also introduce you to other parents and offer information about other local services.

For more information call 01563 551219, or email: hearingimpairment.service@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

East Ayrshire Psychological Services

Our educational psychologists make visits to our schools regularly. Their role is to assist and help children experiencing barriers to their learning, by providing advice and consultation, through working with teachers, staff and parents.

The educational psychologist can be involved in consultation around general issues that may arise regarding particular children.

The educational psychologist will not undertake formal assessment, or meet with your child, without your prior consent and this will be discussed with you by the school.

Where consent is given, the school will keep you up to date with the support on offer, any needs that are identified and the educational psychologist's role in supporting your child. Other school staff may become involved in supporting your child and, again, this will also be discussed with you as part of the process.

The school can give you more information on the psychological service, or you can visit the website: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/eapsychservices/>

East Ayrshire Support Team (EAST)

EAST helps by providing support with early identification/assessment of a child's needs.

They can then offer support through curriculum development, planning of teaching, mentoring, reviewing and staff development.

The service is made up of different specialist teams:

- **The Core Team:** offers direct support to schools
- **English as an Additional Language** helps children with limited, or no English, or those who appear fluent but are not achieving their full potential
- **Visual Impairment Team** supports children with visual impairment and also offers a service to pre-3 children and their families
- **Early Language Centre** supports children from pre-school to P3 who have a severe, specific language delay or disorder
- **Hospital Education Service** supports children and young people who are admitted to hospital for an extended period or are frequently re-admitted
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder Outreach Team** – supports children who have significant Social Communication Difficulty including Autism Spectrum Disorder

All schools have access to a core EAST teacher on a needs-led basis.

For information to other related services for young people, see:

<http://www.eastayrshire.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/ActivitiesAndSupportForYoungPeople/SupportForYoungPeopleSchoolAndEducation/EastAyrshiresupportteam.aspx>

If you believe your child has additional support needs please contact your school/centre, or get in touch with us on 01563 555640.

Child protection

The head teacher has responsibility for all child protection issues and this includes:

- Establishing a positive ethos which supports and values children and contributes to their welfare and protection.
- Ensuring that child protection guidelines are brought to the attention of all staff.
- Making sure there is a named child protection co-ordinator for the school.
- Developing policy and practice to meet national and local authority guidance.

Anti-bullying

We want every child in East Ayrshire to grow up free from bullying behaviour and we're fully committed to making sure children and young people become confident individuals and responsible citizens.

We take bullying very seriously and work to prevent it.

Should an incidence of bullying occur, we will respond quickly and effectively. You can find more information on our Respectful Relationships Policy at: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/SupportForPupils/Anti-Bullying.aspx>

Role of Staff

We expect our staff to act in the best interests of children at all times and, in co-operation with other key agencies, to protect children from harm and abuse.

Where there are grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, staff will observe, report, record and co-operate with agencies such as social work, police, Scottish Children's Reporter and any appropriate medical personnel.

Further information can be found at:

www.eastayrshire.gov.uk/SocialCareAndHealth/CareAndCarers/ChildrenAndYoungPeople-ChildProtection/ChildProtection.aspx

Data Protection

East Ayrshire Council creates, collects and processes personal information about children and we are bound by the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

We collect information from children, their parents and guardians and we may also receive information from other sources, such as previous schools.

All information is stored securely and we do not share it apart from the circumstances described below, or where the law requires us to do so.

Under the Act, we are known as the *Data Controller* and the information we collect is needed for a number of reasons which include, but is not limited to:

- Monitoring and reporting on absence.
- Supporting teaching and learning.
- Monitoring and reporting on your child's progress.
- Providing appropriate care.
- Assessing how well your child's school/centre is doing.

The information we collect will also include details such as contact address or phone numbers and data such as ethnic group, additional support needs and any relevant medical information. Occasionally, we may make information available to other organisations, for example:

- To other schools/centres if you move away.
- To the Scottish Qualifications Authority for examination entries.
- To the Scottish Government and its agencies.

You can see the personal information we hold about you by making a Subject Access Request. A parent or guardian may make a request on behalf of children under 12.

To do this, please contact the Council's Freedom of Information Officer on 01563 576094, or email: FreedomOfInformation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

A fee may be charged for this service.

Education Records

In addition to the Data Protection Act 1998, you also have the right to see your child's education record under the terms of the *Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003*.

You can inspect these free of charge at the school, but please contact the school to arrange an appointment. The records must be made available to you within 15 school days. A copy of the records can also be provided for a fee.

Sharing information

We are keen to help all our children and young people do well in all aspects of school life and achieve better examination results.

To make the best decisions on how to improve education, the Scottish Government, local authorities and other partners such as the SQA and Careers Scotland need accurate, up-to-date information.

We transfer data to the Scottish Government through the ScotXed programme – a system of collecting, processing and sharing the information required for the planning, management and monitoring of Scottish education services.

