

Birkhill Primary School



2024-2025

**This document is available in alternative formats, on request
(Please contact Mrs MacDiarmid, Acting Head Teacher)**

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Welcome to Birkhill Primary School

I hope that you find the information in our handbook helpful. If you would like to discuss anything further or pay a visit to the school, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the contact details below.

Caroline MacDiarmid
Acting Head Teacher

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Birkhill Primary School was built in 1993 as a single storey, open plan building. It has since been extended with three classrooms added in 2003 and a further classroom and cloakroom added in 2015 and 2020. We now have ten classrooms and a nursery. An administration suite contains the school office, the head teacher's office, the staff room, medical room and staff toilets. We have a large, bright and inviting hall which is used for P.E., school dinners and assemblies. Adjacent to the hall we have two gallery areas which are used for storage space.

We have a Parent Council who have been instrumental in raising money and gaining funding to enhance learning within the school over the years. Parents and pupils from all classes serve on the Learning Council, Rights Respecting Council, Reading Council and Eco Committees. We also have citizenship groups including our Community Collaborators in P1-3 and our Community Café, Dronley Delights. We have a wildlife garden, playground equipment and an outdoor classroom. We have gained five Eco Schools Green Flag Awards and are working towards our next one. We recently achieved our Gold School Sports Award for 2024-2026, Silver Reading School Award and Silver UNCRC Award.

Pupils take part in many competitions throughout the year. These include Fun in Athletics, Glee and Scottish Primary Maths Challenge. Teams from the school compete in cross country, swimming, netball and football. Our parents are very active in supporting this. Parents are also involved in a range of activities both within and out with the school day. An Out of School Care Club operates out with the school at present through Tiddlywinks Nursery who can be contacted on 01382 581581. We also have Applebays After School that is based in Liff Primary but brings and collects children to Birkhill Primary. They can be contacted at applebaysliff@yahoo.com, both provide breakfast clubs out with Birkhill Primary School.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address: Birkhill Primary School
Dronley Road
Birkhill
Angus
DD2 5QD

Telephone: 01382 768094

Web Site: <http://www.birkhill.angus.sch.uk/>

E-mail: Birkhill@angusschools.org.uk

Acting Head Teacher's name: **Mrs Caroline MacDiarmid**

School Roll

The present school roll is 264, this number incorporates Primary 1 to 7. The Nursery has recently been expanded and now has the capacity for 56 children. It runs between 9am to 3pm.
The chair of our Parent Council can be contacted on chairbirkhillpc@gmail.com

ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL DAY

School Hours

Morning Session	P1 - P7	9.00 am to 12.20 pm
Morning Interval	P1 - P7	10.30 am to 10.50 am
Lunchtime	P1- P7	12.20pm to 1.20 pm
Afternoon Session	P1 - P7	1.20 pm to 3.20 pm

Nursery Hours

Nursery Session 9am to 3pm

Parents should take note of prevailing weather conditions when sending their children to school but should not send their children to arrive any earlier than ten minutes before normal commencement of the school day.

STAFFING

Head Teacher

The Acting Head Teacher is Mrs C MacDiarmid. She has overall responsibility for the day to day administration and organisation, management of curriculum, general pastoral care and guidance, discipline and the maintenance of close links with external agencies, parents and the community.

Depute Head Teacher Mrs J Athey

Principal Teacher Ms A Capitelli

Class Teachers

P1	(22 Pupils)	Mrs McLaughlin/Mrs Milne
P1/2	(21 Pupils)	Mrs Bell
P2	(25 pupils)	Mrs Todd
P3	(29 pupils)	Mr Giles
P3/4	(24 Pupils)	Mrs Tugman
P4	(25 pupils)	Mr Garden/Miss Higgins
P5	(34 pupils)	Mrs Thomson/Miss Tindall
P6	(33 pupils)	Ms Capitelli/Miss Higgins
P7J	(25 pupils)	Mr Johnston
P7G	(26 pupils)	Mrs Grubb/Mrs Athey
ASN Teacher		Mrs K Ferrier
ASN Teacher		Mrs R Henderson

