



ST COLUMBA'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL 2025-2026

St Columba's RC Primary School
Caol Campus
Glenkingie Street
Caol
FORT WILLIAM
PH33 7DS



Tel: 01397703377



St Columba's RC Primary School,
Glenkingie Street
Caol, Fort William
PH33 7DP
Tel 01397 703377
December 20242

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

Welcome to St. Columba's RC Primary School! This handbook should give you some general information about the life of the school and key aspects about your child's learning journey with us.

At St. Columba's we work hard to ensure that every child is valued and supported in achieving their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

We hope you find the information helpful however; it is only a starting point in your association with the school. Please do not hesitate to contact the school at any time if you wish further information or to discuss any aspect of your child's education or welfare with me or his/her class teacher.

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that information in this handbook is up to date, changes made after printing may affect pupils and parents. In these cases, pupils will be informed by separate communication.

We look forward to working in a happy and successful partnership with you and your family.

Leah Burns
Head Teacher



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Useful Information



Session 2025.2026

St. Columba's RC Primary School
Glenkingie Street
Caol
FORT WILLIAM
PH33 7DS

Head Teacher: Leah Burns

Telephone: 01397 703377



E-mail: leah.burns@highland.gov.uk
stcolumba'src.primary@highland.gov.uk

Facebook: St. Columba's RC Primary School,
Fort William

School Charter



Pupils have a responsibility to come to school prepared, on time and ready to listen and learn.

Article 28
The right to an education

Staff will prepare differentiated, fun teaching and learning opportunities that meet the needs and challenge our learners.



Pupils have a responsibility to respect other people's beliefs and opinions, even if they are different from ours.

Article 29
Education must encourage respect for others.

Staff will ensure that pupils learn about different countries, cultures and religions and have an opportunity to share and celebrate diversity.

Pupils have a responsibility to listen respectfully to the views of others.

Article 12
Children have the right to say what they think and have their views taken seriously.

Staff have a responsibility to listen to the views of pupils.



Pupils have a responsibility to look after people, property and resources

Article 31
Every child has the right to relax, play and join in a wide range of activities.

Staff will provide appropriate resources and organise these in a way that allows pupils to relax, play and join in a wide range of activities.

Pupils have a responsibility to be kind and helpful citizens.

Article 32
Children should be protected from harm.

Staff have a responsibility to promote and model good relationships and support pupils to be safe and happy in school.



S C H O O L D A T E S

Session 2025 – 2026

SCHOOL OPENS

Tuesday 19th August 2025
Monday 27th October 2025
Wednesday 7th January 2026
Thursday 19th February 2026
Monday 20th April 2026

SCHOOL CLOSES

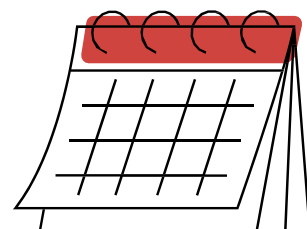
Friday 10th October 2025
Tuesday 23rd December 2025
Friday 13th February 2026
Thursday 2nd April 2026
Thursday 2nd July 2026

IN-SERVICE DAYS

Monday 18th August 2025
Monday/Tuesday 15th/16th September 2025
Wednesday 18th February 2026
Thursday 7th May 2026

MAY DAY HOLIDAY

Monday 4th May 2026



Here is the link to the Highland Council website to keep you up to date with school term dates-

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

PLEASE NOTE – Dates may be subject to change.



Our School



School Mission Statement

At St. Columba's RC Primary School, we are engaged in the pursuit of excellence.

We present the children with opportunities to develop the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence so that they will become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

We hope that this will equip them with skills and attitudes for lifelong learning and will prepare them for life beyond school.

Our overall aim is to create a secure, happy and friendly environment where the children are encouraged to develop academically, socially, emotionally and creatively to the best of their ability.

Our commitment as a Catholic school plays a central part as we endeavour to reflect the ideals of our faith in our everyday practice, particularly in the ethos and positive attitude of the school as a whole. We focus on the development of a community based on genuine care and understanding where each child is respected, valued and encouraged to realise his/her full potential.

School Values and Aims-



Our School Staff



Head Teacher

Miss Leah Burns

Teaching Staff

Class Teachers

Mrs Emma Kelly
Mrs Eilidh Soe-Paing
Miss Leah Burns



ASN Teacher

Non-Teaching Staff

Clerical Assistant

Ms Anne-Marie Dillon

Pupil Support Assistants

Ms Anne-Marie Dillon
Mrs Anne-Marie Laing
Mrs Amy Lopez
Mrs Sheila MacPherson
Miss Susan-Jane Ross
Mrs Nicola Toal
Mrs Elaine Trotter

Visiting Instructors

Piping

Brass

Violin

Music Therapy

Play Therapy

Drama

Ms Margaret MacMaster
Mr Mark Reynolds
Mrs Rebecca Lawrie
Mrs Clare Reynolds
Anna McBride
Ilona Lawson & David Ogg



Janitor

Kitchen Staff Margaret Stewart, Anne MacKenzie, Janine Hunter, Fiona Ismail
Moira Sinclair, Caroline Fraser, Jayne Barton

The School: Accommodation / Facilities



St. Columba's RC Primary School is a denominational school within the Caol Joint Campus, in the village of Caol, near Fort William. We share the Joint Campus with Caol Primary School.

The facility reflects the aspirations of Highland Council in relation to attainment, achievement and inclusion.

The building addresses, in terms of design and layout, the specific requirements for the appropriate identity and integration of the two faculties within the campus.

St. Columba's RC Primary School has three well-equipped classrooms and a Nursery, all with outstanding views of Loch Linnhe and the Ardnamurchan hills.

