

NOTES FOR PARENTS

If you would like this information in

- Large print
- Braille
- Audio tape
- A language other than English

please contact Education, Learning and Leisure on (01224) 664630
or email ELL.reception@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION

These notes are designed to give parents basic information about the education system in Aberdeenshire and also to detail specific areas of government legislation that may relate to the child's experience at school. Should you have any queries, either regarding the notes contained in this booklet or at any point in the future, you should contact the appropriate Education, Learning and Leisure Office.

The information within this booklet is believed to be correct as of 3 December 2009, but changes may occur at any time - for example, the cost of a school meal may increase. Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure also reserves the right to make any changes that may result from either national or local government decisions.

All schools are co-educational.

Aberdeenshire Council is responsible for the following areas of education services:

- pre-school
- primary
- secondary
- support for learners (including educational psychology)
- community learning and development

Aberdeenshire's Education, Learning and Leisure Service has over two hundred freestanding establishments, including:

- 85 nursery classes/units
- 151 primary schools
- 17 secondary schools
- 35 community centres
- 38 units for pupils with additional needs
- 4 schools for pupils with additional needs

These establishments cater for more than:

- 2,500 nursery children
- 19,000 primary pupils
- 15,000 secondary pupils

The most up-to-date contact details for Aberdeenshire Schools can be found by visiting the Aberdeenshire Council website at:


 http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/our_schools/allschools.asp

Please note that all establishment details will be updated on the website as they occur.

The Headquarters Office for the Education, Learning and Leisure Service is:

Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen AB16 5GB

 01224 664630


 01224 664615

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service also has five Education Offices to cover the Authority area. These are:

Banff and Buchan Area Education, Learning and Leisure Office


St Leonards, Sandyhill Road, Banff AB45 1TA


 01261 813340

 01261 813396

Buchan Area Education, Learning and Leisure Office


Old Infant Building, Prince Street, Peterhead AB42 1PL


 01779 473269

 01779 470390

Education, Learning and Leisure - Dover Lodge


117 Charlotte Street, Fraserburgh AB43 9LS


 01346 515303

 01346 512377

Garioch and Formartine Education, Learning and Leisure Office


Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie AB51 3WA


 01467 620981

 01467 622254

Marr, Kincardine and Mearns Area Education, Learning and Leisure Office

Queens Road, Stonehaven AB39 2QQ

 01569 766960

 01569 768489

N.B. After most chapters in 'Notes for Parents', a link for the Aberdeenshire Council website is given where additional information about the topic(s) concerned can be found.

The website address is denoted by this  symbol.

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1. MANAGEMENT

The Education, Learning and Leisure Service has its Headquarters in Woodhill House, Aberdeen. Based here are the Director, Head of Education, Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure, and the Principal Educational Psychologist.

There are three teams based in offices in Stonehaven, Inverurie and Banff. These teams are managed by two Heads of Service, one for the Kincardine/Mearns, Marr and Garioch areas and the other for the Formartine, Banff/Buchan and Buchan areas. Parents should use these offices as their main point of contact for matters outwith the responsibility of Headteachers.

There are 17 Community School Networks (CSNs) in Aberdeenshire with each comprising all Learning and Leisure facilities and functions. Quality Improvement Officers and Educational Psychologists are attached to each CSN as well as other Education, Learning and Leisure staff and staff from partner agencies such as Social Work, Health and Career Services.

2. CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Curriculum for Excellence is now being introduced across Scotland for all 3-18 year olds – wherever they learn. Its purpose is to improve our children's life chances, to nurture **successful** learners, **confident** individuals, **effective** contributors, and **responsible** citizens, with the child or young person at the centre of the learning.

In Aberdeenshire our vision and aims for *Curriculum for Excellence* have been set out in **A Curriculum Framework 3-18 for Aberdeenshire**. This policy gives clear guidance to schools on the planning and delivery of a more meaningful set of experiences and entitlements that will prepare Aberdeenshire learners for 21st century Scotland, including access to new technologies to support creativity and learning. There will be personal **support** to help young people fulfil their potential and make the most of their opportunities. All staff have a responsibility to look after our children's **health and wellbeing** – to ensure that the school is a place where children feel safe and secure. Across Aberdeenshire communication is being enhanced through the use of Glow (Scotland's online network). In the future parents will also be supported to use this technology.

Curriculum for Excellence develops **skills** for learning, life and work to help young people go on to further study, secure work and enjoy life and leisure. It makes learning relevant and helps young people apply lessons to their life beyond the classroom. It links **knowledge** in one subject area to another, helping children and young people understand the world and make connections. It develops skills so that children can think for themselves, make sound judgements, challenge, enquire and find solutions. Every child is entitled to a **broad** and **deep** general education, whatever their level and ability. All staff will be responsible for **literacy** and **numeracy** – the language and numbers skills that unlock other subjects and are vital to everyday life.

There will be enhanced ways of **assessing progress** and ensuring children achieve their potential. There will be new **qualifications** for literacy and numeracy from 2012/13, and new National 4 and 5 qualifications from 2013/14. Scotland's well regarded Access, Highers and Advanced Highers will be updated to take account of and support the new approaches to learning and teaching.

3. CHOOSING A SCHOOL

- **Which School?**

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service has a zoning policy for all schools within its area. All schools serve a local zone which has been agreed by the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee. These zones are known as delineated areas in the legislation. Information on particular school zones is available at each school or from the Education, Learning and Leisure offices.

Parents have the right to ask that their children be registered in a school other than the local zoned school. Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service has a duty to agree to such requests, whenever possible.

The zones exist mainly for the purposes of determining the right to provision of transport and for determining priorities, if required.

