

North Walls Community School

Early Learning & Childcare Setting

Handbook 2025-2026



‘Believe to Achieve’

Introduction

Welcome to North Walls Early Learning and Child Care

North Walls Nursery is situated within the school. It is a bright, spacious room with areas for messy play, investigation, exploration and role play. There are quiet spaces for reading and resting. Outside is a well-equipped playground and school grounds. The school hall is used for dinner and keeping active when the weather is just too poor for going outside!

The nursery class works in partnership with parents in developing children's learning. The Early Years staff encourage parents to become involved in the nursery setting. We value any comments or suggestions you may have, so please feel free to speak to staff when you arrive or when you collect your child.

This is a brief description of activities in the nursery and what your child will need. Please don't hesitate to contact a member of staff if you have any questions.



Andrew Trafford
Head Teacher



Liz Kettle
Lead Early Years Practitioner
Currently on maternity leave



Claire Thomson
Lead Early Years Practitioner

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Local Authority:

Director of Education, Leisure & Housing

James Wylie

Head of Schools

Peter Diamond

Principle Teacher Early Years

Catherine Diamond

Parent Council:

Chairperson

Janine McGeehan

Sessions and times

North Walls Nursery offers up to 1140 hours of childcare per year for 3 and 4 year olds and to eligible 2 year olds. This equates to 30 hours per week during the school term. Details of the school term dates can be found in the school handbook and on the Orkney Islands Council website. For information on eligibility please contact the school or Catherine Diamond at Orkney Islands Council.

The opening times are:-

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9:15 am – 2.15 pm

Tuesday: 9.15 am – 3.35 pm

Friday: 9:15 am - 2:00 pm

Please come into the nursery when you drop your child off and again when you collect your child. It's always good for the children to show you what they've been doing and this also gives you a chance to chat informally with staff.



Day to day information

Clothing:

We do lots of messy activities and although aprons are provided, sometimes clothes get paint, baking mix etc. on them so please send your child to nursery with everyday clothes on.

It is helpful if you can leave a spare set of clothing for your child in a bag so they can change into their own clothes if needed. Your child will also need a pair of indoor shoes that can be left at nursery. Clothes that your child can put on and take off themselves are best as this

helps encourage independence although support will be given if needed. Please regularly check your child's shoes are well fitting and don't slip off as we do lots of running, jumping, hopping and balancing! We go outside in lots of different weathers so always please ensure your child has appropriate clothing on. The school provides waterproofs and wellies for outdoor activities.



Snacks:

Children will have the opportunity for a healthy snack during the morning and afternoon sessions. snacks will mostly consist of a combination of fruits, vegetables and some carbohydrates such as bread or crackers. We will offer cow's milk and water to drink. Snacks are provided in accordance with 'Setting the Table', the nutritional guidance and food standards for early years providers in Scotland. All staff have a Basic Food Hygiene certificate and follow procedures accordingly. The children are encouraged to help in the preparation of snacks, which promotes their preparation of food and social skills. There is no additional charge for nursery snacks.



Nursery Lunch:

Meals are prepared in-house by our cook. School meals for nursery pupils are free. A menu is sent home at the start of term and a copy is then returned to school with choices marked on it. We will be moving to an online ordering system called IPAYIMPACT and further information about this will be issued to parents. Parents can also choose to send in a packed lunch with their child. All lunch items should be sent in a container, labelled with your child's name. This will then be refrigerated until lunch time. We ask that parents follow the guidance on healthy choices for lunches. At lunch time the children along with staff walk round to the dinner hall and collect lunch and bring it back to nursery. The children are encouraged to be as independent as possible by collecting their plates, cups, bowls etc. They are then encouraged/supported to self-serve their own lunch promoting choice and independence. Afterwards the children clear their own plates and return dishes to the dinner hall.



Toothbrushing:

We follow the NHS Childsmile toothbrushing programme and each child is encouraged to brush their teeth with the supervision of a member of staff. They each have their own toothbrush and we follow strict hygiene procedures throughout. Nursery also welcome the Childsmile Team to come and visit the children, talk about the importance of looking after their teeth, check the children's teeth and apply Fluoride Varnish (twice a year).



