

Sandbank Primary School
Gaelic Early Learning and Childcare
Sgoil Àraich Thaigh a' Chladaich



Handbook
2024-25

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Welcome to Sandbank Gaelic Early Learning and Childcare – Learning and caring together.....

Welcome to Sandbank Gaelic ELC – we are a busy and happy nursery which provides an imaginative and creative pre-school experience, based on sound knowledge of how young children learn. We see it as vitally important that we work with parents and the community to ensure that our children receive the best possible learning opportunities during these formative years.

We understand that a child’s early experiences are crucial in shaping their future life outcomes and our ELC staff work hard to ensure that children achieve their full potential, and are confident and successful learners. We have a talented and hard-working team who interact positively with the children and continually strive to improve our practice.

The Gaelic Early Learning and Childcare Unit is situated in Sandbank Primary where the current building was opened in August 2018. This brand new, purpose built setting provides a range of modern features designed in line with advice from the Care Inspectorate and our partners in the Argyll and Bute Early Years Development Team.

I hope you find the information provided in the handbook useful and would recommend if you are considering sending your child to Sandbank Gaelic ELC then you arrange to come in for a visit in the first instance. We operate an ‘open door’ policy to parents, if you have any queries or concerns about your child at any time, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me directly.

As a team, we want your child to be happy, to learn to share, to begin good habits in learning, to make new friends, laugh and contribute to the life of our school during their time here. We look forward to working in partnership with you for this important stage in their journey of life.

Mr Norman MacDonald
Head Teacher

Mrs A. Campbell
Principal Teacher

Our Early Learning and Childcare Team

Head of Unit:	Mr N MacDonald	Head Teacher
	Mrs A Campbell	Principal Teacher
Staff:	Ms K MacDonald	Gaelic Childcare & Education Worker (CCEW)
	Ms C Johnstone	Gaelic Early Years Teacher
	Mr C Orr	Gaelic Classroom Assistant
	Mrs K MacDonald	Clerical Assistant
	Mr P Hobday	Janitor
Health Care:	Mrs E Murray	Speech and Language Therapist
	Mrs S MacNab	School Nurse
	Ms L Paterson	Educational Psychologist

Contact Details

Address	Sandbank Primary School High Road Sandbank PA23 8PW
Telephone number	01369 706 350
Website	www.sandbank.argyll-bute.sch.uk
Daily sessions	8.50am – 2.50pm
Current roll	13 children

How do I enrol my child?

Enrolment dates are advertised in the local newspaper, school website, school and Early Years Facebook pages and school notice board, and forms are available from the school office.

You will be informed in writing as soon as your child has been allocated a place. We would encourage you to come to visit the setting with your child prior to their starting date, when you will receive a warm welcome and meet the staff and have a look around the nursery. You are welcome to visit the ELC at any point with your child. However, it would be helpful if you could contact the school office first.

Registering your child for Gaelic Early Learning and Childcare

To apply for a funded Gaelic Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) space you will need a copy of your child's birth certificate and a proof of address letter in your name. Children born between 1st March 2022 and 28th February 2023 are eligible for funded ELC in the academic year starting August 2025. A ballot procedure is in place should the ELC be oversubscribed.

To make a late application please complete the form found on our [useful documents page](#). Please take this directly to your first choice ELC setting, with your [supporting documents](#).

Any applications received from the Monday after the registration week for your child's date of birth, are a late application. This means the application will get lower priority if the ELC setting is oversubscribed. Applications cannot be accepted without clear copies of the required documents.

Children born between 1st March 2021 and 28th February 2022 are eligible for funded ELC in the academic year starting August 2024.

To make a late application please complete the form found on our [useful documents page](#). Please take this directly to your first choice ELC setting, with your [supporting documents](#)

Additional Year of ELC

If your child is still age 4 on the day they would usually start primary 1 (P1), you've got the right for them to start primary school the following year instead, when they're 5. Children who have their fifth birthday between March and the first day of the school year, are due to start school in August.

All children with birth dates between the second day of term in August and the end of February, are **automatically** entitled to receive an additional year of funded ELC and enter P1 the August after instead. Applications for an additional year of funded ELC for children with birth dates between 1st March and the first day of term in August, will only be granted in cases warranting this at the discretion of Early Years.

You need to indicate that you wish to apply for this additional year of ELC on the online P1 application form, during P1 registration week in January. If P1 registration week is taking place and you are still unsure of what's best for your child, we would advise you to request an additional year of ELC. This is because you can change your mind and withdraw the request, at any point up until the start of the school year. You can speak directly to your child's keyworker to help make a decision on what is best for your child.