- **Information on a Particular School**

Each school produces a handbook containing information about the school which is updated annually. This is available, on request, from the Headteacher. You will also be encouraged to visit the school with your child.

Regulations require all schools (except nurseries) to include the following information in their handbook which is available from 15 December each year:

- i Examination and Certificate Results (including staying on rates to S5) - secondary schools only
- ii 5 -14 Levels of Attainment
- iii School Leaver Destinations - secondary schools only
- iv Budgeted Running Costs
- v Attendance Rates and Rates of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence
- vi Policy on Pupils with Additional Needs
- vii Policy on Development of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Values

The policy of Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service is to provide good, sound, modern education, tuned as far as possible to the needs of individual children and incorporating the methods developed from guidance given by the national agencies in the field. At the same time, Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service has developed its 3-18 Curriculum Framework which supports schools as learning communities to deliver consistent learning experiences that meet the entitlements and needs of learners.

Headteachers have an obligation to make parents aware of this, due particularly to the fact that many approaches have changed from the time when many parents were at school themselves. These notes can do this briefly, but Headteachers are encouraged to develop less formal methods of communication with parents wherever possible.

- **Registering for Primary 1**

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service has a uniform starting date for all its schools in the middle of August in any particular year. You will be informed of this year's starting date at the time of registering at school.

All children who will be five, up to and including the last day of February 2011, may be admitted in August 2010. All children who will reach the age of five on or before Tuesday 17 August 2010 should begin to attend primary school in August 2010. Children who reach the age of five after 17 August 2010 but before 28 February 2011 may also be registered for primary school in August 2010. Parents of children who reach the age of five in January and February 2011 have a right to defer their child's entry to primary 1. Parents of children who will reach the age of five from August to the end of December 2010, can request a deferred entry to commence primary 1. These parents must discuss this with the primary school where they intend to register their child for primary 1.

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service makes no provision to admit children who are five after the February closing date, unless that child has previously been registered and has commenced full-time attendance (excluding induction) at an early stages class in a state supported or forces school and is transferring into Aberdeenshire. In this case, the Quality Improvement Officer can exercise discretion. Registration in a nursery or playgroup does not count for the purposes of this exception.

- **How to Register**

Generally, if a parent wishes to register his/her child in a particular school, an approach should be made to the Headteacher of that school.

- **Communication Between Home and School**

Schools produce a variety of written information for parents: letters, reports, forms, newsletters and minutes. If you need to have this information in a different format, you will be able to request this when you register your child at school. You can also make this request when you update your contact details each year or at any time through your Headteacher.

You can also ask the school to arrange for an interpreter if necessary to be present when you visit the school, or ask to use Language Line (a telephone interpreting service) for short meetings. Please give the school as much notice as possible so that they can make suitable arrangements.

- **Access to School Buildings**

Aberdeenshire Council is in the process of improving access to its school buildings. However, there are some buildings which remain inaccessible to wheelchair users or those with limited mobility. In these cases, alternative arrangements can be made by staff to allow access.

As with communication, you will have the opportunity to record any access requirements when you register your child at school and when you update your contact details each year. However, to ensure that your needs are met, please inform the school of your requirements before you visit.

- **Child Protection**

“All children and young people in Scotland have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights and needs are respected. The welfare of children is paramount”. Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards, Scottish Executive 2004.

Protecting children and young people is a priority for Aberdeenshire Council services.

A comprehensive set of guidelines provide all staff and volunteers who come into contact with children the essential information about protecting children from harm.

All Education, Learning and Leisure Service Managers and School Child Protection Co-ordinators have received training to ensure that they are confident, well informed and supported to promote the protection of children.

All establishments are required to provide Child Protection awareness raising to all teaching and non-teaching staff on the first day of each session.

Protecting Children and Young People in Aberdeenshire – Education, Learning and Leisure Guidelines can be accessed through:

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parents/carers/ChildProtection.asp>

4. PLACING REQUESTS

- **Attending a School Outwith Your Local School Zone**

Every parent has a right, without necessarily giving reasons, to make a request to Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service to have his/her child registered in the school of his/her choice. This right can be exercised at any time and not just at the time of registration to school or transfer from one school to another.

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service has agreed that the simplest way to deal with such requests is for the parents to approach, in the first instance, the Headteacher of the school at which they wish their child to be educated.

All requests for admission to schools other than the zoned school should be made on the application form which is available at schools. In the majority of cases, the Headteacher should be able to indicate immediately whether the child can be admitted. In a few cases only, the Headteacher will be unable to give an immediate decision and will forward the completed application form to the appropriate Quality Improvement Officer who will deal with each case individually and correspond directly with the parents.

- **Making an Application**

Applications for entry to a school in August of any one year which are received up to 15 March in that year will be given first consideration. All placing requests made on or after 16 March for admission in August of that year will be considered and decided after the requests made on or before 15 March have been decided and notified.

- **Consideration of Request**

Where the number of registrations exceeds the places available in any particular school, all placing requests will be considered in accordance with Aberdeenshire Council's list of priorities as follows:

a) Residence

Residents within Aberdeenshire will take priority over those living outwith the Council area. The vast majority of out-of-zone applicants are residents of Aberdeenshire and therefore qualification under this category has no effect on the final decision.

b) Children in Need

The Authority will give priority to children who, in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, would be considered to be 'Children in Need' and where there are reasons why the child's needs can be better met in the school requested than in the school which serves the area in which the child lives. Children in Need is a broad concept and includes needs which arise from medical, psychological and social reasons but are not limited to these categories. Children may be considered to be in need as a result of the disability of another member of their household.

