

**East Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

# **Willowbank School School Handbook 2024 – 2025**





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**The information contained in this Handbook is accurate at the time of publication.**



# Head Teacher's Welcome



Dear Families and Colleagues

This handbook is intended to give information to families, professionals and the community about the work of our establishment.

At Willowbank School, we aim to provide a happy, safe, stimulating, fun environment for learning. We encourage, support, motivate and challenge pupils and young people to develop new skills and build on existing talents, strengths and interests and every opportunity is given for each pupil to be successful and to meet their individual potential both in and out of school.

"Every child of school age has the right to a school education provided by an education authority."

(Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000)

At Willowbank equality of opportunity and a sense of fairness form the basis of our approach. Every pupil has additional support needs and is valued for the contribution they make to the school, local and wider community. We ensure that all pupils' educational, care and medical needs are met to allow all to "be the best you can be".

We pride ourselves on the caring and supportive ethos which permeates throughout the school. This supportive ethos extends to not only our pupils but also to staff and families. Visitors are always impressed by the welcoming atmosphere.

Partnerships are extremely important to us. We have an open door policy at Willowbank and all families and visitors are very welcome.

We look forward to welcoming you to our establishment.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Tracy Smallwood  
Head Teacher



# School Profile

School Name:	<b>Willowbank School</b>
Address:	<b>Grassyards Road, New Farm Loch, Kilmarnock KA3 7BB</b>
Telephone Number:	<b>(01563) 526115</b>
Email Address:	<b><a href="mailto:eawillowbank.sch@eastayrshire.org.uk">eawillowbank.sch@eastayrshire.org.uk</a></b>
Website:	<b><a href="http://www.willowbankschool.com">www.willowbankschool.com</a></b>
Stages Provided:	<b>Primary 1 to Secondary 6</b>
School Capacity:	<b>50</b>
School Roll:	<b>104</b> (as at December 2023)
School Category:	<b>Primary and Secondary Specialist School Non-denominational and Co-educational Gaelic-medium Education not provided</b>
Head Teacher:	<b>Mrs Tracy Smallwood</b> ( <a href="mailto:tracy.smallwood@eastayrshire.org.uk">tracy.smallwood@eastayrshire.org.uk</a> )
Acting Depute Head Teacher:	<b>Mr Kris Campbell Caldwell</b> ( <a href="mailto:kris.campbellcaldwell@eastayrshire.org.uk">kris.campbellcaldwell@eastayrshire.org.uk</a> )







# Senior Leadership Team

Mrs Smallwood is supported by Mr Campbell Caldwell, Acting Depute Head Teacher as well as Mrs Kayleigh Higgins and Mrs Nicola Murray, Principal Teachers.

The Senior Leadership Team ensures the smooth strategic and operational running of the school. Each leader has various specific management remits, including pastoral responsibility for certain classes within the school. You will be informed which member of the Senior Leadership Team is responsible for your child's class.

The Senior Leadership Team is here to support all pupils, families, staff and partner agencies. They can be contacted at any time via the school office.



*Mrs Murray, Mrs Higgins, Mr Campbell Caldwell and Mrs Smallwood*



# Accommodation

Willowbank School is a purpose-built specialist educational environment. Our bright, spacious and well-equipped building opened in August 2013, and we recently marked our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a range of celebrations and events. Our school building consists of four fully accessible wings with a range of teaching and learning rooms and ancillary spaces, all centred around the communal Atrium.

Teaching spaces include 16 classrooms, Home Economics classroom, PE Hall, Dining Hall and Swimming Pool. Pupils also benefit from breakout spaces including two Conservatories, 'The Wee Den', Soft Play and a Sensory Room. The playground and sensory garden also provide safe outdoor spaces for teaching and learning as well as independent exploration.



*School swimming pool*



*Sensory garden*



*Pupils, Staff and Special Guests at Willowbank's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations*



# The Willowbank Way

We pride ourselves on the school's positive, welcoming and supportive ethos. Our vision, values and aims help us achieve this.

In line with the values, purposes and principles of **Curriculum for Excellence**, we aspire to provide all of our pupils with access to the highest quality of learning and teaching in order to maximise their successes and encourage and celebrate achievement in its broadest sense.

Our school **vision and motto** is "**Be the best you can be**".

Our school **aims** are:

- (1) To deliver all aspects of the modern Curriculum for Excellence by:
  - motivating pupils to be successful learners
  - enabling pupils to be confident individuals
  - providing opportunities to be responsible citizens
  - encouraging pupils to be effective contributors and
  - ensuring every individual need is met.
- (2) To provide a safe, secure and happy environment where every child reaches their full potential.
- (3) To raise self-esteem and attainment through the celebration of achievement and success.
- (4) To develop pupils' personalities, talents and physical abilities in a variety of settings allowing them to reach to their fullest potential in school and the wider community.
- (5) To minimise the effect of additional support needs as a barrier to learning and to provide learning experiences that are stimulating, challenging and age appropriate.
- (6) To maintain good lines of communication within the school, with parents and with the wider community.
- (7) To develop partnerships with other establishments and agencies in the local community.
- (8) To develop Willowbank School in accordance with East Ayrshire's Improvement Plan, Community Plan and the Scottish Government's National Priorities.