Attendance

In terms of consistency, it's best if the children attend as many sessions as possible throughout the week. If for any reason your child will not be attending, please let us know by phone, if possible. If we do not hear from you, we may contact you.

Arrival and collection of children

We would request that children attending the Gaelic ELC are brought in and collected by a responsible adult. Parents with cars are asked to use the car park at the back of the school when bringing and collecting children.

Please let a Childcare & Education Worker (CCEW) know if your child is going to be collected by someone different from your normal routine. This avoids situations when a child cannot be allowed to leave with an adult who is not known to staff. There is an 'authorised collectors' form which can be filled in by all new parents when their child begins in the Nursery. You will also be issued with a security number for you to pass on to anyone out of the ordinary collecting your child. Please see our Picking up Policy for further details.

Insurance

Sometimes children like to bring something special or new for their friends to see. We would ask parents to please ensure that valuable items are not left in the setting, as the authority has no insurance to cover the loss of such personal items. Claims submitted are likely to only be met when the authority have been shown to have been negligent.

Excursions and consent forms

We frequently plan outings and excursions and will send you a consent form to ask for your permission for your child to participate. Please note that we would be unable to take your child on a visit/excursion without a completed consent form. When children first enrol in the school there is a general consent form to be signed which covers children going on trips in the local vicinity.

Transport

Transport is not normally provided for children attending ELC establishments.

Emergency Closure Arrangements

If the ELC needs to close due to severe weather, transport problems, power failures or difficulties in fuel supply, we may need to close. If this does happen, we will do all we can to let you know about the details of closure and the re-opening. Emergency closure arrangements will be detailed on local radio, the council website and the school website. We may also try to reach you by telephone.

Emergency Contacts

We ask parents to provide details of two contact persons for your child in the case of emergency. We need names, addresses and telephone numbers and would ask that you please keep the school up to date with any changes of this information.

Clothing

During the sessions the children will have the opportunity to engage in messy play or outdoor activities. To this end, please consider sending your child to the nursery clothing that you don't mind possibly getting dirty and please remember to send your child with a jacket and suitable footwear as we do play outside most days.

As well as outdoor shoes, please provide your child with gym shoes for indoor games activities. We would really appreciate it if you could ensure that all clothes and shoes are named. We would also request that your child has a change of clothes in a named bag.

Snacks and Healthy Eating

The children have refreshments during the sessions where milk/water and a snack with fruit are provided. Sandbank Primary School and ELC are nut-free and apple free establishments. Please also notify us of any particular likes/dislikes your child has and of any food allergies.

Non-Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted in the school or within the school grounds.

Parental Partnership

We operate an open door policy to queries or concerns with the Gaelic ELC and view the parents as the prime educator in a child's life. We would hope that you would inform us of important events and interests in your child's life.

We endeavour to form close home-unit links. Once you have registered your child prior to the beginning of the pre-school year, you will be invited to a pre-entry visit. You will have the opportunity to discuss with staff how the ELC operates and how you can support your child at home. We may also exchange information about your child on a daily basis as you drop off and pick up your child.

Meetings to discuss your child's progress are held formally twice per year, however we are more than happy to arrange additional meetings at times suitable to our parents. At such times we evaluate progress and discuss any issue that need to be addressed. In addition, parents will be able to speak with key workers on a daily basis and we encourage this from the very first day of nursery.

We also arrange a number of social and community events throughout the year when parents are most welcome to enjoy getting together.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

We adopt a whole school policy of promoting positive behaviour and relationships through our school values, assembly programme and reward systems. We endeavour to offer consistent praise and encouragement, forming positive relationships with all children. We take time to listen to children and make clear in a supportive way our expectations in what is acceptable and assist the children in learning how to deal with their feelings.

Fund raising

We would welcome parental involvement in fundraising for certain gifts for the children, graduation gifts, outings, and some materials. We welcome parental ideas on how to raise money and how it is spent and we will keep you up to date on purchases.

Parent Council and Comann nam Pàrant

The Parent Council are formed as part of Scottish Schools Act (2006) to encourage and support parents to become involved in their child's education. The Parent Council welcome parents/ carers as active participants in the life of the school and give parents a platform to express their views. All parents/ carers are automatically members and are entitled to have a say in what happens in the school.

The role of the Parent Council includes supporting the school in its work with pupils; represent the views of all parents; and encourage links between the school, parents, pre-school groups and the wider community.

In addition, parents of our Gaelic pupils may wish to join and participate in meetings held by our *Comann nam Pàrant* (CnP) group, which means "Parents' Organisation". This consists of a network of around 30 local groups, representing the specific interests of parents of children in Gaelic Medium Education.

