

Laelioar ny Paarentyn



Parents' Handbook

Ta Bunscoil Ghaelgagh cur faillt erriu

Welcome to Bunscoil Ghaelgagh

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Dear Parents.

Welcome to Bunscoill Ghaelgagh. We hope you and your family will have a happy and fulfilling time during your years at our school.

Bunscoill Ghaelgagh provides the unique opportunity of learning in a bilingual setting. Not only will your child/ren leave school fluent in two languages but studies show that learning a second language expands the brain and opens new pathways which help in many areas of learning, not just in language acquisition.

The Bunscoill began in 2001 at Ballacottier School with nine children from Reception and Year 1. It moved to St Johns School after Christmas the following year and then up to the present building in June 2003. It became a school in its own right in 2006 when Bnr. Matthews was appointed as head teacher.

Please respect that in order to provide the best opportunity to acquire the second language, we need to maintain Manx as the main language spoken as much as possible through the school day.

Bilingual education is different from that of single language education in that children have to learn a new language when they first come to school, so progress at the early stages is not as developed as in other schools. This is well documented among bilingual schools.

However, by the end of Y6 we expect that most children will be confident readers and writers of English. They have also more than caught up in all the other subjects too and in many cases, have exceeded expectations. Of course, there will be range of abilities in every school, but after 20 years of immersion Manx Gaelic education at the Bunscoill, we can confidently say that all of our children go onto secondary schools well-prepared for dealing with the work ahead and we have excellent links with those schools. Pupils have gone on to be top of their year in a variety of subjects and have won individual school prizes in many cases. Some of our original pupils have gone on to be professional sports players and musicians!

We celebrate the individual at our school and endeavour to provide many opportunities to help the children develop their personalities through their educational experiences and the extra curricular activities we offer at the Bunscoill. The Performing Arts and Music are particular strengths at our school and we also work with Manx Sport and Recreation to give the children the opportunity of trying many different sports.

Leading a healthy lifestyle is an important message we endeavour to instil within the children and our annual health week promotes these values as well as provides the children with opportunities to mix with and make friends with children from other classes, promoting good relationships and co-operation.

As part of the Department of Education Sport and Culture, we provide a broad and balanced curriculum based on the Essentials for Learning Curriculum that DESC advocate.

We want your child to be happy at school and to learn and achieve by encouraging a desire to learn and find out more. The children are important and we invite their opinions and ideas throughout. We value their contributions and aim to promote positive self image in all we do.

I hope this booklet will inform you on what we are all about but remember staff are always happy to talk to you about anything. Please keep in touch with us so we can work together to ensure the best for the children.

Bnr J Matthews

Head teacher

Before your child starts school

When your child starts school, it would help us and your child if he/she could do some of the following tasks as this will develop your child's own sense of independence and give us more time to teach them. Ideally, we would like the children to have the skills which allow them to:

- **Dress and undress themselves**
- **Take off their coat, hat and gloves and hang them up on a peg**
- **Take off and put on their own shoes and pumps (bearing in mind that Velcro is best for young children until they are able to manage laces independently, your help in teaching them this skill is much appreciated)**
- **Carry their own things**
- **Use the toilet independently, flush after use and wash hands**
- **Use tissues**
- **Put away toys, games and puzzles**
- **Ask for help if they need it**



The School Day

08.50 - Children are supervised outside

09.00 - Children come into school for registration

10.30 am - 10.50 am – Morning break

12.00 pm - 1.15 pm - Lunch break for Reception and KS1

12.00 - 13.00 - Lunch break for KS2

14.15 -14.30 – Afternoon break

15.30 – End of the school day

School is open from 8.50am and a member of staff will be on duty in the playground from that time until the whistle is blown and the children come into school to start the day. There is no supervision before this time but parents/guardians/carers are welcome to wait with them in the playground if they wish. When children first start school in Reception, they may come in to put down their bags etc but then they must immediately go back outside to wait. This sets up good habits for the rest of their time with us. In instances of bad weather, we do permit all the children to come into school before 08.50 and wait in the school hall.

