Lochardil Primary School

Early Learning and Childcare Handbook
Session 2026-2027



Head Teacher: Mrs Audrey Kellacher
Depute Head Teacher: Mrs Chloe Johnstone
Tel. (01463) 230250
Address: Lochardil Primary School, Lochardil Road, Inverness, IV2 4LB
Email: lochardil.primary@highland.gov.uk
School Website: http://lochardilprimary.org.uk

Stages taught in wider school setting : ELC and P1-P7
School roll: 325 (+99 Early Learning and Childcare)

Updated November 2025

Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of the handbook is to:

- communicate the ethos of the school and provide a welcome for parents/carers and children to the school.
- help parents/carers to choose a school.
- prepare your child for school.
- act as a reference tool while your child is at the school.

On request, schools must make available to parents a hard copy and, if they want one, a version in an alternative format e.g., Braille, or translated into a community language other than English.

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3. EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ETHOS OF OUR SETTING
POLICY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES; Child Protection and Safeguarding - GIRFEC; assessment of pupils and information to parents. Development of Cultural Values; Rights and Responsibilities; Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policies.

5. PARENTS/CARERS
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APPENDICES
1 – Term Dates 2025-2026 & 2026 -2027
2 - School Parent Council Membership
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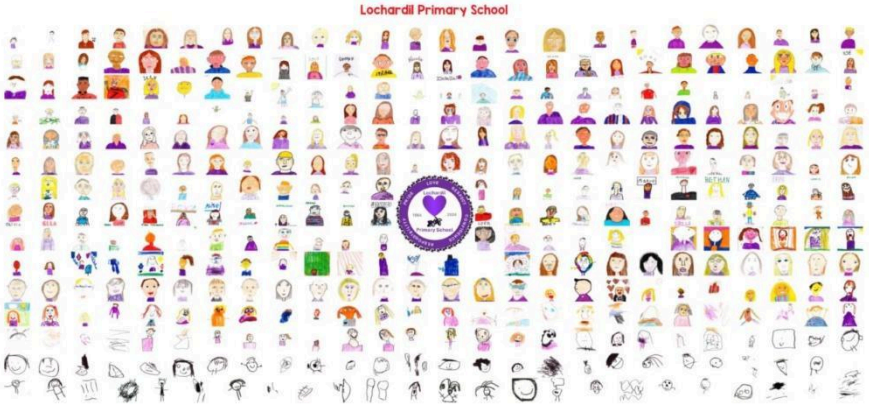


The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Lochardil Primary School



We hope very much that you and your child will enjoy your time with us. Your child is at a very crucial stage of his/her development, as it is now accepted that children learn more rapidly in the first seven years of life than at any other time. Therefore, it is important that the children are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. As a parent/carer, you play a vitally important part in the process. We in the nursery, hope to play our part by treating your child as an individual and offering him/her a variety of experiences and activities which are designed to further the development process. We support children to help develop the skills required to become successful learners, responsible citizens, effective contributors, and confident individuals. We hope that your child finds out that learning can be an enjoyable and worthwhile process.

This prospectus is intended to give you information about the ELC, but please feel free to contact us if there is anything about which you are uncertain.

The ELC Staff are available before and after your child's session to discuss any concerns parents/carers may have about their child.



At Lochardil we aim to develop our young people to be global citizens, able to equally take up their place in the world, contribute to it confidently, successfully, and effectively, and understand their rights and responsibilities to live, learn and work happily. We aim to ensure we build confident, responsible citizens who are equipped with the knowledge and skills, values, informed attitudes, and commitment, to engage with and take action to improve our community and society. We all have a vested interest in making sure our education establishment is the heart of our learning community, to ensure every child's needs are met, and mutually beneficial partnerships are sustained.

We have a positive reputation within our local community. We provide a caring, happy, safe, nurturing and stimulating environment for the children to thrive, and model positive behaviours and high expectations. We encourage a value and rights based whole school approach where pupil, staff and parent views are very much valued, and every voice is heard. A wide range of experiences are offered during the school session and achievements are celebrated on a regular basis both in class and at whole school level.

STAFF

Head Teacher – Mrs Audrey Kellacher
Depute Head Teacher – Mrs Chloe Johnstone
Senior Early Years Practitioner - Miss Samantha McNeil
Peripatetic Childcare Manager- Mrs Claire Fraser
Early Years Education Support Officer (EYESO) - Mairi Mackay

Early Years Practitioners

Miss Laura Paul
Mrs Mandy Mackintosh
Mrs Nicola Lowe
Mrs Anna MacInnes
Mrs Hayley Young
Mrs Kathleen Macpherson
Mrs Kirsty Scobie
Miss Emma Macleod
Miss Katrina Wylie
Mrs Paula Macrae
Mrs Emma Carter
Mrs Joanne Philip
Mrs Coral Watson
Mrs Lynsey Main
Mrs Jackie Duncan (Support Worker)
Miss Lexie MacDonald (Support Worker)
Mr Drew Ferguson (Cross Service Support Worker)
Miss Elizabeth Myers

Out of School Care

School Aged Childcare Assistant – Vacancy Nov 25
Auxiliary – Miss Aimee Ironside
Auxiliary - Mrs Olga Beaton
Auxiliary – Mrs Alison Ironside
Support Worker – Lexie MacDonald
Mr Drew Fergusson(Cross Service Support Worker)

Our school vision, values and aims - Reviewed and agreed session 2016/2017

THE VISION, VALUES and AIMS of our Early Learning and Childcare and School

Vision Statement (agreed June 2016): Lochardil Primary School and ELC strives to equip all learners with a variety of experiences for lifelong learning in a fun, stimulating, challenging, and rewarding environment. We share a sense of pride and encourage each other to be the best we can be, where everyone feels safe, included, valued, respected, and able to contribute equally within the world.