The school shares some facilities with Caol Primary School – Reception Area, Kitchen and Dining facilities, Assembly Hall, Gymnasium and external play areas.

The school grounds are aesthetically designed and include garden areas for pupils to address issues in relation to Eco Schools and Grounds for Learning.

There is also a high quality MUGA – Multi-Use Games Area. We have three synthetic pitches providing a secure area for pupils to participate in outdoor games and PE lessons.

The current roll of St. Columba's RC Primary School is 13 pupils

Organisation of the School Day

School hours for the children are as follows (currently under consultation):

Primary 1 - 3 9.00 am - 12.30 pm

1.30 pm - 2.45 pm

Primary 4 - 7 9.00 am - 12.30 pm

1.30 pm - 3.15 pm



· Morning Interval 10.30 am – 10.45 am

· Lunchtime 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm

The school premises are opened for the children at 8.45 am. Between then and 9.00am (when classes begin) the children are supervised in the playground by a member of the Pupil Support Team. The children are also supervised in the playground during morning interval and throughout lunchtime by the janitor and Pupil Support Assistants.

Wet Playtimes

During adverse weather conditions, the children remain in their classrooms for their break and are supervised by members of our Pupil Support Team. This is also the arrangement during the lunch break.

A copy of our Wet Weather Policy is issued to parents at the start of the school session.

Transport

Buses travel to the school from Fort William, Corpach and Glenfinnan. The times are approximately as follows:

To School: Corpach : 8.40 am
 St. Columba's RC Primary School : 8.50 am
 Fort William/Plantation : 8.17 am
 St. Columba's RC Primary School : 8.45 am



From School:
 St. Columba's School
 Corpach/Glenfinnan : 3.15pm

 Fort William : 3.24 pm

A member of staff escorts the children to the school buses at the end of the school day.

The staff continuously stress to the children the importance of good, responsible and sensible behaviour, both while travelling on the bus and when getting off the bus and walking home. It is important that parents give similar advice to the children.

Please note that transport is not a school responsibility, and therefore any queries should be addressed to the Local Transport Officer:-

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/schools/informationforparents/>

Come and Join Us!



Enrolment

St. Columba's RC Primary School has its own Nursery. Pre-School children are entitled to 30 hours funded provision each week - 1140 hours per year.

Our Nursery is open from 8.45am to 2.45pm daily.

Children who are due to begin school in August are usually enrolled the previous February. 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 or emailing leah.burns@highland.gov.uk

During the summer term, transition visits to the Primary 1 classroom for the new entrants and their parents are arranged.

These visits give the children and parents the opportunity to meet the Primary One teacher.

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.

Parents are served tea or coffee at this time.

The Curriculum for Excellence stresses the importance of recognising and building on prior learning, and to ensure this our school staff liaise closely with Nursery School staff throughout the year.

Placing Requests – Parental Choice

Each school serves its own particular catchment area. However, parents do have the right to specify the school in which they wish to place their child.

Applications should be made to the Area Education and Learning Manager – Mhairi MacDonald.

Placing Request Forms can be obtained from:- Enrol your child Early Learning and Childcare

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/11/school_enrolment/2

Enrol your child for School

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/887/enrol_your_child_for_school/2

Transportation to and from school, for placing request pupils, is a parental responsibility.

If pupils live out with the school catchment area and their parents wish them to attend St. Columba's RC Primary School, they can contact Miss Burns, Head Teacher, (01397 703377) to arrange a visit.



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 St. Columba's RC Primary School our overall aim is to ensure that the curriculum takes into account the different learning styles of pupils so that they meet the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence.



We aim to enable all pupils to become:-

- Successful Learners
- Confident Individuals
- Responsible Citizens
- Effective Contributors



We offer our pupils a wide and varied curriculum which demonstrates the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence – challenge, enjoyment, breadth, depth and progression. We also aim to offer a curriculum which demonstrates personalisation, choice, coherence and relevance.

The curriculum develops skills for learning, life and work, bringing real life into the classroom, making learning relevant, and helping children to apply lessons to their life beyond the classroom. It develops skills which can enable the children to think for themselves, make sound judgements, challenge, enquire and find solutions.

In all areas the emphasis is firmly based on active learning. play Global Education, Active Citizenship and Enterprise Education 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

Languages and Literacy

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning. Language development in the school includes the four elements of reading, writing, talking and listening. 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.

Our approach to READING extends beyond teaching the children to be able to recognise and say words on the printed page. We aim to develop further skills of comprehension and reading for a variety of different purposes. Alongside this, we try, in a variety of ways, to develop in the children an enjoyment and pleasure in reading for itself.

Much of the reading and the wider language work done by the children is centred on Highland Literacy philosophies which encourages planning to be developmentally, systematically and progressively appropriate throughout the school, from Primary One to Primary Seven. The children, start in nursery by looking at emerging literacy, this follows them throughout early level. Parents are invited to share in the process of helping children to read, and the co-operation and support of parents in hearing the children read, talking with them about the stories, and encouraging them is particularly important.

WRITING involves a set of complex skills that develops with structured teaching and practice. Personal, imaginative and factual writing are all developed. The children are taught to write in different forms - 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 through the school.

Talk for writing and Big Writing are used effectively across all stages to develop skills related to Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation (VCOP) with a focus on talking before you can write it and oral story telling in the early years. Spelling is taught through the Wraparound Phonics and Wraparound Spelling programmes.

In practice, the various elements of literacy - reading and writing, talking and listening - are often integrated; and though much is done as separate study, they are frequently developed through other areas of the curriculum, particularly in project or topic work, where the skill being developed can be given a real and meaningful context.