# The Willowbank Way

Our **school values** are centred on Getting It Right for Every Child:

<p><b>Responsible</b></p> <p>I can make good choices.</p> <p>I care about my local and wider environment.</p> <p>I can help others and take on responsibilities.</p>	<p><b>Respected</b></p> <p>I am given a voice and I am listened to.</p> <p>I make decisions about my school.</p>	<p><b>Achieving</b></p> <p>I am encouraged to be the best I can be.</p> <p>I get to share and celebrate my achievements.</p>
<p><b>Nurtured</b></p> <p>I am given opportunities to try new things.</p> <p>I know that people know me and care for me.</p> <p>I know who to go to for help.</p>	 <p><b>Willowbank School Values</b></p>	<p><b>Included</b></p> <p>I am involved in school life.</p> <p>I belong in my class, school and community.</p> <p>I can help others feel included in play and learning.</p>
<p><b>Safe</b></p> <p>I feel happy and safe.</p> <p>I know who to go to for help.</p>	<p><b>Healthy</b></p> <p>I eat well and have friends.</p> <p>I am active and looked after and encouraged to make healthy choices.</p>	<p><b>Active</b></p> <p>I have fun and am active in body and mind.</p> <p>I get a chance to share my learning.</p> <p>I get a chance to share my achievements.</p>

Celebration of success is integral to what we do. We celebrate success and achievements daily, weekly, termly and yearly. This includes Head Teacher Awards, Star of the Week and Well Done Certificates at Assembly, termly Certificates for Achievements and Targets, and Annual Prize Giving.





# Our School Staff

Our school staff, including Classroom Assistants, Teachers, Instructor, Facilities and Catering staff, all work together to ensure all pupils' needs are met. We aim to recruit the best teachers and staff to deliver an excellent education 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).

Staffing levels will change to meet the needs of the pupils and school. As at December 2023, our staffing is:

## Senior Leadership Team

Mrs Smallwood (HT)  
Mr Campbell Caldwell (DHT)  
Mrs Higgins (PT)  
Mrs Murray (PT)

## Teachers

Mrs Brown  
Miss Connor  
Miss Craig  
Mrs Feeney  
Mrs Gardner  
Miss Gemmell  
Mrs McGuinness-Lecluijze  
Mrs Macdonald  
Miss McCreath  
Miss McCulloch  
Mrs McSheehy  
Miss Mikolajczak  
Mr Nicoll  
Miss Robertson  
Mrs Sharpe  
Mrs Skinner  
Mrs Smith  
Ms Smith  
Miss Stalker  
Mrs Wilson  
Miss Woodburn

## Instructor

Miss Kelly

## Classroom Assistants

Mrs Adair  
Ms Aitken  
Mrs Blake  
Miss Borland  
Miss Boyd  
Mrs Boyle  
Mrs Brady  
Mrs Burns  
Miss Chau  
Mrs Cogswell  
Mrs Collins  
Miss Cummings  
Mr Dreghorn  
Miss Dunseath  
Mrs Fitzsimmons  
Miss Fortune  
Mrs Gray  
Mrs Gunthorpe  
Mrs Hamilton  
Mrs Haxton  
Mrs Hendry  
Mrs Hodge  
Miss Hood  
Mrs Howie  
Mrs Hunter  
Mrs Johnstone  
Miss Jones  
Miss Kerr  
Mrs Logan  
Mr Long  
Miss Macdonald  
Miss Marshall  
Miss Martin  
Miss Matchett  
Miss McCluskey  
Miss McEwan  
Mr McFadyean  
Miss McGinn  
Mrs McGowne  
Mrs McNally

Miss McLaughlin  
Mrs Mcleod  
Miss McMaster  
Mrs McRoberts  
Mrs Miller  
Miss Nani  
Ms Ramage  
Ms Rennie  
Ms Roxburgh  
Mrs Russell  
Miss Shaw  
Mrs Shields  
Mrs Slinger  
Miss Sloan  
Miss Smillie  
Mrs Vernon  
Mrs Wark  
Ms Westerman  
Mrs Wilson  
Mr Wilson  
Miss Withers

## Clerical Team

Miss Miller (Senior)  
Mrs Finlay

## Catering Team

Mrs Black (Manager)  
Mrs McGowan  
Mrs Xiong

## Facilities Assistant

Mrs Kerr

## Healthcare Support Workers

Mrs Cashmore  
Mrs O'Callaghan

## Cleaners

Gail (Supervisor), Andrea,  
Elena, Helen and Mo



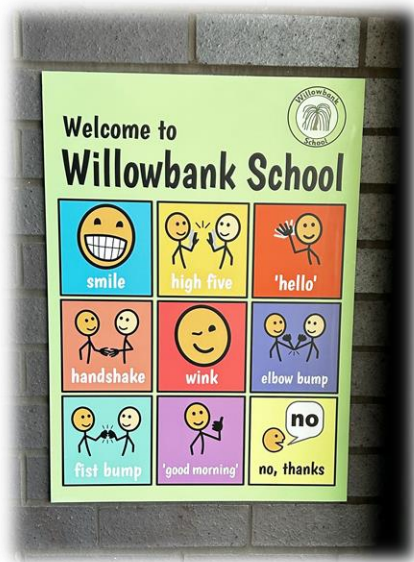
# The School Day and Year

Pupils attend school from 09:30 to 15:30. However, we recognise that where families require, flexible drop off and pick up times may be useful. Therefore, pupils may arrive up until 09:45, or be picked up from 15:15. Please discuss such needs with the school so we can best support you and your child.