Where Aberdeenshire Council is asked to give priority to a child on this basis, it will seek the advice of an Educational Psychologist, Medical Practitioner, Social Worker or other agency according to the nature of the need. The Council will treat all such cases on their individual merits.

c) Local Conditions

Where road conditions, weather conditions or other local conditions constitute a severe hazard to the child.

d) Sibling Attending School

Where another member of the family is already in attendance at the specified school.

e) Social

Where both parents are working and transport the child outwith the zone in which they are resident in order that that child be cared for by a responsible adult outwith school hours.

f) Other Reasons

Such other reasons as may be appropriate in the judgement of the relevant Quality Improvement Officer.

You may write to the Quality Improvement Officer to state your case for consideration under any of the above headings. You are not required to give reasons but a system of priorities can only be applied if you have given your reasons.

• Decision on Application

The Quality Improvement Officer will endeavour to make a decision on your request as soon as possible and will give you written notification of his/her decision not later than 30 April in the case of all children for whom application is being made for entry to school at the beginning of the following session and the placing request was received on or before 15 March. In all other cases he/she will endeavour to give written notification within two months of receiving the placing request. If you have not been notified in writing of the decision within the times specified above you may deem your request to be refused.

Parents whose placing request is approved by Aberdeenshire Council will be expected to make and meet the cost of any transport arrangements arising out of the child attending a school other than that serving the delineated area.

- **Refused Applications**

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service will endeavour to meet your placing request but may refuse it on the following grounds:

- a) If placing the child in the specified school would;
 - i make it necessary for the Authority to take an additional teacher into employment.
 - ii give rise to significant expenditure on extending or otherwise altering the accommodation at or facilities provided in connection with the school.
 - iii be seriously detrimental to the continuity of the child's education.
 - iv be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school.
 - v be likely to be seriously detrimental to the educational wellbeing of the pupils there.
 - vi make it necessary, assuming that the pupil numbers remain constant, for the Authority to elect either to create an additional class (or an additional composite class) in the specified school or to take an additional teacher into employment at that school at the commencement of a future stage of the child's primary education.
- b) If the education normally provided at the specified school is not suited to the age, ability or aptitude of the child.
- c) If the Education Authority have already required the child to discontinue his attendance at the specified school.
- d) If, where the specified school is a special school, the child does not have special educational needs requiring the education or special facilities normally provided at that school.
- e) If the specified school is a single sex school (within the meaning given to that expression by section 2 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975) and the child is not of the sex admitted or taken (under that section) to be admitted to the school.
- f) If the child lives outwith the zone served by the school and his/her admission would prevent the Education Authority from retaining reserved places at the school for children who may subsequently move into the school's zone; the Authority is only entitled to reserve a reasonable number of places to meet this need.

• **The Right of Appeal**

You may refer any refusal of your placing request to an Appeals Committee which will normally comprise five persons three of whom will be Aberdeenshire Councillors.

Parents have the right of appeal against decisions made regarding placing requests. Your appeal must be lodged with the Appeals Committee within 28 days of receipt of the letter of refusal.

It should be borne in mind that;

- you cannot appeal against the refusal of a place in a nursery school or nursery class.
- you can appeal only once a year for each of your children.
- you must appeal no later than 28 days after you receive Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure's letter of refusal.

• **How to Appeal**

You should send a letter of appeal, giving the child's full name, the school you wish to attend and your reasons for appealing against the decision, to the Director of Corporate Services, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen AB16 5GB.

Information about the appeals procedure will be available from the Quality Improvement Officer, who will be able to answer any queries about the procedures for considering requests.

• **School Transport to a School Outwith Your Local School Zone**

Where a child is registered in a school outwith their local school zone, the parent is responsible for making transport arrangements and for meeting all costs involved, except in very limited cases where the Quality Improvement Officer has discretion to grant travel costs.

Travel costs would only be granted where the Quality Improvement Officer accepts that, in the first instance, the reason given by the parent for not registering the child in the zoned school is educational or medical/psychological and/or that it is reasonable to agree to the request.

Of course, the Quality Improvement Officer must have regard to any safety issues drawn to his/her attention by parents when considering requests for discretionary transport. Free transport will only be provided in this case where provision can be made within existing travel arrangements.

5. SCHOOL TRANSPORT

- **Background and Conditions of Contract**

Each school day in Aberdeenshire approximately 13,000 pupils are transported to and from school. Over 100 transport operators are used to provide the service through a mix of dedicated School Contracts, joint School Transport/Local Bus Services and through the purchase of season tickets on public bus services.

All bus and taxi operators are subject to detailed Conditions of Contract, which cover a wide range of requirements relating to the safe and legal operation of home-to-school transport services including a mandatory enhanced Disclosure Scotland check.

Operators are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of pupils in their care. Vehicles used for the provision of home-to-school transport services are subject to stringent inspections by the Vehicle Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and Council vehicle examiners.

- **Free School Transport**

Free home to school transport is provided under the terms of the existing legislation and Aberdeenshire Council policy. Currently this means that all primary pupils who live more than two miles from and attend the school for which they are zoned, and all secondary pupils who live more than three miles from and attend the school for which they are zoned have an entitlement to this transport. These distances are measured via the shortest recognised walking route. Application forms for free transport can be obtained from schools.

Pupils are allocated an appropriate pick-up/drop-off point that the Council is required to ensure is safe insofar as road safety is concerned.

As stated earlier, where a child attends a school other than the school they are zoned to, there is normally no provision of free home to school transport.

- **Season Tickets**

Free transport may be provided in various ways, either by the provision of season tickets on buses or by direct provision of contract transport by the Public Transport Unit on behalf of Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service. In certain isolated circumstances financial payments may be made directly to parents to transport their own children but, again, this is restricted to areas where other more normal methods of transport provision are not available.