Further details about the Parent Council can be found on the Parent Zone website: www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk and Coman nam Pàrant at www.parant.org.uk

Gaelic Parent – Toddler Group

A Gaelic parent and toddler group (Còwal Gàidhlig) runs in Dunoon and this provides a good introduction to Gaelic based play and learning for children going into Gaelic Medium Education. They currently meet on a Monday and Wednesday morning 9.30-11.30am in the Pipe Band Hall. Further details can be obtained from the school.

Medical Information

Parents/Guardians have the prime responsibility for their child's health and we would ask that you provide the school with information about their child's condition. If your child requires medication we would ask parents/guardians to complete and sign a consent form prior to any medication being administered by staff. Once the Head Teacher has given permission for the medicine to be administered, the parent/guardian should deliver the medication to the school. All medication must be delivered complete with the original pharmacy or dispensed label identifying the pupil's name, date of dispensing, name of medication and strength, dosage and frequency, expiry date, quantity, method of administration and any additional instructions.

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to replace time expired medication timeously and dispose of outdated stock. You should note that no non-prescribed medicine will be administered by staff.

Where a pupils needs have been assessed as significant, parents/guardians must, in collaboration with health professionals and the Head Teacher, reach an understanding on the school's role in meeting the child's health care needs and in drawing up an individual Health Care Plan. Parents/Guardians cultural and religious views will be respected. The Head Teacher must seek parental agreement before passing on information about their child's health to other school staff. We would ask that parents/guardians appreciate that sharing of information is important if staff and parents to secure the most informed care for a pupil.

If your child suffers from asthma, please let staff and the Head Teacher know if there are any activities or specific circumstances which are likely to bring on an attack.

If your child suffers from epileptic attacks you must tell the staff what emergency treatment should be given.

If your child becomes ill

We would welcome a telephone call if your child is not able to attend on a particular day. If your child becomes unwell at nursery then we would try to reach you quickly by phone. If however, we cannot contact you on your home/work/mobile telephone

number then we would use the emergency contact number supplied by you on your child's registration form.

Please note that NHS Highland recommend that children are kept at home for 48 hours after any bouts of sickness or diarrhoea where the cause is unknown.

Minor accidents and upsets

Any minor accidents will be dealt with according to Argyll and Bute's Council First Aid procedures. The accident will be recorded both for our records and parents information, and the person picking up your child will be informed.

If your child is upset for any reason during the course of the day you will be informed of this. We would likewise appreciate information on bumps, bruises and upsets that occur out with the ELC.

Visits to ELC by Health Visitor

If you have any concerns in relation to your child's health and development that you would like to discuss with the Health Visitor, please let us know. If we identify any concerns we will consult with you if we feel it is appropriate to request attention, for example, with speech therapy.

Toilet training and the use of nappies

It would be preferable for your child to be fully toilet trained before starting at the ELC, but please note that you will not be refused a place on the grounds that your child is not toilet trained. Your child's needs will be discussed on an individual needs basis. If your child requires nappies then an adequate supply must be handed to the ELC in each week. If any special creams are required to be used then a medication form must be completed and signed.

Parental Access to Records

The School Pupil Records (Scotland) Regulations 1990

Details of the regulations and process for obtaining information specific to pupils are available by contacting the school directly. See management circular 3.11 <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/education-circulars>

Subject Access Requests

GDPR legislation includes the right to request information we hold about you. If you wish to receive a copy of the personal information we hold about you, this is known as a Subject Access Request. Further information and a Subject Access Request form may be accessed via: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/data-protection>

Child Protection

All children and young people in Scotland have the right to be cared for and protected from harm, growing up in a safe environment in which their rights and needs are respected. The welfare of our children is paramount.

Child protection is a professional and core responsibility for all staff at Sandbank Primary School and ELC. As a school, we subscribe to the authority vision, values and aims on child protection and are committed to making sure that effective procedures are in place to ensure the best care, welfare and protection of our pupils. The school actively promotes good relationships between staff and pupils and encourages pupils to show concern and understanding of others.

Staff receive training and updates regarding Child Protection and the Head Teacher, Mr MacDonald, is the Child Protection Officer for the school and ELC. Given on-going public concern on the subject of child abuse, and recent changes in the law, schools and ELCs are now required to report if they think any child may have come to harm as a consequence of possible abuse. The school has excellent links with other agencies such as social work, health and police, any or all of whom may become involved if abuse is suspected.

The Pre-School Curriculum

Learning and Teaching statement of intention:

We seek to provide a curriculum in partnership with parents that:

- Provides a caring, imaginative and stimulating learning environment where children can develop fully as individuals;
- Learning is child led and utilises play based approaches
- Staff offer provocations and encouragement in Gaelic to extend the children's interest and curiosity so that they want to find out more about the world in which they live.