Support/Nursery Staff

Lead Senior Early Years Practitioner	Mrs J Henderson/Mrs H Clark
Senior Early Years Practitioner	Mrs S Hughes
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs J Hamilton
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs J Anderson
Early Years Practitioner	Miss B Thomas
Early Years Practitioner	Miss A McLeod
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs L Gilchrist
Early Years Practitioner	Miss N McDonald
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs D Breckenridge
Early Years Practitioner	Mrs J Taylor
Early Years Assistant	Miss K Campbell

Early Years Assistant	Miss E King
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs M Czerek
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs E Ingram
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs A Ferguson
School and Pupil Support Assistant	Mrs A Ogilvie

Ancillary Staff

Senior Clerical Officer	Mrs K MacGregor
Janitor	Mr N Birmingham

VISITS OF PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

[Choosing a school: a guide for parents \(Scottish Government\)](#)

Primary One Intake

We want every child to have a smooth transition into school and this is especially important in Primary one. Children in Birkhill nursery get the opportunity each Friday throughout the year to mix with their friends and with staff in Primary one. This is a fantastic opportunity; however, we recognise that children come from many nurseries to Birkhill Primary School. In June, we invite parents alongside the child's present nursery staff and any other professionals to a meeting with a member of the school's management team and Primary one teacher. During this meeting we will discuss the child's learning so far, explore any needs that need to be addressed in order for the child to leap into Primary one! The children will be given the opportunity to mix with their new class members during a transition morning. Parents will also be invited to attend our informative Primary one transition meeting.

Transfer

Where parents are considering a possible transfer to Birkhill they are very welcome to visit to find out more about Birkhill Primary School and to share information about their child.

Once your child has been allocated a place we will invite you to meet the staff and children, find out more about the curriculum and share information about your child.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

We love our school uniform and feel that it encourages a standard of neatness, tidiness, self-discipline and pride in the school. School uniform also helps the pupils identify themselves as pupils of Birkhill Primary. It has the added benefit of being fairly economic and eliminating the pressures to dress in fashion garments. Although the wearing of uniform is not compulsory, most parents recognise its importance. We do not have a blazer. It should be noted that we do encourage outdoor learning and children should be dressed appropriately with coats, hats and gloves in winter and sunhats, sun screen etc. in summer. We have added a fleece to our uniform during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All clothing brought to school should be named or marked in some way. It is difficult for children to distinguish their clothing from others.

GIRLS:

Blouse - white or grey

V-necked pullover or cardigan - grey

Skirt, pinafore or trousers - grey

Dark shoes or sandals

School tie

Light cotton dress in summer (if desired)

School Tie

(Ties may be purchased from the school at the cost of £5.00)

BOYS:

Shirt - white or grey

V-necked pullover – grey

Grey trousers or shorts

Dark shoes or sandals

School tie



PE KIT

We have recently made changes to our PE kit and children are wearing their kit all day on PE days. This allows for more teaching time in the day. PE kit consists of a white t shirt, black short or black leggings, with black joggers and a school fleece. Children should wear black gym shoes/plimsolls for indoor PE or trainers for outdoor PE. For reasons of safety and hygiene the wearing of personal jewellery such as ear studs, ear-rings, necklaces etc. are not allowed in PE lessons and they should not be encouraged in general, as all children are active at playtimes. No football strips/colours are encouraged.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

Contact the school immediately if you have a concern. We want to deal with all matters as early as possible. Contact your child's class teacher in the first instance. If you would prefer to discuss the issue with a member of the management team contact Mrs MacDiarmid or Mrs Athey. The staff will listen to your concern and agree a way forward with you. They will usually follow-up the initial conversation with a telephone call to ensure all matters have been resolved satisfactorily. We use Restorative Practices in school to deal with disputes between children.

THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

[Angus Council complaints procedure](#)

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

BECOMING INVOLVED IN SCHOOL

At the school we have a Parent Council and we encourage any member of the Parent Forum to attend meetings. We usually hold our AGM in October and meet regularly throughout the year to discuss school issues and organise fund raising events. Please feel free to attend meetings which are noted in our diary of events.

