

Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar



Leabhar-làimhe na Sgoile

School Handbook

2025-2026

Fòn/Phone: 01397 709720

Post-dealan/Email: bsgla@highland.gov.uk

FÀILTE/ WELCOME

Dear Parent/Carer,

Fàilte bhlàth oirbh gu Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar agus ar coimhearsnachd. A warm welcome to Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar and our community.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform parents/guardians about our school and community. We hope you find this document useful and should you have any questions that are not answered within this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us.

At Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar we aim to deliver a curriculum that delivers high quality broad general education to all our pupils through the medium of Gaelic. We strive to ensure that every pupil is valued and supported in achieving their full potential through our flexible curriculum. We work hard to raise standards of numeracy and literacy as well as ensure our pupils are gaining the skills they need for life, learning and work. We promote a positive ethos across our school community celebrating our pupils' achievements and successes. Our success in this undertaking combines all our stakeholders including children, staff, parents/guardians, external partners and our community.

Throughout the session various activities, events and meetings will be arranged in order to involve parents/guardians and the community in the life of the school. Parental involvement in the life of the school and in the pupils' learning is crucial.

Should you wish to discuss your child's progress or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school immediately.

We look forward to working with you and your family.

Miss Marissa Melville
Ceannard na Sgoile

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GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Bun Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar,
Rathad Àrd Ghobhar,
An Caol,
An Gearasdan,
PH33 7JE

Lochaber Gaelic Primary School,
Ardgour Road,
Caol,
Fort William,
PH33 7JE

Ceannard na Sgoile/Headteacher: Miss Marissa Melville

Fòn/Phone: 01397 709720

Post-dealan/Email: bsgla@highland.gov.uk

Làrach-Lìn/Website: [BSGLA \(google.com\)](http://BSGLA.google.com)

Meadhanan Sòisealta/Social Media - Facebook - Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

Bun Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar is situated 3 miles west of Fort William in the village of Caol. Children from across the Lochaber area attend our school. The roll of the school at present is 150 children in our primary and 50 children enrolled in our Sgoil-àraich (Nursery). We are a non-denominational school. Our Sgoil-àraich offers 1140 hour provision for nursery aged children.

The school, which opened in August 2015, is a stand-alone Gaelic School - the first of its kind in Lochaber. The school has excellent space, accommodation and facilities for a positive and inclusive education for all. The school has seven teaching classrooms, a well-equipped gymnasium, a large resource base, a spacious library, a fully equipped nursery (Sgoil-àraich) and an after-school childcare facility. The school has extensive grounds including a spacious nursery garden and outdoor sports pitch.

This handbook is not exhaustive and continues to develop to reflect the successes and achievements of our school. It is also important to note that information in this handbook is accurate as of December 2024. Our website is regularly updated with any changes:

[BSGLA \(google.com\)](http://BSGLA.google.com)

VISION, VALUES AND AIMS

Ar n-òigridh ag ionnsachadh aig cridhe ar cànan, ar cultair agus ar coimhearsnachd.

Our young people learning at the heart of our language, culture and community.

Values

Coibhneas	<i>Kindness</i>
Urram	<i>Respect</i>
Cuideachail	<i>Helpful</i>
Dìcheallach	<i>Diligence</i>
Spòrs	<i>Fun</i>

Aims

- To promote, enhance, celebrate and immerse our children in Gaelic language and culture.
- To enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors focusing on closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- To encourage social skills, co-operation and tolerance for the beliefs and views of others.
- To embed digital technology at the heart of our learning and teaching.
- To ensure our children take care of their environment and become responsible caring citizens.
- To work with our partners to develop the life and ethos of our school and community.
- To provide an excellent Early Years Curriculum and ensure our children have active and fun learning experiences.
- To ensure that all the staff have opportunities for continuing professional development.
- To actively promote health and well-being through the curriculum and whole school ethos

Our school welcomes and encourages diversity and individuality, while emphasizing our common commitment to moral values such as honesty, respect for others, compassion and justice. Fundamental principles of our school are that all who are involved in the life of our school have the right to be respected as individuals and carry the responsibility to act in a considerate and respectful manner towards others. We are firmly committed to the elimination of any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender or disability.

In our school we are committed to providing appropriate opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values through both the ethos and the curriculum. This will be undertaken in partnership with parents/carers and will take account of the individual needs of pupils and the views of parents/carers.

STAFF

Ceannard na Sgoile/Head Teacher –

Miss Marissa Melville

Tidsearan/Class Teachers -

Mrs E MacKenzie (Principal Teacher)

Mrs A MacColl

Mrs C MacRaid

Mr A Weir

Mrs K Melville

Mrs A MacLellan

Mrs L Stewart

Miss L Campbell

Miss L King

Tràth-bhliadhnaichean agus Cùram Cloinne/Early Years and Out of School Care Staff

Mrs A MacIsaac

Miss L Stewart

Miss M Lees

Miss M Oliver

Ms N Stuart

Miss I Gillies

Miss T Watson

Ms A Murray

Miss A Murray

Non-Teaching Staff

Clerical Assistant – Mrs A Murray

Pupil Support Assistants – Miss A MacDonald, Miss M Oliver, Mrs C Donnelly, Ms M Horne

Facilities Team Leader – Mr A Elder

Playground Supervisor – Mrs I MacLeod

Kitchen Staff – Ms S Robertson, Mrs M Dunlop, Mrs C Wood, Ms M Love

Instrumental Tuition – Mr M Reynolds, Mrs K Thomson, Mrs M MacMaster, Ms S Hamilton

Pàrant is Pàiste – Mrs M Patterson

Cròileagan Grianach Staff – Mrs M Patterson, Mrs G Anderson, Miss H MacRae

We are also very grateful to a number of volunteers who support our school community throughout the year.