Modern Languages

In accordance with National Guidelines, we include the teaching of foreign languages in the curriculum. French is taught to all pupils throughout the school, from Nursery to Primary 7. Pupils in Primaries 5 - 7 are also taught Gaelic.

We also use Makaton as a communication tool throughout the school.

The aims are to encourage the children to have confidence in expressing themselves in a second language, and to increase their awareness of another culture.

The main emphasis is to deliver the language to the children in an enjoyable, active and motivating way. This is achieved through the provision of a wide range of activities including games, songs, role-play and story-telling as well as direct teaching of simple vocabulary and language structures.

Mathematics and Numeracy

The main strands of Mathematics are:
Number, Money and Measure
Shape, Position and Movement
Problem-Solving and Information Handling

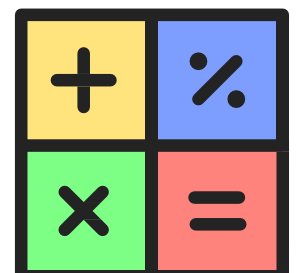
At St. Columba's RC Primary we want children to develop their mental agility to aid pace and accuracy in numeracy work. This involves the use of a variety of stimulating and appropriate materials through which we foster an enquiring attitude towards Numeracy.

Our approach looks at the importance of the children understanding mathematical concepts and ideas, developed through working with practical materials, as well as teaching skills and processes of computation. We try to ensure children understand mathematical language and have lots of strategies to solve different problems- it is important to us that children fully understand the processes and learn the transferable skills. Problem solving and the relation of maths to realistic and meaningful situations is prominent.

Computer resources/games and technology equipment are used throughout the school to enhance and fulfil children's learning.

The school uses a wide range of resources including the Highland Numeracy Progression, the Heinemann Active Mathematics Scheme and Teejay Maths. The children work through a programme of work progressively, their rate of progress being determined by their development and ability so that those who are capable of it are being challenged, while children who need longer to learn and consolidate certain processes are not being pushed on more quickly than they can cope with, but are given more time and extra assistance.

We try to take an active approach to maths at all stages throughout the school including the use of technology, through enterprise, interdisciplinary learning and outdoor learning.



Social Studies

The Social Studies experiences and outcomes are structured under three main organisers:

People, Past Events and Societies
People, Place and Environment
People in Society, Economy, and Business

The main aim of our Social Studies programme is to enable our pupils to study their own environment with a view to learning both from it and about it. The children develop an awareness of the world around them – both local and global.

An inter-disciplinary topic based approach is used with three main topics covered per session.

These are designed to provide our pupils with continuity, progression and balance throughout the seven years in primary school. Topics are planned in accordance with the Curriculum for Excellence, children's interests and choice, taking account of learning outcomes and skills development appropriate to the child's age and stage.



Health and Well-being

Health and Well-being is divided into physical, social and emotional health. Health and Well-being is at the centre of our school and our curriculum. Children are able to access learning with more ease when they are well in themselves.

It is delivered across the curriculum through areas such as drama, art, PE, language, maths and moral education and we focus on specific needs of the children in relation to the SHANARRI well-being indicators all year round.

- 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. This also encompasses our physical education.
- 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, drug misuse. We create individual emotional well-being programmes for children who need it and have various different therapy options in school.
- Social Health explores the interaction of the individual, the community and the environment in relation to health and safety e.g. dealing with litter, practicing personal safety strategies and exploring ways of helping the school to be a health promoting school.



Expressive Arts

The expressive arts element of the curriculum encompass a range of activities and experiences - art and craft, music, movement and drama.

In each of these areas, the children are given a broad range of activities and experiences.

Art and Design: The children are taught a variety of different skills and techniques. In addition to drawing, painting and modelling there are ample opportunities for exploring colour and texture through a range of materials such as stones, bark, shells, plants, etc. Printing and collage work are also included in the art and craft programme.

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. Through PEF we fund for some of our children to attend music therapy. Music tuition is available for children (typically P4-7) in brass, sting, woodwind and chanter. We also have singing sessions in school where we practice our hymns and religious songs.

Various classes participate in the Highland Youth Music Initiative and Kodaly Music Sessions. We encourage our pupils to participate in the local Music Festival.

Drama: Pupils in all classes are given the opportunity of participating in improvisation, role play and mime as well as scripted plays. Drama is delivered through scripted plays in reading books, dramatisation of bible stories, acting out situations e.g. calling emergency services, keeping safe near roads and a variety of situations in personal and social development. Through PEF we currently have Bright productions working with the children on theatre techniques such as puppetry, masks, UV light and expression with and without a voice.



Religious Education

Religious Education in a Catholic school such as ours is something which cannot be confined to a timetabled lesson, but forms the whole ethos and attitude of the school. The principle aim of our religious and moral education is to foster faith - to help the children towards a knowledge and sense of God in their lives and in the world. This can be done, not only by what we say to the children, but by what we do and how we live as a community. At the same time, we do have a very specific programme of religious and moral education which runs systematically and progressively through the school, and includes the elements of doctrine, sacraments and liturgy, moral education and prayer.

The teaching is based largely on the Catholic Religious Education Programme “This is Our Faith”. “This is Our Faith” stresses the importance of being inclusive to all learners and details the distinctive purpose of religious education in the Catholic School. “This is Our Faith” invites schools to provide for children structured opportunities to encounter Jesus’ presence.