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service does not guarantee to provide 'door to door' transport. In certain instances, children may be required to walk to meet the school bus.

In particular cases of difficulty, for example where medical problems exist, an approach should be made by the parent to the appropriate Quality Improvement Officer.

Where bus passes and season tickets are lost, Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service charges a sum of £2 plus administrative costs for renewal.

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/publictransport/schooltransport/index.asp>

6. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

- **Long Term Illness**

Where a child is unable to attend school due to long-term illness, the Authority can make provision for individual tuition. Parents should approach the Headteacher of the school that the child attends in the first instance.

- **Educational Psychology Service**

The school's educational psychologist works in partnership with school staff to help children and young people achieve their full potential. The educational psychologist supports this by offering schools a number of services including training, research, project work, intervention work, assessment and consultation.

During planned visits to the school, the educational psychologist meets with staff to discuss whole-school and class issues and how best to meet the needs of children and young people. These informal consultations aim to develop strategies that staff can use to bring about positive change. The educational psychologist may also spend time observing in the classroom or playground to support teachers in assessing how different circumstances and teaching approaches affect learning and behaviour.

When concerns persist, the school and educational psychologist may feel that a more formal meeting would be helpful. If the concern is about a child, the school will ask the parents' or carers' permission to hold a consultation meeting. This is a problem-solving discussion led by the educational psychologist, with parents or carers, school staff and sometimes other people who can helpfully contribute. The child or young person can also be supported to attend the meeting or contribute in some other way if appropriate. The aim is to agree a plan of action to bring about positive changes for the child or young person.

If parents or carers have concerns about their child's education it is best to share them with school staff first, as most problems can be solved in school without the involvement of an educational psychologist. School staff will contact the educational psychologist if they feel that he/she would be able to help.

It is possible for parents/carers to request the involvement of an educational psychologist by contacting the Educational Psychology Service directly. However, where possible, it is best to seek the involvement of an educational psychologist with the help of school staff.

Further information about the Educational Psychology Service is available from the school or the Educational Psychology Service website:

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/eps>

- **Pupils With Additional Needs**

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure provides a range of services for pupils with additional needs as outlined in 'Supporting Learning in Aberdeenshire: Pathways to Policy.' This provides a framework for the planning and delivery of additional needs services. There is an open and participative approach where parents and carers, and children themselves, are fully involved in decisions about the best ways of meeting additional needs. Wherever possible provision is made within the local school in order that pupils with additional needs can have the same opportunities and access to the curriculum that is available to all children.

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/additional/index.asp>

- **Support for Bi-lingual Learners**

If you as a family use a language other than English as your first language at home, you need to tell your child's Headteacher at the admissions meeting. You will then be asked if you would like your child to be referred to the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service. The EAL service provides and advises on language support.

After a pupil has been referred, a teacher from the EAL service will conduct an assessment to determine the level of support required. This support may range from advice for class and subject teachers, including the provision of appropriate resources, to direct tuition for the pupil. Teachers from the EAL service will work together with school staff, people from other agencies and parents and carers to enable the pupils to develop their full potential.

Teachers from the EAL service can also advise you on where you can learn English if you wish to do so. The EAL team works closely with Aberdeenshire Community Learning and Development Service who provide English language classes throughout Aberdeenshire.

All Aberdeenshire community school networks work within the guidance contained in the Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure 'Working together to support bi-lingual learners'.

You can contact the EAL service on 01888 544831 or you can email jennifer.walker@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/additional/sensory.asp>

- **Sensory Support Service**

The Sensory Support Service provides support for children and young people with a sensory impairment from birth to school leaving age. If requested, a specialist Hearing and Vision Support teacher will assess your child's hearing or vision and suggest ways of helping your child develop their full potential. This may be through loan of equipment to help your child's hearing or vision, or advice and recommendations to school staff.

For those with a more significant impairment, it may be through class support or one-to-one teaching. But in all cases, the specialist teacher will work in partnership with school staff and other agencies to ensure that your child has the best possible access to the school curriculum and the life of the school.

If you have concerns about your child's hearing or vision, it is best to contact the school first and discuss them with the class or guidance teacher. They will then, with your permission, contact the Sensory Support Service. You can, however, contact the Service yourself and the details are listed below:

Sensory Support Service

Westhill Academy

Hay's Way

Westhill

AB32 6XZ



01224 744786



01224 743568



sensorysupportservice.education@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/additional/sensory.asp>

7. BEHAVIOUR

Key to promoting positive attitudes in schools and other educational settings is the development of constructive relationships based on mutual respect, responsibility and tolerance within a supportive learning environment

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service is committed to providing a high quality educational experience for all children and young people. A school where pupils and staff alike are valued and treated with respect, and where individual educational needs are met, is one where positive behaviour is more likely to occur.

- *Curriculum for Excellence* aims to ensure that learning both in and out of the classroom provides children and young people with the opportunity to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to Scottish society.
- Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure 'Supporting Learning in Aberdeenshire: Pathways to Policy' provides schools and community school networks with a framework to support a wide range of children and young people's needs.
- Aberdeenshire Staged Intervention Supporting Teachers (ASSIST) is in place in all Aberdeenshire Schools. Each school has a behaviour support coordinator whose role is to support staff in dealing with low-level indiscipline.

• Exclusions

Some children/young people, for a variety of reasons, find it more difficult than others to cope with school life. This can sometimes result in difficulties with relationships at school and the child or young person may be at risk of exclusion.

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure's Policy on School Discipline and the Use of Exclusion states that:

"The Authority is committed to the principle that exclusion should only be used as a last resort."

