

# **GATEHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**[www.gatehouseschool.org](http://www.gatehouseschool.org)**

# **NURSERY HANDBOOK**

**2009 - 2010**



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**This handbook** should be read in conjunction with the school handbook, a copy of which you should also have. The latter contains much information in respect of day-to-day aspects of school life. The two handbooks together should hopefully resolve most of your queries, but the nursery staff or myself are always pleased to be able to answer any queries you may feel remain unanswered, or which you should like to discuss further. Please note that holiday dates are included in every school newsletter. These are normally issued to all parents on a three-weekly basis, and serve as a means of keeping everyone up-to-date with a variety of on-going school news.



For many of you, this will be your first regular contact with the school, and we look forward to many long, happy and productive years' contact with you. This is a big step for your child to take – and one that is an exciting new experience for him / her

### **The Purpose of pre-school education:**

Pre-school education is what you yourselves have been providing for your child since birth. It is widely acknowledged that the valuable experiences children have in and around the home in the early years are extremely important in their development, and lay excellent foundations upon which to build.

Between the ages of three and five years, all children are now given the opportunity to take up a place in a pre-school centre where there are planned opportunities for them to continue to learn by exploring, observing, listening and talking, responding, thinking and experiencing (in) a variety of situations.

The emphasis is not on formal teaching, but on developing positive attitudes to learning so that children will come to school confident and eager to learn. Children will, of course, be encouraged to develop and practise skills which will contribute positively to their ability to cope with more formal education.

In our nursery here, we feel that good quality pre-school provision is very important in assisting the overall development of the young child. While your children are with us, we aim to provide them with a wealth of experiences which will help them develop self awareness, a high level of self esteem, and equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to help them achieve their full potential.

We want you to remain fully involved in your child's education and we will offer many opportunities for you to come into the nursery to observe, ask questions and assist. We value your support and participation in what we regard as a partnership between home and school. Details of our aims and



objectives can be found in our curriculum policy document.

### **When can your child start nursery?**

#### **The Pre-school year:**

Children whose 4<sup>th</sup> birthday falls between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 28<sup>th</sup> February will be eligible for funding (attendance at pre-school) from August of that same year.

#### **The year prior to the pre-school year (the pre-pre school year):**

Children are eligible for funding from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday with intakes in August, January and April.

### **What does nursery provide?**

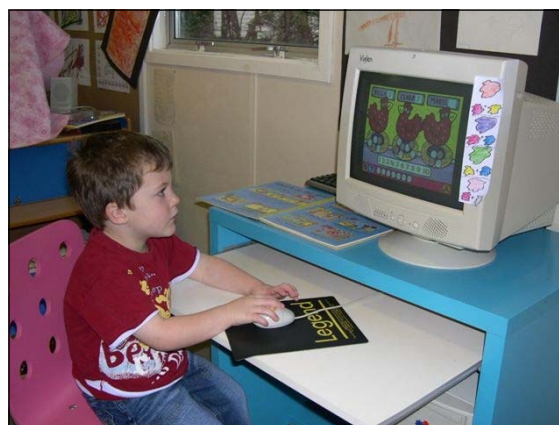
#### ***Our Pre-school education AIMS are to:***

- provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children can feel happy and secure,
- encourage the emotional, social, physical and intellectual development of the children,
- promote the welfare of the children,
- encourage positive attitudes to self and others and develop confidence and self-esteem,
- create opportunities for play,
- encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment,
- provide opportunities to stimulate interest and imagination, and
- extend children's abilities to communicate ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.



**The nursery curriculum** is based on the *Curriculum for Excellence* which refers to *planned learning experiences* based on different aspects of children's development and learning in:

- Emotional, personal and social development,
- Communication and language,
- Knowledge and understanding of the world,
- Expressive and aesthetic development, and
- Physical development and movement.



**Play is crucial** to children's development and is a motivating factor in their learning. The nursery curriculum, therefore, is based on learning through play which is mainly child initiated. Nursery staff observe and evaluate the learning which is taking place through play and, where necessary, structure and guide it so that children derive maximum benefit from it. Intervention will not take place in a way which is obtrusive and manipulative, but will enhance and extend the play so that children can gain maximum learning opportunities from it.