Motto (agreed March 2009): **Share, care, work and learn.**



Core Values (renewed October 2016)

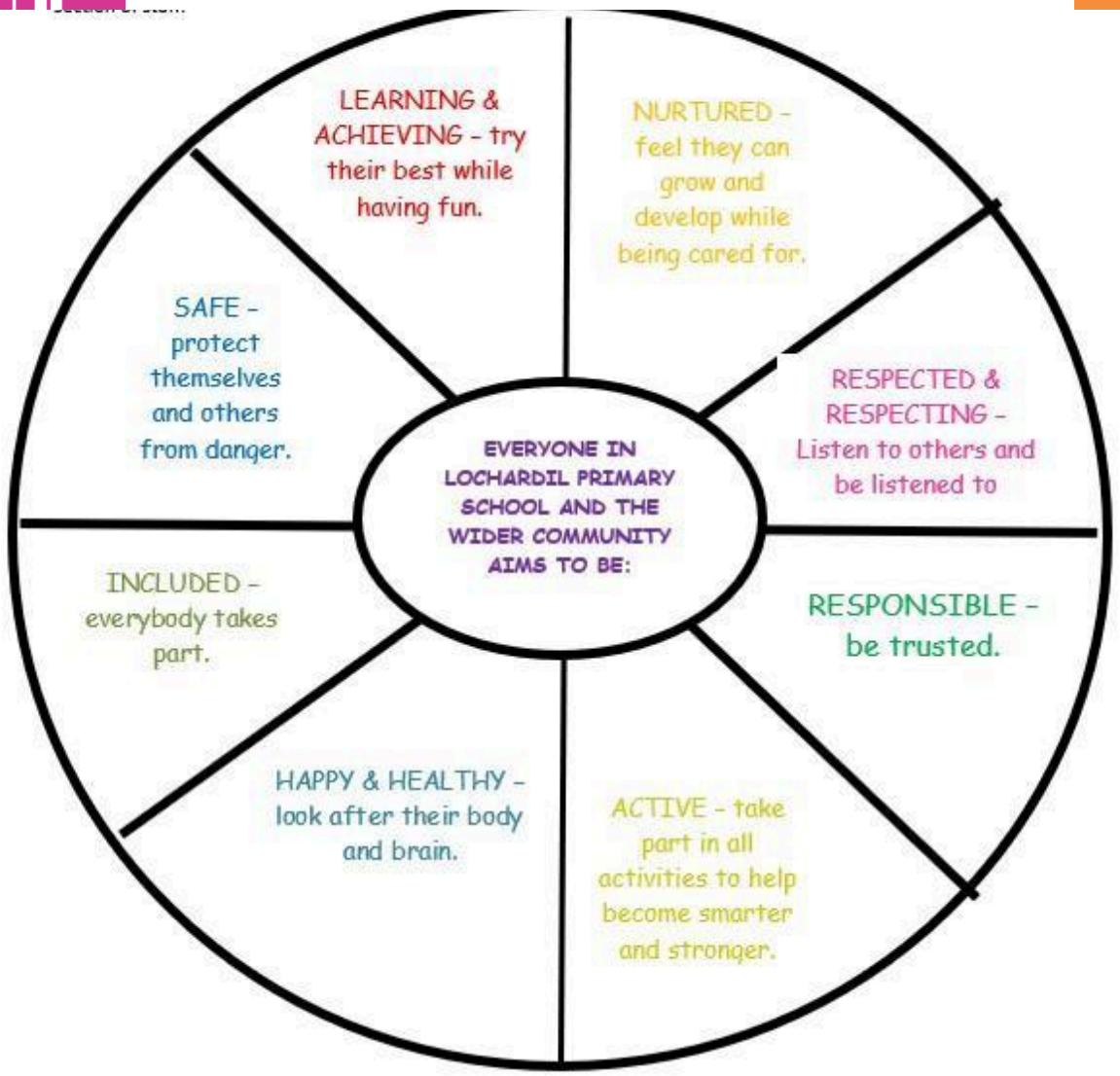
Additional values that support our core values – based on the word Lochardil (agreed June 2016):

L – Learning & Loving
O – Open minded & Optimistic
C – Caring & Confident
H – Hardworking & Helpful
A – Ambitious & Achieving
R – Responsible & Respectful
D – Determined & dependable
I Intelligent and Inclusive
L – Listening & Loyal

Early education is concerned with the development of the individual child. We use the GIRFEC model to meet every individual's needs.







We promote the child's ability to:

- develop strategies for learning.
- seek out and respond to learning opportunities.
- choose and plan their own activity and take control of their own learning.
- collaborate and reflect with others.
- think and share ideas.
- acquire knowledge, skills and understanding for use in new situations.
- communicate with peers and adults.
- express themselves through the medium of art, craft, music, drama, and movement.
- develop self-esteem and be more tolerant of others.
- have fun and enjoy themselves.

Further: -

- We provide a stimulating environment.
- We adhere to the requirements of the Care Inspectorate

- All staff are registered with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
- We provide parents/carers with information about their child &encourage them to participate in their child's learning.
- We provide staff with appropriate training.
- We look for ways to be involved within the community.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ELC Hours:

Monday & Tuesday 0800am – 4:30pm

Wednesday – Friday 0800am – 5:30pm

All children must be dropped off and collected by an adult (over 16 years of age) known to the child. Please ensure that your child does not enter the car park unattended. All bikes and scooters MUST be left at the school entrance in the appropriate bike shed and NOT taken through the playground or down to the centre.

FLEXIBLE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

We currently offer the option of flexible Early Learning and Childcare. This allows parents and carers the opportunity to choose their session to suit their needs. As part of the Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare Expansion, children are now eligible for 1140 hours free of charge from the term following their 3rd birthday. We have intakes in August, January, and April.In addition we offer breakfast club and after school provision for pupils up to Primary 7 age. For further information please contact Samantha.Mcneil@highland.gov.uk .

Transition into the ELC

The June following enrolment, parents/carers are invited to an evening information session. Following this there will be a drop in visit for parents/carers and children to see the ELC in action. The month before your child starts ELC for the first time, you will be offered a chance to visit and spend some time in the ELC setting. August start children can have a flexi start if you feel this would be beneficial to help your child settle and become familiar with the setting. Please discuss with ELC staff.
An ELC Parent Focus Group has developed a Parent/Carers Guide to starting the ELC experience and this is available to all new parents/carers.

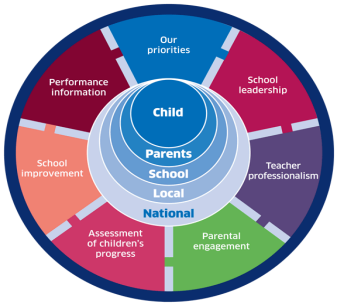
The ELC Experience

We promote Equal Opportunities for all. The ELC: -

- Takes account of pupils' cultural backgrounds, language needs and different learning styles.
- Encourages all children to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the nursery room.
- Ensures all learning materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and overt or covert discrimination.
- Ensures staff time, support, attention, and all resources are given equally to all children.
- Encourages all children to work and play freely with each other.
- Ensures discipline procedures – notably rewards and sanctions – are the same for all children.
- Encourages all children and staff to value each other, build up and maintain co-operative working relationships.



- Ensures that each parent/carer is treated in a manner which guarantees that they have full and equal access to support, information, and resources.