How we promote learning

Within the Gaelic ELC we plan for an environment which encourages children to learn through play and embraces the outdoors. There is a carefully designed programme of activities delivered flexibly to match the needs and interests of the children, with a focus on the development and acquisition of the Gaelic language. Activities are planned in Gaelic around the interests of the children which extends to all areas of play (inside and outside the school), through painting, drawing, music and role play, books and story and quiet areas. Staff will plan for children's learning using a mixture of responsive planning and intentional promotion. Responsive planning extends the interests of the child while intentional promotions are adult-led activities.

Children of this age learn through play and our team of staff encourage the children to become absorbed and interested in activities and through questioning, develop the children's understanding. Children learn to share and we focus on increasing the children's confidence and self esteem.

We hope that by working in partnership with parents and carers and the wider community and valuing and building on the children's learning experiences through play and exploration; the children become confident, keen and enthusiastic learners who are looking forward to starting school.

Key Aspects of the Pre-School Curriculum

Sandbank Gaelic ELC follows the National Guidance for the Early Years Curriculum 'A Curriculum for Excellence', issued in 2009 and 'Realising the Ambition'; updated national practice for the Early Years (Education Scotland, 2020).

'Realising the Ambition' builds upon the principles of the previous documents 'Pre-Birth to Three' and 'Building the Ambition' to support the expansion of funded early learning and childcare for three and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds to 1140 hours per year. Realising the Ambition is intended to improve the quality of early learning provision across nurseries, playgroups, childminders and the early stages of primary schools in Scotland.

Details regarding the aims, design principles, curricular areas and levels relating to A Curriculum for Excellence are available from the school, on request.

Gaelic Language Acquisition

Through play, children will access all areas of the curriculum, building their knowledge and skills through the medium of Gaelic. The regular changing of contexts for play, both indoors and outdoors, ensures that children's language and vocabulary is being extended. While children are free to play, adults interact with them, also playing and developing lines of imagination while building vocabulary and phrases through the use of the Gaelic language. Staff talk constantly providing commentaries in as much Gaelic as they can. For this, they ask questions, explain what they are doing in everyday routines and when engaging in activities with children such as arts and crafts. They intentionally enable children to hear language all of the time to help them absorb Gaelic. More information on the benefits of bilingualism can be found here [Advice on Gaelic Education - Updated March 2022](#). Copies of our leaflet can be collected from the school office.

Children with Additional Support Needs

Additional support needs arise from challenges or barriers to learning. Many of the challenges which young children experience are of a temporary nature and are

resolved as they develop and mature. Some challenges relate to speech and language development and additional help may be needed.

There are a number of professionals who may be drawn on for help and advice to support children who have additional support needs.

If a member of staff has any concerns regarding a child's progress, this will be discussed with parents/carers and the Head Teacher and in consultation we may seek extra support and advice from outside agencies.

Any extra support is provided in a calm, friendly environment where the children can learn at their own pace with the promotion of self esteem being at the heart of our work.

Tracking Progress

Through a process of observation of each child's stage of learning is assessed to inform the next steps for learning. Staff will undertake a continuous assessment through observation as they take part in various activities designed to show the children's understanding and skills and this is used to plan future activities to support pupil learning. This is also shared with parents.

The observations are noted in day to day records that are used to compile your child's learning profile and shared with the child and parents. Each pupil has a folder (PLP) which contains the pupils own drawings, photographs, paintings, as well as tracking and monitoring information and observations. The PLPs will help to inform discussions during parent meetings.

At the end of the Pre-5 year, a professional discussion will be held with the Primary 1 teacher and any parental worries or concerns can be passed on to support the transition period into school.

Working together to support learning

The Early Learning and Childcare staff believe that the children's previous experiences and achievements have a major part to play in their future learning. We feel therefore that it is crucial to work together with parents to share the children's experiences at home and within the Unit. We send out regular newsletters, update the school notice board and have regular open days throughout the year. Parents are welcome to visit the ELC if they wish to share particular interests or information with us.

The Equality Act 2006

Sandbank ELC will ensure that no child or adult is excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, religion, culture, family background, disability, gender, sexual orientation, home language, additional educational needs, rurality or ability. We will ensure that all

children and adults feel secure, included and valued. These principles are reflected in our admissions criteria and our daily practice.