More detail of the uses of this data can be found at: www.scotxed.net. The data is held securely and no information on individual pupils can or would be published by Scottish Government – it is only used for statistics and research.

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002 gives you a right of access to a wide range of information held by Scottish public authorities.

Subject to some exemptions, anyone who makes a request to a public authority for information under the Act will be entitled to receive it. In line with other Councils and public bodies, the Council has a 'publication scheme' – a range of material online, routinely made available to the public.

Such material is exempt from requiring a specific response under the Freedom of Information legislation. To request information e-mail: freedomofInformation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Social Networking and Social Media

In recent years, use of the internet and social media has grown significantly and the Council has policies which support and promote the safe, ethical and responsible use of social networking and social media.

This policy promotes a managed approach to social networking within East Ayrshire Council allowing responsible interaction through social media in a way that enhances communications and engagement.

Equalities

The Council and all our schools are fully committed to terms of the Equality Act 2010 and the nine protected characteristics it outlines which are: Race, Religion and belief, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Sex, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and maternity and Age.

School Inspections

HM Inspectors from Education Scotland inspect and report on the quality of education in Early Childhood Centres, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, community learning and development services, colleges, and residential educational provision.

In addition, Early Childhood Centres are also subject to inspection by the Care Inspectorate.

Occasionally, Early Childhood Centres and partner centres may have shared inspections by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland.

All reports are published and can be viewed on the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland websites.

Early Childhood Networks

In East Ayrshire, there are seven Early Childhood Networks, bringing different partners and agencies together to progress local priorities and partnership working.

Each network is led by one of our Early Childhood Centres (ECC) and these are:

1. **Cumnock, Mauchline , Auchinleck** - lead: Netherthird ECC
2. **Irvine Valley** - lead: Darvel ECC
3. **Doon Valley and Drongan** - Patna ECC
4. **Kilmarnock Central and South** - joint lead: Flowerbank and Shortlees ECC
5. **Kilmarnock North** - joint lead: Cairns and Hillbank ECC
6. **Kilmaurs Stewarton, Dunlop** - lead: Kilmaurs ECC
7. **New Cumnock, Muirkirk and Catrine** - lead: New Cumnock ECC

The head teacher, or manager in each lead ECC has responsibility for supporting and developing services and working with different agencies to develop the network.

The aim is to create flexible services, meeting you and your child's needs, including outreach work for vulnerable and looked after children, their families and carers.

A broad range of services is also offered, including family support in the home, parenting programmes, volunteering, work, money and benefit advice, health visitor drop-in sessions, clinics and relationship support.

The networks are linked to the Childcare and Recreation Information Service (CARIS) which provides free family information on a range of matters.

Their helpline is 0345 351 3000 and their website is: www.families.scot

Education Groups - Principles

The structure within the Education Service is designed to ensure effective and responsive operating arrangements, to provide effective support for curriculum development, service improvement and for the collection, interpretation and dissemination of relevant performance management information.

Individual educational establishments are assigned to an Education Group, and each group has an Executive Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team is responsible for supporting the vision of the service and to collectively deliver the priorities in relation to raising attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing.

Through collective leadership, greater use of performance data and the sharing of resources, Education Groups drive forward improvements across the Education Service and in all educational establishments.

Collective leadership means everyone taking responsibility for the success of the Learning Community as a whole – not just for their own school or sector.

This is designed to create a positive, caring and supportive environment for staff, children and young people to enable them to enjoy developing their talents to their maximum potential.

Our teachers and staff

We aim to recruit the best teachers and staff to deliver a superb education and early learning and childcare for your child.

Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous and consistent and the recruitment process includes a security check – through the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG). All teaching staff are registered with the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS).

All early years' practitioners working with children are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and all employees are required to fully adhere to the SSSC code of practice.

Teacher access programme

We have a team of qualified teachers who work flexibly at different locations across East Ayrshire in local authority Early Childhood Centres and partner centres. This is known as peripatetic working.

Peripatetic teachers support the delivery of early learning and childcare through focused learning experiences and opportunities for children, working closely with qualified early learning and childcare practitioners.

Comments, suggestions and complaints

Our aim is to provide high quality services to the people we serve, but sometimes things can go wrong. If this happens, please tell us, so that we can put things right via the following link: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Contact-us/Contactusform.aspx>

Complaints

If you have experienced a problem with a service or have a complaint to make, the quickest way to get it resolved is to talk to the school or head teacher.

- **Stage 1:** If the head teacher is unable to provide a satisfactory resolution to your enquiry or complaint, you can raise a formal complaint via the Council's Complaints Procedure. Your complaint will be reviewed by a manager within education and a response provided within five working days.
- **Stage 2:** If you are not satisfied with the response received, you can ask for a further review of your complaint by senior management and we will aim to respond within 20 working days.