Whether pupils are dropped off by their families or travel on school transport, they benefit from the warm welcome of familiar faces each day. Teachers, Classroom Assistants, our Facilities Assistant and Senior Leadership Team are in the car park to greet pupils and take them to classes every morning.



*Our Facilities Assistant, Joan, welcomes pupils each morning*



*Pupils are encouraged to use the welcome boards each day to choose a safe touch greeting from staff*

Lunchtime is from 12:00 to 12:45 for younger pupils and 12:45 to 13:30 for older pupils. We see lunchtime as a valuable opportunity for learning and socialisation, and pupils are encouraged to be as independent and responsible as they can be, with staff support as required.

School term dates are available on the [East Ayrshire Council website](#). Please note dates can change depending on local and national circumstances. The school is open to pupils 190 days per year, and staff attend an additional 5 days for in-service training and development.

The law requires all parents to provide an education for their child. Regular and punctual attendance is linked closely to achievement and staff will work with families to ensure that children can achieve their full potential.



# The School Day and Year

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

If your child is not going to be attending, please let us know by 09:15 on the first day of absence, explaining the reason. This is most easily done by phoning the school office on (01563) 526115. You can also email [eawillowbank.sch@eastayrshire.org.uk](mailto:eawillowbank.sch@eastayrshire.org.uk)

Where your child's absence is approved, for example a medical appointment or the school is notified of a sickness absence, it is marked as an **authorised** absence.

Where an absence is unexplained by the family the absence is marked as **unauthorised**.

We value good attendance and follow up on unauthorised absences, or continued absence from school. 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 or other concerned party, requesting that they visit your home to investigate and report back on their findings.

Where pupils are having difficulties in attending school, for any reason whatsoever, please let us know so that appropriate supports can be put in place.

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 to attend a family holiday you must inform the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher. This will be recorded as unauthorised absence, though there may at times be exceptional family circumstances, which should be discussed with the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher well in advance.

Absences will also be authorised where a pupil is going to a religious ceremony or a wedding of someone very close to them or if they are a Gypsy/Traveller and are currently travelling, as long as you keep in touch with your child's teacher.

Families are advised to limit the number of holidays taken during term time, to minimise disruption to their child's education.



# Our Pupils

We recognise and celebrate the individuality of all the children and young people who attend Willowbank School. Our pupils come from a wide catchment area within East Ayrshire and beyond. Getting It Right For Every Child is at the heart of what we do.

All of our learners have additional support needs. Pupils' barriers to learning include Cerebral Palsy, complex learning needs, Autism, complex behavioural needs, Down's Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, ADHD, sensory and motor impairments, and many other additional needs and disabilities.

We work in partnership with a variety of agencies and support services in order to meet these needs and to ensure that our pupils have the best possible opportunities to develop as Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors.

All our of pupils have an 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 [the council's website](#).



*All pupils are given access to a highly individualised curriculum based on their needs, abilities and interests.*





# Our Pupils

Willowbank Pupil Council is well established. The council is made up of our elected School Captains Team as well as a class representative from each class, and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

The agendas of our regular meetings are pre-set and issued to classes prior to the meetings. The school ethos and positive relationships are often discussed as well as current events and issues which are impacting on the school.

Everyone is given an opportunity to contribute their ideas, make choices in what they do and learn and plan for school events.



*Pictured with Mrs Smallwood and Mr Campbell Caldwell are our elected School Captains and Vice Captains for session 2023 – 2024.*



*Pupils are offered support throughout the day to make choices as much as is possible. Staff support pupils to do so in a way which is appropriate to their needs.*



# The Curriculum

All of our pupils follow the national **Curriculum for Excellence (CFE)** which provides a holistic, child-centred approach to teaching and learning. Staff are skilled at bringing learning to life in a useful, meaningful and personalised manner. You can read about Curriculum for Excellence on the [Education Scotland website](#).

A broad, balanced, fun curriculum is offered, promoting skills for learning, life and work. Everyone who works with the pupils shares a responsibility to develop skills in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing and offer the appropriate support for each individual. This ensures pupils learn in a way that works for them, at a pace they can cope with, to reach success but also to ensure they are challenged in their learning and that they develop new skills.

Every pupil has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which promotes the development of core skills. Pupils (where appropriate) and families are consulted on priorities for development and ILPs are built by teachers in partnership with families. All pupils are encouraged to become as independent as possible, developing their self-esteem and confidence within and beyond the classroom environment.

## **Principles**

- Willowbank School will plan and deliver an appropriately differentiated curriculum for every pupil, based on *Curriculum for Excellence* and *National Qualifications*.
- All pupils will have opportunities to achieve and all achievements will be celebrated.
- The curriculum will be broad based, age appropriate and will ensure progression.
- Parental involvement will be encouraged to contribute to the setting of priorities and the assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum for their own child
- The curriculum is based around the needs of the whole young person – education, care and medical needs.