We also encourage parents to volunteer to help out at school. We have parents helping with our Community Cafe, class outings, Gardening, Eco Committee, Reading Council and Sports Clubs. If you wish to be a regular parent helper, PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) checks have to be completed. Please discuss this with our office staff.

Parents are invited to attend the school on a regular basis throughout the year. We hold 'Meet the Teacher' early in the first term to allow parents to visit their child's class. In November we hold Parent Contact Evenings, this takes the form of individual appointments. The format varies depending on the stage your child is in, in Primary 1-3, this takes the form of a meeting with parents. In Primary 4 -7, pupils have the opportunity to share their progress and next steps with their parents. We use Seesaw to share your child's learning throughout the year. This alongside curricular overviews, will make you aware of what the children are learning in school and how you can support them at home. We frequently make two way contact with home through Seesaw. We share children's Learning Folios each term.

Progress Reports:

In the last term of each year, parents will receive a progress report relating to Numeracy, Literacy, Health and Wellbeing. This report also focuses on learning which links across different curricular areas and achievements throughout the year. At this time, we do not have formal meetings but if a parent wishes to discuss this further then an appointment can easily be arranged.

Homework

Homework is given at every stage in the school and is usually given out on a Monday with the expectation that it is completed by Thursday. This allows children to organise their work to take account of any clubs or out of school activities they attend. We give homework for a variety of reasons. Firstly, to allow parents to see a little of what is happening and to encourage discussion about school work. Secondly, to help the children to understand that school is part of the world outside. Thirdly, to allow children to research some topics in a manner most suited to their own circumstances giving them the opportunity for personalisation and choice. Fourthly, to reinforce class work and finally to prepare the older children for the extra work which they will find themselves doing at secondary.

Time spent doing homework should not be too long. If a child is having difficulties with any homework then the school should be informed as soon as possible so we can help. Prolonged sessions with distress on the part of the pupil or parent should be avoided.

As in all aspects of schoolwork, the active interest and co-operation of parents is very important. It must be mentioned that parents should not accept work which is below a standard which could be considered as reasonable, bearing in mind the age and ability of their child. We ask that parents sign homework jotters. If homework is not being completed then parents are informed by the class teacher.

Holiday Homework Changing work patterns mean that one feature of modern society is that holidays are taken throughout the year and are not confined to the summer break. While I would urge all parents to try to avoid taking holidays during term time I realise that this is not always possible. Parents are asked not to request any holiday homework at this time. Each teacher will arrange for extra work, if required, to be done after the holiday, rather than during it. This will not apply to illness, particularly of a long-term nature.

SCHOOL ETHOS

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

Our school welcomes and encourages diversity and individuality, while emphasizing our common commitment to moral values such as honesty, respect for others, compassion and justice. It is a fundamental principle of our school that all who are involved in the life of our school both have the right to be respected as individuals and carry the responsibility to act in a considerate and respectful manner towards others. We implement the council policy for Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality and ensure that all pupils have access to the full range of educational experiences available within the resources of the school. We are firmly committed to the elimination of any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender or disability.

We have recently reviewed our school Vision, Values and Aims through discussion with our staff, pupils, parents and school community. We discuss our Vision, Values and Aims with our children regularly through class activities, school assemblies and informal chat.

Our School Vision **is to provide a safe, nurturing and effective learning environment where**

all children and staff are supported to achieve more than they thought they could.

Our School Values are Respected, Ready and Safe.

Our School Aims are linked to the skills we believe our children need to be successful learners. We have chosen characters linked to the aims to make them memorable.



SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LINKS

We have strong links with the local community and are eager to continue to develop these links further.

Donna Hayes, the School Chaplain, visits the school on a regular basis, she takes regular assemblies in the school hall and visits classes to help with the teaching of religious education.

Our school Glee club sings in the local community and performs to parents. They take part in the annual Glee competition which is a national event and takes place in the Caird Hall, Dundee.

We call upon the school nurse service, police and fire services who work alongside us to deliver our health and wellbeing education

Many members of the local community have helped with the outdoor learning classroom and wildlife garden. We are lucky to have the support of our parent council to help us maintain our outdoor learning areas.



POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

[Angus Council anti-bullying policy](#)

Good behaviour is essential to good learning. The general aim of the school is to provide an atmosphere of mutual respect and collective responsibility. Pupils, parents and staff all have an important part to play in producing and sustaining this positive ethos. Each class has goals and expectations and they are fundamental to ensuring an ethos of mutual respect. We have recently reviewed our Positive Learning and Behaviour Policy.

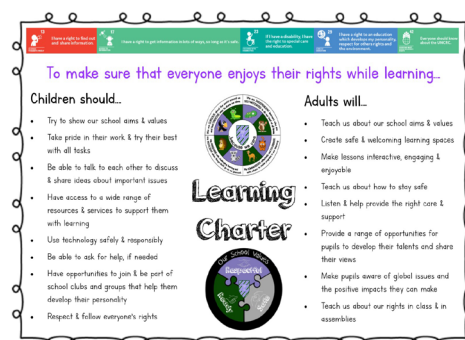
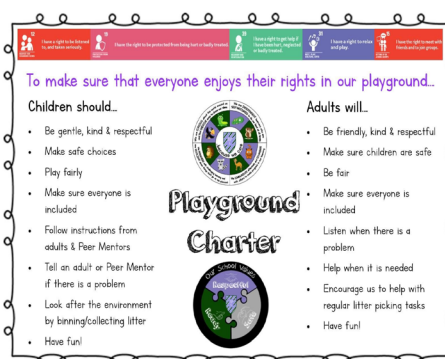
Rights Respecting School

Birkhill Primary School aims to be a school where children's rights are at the heart of our ethos and culture, to improve well-being and to develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential. As part of this plan we are working towards our Gold Award as a 'Rights Respecting School', an award given to schools on behalf of UNICEF UK. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

As part of our Rights Respecting Schools journey all members of our school community worked hard to develop a set of charters for the school. A charter is a visual document that establishes an agreed set of rights-based principles upon which relationships can be based and which provide a language for shared values.

'Creating a charter helps to make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) more prominent and relevant. It should be seen as a framework for both adults and children and young people on how to respect each other's rights. A charter not only provides an opportunity to learn about specific articles from the CRC, but helps to establish and build shared values and relationships for creating a rights respecting ethos.'
UNICEF UK

Birkhill Primary School has charters for learning, for the playground and for our dinner hall.



CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT

Children work hardest when they know their work will be appreciated and praised. All staff encourage pupils at all times and in all activities to give their best. We are encouraging children to talk about their learning, identifying where things have gone well and what their next steps in learning are. Achievements from out with school are celebrated during assemblies/together times and are regularly shared on our Birkie Bulletin. The continued use of our Birkie Bulletin has been very successful in sharing the wider achievement of the school with parents and partners.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

At Birkhill Primary we run a selection of extra-curricular activities before the school day, during morning break, lunchtimes and at the end of the school day. These include football, netball, cross country running, STEM, recorder and Glee Club. Pupils taking part in these clubs have the opportunity to take part in competitions where they have been very successful on many occasions.

The school swimming club, Muirhead Minnows, meets on Monday nights at St Johns RC High School. Muirhead Minnows hold their gala in June and it is open to all pupils in the school.

Each year the Primary 7 pupils are given the opportunity to attend a residential course where they can take part in various outdoor activities, including abseiling, raft building, survival training and team building activities. We are very grateful to parents and teachers who without their support, we would be unable to offer this range of activities.

Our Football Team



Our Netball Team

LEARNING COUNCIL:

We have an active and highly effective pupil Learning Council in our school which includes representatives from all the Primary 4 to 7 classes. The members are selected at the beginning of session and they hold office for the duration of one year. Throughout the year they will meet regularly with a member of the management team. They are involved in taking forward school improvement priorities and undertaking learning visits to each class to support moderation.