If you have completed the Council's complaints process and you are still unhappy, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to look at your complaint. Further information is provided in the leaflet a **guide to making comments, suggestions and complaints** or on the Council website www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/complaints

Complaints about care

You have the right to contact the Care Inspectorate with any complaint that you have about an Early Childhood Centre and you can make a complaint:

- online at www.careinspectorate.com
- by email enquiries@careinspectorate.com
- by phone on 0845 600 9527
- by letter, or by visiting any of their offices – a list is here:

www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/our-offices

Mediation

Mediation and advocacy services are also available through Enquire - the Scottish advice service operated by Children in Scotland, for additional support for learning. You can call them on 0845 123 2303 or email: info@enquire.org.uk

You can also go online at two websites - www.enquire.org.uk (for parents/carers and practitioners) and www.enquire.org.uk/yp (for children and young people).

Section 3

Policies

What we do - and how we do it - is governed by a range of laws, policies and conventions.

Policies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing legislation and national policies. Please contact the school/centre office if you would like more information.

The following references give a brief summary and you can use the highlighted links for more details on each.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC aims to reform children's services by changing existing practices, removing barriers to services and promoting partnership working between different professionals.

It introduces a co-ordinated approach across all agencies for the delivery of support to children and young people as they require it.

Locally, we will continue to bring together early years, primary, special and secondary schools with other organisations, health and social care partners to plan and improve services for children.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright

Pre-birth to three: positive outcomes for Scotland's children and families

This acknowledges the significance of the time before birth and early years and how it can influence children's future outcomes.

The guidance highlights the importance of attachment for young children to their parents and carers and the principles and philosophy underpin the Early Years' Framework and Curriculum for Excellence.

It also emphasises that all adults working with Scotland's youngest children have an important role in implementing the Early Years Framework, through giving all children the care, support and respect they need.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/earlyyears/prebirthtothree/index.asp>

Building the ambition (2014)

Building the Ambition sets the context for high quality early learning and childcare and complements the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (see *below*).

It aims to support those who are delivering early learning and childcare in different settings across Scotland.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/earlylearningandchildcare/buildingtheambition/index.asp>

Legislation

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

This is perhaps the most important piece of legislation and sets out a number of key requirements as follows.

- *Named person*
This sets a requirement for Health Boards to provide children with a *named person* from birth up to when they go to school. Local authorities must provide children in schools with a named person from school age to 18, or until they leave school, whichever is later.
- *Lead professional*
All children and young people who need support can access this from one person – called a *lead professional* – who will act as a single point of contact for the child, or family and co-ordinate the care required across a range of different services.
- *Child's plan*
Local authorities require to prepare a plan in relation to an individual child if it is considered that a child has a wellbeing need. This is required if it is considered that wellbeing cannot be met without targeted intervention.
- *Early learning and childcare*
Local authorities must offer minimum of 600 hours of free early learning and childcare for all eligible children who reside in their area.

This includes three and four year-olds and those two-year olds from households where the parent or carer is in receipt of certain benefits.

Two year-olds who are looked after under a kinship care order (or with a parent appointed guardian) are also eligible for early learning and childcare.

Looked after two year olds will have an integrated, multi-agency assessment using the GIRFEC process leading to a Child's Plan, to improve wellbeing outcomes.

Local Authorities may make alternative arrangements for a child's early learning and childcare, where this appropriate.

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Early Childhood Centres

This sets up a system of registration and inspection for care services and a set of national standards.

The standards that apply to early education and childcare are used to monitor the quality of our services and how they comply with the Act.

www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/8/part/5/chapter/3

You can find Early Childhood Centre inspection reports on the Care Inspectorate website here: www.careinspectorate.com

The Educational Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2009

This sets out the law relating to special needs and updates the same Act from 2004.

Some children may face difficulties (for a range of reasons) that act as a barrier to their learning. It requires that all schools and Early Childhood Centres identify children with additional support needs and plan their education at the earliest possible stage.

Children identified as having additional support needs will be supported in a number of ways including an Action Plan (AP), an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) or a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP).

The Act also gives more rights to parents to request assessments for their child and places additional responsibilities on local authorities for children in their care.

The Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006

Family law covers topics such as marriage, civil partnerships and cohabitation, what happens when a relationship ends, relationships between parents and children, inheritance, succession and gender recognition.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/law/17867/FLSA2006

Parental Involvement Act 2006

This helps boost how parents and schools work together to benefit from shared knowledge, helping our children to reach their full potential.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/08094112/0

Disability Strategies Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Act 2002

This helps to promote positive attitudes towards disability in all Scottish schools and will help responsible bodies to ensure that they can meet their new duties under the amended Disability Discrimination Act 1995 - effective from September 2002.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2002/09/15494/11272

Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000

This declares that every child of school age has the right to a school education provided by an education authority and states that education should be "directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential." It requires local authorities to:

- secure pre-school education for all pre-school and ante pre-school children, where a parent wishes one
- secure the right of every child to have a school education

www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/contents

Education Scotland Act (1980)

This places a duty on every education authority to make sure their area has an adequate and efficient provision of school education and further education.