Schools address the needs of pupils with behavioural problems through a variety of approaches involving their own staff and other appropriate outside agencies, before considering exclusion. All schools will have policies and procedures in place which promote positive behaviour and address behavioural issues through early intervention in partnership with parents and involving outside agencies where appropriate.

Before deciding to exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will have taken account of previous behaviour patterns and any recent incidents in which the pupil has been involved. The Headteacher will consider the effects the pupil's behaviour is having on the education and welfare of other pupils in the school.

- **Bullying**

Schools are required to have a written statement about their policy and practice on bullying. This outlines the school's structures for the positive management of behaviour and the support of individual children, the school's specific responses to incidents of bullying with an emphasis on the need for children to 'tell', guidance to parents about how to raise concerns with the school and a description of the arrangements that have been set up to monitor incidences of bullying. Partnership with and support from families and the school community is a key factor.

- **Reporting of Racist Incidents**

All school staff are responsible for recognising and tackling racial discrimination and promoting equal opportunities and good race relations in all areas of school life. They must also follow procedures in the Education, Learning and Leisure Race Equality Policy. Included in this is a requirement to ensure that all racist incidents are recorded and reported according to Council policy. However, schools are part of the community approach to tackling racial discrimination and therefore this must be shared by all those in the local community.

8. TERM DATES FOR JANUARY 2010 TO JANUARY 2011

Term starts	- Tuesday 5 January 2010
Mid-Term Holiday	- Monday 15 February 2010 (1 day)
Easter Holidays	- Monday 29 March 2010 to Friday 9 April 2010
May Holiday	- Monday 3 May 2010
Term ends	- Friday 2 July 2010
Term starts	- Tuesday 17 August 2010
October Holidays	- Monday 11 October 2010 to Friday 22 October 2010
Christmas Holidays	- Wednesday 22 December 2010 to Tuesday 4 January 2011
Term starts	- Wednesday 5 January 2011

The above dates apply to all Aberdeenshire Council schools. Please contact schools individually for details of In-service days and other holidays to be taken in 2010.

 http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/term_dates.asp

9. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education is provided for all 3 and 4 year olds across Aberdeenshire in nursery classes, and in commissioned playgroups and private day nurseries. All pre-school education settings are regulated by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and the Scottish Social Services Council. Aberdeenshire Council provides staff development and quality assures all settings.

Pre-school education is not compulsory but if parents wish their child to attend, the entitlement is five sessions weekly during term time.

A child's pre-school education entitlement commences:

- 17 August 2010 for children who are three years old by 31 August 2010*
- 5 January 2011 for children who are three years old between 1 September 2010 and 31 December 2010.
- 18 April 2011 for children who are three years old between 1 January 2011 and 28 February 2011.

** Children cannot start until their third birthday; therefore a child born on for example 26 August could not start pre-school education until that date.*

The application period for pre-school education is 5 - 15 January 2010. You will need to complete a pre-school education application form for your child if:

- Your child reaches her/his third birthday by 28 February 2011, and you wish to secure a pre-school education place for her/him.
- Your child is already accessing pre-school education as a three year old, but you wish to change placement for her/his further year of pre-school education.
- You wish your child to remain in their current pre-school setting for their pre-school year.

You can obtain two leaflets from all pre-school settings throughout Aberdeenshire: 'Applying for Pre-School Education for your Child' and 'Selecting Pre-school Education for your Child' (all pre-school education settings are listed in this leaflet).

Pre-school education application forms should be obtained from and returned to the pre-school setting of your first choice, together with evidence of your child's date of birth and your home address.

Further information, including copies of the above leaflets, is available at:

 http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parents/carers/pre_school/index.asp

and from the following Area offices overleaf:

AREA OFFICES:

Banff and Mintlaw Network

Shona Murray, Admin Assistant

Banff and Buchan Education Office, St Leonards, Sandyhill Road, Banff AB45 1BH



01261 813340



01261 813396



preschool.north@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Fraserburgh Network

Audrey McConachie, Admin Assistant

Education Learning and Leisure Office, Dover Lodge, 117 Charlotte Street,
Fraserburgh AB43 9LS



01346 515303



01346 512377



preschool.north@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Peterhead Network

Katrine Duncan, Admin Assistant

Buchan Education Learning and Leisure Office, Old Infant Building, Prince Street,
Peterhead AB42 1PL



01779 483131



01779 470390



preschool.north@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Ellon, Inverurie, Kemnay, Meldrum, Turriff and Westhill Networks

Doreen Adams, Admin Officer

Education Learning and Leisure, Gordon House, Blackhall Road,
Inverurie AB51 3WA



01467 628061



01467 622254



preschool.central@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Aboyne, Alford, Banchory, Huntly, Laurencekirk, Portlethen and Stonehaven Networks

Sandra Johnston, Admin Officer

Stonehaven Education Office, 39 Queens Road, Stonehaven AB39 2QQ



01569 768488



01569 768489



preschool.south@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

10. SCHOOL MEALS

- **Provision and Cost of School Meals**

All schools provide a wide range of freshly prepared, healthy food on their menus, which offer choice and variety using mainly local produce. The two-course meal available in primary and special schools is good value at £1.75 (2009/10 school year) since Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service supports the true cost of each meal by approximately £1.

The primary and special school menu includes a sandwich option, which offers an inexpensive alternative to packed lunches from home. In secondary schools, pupils can choose from a wide daily selection paying individually for each item chosen. Special and medically prescribed diets can be available through School Meals and parents should initially contact their Headteachers for more information.