## **Methodology**

Children and young people in Willowbank School are most likely to learn:

- In a safe, stimulating environment
- Through structure and routines such as morning group, snack and lunch times.
- Within fun, relevant themes providing opportunities to work with others .
- If they are presented with achievable tasks relevant to their needs.
- Using high quality resources are used and there is appropriate adult involvement.
- When involved in individual, group and whole school activities.
- Where emphasis is on practical experience through enterprising teaching.
- When ICT is embedded into the curriculum.

It is essential that families are fully involved in their child's teaching and learning process, and that skills being developed in school are, where appropriate, carried over into the home. Families are actively involved in the determination of their child's annual targets and receive end of term and regular reports on pupil attainment.





# The Curriculum



*The importance of play is valued throughout all stages of the school.*

## **Social Education Visits**

Every class regularly makes trips into the local community, or even further afield. On these occasions, pupils are given opportunities to use the skills they have been learning as part of their daily school work, e.g. reading social sight words in real situations, shopping in local supermarkets, enjoying a snack in a café with local residents, using the public library or visiting local parks and amenities. Social outings also have a significant role to play in moves towards a more inclusive society which accepts the individuality of all and promotes fairness, equality, citizenship and social inclusion for all groups.



*Pupils enjoying social outings in a range of places*

At the start of the school year, we will ask you to consent to regular community outings for your child, with medical and emergency contacts being requested. 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.



# The Curriculum

## **Swimming and Hydrotherapy**

Some pupils use the pool for Hydrotherapy sessions. Pupils with physical difficulties can relax, exercise limbs and experience easier movements in water. Swimming also enables pupils with established physical skills to develop these skills, to develop confidence and self-esteem and to experience and develop co-operation.

## **Citizenship**

The learning environment of Willowbank supports and encourages all pupils to be effective members of the school community which will enable them to acquire and practice the skills needed to play a participative role in society.

## **Sensory Curriculum**

Some pupils may have sensory needs which result in a reluctance to interact with a range of textures, materials and environments. The outcome of this can be that learning opportunities are reduced as the children are unable to explore the world around them. A sensory assessment can be completed and sensory tactile sessions are designed to support pupils and encourage voluntary interaction.

## **Complimentary Therapies**

Over the past few years, we have developed our use of complimentary therapies to enhance the existing curriculum, including pet therapy, equine therapy and Rebound Therapy. We are a Rebound Therapy Centre of Excellence.



*Many pupils are highly skilled at using Makaton signs and symbols to communicate.*



*Pet Therapy is a firm favourite amongst most pupils!*

## **Total Communication**

We use a Total Communication approach. This means we use a variety of ways to support each young person in the way they best communicate. This includes Makaton signing, Eye Gaze, use of symbols, and use of objects of reference. This allows all learners regardless of their needs and support to be able to communicate in a way that is appropriate for them. Willowbank is a Makaton Friendly school, having achieved our Silver Award. We are currently working towards achieving Gold. Mr Campbell Caldwell, Acting DHT, and Mrs Higgins, PT, are both Makaton Tutors and provide training to staff, partners and families.





# The Curriculum

## **Movement Opportunities Via Education (MOVE)**

There is a variety of equipment which allows staff to offer balanced, structured programmes of physical activities. Some pupils have a MOVE programme which is a structured activity based programme, designed to help pupils acquire increasing amounts of physical independence needed for sitting, standing and walking. We are a MOVE Centre of Excellence. Mrs Murray, Principal Teacher, is a MOVE Coordinator and Trainer and provides training to staff.



*Pupils accessing the curriculum through movement opportunities.*

## **Enterprise**

Enterprise plays a very major part in the curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities in real life, active, practical, hands-on tasks. Our school café, *Thanks a Latte*, is well established, and pupils confidently embrace responsibilities during this work experience activity, which is often attended by parents and partner agencies.

## **Eco School**

Willowbank is the first school to hold Seven Green Flags. Eco is very much part of our school ethos and there is a strong sense of community spirit with all parties including children, staff, parents, multi-disciplinary team and the local/wider community.

## **Outdoor Learning**

Willowbank access the outdoors regularly and this is an important part of the curriculum. We are fortunate to have a large playground and sensory garden which the pupils get to use on a daily basis along with the Kay Park directly across from the school. Pupils are afforded the opportunity to transfer skills taught in school to a variety of environmental contexts. Activities have included visits to Dumfries House, and partnerships with Duke of Edinburgh. We work closely with the Dean Park Ranger Service and pupils enjoy learning experiences with the Rangers both in the school and at the Dean Park.

## **Assembly**

Assembly allows us to come together to celebrate events, share success and achievement, showcase learning and practice the skills of listening and turn-taking. We have a mixture of department and whole school assemblies, both in the Hall and through Zoom. Rev Cameron joins us for certain events in the school calendar to offer his chaplaincy.



# The Curriculum

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

We have a number of activities available during lunch time and after school for our pupils. We have regular input over the year from Active Schools who bring fun sports opportunities to the pupils. In addition to the development of individual physical skills, this is also an opportunity to develop personal and social skills and there are opportunities indoors and outdoors when pupils can experience physical activity in a safe environment.

## **Secondary Education and Senior Phase**

At approximately, 11-12 years our pupils move into the Secondary Department. This consists of two stages: S1-S3 (Secondary) and S4-S6 (Senior Phase)

Pupils in the early stages of secondary continue to develop Literacy and Numeracy skills by continuing to follow Curriculum for Excellence. Pupils also study SQA National Qualifications, which provide challenge and enjoyment and encourage pupils to take opportunities to develop interests and talents through personalisation and choice of units.