Library:

Books and toys can be borrowed from the nursery. The Mobile Library van calls at the school every two months. Nursery children are encouraged to choose books of interest or explore new exciting books.



Parent/carer information board:

This is situated at the nursery entrance and relevant information is displayed here, such as newsletters, menus and policies.

Typical nursery day

The Early Years staff always try to respond to the children's needs and interests - as well as the Orkney weather - so it may mean that timings and activities may differ slightly from day to day. A typical day in nursery may be as follows;

Children arrive with parents – 9.15 am. This gives staff and parents an opportunity to share information. Please park at the rear of the school in the car park outside the Healthy Living Centre and enter through the nursery door.

Hello Time – this is where we share our news and look at all the areas and activities to choose from and plan what we are going to do for the day.



Together Time – this part of the session is where the Early Years staff introduce an experience, activity or material to the children. This may be puppets storytelling, language and maths games, music, rhymes, jigsaws, playdough. We might play ball games, dance, sing, have music time or a story with rhymes and songs.



Snack time – 10.30 am

At snack time the children select their own cup, plate etc, they then have the opportunity to peel and chop fruit and veg. Milk and water are available. Pouring and spreading independently is encouraged.

Tooth brushing – This is offered during either the morning or the afternoon.

Choosing Time – This is the biggest part of our day; children now have time to invent, explore and create within the nursery. The range of activities includes painting, writing table, sand and water, bricks, playing games, counting and sorting, role play & house area, construction area and book area. Play may be indoors or outdoors. We use our outdoor area, the football pitch, the

school's playground to offer a variety of experiences such as climbing, running, riding trikes, kicking, throwing and catching balls. We also have an amazing nature trail within our school grounds. This leads to an outdoor learning area where we can build dens and have a firepit. At the end of choosing time, we all tidy up together.



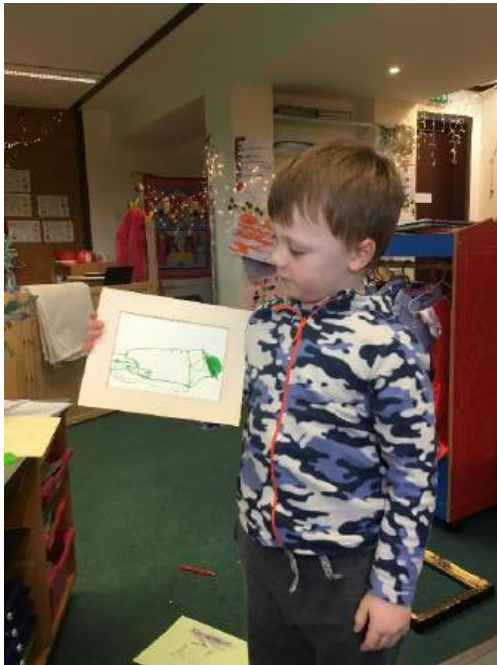
Lunch Time – 12.20 pm. Nursery children have their lunch in the nursery after collecting lunch from the dinner hall.

Home Time – When you collect your child this is an opportunity to talk with Early Years staff, have a look around and share any achievements or concerns.

Learning Folders

Each child will have their own 'Learning Journey' folder. The aim of the learning folder is to build up a picture of your child, their interests, development and to share this with the child themselves, family and those who are important to the child. We aim to do this in a number of ways; encouraging children to contribute their work to the folder, learning stories (an observation of your child's learning), peedie notes (highlights moments of achievement, wonder, excitement and so forth) and of course exciting moments from home, holidays, trips. We would love you to feel part of this process, feel free to bring in photos from home or email photos to a staff member should this be more manageable. Your child's Learning folder allows for a comprehensive view of your child's holistic development. They showcase not only academic achievements but also their well-being,

social interactions, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, which are key aspects of the SHANARRI Well-Being Wheel. The Learning folder also provides a means of sharing your child's progress with you their parent and their P1 teacher. Parents can review their child's achievements, see their developmental milestones, and gain insight into their well-being. This promotes active engagement and partnership between parents and nursery staff.