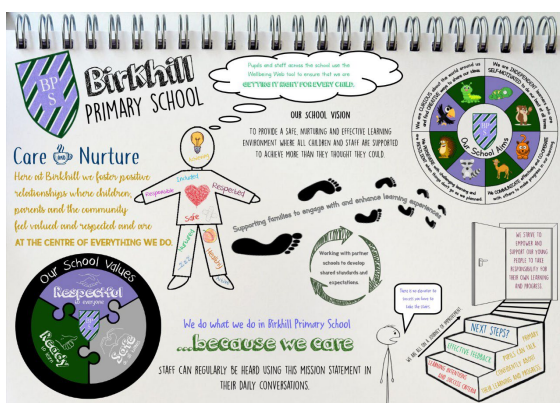
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In line with National Guidance we aim to give each child at Birkhill a broad general education from Nursery to Primary 7. We plan using the experiences and outcomes as noted in Curriculum for Excellence to support each child to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing permeate all areas of the curriculum and when planning lessons and experiences for the pupil's teachers take this into account. The curriculum is divided into eight areas which include Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Languages, Mathematics, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, Social Studies and Technology.

Pupils progress within these broad levels with emphasis being placed on the seven principles of curriculum design which are breadth, progression, depth, challenge and enjoyment, coherence, relevance and personalisation and choice. At Birkhill we promote Active and Co-operative Learning.

We have recently reviewed our Vision, Values and Aims. Our House Captains supported the gathering of this information from our parents. We considered the feedback we received from parents, staff, partners and children and have now updated our sketch note. This sketch note also serves as our Curriculum Rationale.



THE PUPILS AND PARENTS VOICE

Personalisation and choice is one of the seven principles of curriculum design and children and young people throughout their education will have the opportunity to discuss with their teacher the context in which they learn and how they will approach the learning. Staff will discuss new learning with the children at the beginning of a new topic and plan together the areas of specific focus. This will be shared with parents through Seesaw, parents will be invited to support the learning by sharing resources from home or visiting the school to share a talk.

Parents are also given the opportunity to comment on their child's work through Seesaw. We share our intended learning through Seesaw, this allows for the sharing of academic and social targets for the term.

THE CURRICULUM AT SCHOOL, LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Prior to your child starting school you will be given information regarding the curriculum and what your child is likely to cover. Throughout the year we also have curricular events when we invite parents to learn more about certain aspects of the curriculum. Previous events have included an open afternoon showcasing how we use Digital Learning within the classroom.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

In Scotland all three and four year olds, and some two year olds, are eligible for up to 1140 hours a year of funded early learning and childcare (ELC). Our ELC class offers sessions between 9am-3pm, 5 days a week. Other attendance patterns are available in other Angus Council settings and in our wide range of partner nurseries, playgroups and childminders. To find out more about the benefits of ELC and the options available, visit our dedicated ELC web pages at www.angus.gov.uk/earlyyears.

LIAISON WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL

The school maintains close links with Monifieth High and other primary schools within the Angus area. Our teachers and in some cases, our pupils, visit other schools and establishments and other teachers and pupils visit us. This process is necessary for the professional development of staff, reciprocal understanding and the establishment of curricular consistency.

Pupils living in the catchment for Birkhill Primary have three options open to them. They can transfer to Monifieth High School, Forfar Academy or Baldragon High School in Dundee. Transport is available to these schools for children living in the Monifieth High School Catchment area.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Our Primary 6 and 7 pupils re-opened our Dronley Delights Cafe for the school community on 3 dates in April/May 2024. Pupils gained hands-on experience in a range of work roles and the project raised £1751 for the school.

We created a group of 'Garden Warriors' who work with the Depute Head Teacher to grow vegetables in the garden for the school to eat. All classes have taken a turn throughout the year. This was an action that the Eco Committee wanted included in the Eco Green Flag Action Plan. Links with Campy Growers were created to support this.

Our Sports Council and Primary 6 Young Leaders have worked with our Active Schools Co-ordinator to plan and deliver engaging interval and lunchtime clubs for our pupils. We achieved our Sports Scotland Gold Award in May 2024.

Each September our P7 pupils are given the opportunity to apply for the role of school captain. We have a house system with a captain and vice-captain for each house. This year the captain and vice-captains have extended their roles to run assemblies and lunchtime clubs for the P1-6 pupils. Feedback from the pupils has been very positive.

