

School Handbook

Blackness Primary School



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Section 1: Welcome and Vision

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'd like to welcome you to Blackness Primary School. I hope that the information contained in this handbook is informative and helpful to you.

At Blackness Primary School, we are a welcoming, inclusive community where Everyone Here Matters. We have high expectations for all our learners, encouraging them to believe in themselves, be inquisitive, resilient and ambitious, both in and out of the classroom. Our pupils feel happy, valued and supported, giving them the confidence, enthusiasm and social awareness for life-long learning needed to succeed in a fast-changing world.

Learning at Blackness is guided by the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, providing rich, engaging experiences that develop our pupils as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The process of education is continuous and begins before your child comes to school. We aim to work in true partnership with you to allow your child to grow intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. By working closely with early years colleagues and fostering strong partnerships with families, we build on each child's unique experiences and strengths to inspire a love of learning and curiosity about the world.

Our approach reflects the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). We place children at the centre of all that we do, working in partnership with parents and carers to support wellbeing and achievement. Through our learning, teaching and wider school experiences, we promote the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, ensuring our children feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

We encourage pupils to take pride in their learning while also recognising and celebrating wider achievements. A broad, balanced curriculum and a wide range of experiences ensure that every child is given the opportunity to thrive, grow in confidence and develop a love of learning alongside kindness, respect and pride in their school and community.

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In addition to this handbook, please explore our school website to see what makes our school a special place to learn and grow. If you wish to speak with me for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Victoria Taylor
Head Teacher



Section 2: School Ethos

Why are we here?

Blackness Primary School provides staff, pupils and families with experiences that promote a positive mindset, engagement, learning and enjoyment. This is developed through relationships between home, school and our community whilst drawing on wider expertise and resources. We operate on a level of mutual respect, with the understanding that “Everyone Here Matters”. We develop our community through supported challenge and a wide range of opportunities and experiences

We will nurture positive relationships:

- where staff, pupils and parents are valued and have a sense of pride in our school
- where relationships with parents and carers are fostered, involving them in the learning of their child and the life of the school
- where visitors are welcomed and links with others in the community are promoted
- working in partnership with the “Friends of Blackness”
- developing, supporting and drawing on links with other educational establishments and other providers.

We will promote and extend learning:

- providing high-quality learning experiences for all our children
- through having a shared understanding of a child’s strengths and development needs
- recognising and celebrating achievement and effort
- providing quality feedback to learners and those who can support them
- ensuring the progress and attainment of pupils
- using School Improvement Planning to identify, develop and evaluate improvement projects
- continually develop our learning and skills to create a strong school team

We will develop engagement in learning:

- supporting children to develop positive mindsets
- supporting children to evaluate and understand their own learning journey
- ensuring enjoyment of learning experiences which provide challenge and interest
- ensuring learning is relevant
- building upon prior learning
- providing a broad range of learning experiences
- providing opportunities for children to lead and direct their Learning

We will include our whole community:

- celebrating the diversity within our primary school
- understanding the needs of others
- valuing the opinions and views of others
- valuing Learning and experiences out with our school
- providing supports to overcome barriers
- developing a sense of responsibility for our lives and the wider world

We will include our whole community:

- meeting emotional, physical, social, cultural and moral needs
- promoting responsible behaviour where pupils exercise self-awareness,
- responsibility, resilience and independence;
- developing the need for interdependence
- providing a wide range of health promotion experiences

Section 3: School Information

School Address: Blackness P.S., Pennycook Lane, Hawkhill, Dundee, DD1 5RT

Telephone: 01382 435939

Email: blacknessprimary@dundeeschools.scot

Website: [Welcome to Blackness Primary School — Welcome to Blackness Primary School Website](#)

Head Teacher: Victoria Taylor

Depute Head Teacher: Michelle Allan

Principal Teacher: Cheryl Cuthbert

School Status: Non-Denominational

Primary 1 – 7

No provision for Gaelic Language Education

School Roll: 310

School Hours: 9.00am- 3.15pm

Parent Council: Chair: Ailsa Gallie

Contact Information Email: pcbblackness@dundee.npfs.org.uk

Parish Priest/Minister: Rev. Grant Maclaughlan

Contact Address: Dundee Westgait (Roseangle), 130 Perth Road, Dundee, DD1 4JW

Office Hours: The school office is open from 8.45-12.15 and 1.15-3.45pm. Please help us by making routine telephone calls within office hours. Voicemail is available when the school office is unstaffed. Please leave a message and we will return your call as quickly as possible.