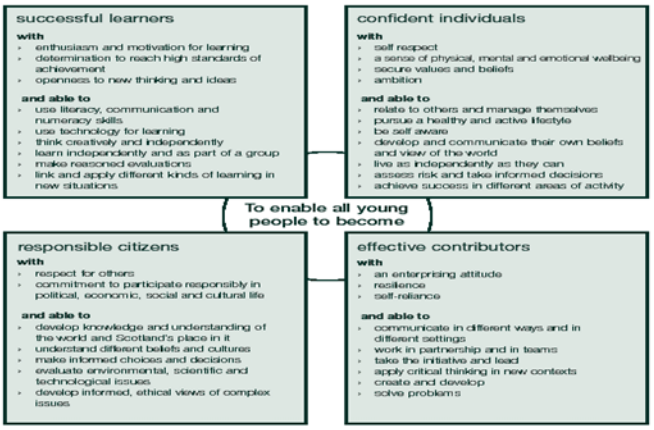


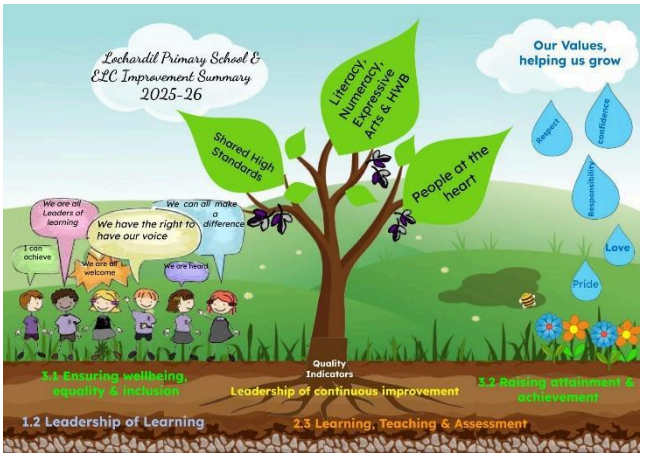
The purposes of the Curriculum are outlined in the Scottish Executive's document 'A Curriculum for Excellence (2004)':

We continue to build and develop our curriculum, using the National Improvement Framework, How Good Is Our School 4 & How Good is Our ELC document guidance to underpin our planning and developments. We are developing our progression pathways through our curricular areas to ensure we engage in a curriculum that achieves excellence and equity for all. What makes our curriculum unique is our mutually beneficial partnership approach with our community to offer our pupils opportunities and experiences to learn, develop and enhance skills for learning, life, and work.

Our improvement plan sets out where we will build on our existing strengths and identifies our priorities for change across our school setting.

Our curriculum plan illustrates our proposed journey to show what the school will look like in time. We aspire 'To enable all young people to become Successful Learners; Confident Learners; Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors through Curriculum for Excellence. All underpinned by Learning for Sustainability to ensure we develop our global citizens to actively engage in their world through looking 'Inwards, Outwards and Forwards.'





Most theories about learning stress the importance of communicating with others and consequently we will encourage your child to co-operate and work with other children and the various adults with whom the child comes in contact. Much of the children's learning will be through play, where children are offered a range of activities each with an underlying educational purpose.



Play is how humans explore a variety of experiences in different situations for a variety of purposes. It is a process that provides a way of learning; therefore, it should be seen as a means of teaching and learning rather than a separate entity.

So why play?



- Through activity-based learning the brain and body are stimulated and active.
- It provides pleasure and enjoyment which in turn will motivate children to further their learning by persevering, overcoming difficulties and concentrating for longer periods of time.
- It helps to build confidence in themselves and their abilities.
- It allows the child to tackle new experiences in a non-threatening situation.
- Skills can be practised and repeated as many times as is necessary for confidence and mastery.
- Opportunities for sensory experiences which are the foundation of intellectual



development are provided.
- It provides reasons children can understand for acquiring skills and knowledge and creates context for language development.

A wide range of play activities are made available to the children at every session, from which they are free to choose their own activity. Sometimes children will want to play alone and sometimes with friends, occasionally they may simply need to take time out or look on.



The range of activities on offer encourages development in all the areas of Curriculum for Excellence. Through these activities children are encouraged to become

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors
- Responsible citizens.

Throughout our activities we will also focus on the main development areas of



- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Health and Wellbeing



We will also focus on developing the other 5 curricular areas of social studies, Science, Technology, RME and Expressive Arts
We also focus on developing children's own interests and extending their knowledge through play.

Outdoor Play



Children experience daily outdoor play throughout the whole ELC year. Our outdoor area has been extensively developed to include mud kitchen, outdoor sandpit, construction area, water area, bug hotel, planting, and growing areas. We actively promote outdoor learning through our work with the Forestry Commission which has enabled staff and children to experience forest school sessions. During these sessions there is an emphasis on how to stay safe outdoors focusing on looking after themselves, their friends, and the environment. Outdoor clothing is essential as outdoor play is an integral part our ELC experience.

Lochardil Learning Pathways



Within Lochardil Primary we have a focus on continuous profiling and reporting which begins in the ELC setting. Observations are made on children in line with the Curriculum for Excellence. This information is recorded on individual Learning Pathways which are shared with parents/carers at stay and play, family learning conversations with key workers and interview times. As part of our ongoing family engagement these are also sent home on a regular basis. If any concerns arise, they will be shared with parents/carers as soon as possible. The Learning Pathways are also shared with the Primary One teacher. The Learning Pathways are always kept in the child's individual trays. We encourage Family Engagement in contributing to these Learning Pathways.

Snack



The children will be given a small snack every day which is offered on a flexi basis throughout the morning and afternoon. The main purpose of this activity is to develop a range of social skills associated with eating. At times the children are involved in helping to prepare some of the snack themselves under adult supervision.



It is important that parents/carers advise ELC staff of any dietary requirements or allergies prior to their child starting ELC. A list of children with food allergies/special requirements is clearly displayed in the food preparation area to serve as a constant reminder to staff. Allergens contained within nursery snack are displayed as part of the monthly snack menu.

The ELC follows a Healthy Eating Policy. Due to Health & Safety we are unable to accept



any home baking or other foodstuffs for consumption in the nursery.

Clothing

All children must bring a pair of suitable indoor shoes. It would be appreciated if the shoes are easy to get on and off. Please make sure that all the children's shoes and clothes are labelled clearly. School uniform is encouraged, and order forms are available from the school office. If uniform is not worn, please ensure your child does not wear "good" clothes as they will have the opportunity to participate in messy activities.