The focus for all pupils in the Secondary Department is developing skills for independence. This includes in personal care, communication and social interactions, which will set them in good stead for the transition into adulthood.

## **Developing the Young Workforce / Work Experience**

The young people are involved in school based work experience and in work experience that has been arranged outwith school with our community partners. This allows pupils experience of the wider community, building their confidence and self-esteem and an opportunity to develop new relationships within the community.

## **College**

Pupils will have the opportunity to attend Ayrshire College if appropriate, alongside peers from Hillside School. Lecturers from Ayrshire College deliver aspects of the Secondary curriculum working co-operatively with school teaching staff.



*Secondary pupils at Ayrshire College.*



# The Curriculum

## **Sensitive Aspect of Learning**

Willowbank School supports pupils to develop their understanding of themselves and others around them. Curriculum for Excellence provides opportunities to study potentially sensitive aspects of learning, such as Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood, and drugs and alcohol awareness.

The RSHP programmes at Willowbank School are specific and proportionate to the needs of individual pupils. This can vary from how to look after a baby in the early years to puberty and sexual relationships in the upper school. All of our RSHP programmes are LGBT+ inclusive.

Where families wish further information on these areas of the curriculum, they should contact the Head Teacher.

## **Religious and Moral Education**

We believe that studying Religious and Moral Education (RME) in line with Curriculum for Excellence helps children become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

The basis of RME in Willowbank is an appropriate ethos in which children are valued and loved, and respect for self and others is fostered. Attention is paid to special events, festivals and themes from all major world religions.

## **Religious Observance**

The school chaplain, Rev David Cameron, also provides support and encouragement to staff and families. For many pupils, families and staff, this approach is wholly consistent with their own faiths.

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. If you wish to do so, please contact the Head Teacher. Your child will never be disadvantaged as a result of withdrawing from religious observance.



*Pupils exploring aspects of religious festivals as part of an SQA National 1 Unit studying Life in Another Country.*



# Families as Partners

## **Partnerships with Families**

Partnership with Families is vital and strongly encouraged. Every opportunity is given to families to be involved in activities. Families are kept informed of the everyday happenings by means of the Learning Journals app. Regular newsletters and updates from the Head Teacher are also sent out to families via Learning Journals. We ask that you use the app to keep us up to date on anything which might affect your child, including any medical information, appointments or news that your child might want to share with their class.

In Willowbank School we aim to provide a good quality service. We are committed to maintaining good lines of communication with everyone who uses the school whether parent, pupil, member of staff or visiting specialist. The school *Open Door Policy* is appreciated by all of the parents. We are happy to discuss any sensitive aspects of your child's learning, including sexual awareness and sexuality, challenging behaviours, dietary requirements, sensory challenges and other issues or concerns.

Families are extremely welcome to phone to make an appointment to visit or speak with management team or their child's teacher. Parents are encouraged to highlight any concerns or issues, in the first instance, to the class teacher or to the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher and an appointment will be made, at the earliest convenience where we will look to work together to find a resolution.

We involve families in their child's learning through Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), informal and formal education reviews, information meetings, parents' afternoons, newsletters, reports, school events and annual review meetings.

## **Homework**

We recognise that pupils spend more time at home than at school and therefore much of their learning happens with their families. Teaching and learning in school can be backed by homework. This will be given to pupils where families wish and will be appropriate to individual needs. Families will be given support to share in their child's learning at home and help our learners transfer skills learned in school to home.

## **Assessment and Reporting**

It is vital that families understand how their child is progressing in their learning. We will invite you to at least two Parents' Afternoon appointments per year, as well as a Team With The Family (formerly Team Around the Child) meeting to discuss your child's learning and set new targets. At the Team With the Family Meeting, we will share with you a PowerPoint presentation of your child's successes and achievements. Additionally, a robust and detailed Annual Report will be issued in the last term of each academic year.

Pupils in the Secondary Department will receive SQA Certificates through the post to their home address which will detail their National Qualifications.





# Families as Partners

## **Parent Council**

As a parent of a child in attendance at Willowbank, you are automatically part of the Parent Forum. The membership of the Parent Forum is made up of all parents who have a child at Willowbank.

The Parent Forum can decide to form a smaller body called the Parent Council. The Parent Council is a group of parents selected by members of the Parent Forum to represent them.

The Chair of the authorities' Parents Steering Group has a place on Council Cabinet to help influence decision making about all matters relating to education. The authority's Parent Steering Group is composed of representatives from Parent Councils across East Ayrshire and this group will represent the views of parents in the establishment sector.

Willowbank School's Parent Council Chairperson is Mrs Jayne Sangster. The Vice-Chairperson is Mrs Katie McCulloch. Both can be contacted via the school office.



## **Friends of Willowbank**

Friends of Willowbank is a charity and is a group of parents, staff and community members who share an interest in the school and wish to be involved in organising and assisting in events and fundraising. They support the school to help raise funds and plan social events for the benefit of the children and young people.