Class Organisation: The organisation of classes may vary from year-to-year dependent upon certain factors such as the school roll and the number of teachers allocated to the school that session.

Primary Schools: Pupils may be in a straight class which comprises of pupils from the same stage e.g. all primary 2 pupils or they may be part of a composite class which comprises of pupils from more than one stage, for instance a class with some primary 2 and some primary 3 pupils.

School Policies are available on our website, at [Documents — Welcome to Blackness Primary School Website](#)

School Uniform: We expect all pupils to wear the correct school uniform. This helps to encourage children and young people to take a pride in their appearance and to have respect for their school. All items of clothing should be labelled. This assists greatly in recovering lost property.

Further uniform information can be found on our school website: [Documents — Welcome to Blackness Primary School Website](#)

Section 4: Parental Contact

Communication with Blackness:

Parents/Contacts can contact the school by telephone or email or by visiting in person (although it's best to call first to make an appointment so that whoever you wish to see can be available).

We communicate to parents/carers through: Groupcall, Messenger, Seesaw, Emails, Phone Calls, Pupil Tracking and take pride in our face-to-face interactions before and after school.

Get Involved at Blackness

We love working in partnership with our families and wider community. There are lots of ways you can get involved and make a difference at Blackness Primary School.

You could:

- Join our Parent Council- Friends of Blackness and help support school events and initiatives.
- Volunteer on school trips and support our children's learning experiences.
- Get involved in our 'Days with a Difference' and special school events.
- Come into school to share your experiences, work, skills or expertise with our classes.
- Support children's learning by sharing your knowledge, hobbies, talents or community connections.

Whether you can give a little time or get involved regularly, everyone has something to offer. Your involvement helps us to provide wider experiences, strengthen our school community and make learning meaningful for our children.

Supporting Pupils' Learning

At Blackness Primary School, we value parents and carers as important partners in their child's education. We provide information about children's learning, progress and wellbeing through Seesaw, newsletters, parent/carer meetings and our school website. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate with staff and share information about their child to help us understand their strengths, needs and interests.

Parents and carers have two formal parents' evenings each session to discuss their child's progress, learning, wellbeing and next steps. A written school report is also provided in June, giving families an overview of their child's progress, achievements and areas for development. Parents and carers are also kept informed through regular communication with class teachers and opportunities to discuss any concerns or questions throughout the year. Where a child requires a little more support, we work in partnership with parents and carers through our Team Around the Child approach. This provides an opportunity for school staff, families and, where appropriate, other professionals to work together to identify the child's strengths and needs, agree appropriate supports and review their impact. Parents and carers are involved in discussions and decisions about the support put in place for their child.

We provide information, support and advice to help families support learning at home, including home learning activities, curriculum information and opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing skills. Parents and carers are also invited to participate in school events, workshops, learning opportunities and wider school activities.

We work closely with families at key stages in their child's education, including transitions between stages and into secondary school. Parents and carers are kept informed about progress, next steps and available pathways, with opportunities to discuss options and ask questions so they can support informed decisions about their child's learning and future.

Section 5: School Improvement

Our School Improvement Report, also known as the Standards and Quality Report, is on our school website at [Documents — Welcome to Blackness Primary School Website](#).

This report shows:

- the main achievements of the school over the last 12 months
- the trends and information which give the overall picture of how the school is performing including achievements over the last 3 years
- how the school has improved standards in relation to literacy, numeracy and health and well-being

Also on our website are our current School Improvement Plan and attainment data.