- **Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Scotland Act 2007**

School menus are planned to ensure that the Nutrient Standards contained in this Act are met. The menu is nutritionally balanced across the whole week rather than on individual days.

All primary schools offer 'prepared fruit' free of charge for P1 and P2 pupils and many schools now have a healthy tuck shop.

In secondary schools there are vending machines with a range of healthier drinks and snacks to complement the meals.

- **Free School Meals**

Children are eligible for Free School Meals if their parents (or carers) are in receipt of the following:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Any income related element of Employment Support Allowance.
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit (WTC), and have an income of less than £16,040.
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC), and have an income of less than £6,420.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

The Council's Benefits Section are involved in assessing entitlement to Free School Meals and help is available on 08456 08 01 49. Also a leaflet called 'A Guide on How to Obtain Free Schools Meals' is available from schools along with an application form. This can also be viewed by visiting the Aberdeenshire website at:

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/financial/meals.asp>

- **Have Your Say**

There are two dedicated e-mail addresses available for parents and pupils to comment and make suggestions about any aspect of the School Meal Service:

 primary.meals@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

 secondary.meals@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

For further information and news stories click on the Council's webpage at:

 http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school_meals/index.asp

11. HEALTH

- **Partnership**

Attendance at school by children and young people is essential in order that they receive the education to which they are entitled. The health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people at school, and before and after school, must be protected and promoted to enable them to benefit from the educational opportunities available.

Parents/carers, schools and Aberdeenshire Council all have a part to play in maximising attendance and health, safety and wellbeing. The following statement sets out the relative roles and responsibilities of parents/carers, schools and Aberdeenshire Council.

- **Duty to Provide Education**

All parents/carers have a duty to provide appropriate education for their child. Parents/carers may do this by ensuring the attendance of their child at a school run by Aberdeenshire Council.

Where parents/carers choose to provide education for their child by ensuring the attendance of their child at a school run by Aberdeenshire Council, they have a duty to ensure regular attendance, unless there is a good reason for non-attendance.

- **Attendance and Absence**

Aberdeenshire Council will monitor attendance for the purposes of ensuring the provision of an appropriate education and to maximise children and young peoples' safety through its Attendance Policy. The steps to be taken by Aberdeenshire Council in the event of failure to attend school without good reason are set out in that policy.

It is essential that you liaise closely with your school on all aspects of pupil attendance.

Full details of Safe Arrival at School, Attendance and Absence Management Procedures are set out in the guidelines, 'Protecting Children and Young People in Aberdeenshire' and can be accessed at:

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Parentscarers/childprotection.asp>

- **Child Medication**

This will usually fall into one of four categories:

- i Children with short-term illness who, whilst well enough to attend school, still require to take treatment. If it is at all possible, parents should arrange the timing of treatment such that it is only taken at home, i.e. before and after school and possibly at lunchtime if the child goes home for lunch.
- ii Children with long-term medical conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, who require either regular medication to control their condition and/or occasional treatment during attacks or relapses).

Every effort will be made to help such children to benefit from all aspects of school life. In certain cases specific training of staff about a child's treatment may need to be given. This should be discussed with parents and the school doctor.

Depending on their maturity, it will usually be appropriate for older children to carry their own medication and be responsible for its use. It is essential however that parents ensure the school is informed of this. For many conditions, and in particular when a child requires inhaled treatment for asthma, pupils are requested to provide a reserve inhaler/supply of medication to be kept in a secure place in school. Therefore the health of the child will not be unnecessarily impaired should he/she 'forget' or run out of his/her medication. Such reserve medications should be renewed at least once a year.

In all cases where a child requires medication to be given in school, parents should provide precise written or oral instructions on the amount and frequency of dosage, and signed authorisation to administer such medication.

- iii If a child complains of headaches or other pains and requests painkillers, these will not be given to children in primary schools. For secondary pupils, a single 500mg paracetamol tablet may be issued. The child will be given a note to inform his/her parents and a record will be made of the child's name and complaint and of the date and treatment given. If the school nurse is available at such a time, the nurse will give any painkiller necessary.

N.B. Aspirin and aspirin-based products are specifically excluded from school first-aid boxes.

- iv Pupils with gastrointestinal symptoms should be discouraged from attending school until 48 hours after the symptoms have cleared.

In addition, the Authority has the power to direct that all pupils, or any individual pupil, attending one of their schools, be inspected by a medical officer of NHS Grampian. The Scottish Government must also make sure that there are such comprehensive facilities as are necessary to ensure that free medical and dental treatment is available for school children.

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/wellbeing/index.asp>

12. DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND CHECKS

Systems are in place to ensure that all appropriate staff and volunteers in a childcare role undergo an enhanced level Disclosure Scotland check. In addition, systems have also been developed to ensure that all such checking takes place efficiently and timeously.

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/parents/disclosure.asp>

13. ADVERSE WEATHER

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service has a very clearly prepared storm warning procedure. Headteachers, particularly in rural areas, have complete discretion to close their school in anticipated storm conditions that would put pupils at risk. Where possible, Headteachers endeavour to contact parents to let them know of such a decision. This, however, cannot be guaranteed; thus it is of vital importance that the Headteacher is kept up to date with contact telephone numbers in order to cover all emergencies. Every care is taken to try to ensure that pupils are not sent out in dangerous conditions.

Adverse weather conditions could result in the retention of children in schools, or at nearby addresses, and all Headteachers normally request parents to nominate relatives or friends as an emergency contact who can, in an emergency, look after their children. Each school has a safety procedure and full details are available from the Headteacher.