### Who will be working with your child?



Staff in the nursery are always trained and experienced in the provision of early years' education. As professionals in the education sector, you can be confident that they have undergone rigorous security screening and will therefore be deemed fit persons to work with children. From time to time we extend the children's experiences by involving professionals from out-with the education sector, and also members of the community who have expertise from which the children can benefit. Under no circumstances will your child ever be left in the care of anyone who is not employed by the Department of Education.

### How is the nursery organised on a day-to-day basis?

*Staff:*

*Head Teacher (Centre Manager):*

Mr Howard T McLean,

*Nursery Teacher:*

Mrs Rosemary Proudfoot,

*Nursery Nurse:*

Mrs Kirsty Bruton

*Session times:*

The nursery class is open full-time each day. Morning sessions operate between 9.00 and 11.30am and afternoon sessions between 12.30 and 3.00pm.

The nursery teacher will notify you of the details of which sessions your child should attend. Please try to ensure your child attends regularly. That way, he / she will obtain maximum benefit from the experiences the nursery has to offer.



For the comfort and safety of your child, please deliver him / her promptly at the times allocated to you. We are particularly anxious to ensure the safety of your child, and therefore we ask you come into the nursery at delivery and collection times (i.e. not just to the school gate). We also particularly ask that family members be involved in this important task – and not just a friend, whose identity we may not know.

You are welcome to stay in the nursery classroom if you feel your child may be distressed in any way by your absence.

*Some simple rules:*

It is important for us to ensure that nursery is a safe environment for your child. In achieving this, we have established the following simple rules, mainly in the interest of safety, but also as an important means of encouraging your child to understand how to act and behave properly:



Always walk – don't run.

Always be polite and kind to others.

Be aware of the dangers posed by re-positioning the furniture and equipment.

Remember to wash hands before snack and after toilet visits.

We hope you will support what we are doing by encouraging these rules for your child at home also. This way, your child should see there is consistency to rules at both home and school.

*Snack fund:*

We operate a snack fund in the nursery, from which your child receives a daily drink and something-to-eat mid-way through each session. We ask you, please, for a daily donation for this purpose. Any small surplus funds raised in this way go towards purchase of materials and equipment.

*Fund-raising:*

The upkeep of existing materials and purchase of new equipment provide us with a constant need for funds. We enjoy the challenge of ensuring our nursery class both stimulates and rewards the children that use it, and to meet these ends, we need to raise funds occasionally.

**How will you know about your child's progress?**

We allow – and encourage – opportunities at the beginning and end of each session so that you can have an informal chat with the nursery teacher about your child's progress, or about any concerns you may have. There are also evening meetings each year in November and May/June, at which time an appointment will be made for you to come along and discuss (written) report(s) prepared by the nursery teacher.

### **How can you be sure of your child's safety?**

The school has policies on: Health & Safety, Child Protection and Safety, and Risk Assessment. Risk Assessments are rigorously undertaken for all activities in and outwith the nursery classroom. All staff undergo rigorous security checks, and no-one not 'Disclosure Scotland' checked is allowed to work with your child unless a member of staff is present. All our policies and procedures, including those mentioned above, are available at any time on our school website ([www.gatehouseschool.org](http://www.gatehouseschool.org)).

### **How is your child encouraged to take responsibility?**

The following is taken from our Behaviour Management Policy:

- Children will be encouraged to use equipment carefully, to learn to share with others and to take turns,
- They will be asked to help with tidying up and to make sure that all the parts/pieces of games and toys have been put away,
- They will learn to listen to others and to allow everyone to express their wishes,
- They will learn that they are allowed to express their wishes in a reasonable manner,
- They will be asked to keep noise to an acceptable level,
- They will be asked to move around the nursery in a manner which will not endanger their own safety or the safety of others.

Children will also be asked to take some responsibility for their own learning by making a choice from a variety of activities available in the nursery. Naturally, if a child persistently avoids certain activities, he/she will be persuaded by staff to try them.