More information regarding the school's performance at local and national level can be obtained at [School information dashboard](#) | [My school](#) | [Parentzone Scotland](#) | [Education Scotland](#)

Section 6: Extra Curricular Activities

This session, we are fortunate to be able to offer a range of extra-curricular activities. These are supported by our Active Schools Co-ordinator, Active Schools Assistant, School staff, Club coaches, Abertay University students, volunteers and pupil leaders.

A sample of the clubs we offer in Blackness are:

- Football P5-7
- Girls Football P6-7
- Netball P5-7
- Hockey P4-7
- Cricket P4-7
- Dance P4-7 and P1-2
- Glee Club (Mixed age groups based on auditions)
- Dodgeball club P7
- School Show P6-7
- Code Club P6-7
- Choir P5-7
- Active Play P1, P2 & P3
- Shoelace club- P1 & P2

These activities and clubs take place either at lunchtime or after school hours.

Details of current clubs and activities is on our website.

Section 7: Attendance

Presence at school is a key feature of our school's improvement plans. Good school attendance ensures the education to which all children and young people are entitled. Parents/Carers and school working together helps to make presence a reality. Even 90% attendance still means that 10% of learning time has been lost – nearly twenty days across a full year.

If an absence is planned, e.g. a hospital appointment, please let the school know in advance.

If your child is ill and cannot attend school, please contact the school before, or as soon as possible after 9.00am on the first day of absence. This can be by telephone or via Parents Portal. A follow up note to school with your child on their return explaining the reason for the absence is welcomed. If your child is absent for more than three days, please contact the school again to update us.

If your child is absent and no contact is made by you, a text message will be sent from the school. If you have not contacted the school to say your child is absent but have received a text message, please contact the school as soon as possible.

If the school is concerned about your child's whereabouts, and there has been no explanation for an absence, a School Worker may arrange to visit you and your child at home (normally after three consecutive days of absence).

Dundee City Council asks that parents do not take children out of school for family holidays during term time. In accordance with Scottish Government guidelines, almost all holidays are recorded as unauthorised.

Our school attendance data is on our school website at [Blackness Primary Policy Documents — Welcome to Blackness Primary School Website](#)

[School attendance: a guide for parents](#) is a government guide for parents about school attendance. It explains parental responsibilities with regard to children's attendance at school.

Section 8: General Information

The [Schools & Learning](http://www.dundee.gov.uk) pages on the Dundee City Council Website (go to www.dundee.gov.uk and choose Schools and Learning) contains a wide range of relevant information for Parents/Carers.

Enrolment & Placing Requests

Information on how to secure a school place for your P1 child, how P7-S1 transfer is managed, and how to change schools is on the DCC website at [Enrolment and Placing Requests for Schools in Dundee](#).

School Clothing Grants

Information on eligibility and application is on the DCC website at [School Clothing Grants](#).

School Meals

Information is on the Council's website at [School Meals](#), including details of how to apply for free meals.

Children/young people eat in the dining hall, which is supervised by staff. Glass bottles/glass flasks should not be brought to school. In primary schools, pupils staying for school lunches or packed lunches should not leave the grounds during lunch time without adult supervision and are not allowed to leave the school grounds during intervals. In secondary schools, specific policies are listed on the school's website.

School Holidays

Holidays and In Service Closure Days are listed on the Council's website at [School Term Dates](#).

Emergency School Closure

In exceptional circumstances the school may be unable to function normally eg in severe weather or with power or water failures. We shall do all we can to let you know about the details of closure and re-opening through the local radio, press, text messages and letters home. Primary children must be collected by an adult in the event of a closure during a school day.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

All Dundee schools encourage positive behaviour. Specific details for our school are available on the school's website. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all, children and young people must behave responsibly within the school and in the grounds.