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/44/contents

The content and information in this handbook was correct in August 2018.

However, laws, education policies and procedures can change rapidly and we're committed to keep you updated through the Council and school websites, social media, texts, announcements and additional information which may be distributed in school.

About the Service

Onthank Early Childhood Centre is registered to provide a nursery service for a maximum of 135 children aged from two years to those not attending primary school. A maximum of 15 children aged two years can be accommodated at any one time.

The service is located in Kilmarnock and is available Monday to Friday fifty-two weeks of the year. Currently, it is being provided from 8.30am until 3.40pm, with most children attending either mornings or afternoons. Flexible childcare is available for some children over lunchtime.

The nursery moved to its current building in August 2014. This was purpose built and provided additional space to accommodate children. The space also allows parents/ carers to stay and take part in workshops and social events, and for visiting services to meet with children, families and staff privately.

Session Times

Morning 8.30am – 11.40am

Afternoon 12.30pm – 3.40pm

Onthank Early Childhood Centre Vision, Values, Strengths and Aims

Vision

Working together to inspire, nurture and to build a better future for all.

Values

Onthank staff team values honesty, caring and respect.

Strengths

As a staff team we will bring the strengths of kindness, fairness and teamwork to the centre.

Our Aims

At Onthank Early Childhood Centre we aim:

To create a safe, happy and caring environment in which everyone is made welcome.

To promote independence, self-esteem and confidence in an atmosphere that encourages respect for themselves and others.

To provide a curriculum that promotes challenge, enjoyment, personalisation and choice in learning.

To provide an environment inside and outside which extends their sense of wonder and lets children experience success and develop a positive attitude to learning.

To work in partnership with parents, the local community and outside agencies.

Above all we hope that your time as a family at Onthank Early Childhood Centre is a happy and enjoyable experience.

We share the vision and principles expressed for all the citizens of East Ayrshire in the Community Plan.

All our vision, values and aims take into account the Rights of the Child. Our aims reflect the principles of the Health and Social Care Standards, Curriculum for Excellence, Birth to 3, Building the Ambition and How Good Is our Early Learning and Childcare?

Improvement Plan summary 2018-19

Every year schools develop a plan which indicates their priorities for improving learning and teaching in their establishment. We have compiled a summary of the improvement plan for Onthank Early Childhood Centre and we hope that you find the summary helpful in understanding our improvement priorities for the 2018-19. Copies of the Improvement Plan in its entirety are available from the school and it is displayed in the main corridor just outside the office. Each month we will highlight what we are doing within the centre towards our improvement priorities. Please contact us if you would like a copy of the full version.

Children's speech, Language and Communication skills will be enhanced and developed from highly trained staff who are working towards accreditation as a 'Communication and Language Friendly Environment' for Onthank ECC.

We will be tracking and monitoring the progress of our children to ensure that, as expected by the Scottish Government, we raise attainment in literacy. We will do this by focusing at group time and during free play on developing all literacy skills, assessing and monitoring development, working with small groups to provide targeted intervention. Working with parents/ carers providing information and support on how to develop children's communication skills at home and providing a link with outside agencies, for example, Speech and Language Department.

To provide a mathematical rich environment inside and outside.

We will be tracking and monitoring the progress of our children to ensure that, as expected by the Scottish Government, we raise attainment in mathematics. We will do this by focusing at group time and during free play on developing all maths skills inside and outside, assessing and monitoring development and working with small groups to provide targeted intervention. Working with parents/ carers providing information and support on how to develop children's mathematical skills at home.

To promote and use a nurture approach to support our children within our centre.

Our nurturing environment and approach will promote security, routines, clear boundaries and carefully planned learning opportunities. Our children will feel physically and emotionally safe within our centre. Children will be more open to learning and teaching.

To increase engagement of parents and carers in the life of the centre as they are the primary educators of their children.

We will be working with our parents/ carers throughout the year to develop ways in which we can engage parents/ carers with the life of the centre. We will also be providing monthly play and stay experiences, weekly environmental walks, weekly woodland visits, book bug sessions, coffee events, individual care plan and progress meetings. Community practitioners will run massage sessions for the children, parent drop in sessions and workshops. Communication Champions will offer drop in sessions every Thursday, guidance for Language and Communication support at home and regular workshops. The centre will provide home link activities, weekly rhymes and information about Literacy, Mathematics and Health and Wellbeing. Our Digital Learning champion will set up GLOW and Facebook as a means of communication with parents/ carers along with texts, emails, newsletters and noticeboards.