Toileting

The Highland Council has an equal opportunities policy and children cannot be refused admission to the ELC because they are not toilet trained. If necessary, parents/carers should discuss their child's toilet needs with staff prior to starting nursery. If your child is not yet toilet trained our staff will do our very best to support, you and your child on this journey. We want to make the process as smooth as possible and would ask that you work with us to carry on the same practices at home.

Illness

Children have more opportunities to meet infections, so parents/carers are advised to check that all vaccinations are up to date. If necessary, contact your Health Visitor or GP for further advice.

In accordance with Highland Council policy all absences must be notified to the school office, by telephone, by 9.15am daily and followed by a letter on the child's return. Children who are unwell should be kept at home until they are fully recovered and ready to attend the ELC again. In cases of sickness/diarrhoea children must be kept away from the ELC for 48 hours after the last occurrence, to avoid the spread of infection. If your child becomes ill, or has an accident while attending, we will contact you by telephone. If there is no reply, we will then ring your emergency contact number.

Photography

At the start of the session parents/carers will be asked to provide written permission for their child to be photographed. The staff (or an approved photographer) will take occasional pictures of the ELC in operation and will display these photographs on the notice board, on the ELC blog and in newsletters.



Lunch

Children who are eligible for the 1140 hours and who stay all day receive a free school lunch. This provides a healthy, nutritious, balanced meal and allows the children an opportunity to develop their social skills and interaction with their peers. If space allows, throughout the year, children can extend their ELC day to include a lunch. If you feel your child will benefit from this then please discuss with the senior EYP.

Introduction to School

The ELC utilises school facilities as much as possible including outdoor play areas, the gym hall, the dining hall, and toilets. Throughout the year joint activities are organised across the Early Level with a focus on Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy. These activities help to ensure a smooth transition from the pre-school year to Primary 1.

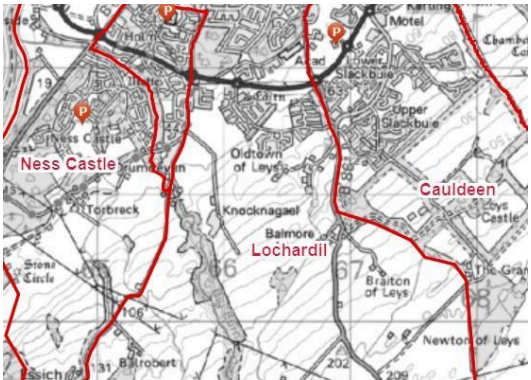




CATCHMENT AREA AND PLACING REQUESTS – PARENTAL CHOICE

Enrolment to Primary 1

Parents/carers of children who attend our ELC but live out with the catchment area should be aware that a place in our ELC does not guarantee automatic progression to Primary One at Lochardil Primary School. If you wish to apply for a place at **Lochardil Primary School**, a written placing request must be made to: **Area Education Manager, Care and Learning, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX. Telephone 01463 702811**



Each school serves its own catchment area. Our school is no longer capped but was for 8 years, to manage the increasing school roll and capacity of the building and grounds. Pupils whose homes are in that area will have priority in being allocated a place in the school.

Parents have the right to specify the school in which they wish to place their child. Application must be made to the Area Care and Learning Manager. Transportation to and from school, for placing request pupils, is a parental responsibility. Parents

of children with additional support needs, (including those that have Coordinated Support Plans) can make placing requests to any school in Scotland including schools outside of the local authority area they live in. All appeals about placing requests to special schools will be referred to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal.

At the end of the primary stage of education, pupils from the Lochardil catchment area transfer to **Inverness Royal Academy, Culduthel Road, Inverness, IV2 6RE. (01463) 222884.**

Parents/carers of pupils who currently live outside the catchment area of the Inverness Royal Academy are required to make a placing request to the Care & Learning Manager if they wish their child to transfer to the Inverness Royal Academy.

CARE & LEARNING MANAGER, GLENURQUHART ROAD, INVERNESS. (01463) 702 811

You can see your catchment area on the map here:
https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=531a30ee33564231866ff94e96607f26

Placing request applications are made online at:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/887/enrol_your_child_for_school/2.

Enrolment Dates

P1 enrolment - If your child will be five years of age on or before 28th February 2025, they are eligible to enrol for Primary 1. If you wish to enrol your child for Primary 1, please do so during **enrolment week** which will take place **week beginning Monday 29th January 2025 – 2nd February 2025. Early Learning and Childcare -** Children born between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2022 are entitled to a funded Early Learning and Childcare place. For Early Learning and Childcare places, **enrolment week commences Monday 10th February 2025.**

Please see the Highland Council Website for up to date enrolment information for session 2026/2027:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/887/enrol_your_child_for_school

Children eligible for P1 or funded Early Learning and Childcare
in the School Year commencing August 2025

"**5-year olds**" – P1 Those born on or between	**1 March 2020 – 28 February 2021** are eligible for **P1** from **August 2025**
"**Deferral**" to P1 Those born on or between	*Between **19 August 2020 and the end of February 2021** child is entitled to defer entry to primary school.*
"**4-year olds**"- N5 Those born on or between	**1 March 2021 – 28 February 2022** are eligible for a funded place from **August 2025**
"**3-year olds**" – N4 Those born on or between	**1 March 2022 – 31 August 2022** will be eligible for a funded place from **August 2025**
	1 September 2022 – 31 December 2022 will be eligible for a funded place from **January 2026**
	1 January 2023– 28 February 2023 will be eligible for a funded place from **April 2026**
"**2-year olds**" Those born on or between Subject to eligibility & availability	**1 March 2023 – 31 August 2023** will be eligible for a funded place from **August 2025**
	1 September 2023 – 31 December 2023 will be eligible for a funded place from **January 2026**
	1 January 2024 – 29 February 2024 will be eligible for a funded place from **April 2026**

PARENTS/CARERS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE



We recognise the role of the parent/carer, in the education process, as that of a partner. Pare
play sessions throughout the year. Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to Learni
Pathways on these sessions.
The individual interest and support of parents/carers in their child's education is crucial.
We encourage parents/carers to inform the staff of any worries that they or their child may h
is also important that parents/carers make staff aware of any information that may affect the
in the ELC.
Parents/carers also contribute to the success of the ELC by voluntary activities:

- Helping with an educational outing or visit
- Contributing to the educational life of the ELC, by taking or showing something of interest to the children within the ELC. Please contact us to discuss your idea.



We recognise the importance of parents/carers receiving relevant and regular information. The school website and ELC blog are updated on a regular basis.
Parents/carers are provided with formal written and verbal reports on their child's progress during a year. Informal conversations take place on a day-to-day basis. Should you have a concern then an appointment can be made with your child's key worker.