The children receive daily lessons in religious and moral education from their own class teacher. The children in Primary 4 are given thorough preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion. The sacrament of Confirmation now happens in Primary 7. Our links with the local parishes of St. Mary’s and St. John’s are very close. We work closely with the local parish priest, who visits the school pastorally, celebrates Masses and other services with us and shares with us the joint planning of parish celebrations in which the children and staff are involved. Worship is both an end and a means of religious and moral education, and alongside daily class prayer and periodic class prayer services, we have Class Masses and Masses for the whole school. At School Masses we are happy to have the participation of parents, families and parishioners.

Our approach in religious and moral education is similar to that in other areas of the curriculum, in that the teaching is geared towards the age and level of understanding of the child; it takes as its starting point the actual concrete experience of the child and moves from that to the specific religious message - from, for example, the experience the child has of the beauty of everyday things in nature to an appreciation of nature as God’s creation and gift.



Although Religious Education in the school mainly focuses on the Christian religion as this forms a background against which a pupil can generally appreciate the social and moral values being projected by the school, we also endeavour to give the children an understanding and appreciation of Other World Religions.

The school is obliged to advise parents that they have a legal right to have their child withdrawn from religious and moral education

Sciences

Through their learning in Sciences, the pupils develop their interest in, and understanding of, the living, material and physical world.

They are presented with a wide range of investigative tasks which allows them to develop important skills to become creative, inventive and enterprising adults in a world where skills and knowledge of the Sciences are needed across all sectors of the economy.

Pupils develop an understanding and increase knowledge of:



Planet Earth
Forces/Electricity
Biological Systems
Materials
Topical Science



Technologies

ICT to enhance learning is an important part of our work in Technologies. Every child has access to a Chromebook and each teacher has access to a laptop. Each classroom is equipped with an Interactive Smart board and have access to the Internet. Pupils at all stages use Chromebooks across the curriculum.

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

They are given opportunities to develop:



problem-solving skills
planning and organisational skills
skills in ICT



skills in collaborating, leading and interacting with others
skills in using tools, equipment, software and materials

The children get the opportunity to learn about coding through online programmes as well as access to beebots and spheroes.

ICT skills are directly taught and applied within the contexts of other curricular areas.

All pupils and parents complete a Responsible User Agreement.

Our E-Safety Policy is shared with parents at the beginning of the new session, and we host E-Safety Workshops for parents throughout the school year.

Enterprise Education

One of our priorities is to ensure that every pupil has an opportunity to participate in at least two Enterprise Projects each year.

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.

Committees

All children have the opportunity to be a part of a committee in the school.

Currently we have an Eco-Council, Fairtrade Committee and a Learning Council. We also hold termly whole school meets to talk about what is going well, what we like and what we want more of in the next term. Pupil voice is important at St Columba's RC and we want all children to feel empowered. St. Columba's RC Primary School has an active Fairtrade Steering Group. The members promote Fairtrade initiatives throughout the year in the school and in the local community.

As a Fairtrade Achiever School we believe that learning about Fairtrade is an extremely powerful way for children to find out about what goes on in the world.



Additional Support Needs



In our school we appreciate that children have different needs and may require support for a long or short period of time. We have a nurturing approach to learning, and we are committed to meeting the needs of each child- we want the children to know they are valued and an important part of our school community. We strive to ensure any child experiencing any difficulties, short term or long term, is given appropriate support, either by the class teacher, the Head Teacher, the Additional Support Needs Teacher, and/or the Pupil Support Assistants.

Our Additional Support Needs Teacher attends a day each week. Much of her time is directed towards supporting our children with the most severe and complex needs. She attends multi-agency meetings and is heavily involved in the additional paperwork and professional dialogue required between school, parents and the Allied Health Professionals who support our children. She supports the other class teachers by providing help for children who may be having particular difficulties or problems in some area of their work. And she works closely with the Pupil Support Assistants to support them in their role throughout the week. For part of her time, she works with small groups or individuals extracted from the classroom for specific reasons, or in an advisory and consultative role, - helping the class teacher to plan programmes of work for children who have particular difficulties.

We have regular meetings to track and monitor the needs of all of the children in the school and use a number of approaches to help support our children. At the moment we have involvement from Kinlochlovin' for play therapy, Clare Reynolds for Music therapy and a huge amount of allied health professionals to ensure we are getting it right for every child.

We have a range of different facilities the children can access as well. Across our campus we all have access to a sensory room and a soft play room. In our school we have our hive space which is a space for nurture, where children will sometimes engage in directed learning and at other times take themselves to this space. It encourages emotional regulation and time for decompressing and reflection.

We have our Seashore room where children with additional support needs can explore in a play friendly environment. There is space for water and sand play, an interactive whiteboard, cooking facilities and role play areas. This space also has access to a gated outdoor garden.



All children need support to help them learn. Some children require more help than others. We follow The Highland Practice Model staged approach to assessing, identifying and supporting additional support needs.

In this model every child has a 'named person', who is responsible for making sure that the child or young person has the right to support his/her development and well-being.

If you have a concern about your child please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance or the 'named person', who will usually be the Head Teacher - Miss Burns.

You can also read more on the following web links:-

Support for Learners Website

<http://enquire.org.uk/>

Staged Approach

Staff in Highland Schools follow a Staged Approach to identifying and assessing the needs of the children and young people in their care to ensure that they receive the help they need.

Level 1 – Most children and young people’s needs will be met at the classroom level by the class teacher’s observations, assessments and planning for the class as a whole, for groups and for individuals.

Level 2 – Where your child has needs identified which cannot be met wholly by the class teacher’s planning, then assistance from support staff within the school will be requested. Observations and further assessment will help staff plan for and monitor how your child is achieving.