ORGANISATION OF THE SCHOOL DAY

School hours for pupils are as follows:

Primary 1 - 3: 9.00am – 12.30pm
1.30pm – 2.45pm

Primary 4 – 7: 9.00am – 12.30pm
1.30pm - 3.15pm

Morning Interval: 10.30am – 10.45am

Lunchtime: 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Sgoil-àraich: 8.30am – 3.00pm

Out of School Care: 2.45pm – 5.45pm

Pupils should not arrive at the school any earlier than 8.45am as there is no supervision or access to the playground. Parents/guardians should not go beyond the green under-pass gate. The pupils are supervised in the playground by support staff. The pupils are also supervised in the playground during morning interval and throughout lunchtime by support staff. If the weather is unsuitable, pupils will remain in their classrooms during interval and break supervised by P7 monitors and support staff.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The following dates are subject to change, they can be found online at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/school_term_dates

2025 holidays

- February break - 17 February and 18 February
- In service day - 19 February
- Easter holidays - 7 April to 21 April
- May Day - 5 May
- In service day - 2 June
- Summer holidays - starts 4 July
- In service day - 18 August

- In service days - 15 September and 16 September
- October holidays - 13 October to 24 October
- Christmas and New Year break - 24 December to 7 January

2026 holidays

- February break - 16 February and 17 February
- In service day - 18 February
- Easter holidays - 3 April to 20 April
- May Day - 4 May
- In service day - 7 May
- Summer holidays - starts 3 July

NURSERY/ SGOIL-ÀRAICH

All three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds, are entitled to 1140 hours (pro rata) of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). 1140 hours ELC is intended to support child development, help close the attainment gap through the provision of high quality services, and support parents to work, train or study. ELC can be accessed through local authority settings, partner provider nurseries and childminders. Parents can also choose to have a blended placement using more than one setting and/or childminder. Further ELC Information for parents is available at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/11/enrol_your_child_for_early_learning_and_childcare

Information on **Gaelic Medium ELC** can be found at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/11/enrol_your_child_for_early_learning_and_childcare/3

PARENT COUNCIL/ COMHAIRLE NAN PÀRANT

The Parent Council is a group of parents/guardians who are selected to represent all parents/guardians of children at our school. The members of the Parent Council are:-

Claire Ewing - Chair

Rachel Chalmers – Treasurer

Leanne Stoddart – Secretary

The role of the parent council is: -

- To support the school in its work with parents

- To represent the views of all the parents
- To encourage links between the school, parents, pupils and the wider community
- To report back to the Parent Forum (every parent with a child at the school)

The parent council can be contacted by emailing cnamparant.bsgla@aol.co.uk.

Meetings are held in the school every term. Minutes of the meetings are available on our website. Further information about the Parental Involvement Act 2006 and Parent Councils can be found on the internet: www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

ATTENDANCE

Parents/guardians are expected to ensure that their children attend school regularly. If a child is absent, parents/guardians are asked to inform the school **before 9.30am** by leaving a message on our Pupil Absence Line on 01397709721. If no message or phone call has been received, a member of staff will contact you to ascertain the reason for absence

The Three Day Rule for Unexplained Absence of Pupils

Day 1: First day of unexplained absence of a pupil

The school will endeavour to make contact by telephone to parents/guardians or emergency contacts informing them that their child is absent and requesting a reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with the parents/guardians or emergency contacts on the first day of absence this will be noted by the school. If the family is known to other agencies, because of possible concerns about wellbeing, then contact will be made by these agencies.

Day 2: Second day of unexplained absence of a pupil

The school will make every attempt to contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts by telephone or email. If no contact can be made on the second day of absence, this will be noted by the school.

Day 3: Third day of unexplained absence of a pupil

If no contact is established and no satisfactory explanation is given for absence, the police will be notified of the child's non-attendance.

At Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar we put a great deal of emphasis on attendance at school. We monitor the attendance of all pupils closely and we inform parents when concerns emerge.

Appointments – dental/medical

If a child has to attend a medical or dental appointment within school hours, contact the school office and the date and time will be passed on to the class teacher. Please remember

that children will require to be collected from the school office and will not be allowed to leave the school premises unaccompanied.

Holidays taken during school term time

When parents are considering whether or not to remove their children from school for a family holiday, they should be aware that such a decision:

- will result in a significant loss in classroom experience;
- will result in a pressure to 'catch up' on missed work by pupils;
- could result in pupils missing assessments with consequential impact on pupils and teachers;
- could result in the loss of curricular activities;
- will affect school attendance records and efforts to raise standards of attendance;
- under the guidance issued at a national level, most family holidays will be coded as unauthorised absence, only in exceptional cases will the absence be recorded as authorised.

In conclusion, we would ask parents to be aware of these considerations when making decisions on planning holidays during term time. If parents decide to make holiday arrangements during school term, this should be confirmed in writing to the Head Teacher.

UNIFORM

The Education Committee recommended at its meeting of 21 August 1997 that - 'the adoption of a distinctive dress code chosen to enhance the ethos of the school should be encouraged in all schools'.

In Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, the suggested uniform is as follows:

- A light grey sweatshirt or cardigan
- A white polo shirt
- Black or grey trousers (not jeans), skirt or shorts or a tartan kilt
- When on educational visits the children are required to wear a top with a school badge on it as a safety aid to identity and identification
- A white shirt and school tie should be worn at more formal events

The Sgoil-àraich uniform is as follows:

- Dark Purple sweatshirt
- A white polo shirt

Clothing with the school or sgoil-àraich badges can be purchased at:

[Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar | Product categories | SPT Uniforms](#)

Pupils representing the school in inter-school events or on public occasions are always expected to wear school uniform

Shorts and tee-shirts are required for PE. The children may wear either trainers or gym shoes in the gym, but outdoor shoes are not permitted.

Please note that wearing football related clothing is not permitted in our school.

Sports clothing in school colours with the BSGLA badge can be purchased online by following this link:

[Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Loch Abar Online Shop |](#)

[O'Neills GAA](#)

oneills.com



This is entirely optional for anyone who may be interested.

The Primary School formal uniform is shirt, school tie, black trousers/skirt and black shoes.

The formal uniform is used for when children take part in events such as the Mòd.

Outdoor Wear:

Bearing our weather patterns in mind, it would be very helpful if pupils could have a change of footwear – one pair for outdoors and one for indoors (this could be their gym shoes).

Suitable clothing for wet weather would also be encouraged. We prefer to think that it's not the weather that's wrong, just the wrong kind of clothing for the weather we usually get.

We encourage children to go out at break times as much as possible, and we regularly use the wonderful environment around us as a medium for learning. We can do this if they are dressed appropriately. We would also ask you to be aware of the need for sunscreen in those (admittedly not very often) moments when the sun shines. The most effective way of ensuring this is to apply sunscreen at home before your child comes to school.

Please note that school uniform is not compulsory, and it is not policy to insist on pupils wearing uniform or having specialist items of clothing in order to engage in all of the activities of the curriculum. As such, pupils will not be deprived of any educational benefit as a result of not wearing uniform.

However, there are forms of dress which are unacceptable in school, such as items of clothing which:

- potentially encourage faction (such as football colours);
- could cause offence (such as anti-religious symbolism or political slogans);
- could cause health and safety difficulties (such as loose fitting clothing, dangling earrings);
- are made from a flammable material, for example shell suits in practical classes;
- could cause damage to flooring;
- carry advertising, particularly for alcohol or tobacco; and
- could be used to inflict damage on other pupils or be used by others to do so.

All clothing brought to school should be labelled or marked in some way, as it is difficult for children to distinguish their own clothing from others.

School Clothing Grants

Information on school clothing grants can be found at:

[Free school meals and assistance with clothing | Free school meals and assistance with clothing | The Highland Council](#)

SCHOOL MEALS

All pupils in Primaries 1-5 are entitled to a free school meal at lunchtime. The meal is completely optional. This is a Scottish Government funded initiative. There is no application form to be completed. Families receiving Income Support are eligible for free school meals for children in Primary 6-7. Further information can be found at:

[School meals | School meals | The Highland Council](#)

School meals are provided at the school. They are cooked in the kitchen on the premises. The children are supervised by staff members at all times.

The cost of a school meal is currently £2.40 per day for children in Primary 6 and 7. We operate a cashless catering system and remind parents/guardians to top up online for school dinners by going to [Pay for school meals | School meals | The Highland Council](#).

Parents/guardians can contact the school office if they have any queries. If you choose to pay by cheque or cash, there is a drop box situated beside reception to leave payment.

Cheques should be made payable to “Highland Council”. Special dietary requirements should be discussed with the Head Teacher.

Packed lunches are also eaten in the dining-room. Please note:

- glass bottles/containers are not permitted under Health and Safety Regulations;
- vacuum flasks containing hot liquid are not permitted because of the danger of scalding;
- a water dispenser is available in the dining room;
- **nuts or any products containing nuts should not be taken into the school.**

Our catering staff run a tuckshop during break with a range of healthy snacks such as fruit and toast.

TRANSPORT

Your child may be eligible for free school transport if they are:

- Under 8 and live more than 2 miles from school
- 8 or over and live more than 3 miles from school
- Have a medical condition or additional support needs
- Would have to walk a route which is considered by us to be unsafe for children to walk, even when accompanied by an adult

Staff continuously stress to pupils the importance of good, responsible and sensible behaviour, both while travelling on the bus and when getting off the bus and walking home. More information on transport and how to apply for free transport can be found on the Highland Council website at: [Apply for school transport | School transport | The Highland Council](#)

EMERGENCY CONTACT/ ADVERSE WEATHER

Parents/carers are asked to ensure that telephone contact numbers – home, work and emergency contact(s) are kept up-to-date and are numbers at which a response can be obtained in all normal circumstances.

In the event of severe weather, parents/guardians should visit the school closure page on the Highland Council website <https://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures>. Information will be posted on Class Dojo, the school’s website will also be updated (where possible) as well as our Facebook page. BBC Radio nan Gàidheal and local radio stations will continue to provide updates on school closures.

Please remember that it is ultimately the responsibility of parents/guardians to decide if a pupil should attempt to travel to school in adverse weather conditions.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

In all cases of concern, please get in touch with us. We will arrange an appointment with the teacher, or Head Teacher if appropriate, to discuss these concerns. Whether your concern is about playground behaviour, your child's learning progress or some other matter, we can find a solution if we know about it and discuss it. Contact details are at the start of this handbook.

If you feel that an issue you have raised has not been dealt with appropriately, please contact Mhairi MacDonald, Area Education and Learning Manager at mhairi.macdonald3@highland.gov.uk

Further support and advice can also be accessed from Parentline:

[Children 1st Parentline - Parenting Help, Advice & Support | Children 1st](#)

The Complaints Procedure

A complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Council'.