*Friends of Willowbank presenting iPads to staff and pupils*



# Attainment, Achievement and Improvement

Willowbank continually reflects on our performance and produces an annual **Standards and Qualities Report** to provide information on what has been achieved during the last year. It identifies strengths and highlights areas for further development in our annual cycle of self-evaluation. A summary version of the report is shared annually on Learning Journals and the full version can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Children and young people achieve well in Willowbank School.

Target setting has shown that pupils are achieving very well in the key areas of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

- Overall 99% of targets set in pupils' Individual Learning Plans were achieved in school session 2022 – 2023.
- 104 SQA National 1 Awards were archived by 33 pupils.

The **School Improvement Plan** is a major tool in ensuring quality provision for all our pupils. The plan is completed annually and is developed through the process of self-evaluation, using the performance indicators in How Good Is Our School?, along with other audit tools.

The views of families, pupils, staff and other professionals are sought using questionnaires and discussion techniques and have a significant effect on the perceived priorities. A summary with our annual priorities is sent to every parent on Learning Journals, inviting them to request the whole plan from the school office if they wish.

Our Improvement Priorities for Session 2023 – 2024 are:

- Improved pupil voice through the development of a range of total communication methods and increased opportunities for staff professional development in Alternative and Augmentative Communication approaches, Autism and Sensory pedagogy.
- Pupils will be given equity of choice within their school and local community to encourage them to participate their fullest ability and potential.
- Improved mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing for staff, parents and pupils giving Every Pupil, Every Chance through the use of complementary therapies and supported by appropriate learning and teaching strategies and resources
- Improved assessment approaches through development of Learning Journals tracking tools.



# Positive Relationships

Positive relationships, positive behaviour and respect for others in the school and local community is a vital part of school life at Willowbank. It is one of the elements which make up the positive ethos of the school where our pupils are learning in a happy, safe and purposeful environment.

The need for acceptable standards of behaviour is incorporated in pupils' social education. Staff work extremely hard to develop excellent relationships with pupils. Positive relationships are encouraged and all pupils are supported by staff to display socially appropriate, positive behaviours at all times.

If a pupil is experiencing difficulties in regulating their behaviours, families are informed and are involved in planning strategies to reduce these behaviours. We see this as a good example of staff and parents working together for the benefit of the pupil.

The school follows the Crisis Prevention Intervention model of promoting positive behaviour and creating a setting of safe environments and safe adults around the young people. Each young person has a Safe Plan which staff keep up to date. These are based on nurturing principles and are fully trauma-informed. All staff regularly undertake professional learning in order to understand behaviour as communication. This is particularly important when considering behaviour in line with specific barriers to learning, e.g. Autism, ADHD or Fragile X Syndrome.

All schools in East Ayrshire follow the guidance outlined within the council's [Anti-Bullying – Respect for All Policy](#).

Trauma Informed Contact and Care is an Education and Police initiative to inform schools, first thing in the morning, if a child or young person has been exposed to a domestic abuse incident the night before. This allows the school to be aware that the child or young person may not have completed homework, be feeling tired or may show signs of dysregulated behaviour that requires support. Staff follow Getting It Right For Every Child processes to provide appropriate support to the child, young person and their family.



*Positive Relationships lead to a happy, safe and purposeful learning environment*



# School Uniform

Pupils normally wear a sky blue polo shirt and embroidered royal blue sweatshirt or cardigan with black/grey/navy trousers or skirt and comfortable footwear. A school waterproof reversible jacket is also available.

We operate a flexible uniform policy and other items are available. We are more than happy to offer advice and support to children/young people and their families, to find solutions to sensory issues and other sensitivities relating to the wearing of school uniform.

Under no circumstances will pupils be deprived of any educational benefit as a result of not adhering to the dress code.

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

Families can purchase school sweatshirts, cardigans and polo shirts with the school emblem (badge) from [My Clothing Limited](#) and the Ayrshire Schoolwear in Kilmarnock and Balmoral Mill in Galston.

If you get Universal Credit, or other benefits, you may be entitled to grants for free school meals, footwear and clothing. As at December 2023, if you qualify for a clothing grant you are entitled to an award of £120 per child in primary and £150 per child in secondary. This can only be paid once a year. If your child is intending to stay on after fourth or fifth year, any award will not be paid until they return to school in August.

[Visit our clothing grants and free school meals page to find out more and apply online.](#)



*Our school uniform*





# Security and Visitors

## **School Security**

Entry to the school building is via the Security System. Parents and visitors can access the main building by Reception and will be asked to sign the visitor book on entry and exit. They will be issued with a visitor's badge.

Any visitors who would require assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation should let the Clerical or Facilities staff know upon arrival. All other visitors should be prepared to assist pupils and staff to a place of safety in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Members of staff are easily identified by their security badge. They are able to access the building by using their electronic card or wristband.

Any pupil leaving during the school day, e.g. for an appointment, must be signed out by their parent/carer.

## **Photography and Videoing In School**

No unauthorised photography or videoing is allowed within the school premises without the permission of the Head of Establishment.

Families are asked to comply with the requests on photography and videoing at school events which will be published in relation to each individual event. Such requests are made of you solely to protect the interests of individual children and families.

## **Child Protection**

It is everyone's responsibility to protect children, whether it be at home, at school or in the community. If you have concerns about a child or young person, please contact the Head Teacher immediately.