Level 3 – Should your child continue to have difficulties in moving forward with his/her learning, help, advice and direct involvement may be requested from Education Services such as ASN Staff, Psychological Services, Autism Outreach Service or Services from Hearing or Visual Impairment. At this stage an Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) may be drawn up. This will record your child’s needs, the support required to meet those needs, the learning outcomes and the planning needed for the programme. You and your child will be involved in drawing up and reviewing the IEP.

Level 4 – A few children and young people may need more help from wider services such as Health and/or Social Work. Help and advice from these services would be requested at this stage at a multi-agency Liaison Group level.

At St. Columba’s RC Primary School we advise parents if their child is at Level 1. As soon as a child moves on to Level 2, class teachers inform parents and a meeting is arranged to discuss the needs identified and support being put in place. Regular reviews are held throughout the year. Sometimes a Child’s Plan may be put in place to help organise, monitor and regularly review your child’s progress.

If you wish to find out more about The Highland Practice Model or the Child’s Plan you can access more information at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_additional_support_needs/

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/230/highland_practice_model - delivering additional support for learners](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/230/highland_practice_model_-_delivering_additional_support_for_learners)

There are also information sheets available at: www.thrivingfamilies.org.uk
(click on Education.)

The school is fully accessible in accordance with the Accessibility Strategy 2014.

Enquire - The Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning

Enquire offers independent, confidential advice and information on additional support for learning through:

Telephone Helpline: 0845 123 2303

Email Enquiry Service: info@enquire.org.uk

Advice and information is also available at www.enquire.org.uk

Enquire provides a range of clear and easy-to-read guides and factsheets including The parents' guide to additional support for learning.

Equal Opportunities

In all areas, St. Columba's RC Primary School conforms to the principle of Equal Opportunities, and access to all subjects is provided to all pupils without reference to the gender, race, nationality, faith or ability of the pupil.

We seek to extend choice and opportunity for all pupils without discrimination.

Our staff have received training on Supporting Inclusion, Neurodiversity and Child Protection.

Equality and Inclusion

Issues of multi-cultural and anti-racist education are of growing relevance in our society. 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 opportunity regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief. We aim to create an environment in which shared cultural experiences provide the basis for mutual understanding of other backgrounds and beliefs. St. Columba's RC Primary School -

- a) is opposed to all forms of prejudice and discrimination;
- b) provides equality of opportunity through its ethos and working practices;
- c) promotes understanding and respect for other people's cultural identity and beliefs;
- d) aligns itself with the Authority's Anti-Racist and Multi-Cultural Guidelines for Primary and Nursery Schools, and Race Equality Policy.

Incidents of a discriminatory nature will be logged and the action pursued as a result will be recorded.

Achievement at St Columba's RC Primary



At St. Columba's RC Primary we believe that celebrating successes and achievements empowers pupils to aim for higher levels of attainment. We work hard to promote a strong ethos of achievement.

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate achievement, citizenship and enterprise skills through class work, competitions and a variety of out of school activities.

At least twice a term we host a whole school assembly where we focus on achievement. The children are picked for awards by in school staff and visitors to our school. At the end of the year we also award achievements as part of our leavers assembly.

The children receive awards for:

- Head Teacher's Award- different focus each assembly
- Kindness to others and themselves
- Being a Successful Learner
- Being a Confident Individual
- Being a Effective Contributor
- Being a Responsible citizen

There is also an opportunity to be nominated for specific individual awards as we try to recognise achievement in school and outside of school.

We believe it is important that children understand that we constantly achieve as we go through life and therefore at each assembly at least one staff member is recognised for their achievements.

Please feel free to contact us at any time to share any successes or achievements your child may have had. This could be from an after-school club or a life skill that they have worked hard on. It is important to recognise all success.



School Information



School Improvement

· Raising Attainment

Monitoring performance and using the resulting information to secure improvement is an important part of the work of the Head Teacher and school staff.

· Standards and Quality Report

Every year each school publishes a Standards and Quality Report which highlights the school's major successes and achievements over the school year. This can be viewed on the school website. A paper copy is available from the school on request.

· School Improvement Plan

Every year each school publishes a School Improvement Plan which details the school's main priorities for improvement in the coming session. These priorities will reflect self-evaluation processes with all stakeholders within the school as well as local and national priorities.

The current School Improvement Plan is available at the school for perusal



2023-2024 Update:

This year we used our PEF money allocation in several areas. One of our main focuses was staff training, trying to upskill staff and build confidence in all staff when working with children with a range of needs. All staff had at least one new training opportunity and we have managed to introduce and embed the use of Drawing and Talking therapy in house.

We have created a professional reading library with some of our PEF money. This has encouraged more exploration of different pedagogies, an opportunity to increase discussion around support all ASN needs and created an ethos of learning for life for all.

Wider Achievements:

- ê We had entries for every child at the Lochaber Rural Complex Agricultural show where some of children won certificates
- ê All children in our school attended swimming sessions where children were able to meet their own swimming targets.
- ê P6-7 children entered the Lochaber High School badminton and basketball tournament.
- ê A group of children from the school participated in the local Dance Platform
- ê One child has achieved different awards through their flexi schooling experience.
- ê Individuals and groups took part in the Lochaber Music Festivals and achieved a wide range of awards.
- ê Three of our primary seven children have completed their Confirmation in conjunction with the class teacher and the Church.

Overall, attainment across the school in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy and, across the school, a few children are exceeding nationally expected levels. Most children who face barriers to learning are making good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

School Meals

School meals are provided at the school. They are cooked in our kitchen on the premises. The children are supervised in the dining room by the Pupil Support Assistants. The cost of a school meal is currently £2.30 per day for children. We ask that payment is made on a Monday morning for the week ahead. Cheques should be made payable to "Highland Council".