Complaints can be notified in person, by phone, by email or in writing to the Head Teacher. If parents/carers have cause for complaint they should contact the school in the first instance to make an appointment to meet with the Head Teacher or member of the management team.

Please note that transport is not a school responsibility and any queries should be addressed to the Transport Development Officer, Highland Council, Glenurquart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX, or public.transport@highland.gov.uk

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Class teachers, in conjunction with the Head Teacher, monitor the progress of pupils with additional support. The needs of such pupils are generally catered for within the normal curriculum but with specialist advice and support as required. If necessary, a child's plan may be put in place to help plan, organise, monitor and regularly review a child's progress. Parents and pupils will be involved in these procedures and in reviews.

More information can be found about the Highland Council model for support and child's plans at:

[Policies and guidance - support for learners | Highland Practice Model - delivering additional support for learners](#)

Sometimes a Children's Service Worker will be involved in supporting a child. A Children's Service Worker is often based at the school and will generally focus on more social and emotional needs rather than issues about the curriculum or classroom learning. They:

- work in collaboration with the support team in school
- work to support families in their own communities
- work with individual pupils and small groups - offering a further level of support

Parents/Carers will always be involved in discussions about any additional support being suggested for their child and any need that may be identified within the school.

Highland Council would seek to work in partnership with parents at all times, but sometimes you will have a concern that you don't feel is being addressed or will want to talk to someone out with the school. Should you have any concerns that your child's additional needs are not being met, you should contact the Head Teacher on 01397709720. If your concerns continue, there are a number of means of resolving difficulties and disputes and information on this can be found at:

[Policies and guidance - support for learners | \(highland.gov.uk\)](#)

The following organisations provide advice, further information and support to parents of children and young people with additional support needs:

- a) Enquire – the Scottish advice and information service for additional support for learning [Enquire - The Scottish advice service for additional support for learning](#)
- b) Thriving Families - <https://www.thrivingfamilies.org.uk/>
- c) My Rights, My Say – an advocacy and advice service for young people over 12 with additional support needs [My Rights, My Say \(myrightsmysay.scot\)](#)
- d) Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance, an advocacy service to support parents and children: [Home - Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance \(siaa.org.uk\)](#)
- e) Scottish Child Law Centre, an organisation providing free legal advice to young people: [Free Expert Legal Advice | Scottish Child Law Centre \(sclc.org.uk\)](#)

Gaelic Medium Education

- Gaelic Medium Education is based on the principles of immersion with children accruing all the benefits of bilingualism.
- The early stage of learning through the medium of Gaelic, and where no other language is used, is referred to as 'total immersion'. This is followed by an 'immersion phase' up to and including the senior phase.

- Children and young people need to be equally confident in the use of Gaelic and English and able to use both languages in a full range of situations within and outwith school.
- All Gaelic Medium Education provisions, whether in free-standing provision known as Gaelic schools or Gaelic Medium schools or when delivered alongside English medium, have as an underlying foundation the principles of immersion.

More information can be found in Education Scotland's [Advice on Gaelic Education](#).

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

The [Curriculum for Excellence](#) aims to provide greater choice and opportunity for pupils, and a single, coherent curriculum for all young people from 3 years of age to 18 years of age. At Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar our overall aim is to ensure that we provide a broad general education to all our learners. We strive to provide a curriculum which is structured yet flexible and fosters our Gaelic language and culture. A curriculum which gives pupils the skills they require in life, learning and working. A curriculum that ensures our pupils are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

We offer our pupils a wide and varied curriculum which demonstrates the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence - challenge, breadth, depth and progression. We also aim to offer a curriculum which demonstrates personalisation, choice, coherence and relevance. We endeavour to teach skills across the curriculum and ensure that our learners are equipped with the skills they need in life, learning and work. Global education, active citizenship and enterprise skills are actively promoted at all stages throughout the school.

The curriculum is divided into eight parts:

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

Within the Curriculum for Excellence there are three broad levels:

Early Level – Nursery 3 year olds, 4 year olds and Primary 1

First Level – Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4

Second Level – Primary 5, Primary 6 and Primary 7

Literacy

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning. Language development in the school includes the four elements of reading, writing, talking and listening through the medium of Gaelic and English. It should be noted that English is not taught until the end of P3 and beginning of P4. A large focus is placed on immersion at the nursery and P1/2 stages to ensure children have plenty opportunities to listen and use the Gaelic language through structured tasks and play.

Talking and listening are developed in a variety of ways, in a range of contexts, at every stage in the school. They are seen as not only important in themselves, but also very closely linked to reading and writing skills.

Reading extends beyond teaching the pupils to be able to recognise and say words in both Gaelic and English. We aim to develop further skills of comprehension and reading for a variety of different purpose. Alongside this, we try, in a variety of ways to develop pupil's enjoyment and pleasure in reading.

Once pupils are confident in essential phonics, pupils will use a variety of resources including the Gaelic Storyworlds reading scheme, The Highland Literacy Project resource bank and a varied of Gaelic novels (at later stages) to ensure there is progression throughout the school.

Pupils begin reading in English at the beginning of P4. Time is spent to go over phonics that children may not have covered to ensure there is a smooth transition. We would always encourage children to continue to read at home in both Gaelic and English.

Writing - a similar, broad approach is adopted. Personal, imaginative and factual writing skills are all developed through the medium of Gaelic (from P4 for English). The children are taught to write using different types of writing including stories, poems, letters, reports, notes, plays, recipes, and so on – for a variety of purposes.