Registration begins at 9.00 am and the school day ends at 3.30pm. Any late comers should come into school by the rear entrance and sign the late book giving time of arrival and reason for lateness.

Please ensure your child arrives on time and is collected promptly at the end of the school day.

Teachers are busy and some have duties at the end of the day which can be difficult to fulfil if waiting for a late parent so please turn up on time to collect your child. If you know you are going to be late then please telephone out of courtesy to school and to allay any anxiety your child may have about you not being here at the usual time.

Drop off and Pick up

Please remember when bringing your child to school that we are located next to a very busy road. Cross the road at the pelican crossing as this is the safest place. There is no lollipop person on this crossing so it is important that your child understands that when using the crossing that they must wait until the cars have **STOPPED** before they cross. Not all cars do stop, even when the 'green man' is showing!

Please park safely when dropping off and picking up your child (the arboretum car park is ideal). When waiting for your child, could you please make a habit of waiting on the school side of the school gates for safety. We find that children can easily play near the road if parents are congregating on the road side of the gates.

A few things for you to think about:

- **Do not park on the bus stop outside the school**
- **Do not let your child get out of the car on the 'road side'**
- **Do not park where it could inhibit the view of the crossing**
- **Always use the crossing with your child**
- **Teach your child how to use the crossing correctly**
- **Remind your child not to run near the road as they could fall**

Please park safely and legally when carrying out school drop offs and pick-ups. Should you wish to discuss road safety at school further at any point then please see me. We also have good links with Peel Police Station. You can phone the station directly on 842208 if necessary, should you witness any traffic infringements and wish to report them; advising us you have done so is also a good idea so we are kept in the loop. We aim to work together to keep the road as safe as possible outside of school.

Bus travel, to and from school

You may choose for your children to travel and from school using public transport once your child is old enough. We do have a Bus Agreement we ask both parents and children to agree to. Please ask for details.

Active Travel

We are finding that more students and staff are now making use of the old railway line to cycle to school.

Rolley/Register

The school register is taken each morning and afternoon. Reasons for absence are noted and the appropriate 'key' noted. This information is uploaded monthly to the Department of Education Sport and Culture. All absences must be supported by a parent/guardian's note or phone call. Absence should be explained by a parent/carer rather than the child or sibling.

Late arrivals

If your child is late then they will get a 'Late' mark put next to their name. If they arrive after the register closes then a different late mark is applied which is logged as unauthorised absence. If these become frequent then the attention of the attendance officer is alerted. Getting to school on time allows your child to start the day in a calm manner and understand the day's tasks which are explained then. Many classes use the first few minutes for handwriting and phonic practice which is essential for their educational development.

Taking time out of school other than for illness or authorised absences

For families intending to take any holidays during term-time we ask that they send in a written or emailed request showing:

Reasons for intended absence

Start and last date of anticipated absence

Such requests can be considered by the head teacher and must be sent into school IN ADVANCE – **not** retrospectively.

A request for up to ten school days as maximum can be applied for as 'Holidays During Term Time' in any academic year. Requests beyond this quota would be recorded as 'Unauthorised Absence'.

Emergency Contact – Details and Procedures

Please fill out the form to pass on your emergency contacts in the event of illness or accident which may require medical attention.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE ASKED YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACTS IF THEY ARE WILLING TO TAKE ON THIS TASK AND ARE HAPPY FOR THESE DETAILS TO BE PASSED ON TO SCHOOL. **Please note:** Under Data Protection legislation, the school will not pass these contact details to private individuals who may request them.

Health

If your child is ill please let us know they will not be attending by contacting the school as soon as possible; ideally on the first day of absence. If your child is ill the best place for them is at home, as they will not learn if they are unwell. If your child becomes ill during the school day, we will try to contact you on one of your designated emergency contact numbers. (Please inform the school of any changes to contact details immediately so that we are always able to contact you in case of an emergency).