The Daily Routine

Our daily routine is very flexible and allowing for the interest of the children and unexpected learning opportunities within our unique setting. However a clear routine is important to children of this age and we have regular time allocated for visiting the school library and gym hall and while it can vary from day to day a typical day in the nursery can look like the following:

- Circle time: Children sit together at the start of the day to self-register, say good morning and a child takes a turn each day to be the 'tidsear' (teacher) and complete the daily calendar, talk about weather and have a conversation in Gaelic.
- Toothbrushing: Children will be given the opportunity to brush their teeth daily, following the guidance of the Childsmile Supervised Toothbrushing Programme.
- Snack time: Children develop their social skills with their friends and prepare the snack table, putting out cups, plates, helping themselves to fruit and pouring their own milk. A wide variety of food is provided. Again, there is an important emphasis on developing children's social language so that they can begin to speak Gaelic for real and purposeful reasons. Staff will build children's confidence in the use of Gaelic by encouraging them in making requests and the use of social language at snack and lunch times.
- Free choice: Play is child led and the children have access to all areas in the playroom, both inside and outside, and can chose to play alone or with friends or participate with an adult in a group activity. Children can use the equipment that has been laid out or choose to take out another activity of their own choice. The nursery has been set up in such a way that all the equipment is accessible to the children as the children are encouraged to become independent. During this time the children will hopefully complete some or maybe all of their chosen activities.
- Group time- The children will spend a short amount of time in their groups with their allocated key worker, taking part in a variety of activities in Gaelic to ensure language is being developed in a progressive way. This may be centred around, for example, singing, games, including those to develop language, telling and discussing a story, using pictures or role-play.

Lunch time- The children all sit down at the lunch table and are offered the option of a nutritious hot meal. Self-service of meals is encouraged in a relaxed, calm, pleasurable and safe environment, promoting a sense of independence, belonging and further supporting social interactions.

Tidy up time: The children are encouraged to hang up aprons, dressing up clothes, put away toys and participate in general clearing up during tidy up time.

Plenary/Story/Singing time:

The children discuss with staff their choices for the day – what activities they enjoyed and this is recorded in our floor book. This informs the planning for the next day and future learning opportunities. The children then enjoy a quiet time with a story and some songs in Gaelic. This helps children learn set phrases, which they absorb and then apply on a more independent basis.

The Wider Community

Sandbank ELC has forged many community links and we welcome visitors that support learning throughout the year such as the police, road safety representatives and health professionals. We organise frequent visits to the local community, for example, local parks and shops, the seashore and places of interest in Dunoon. We also support students from college who are studying childcare in placements and secondary students on work placement.

Pre-5 to Primary 1 Transition

Our Pre-5 children may go on to their primary education in other schools within Cowal and we will do everything we can to aid a smooth transition into these schools by working in partnership with our colleagues. Children will have the opportunity to visit their new schools during the transition period.

Should you wish your child to attend Primary 1 at Sandbank Primary School, then you will need to register with us. As part of our ongoing transition work, we regularly visit the Primary 1 areas to enjoy sessions with staff and explore new surroundings. We also invite you to a meeting with the Primary 1 teachers and the school management team to explain to you the next steps for your child on moving into Primary 1.

We work hard to ensure that there are common teaching and learning approaches between nursery and Primary 1 and the transition is a smooth one for the children. Staff plan and share expertise across the sector at this time.

Staff share information with class teachers relating to the children's interests, strengths and next steps for learning.

Smoothing transition

During the last few weeks of the summer term and the first few weeks of the autumn term our Primary 1 children and Pre 5 children work together each week within the Primary 1 classroom. The children engage in a shared learning experiences that cover all aspects of learning across the curriculum. This has proved to be highly successful in delivering a quality transition for our children. Positive transitions will take into account the five C's: Consistency, Communication, Child-Centred, Culture and Collaboration.

Skin Protection

Your child's skin may be affected by exposure to the sun during outside play and activities. It is a good idea for your child to wear a sun hat. If they have one, please put it in their school bag. You should ensure your child has sunblock applied prior to arriving at school in periods of hot weather and if you wish them to have further applications at lunchtime then you should send in sun-cream/block and we can help your child apply it. At your child's induction, you will be required to sign a written consent form for sun cream and midge repellent, if required.

Face painting is occasionally carried out within schools. Parents will be informed when this activity is being planned.

Suggestions and Complaints

Argyll and Bute endeavour to maintain and improve our service. If you have any suggestions about how to improve the service, please contact Mr MacDonald. Similarly, if you have a complaint, please contact Mr MacDonald who will go through the complaints procedure with you.

Please note.....

The information in this handbook was correct at the time of printing but there can be changes in practice throughout the year. Mr MacDonald and the staff team will notify you of any important changes to information. For further information or to read any of our policies, please ask one of our staff team.