The presentation as well as the content of writing is important and the children are taught to write legibly and correctly. Punctuation, spelling, grammar, sentence construction and handwriting are taught systematically thorough the school.

Big Writing is used across all stages to develop skills related to Vocabulary, Connectively, Openers and Punctuation (VCOP) and Talk for Writing methodology is being introduced to enhance talking, reading and writing. Spelling is taught through interactive multi-sensory approaches. Literacy is also used in many different contexts across all curricular areas to further develop skills in talking, listening, reading and writing.

Modern Languages

In accordance with 1+2 approach to language learning and the Gaelic Medium Advice Note from Education Scotland, we include the teaching of a foreign language in the curriculum. The foreign language is French and is taught from Primary 5-7. The aims are to encourage our children to have confidence in expressing themselves in a third language and to increase their awareness of another culture.

Numeracy

Our approach stresses the importance of pupils understanding mathematical concepts and ideas whilst developing numerical skills through using practical materials and active teaching methods. Problem solving and the relation of maths to realistic and meaningful situations is prominent. Pupils are given the experience of working with calculators where appropriate. Scottish Heinemann Active Maths and TeeJay Maths, supplemented by an extensive bank of teacher-prepared materials are some of the resources we use. There is a particular emphasis on problem solving and mental agility. Numeracy is initially delivered entirely in Gaelic. In the latter stages of Primary children become familiar with key English vocabulary also. Numeracy is embedded across our school in all other curricular areas.

Social Studies

Through our Social Studies programme the pupils develop their understanding of the world by learning about other people and their values, in different times, places and circumstances. They also develop a deeper understanding of the environment, as well as their understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland. This helps to give them an appreciation of their local and national heritage and culture of the world. Much of this work is approached through projects or topics, in which a range of subjects and skills (history and geography, reading and writing, art and craft, music and drama, etc.) will be involved in an integrated way.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing is central in ensuring effective learning and preparation for successful independent living. Health and wellbeing is divided into physical, social and emotional health, and is delivered across the curriculum

Physical Health - explores physical factors in relation to our health and looking after ourselves e.g exploring changes in the body, identifying ways of crossing the road safely and recognizing the harmful effects of smoking, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs.

Emotional Health - explores emotions, feelings and relationships and how they affect our mental well-being e.g learning to share and care for others and reflecting on experiences and ways of dealing with problems, e.g loss, bullying, and drug misuse.

Social Health - explores the interaction of the individual, the community and the environment in relation to health and safety e.g dealing with litter, practising personal safety strategies and exploring ways of helping the school to be a health promoting school.

Physical Education – all pupils receive a minimum of two hours PE lessons per week. The children are given a balanced programme of gymnastics, games, movement and dance. All pupils also take part in the ‘mile a day’ scheme which gives pupils the opportunity to run or walk every day for a mile. We work closely with the Active Schools Co-ordinator who provides a wide range of sporting opportunities for the pupils throughout the year. We also

have a very busy extra-curricular programme offering many sports including Football and Shinty from P1 to P7.

Expressive Arts

Art and Design - pupils are taught a variety of different skills and techniques through drawing, painting, modelling, printing and collage as well as learning more about artists past and present.

Music - opportunities exist for the pupils to take part in a wide range of musical activities including singing, music-making, listening to music and formal instrumental work. Instruction is available, at certain stages, for recorder, chanter, violin, brass instruments and woodwind instruments. We encourage our pupils to participate in the local Music Festival. We participate in two local Mòds as well as the National Mòd.

Drama - pupils in all classes are given the opportunity to develop their skills in improvisation, role play, and mime. Pupils take part in shows at Christmas and in the summer term. Gaelic outreach workers also work closely with children to develop their skills and become confident on the stage.

Sciences

Pupils develop an understanding and increased knowledge of:

- Planet Earth
- Forces/Electricity
- Biological Systems
- Materials
- Topical Science

Technologies

Through their learning in Technologies, pupils are provided with frequent opportunities for active learning in creative contexts.

- Problem-solving skills
- Planning and Organisation skills
- Skills in ICT
- Skills in collaborating, leading and interacting with others
- Skills in using tools, equipment, software and materials

The school is well-equipped with computers, iPads and interactive whiteboards. All children in P6 and P7 have access to 1 to 1 Chromebook devices. All other classes have a range of Chromebook devices to further develop technology skills.

ICT skills are directly taught and applied within the contexts of other curricular areas. All pupils complete a Responsible User Agreement.

Enterprise Education

We aim to develop enterprising attitudes and skills through learning and teaching across the school. We encourage independent thinking, creativity and positive attitudes to entrepreneurship.

SEXUAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

Sexual Health and Relationships Education is part of Health and Wellbeing. The main areas covered are:

- Respecting themselves and others
- Respecting individual differences
- Ways of expressing and dealing with feelings and emotions
- Ways of keeping safe
- Positive and supportive relationships

These areas are recommended by Scottish Government and are age and stage appropriate.

We use the [RSHP](#) (Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood) programme. An effective programme of education about Sexual Health and Relationships is best built on parents/carers and schools working in partnership and assuming shared responsibilities. We aim to keep parents/carers informed about the nature and purpose of the learning programme their children will follow, and to seek parents'/carers' views at appropriate times. Any parents/carers who do have any questions or concerns should contact the Head Teacher directly.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Assessment and reporting is an integral part of our teaching and learning. Pupils are continuously assessed in an informal way as part of the daily class routine. We operate a policy of continuous assessment across our whole school to build clear pictures of all our learners. Assessment for Learning (AifL) strategies are used and formative assessments supports learning, informing pupils of how they can improve their work.