Free School Meals

From January 2022, all children in P1-5 are entitled to a free school meal. The meal is completely optional, and all choices provided are healthy and nutritious. 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 Primaries 6 – 7. Application forms and details of how to apply are available online from the Highland Council at the addresses below. https://self.highland.gov.uk/service/Free_school_meals_and_clothing_grants
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/9/school_meals.

A copy of the school menu is issued termly to all families.

Packed Lunches

Packed lunches are also eaten in the dining-room.

Please note:

- Glass bottles/containers are not permitted under the Health and Safety Regulations
- Vacuum flasks containing hot liquid are not permitted because of the danger of scalding
- Water beakers are available in the dining room.

School Uniform

The school encourages pupils to wear the official school uniform. We believe that this helps pupils to identify closely with the school and, as a consequence, develop a loyalty to it.

The following items can be purchased from the school office:

- A navy-blue school sweatshirt with a green emblem costs £10.00
- Polo shirts cost £8.00
- School ties cost £3.50

Children must wear a grey/dark coloured skirt or trousers and a white or green shirt, blouse or polo shirt.

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

Shorts and t-shirts are required for PE. The children may wear either trainers or gym shoes in the gym, but outdoor shoes are not permitted. We would like to see children wearing a tshirt that matches their House Colour for PE.

Please note that the wearing of football strips is not permitted in the school.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The pupils are given the opportunity to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities. These include modern dance, football, netball and art.

The activities take place either during lunchtime or after the school day.

Such activities greatly enrich the school. As well as being good in themselves for the children, they often help to build their self-confidence, and they also contribute towards the children's general commitment to the school.

Parents will be emailed termly about the opportunities for the children to take part in Extra-Curricular activities, as well as posts on Facebook. You should contact the school directly with any enquires, suggestions or ideas about Extra-curricular activities.

Educational Excursions

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.

Policy Information:

We are working on creating a new website. In the meantime please access all Highland Council policies by following this link: [Authority Policies](#)

Assessment and Reporting

As a school, we seek to provide information to pupils, parents and staff to assist in the effectiveness of the learning and teaching process and in raising attainment.

This is an integral part of teaching and learning and pupils are continuously assessed in an informal way as part of the daily class routine.

We operate a policy of continuous assessment from Primary 1 to Primary 7 in order to build a clear picture of each child's progress.

Assessment is for Learning (AifL) strategies are used and formative assessment 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.
- b) To support and develop the strengths and weaknesses of the child.
- d) To give parents feedback on their son or daughter's progress through pupil reports, progress checks and target setting information.

Assessment of the children's work and progress is done continuously by the teacher in her day-to-day observation of the class.

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

Pupils are also involved in self and peer assessment which is used in order that they can identify their own areas for development or next steps. This is done by the class teacher working with the children and sharing learning targets.

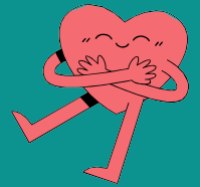
Assessment records are kept as a cumulative record of each child's progress, to give teacher's information, to support and develop individual strength and weaknesses of each child and to report to parents.

At the end of the year, reports are sent out to parents. Parents receive feedback on their child's progress through pupil reports, progress checks and learning snapshots. Pupils reflect on their progress, achievement and best work on their online profiles.

Detailed pupil profiles are completed at the end of P7 for transfer to Secondary School.



Pupil Welfare



The School Nurse attends the school regularly to carry out routine medical checks.

The Community Paediatrician attends during the term to carry out a screening service at certain points in the pupils' school career. Parents are notified in writing, and are requested to be present at such examinations.

The Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist come in to school to work with pupils who have been identified as having a specific requirement. Parents are fully consulted in such cases.

NHS Highland Guidelines for Infection Control

Guidelines can be found online by following the link – www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk

Injury or Illness at school

Minor cuts or bruises are treated by members of staff. All members of staff have received basic First Aid training and some have enhanced training to a named First Aider.

In the event of a more serious injury occurring, the child is taken to the Belford Hospital, with the parents being informed as soon as possible.

In cases of illness, the child is taken home or to the emergency address.

We emphasise the importance of supplying the school with up-to-date information regarding home address, telephone number, parent's place of work and the name and number of a friend who can be contacted if the parents are unavailable.

Administration of Medicines

Some children may require to take medication in order that they can continue to attend school. Staff will only administer medication when there is clear written guidance from parents.

Parents are kindly requested to note that:

- a child may only take medication (including non-prescription) if the parent/guardian has given written permission- a form can be obtained from the school.
- 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 in the medication to the class teacher upon arrival at the school.

Absence from School

Good attendance is vital if pupils are to achieve their full potential. Parents are expected to ensure that their children attend school regularly (Section 30 of the Education Act 1980).

Ø It is essential that parents inform the school before 9.30am if their child is likely to be absent from school.

Ø If we do not receive a phone call by 9.30am, a member of the office staff will contact you if your child is absent.

Ø These procedures were introduced to ensure parents can be confident about safe arrival of pupils at school.

Ø If a child is likely to be absent for one week or more, parents should contact the school and advise accordingly.

Ø At St. Columba's RC Primary School we put a great deal of emphasis on attendance at school. We monitor closely the attendance of all pupils and we inform parents when concerns emerge.

Parents are discouraged from taking children on holiday during term time. However, if this cannot be avoided, parents should write to the Head Teacher requesting permission.

Holidays Taken Out With The Normal School Holiday Period

Our school implements a continuing programme of raising standards of achievement, part of which is targeted at reducing absences from schools. All schools are involved, and have set targets for reducing absence. While the vast majority of parents plan family holidays within the allocated 12 weeks during the year, there are still some parents who choose to remove their children during term time.