Accidents/Illness at School

If a child/young person has an accident or becomes ill at school, we will attempt to contact parents then will contact the nominated Emergency Contact. It is very important that Emergency Contact details are kept up to date – please inform us immediately of any changes via Parents Portal, by telephone or at the School Office.

Instrumental Tuition

Information is on the Council website at [Instrumental Music Service](#).

Appointments

If your child has an appointment during the school day or needs to leave school for any other reason, please put this in writing. It's best if routine appointments could be made outwith school hours if possible. In the interest of safety, we cannot allow primary aged children to leave the school unaccompanied. If a primary aged child needs to leave school, they must be collected by a parent/carer/trusted adult from reception.

School Concerns and Complaints

If you want to talk to your child's teacher or a member of the senior staff, it is best to make an appointment. This ensures that the member of staff is available, that classes are not disturbed and that pupils' lessons are not affected.

To complain about any matter, please contact the school by telephone or by email, explaining as clearly as you can what you think is wrong. Your concern will be acknowledged promptly and the procedure for dealing with it will be explained to you. Please do not use platforms such as Seesaw to make complaints.

If you have made a complaint to the school and you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can have your complaint reviewed by an Officer in the Children and Families Service. This can be done by emailing children.families@dundeecity.gov.uk detailing your concerns.

Further details on the Council's complaints processes are on its website at [Complaints to the Council](#).

Reporting to Parents/Carers

Throughout the year, teachers report to parents on the progress of the children in several ways, including Parents' Evenings, Profiles, and written reports (e.g. at the end of the school year). Further opportunities for meeting with staff throughout the year are provided if required.

Further information on how we recognise achievement, report and produce pupil profiles is on the school's website.

Transitions

When your child transfers from nursery to Primary 1, stage to stage within primary, from P7 to S1 or year to year from then on they will be supported during this process. School staff make every effort to ensure that important information about your child, their learning and progress and any additional support they require is communicated to the teacher at the next stage of learning and that parents are involved whenever necessary.

The school encourages parents to discuss these changes, and the Senior Leadership Team will be happy to meet with you to allay any concerns you may have over the new arrangements for your child.

Transfer to Secondary School

When your child is due to leave the school at the end of Primary 7, they will be allocated a place at their catchment school, based on home address.

The move from primary to secondary school can be a daunting step for pupils and parents. To make this time more comfortable, primary and secondary schools work closely together to provide a range of transitional activities throughout Primary 7. These include Primary School visits from secondary school staff and a 2-day visit to the secondary school where pupils follow a secondary school timetable. Around this time, secondary guidance and support for learning staff meet with the Primary 7 teachers to discuss the needs of the children.

Section 9: The Curriculum

Information about the school curriculum in Scotland can be found by clicking the Curriculum for Excellence tab at <https://education.gov.scot/>. This includes details of curricular areas, learning pathways, progression through levels, and assessment methods. A link to the Parentzone parent support website is also included. The Scottish Curriculum is in the process of being reviewed. Information on the Curriculum Improvement Cycle can be found [here](#).

Additional specific details for our school are available on the school's website.

Religious Observance

Under current Scottish legislation, parents/carers may request that their child be withdrawn from activities like services or assemblies which are considered to be Religious Observance. This does not apply to curricular religious education, which remains mandatory. In line with children's rights legislation, the views of the child will be sought and considered within the decision-making process. The school will discuss any request with parents/carers and the pupil to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made. Suitable educational activities will be provided for any pupil not participating in Religious Observance. Families wishing to discuss this should contact the Head Teacher.

Sensitive Issues

Parts of our curriculum involve learning about issues which could be considered sensitive e.g. sexual health and relationships education, drugs and alcohol awareness. Whenever these topics arise, we will communicate as appropriate with home. On some occasions we may send a letter to raise awareness that specific issues are to be covered. On other occasions we will actively seek permission to include your child/children in a series of lessons. If any parent has any concerns over content, please to raise this with a member of staff.