Our priorities for assessment are:

- a) To give a continuous and cumulative picture of the child's performance.
- b) To give the teacher information.
- c) To support and develop the strengths and weaknesses of the child.
- d) To give the parents information.

In addition the class teacher may carry out routine tests in order to monitor progress, identify difficulties, recognise strengths and plan programmes of work which take the needs of the child into account.

As part of forward planning, records are kept by staff of the work carried out in class. Assessment records are kept as a cumulative record of each child's progress, to give teacher's information, to support and develop individual strength and weaknesses of each child and to report to parents. At the end of the year reports are sent out to parents. Detailed pupil profiles are completed at the end of P7 for transfer to Secondary School

Parents/guardians currently receive learning snapshots (High Quality Assessments) of their child's learning home in the following terms:

Term 1 – Health and Wellbeing

Term 3 – Numeracy and Literacy

Term 4 – Interdisciplinary Learning

These assessments contain children and teachers' next steps in learning and give you the opportunity to comment on the learning in the classroom.

HOMEWORK

Children are asked to focus on core maths skills, reading for enjoyment, phonics and spelling. C4 – 7 may be asked to complete a home research project.

SCHOOL TRIPS

Educational visits and excursions are an important part of the school curriculum. They enable pupils to gain first-hand experience of their environment and to carry out practical investigations in a meaningful context. These visits vary from local nature walks to trips further afield which involve considerable planning and preparation. Details of excursions are sent to parents before the event. A risk assessment is carried out for all excursions in line with the council's policy.

HEALTH

Administration of medicines

Some children may require to take medication in order that they can continue to attend school.

Parents/guardians are kindly requested to note that:

- A child may only take medication (including non-prescription) if the parent/guardian has completed the 'Administration of Medicine' form which is available from the school office.
- Only medication supplied by the parent/guardian will be administered to a child.
- Pupils will take medication only when supervised by an adult.
- Parents should deliver the medication to school but if this is not possible the pupil should hand the medication to the class teacher upon arrival at the school.

Parents/guardians of pupils with more complex health issues should meet with the Head Teacher and Class Teacher to complete a more detailed health plan.

Health Care

The School Nurse attends the school regularly to carry out routine medical checks. The Community Paediatrician attends during the term to examine the children at certain points in their school career. Parents are notified in writing and are requested to be present at such examinations. The Speech and Language Therapist works with a small number of children identified as having specific speech problems. Parents are fully consulted in such cases.

Head Lice

Unfortunately, head lice can be a problem within schools. Weekly wet combing is advisable for all children throughout their school years. If head lice are detected, Pharmacists are able to advise on the management of a head louse infection. Please remember that children are entitled to free prescriptions and insecticide lotions and the "Bug Buster" Kit (a non-insecticide alternative) are both available on prescription. We would be grateful if you would contact us if you find your child has head lice. Children should be returned to school once they have been treated. We will contact you personally or by letter if we detect head lice and will be able to give advice and support about treatment.

The School Nurse can be invited to hold workshops and talk to the children. Termly letters will contain any updated information with regards to head lice treatments and guideline changes.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Staff will support the emotional development and wellbeing of pupils through formal and informal curricular activities. Any concerns about a pupil's wellbeing can be discussed with

the Head Teacher. School have access to Highland Council's Primary Mental Health Worker Service and consultation and advice may be sought if there are concerns that might require more targeted support. Parents would generally be involved in discussions beforehand.

FIRST AID

Minor cuts or bruises are treated by members of staff in our well-equipped Medical Room. Parents/guardians will be informed of any injuries to the head. In cases of serious illness, a parent/guardian of the pupil will be contacted to collect their child. **We emphasise the importance of supplying the school with up-to-date emergency contact information.**

CHILD PROTECTION

All agencies involved in Child Protection are obliged to make the welfare of children their paramount consideration. In terms of Highland Child Protection Committee Inter-agency Protection Guidelines, Education Service staff must report incidents to Social Work Services which can lead to a joint Social Work/Police investigation.

All agencies involved in Child Protection are obliged to make the welfare of children their paramount consideration and this will be the priority for Education Service staff.

Child protection guidelines are available online at

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1361/childcare_and_family_care/438/child_protection

COMMUNICATION

If you need to get in touch with the school you can either telephone or e-mail the school office. If you are unable to reach the school by telephone, we have a messaging service and will endeavour to return your call at the earliest opportunity. If you wish to meet with the Head Teacher or a member of staff, please arrange an appointment by contacting the office. Communications to teachers should be sent to the school email address bsgla@highland.gov.uk and marked FAO the class teacher(s).

Class Teachers and Early Years Practitioners post regular updates on Class Dojo. This will also function as our homework diary in 2025/26.

An Annual Data Check Sheet will be sent home to all parents/guardians at the beginning of the school term. It is important that this form is returned to the school as soon as possible

with the updated details. We must stress the importance of notifying us of any changes to your contact information.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Our pupils are given the opportunity to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities through the medium of Gaelic. These include Còisir (choir), Sradagan (youth club), Nature Club, Club Spòrs (sports club) and holiday clubs. We also have school football and shinty teams which are run by parent volunteers. Pupils also participate in a variety of activities run by High Life Highland, Fèis Lochabair, Lochaber Rugby Club and others.

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT

At Bun Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar we believe in promoting a strong ethos for positive achievement among our school community. We celebrate the achievements of our pupils and staff in many ways including assemblies, display boards, our website, social media platforms, Class Dojo and newsletters. Pupils record their achievements in and out of school using their learning journeys.