Parents are encouraged to carefully consider the implications on your son or daughter's education if you decide to remove him or her from school for a family holiday.

It is acknowledged that, for some parents, it is not always possible to plan a holiday in the designated school holiday periods. For some parents, summer is a very busy time and a holiday cannot be taken then but we would encourage you to use the two-week October holiday period if you are in this category.

When considering whether or not to exercise your right to remove your child from school for a family holiday, please 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 guidance from the Scottish Executive, most family holidays will be coded as an unauthorised absence; only in exceptional cases will the absence be recorded as authorised.

Parents are asked to be aware of these considerations when making decisions on planning holidays during term time. Holiday dates are included in this brochure to aid you in your planning of any holidays you may be considering. School term dates may also be accessed on the Highland Council website –

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/schooltermdates>

Highland Council Child Protection Policy

All agencies involved in Child Protection are obliged to make the welfare of children their paramount consideration.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator for the school is Miss Burns.

In terms of its Child Protection Guidelines the Authority imposes a duty on schools and on all staff to report, by way of laid down referral procedures, any incidents which may give rise to a suspicion that a pupil has been subjected to abuse in any of its forms. This might involve information being passed on to other agencies without immediate reference to a pupil's parents or guardians.

Within our school we strive to provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our pupils. All staff have a statutory and professional responsibility to take action if we have reason to believe a child is suffering, or is at risk of abuse.

Further information about Child Protection Procedures within Highland can be obtained from the Child Protection Development Officer or online at –

www.highland.gov.uk/info/1361/childcare

Please follow the link to Highland Council's anti-bullying policy- we are currently updating our in school guidance:

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

Drugs Misuse Incidents

In line with Highland Council's recommendation, St. Columba's RC Primary School endorses the Scottish Executive Guidelines for the Management of Incidents of Drugs Misuse in Schools.

Any incidents of Drugs Misuse will be reported and dealt with in line with Highland Council Policy.

Doctor or Dental Appointments

If a child has to attend the doctor or dentist within school hours, it would be helpful if parents would send a note of the appointment time to the class teacher.

Working in Partnership



Family Learning / Parents / Guardians / Carers as Partners

We provide opportunities for parents to become involved in the school in lots of different ways. We ask them to support learning at home, attend our open mornings and school Masses and encourage them to attend parents evenings and other school events.

In term one and term three we have open mornings/ afternoons where parents are welcome to come and participate in our learning and join in with the classroom life. In terms two and four the parents are invited in for a number of activities such as school concerts, Mass, sports days etc. Parents are always welcome in the school particularly to share their skills or hobbies with the children- please get in touch if you have any suggestions or contributions you can make to the school.

Regular Newsletters are sent out to parents via email and this gives information about forthcoming events, a summary of past events, holiday dates etc. We also post information for parents on our Facebook Page:

St. Columba's RC Primary School, Fort William

The school is very appreciative of the support given by parents. Parents should not hesitate to make contact with the school on any matter which they are concerned about.



Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings are arranged twice a year (November and May), when parents are invited to view their children's work and to discuss their performance with the class teachers. A formal written report is sent home to parents after the final Parents' Evening. This indicates pupils' progress in all curricular areas, their CfE level and their next steps in learning.

As we highly value parental involvement, we ask parents to contact the school at any time if they are concerned about their child's progress. An appointment can be readily arranged to consult with the class teacher or Head Teacher.

The Parent Council

The Parent Council is a group of parents who are selected to represent all parents of children at the school.

St. Columba's RC Primary has an active Parent Council.

The members of the Parent Council are:-

> Parent Members:

Mr Gary Somers (Chair Person)
Miss Nicole MacKinnon (Treasurer)
Miss Gemma Boyd (Treasurer)
Mrs Rachel Somers

> Co-opted Members:

Fr. David Connor – Parish Priest
Miss Leah Burns – Head Teacher
Miss Anne-Marie Dillon – Staff Representative

to contact please email: stcolumbasrc.primary@highlandpc.co.uk

The Role of the Parent Council is:-

- To support the school in its work with parents
- To represent the views of all 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.)

Meetings are held at least once a term and are online or in person depending on the group attending. Minutes of the meetings are shared with the school community. An email is sent out prior to all parent council meetings asking for any important items or topics for discussion.

Further information about the Parental Involvement Act 2006 and Parent Councils can be found on the internet: www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk



School Fund

From time to time we must raise funds to supplement the capitation allowance.

Each year we engage in at least one or two fund-raising events, such as coffee mornings or a sponsored activity. The fund is held in a bank account.

The School Fund is used to provide a wide range of 'extras' for the children. These include class and school trips, Christmas parties, visits by theatre groups, celebrations at times of First Communion and Confirmation. The Fund also contributes towards extra library stock and computer equipment and can be spent in consultation with the children.

We are greatly encouraged by the outstanding support given by parents and families.



Complaints Procedure

It is hoped that parents will have little or no reason to complain about either the standard of the education offered or the manner in which it is taught. On occasions parents may feel that they would like to discuss some matters regarding their child's education more thoroughly with either the class teacher or the Head Teacher.

Parents are always welcome to make an appointment – please contact the School Office in order that a suitable time may be found for both parties.

When the complaint is made the following action will be taken by the school –

- Any investigation will be carried out or evidence gathered immediately.
- The Class Teacher will be informed if the issue relates to a specific class.
- The school's response will be relayed to the parent either by letter, by a telephone call or by a further appointment with the Head Teacher, Class Teacher and parents and pupils.
- Formal documentation will be kept of each complaint and its resolution.

We want to reassure parents that we take seriously any complaints and endeavour to resolve them as expeditiously as possible.

If need be then subsequent meetings will be arranged in an effort to resolve the situation to everyone's satisfaction.

Should a situation not be resolved, parents can contact the [Area Education and Learning Manager – Ms Mhairi MacDonald](#) - Mhairi.MacDonald3@highland.gov.uk - 0791 8842021

Other Important Information



Adverse Weather

Winter Weather Website

The Education and Learning Service has developed an updated winter weather website which parents will be able to log onto from home in order to access school closure information. There will be links to the website on the Highland Council website. You can access the winter weather website at the following web address: <https://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures>. Please click on the relevant geographical area for local school closure information.

You can also access the Highland School Closure website on:
www.highland.gov.uk/info/827/educationandlearning

The winter weather website allows parents to access school closure information on the internet, thus reducing pressure on the very heavily used PIN number system. However, please note that schools will continue to update the PIN number facility as well as the new website. Our aim is to provide clear, unambiguous information to parents with regard to school closures during periods of adverse weather. I would therefore encourage you to use either the PIN number system or the new winter weather website in this expanded winter weather information system.



Please also remember that the local radio stations will continue to provide regular winter weather updates with regard to school closures.

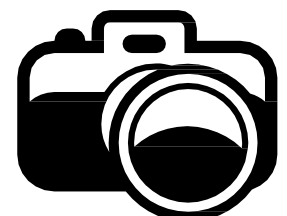
Finally, please remember that it is ultimately the responsibility of parents or carers to decide if a pupil should attempt to travel to school, by transport or on foot, in adverse weather conditions. The Education Authority encourages full attendance at school, but in severe weather conditions the safety of pupils is much more important. Parents should therefore continue to use good judgement in deciding whether it is safe to send a child to school.

Filming and Photography - School Events

The safety and protection of children are key concerns.

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.



Transfer to Secondary School

On completion of their primary school career, children normally transfer to:

Lochaber High School
Camaghael
FORT WILLIAM
PH33 7ND
Telephone: 01397 702512

During the fourth term, Primary Seven 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.

Members of the Guidance Staff also visit our school to talk to the children and to answer any questions which they may have. This helps to ensure that transfer is achieved smoothly. Children with additional support needs are seen in advance by the Secondary Learning Support Teachers. Enhanced transition visits are arranged for these children and their parents.

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.

Data Protection

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the school ensures that any information which parents have supplied about their children will be used only for the purpose for which it was provided and any relevant procedures following from this.

The data will be maintained in accordance with the Act and will not be passed onto any other organisation without the prior approval of parents unless there is a legal requirement.

Educational Data About Pupils

Education authorities and the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) have collected data about pupils on paper forms for many years. We are now working together to transfer data electronically through the ScotXed programme.

What pupil data will be collected and transferred?

Data on each pupil is collected by local authorities and SEED. The data collected and transferred covers areas such as date of birth, postcode, registration for free-school meals, whether a pupil is looked after by his or her local authority, additional support needs including disability, attendance, absence and exclusions from school.

Pupil names and addresses are collected by their school and education authority but they are not passed to SEED. Your postcode is the only part of your address that is transferred. Data is held securely and no information on individual pupils can or would be published by SEED.

Providing national identity and ethnic background data is entirely voluntary. You can choose the 'not disclosed' option if you do not want to provide this data. However, we hope that the explanations contained in this message and on our website will help you understand the importance of providing the data.

Why do we need your data?

In order to make the best decisions about how to improve our education service, SEED and education authorities 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 exam results. Accurate and up-to-date data allows SEED, education authorities and schools 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 that influence pupil attainment and achievement
- target resources better

Your data protection rights

The collection, transfer, processing and sharing of ScotXed data is done in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). We also comply with the National Statistics Code of Practice requirements and other legislation related to safeguarding the confidentiality of data.

The Data Protection Act gives you the right to know how we will use your data. This message can give only a brief description of how we use data. Fuller details of the uses of pupil data can be found on the ScotXed website

www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed/SchoolEducation/SchoolPupilCensus

SEED works with a range of partners including HM Inspectorate of Education and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

On occasion, we will make individual data available to partners and also academic institutions to carry out research and statistical analysis.

In addition, we will provide our partners with information they need in order to fulfil their official responsibilities.

Any sharing of data will be done under the strict control and prior agreement of the Data Sharing Panel in SEED, which will ensure that no individual level data will be made public as a result of the data sharing and that the data will not be used to take any actions in respect of an individual.

Concerns

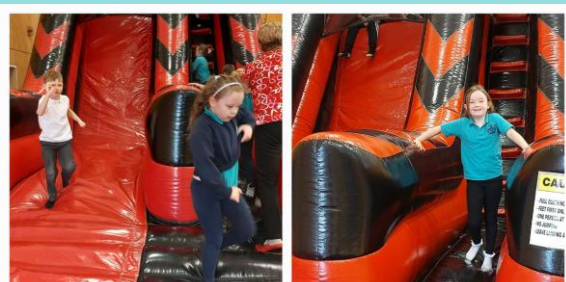
If you have any concerns about the ScotXed data collections you can email the Senior Statistician, Peter Whitehouse, at Peter.Whitehouse@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to The ScotXed Support Office, SEED, Area 1B, Victoria Quay, Leith, EH6 6QQ. Alternative versions of this page are available, on request from the ScotXed Support Office, in other languages, audio tape, Braille and large print.

Further Information

Further details about ScotXed data exchanges are available on the ScotXed website:

www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed/SchoolEducation/SchoolPupilCensus

For any more information please contact the school.



Everyone is welcome at St Columba's RC Primary School.