Parent/Carer Comments and Suggestions

We welcome comments or suggestions which could help us to improve our service, and these should be directed to the ELC Staff or placed in our suggestion box located in the ELC hallway. However, we are aware that difficulties can occur from time to time, and if you feel you have further concerned then please follow the procedure outlined.

Please use the open-door policy and speak to the Early Year Practitioners either at the beginning or end of your child's session. If you prefer, an appointment can be made to speak to the ELC Staff in private. It will then, in consultation with the parents/carers, be decided if the matter needs to be taken further, in which case the Childcare Manager, Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher will be informed, and a meeting arranged. If necessary, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Area Education Manager who will decide the next steps to be taken. Parents/carers will be kept fully informed at each stage and will be invited to attend any meetings being held.

LOCHARDIL SCHOOL PARENT FORUM/COUNCIL

All parents/carers of pupils at Lochardil School belong to the Lochardil School Parent Forum. Established in the school is a representative group of parents/carers, who have been elected and nominated by the Forum, and who meet regularly and are called the Lochardil School Parent Council. The purpose of the School Parents Council is to establish close links between schools and parents/carers, to represent parents'/carers' views and to organise social and fund-raising events on behalf of the parents/carers e.g., the Councils' duties and functions include:

- Keeping in touch with parents'/carers' views and reporting to parents/carers.
- Encouraging links between the school and parents/carers.
- Receiving reports from the Head Teacher and the education authority and making representations to them.
- Taking part in the appointment of senior staff.

Meetings are open to attend, and dates, times, agenda of meetings and Minutes are available on the school Blog or through school bag mail on request. Information can be found at: https://www.lochardilprimary.org.uk/lochardil-parents/lochardil-parent-council
Correspondence should be sent to the Chair of the School Parent Council, c/o Lochardil Primary School or e-mail: lochardil.primary@highlandpc.co.uk

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equality and Inclusion
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, 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 school believes that every child should be given equal opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in all areas of the curriculum. We seek to extend choice and opportunity for all pupils without discrimination. We are opposed to all forms of prejudice and provide a strong sense of fairness, tolerance, and sensitivity to the needs of individuals and societies and take steps to prevent discrimination on any grounds but particularly about race, gender, and disability. It provides equality of opportunity through ethos and working practices and promotes understanding and respect for other people's cultural identity and beliefs. The school aligns itself with the Highland Council Education Service's "Anti-racist and Multi-cultural" Guidelines for Primary and Nursery Schools" (May 1997) and continues to assure anti-racist ideas are embedded in the school. Our work in Equalities, Diversity and Children's Rights as a school aims to address the Equalities Act (2010). Here is a copy of our 'Equalities and Diversity' policy. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q5Meb0wBWJhBF9R8eyCQ4FPpbe-ooEGe/edit

Equalities and Diversity

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaces previous separate equality legislation in the U.K. with a single Act. The Act provides a modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. The Act protects people from discrimination based on the following protected characteristics:





- Age*
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership*
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.
- *Age and marriage and civil partnership are not protected characteristics for the school's provision. However, in general, the Act applies across all the protected characteristics in a consistent way.
- The school endorses the authority's *'Promoting Equality and Diversity'* and *'Positive Relationships and Bullying Prevention'* guidance.

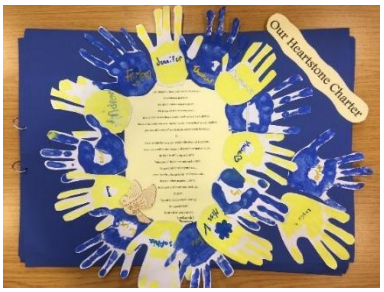
POLICY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Rationale

The school is required to conform to the wishes of the Equal Opportunities Commission that opposes all forms of discrimination and states that schools should provide equal opportunities for all children and staff. The philosophy of 'inclusion' encompasses equal opportunities for all.

Aims

• To endorse the principle of inclusion for all at our school
• To provide equality of opportunity for all children and staff whatever their age, ability, disability, gender, religion, race, background, or culture
• To work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices are in line with inclusion for all
• To provide equality of opportunity through its ethos and working practices
• To implement the advice and procedures outlined in the Highland Council's Race Equality policy we aim to



provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race, background or culture.

We want all our children to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work.

to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices do not prevent any child from reaching their potential.

As a school we work to employ certain strategies to ensure that the cross curricular dimension of equal opportunity permeates all the life and work of the school. We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so the school aims to enhance the children's self-esteem and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any bias or stereotyping and promote equality of opportunity.

Gender

We are aware that as children mature and their relationships with peers of both sexes develop their perception of gender roles alters. We also recognise that such perceptions are influenced by other factors including home, peer group and the media. Teaching and other groupings, queuing, classroom seating and playground areas are organised based on criteria other than gender, for example, age, ability, friendship.



Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving/delegating responsibility and noting the achievements of both staff and children. Any differences involving gender which arise inside or outside the classroom are dealt with sensitively and are discussed with the children. We will ensure that no staff member is discriminated against because of his or her gender.

Race or cultural background
Under the amended 'Race Relations Act' (2001) it is unlawful to discriminate someone because of their race.
Through implementation of the Highland Councils Race Equality Policy, we will ensure that children/parents/staff from different ethnic groups, cultures, religions, and background are provided equality of opportunity and are not discriminated against either openly or covertly.

Religious Observance
We engage in religious observance at times e.g., through assemblies or events in the Christian calendar. We have a long-standing link with Christian Culduthel Centre & Rev. Alasdair MacLeod, St Stephen's Church, and St Columba Church of Scotland & Rev Scott McRoberts. We welcome leaders from other faiths and have an annual calendar of visitors to the school to provide a range of viewpoints and beliefs. We are currently exploring working with providers to include Humanist perspectives/ involvement in our varied programme.