*All visitors should report to the Reception via the Main Entrance.*



# Enrolment

At Willowbank School we recognise that transitions throughout school can present greater challenges for pupils with complex additional support needs. We also recognise that transition into school and particularly transition from school into adult services are difficult, emotional and often worrying times for parents and carers of a child with a disability.

## **Enrolment**

When it is identified that a young person would benefit from a specialist provision, a full assessment is carried out by members of a multi-disciplinary team at the pre-school stage.

Parents/carers are involved in this and kept informed at all stages. The professional opinions are then collated by the East Ayrshire Psychological Service and the recommendations are discussed with the parents at a Pre-School Assessment Team (PRESCAT) meeting.

The parents/carers then visit the suggested schools and obtain all the relevant information and make an informed choice. If the child is transferring from an Early Childhood Centre, the Head Teacher would usually visit the child at the centre to confirm that Willowbank would be the most appropriate placing.

There is also the opportunity for the children to visit as part of a transition programme to prepare them for school in August. All information is passed to the Head of Education for their decision and steps are taken to admit the child and an Induction Programme is put in place.

Parents seeking to place a pupil outwith August enrolment should contact the [Psychological Service](#).

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 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.



# Transition

Transition planning will begin in the Senior Phase of a young person's school career and will involve school staff and relevant professionals including Social Work, Adult Services and the Community Learning Disability Team. Generally in their fourth year of school, but prior to this if appropriate for the individual, we begin planning in earnest for the move to further education, adult resource centre or in to other supported services.

This is a difficult and highly emotional stage in any young person's life and is understandably a very worrying time for both our pupils and their parents. At all stages of transition we aim to offer the appropriate support for both pupils and families to make this a positive experience.

For more information on Transition planning, please contact your child's allocated Social Worker, or the Duty Social Worker.



*Previous positive destinations pupils have moved to include the Sir Alexander Fleming Centre and Ayrshire College.*



# School Catering

At Willowbank School, eating and drinking skills and the associated social skills are part of the curriculum. Staff encourage pupils to be as independent as possible, while providing support needed. Lunches and milk are provided free of charge for all pupils at the school.

Special diets can be provided for children who require them and the catering staff are aware of all requirements, allergies and needs.

The Speech and Language Therapist assists with plans for pupils' eating and drinking in order to develop skills and maximise independence and there is support from the Dietician where necessary to reinforce this.

Our lunch menu works on a three-weekly rotation and there are at least 2 options every day. The Catering Service aims to use organic, local, seasonal produce. For those pupils who have food sensitivities and/or restricted diets, catering staff will always ensure a 'safe option' exists.

You can view the menu [here](#).



*The Dining Hall is a welcoming, safe environment for pupils*





# Partner Agencies

We are fortunate to be well supported by a number of partner agencies who support the overall health, wellbeing and educational needs of our pupils and their families. They all form part of the 'Team With The Family' (formerly Team Around the Child).

**School Nurse:** Mrs Fiona Campbell

**Educational Psychologist:** Miss Lindsey Thomson

**Speech and Language Therapist:** Mrs Claire McPherson

**Senior Physiotherapist:** Mrs Fiona Gaffney

**Occupational Therapist:** Mrs Sandie Blake

**Teacher of the Deaf:** Miss Louise Phillips

**Visual Impairment Teachers:** Mrs Jacqueline Hume, Mrs Mhairi Iles, Mrs Carol Rome

**Campus Police Officer:** PC Jennifer Scade

**School Chaplain:** Rev David Cameron (New Laigh Kirk)

**Social Work Team Leaders:** Mr Hugh MacDonald (Children) and Mrs Carol Fennell (Adults)

**Financial Inclusion Officer:** Mr Callum McMichael

**Moving and Handling Resource Worker:** Mrs Maryanne Duffy

**Active Schools Coordinator:** Mr Gary Seymour

**Community Paediatrician:** Dr Nuno Corderio

We also work with local colleges and universities to provide placements for student nurses, teachers, paramedics, early years practitioners and various other courses.



*Visits from PC Scade are always a highlight*



# Transport

East Ayrshire Council policy provides entitlement to free school transport where a pupil attends a specialist school outwith the local catchment area to meet their additional support needs.

## **Pick up and Drop off**

Free transport is based on one designated pick up and drop off address for a pupil. This may not always be the pupil's home address depending on circumstances. There are occasions where families request alternative pickup and drop off points (PUDOS). Where these alternative pickup and drop offs are part of the typical route between home and school, and can be achieved with no additional costs to the transport contract arrangement, this will be acceptable. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to make alternative arrangements.

## **Travel Alone**

There can be rare occasions where a pupil requires a period of travelling alone. Where there is such a circumstance all attempts to assess and understand the difficulties leading to any issues should be undertaken. This will involve collaboration between Facilities Management staff, designated staff in establishments, and families. If following assessment, and appropriate supports or interventions, a period of travelling alone is deemed necessary a request can then be made. In these cases approval must be sought from Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion.

## **Motability Vehicles**

Where a family has access to a Motability vehicle or accesses additional funding to enable transportation of their child to and from school, this will require to be taken into account in determining the most appropriate method of transporting your child to school and level of support provided by the Council as part of the Additional Support Needs Assessment.