IMPROVING STANDARDS

We have been working with 'Voice 21', a UK based charity, to raise attainment in listening and talking across the school. All teaching staff have reported that this training has had a positive impact on their teaching and on the learning. Attainment levels in listening and talking have increased. Most pupils have reported that they feel their listening and talking skills have improved because of the work we have been doing.

All members of teaching staff have engaged in 'Explicitly Teaching Writing' training. This has had a very positive impact across the school with almost all learners and teachers reporting an increase in confidence, skills and attainment in writing.

The Reading Council achieved our Silver Reading School Award in June 2024. As part of this we applied for and received a £250 grant from The Scottish Book Trust to create an outdoor reading area that all the school can enjoy at breaktimes. This area, within our outdoor classroom, was completed and opened in March during our annual Reading Festival. Our 'One School, Many Stories' family storytelling event was held in June to celebrate the diversity of the backgrounds of our families and share the school ethos of reading for pleasure with our school community.

Our Rights Respecting Council achieved our Silver 'Rights Aware' award in June 2024. Our school assemblies each week have a strong focus on the Rights of the Child and our learners are becoming more able to talk about their rights and how they relate to their lives. A Climate Action Day was held in May 2024 as a jointly run event by Eco Committee and Rights Respecting Council. The aim of the day was for our learners and staff to gain a greater understanding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, why they are important and small actions they can take to make a difference.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Our priorities for session 24/25 are: -

Whole School -

- Continue to build upon our learners' improved attitude and engagement with reading, leading to Gold Reading School Accreditation.
- For the whole school community to know and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and be able to describe how it impacts on their lives and the lives of other children. Achieve Gold UNCRC Award.

Primary 1-7 –

- Continue to develop a shared understanding of effective learning, teaching and assessment of listening and talking.
- Continue to develop a shared understanding of effective learning, teaching and assessment of writing.

Nursery –

- Continue to develop the outdoor space to allow high quality outdoor learning opportunities.
- Review all planning, assessment and evaluation to ensure they take full account of all the curriculum design principals.
- Continue to reinforce the language of the wellbeing indicators with their learners and families.
- Continue to explore opportunities to provide high quality learning in relation to diversity and equality.

HEALTH CARE

You can contact your school health staff at: -

School Nurse - Carron Forbes
School Nurse Team - Carnoustie/Monifieth Cluster
Abbey Health Centre
East Abbey Street
Arbroath
DD11 1EN

DOGS IN SCHOOL GROUNDS

We understand walking your child(ren) to and from school/nursery is an ideal opportunity to walk dogs. However, the safety and wellbeing of our pupils, families, staff and community is paramount. Also, some children feel intimidated or unsure of dogs.

So, please ensure dogs (except for assistance dogs) are not brought into school grounds.

If you are walking your dog to and from school, please remain at a reasonable distance from the school gate. This will enable children and adults to enter and exit safely.

We'd ask you to pass this information on to other adults who bring and/or collect your child(ren) from school.

Child Protection Coordinator

If we think a child has come to harm as a consequence of possible abuse, we need to report it.

At least one member of staff in each school is responsible for child protection matters. They will have had special training in this area.

In our school the Child Protection Coordinator(s) are:

Mrs Caroline MacDiarmid and Mrs Jenni Athey

If you want to know more about child protection and the safety of children, contact the school. There is also information about child protection on the Angus Council website.

As a school we have good contacts with health professionals, social workers and the police. Any or all of them may offer support, or become involved, if concerns of abuse arise.

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Angus Council
Angus House
Orchardbank Business Park
FORFAR
DD8 1AN
Tel: 03452 777 778
Email: ACCESSSchoolsLearnBSU@angus.gov.uk

ANGUS COUNCIL WEBSITE

Visit angus.gov.uk/schools for information that applies to schools across Angus on topics including:

- holidays
- meals
- school payments
- attendance and absence
- assessment and reporting
- transport
- drugs education
- religious and moral education
- transitions
- ...and more

OTHER WEBSITES

Find useful links to other websites at angus.gov.uk/linksforparents