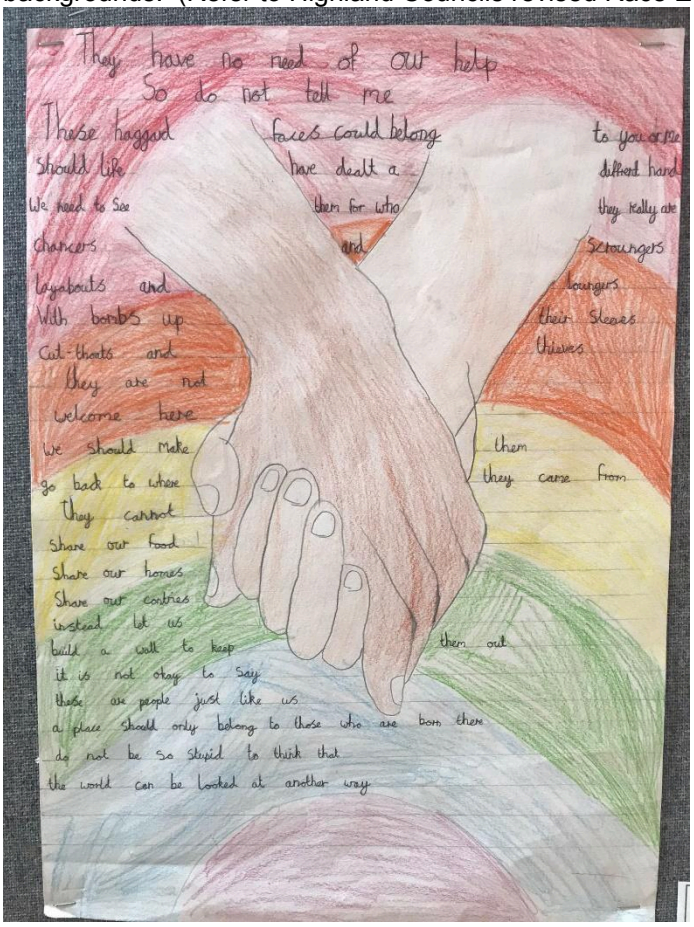
Please Note: All pupils participate in Religious & Moral Education. However, parents have the right to have their children excused from Religious Observance on written notification to the Head Teacher if they wish.
Special arrangements will be made for pupils whose parents do not wish them to part[illegible]e.







Through our teaching we take positive steps to promote mutual understanding and respect for people from different backgrounds. (Refer to Highland Councils revised Race Equality Policy.)



Age
We make efforts to ensure that children of different ages are provided with appropriate activities and that children are not excluded from activities solely on the grounds of their age. We will ensure that all staff are given equal opportunities within the school regardless of age.

Ability
We want all the children to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices do not prevent any child from reaching their potential whatever their ability. We will make efforts to ensure that all children receive equality in teaching time and support.
For further information on how pupils are supported throughout their learning and how individual needs are met. **Support for Learners Website**

Disability
"Anyone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect upon his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is stated to be disabled." (Quote from Disability Rights Commission).
Disability is not about wheelchair users only; it includes dyslexia, epilepsy, dyspraxia, diabetes, ADHD, sensory impairment, cancer, and debilitating conditions.
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act 2001 places new duties on all schools to avoid discrimination against disabled children. It also

makes it unlawful to be discriminated against because of a disability in areas of employment or access to goods, facilities, and services.
We will endeavour to provide appropriate access both physically and through the curriculum, for all children with disabilities with the appropriate support when required, from the local authorities and outside agencies. Staff with disabilities will be afforded the same support.

Equal opportunities for all children
We will:

- Ensure all children will have equal opportunity within and equal access to, all areas of the whole school curriculum. This includes full engagement with Curriculum for Excellence and other areas such as extra-curricular activities.
- Take account of pupils' cultural backgrounds, language needs and different learning styles in learning and teaching.
- Encourage all children to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.
- Make efforts to ensure that children in different localities, rural or urban have access to the same opportunities.
- Ensure all learning materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and overt or covert discrimination.
- Ensure teacher time, specialist support, attention and all resources are given equally to all children.
- Encourage all children to work and play freely with each other.
- Ensure discipline procedures – notably rewards and sanctions – are the same for all children.
- Encourage all children and staff to value each other, build up and maintain co-operative working relationships both within school and in the community, based on mutual respect.
- Ensure that each parent/carer is treated in a manner which ensures that they have full and equal access to support, information, and resources.

For up-to-date information please see:
www.highland.gov.uk/info/751/equality_diversity_and_citizenship/313/equal_opportunities

Pupil Welfare

The Child Protection Co-ordinator here is Mrs Audrey Kellacher (Head Teacher) or Mrs Chloe MacDonald (Depute Head Teacher) in her absence.
At Lochardil Primary we take the care, welfare, and protection of our children very seriously. All children have the right to feel safe, within a nurturing environment that promotes inclusion and achievement.

Copies of Child Protection policies are available from our front reception or online at



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

In terms of Highland Child Protection Committee Inter-Agency Protection Guidelines, Education Service staff must report such incidents to Social Work Services which can lead to a joint Social Work/Police investigation. Child Protection supersedes confidentiality.

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.

More information about Child Protection Procedures can be obtained from the *Child Protection Development Officer, Highland Child Protection Committee, Kinmylies Building, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NN – Telephone (01463) 703483 Fax (01463) 713237*

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD: Working together

This pre-school education centre works closely with other agencies so that the resources we have will bring the most benefit to families.
The aim is to ensure we have the right services for your child at the right time.

We have a Link Health Visitor, who visits the centre at least once a term. Her/his main role is to offer advice on children's development and to be the lead person if your child requires any extra support. S/he will also liaise with your own Family Health Visitor.

Telephone: 01463 706700

If your child would benefit from help from other agencies, you will usually be asked for permission so that relevant information can be shared. This enables staff to get a rounded picture of your child and means you won't keep being asked for the same information by different people.

If it is believed your child's immediate safety is at risk, we can share their information without consent, enabling us to deal quickly with any potential situation, e.g., child protection issues or emergency medical procedures when parents/carers are not present. (Agreed by Highland GIRFEC & Early Years working group, October 2007)

Care Inspectorate

Parents/carers are also able to contact The Care Inspectorate directly with a complaint if they so wish. The "How to Complain" The Care Inspectorate document is available. You will find a copy of this displayed on our Nursery notice board. The local address and telephone number for our centre is:

The Care Inspectorate
Great Glen House
Leachkin Road
Inverness,
IV3 8NW

Telephone: 0345 6009527

Safer Schools App – Download using the QR code or search on your app store.

- Find credible advice on contemporary issues facing families today, such as harmful content, image sharing, mental health, consent, and gaming.
- Everything is kept in one handy place right in your pocket, 24/7 – your child's homework, safeguarding information, school updates and more.
- Receive updates straight to your phone that will keep you informed on the latest online safeguarding news, threats, and advice.
- Keep up to speed with the latest games, social media trends, apps, and websites that children and young people are visiting.
- Gain practical, useable advice that you can implement easily into your family life, including how to talk about the digital world and its risks, bringing your child's online life off the devices and into the dinner table conversation.



ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

<u>Contacting and accessing the school & ELC</u>
<u>Telephoning the school</u>
The telephone system will have 3 options to choose from:-

Option 1 – Report an absence. Please leave your child's full name, class, your relationship to the pupil and the reason for absence (sickness, cold etc.)
Option 2 – Speak to a member of staff in Early Learning & Childcare
Option 3 – Speak to the school office

If you wish to speak to someone in the canteen regarding lunches, payments etc, please contact the School canteen direct on 01463 714931.

<u>Access to Early Learning & Childcare (ELCC)</u>
The security gate has two buttons – one for the school and one for access to ELCC after 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and after 3.30 p.m. on a Friday.

Good attendance is vital if pupils are to achieve their full potential. Registration takes place twice daily, morning and again after lunch, electronically using a system called Semis. If your child is absent, it is important to **contact the school** by phone, (01463) 230250, on a daily basis **before 9.15am** to inform us. In line with Highland Council Policy, if we do not have any prior reason for a child to be absent from school, the school's 'Three Day' policy for unexplained absences will be deployed. This means that the following procedures will be very strictly followed:

DAY 1: First day of unexplained absence of pupil

The school will endeavour to make contact by telephone with parents/carers or emergency contacts informing them that the child is absent and requesting a reason for the absence. If no contact can be made 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 his/her wellbeing, then contact will be made with these agencies.

DAY 2: Second day of unexplained absence of pupil

The school will make vigorous attempts to contact a carer or family member by telephone. 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 pupil

If no contact is established, we will arrange a home visit to check the situation. If the child is not found and no satisfactory explanation is given for absence, the police will be notified of the child's non-attendance. The police will treat this as a missing persons alert. If a decision has been made to contact the police, our Area Education Manager will be notified.

A note, explaining the reasons for absence should also be given to the class teacher on return. Forewarning of absence for medical appointments is appreciated. Permission to leave during the school day: If a pupil needs to leave during the school day for an appointment etc., pupils need to bring with them a note from parent or guardian. Pupils must report to the school reception, be collected by an adult and 'sign out'. If returning the same day, they must report again to the reception and 'sign in'. Medical and dental appointments should be made out with school hours where possible.

If pupils fall ill during the day, parents are contacted for them to collect their child, therefore it is essential that we have up to date day time contact numbers and emergency contact numbers for all pupils.

Schools are required to keep an attendance register by law. We have a responsibility for the care and welfare of all pupils during the school day, therefore need to know the whereabouts of absent pupils.

Apart from illness, absence from school should be kept to a minimum and parents/carers should not, in normal circumstances, take a child away from school for holiday and social purposes. Any holiday absence will be noted as an unauthorised absence. As per Highland Council policy, we strongly advise not to holiday within term time.

We follow the Highland Council advice on all illnesses. Children, who are unwell, should be kept at home until they are fully recovered and ready to cope with school again. A copy of the NHS Guidelines on Infectious Diseases and recommended return timescales can be found in appendix 5. We strictly adhere to the 48 hour return rule following any vomiting or diarrhoea related illnesses.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS – It is vitally important that the emergency contacts for each pupil are kept up to date in the event of a child having to be sent home due to illness or accident in school or school closure. The school will request updated information at the beginning of every school session and may ask that you check details again during terms 2 & 3 when winter weather can cause school closures – see sections 6.8 Illness or accident in school and 6.14 Adverse Weather Conditions and School Closures.

CHILDREN'S POSSESSIONS AND LOST PROPERTY

All property **MUST** be **clearly marked with the child's name** - otherwise they are unlikely to be identified if lost. Please note that the school cannot be held responsible for money or valuables that are brought into school. We therefore ask that valuable personal possessions are left at home. Children should bring any money in an envelope, marked with the purpose and the child's name and class, and hand it over to the teacher when they come in to school in the morning. Any lost property which can be identified will be returned to the child before the end of the school day. Lost property can be located in the front reception area (down the ramp) and in clearly labelled category boxes.

Early Closure

Should the ELC need to close earlier than normal you will be contacted by telephone if warning has not been given out. Again, we will contact your emergency contact to come and collect your child if there is no reply.

Parents/carers should advise the school of an alternative address which may be used by their children in such emergencies.

Adverse Weather Arrangements

It is 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 and pupils are often concerned that important examinations



may be missed, but this should not over-ride good judgement. Schools normally make alternative arrangements for missed examinations.

The school updates its procedures for adverse weather closure annually, therefore: -

- **parents** should advise schools of an alternative address, as close as possible to the school, which may be used by their children in emergencies.
- **the school** will advise parents of normal local arrangements for school transport and any special arrangements in the event of adverse weather.

School Closures will be published on the Highland Council Website by 8am each morning: https://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolclosures.

The school will post on all usual communication platforms including the blog and Google Classrooms and ensure that parents are fully informed of the arrangements. The school closures website will also be updated with information for individual schools. www.schoolclosures.highlandschools.org.uk

When weather conditions are poor: -

Local radio stations issue news and weather bulletins on traffic conditions and school closures. Transmissions may not cover all households and may be subject to re-scheduling but should be helpful. Parents are advised to remain "tuned in" to ongoing road weather, or school information updates.

Moray Firth Radio - www.mfr.co.uk

Morning bulletins will be at **7.10, 7.40, 8.10 & 8.40am** and will also include local information on weather, roads and conditions affecting schools. In severe conditions normal programmes will be interrupted more frequently to carry emergency bulletins.

BBC Radio Highland (6-minute bulletins)	**6.30am, 7.30am, 8.30am,**	**12.30pm, 4.30pm, 5.30pm**

In extreme conditions Radio Highland will interrupt Radio Scotland transmissions, usually on the hour, to carry emergency bulletins.

Please do not telephone local radio for advice but listen to appropriate broadcasts.



We look forward to welcoming you and your child/children to Lochardil Primary ELC and hope you all enjoy being part of our school community.

We hope this handbook will be useful as you look to enrol your child in school.

We continue to improve the content and appearance of our handbook with the aim to convey our information in a user friendly and appealing way.

We very much appreciate your views on any content you feel should be included to ensure your child gets the best start and that you as a parent/ carer are fully informed. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any further queries or comments, we will be delighted to talk them through.

Thank you.

Mrs A. Kellacher Head Teacher

** Whilst information in this handbook is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication – December 2025, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the information. **

Appendix 1: TERM DATES & IN-SERVICE DAYS FOR STAFF

Current and future term dates can be found on the Highland Council Website
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/school_term_dates

Highland School calendar 2026/27

Please note - Dates may be subject to change

August 2026

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
32						1	2
33	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
34	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
35	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
36	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
37	31						

September 2026

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
37		1	2	3	4	5	6
38	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
39	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
40	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
41	28	29	30				

October 2026

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
41				1	2	3	4
42	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
43	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
44	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
45	26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2026

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
45							1
46	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
47	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
48	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
49	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
50	30						

December 2026

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
50		1	2	3	4	5	6
51	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
52	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
2	28	29	30	31			

January 2027

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
2					1	2	3
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
5	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
6	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2027

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2027

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
14	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
15	29	30	31				

April 2027

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
15				1	2	3	4
16	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
17	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
19	26	27	28	29	30		

May 2027

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
19						1	2
20	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
22	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
24	31						

June 2027

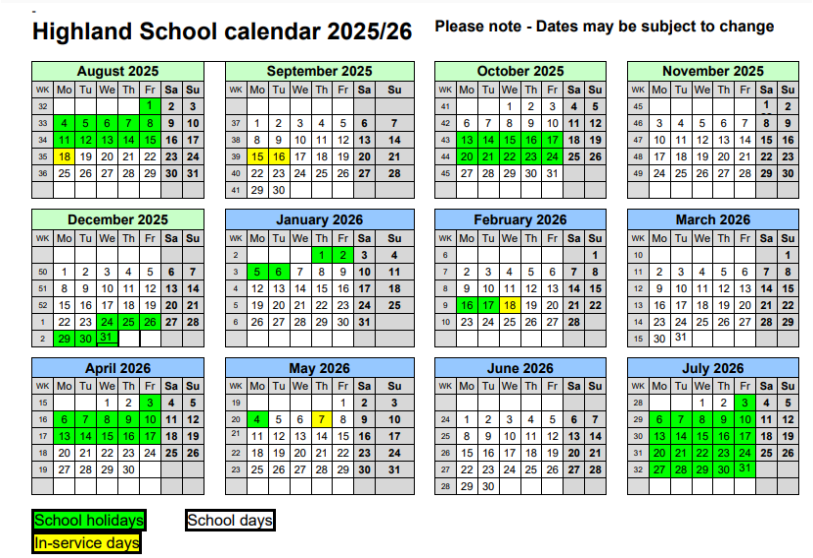
WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
24		1	2	3	4	5	6
25	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
26	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
27	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	28	29	30				

July 2027

WK	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
28				1	2	3	4
29	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
30	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
31	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
32	26	27	28	29	30	31	

School holidays
In-service days
School days

Our ELC follows school Term Dates – for more information and up to date calendars please see the Highland Council Website: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/school_term_dates



Appendix 2

Parent Council

Parent Forum and the Parent Council

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 has changed the arrangements for parental representation in all schools. Since August 2007, all parents are automatically members of the Parent Forum for their school, and they have a right to establish a Parent Council to represent them.

The membership of the Parent Forum is made up of all parents who have a child at an education authority school. Membership of the Parent Forum allows parents to have a say in the local arrangements to enable their collective view to be represented on matters such as the quality and standards of education at the school and other matters of interest to parents. One of the ways parents in the Parent Forum will be able to express their views will be through the Parent Council.

The Parent Council is a group of parents selected by members of the Parent Forum to represent all the parents of children at the school. Parent Councils are very flexible groups, and the Parent Forum can decide on the type of group it wants to represent their views.

The types of things a Parent Council could get involved in include:

- Supporting the work of the school
- Gathering and representing parents' views to the Head Teacher, education authority and HMIE
- Promoting contact between the school, parents, pupils, and the local community
- Involvement in the appointment of senior school staff

Parent Council

Parent Councils are recognised in law from August 2007. As a statutory body, the Parent Council has the right to information and advice on matters which affect children's education. So, the school and the local authority must listen to what the Parent Council says and give it a proper response. We would encourage any parents to get involved in the life of our school, become a member of the Parent Council, and help our school be the best it can be.

Generally, members of the Parent Council must be parents of children who attend the school, and the chairperson must have a child in the school. However, the Parent Council can decide to co-opt other members from teachers and the community who will have knowledge and skills to help them.

Members of the Parent Council will bring knowledge from their own experience and personal views. However, as parent representatives, they must also consider how they can ensure that the Parent Council presents a co-ordinated, collective voice through consultation with other members of the Parent Forum.

More information about the Lochardil Parent Council can be found under 'Parent Council' on the school blog. Check out the Education Scotland Parent Zone site for additional information:
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/

We are also very fortunate to have parents within the Parent Council who volunteer to lead fundraising opportunities and experiences to foster community spirit i.e., fun events throughout the school year. Again, you can find out about their work and how to get involved by visiting the school blog. To donate to our school to raise funds all year, please support through our Easy Fundraising page www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/lochardilpc where we can benefit from your online shopping

Our parent council can be contacted at: Lochardil.Primary@HighlandPC.co.uk

Appendix 3 — Exclusion criteria for childcare and childminding settings

Main points:

- Any child who is unwell should not attend regardless of whether they have a confirmed infection
- Children with diarrhoea and/or vomiting should be excluded until they have no symptoms for 48 hours following their last episode
- Children with unexplained rashes should be considered infectious until assessed by a doctor
- Contact a member of the HPT if required for advice and always if an outbreak is expected

Infection or symptoms	Recommended Exclusion	Comments
1. Rashes/ skin infections		
Athletes foot.	None.	Not serious infection child should be treated.
Chickenpox (Varicella Zoster).	Until all vesicles have crusted over (usually 5 days).	Pregnant staff should seek advice from their GP if they have no history of having the illness.
Cold sores (herpes simplex).	None.	Avoid kissing and contact with the sore.
German measles (rubella).	7 days before rash and 7 days after.	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2 doses). Pregnant staff should seek prompt advice from their GP.
Hand Foot and Mouth (coxsackie).	None.	If a large number of children affected contact HPT. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances.
Impetigo (Streptococcal Group A skin infection).	Until lesions are crusted or healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotics.	Antibiotics reduce the infectious period.
Measles.	4 days from onset of rash.	Preventable by immunisation. (MMR x 2 doses). Pregnant staff should seek prompt advice from their GP.
Ringworm.	Not usually required unless extensive.	Treatment is required.

Scabies.	Until first treatment has been completed.	2 treatments are required including treatment for household and close contacts.
Scarlet fever.	Child can return 24 hours after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment.	Antibiotic treatment is recommended for the affected child.
Slapped cheek/fifth disease. Parvovirus B19.	None (once rash has developed).	Pregnant contacts of a case should consult their GP.
Shingles.	Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered.	Can cause chickenpox in those who are not immune, i.e. have not had chickenpox. It is spread by very close contact and touch.
Warts and verrucae.	None.	Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gymnasiums and changing rooms.

https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/resourcedocument.aspx?id=6606 for further information.