There are strict limitations on administration of medication in schools and we have no contractual obligation to administer medication on your behalf. However, some children require long-term medication which has to be taken during the school day in which case, we liaise with school health, parents and ourselves to draw up an agreed care-plan.

Parental Permission

Occasionally, members of the school staff may have a concern about a child which they wish to pursue – for example, a child may have difficulty in reading the board from a distance in which case we would discuss with you the possibility of getting your child's eyes checked by the school nurse. We would never pursue an enquiry such as a hearing or eye test without first obtaining your consent.

Please be aware that medical information, which the school would benefit from having, does not automatically come to us, even if the referral to a school nurse came from school.

Infection control in school

The spread of infection in school can be minimised by routine immunization, high standards of personal hygiene and practice, particularly handwashing, and maintaining a clean environment. For specific illnesses / diseases your child may acquire, you can always find current guidance from Public Health on 642615 / 642657 or via their web site www.gov.im/publichealth or, feel free to call us for guidance.

Allergies

You will be required to complete a Pupil Record Form in the summer term of the year your child starts with us. We will ask if your child has any allergies or other medical information you feel we should know about. Depending on the severity, we may arrange an appointment with the school nurse.

Asthma

If your child has asthma and needs an inhaler, **even infrequently**, please let us know as a matter of safety. Your child will need to have an inhaler in school labelled with their name and this will be held in the care of their class teacher and therefore accessible without panic should an occasion arise. **THIS MUST STAY IN SCHOOL ALL THE TIME.** It is taken out with the child on any outside visits, swimming, PE etc. **PARENTS SHOULD ENSURE THEY ADVISE US AS TO WHAT THEIR CHILD'S SYMPTOMS ARE SO THAT WE CAN OFFER THEIR INHALER APPROPRIATELY.**

Any use of the inhaler, outside of the prescribed times, is recorded in our generic Accident Record Book.

If your child is about to join our school, we must have this inhaler provided from the first day. See your GP to arrange.

Cullee Scoill School Uniform

Our school uniform consists of:

- A navy blue sweatshirt, sweatcardi or fleece with or without school logo (most children wear items that show the logo)
- A purple, jade or red polo shirt with or without school logo
- Navy, black or grey trousers, skirts and shorts / pinafores for summer
- In warm weather in the summer and autumn term navy blue, jade or red checked dresses can be worn
- Plain black sensible-style shoes or trainers suitable for running and playing outdoors. Please ensure that your child can put on, take off and fasten their own shoes (Velcro advisable for the younger ones whilst the skill of tying- laces is yet to be learnt).

We also invite parents to donate unwanted used uniform to school which is for sale from the school hall, please ask Bnr Matthews.



Sun Protection

We have outdoor activities throughout the year especially during the summer and autumn terms. We do not put suntan lotion on the children at school so it's a good idea to cover them before they are dressed for school in the morning as this will protect their skin during the outdoor sessions. Please ensure that your child has a named sun-hat in school.

Outdoor Wear

A suitable outdoor coat, with gloves, scarf and hat is advisable during the colder weather. Children like to have fun in puddles and so we advise a pair of Wellingtons. Don't forget to name them and leave in school. We do have a collection of donated Wellies in school too so if you are unable to provide a pair, we should be able to find something which will fit.

When buying a coat for your child don't forget visibility for the dark and bad weather conditions.

Please teach your child how to fasten their own coat as we encourage them to be as independent as possible.

PE KIT

Please provide your child with a named PE bag for their kit which consists of:-

- A plain coloured t shirt (no zips or pockets)
- A pair of plain shorts (no zips or pockets)
- A pair of plimsolls / occasionally trainers too for older children (teacher will advise).

PE is a compulsory part of the Island's curriculum and therefore the kit should be in school at all times. We encourage the children to periodically bring the kit home for washing but then bring it back again in time for the next lesson. All jewellery should be removed as a safety precaution and in the case of earrings, the child should remove them whenever possible or should be covered by a plaster or other suitable tape to prevent rip or tear accidents. This also applies to swimming.

Don't forget to name all your child's uniform, including pumps so if anything gets lost, we can give it back to the right child.

Lost Property

If anything is found and we do not know who it belongs to it will be put in the Lost Property Box (Stoo Faagit) should anyone be looking for a particular lost item. This can be found at the back of the school hall near the office.

Valuables and Toys

We would ask that parents discourage children from bringing valuables, toys and precious items into school. We know that children can get upset if they lose such items or if a possession is damaged at school. We cannot be held responsible for any loss or breakages.

Please note that as a rule, mobile phones are not allowed in school. If they are seen to be in school, they will be taken from the child and put into the safe until the end of the school day when the child can request their return. The exception is if a parent has spoken with me beforehand to explain justification for their child having a mobile at school. For example, some children travel to and from school by bus and therefore there may be legitimate reason for the phone. It is just a case of communicating your needs with us. Even in these cases, the phone should be kept in a safe place each day.

Jewellery

For safety reasons, jewellery should be confined to sleepers or studs and a watch. All earrings must be removed for PE and swimming or covered with a band if recently pierced.

Reading Wallets

The parent's group SnyP buy a reading wallet for your child when they first start school which has a name tag for your child's name. Once the children have settled into the new term, we will be sending home their reading books in the wallet. Class teachers will advise when you need to ensure the wallet is sent into school. If these are lost then a replacement can be bought in school. These are available at the office.

There will be a 'home school reading record book' in each wallet where the teacher will write what the child has done in school and you are invited to write down how the child gets on at home or to at least sign it so we know the books have been read. For parents who do not speak Manx, we will give you access to recordings of any relevant books as well as advice on how you can help your child at home.

Pencil Cases

All equipment is provided for work in school. Individual teachers may allow students in KS2 to bring in their own pencil cases, they will communicate with you directly about this.

Traa Jinnair Lunchtime arrangements

We ask parents provide a daily packed lunch and drink for their children. Children are asked to leave any uneaten food in their boxes so that parents have an idea how much has been eaten. Our ancillaries do their best to encourage children to eat but of course we do not 'force' any child against their will.

We like to promote healthy eating and so it is great if this belief is reflected in the contents of your child's lunchbox. A well-balanced content of carbohydrates, protein, ideally including fruit, makes for better behaved and clearly-focused children in school. (Just ask us for lunch ideas if you get stuck!)

Please ensure that your child's name is clearly marked on their lunch boxes / tub (no rucksacks please as they will not fit onto our lunch box benches and cause a trip hazard when left on the floor).

Snacks and Drinks

In Blein Toshee (Reception), children are offered a cracker with a cup of water every day at morning break. They use this as a learning opportunity to talk about shapes in Manx and to sit down and have a pleasant snack time together

Older children can bring in a healthy snack of their own to eat at morning break, no biscuits, sweets or chocolate please. On Friday, older children can bring 25p for toast. Any money raised goes into school funds and helps to pay the children who do the dinner duty each day.

Chilled, filtered water is available throughout the day.

Cooney 'sy Scoill Helping in School

The school continues to benefit enormously from the voluntary help offered by Manx speaking helpers who work with small groups of children to support them in their work and offer their talents in club afternoon.

If you have any spare time and would like to use your Manx then please contact us to see how we can use your skills to support us in our school life.

We also ask for volunteers to assist with transporting groups of children from time to time and although Manx speakers are great to help support the school ethos, we understand that not all parents/guardians will get the opportunity to learn themselves. Any help you can offer here is gratefully accepted, whatever your level of Manx.

Police Checks

We carry out DBS checks on all adults who work, whether it be as an employee or volunteer, in school in any capacity. Our entire staff have been checked and all volunteers must be too. We therefore ask that if any parent feels they would like to volunteer at any time in school, on trips, transporting pupils or at swimming lessons etc then please let us know as soon as possible. Even new parents can have the paperwork processed before their child starts in September. This service is free for volunteers.

Sheshaght ny Paarentyn

All parents and guardians of children at Bunscoill Ghaelgagh are automatically members of Sheshaght ny Paarentyn or SnyP. This is our parents' association who work together to support the school by holding social and fund-raising events to help us provide additional resources to supplement those provided by the Department of Education and to assist in paying for extras such as educational visitors to school.

There are social events throughout the year for example the Christmas Fair, Easter picnic, bingo, Ceilidh in the Barn. Some of which are to raise money and others get together to get to know each other.

If you would like to contact SnyP then please email sny@manx.net.

The AGM is held in November each year. Please come along and share any good ideas for fund raising you may have. It is also a good opportunity to meet other parents and find out more about the school.

School Newsletters

We aim to keep you regularly updated about school life and will send home newsletters through your children. (If your child is going to start with us in September, then please send us an email any time from now so that we know to add you to the 'email list for newsletters' as soon as your child starts with us.)

Parent/Teacher meetings

There is a parents evening in the Autumn Term and another in the Spring or early Summer. A school report will come out in the Summer Term. If, however at any time you wish to discuss a concern with a teacher or the head teacher then please make an appointment.

Concerns

If you have a concern about any aspect of your child's education or your experience as a parent of one of our pupils, then we urge you to let us know as soon as possible. We can arrange an appointment and work together to solve the problem. Very often difficulties are about a matter of perception. Discussing matters frankly and fully will usually provide the necessary perspective for a successful outcome.



The Curriculum

The Bunscoill follows as closely as possible the Manx National Curriculum. However, some differences are inevitable, particularly in relation to the English language/literature curriculum. Children begin English lessons from Blein 3 with a half day per week provision. It is helpful for you to read and practise English spellings at home as there is not time to do this during the lessons at school. A Manx Gaelic curriculum has been devised by the teachers and this is followed from Reception through to Year 6, with transferrable skills highlighted. By the time the children come to Year 3 they already have many skills which they can call upon and their ability to read and write in English soon catches up and often overtakes their abilities in Manx.

At the Bunscoill we seek to offer the children a wide range of experiences and try to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced. We work with the Department of Education, Sport and Culture following their essentials for Learning curriculum. As do the other Island primaries, we follow a Skills-Based Curriculum which places emphasis on developing important and essential learning skills. This also enables the teachers to work with the children in choosing the topics they teach the skills through, so the children have an invested interest in what they are learning about. The curriculum is taught through the medium of Manx so the children spend time in Reception learning the vocabulary and are able to access the curriculum more easily when the language is acquired.



Early Years Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage is the period of a child's education from the age of three until the end of their first year of school which is referred to as Blein Toshee at Bunscoill.

The emphasis in the Foundation Stage is on learning through play. At this stage of life, play is the best way for children to learn. They can develop a positive attitude to learning by developing self-confidence, self-esteem and independence. Play also allows the child to absorb and practice the Manx language in a safe, relaxed atmosphere.

The Foundation Stage weaves together six main areas of learning that equip children with the basic skills that they need to learn to become successful throughout life.

Areas of Learning:

Personal, Social and Emotional,

Communication, Language and Literacy, Physical,
Creative, Mathematical,

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

These Early Learning Goals are what most children are expected to achieve by the end of their Reception year in preparation for moving to into Year 1. Your child's progress is assessed in Manx during their Reception year using the Foundation Stage Profile, which is a system for gathering information regarding individual achievement at various stages throughout the year. In this way an accurate profile of individual strengths and areas for development is the basis for planning and delivering the Key Stage 1 curriculum over the following two years. They are also assessed in their acquisition of Manx Gaelic which we as a school have developed as we are unique on the island in this respect.



Additional Needs

From time to time as in any school, there will always be a number of children who struggle to learn as quickly as others. This could be in a specific area, eg reading, spelling or letter sounds (phonics), in aspects of maths (dyscalculia) or more general slowness across the curriculum. Some children are just slower learners or immature.

Dyslexia is a commonly-encountered problem which covers a wide range of abilities, and although there is no cure, we can help affected children to access the curriculum, improve their work, and succeed. Dyslexic children often have very special abilities which we encourage. Confidence and flexibility are key here, and we find that bilingual children are generally more confident about dealing with set-backs; they all face the same challenge of learning through a second language.

It is worth remembering that at any one time 20-25% of children in any class, in any school, will have a specific learning difficulty; these difficulties may not be long-standing/serious, or may be ongoing and more challenging. Children with such problems are identified and provision made for them. All children have individual targets to help them achieve the next level and then move on. Teachers work with the children on these and they will know their next steps for learning. We will always tell you if your child is on an Individual Education Programme for additional needs and work with you to help your child.

SWIMMING AND MUSIC LESSONS

In KS2 all students take part in school swimming lessons. Details will be given about this beforehand. There will also be opportunities for students to take part in small group instrumental lessons with staff from the DESC peripatetic music team. Members of the music team will come in to speak to students and hand out forms for those who wish to participate.

Transition to Secondary School

During the Spring Term, a system comes into operation for year 6 pupils to facilitate the choice of secondary school and subsequent transition to Key Stage 3.

Once the choice is made the secondary school will contact you directly to invite you and/or your child to meetings and events.

Pupils from the Bunscoil Ghaelgagh can choose to go to QEII where there is provision to continue to learn through Manx in two subjects for the first three years. You can choose to send your child to the secondary school in whose catchment area you live but we cannot ensure there will be provision to continue studying through Manx.

Representatives of the schools to which the children will be attending, arrange to visit our school to meet the children in their own space and children are also invited to spend time in their chosen secondary school for their 'intake day' to meet the teachers, their peers and get to know their way around the building.

In some cases, there is a need to make special arrangements for individual pupils. In this case, arrangements as discussed with parents and the school of choice well in advance of the Summer Term.

If you have any concerns, we are all here to help so please just ask.

Skimmee Staff

Brastyl 1 (Greeba) Blein Toshee/ Reception – Bnr R Blindell

Brastyl 2 (Bradda) Blein1 as 2 /Year1 and 2 - Bnr H O’Meara

Brastyl 3 (Barrule) Blein 3 as 4

/Year 3 and 4 - Mnr A Cain

Brastyl 4 (Sniaul) Blein 5 as 6 /Year 5 and 6 - Bnr A Clague

Skimmee Elley

Other staff that you will meet during the normal school week that provide additional support are:

Bnr J Matthews - Head teacher

Bnr J McVerry - Full time ESO

Bnr S Christian - Part time ESO

Bnr D Hawley - School Administrator

Mnr C Joughin - Part time ESO and Lunchtime Ancillary

Bnr Hayes- Caretaker/Cleaner and Lunchtime Ancillary

Governors

The Bunscoill Ghaelgagh Governors help and support developments in the school among other duties. The Governors include a parent representative for which elections are held every two years. At the end of their term all parents will be written to and invited to stand.

Governors tend to meet once a term.

The school has its own Articles and Instrument of Government. Any parent of a pupil in the school may ask to see a copy if they so wish. For a list of current governors please ask in school.

Additional Information Contacting the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh

postal address: Bunscoill Ghaelgagh Main Road St Johns Isle of Man IM4 3NA

telephone: 01624 803330

email addresses: BunscoillEnquiries@sch.im

headteacher enquiries: Julie.Matthews@sch.im

Learning Manx

If you would like to take the opportunity to learn and find out more about Manx we can point you in the right directions. Please contact Adrian.cain@sch.im and he will help you find what you are looking for.

In conclusion

The aim of this booklet is to give you an overview of Bunscoill Ghaelgagh school life for you and your child. It does not attempt to cover everything; that would be an impossible task as life in the school evolves!

We do not pigeon-hole children and have a firm belief of treating each and every one as an individual with the aim of enabling them to reach their potential.

We strive to build confidence and have fun on the way.

Our door is always open should you have any queries – nothing is too small a matter.

We are all looking forward to working with you and your children.