### **What happens if your child is naughty?**

Because children are fully occupied during the nursery session we rarely have any problems with behaviour. However, 3 and 4 year olds can still have 'difficult' days when they find it difficult to agree with everyone. The staff are very experienced in dealing with this, and usually avert problems very quickly. We feel it is in the interests of all children that we do have standards with which we expect everyone to comply.

### **What do you do if you have a complaint?**

Hopefully, by being fully aware of our policies and procedures, and by maintaining links with the nursery staff, you will find that everything runs smoothly during your child's time in nursery. We have high standards which we aim to maintain by evaluating our policies and practices regularly. If at any time, however, you feel that we are not meeting your expectations, you may speak with any member of staff using the procedures outlined in our complaints policy (a copy of which can be found on our school web-



site).

You are also free to contact the Care Commission directly at:

Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care,  
South West Region,  
Galloway House,  
Crichton Business Park,  
Bankend Road,  
Dumfries.  
DG1 4ZZ  
Tel: 01387 207195



### **Is attendance at nursery compulsory?**

Attendance at pre-school education is not compulsory, but we are certain that children derive the greatest benefit from nursery education when they attend regularly. When they first start, you may wish that they gradually build up to full attendance, either by sending them for fewer sessions than you had sought, or for, initially, part of a session. In either case it is important that staff are fully aware of your intentions. We maintain an attendance register, and once our session attendance reaches 20 children, we may well have a wait-

ing list. In such cases, we would hope that those children allocated places would be using them regularly.

### **When should your child *not* attend nursery?**

If a child is unwell, it is usually best to keep him / her at home. If your child is absent, it would be helpful if you could inform the school by telephoning (01557) 814262.

### **What do you do if your child is unable to attend?**

If your child is unable to attend for any reason other than illness, the procedure is the same. We have a duty of care to any child enrolled with us and we require to keep a register of attendance.

### **What happens when your child is ready for school?**

When your child reaches school age, we try to make the transition as smooth and stress-free as possible. There is a programme of planned visits to P1 class each June prior to commence-



ment at P1 stage the following August.

A copy of your child's written reports will be passed to the P1 teacher, along with any assessments (copies already issued to you) compiled in nursery. If you feel that your child is not yet ready for school, you may request a further year at nursery. This request cannot be guaranteed and, depending upon your child's date of birth, may need to go to an appeals panel. If you have any concerns, you should discuss these with the head teacher as soon as possible.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, we include here a few do's and don'ts which, from experience, will help your son/daughter settle into the nursery class more quickly.

- For the safety of your child, we ask that you, or someone known to you, delivers and collects your son/daughter each day. It is of great assistance to us for our preparation if your child does not arrive too early for the session – and is collected promptly at the end of it.
- To encourage the fullest involvement of your child in the Nursery experience, we point out that normal 'play-clothes' are ideal in order to encourage active movement. Light shoes are preferable for wearing in class – without buckles, please, if possible, and that items of clothing are clearly identified with **your child's name**. We don't wish to see any pupils' clothing lost.
- You are very welcome to stay with your son/daughter until he/she has settled in, and feels secure enough to remain with Nursery staff.
- Each day, we provide the children with a snack – that is, a drink and something to eat. To help meet the cost of this, we ask you, please, for a daily contribution of 30p towards this.
- It is important for ourselves, and for your child, to establish regular contact with you in respect of your son/daughter. Please take the time, therefore, to discuss any matters affecting him/her with members of the Nursery class staff.
- In the interest of safety we ask that you do not allow your child's elder sister or brother to come to Nursery to collect her/him.
- We know you will appreciate the importance and benefits for your child of regular attendance at Nursery class. Please, therefore, encourage this regular attendance, and notify the teacher if he/she is likely to be absent at any time.
- We ask that you discourage the bringing of toys from home. While we appreciate that these may seem a link with the home environment, they can, nevertheless, get broken, and we would not wish to feel responsible in such circumstances.

It is our wish that your child's years with us will be both educationally rewarding as well as enjoyable. We are all only too pleased to assist you in any way we can.

Howard T McLean,  
Centre Manager.

Updated: 8th March 2010