Parental Involvement

Staff work in partnership with parents and encourage involvement as much as possible. Throughout the year parents and staff will have opportunities to share and exchange information about their child's progress. This happens day to day at drop off and pick up times, and at parents' meetings. Having parents' meetings and time within the nursery are really important as it gives us a chance to have time to sit down and talk about your child's progress or any worries you may have, as well as giving your child a chance to show off their nursery. Parents also have an opportunity to chat and catch up on what their child has been doing/learning at our Stay & Play, Peep and/or Bookbug Sessions. Parents and children are also encouraged to take part in the weekly Swimming Sessions. We also encourage family involvement by inviting parents to participate in special events and activities, for example the soft play in Kirkwall, special assemblies, Days-out and whole School activities.



Don't let any concerns build up; we can arrange a time for a chat.

The school values input from parents regarding assessing and improving all parts of our service. If you have particular issues you would like to discuss please contact Early Years staff or the Head Teacher either directly or through the school office. In addition, parents may be asked by the school or other stakeholders to fill in questionnaires about the service we provide. We encourage you to fill these questionnaires in as a means of improving the service we provide.

Early Years Curriculum

'Realising the Ambition: Being Me' is the early childhood curriculum from birth to 3 years. The early childhood curriculum is about what the child wants to learn within a caring, nurturing environment. While the intentional promotion of specific experiences and interactions are important for young children to learn, so too is a curriculum which values and upholds the rights of the child. The right to a relevant, coherent and child-centred curriculum which recognises and intends to build on what the child already knows. These intentions are supported by high quality interactions and warm caring relationships. Relationships which are well judged and focussed on extending and deepening children's skills as lifelong learners.



SHANARRI Well-Being Wheel

The SHANARRI Well-Being Wheel is a holistic framework that focuses on the well-being and development of children and young people in Scotland. SHANARRI represents eight key well-being indicators, each of which is essential to promoting positive outcomes for children. These indicators form the spokes of the wheel, emphasizing that well-being is interconnected and multidimensional.

The **SHANARRI** indicators are as follows:

1. **Safe:** Children have the right to be safe from harm, abuse, or neglect. This indicator emphasizes the importance of creating a safe and protective environment.
2. **Healthy:** Promoting physical and emotional health is essential. This includes access to nutritious food, regular exercise, and support for mental well-being.
3. **Achieving:** Children have the right to reach their full potential. This indicator underscores the importance of educational attainment and personal development.
4. **Nurtured:** Children thrive in environments where they feel loved, cared for, and supported. This indicator highlights the significance of positive relationships and attachment.
5. **Active:** Encouraging physical activity, play, and recreation is vital for children's well-being. This indicator promotes an active and healthy lifestyle.
6. **Respected:** Children's rights and views should be respected. This indicator focuses on valuing diversity, cultural identity, and the importance of listening to children.
7. **Responsible:** Children have responsibilities and opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them. This indicator emphasizes involving children in matters that concern them.
8. **Included:** All children, regardless of background or circumstances, should be included and feel a sense of belonging. This indicator promotes inclusion, equality, and diversity.



The **SHANARRI** Well-Being Wheel serves as a guiding framework for childcare settings, including our nursery. It reminds us of the importance of nurturing the whole child, ensuring their safety, health, education, and emotional well-being. By integrating these well-being indicators into our practices and policies, we strive to provide a holistic and child-centered approach to care and learning.



In Scotland, we have the benefit of curriculum guidance which spans both the ELC sector and the early stages of primary school. Curriculum for Excellence 'early level' is intended to support the implementation of a responsive, continuous play-based curriculum for children aged three to six.

The Curriculum for Excellence is the National Curriculum for children aged 3-18. It provides curricular areas and clearly defines what we anticipate children to learn as they develop (see below). We use this to plan learning experiences for the children. The Early Level Curriculum starts in Nursery and continues into Primary 1 giving continuity and progression for children as they transition into their first year of school.

Health and Wellbeing

Languages & Literacy

Numeracy and Maths

Sciences

Social Studies

Expressive Arts

Technologies

Religious and Moral education

The purpose of the Curriculum is to help children to become:

- **Successful learners:** through using their imagination and creativity, tackling new experiences and learning from them and developing important skills including literacy and numeracy through exploring and investigating while following their own interests.
- **Confident individuals:** through succeeding in their activities, having the satisfaction of a task accomplished, learning about bouncing back from setbacks, and dealing safely with risk.
- **Responsible citizens:** through encountering different ways of seeing the world, learning to share, give and take, learning to respect themselves and others, and taking part in making decisions.
- **Effective contributors:** through playing together in leading or supporting roles, tackling problems, extending communication skills, taking part in sustained talking and thinking, and respecting the opinions of others.

These are often referred to as 'The Four Capacities'.

Principles of Curriculum Design:

There are seven broad principles that practitioners should take into consideration when planning children's learning:

- Challenge and enjoyment in learning
- Breadth of learning
- Progression in learning
- Depth of learning
- Personalisation and choice e.g. in how to present learning
- Coherence (with other areas of learning)
- Relevance of learning



The starting point for planning is the children's interest. There will always be adult planned activities, children-led activities and spontaneous activities.

If you have any queries about the curriculum or would like more information please talk to us or follow the curriculum link: [Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) | Sector | Learning in Scotland | Education Scotland](#)

Vision, Values and Aims

At North Walls every child matters. We aim to create a happy, healthy, safe, secure and nurturing learning environment where every child is included. We encourage all children to become independent, lifelong learners and achieve their full potential. We positively promote caring attitudes, respect and responsibility towards each other, the environment and the wider community.



The foundations for achieving this vision lie within our pupil constructed **SMART Values**:

Ssafety & Happiness

Mindful Learners

Achievement for All

Responsibility & Resilience

Teamwork & Trust

Our aim is to provide consistently high quality learning experiences, value the learning and achievements of all our children and promote high expectations and ambition to enable them to

achieve their potential. We aim to support our pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need to do well in life, in learning and in the work place.

We aim to provide a **nurturing and trusting** environment in which everyone feels **safe, included** and **happy**.

We aim to support everyone to **achieve** their potential and be the best they can be.

We aim to encourage **active, healthy** lifestyles

We aim to encourage our learners to be **mindful** and **resilient**.

We aim to promote **respect** and **responsibility** so everyone's rights are met.

Through **teamwork** and communication between staff, parents and pupils we aim to develop positive relationships amongst all members of the school community.

Health and Safety

It is important to let us know if your child has an allergy to any food or material or suffers from any medical conditions. You will be asked to complete a form when your child enters nursery and any medical details need to be included and discussed. If your child needs to take any medication, please let staff know and we will ask you to fill in a form to ensure it is administered correctly.

We ask for emergency contact numbers for parents and a relative or friend, whom we can contact if the parent is not available. If your child is not well please keep them at home until they are better. Children who have been absent with sickness / diarrhoea should remain off school for 48 hours after the last period of illness.

If your child is not well and not attending nursery for this or any other reason, please contact the school by 9.30 am.



Please let us know about any changes of address or telephone number, emergency contact details or home circumstances that could affect your child or concerns you may have about your child.

All our policies are available to parents – please speak to the Early Years staff.

Concerns and Complaints

For your child's happiness, we believe it is important that any concerns or complaints you have are followed up as soon as possible.

The Early Years staff are always available for you to talk to at the beginning and end of each session. If you have any concerns or worries at all, please share these with us so that we can address them as soon as possible.

If there is something that needs more time to discuss then we can arrange a quieter time to meet.

Whether it is a suggestion, praise or a complaint, we hope you will feel able to talk with the staff or with the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is not available at the time, please make an appointment by calling in at the school office or phoning the school.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of discussions with staff then you can contact the Head of Schools at Orkney Islands Council. If you wish to make a formal complaint to the Care Inspectorate, you can access the necessary information at:

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/complaints>

The most recent Care Inspectorate report can be accessed by visiting:

[North Walls Nursery](#)

The most recent school and nursery inspection from Education Scotland can be found here:

[North Walls Community School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)