ASSEMBLY

The whole school meet for assembly once a week to celebrate the successes and achievements of our school community. As a non-denominational school, we value all religions, cultures and beliefs. We will on occasion welcome figures from the local community, including members of local religious communities. If you do not wish your child to take part in any assemblies with local religious figures such as local priests and ministers, then please inform us in writing and alternative arrangements will be made.

EVENTS AND CULTURE

Gaelic and highland culture plays a huge part in the community and ethos of our school. We hold many ceilidhs and events in the school to promote our culture. Information is cascaded in our newsletters, website and social media.

CRÒILEAGAN & PÀRANT IS PÀISTE

Cròileagan Grianach run a Gaelic playgroup for two year olds every day of the week as part of our school community and a parent and toddler group once a week. We work closely with the staff and committee. For more information, please contact Margaret Mulholland on 01463 703690.

PRIMARY ENROLMENT

Children who are due to begin school in August are usually enrolled for Primary School the previous January. Enrolment of new entrants is advertised in advance. Parents who are considering enrolling their children are most welcome to visit the school to meet the Head Teacher. An appointment can be arranged by telephoning the school. We are always happy to discuss the benefits of bilingual education.

During the summer term, normally in June, a visit to the school by the new entrants and their parents is arranged. This visit gives the children and parents the opportunity to meet the class teacher(s). The children spend some time in the classroom where they are encouraged to participate in some creative activities, while their parents are given a guided tour of the school and are given an opportunity to view and discuss educational materials and resources.

Children attending our Sgoil-àraich will also be part of our transition programme which happens throughout the year. C1/2 attend the Sgoil-àraich setting weekly to build up relationships and work on language acquisition.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In all areas, Bun Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar conforms to the principle of Equal Opportunities. For up-to-date information please see:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/751/equality_diversity_and_citizenship/313/equal_opportunities

In summary, our activities in school should ensure that we:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations. Activities should not discriminate against any of the following 'protected characteristics' age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity. Our policy can be found on our website.

MULTI-CULTURAL AND ANTI-RACIST POLICY

As a school, we have a special responsibility not only for combating racism, but also for promoting mutual understanding and respect for other people's cultural identity and beliefs.

Our aim is to provide equality of opportunities of race, gender, class, or ability. We aim to create an environment in which shared cultural experiences provide the basis for mutual understanding of other backgrounds and beliefs. Bun Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar –

- Is opposed to all forms of prejudice and discrimination;
- Provides equality of opportunity through its ethos and working practices;
- Promotes understanding and respect for other people's cultural identity and beliefs;
- Aligns itself with the Authority's Anti-Racist and Multi-Cultural Guidelines for Primary and Nursery Schools, and Race Equality Policy.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Highland Council Anti-bullying Policy can be viewed at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19358/anti_bullying_-_guidance_for_schools

FILMING AND PHOTOGRAPHY – SCHOOL EVENTS

In line with Highland Council Guidelines, we ask parents to advise the school if they do not wish their child to be photographed or filmed by any spectator or member of an audience at a school event. If any parental objection is received, unofficial photography/filming will not be allowed.

MAJOR SCHOOL EMERGENCY

Procedures for evacuating the building are well established and practised routinely during fire drills. In the event of a major school emergency, pupils and staff will follow the major emergency plan and be evacuated to the Lochy Bar followed by onward transport to the Caol Primary Campus. All staff are aware of procedures to be followed and we would appreciate the co-operation of parents/guardians in following the instructions of the Emergency Services. It is essential that all emergency contact details are kept up to date.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones should not be taken to school. If they need to be taken for contacting AFTER school they must be switched off all day and kept out of sight in a schoolbag or left in the classroom with the class teacher.

PARENT MEETINGS

Meetings are arranged twice a year (November and May). Parents/guardians are invited to discuss their children's learning and progress with the class teachers. A formal written report is sent home to parents prior to the final parents' meeting. There will also be two opportunities for parents/guardian to visit classrooms to view pupil work. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school at any point and make an appointment with the class teacher or Head Teacher if they have any concerns.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We welcome parents/guardians at any time in our school. Parents are invited in at various points throughout the year to see the work of their child in an informal manner by attending open mornings/afternoons where you will see the Curriculum for Excellence in practice. Additionally, we welcome and rely on parent volunteers to enable us to provide a wide range of school outings, extra-curricular activities and local events.

We have parent and pupil focus groups where we discuss aspects of our school improvements.

Useful information for parents and how to get involved in your child's education, how to support the school, information on curriculum developments can all be found at Parentzone: [Parentzone Scotland | Parent Zone \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.parentzone.scot.nhs.uk/)

PARKING

We would ask that parents/guardians do not park at the bus drop-off zone. Parking spaces are available in the main parking area for appointments and visits to the school. Please note that the parents/guardians should only use the spaces along the nursery for dropping off children. These are not parking spaces.

SCHOOL FUND

From time to time we must raise funds to supplement the allowance we are given centrally. The school fund is used to provide a wide range of additional resources and activities for pupils including school trips, Christmas parties and gifts, visits by theatre groups, science workshops, music workshops as well as additional classroom resources and ICT equipment. We are very thankful to all our parents/guardians and families who contribute towards our school fund.