## **Parental Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act provides for disability by association where the disability of a pupil's parent/s may cause the child difficulties in getting to school. This circumstance should be considered for free school transport where a recommendation has been received from a designated medical officer or the request is supported through the claim of a disability living allowance. In these cases approval must be sought from Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion.

The school works closely with Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) to ensure a smooth service is provided, but overall operations and decisions lie with the ARA. They can be contacted by email at [school-transport@east-transport.gov.uk](mailto:school-transport@east-transport.gov.uk) or by phone on (01563) 576334.



# Medical Matters

## **Medical Conditions and Medication**

It's essential that you let us know of any particular medical conditions or requirement(s) your child might have.

Many of our pupils will require medication to be administered as part of their daily routines. Families should also keep the school informed of medication or other medical requirements pertaining to their child.

If medication has to be given in school, parents **MUST** sign specific forms giving details of administration and their permission prior to any medication being given.

Only medicines which have a pharmacist's label with the child's name and medication dosage/instructions will be administered.

If there are any special procedures to be followed with regards to epilepsy, asthma or anaphylaxis, the school must be informed.

Copies of the Healthcare in Education Policy and the medical consent form are available [here](#), or by request from the school office.

The administration of prescribed medicines in an educational establishment is a matter for the discretion of the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher agrees to administer medicine at the establishment, and a member of staff volunteers to do so, then they are required to exercise reasonable care to avoid injury. In return, the Head Teacher is entitled to the full co-operation of the parents in helping to observe safe practices.

## **Illness and Injury**

Every care is taken to ensure pupils are safe and secure at all times. However, it is inevitable that accidents can and do happen in schools. In the event of a child becoming ill, having an accident or seizure in school, the Head or Depute Head or Principal Teacher will decide on the action to be taken.

Every effort will be made to contact the parents/carers or emergency contact to inform them of the situation. Should hospital treatment be required, an ambulance will be called and a member of staff will accompany the pupil, and remain there until the parent arrives. Any special instructions or procedures should be notified in writing to the Head Teacher.

Minor accidents will be dealt with by Miss Miller (Senior Clerical Assistant and First Aider).

All accidents and incidents will be recorded by staff on Learning Journals and shared with the family.

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.



# Emergencies

## **Learning Journals**

This is Willowbank School's main method of communication and we will always send any emergency information through this medium first.

## **Group texts**

Group texts are sent out to parents to advise of an emergency. Parents should provide the school office with an up-to-date mobile phone number to enable automatic contact via text messaging.

## **Website and social media**

In the event of an emergency, the Council's communications team work quickly to update our website, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) with the latest developments and advice on what to do.

## **Radio**

The communications team also work closely with [Greatest Hits Radio](#) (formerly West Sound) and [West FM](#) with statements and updates 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.

## **Where to check for updates**

As parents, you are advised that before telephoning your child's educational establishment for news and announcements, you should first check:

- [Council website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)





# 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 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](mailto: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.



# Comments, Complaints and Compliments

## **Comments**

We are an open and reflective school, and we value feedback and suggestions. Please give us a call, email or send a message on Learning Journals.

You can also make an appointment to meet you with child's teacher, via the school office.

## **Complaints**

Through our *Open Door Policy* and two-way communication, we strive to get things right first time. However, from time-to-time, things can go wrong. Usually the first port of call is your child's class teacher who can be contacted by phone via the school office or on Learning Journals.

For any formal complaints, please contact the Head or Depute Head Teacher. In some cases, this may mean that the Head or Depute Head Teacher deals with the totality of a complaint raised, or the issue will be delegated to another staff member. We will always outline potential turnaround times and will communicate next steps as soon as possible.

If you do not believe that the matter has been addressed, you should notify Mrs Smallwood.

On rare occasions, you may feel it necessary to escalate a complaint to local authority level. You can do so [here](#).

## **Compliments**

We know that our staff try to do their very best for all of our pupils and families and some of them always go the extra mile. We feel it is important to those members of staff, who have done a good job, that they receive positive feedback.

If you would like to compliment a member of staff or a team, you can email, or phone us. We will make sure that the individual and their manager gets to hear about it.



# Kilmarnock Education Group

Willowbank School is part of the Kilmarnock Education Group.

Associated Establishments:

- Sgoil-Àraich na Coille Nuaidh & Sgoil na Coille Nuaidh
- Hillbank Early Childhood Centre
- James Hamilton Early Childhood Centre & Primary School
- Kilmarnock Academy
- Loanhead Early Childhood Centre & Primary School
- Onthank Early Childhood Centre & Primary School
- Riccarton Early Childhood Centre
- Whatriggs Early Childhood Centre & Primary School

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.



# Useful Contacts

<b>Social Work</b>  social.work@ east-ayrshire.gov.uk  (01563) 554200  Outwith Hours: 0800 328 7758	<b>Ayrshire Roads Alliance (School Transport)</b>  school.transport@ east-ayrshire.gov.uk  (01563) 576334	<b>School Nursing</b>  Hub: (01563) 545737  Product Orders: (01563) 545700
<b>Ayrshire College Inclusive Learning</b>  0300 303 0303	<b>Educational Psychology</b>  education-admin@ east-ayrshire.gov.uk  07500 913 493 07500 912 741 07985 394 638	<b>Rainbow House</b>  aa-uhb.clinical- rainbowhouse@ aapct.scot.nhs.uk  (01294) 323070







**East Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