Other than phoning a school direct, Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service offers three additional options to finding out if a school is closed in Aberdeenshire. These are:

- i **Aberdeenshire Council website** – addresses are given below. The information on the website is reset at 4.00 pm each afternoon so as to start receiving information for the next day. This information is also available on Twitter.
- ii **Main local radio stations** – these radio stations receive updated information bulletins every fifteen minutes direct from our website.
- iii **Aberdeenshire school information line** – to operate this, parents need to dial 0870 054 4999 then enter the dedicated Pin number to obtain a message for the school in question. If parents cannot get through to this number first time, it is requested that they do not put this number on automatic redial as past experience has shown that this makes the line even busier.

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/closures/infoline.asp>

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/closures/index.asp>

 <http://www.twitter.com/aberdeenshire>

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

• Clothing Grants

A clothing grant may be available to parents/guardians who meet with the criteria laid down by Aberdeenshire Council. Grants are available for all school-aged children i.e. primary 1 and upwards from the time they start at an Aberdeenshire Council school until they reach their official leaving date.

Payments will normally be made to parents/guardians in receipt of the following:

- Child Tax Credit (TC602)
- Working Families Tax Credit
- Disabled Persons Tax Credit
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Support
- Widowed Person's Allowance
- Retirement Pension
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Only one clothing grant will be awarded per child (if appropriate) per financial year (1 April to 31 March). Children attending a nursery do not qualify for a clothing grant. At present, an award of up to £50.00 is made per financial year.

Application forms along with a leaflet called 'A Guide on how to obtain a Schools Clothing Grant' are available from schools and the following Education Offices: Banff and Buchan Education, Learning and Leisure Office; Garioch and Formartine Education, Learning and Leisure Office; and Marr, Kincardine and Mearns Education, Learning and Leisure Office. Alternatively, this information can also be viewed by visiting the Aberdeenshire website at the address given below:

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parents/carers/financial/clothing.asp>

- **Insurance**

No insurance is held by Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service that automatically compensates school pupils for personal accident, whether an accident occurs within or outwith the boundary of the school. Insurance of this nature, e.g. personal accident, life, private medical, is seen as a parental responsibility. It is your responsibility as a parent to insure your child for personal accident or death if you feel this is appropriate.

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service does hold third party liability insurance, which indemnifies the Council against claims from third parties, e.g. parents on behalf of pupils who have suffered injury, illness, loss or damage arising from the negligence of the Council or its employees. In these circumstances all claims are handled on behalf of the Council by external Insurers and Claim Handlers and compensation is dealt with on a strictly legal liability basis.

The Authority has a duty of care in respect of pupils in its charge during school hours and as such has to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all primary and secondary pupils. However, it is thought that secondary pupils should be more mature and, therefore, a lesser degree of supervision would be sufficient.

It may be necessary to provide supervision for primary children on school premises before or after normal school hours if their early arrival or late departure is due to the timing of official school transport. This general duty of care continues if the children go home by way of school transport and ends when the child gets off the bus, at which point the parents then become responsible.

- **Boarding Schools**

Boarding education is not provided in the Aberdeenshire Council area and Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service does not make payment for boarding provision outwith its area, except in very special circumstances - such as the support of children at specialist schools for art, drama, music, etc. Generally, the full cost of sending pupils to residential special schools outwith the Authority area is met by Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service.

- **Education Maintenance Allowance**

Students who stay on at school after the age of 16 years, or who leave school to attend a full-time course at a further educational college, may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The EMA consists of a weekly allowance during term-time, and two annual bonus payments. In order to receive their payments students must have an acceptable learning agreement.

The EMA is a means-tested allowance for students applying for the first time:

- If the combined household income is £0 - £20,351 with one dependent child in the household they will receive a £30 weekly allowance.
- If the combined household income is £20,352 - £22,403 with 2 or more dependent children in the household they will receive a £30 weekly allowance.
- Students who applied **BEFORE** 2009/10 – if the household income is £22,403 or less, a £30 award will be payable.
- If the household Income is between £22,404 and £27,465 a £20 award will be payable.
- If the household income is between £27,466 and £33,156 a £10 award will be payable.

Further information and application forms are available from Academies. Students who are intending to leave school and attend college should contact their college for further details.

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parents/carers/financial/ema.asp>

15. HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

- **Improvement/Health Promoting Schools**

The Education, Learning and Leisure Service is committed to ensuring that school communities in their entirety provide opportunities that enable pupils, staff and parents to make healthier choices. The new legislation Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 and the *Curriculum for Excellence* will provide a framework for enabling education to further develop its approach to improving the health and wellbeing of all staff, children and young people.

Schools are fully involved in promoting health and wellbeing; pupils, staff, parents and members of the wider community are involved in a whole school approach to health promotion and education. For establishments health promotion has developed considerably away from being an initiative to featuring as a core aspect of their organisational culture, improvement planning and day to day life.

- **Substances (Alcohol / Illegal Drugs and Tobacco)**

The Education, Learning and Leisure Service provides an environment where children and young people are provided with knowledge, skills and attitudes around substance misuse to enable them to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and relate these to their own actions, both now and in their future lives.

The substance misuse programmes being offered through our Community School Networks are supported and reinforced at whole community school level. It emphasises links between home and school and also endeavours to provide guidance and support to parents, carers and families.

The Service also provides assistance to school communities through specialist substance misuse services and agencies, who contribute important knowledge, advice and resources. The Authority also provides guidance on what school communities should do regarding a substance misuse incident and details of this policy can be accessed from the Service.

16. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- **Parent Forums / Councils**

The Scottish Schools (Parent Involvement) Act 2006 established a new model of parent representation which came into effect on 1 August 2007. School Boards were formally disestablished on 31 July 2007.