SCHOOL RULES AND DISCIPLINE

We have recently updated our [Positive Behaviour Policy](#). We believe that developing a responsible attitude and self-discipline is the responsibility of our school community. Our school rules are mainly concerned with the safety and well-being of our pupils. Our pupils are expected to behave in a socially acceptable manner, to treat other pupils with consideration and fairness, to show respect to members of staff and visitors and to respect school property. Parents/guardians will be informed of any serious breach of school rules or persistent challenging behaviour.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT REPORT AND PLAN

A copy of our School Improvement Report and Plan is available online. This document highlights our successes to date as well as the next steps we are taking to improve our school community. [BSGLA - Planaichean-Leasachaidh / School Improvement Planning \(google.com\)](#)

Inspection reports can be found at:

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/find-an-inspection-report/find-an-inspection-report/>

ATTAINMENT DATA

Data gathered last session showed:

- **almost** all pupils to be at or beyond the expected level in Gaelic Talking and Listening
- **all** pupils to be at or beyond the expected level in English Talking and Listening
- **most** pupils to be at or beyond the expected level in Gaelic Reading
- **all** pupils to be at or beyond the expected level in English Reading
- **most** pupils to be at or beyond the expected level in Gaelic Writing
- **all** pupils to be at or beyond the expected level in English Writing
- **the majority of** pupils are at or beyond the expected level in Numeracy

TRANSFER TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

At the end of P7, pupils normally transfer to Lochaber High School. The Head Teacher of Lochaber High School is Mr Scott Steele and the telephone number of the school is 01397 702512.

During the fourth term, P7 pupils are invited to spend five days at Lochaber High School. They are introduced to staff members and shown around various departments. They follow a timetable for the induction days participating in a range of events. At the beginning of January, pupils will also take part in a Gaelic induction programme in conjunction with the Gaelic Department at Lochaber High School.

Members of the Guidance Staff at Lochaber High School also visit our school to talk to the pupils and to answer any questions which they may have. Pupils with additional support needs or social and emotional needs take part in an early transition programme organised by Support for Learning Teachers at Lochaber High School.

When a pupil transfers from Primary School to Secondary School, a folder containing copies of the pupil's School Reports is delivered to the Head Teacher of the Secondary School.

APPENDIX – OTHER INFORMATION

Access to Pupil Records

The Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003 extend to parents the right of access (with certain specific exceptions) to any record held by the Authority in relation to their child. Parents may make application to the Head Teacher.

Data Protection Legislation

Information on pupils, parent and guardians is stored on a computer system and may be used for teaching, registration, assessment and other administrative duties. The information is protected by data protection legislation and may only be disclosed in accordance with the codes of practice.

Transferring Educational data about pupils

The Scottish Government and its partners collect and use information about pupils through the *Pupil Census* to help to improve education across Scotland. This note explains why we need this information, how we use it and what we do to protect the information supplied to

us. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed>.

Data about pupil preferred routes, preferred occupations and anticipated school leaving date is also collected from S3/S4 to support planning for leaving school. This information is shared with Skills Development Scotland. Further information about 16+ Data can be found here: <http://hi-hope.org/directory/listing/16plus-planning>

Data policy

Information about pupils' education is collected through our statistical surveys in partnership between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities through the ScotXed Programme which aims to help schools and Local Authorities by supporting efficient collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information. The Scottish Government then provides analysis of the data to support research, planning, management and monitoring of education services as well as to produce National Statistics publications.

Education data within Scottish Government is managed effectively by secure systems and is exploited as a valuable corporate resource, subject to confidentiality restraints. As part of its data policy, Scottish Government will not publish or make publicly available any information that allows individual pupils to be identified, nor will data be used by Scottish Government to take any actions in respect of individuals. Data is held securely and no information on individual pupils can or would be made publicly available by Scottish Government.

The individual data collected by Scottish Government through the Pupil Census is used for statistical and research purposes only.

Information on why we collect data about pupils and who we share this data with can be found in Highland Council's Privacy Notice which is available here: https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1095920/enrol_your_child_at_a_school

Why do we need your data?

In order to make the best decisions about how to improve our education service, Scottish Government, education authorities and other partners such as the SQA and Skills Development Scotland need accurate, up-to-date data about our pupils. We are keen to help all our pupils do well in all aspects of school life and achieve better examination results. Accurate and up-to-date data allows us to:

- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of all pupils
- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of specific groups of pupils

- better understand some of the factors which influence pupil attainment and achievement
- share good practice
- target resources better
- enhance the quality of research to improve the lives of young people in Scotland

Your data protection rights

The collection, transfer, processing and sharing of ScotXed data is done in accordance with data protection legislation. We also comply with the National Statistics Code of Practice requirements and other legislation related to safeguarding the confidentiality of data. Data protection legislation gives you the right to know how we will use your data. This note can give only a brief description of how we use data. Fuller details of each individual ScotXed survey, including the purpose of each and the published data, can be found on the ScotXed website

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed/SchoolEducation>

Scottish Government works with a range of partners including Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the SQA. On occasion, in order to help meet our aim of improving the life of young people in Scotland, we may make individual data available to partners such as the National Registers of Scotland to carry out research relating to the national population census and also academic institutions and organisations to carry out additional research and statistical analysis to meet their own official responsibilities. Any sharing of data will be done under the strict control of Scottish Government, and will be consistent with our data policy. This will ensure that no individual level data will be made public as a result of the data sharing and that these data will not be used to take any actions in respect of an individual. Decisions on the sharing of data will be taken in consultation with relevant colleagues and individuals within and outwith Scottish Government. At all times pupils' rights under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation will be ensured.

Concerns

If you have any concerns about the ScotXed data collections you can email the Head of Schools Analysis at ScotXed@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to The ScotXed Support Office, Area 2D, Victoria Quay, Leith, EH6 6QQ. Alternative versions of this page are available, on request from the ScotXed Support Office, in other languages, audio tape, Braille and large print.