Assessment

A variety of assessment takes place in every classroom, every day. Teachers use these assessments to record pupil progress, inform next steps in learning and identify strengths and developmental needs. Through observations, discussions and the tasks the learners undertake, a profile of the pupil's progress is collected to evidence their learning. This is added to as the pupil moves through the school system. Pupils are given feedback about their learning and are helped to see how they can improve and what they need to practise. Pupil performance is also measured using standardised assessments. These allow measurement of value added by the school as well as giving diagnostic profiles of pupils' strengths and development needs.

During the Broad General Education (BGE) from Nursery to S3, there are benchmark assessment points at in P1, P4, P7 and S3. This included National Standardised Assessments for Scotland (NSA), computerised assessments which give standardised information about pupil progress. Teachers use the data from these to plan next steps in learning.

At S4-6, pupil assessment in the Senior Phase follows the Qualifications Scotland Framework outlined at <https://qualifications.gov.scot/>.

Section 10: Supporting Learners

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

The GIRFEC approach outlined at www.scotland.gov.uk/gettingitright guides how staff in all children's services, including schools, meet the needs of all children and young by working together to ensure that children reach their full potential and are safe. [The Dundee Protects Website](#) has lots of information about how GIRFEC and Child Protection operate in Dundee, including the Team Around the Child approach

[The Additional Support for Learning \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#), the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) and the [Children and Young People's Act \(Scotland\) \(2014\)](#) guide how we assess and plan for all children and young people.

Additional Support

Most children make satisfactory progress in school, and their education can be fully supported by their class teacher. Some may need additional support to help them access learning in the classroom. Through assessment and planning we identify their strengths, barriers to learning and what action or support required to meet their additional needs.

Support for learning takes place in every class and is the responsibility of all staff. Pupils are encouraged to work to the highest level of their ability; extra help is available for children who may require it to help them achieve their potential. Senior Leaders, teachers and other staff work closely to ensure that children and young people's individual learning needs are met.

Support for learning is co-ordinated by the Senior Leadership Team, based upon pupil need, and is regularly reviewed. Support may be given within the class or within another setting and may be within a group. Support it is always based upon the needs of the individual child.

To help assess the specific needs of any pupil, the school can involve an Educational Psychologist from Dundee Educational Psychology Service. Parents are always contacted first, and the reason for such a referral is fully explained and parental co-operation sought. We also work with a wide variety of partner agencies to provide whatever support our pupils need.

Information about how Additional Support works in Dundee is on the Council's website at <https://www.dundee.gov.uk/additional-support-needs>. This includes information on

- Assessing Additional Support Needs
- Attending Pupil Support Planning Meetings
- Co-ordinated Support Plan
- Dispute Resolution
- Dispute Resolution Referral Form
- Mediation - Parent to Parent leaflet
- Supporting Learning in Dundee – our policy

This internet page also provides many other support leaflets on related topics which might be of interest to you and links to external services.

If you cannot access the internet, please ask the School Office for support.

Section 11: ScotXed Education Statistics

Privacy Notice for Pupil and Teacher Data

These notices provide information to pupils, teachers and parents about data collected through Scottish Government Statistical Surveys including why it is needed, data policy and individuals' data protection rights. The changes in the latest version are intended to:

- Clarify that the information collected is about pupils/teachers in schools rather than solely related to the Pupil or Teacher Census.
- Continue to inform pupils, teachers and parents that the data may be shared with partners for statistics and research purposes and clarify that this could include linkage to other sources in line with the National Data Linkage Guiding Principles.
- Confirm that pupil/teacher names and address (other than postcode) are never collected.
- Local authorities are responsible for ensuring pupils, teachers and parents are kept informed about how data will be used and that such information provided is reviewed regularly to ensure it is in line with best practice.

You can access the updated notices at the following links:

- Education Statistics Privacy Notice – Pupils –
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed/SchoolEducation/SchoolPupilCensus/SchoolHandbookInsertpupils>
- Education Statistics Privacy Notice – Teachers –
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed/SchoolEducation/StaffCensus/SchoolHandbookInsertstaff>