The Act provides that all parents and carers of children at a school are automatically members of the Parent Forum for that school. Each Parent Forum may then establish a Parent Council to represent the views of parents to both the school and the local Authority. The constitution of the Parent Council is determined by the Parent Forum and should reflect what it feels is best for the parents, the pupils and the school; the constitutions of Parent Councils will, therefore, vary from school to school.

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) may continue to exist as separate bodies or may merge with, or become sub-groups of, the Parent Council.

In Aberdeenshire there is an annual Parent Council Conference where parents have opportunities to network, view examples of good practice and share their own experiences. A Parental Involvement Focus Group has been set up with representatives from parents across Aberdeenshire Parent Councils; they also have the opportunity to meet with Area Heads of Service three times per year.

For further information about the Parent Council of your child's school, please contact the Headteacher.

- **Complaints**

If you have an issue with your child's school, or the services provided at the school you should speak to the Headteacher in the first instance.

If the Headteacher is unable to resolve your concern to your satisfaction you should ask the Headteacher (or contact the Education, Learning and Leisure Service on 01224 664630) for the contact details of your Quality Improvement Officer. You should contact your local Quality Improvement Officer directly and discuss your concerns with them.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from your Quality Improvement Officer you should contact the Head of Education at:

Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB.



01224 664630

Finally, if you are still dissatisfied with the responses you have received you should go to step 2 of:



<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay>

17. NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT CARD

Aberdeenshire secondary school pupils currently use the National Entitlement Card to access their school/public library and to purchase school meals (where available). Pupils can also use this same card to access discounted travel across Scotland (www.givememycard.com) and to obtain additional benefits through the Young Scot scheme (www.youngscot.org).

To obtain a National Entitlement Card, your child will be asked to complete an application form and have their photograph taken. Secondary Schools will arrange to take their photograph either when your child's Primary 7 class visits their chosen secondary school or during your child's first couple of weeks at that school. If your child already has a National Entitlement Card, please inform your secondary school when you are registering as you will not need to apply again.

The information from the application form will only be used in the administration of the National Entitlement Card scheme i.e. generating cards, making future personal amendments like change of address, and to allow new services to be added when they become available.

Further information can be obtained from the secondary school or from Aberdeenshire Council's website:



<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/publictransport/concessionarytravel/scotland-wide.asp>

18. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING OF PUPILS

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service understands that parents want to have mementoes of their children's life at school and may want to have photographs and video recordings of a range of events such as school plays, concerts and sports days.

In response to this, a policy has been introduced that permits photography and video recording of pupils at nurseries and schools run by Aberdeenshire Council whilst respecting the rights of individuals.

Your local school will issue the necessary pro-formas for agreeing to your child having his/her photograph taken.

19. PUPILS' WORK PERMITS

The Children (Protection at Work) (Scotland) Regulations 2006 has amended the legislation which governs the number of hours per week, and circumstances, under which young people at school are able to work in paid employment during school term time.

Previously the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937 allowed young children under the age of 15 to work a maximum of 17 hours per week.

The new regulations specify that a new limit of 12 hours per week applies as follows:

- 2 hours allowed per school day
- 2 hours allowed on a Sunday
- 8 hours (over 15 years of age) and 5 hours (under 15) on a Saturday

The new regulations specify that children wishing to work for an employer within school term time should apply to their school for a work permit.

Information concerning children's work permits and the bye laws relating to them are available from your school.

20. DATA PROTECTION ACT

When registering your child in one of our schools, and throughout their time in education, you will be asked to provide a range of personal and potentially sensitive information about your child and your family. All information provided by you will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. As such we draw your attention to the following Fair Processing Notice.

- **Fair Processing Notice**

Who may process your personal data?

The information which you provide to your child's school will be processed by Aberdeenshire Council, which is a Data Controller of this information for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. You can tell us at any time if you do not want us to process or share any information that you have previously provided.

What personal data will be collected?

The information which you provide may include:

- Personal contact details
- Employment details
- Child's date of birth
- Physical or mental health or medical conditions
- Income (if applying for free school meals or clothing grants)

For what purposes will your personal data be used?

The information which you provide on the attached form will be used by Aberdeenshire Council for the following purposes:

- Provision of education to your child
- Provision of additional educational support for your child (if required or requested)
- Provision of transport for your child (if required or requested)
- Provision of extra curricular activities for your child (if required or requested)

Will Aberdeenshire Council disclose your personal data to anyone else?

Yes. Aberdeenshire Council may share this data with partner agencies. These may include NHS Grampian, Careers Scotland, or Scottish Government departments such as the ScotExed statistical return and transport providers.

We will tell you on the forms that you complete, who we may share that information with, and will seek your permission to do so. We will only reveal information to somebody else where we have your permission or as required by law where it is relevant for that purpose. We do not sell or rent information to anybody.

If you have any queries regarding how we will process your information under the Data Protection Act 1998, please contact:

Aberdeenshire Council Education, Learning and Leisure Service:



01224 664630 or email:



education@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

21. LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Online mapping service with address search and useful local information:

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/local/map.asp>

View H.M. Inspection of Education reports on Aberdeenshire schools:

 http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/hmi_reports.asp

List of frequently asked questions by parents and carers in Aberdeenshire:

 <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentscarers/faqs/index.asp>

Offers advice for parents on learning and education:

 <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone>

Searchable directory of all schools in Scotland:

 <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/scottishschoolsonline>

Learning and Teaching Scotland website:

 <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk>

Website of the Scottish Government's Anti-Bullying network:

 <http://www.antibullying.net>

Website offering advice for victims of bullying, their parents and their school:

 <http://www.bullying.co.uk>

Website for the Scottish Government:

 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk>