

Houston Primary School's
Early Learning & Childcare Class
Handbook



April 2022



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Houston Primary School
Crosslee Road
Houston
PA6 7EJ

May 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am delighted to welcome you and your child to Houston Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class (EL&CC) and look forward to getting to know you.

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with helpful information and I hope it will answer most of the questions you may have. Please keep it for future reference.

We are looking forward to welcoming the children to our purpose-built facility which will provide greater flexibility for parents/carers, offering different attendance patterns. The building will be open from 8.15am until 5.45pm, up to 48 weeks of the year and will accommodate up to 60 children at any one time. Our building consists of a Story Area, Creative Area, Social Area, Discovery Area, Family Room, Boot Room and Kitchen. There is a great focus on outdoor play with raised beds for planting, Messy Play Areas, a Secret Garden and track for wheeled vehicles. The layout includes a covered area with flexibility to accommodate various learning experiences.

The staff of Houston Primary School EL&CC are committed to working in partnership with you to provide the highest quality of Early Learning and Childcare for your child. Prior to your child starting, staff will be in contact to arrange a visit (dependant on Covid guidance). Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for you to see what is going on or to take part in learning experiences with your child. We are always happy to talk with you about your child's development and progress.

If you require any further clarification on any aspect of life at Houston Primary's Early Learning & Childcare Class, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,

Laura Anderson & Helen Greenhorn

Deputes of EL&CC

Laura.anderson@renfrewshire.school
Helen.greenhorn@renfrewshire.school

EL&CC Staff

Head Teacher	Mrs. Jennifer Murray
Depute Head Teacher (Early Years)	Mrs. Amanda Johnston
Depute Head Teacher/ Support Co-ordinator	Mrs. Jillian McPherson
Deputy Heads of Class	Ms. Laura Anderson Mrs Helen Greenhorn
Senior EL&CC Officer	Miss Hayley Lennon
EL&CC Officers	Mrs. Julie Bell Mrs. Nicola Bridgeman Ms. Hayley Cochrane Mr. Stephen Donnelly Mrs Tracy Ferguson Ms. Amanda Fernie Mrs Cheryl Murray Mrs. Laura Jack Ms. Zoe McIntyre Mrs Tracey Pollock Mrs. Amanda Smart Ms Kayleigh Moran peripatetic supply member of staff
Support Workers	Mrs Jan Black Mrs Linda Hill Ms Joanne Sneddon
Office Manager	Ms. Ellen Pyra

We assist in the training of childcare/education students from West College, City of Glasgow College, Paisley University, Glasgow University and Strathclyde University.

We also provide work experience placements for pupils from Gryffe High School and other local secondary schools.

Section One: The Aims of Houston Primary School EL&CC

The Aims of Houston Primary School EL&CC

At Houston Primary School EL&CC all members of staff endeavour to provide a secure, nurturing environment where children are enabled to reach their full potential.

We aim to:

- provide an appropriate curriculum for our children that will be
 - relevant, well planned and evaluated
 - delivered using a variety of approaches
 - broad, balanced and will provide progression
 - effective, ensuring our children achieve their full potential
- use skilled observation and interactions to provide opportunities, appropriate to individual children's learning needs, which will ensure children's development and progress
- develop children's learning through high quality play experiences indoors and outdoors that provoke children's natural curiosity, creativity and problem solving skills.
- build partnerships with parents/carers and the wider community, and provide support for children and their families
- create a positive and nurturing ethos where:
 - there is a safe, relaxed and happy learning environment
 - children, staff and parents are valued and their contributions acknowledged
 - visitors are welcomed
 - children are encouraged and motivated to give of their best
- provide high quality resources to support effective teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors
- manage the nursery effectively by establishing a team that works towards providing a high-quality service, using effective quality assurance procedures and a commitment to continuing professional learning

We consider that it is important to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest quality of education for our children.

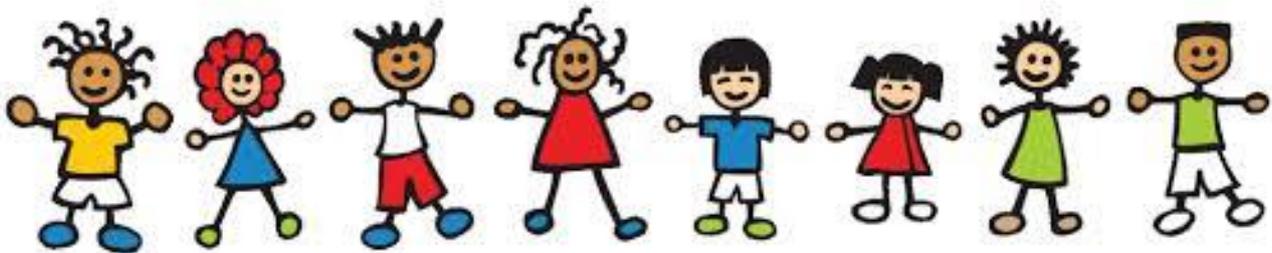


Non-Denominational Policy of the EL&CC

The EL&CC is non-denominational. We respect and welcome children and parents of all religions, faiths and beliefs. These principles are reflected in the criteria used to admit children to nursery and the curriculum of all establishments.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy

All pre-five services should reflect the Council's equal opportunities policies and be anti-racist, anti-sexist, multi-cultural and recognise the rights of both men and women to work or to care for children. Provision takes into account the needs of children with additional support needs. These principles are reflected in the criteria used to admit children to Early Learning & Childcare and in the curriculum of all establishments.



Section Two: General Information

Admissions

Houston Primary School EL&CC is non-denominational and caters for children aged 3-5 years. Children's names should be placed on the waiting list any time after their second birthday, but they must be at least three years of age before they are eligible for nursery education. Children born between 1st September and the end of February will be able to take up their funded ante pre-school place from the month following their third birthday. Children born between 1st March and the end of June will start in the EL&CC in the autumn term. All children are entitled to a funded place from the month following their third birthday, in line with national and local guidelines.

Application forms can be downloaded from our website, completed online from the Renfrewshire Council Website or collected from the school or EL&CC office. Once completed, they should be posted to or handed in at the EL&CC office. It is advisable to telephone to make an appointment and parents should bring along their child's original birth certificate and proof of residence. Photocopies are not acceptable. Please note that only one application per child is required.

An Admissions Panel will meet at regular intervals throughout the year to consider each application and offer places accordingly. The panel will consist of all heads of pre-five establishments in the area and representatives of the other agencies involved in supporting children and their families e.g. Social Work Department, Health Board. Parents are informed by letter of the Admissions Panel's decision regarding a place for their child. Renfrewshire Council has agreed that there are some family and geographical circumstances which will give children priority for admission. All EL&CC places are allocated in line with Renfrewshire Council's Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy Guidelines and the EL&CC manager is happy to advise parents how this policy operates. Please refer to Renfrewshire Council's website for further information.

Register of Applicants

A register of applicants will be kept in the EL&CC. Please note that the length of time a child's name has been on the register will **not** affect the child's priority for admission. Parents can ask to see their application form at any time. **If circumstances change which affect the application, you should notify the office.**

Attendance patterns available	
Term time option (38 weeks)	Monday – Friday 8.50am-2.50pm (lunch included) 38 weeks
Full year option 2.5 days (48 weeks)	Monday, Tuesday 8.15am – 5.45pm & Wednesday 8.15am - 1.00pm (lunch included)
Full year option 2.5 days (48 weeks)	Wednesday 1.00pm – 5.45pm, Thursday & Friday 8.15am – 5.45pm (lunch included)
Full year option AM session (48 weeks)	Monday – Friday 8.15am – 1.00pm (lunch included)
Full year option PM session (48 weeks)	Monday – Friday 1.00 – 5.45pm (lunch included)
Blended model	This will combine using hours at Houston EL&CC and with another funded provider, this may be a local partnership nursery or a child minder.

Please note that a limited number of each place is available in order to ensure that the centre runs at full capacity.

Attendance

Children gain a great deal from coming to the EL&CC, so regular attendance is very important. Such regular attendance allows the staff to build on, and develop, your child's interest in a planned and coherent programme. Our work with your child today will extend what he/she learned yesterday, and we plan tomorrow's learning to develop and extend what your child learned today.

If your child is going to be absent, please telephone the EL&CC on 0300 300 1477 to let us know. Where we have had no contact a text message will automatically be sent.

Enrolment

An Enrolment Form must be completed once your child has been allocated a place at the EL&CC as this will provide vital information such as emergency contacts, dietary requirements etc. This form will usually be completed at the Parents' Information Evening in June, or at the EL&CC if a place has been allocated during the session.

Settling In

You and your child will initially be invited to attend a pre-entry visit lasting approximately 30 minutes. This will usually take place a few days prior to your child's actual start date. During this time, you and your child will be given a tour of the EL&CC and given important information on our day-to-day procedures.

Your child's first day will be fairly short (approximately one hour) and a parent or adult well known to your child will be expected to stay with him/her. This will allow you to get to know the staff who will be working with your child and them to get to know you. From experience, we know that this will help your child feel more secure

and become more confident to stay on their own. Children are brought in on a staggered basis and parents will be notified of entry dates at enrolment.

All children are different - some settle very quickly, others take longer and prefer mum or dad to stay for several days. We wish your child to feel safe and secure within the EL&CC and so will not hurry you away.

Arrival and Collection of Children

It is expected that a responsible adult will bring your child to and from the EL&CC. In the interest of your child's safety, you should make a point of telling a member of staff if someone not known to them is to collect your child, so that they can be added to your child's Personal Care Plan. This avoids difficult situations when a child cannot be allowed to leave with an adult who is a stranger to the staff. As an additional security precaution, children are required to be signed in and out of the EL&CC.

When the children are settled into the routine, the following are helpful to the staff:

- children should change clothes in the Cloakroom Area
- children should wear soft indoor shoes to keep the floor area clean for playing on and wellington boots for outdoor play
- please be punctual when you collect your child as it can be distressing for your child to worry that they have been forgotten

Emergency Contacts

Parents of children attending the EL&CC are asked to provide, where possible, names, addresses and telephone numbers of 2 relatives/friends who may be contacted in the case of an emergency.

PLEASE INFORM THE EL&CC OF ANY CHANGES TO THIS INFORMATION.

Transport

Transport is not normally provided for children attending pre-five establishments. The Council, however, may provide transport to and from the EL&CC for children with additional support needs.

A few establishments have their own transport, but this is exceptional and generally parents should make their own arrangements.

Insurance

Sometimes, children like to bring something special or new to the EL&CC for their key workers and friends to see. However, parents should be aware that the Council cannot accept responsibility for personal belongings left in the EL&CC. Submitted claims are likely to be met only in circumstances where the authority can be shown to have been negligent.

Emergency Closure Arrangements

The EL&CC will be open at the times already outlined, but on some occasions, circumstances may arise which mean the EL&CC has to close.

Establishments may be affected by, for instance by, severe weather, transport, problems, power failures or difficulties with fuel supplies. If this happens, we will do all we can to let you know details of closure and re-opening.

We may keep in touch by telephone, text, e-mail, school website, notices in local shops and community centres, announcements in local churches, in the press and on local radio.

No Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted in the EL&CC or school playground.

Lunch

A two-course lunch is provided daily for children who attend over the lunchtime period. The weekly menu is displayed on the parent's notice board and on the School website under EL&CC tab. Children who have a special dietary requirement can be catered for. This should be discussed at enrolment with one the Depute Heads or your child's keyworker. Lunchtime for the children is a nurturing experience. Children are encouraged to develop their independence, self-help skills, confidence, and social skills. We do this by supporting children to help set the table for lunch, serve themselves their food and help others. Serving themselves their lunch ensures children make healthy choices, discuss food, and develop their conversational skills with others. The atmosphere of the lunchtime approach is very relaxed and at a pace suited to individual needs of the children.

Snack Time

The children are offered a snack both in the morning and in the afternoon. We are keen to promote healthy eating habits and children will be encouraged to choose from a selection of fresh fruit, dairy products and a variety of breads, along with a drink of milk or Water. A small amount of free fruit is provided weekly by the local authority to promote and encourage healthy eating. Semi-skimmed plain milk is delivered to the EL&CC each day and we encourage the children to drink this. Children will be consulted on what snack they would like and even participate in the

preparation. Children will use real glasses and crockery and will learn how to handle these safely and responsibly.

Snack is usually available for a period of the day. However, this may vary depending on special events and activities. Children are encouraged to select from a buffet. Sometimes, they are invited to help prepare their own snacks, under the supervision of an adult. Children use real crockery and cutlery. They are encouraged to follow hygiene routines and tidy up after themselves.

Water at EL&CC

Research has highlighted the importance of drinking lots of water, therefore water is available throughout the day and drinks are always given following any physical exercise.

Voluntary Contribution

Parents/Carers are asked for a voluntary contribution of £2.00 per week towards our funds. This money covers the cost of snacks, baking ingredients, specialist sport sessions, sewing kits, special art materials, birthday gifts etc. Coach trips to the library are also paid from this fund.

Many people prefer to pay this on a monthly or termly basis using our ParentPay online system. Your child will be given a unique Username and password when they start. Ms Pyra in the office can answer any queries regarding payment.

Suitable Clothing

It is advisable that your child wears comfortable, easily washed clothing as they may be involved in messy and energetic activities. Trousers should be easily managed as this allows independence for toileting and thus avoids 'accidents' which can be upsetting for a child. Easily pulled up sleeves allow children freedom at water play, baking, art etc.

For your convenience, a nursery uniform can be ordered online from our supplier by visiting their website at www.schoolwearmadeeasy.com. Children should bring a small draw string bag which will remain at nursery containing indoor gym shoes and spare clothes which should be labelled, in the event they have a little accident and have to be changed. Wellington boots should be supplied labelled and will be stored in the rack in the boot area.

Your child's A4 sized Book Bag should be transported to and from the EL&CC in their backpack. This should be handed to your child's key worker on arrival, so that letters, books and children's work can be put in this folder.

We will provide aprons for creative indoor activities and all weather suits for outdoor experiences.

Please make sure that your child has suitable outdoor clothing as daily outdoor play is encouraged in all weathers. Wellington boots and rain jackets should be worn during winter months. It is **extremely** important that children wear sun hats when the weather is hot. In line with our Sun Protection Policy, children will spend limited time exposed to direct sunlight outdoors during the hottest parts of the day (11am to 3pm). -It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that sun protection cream is applied before coming to the EL&CC. We ask that if parents are supplying their own sunscreen that it is labelled with the child's name and the SPF is no lower than 30 and has at least a 4 star UVA protection, this should be handed to their child's key worker. Please speak with your child's key worker or Ms Lennon (Senior Nursery Officer) to ensure that the appropriate written consent is provided to allow staff to help your child apply sun lotion.

Please put your child's name on **all** clothes, which will be taken off once they are inside the EL&CC - coats, shoes, wellington boots etc. as this makes matching clothes to owners much easier and prevents misunderstandings as to ownership.

We do have a small supply of emergency clothing, but a spare set of clothes should be brought to nursery in your child's bag in case of 'accidents'.

Internet Safety

Children of all ages enjoy using technology. We now see young children going online to play games, talk to family, watch videos and even learn to use voice enabled tech like Alexa and Siri to find out about their world.

To have a safer online experience and get the best out of the digital world as they grow, We suggest following these practical tips, tell children to seek guidance by asking if this site is safe to use, also make use of parental controls.

You can also visit <https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/keeping-young-children-safe-online/> for more ideas on keeping under 5s safe online

Excursion and Consent Forms

When outings or excursions for the children are planned, staff will advise you in advance. We try to take the children out into the local community on a regular basis. An outing can be simply to the park, to the post office, to the shops to buy vegetables or to other nearby places of interest. We may also go further afield e.g. Blair Drummond Safari Park, Erskine Community Library, Science Centre, etc. You will be asked to complete and update a consent form at the start of term allowing your child to take part in all out of school activities. Parental permission is granted via our online platform, Parent Pay. **Please note that children cannot take part in outings unless consent has been given by the parent/carer.**

Nursery Holidays & Closures 2022-2023

First term	In- service Day	Closed to all EL&CC children	Friday 12 th August 2022 & Monday 15 th August 2022
	September Weekend	Closed to all EL&CC children	Friday 23 rd September to Monday 26 th September 2022 (inclusive)
	October Holiday	Term time children	Monday 17 th October to Friday 21 st October 2022 (inclusive)
	In-service Day	Closed to all EL&CC children	Monday 24 th October 2022
	St Andrew's Day	Term time children	Wednesday 30 th November 2022
	Christmas / New Year	Closed to term time children	Thursday 22 nd December 2022 to Wednesday 4 th January 2023 (inclusive)
		Closed to all EL&CC children	Monday 26 th December to Wednesday 4 th January 2023 (inclusive)
Second Term	Nursery re-open		Thursday 5 th January 2023
	Mid Term Break	Term time children	Monday 13 th February to Tuesday 14 th February 2023 (inclusive)
	In-Service Day	Closed to all EL&CC children	Wednesday 15 th February 2023
	Spring Holiday	Term time children	Monday 3 rd April to Friday 14 April 2023 (inclusive)
	Spring holiday	Closed to all EL&CC children	Friday 7 th April & Monday 10 th April 2023
Third Term	Schools re-open		Tuesday 17 th April 2023
	May Day	Closed to all EL&CC children	Monday 1 st May 2023
	Local Holiday	Closed to all EL&CC children	Friday 26 th May & Monday 29 th May 2023
	In-Service Day	Closed to all EL&CC children	Tuesday 30 th May 2023
	Last day of session	Term time children	Tuesday 27 th June 2023 term time children last day

School in-service days

- Friday 12th August 2022
- Monday 24th October 2022
- Tuesday 30th May 2023
- * Monday 15th August 2022
- * Wednesday 15th February 2023

Section Three: Medical Information

Medication

If your child is in need of prescribed medication during his/her time at nursery, you must discuss his/her requirements with the Deputy Head and your child's Key Worker. We will give you the necessary form to complete, which authorises staff to administer the medication to your child. The parent/carer must administer the first dose of medication prior to coming to the EL&CC. Please note that parents will be asked to review Administration of Medication forms every three months.

If your child suffers from a life-threatening condition such as epileptic seizures, allergies or asthma, you must inform us, prior to your child starting with us. A meeting will be arranged with the Deputy Head to establish a Health Care Plan, detailing relevant information on your child's medical condition, including activities or specific circumstances that are likely to bring on an attack and the actions required by staff in the event of an emergency.

Health Care Plans will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they contain up-to-date information, and that staff are fully informed of individual's medical needs. Please note that staff must be informed of and kept up to date with any changes in your child's health needs.

Illness

If your child is unwell, please do not bring them in to the EL&CC even if they want to come! We do our best to protect your child from infection by firmly encouraging hygienic habits. It is particularly important in cases of sickness and diarrhoea that a child should not return until they have had a period of 48 hours at home after they were last showing symptoms.

We will put up a sign on the Information Board at the Main Entrance when we are informed of a case of Chickenpox, Measles, Mumps, Hand, Foot and Mouth, Slap Cheek etc. We ask that parents/carers take advice from their GP or follow NHS Guidelines. The EL&CC would welcome a telephone call if your child is not able to attend on a particular day.

Illness during the Day

Children who become unwell during their session are attended to by the staff. Most staff are trained First Aiders. All details of accidents are recorded in the Accident Book. This should be read and signed by the parent/guardian on their return. If your child becomes ill during their session, staff will telephone the parent or the named emergency contact to arrange for your child to go home where he/she will be more comfortable. **It is very important that we have up-to-date contact numbers.** In the unlikely event of an emergency, medical advice will be sought and parents contacted immediately. It is very important to notify us if you change your employer or your emergency contact arrangements change in any way, even if it is only temporarily, so that our records are kept up to date. If your child is ill or has an infectious disease he/she should **not** attend the EL&CC. We would be grateful if you could keep us informed of any illness that could affect your child's attendance or the health and wellbeing of others.

Headlice

Please remain vigilant to the occurrence of head lice/nits. Infection is most common in children aged 3-11 years. Outbreaks happen throughout the year. We are advised against sending home letters alerting you to specific outbreaks. Parents are discouraged from using insecticide lotion, shampoo or sprays preventatively. Only use these treatments if live lice are detected. Recent advice from our School Nurse promoted 'wet combing' as the most effective method of live lice detection and removal. You may find the following websites helpful; www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/ www.nits.net/bugbusting

Visits by Health Service Staff

We shall secure your written permission before any kind of screening is carried out by a member of Health Service Staff. A health visitor will be available to speak to parents at least once per term. This initiative is designed to support our parents. Dates of these sessions will be issued in advance.

Hearing, Vision and Speech

Speech & Language Concerns:

Many speech problems in young children disappear as they grow older. Most staff are trained in the 'I Can' approach and will be happy to carry out simple assessments and offer advice and support to help develop your child's language and communication skills.

Some problems, however, may need the support/attention of a speech therapist. Parents and staff will discuss anxieties/problems which the child is encountering and, if the parent is willing, the expertise of the speech therapist will be sought.

Renfrewshire Council runs Drop In clinics, based locally, for parents to take their child to should they wish to seek advice or an assessment from a Speech & Language Therapist. Details are available on our website and from the EL&CC.

Hearing Difficulties:

Please talk to us if you have any worries about any aspects of your child's development.

Orthoptist:

All children in their pre-school year are seen by the Orthoptist. Parents will be asked to give their consent before testing is done.

Section Four: The EL&CC Curriculum

Promoting Learning

Education at Houston Primary School EL&CC aims at offering experiences, which lead to effective learning for all children. We provide excellent conditions for learning by:

- acknowledging the individuality of each child
- recognising the different needs/strengths/difficulties of each child
- using the information given by parents/carers to help staff provide appropriate learning experiences
- noting the child's choices and encouraging him/her to take part in as many experiences as possible
- observing the child and planning on the basis of these observations

We plan in accordance with the Curriculum for Excellence framework, which supports all children and young people from 3 to 18 to develop as **successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens** and **effective contributors**. The underlying design principles of the curriculum are:

- Challenge and Enjoyment
- Breadth
- Balance
- Depth
- Personalisation and Choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

EL&CC staff will work alongside children to plan learning experiences, which promote children's development in eight key areas.

- Health and Wellbeing
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Sciences
- Technologies
- Religious and Moral Education
- Expressive Arts

The active learning approaches which are used in the EL&CC will be extended into the early years of primary and beyond.

Throughout the year, you will be invited to Stay & Play sessions and Curriculum Events that will enhance your understanding of how young children learn at Houston Primary School's Early Learning & Childcare Class.



EL&CC Numeracy & Maths

Play is a powerful medium for learning and many mathematical concepts will be developed through playful indoor and outdoor experiences. A range of experiences linked to Curriculum for Excellence, Early Level will be planned for and facilitated through Free Play and Together Time.

Staff will observe the children at play and thoughtfully intervene to scaffold and progress children's understanding and skills. They will offer resources to support the context for learning and facilitate the use of mathematical skills in a way that is relevant and meaningful to young children. Everyday experiences and interactions will be used to promote the application of numeracy and mathematics skills: counting and

weighing when baking or considering shape, symmetry and measurement when constructing models using blocks and loose parts

Staff will track individual's progress and plan experiences to ensure they are developmentally appropriate. They will also use their expertise and knowledge of children's interests to ensure rich and varied mathematical experiences that develop their mathematical vocabulary and develop a solid foundation.



EL&CC Literacy & Language

Our playful environment will facilitate choice and immerse children in a wide variety of literacy based learning experiences. Whether children prefer making their own books, baking, playing in the Home Corner or building huge models with blocks, staff will promote how we use literacy in our everyday lives. They will observe the children at play and carefully consider ways to use individual's interests as a context for developing early literacy and English skills. Through the use of interesting texts, unusual mark making tools, multi-sensory materials, note pads, technology, clipboards, books, plans etc. children will be inspired to read and communicate their ideas.

Through a range of experiences, including the use of Home Learning resources, children will develop skills including:

- listening and talking skills (including use of Chatterbox cards)
- understanding of language and concepts such as rhyme and letter sounds through nursery rhymes, songs and stories
- retelling stories using puppets and role play
- through story telling sessions, children will discuss events, characters and their feelings; making connections with their own life experiences
- recognising print in their environment and how we can use it to learn more about the world around us
- they will learn to mark make to communicate ideas through drawings and writing (including use of Home Learning and Mark Making Sacks).

These experiences are practical and fun, and will contribute to the development of your child's early literacy skills.



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Renfrewshire

Dolly Parton's imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting free books to all children who are aged 2-5 yrs that live within Renfrewshire.

Every child who is eligible will receive a free, age appropriate book each month addressed to them. Check availability and register your child by visiting www.imaginationlibrary.com/uk

Community Library Visits

We hope that every child in Houston Primary School EL&CC will become a member of the library. The children will enjoy a visit from the Skoobmobile or will visit Erskine Community Library during the year. Here they will be read a selection of stories by the librarian and have the opportunity to browse and choose books to bring back to the EL&CC.



Bedtime Book Club

Each week, children are invited to borrow books from the selection displayed at the Main Entrance. Our Book Club operates a book loaning circle of trust, whereby books are returned without the need to keep a log. In order to motivate everyone, each child will be given a ping pong ball by their key worker to place in their group's jar at the Main Entrance after every story read. Children are also encouraged to re-read their favourite books from home. The group who has enjoyed the most stories over the course of the week will receive a special stamp. When a book is returned, your child is welcome to select another book to take home and enjoy with an adult or sibling.

Book Bags

Book bags are available to buy from www.schoolwearmadeeasy.com. These are used to transport library books, letters and artwork to and from the EL&CC. They can be purchased from the office when your child starts at the EL&CC.

Play at Home

During the year, each child will have the opportunity to take home 'Play at Home' sacks to enjoy with their family. In order to promote the 'Five to Thrive' nurture approach which has been proven to benefit children's emotional and cognitive development, sacks containing resources have been created with the aim of engaging families in fun collaborative play activities. An information pamphlet for parents is included in each sack.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important part of the curriculum and has been developed to accommodate the changing seasons and involve children in assessing risk. The outdoor play area is extensive and includes a hard surface area for use with bikes, prams and other wheeled toys. There is ample space for outdoor mark making with chalks, paint, water etc. Loose Parts are also available, so that children can construct and create their own models and artwork. There is a separate play area with grass, a Secret Garden, a playhouse and a Mud Kitchen. Also, there are raised beds, so that the children can grow, harvest and prepare tasty dishes with their own fruit and vegetables. The children will also be encouraged to dig for buried treasure in the sand pit and create imaginative scenarios in the playhouse.

Within our new EL&CC, parents, staff and children will work together to enhance the outdoor space and enable our children to have the opportunity to experience the wonderful world of nature at first hand. We plant wildlife, sensory and flower gardens that allow children to observe the birds feeding and investigate living bugs and other insects in their natural habitats.

Fitness

The children are time-tabled to use the school Gym Hall and Mini-Gym each week. The children will participate in a range of physical activities throughout the year including dance, gymnastics, football and tennis.

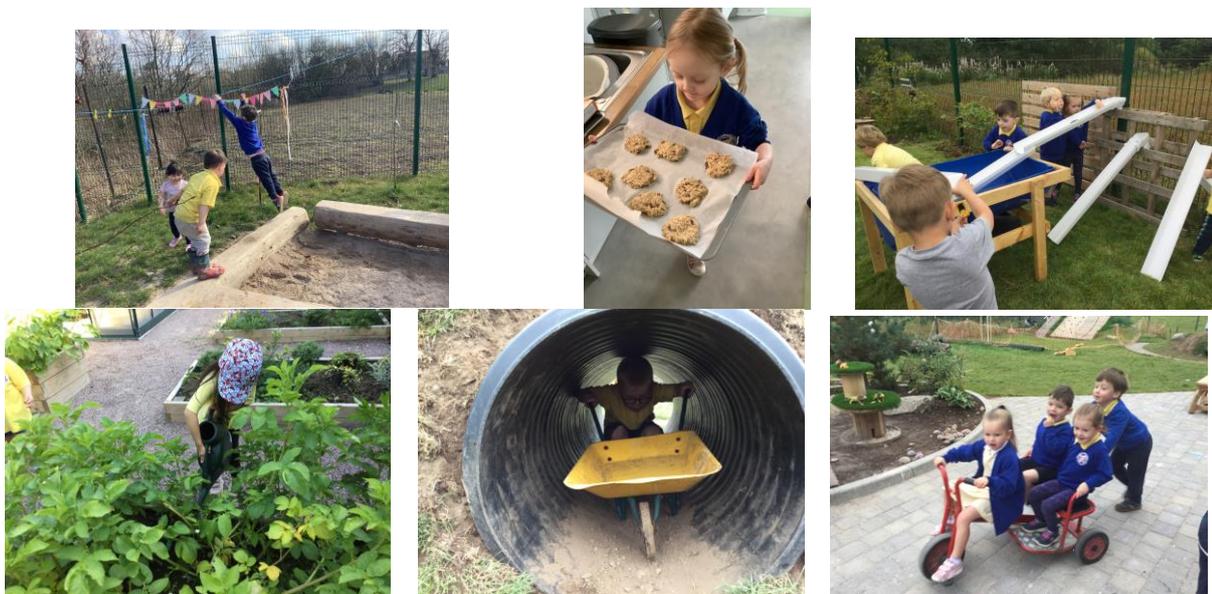
Children are encouraged to bring their bike/scooter where it can be parked safely in the mini pods at the main entrance. Please ensure your child is wearing a helmet. Renfrewshire Council cannot accept responsibility for damage or loss of your child's bike or scooter.

Sport Coaches

We have strong partnerships within the local community that enable us to access expert tuition from sports coaches. Strathgryffe Tennis Club provide sessions in the Gym Hall. Renfrewshire Council also provide some football lessons.

We also benefit from supportive parents who often offer what time they have to share their own expertise and skills in a range of activities from basketball to yoga. All of these experiences help to keep the children fit and healthy, and ensure that they receive regular cardio-vascular exercise. They also help to improve eye, hand, foot, balance and co-ordination skills. The children get the opportunity to play with other children, make new friends and take part in team games.

We are always looking for volunteers who are prepared to work alongside the staff to teach children new skills and introduce them to new sports and activities.



Observation and Assessment

From a child's first day, recognising achievement is an important part of learning and development. Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. *Assessment for Learning* supports the purposes of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Assessment of children's learning is based on day-to-day observation and high-quality interactions. Assessment practices which will be used by all staff will be based on thoughtful questions, careful listening and reflective responses to help the children to achieve their goals and to develop their learning and thinking skills. When staff, interact with children, or take time to stand back and observe their play, they can gather important information about each child's development and learning. The purpose of assessment through observation and interaction is therefore to build up a knowledge and understanding of your child. Children's individual needs are observed and discussed on a daily basis as this enables staff to plan and evaluate activities effectively.

Children will be encouraged to look at their work and make decisions about their own learning. Through discussions, the children will be able to identify aspects of their learning that they find easy or difficult. Staff will encourage and support children in

their next steps on a day-to-day basis by observing and engaging in conversations with your child.

Samples of children's learning, photographs and brief summaries of their development are recorded in each child's 'My Special Book' which provides us with some evidence of progress made. 'My Special Book' is always accessible for children and their parents, and will be used as a focus for discussion at parents' meetings. Staff will communicate with children and their parents/carers regularly to devise and review children's Personal Learning Plans.

Parents will be kept informed of what children are learning about via e-mailed communications and our blog which you will find on our school website.



GIRFEC - Getting It Right For Every Child

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 was passed in the Scottish Parliament on 19 February 2014 and received its Royal Assent on 27 March. The Act covers a variety of areas relating to the wellbeing of children and young people. For further information please visit www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/legislation You can also learn more about this in your child's Personal Learning Plan.

What is GIRFEC?

It is a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people.

For children, young people and their families:

- They understand what is happening and why
- They have been listened to carefully and their wishes have been heard and understood
- They will feel confident about the help they are getting
- They are appropriately involved in discussions and decisions that affect them
- They can rely on appropriate help being available as soon as possible

- They will have experienced a more streamlined and co-ordinated response from practitioners

For practitioners:

- Putting the child or young person at the centre and developing a shared understanding within and across agencies
- Using common tools, language and processes, considering the child or young person as a whole, and promoting closer working where necessary with other practitioners

The GIRFEC approach ensures there is a single planning model for children who need additional support from services, providing a single point of contact for every child and providing a holistic understanding of wellbeing. By adopting this approach, practitioners can focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and how they can act to deliver these improvements.



In order to help staff meet children's additional support needs at Houston Primary School's EL&CC, a stepped intervention process is used. In many instances, the children will be supported in the playroom by EL&CC staff. For other children, additional support will be required from other agencies. For a small number of children, significant additional support may be required. For example, there may be several agencies providing frequent support. For those children identified as requiring additional support, a Child's Plan will be completed.

Regular GIRFEC meetings are held with staff to monitor the progress and needs of **all** children in the EL&CC.

When staff, parents/carers and other professionals are working together to support a child's identified needs, meetings are arranged to ensure information is shared effectively.



Section Five: Parental Partnership

Working together with homes and families

Parents are children's prime educators in their earliest years and they continue to play a major role in their young child's learning when they start formal Early Years Education. The staff at Houston Primary School's EL&CC value the role of parents in their child's learning and they will work hard to create a genuine partnership with parents.

The starting point for this partnership is the pre-entry visit to the EL&CC. As well as welcoming and familiarising the children and parents with the new setting, this provides an opportunity to involve parents and children in discussion about their child's achievements to date. Continuing a two-way communication is important to successful partnership.

Working with you

We welcome the opportunity to talk to you and share knowledge about your child so that we can find ways to use that knowledge to benefit your child's education. Please keep us informed.

Supporting Children with Difficulties

If staff feel that your child is having difficulties with any aspect of their learning, they will discuss it with you and take steps to ensure that the appropriate help is given. Staff do liaise with outside agencies e.g. psychologists, speech therapists, health visitors etc. and these links with other agencies can also give us access to specialist resources. Any information about your child will of course be regarded as confidential and discussed with parents in the first instance.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

We are keen to promote our shared school values: **friendship, respect, honesty and success** (please see back cover). Children will learn about them through discussions and everyday interactions in the EL&CC. Staff will use praise to recognise good examples of our values in action.

Staff are trained to deal with children who are leaving their parents for the first time and, perhaps, mixing with other children for the first time outside their home situation. We have many strategies at hand to encourage children to co-operate with staff and each other. Any 'undesirable' behaviour will be discussed with you, and parents and staff will work together to support your child.

If you as a parent feel you are having difficulty handling your child's behaviour, do talk to the staff about your concerns. We are here to listen and offer support/advice.

Your Child's Progress

There will be lots of opportunities for you to discuss your child's progress with staff as children are brought to and from the EL&CC. If at any time you have concerns about how your child is progressing, or if you have an important matter you wish to discuss, then please do not hesitate to contact the EL&CC to make an appointment to speak to your child's key worker or the Depute Head.

In addition, you will be invited to attend an EL&CC Parents' Meeting twice yearly to discuss your child's progress in more detail. These meetings will usually take place in November and May. There will also be further opportunities provided for parents to visit the EL&CC. On such occasions parents will be able to look at their child's 'My Special Book', and they will have an individual opportunity to speak to their child's key worker.

Your child's 'My Special Book' will be sent home periodically for him/her to share with you. Please add comments and return it to your child's Key Worker, as soon as possible.

Fundraising

Houston Primary School's EL&CC first established a Very Important Parents' Fundraising Committee in October 1998. The Committee consists of parents and staff who work together throughout the year to raise funds for the children. In this time, the children and parents have managed to raise more than £40,000. Fundraising events have included sponsored events, the sale of shopping bags and calendars, Christmas Celebrations, family night discos and the sale of children's portraits.

Recent inspections by HMIe and the Care Inspectorate acknowledge the wide variety of well organised and maintained resources on offer to meet children's needs.

In November each year, a new committee will be elected. The committee will meet once or twice per term, during EL&CC hours, to discuss and plan specific events. Please remember that all funds raised will benefit your child. Contact the EL&CC manager if you would like to join the committee. We welcome support from all parents and any new suggestions for fundraising are always welcome.

Section Six: The Wider Community

The Local Community

Houston Primary School's EL&CC has already established close links with other agencies in the community. These include:-

- all pre-five establishments including voluntary, partnership and private sectors
- health services e.g. health visitors, speech therapist, psychological services
- local shops, Erskine Community Library etc

Services within the Community

Doctors' Surgery

Kirk Road
Houston
Tel: 01505 613240

Dentist

Hillview
North Street
Houston
Tel: 01505 612376

Post Office

The Old Smiddy
North Street
Houston
Tel 01505 612685

Links with Primary Schools

Children normally go to Primary School between the ages of 4½ and 5½. Houston Primary School EL&CC, have created excellent links with our associated Primaries. Information on registration and enrolment procedures for schools will be displayed on the Parents' VIP Information wall and on our school website. **Please note that the children must be registered in their catchment area school.** Children will attend transition events and induction days at their new school, usually in May or June. We also try to send the EL&CC staff to the local schools for the first few days of the new session to help welcome and settle your child in their new school. During Term 3 staff from associated Primaries will also visit our EL&CC to meet and work with their future pupils. Our closest links are with St. Fillan's Primary School, Houston Primary School and Bridge of Weir Primary School. Other primary schools will be included if required.

Transfer of Information

The EL&CC staff will complete a '*Transfer of Information*' report in May, for children entering primary school the following August. This provides a summative assessment of each child's significant progress and development needs. The will be completed by your child's key worker and, with parental consent, this information will be passed on to your child's Primary One teacher. Arrangements will be made for the key worker and your child's Primary One teacher to meet in order to discuss your child's needs more fully.

These links help to make the transition from the EL&CC to primary easier for children, parents and teachers. Visits to primary school will also be arranged.

A pre-five/primary liaison group is well established in Houston. The main aim of this liaison group is to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning and development. These meetings provide staff with opportunities to:

- share information and knowledge about individual's learning and development
- share teaching and learning approaches
- exchange ideas and resources
- develop positive relationships
- support transition

Local Primary Schools

Houston Primary School
Crosslee Road
Houston

St. Fillan's Primary School
Main Street
Houston

Renfrewshire PA6 7EJ

Tel: 0300 300 0159

Renfrewshire PA6 7EJ

Tel: 0300 300 0182

Bridge of Weir Primary School

Warlock Road

Bridge of Weir

Renfrewshire PA11 3QB

Tel: 0300 300 0148



Section Seven: Other Information

Suggestions and complaints

We are always anxious to maintain and improve our service. If you have any suggestions to make about our service, please contact the EL&CC manager. If you have any concerns at all, there are several things you can do. The first person to speak to is your child's Key Worker. If you require further explanation please contact a member of the Senior Management Team.

If you are still not satisfied, put your complaint in writing to:

*Director of Children's
Services:*

Steven Quinn
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1UJ

Tel: 0300 300 0330

You also have the right to contact the Care Inspectorate should you wish at the undernoted address:

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Tel: 0845 600 9527

Website: www.scswis.com
Email: enquiries@scswis.com

Formal complaint forms are available from the nursery or any council office.

Useful Addresses

Chief Executive

Sandra Black
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
email: chiefexec@renfrewshire.gov.uk
phone: 0141 618 7354

Director of Children's Services

Steven Quinn
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1LE
email: schools.els@renfrewshire.gov.uk
phone: 0300 300 0330

Education Manager (GIRFEC)

Susan Bell
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1UJ
Tel: 0141 842 5602

Please note that although the information in this handbook is correct at the time of printing, it should not be assumed that there will be no change affecting any of the matters dealt with in this document:-

- Before the commencement or during the course of the current school year
- In relation to subsequent school years

The head of establishment will tell you of any important changes to the information.

One Stop Shop for Help in Finding Childcare

Childcare in Renfrewshire Information Service

CRIS provides free, impartial, accurate and up to date information on a wide range of local childcare and pre-school information services including the following:

- Childminders
- Nurseries
- Pre-School Education
- Out of School Care
- Holiday Play Schemes
- Parent and Toddler Groups
- Playgroups

The service offers advice to callers on how to choose the type of provision most suited to their needs and the needs of their children. However, no specific recommendations will be made.

How to get in touch?

Contact: Childcare Information Service
St. Catherine's Primary School
Brabloch Crescent
Paisley
PA3 4RG

Tel: 0141 840 893

Uniforms

For those who wish to purchase an EL&CC uniform, we have set up an account with School Wear Made Easy. Please visit www.schoolwearmadeeasy.com and click on the

'Badged School Uniform' section. This allows you to order uniform online and have it delivered free of charge to your home. Please note that uniform is not compulsory.

Our School Values



SUCCESS

BOOM!

YEAH!

We can do it!

Achieving by doing your best and not giving up when things are tricky.

SUPER HERO TRAINING ACADEMY

AWESOME!

RESPECT

Looking after people, learning and things.

AWESOME!

POW!

I'M A SUPER HERO in training

ZOOM!

WOW!

YEAH!

THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIGHT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

YEAH!

HONESTY

WOW!

BANG!

Sorry!

Telling the truth and doing the right thing.

CRASH!

ARGH!

FRIENDSHIP

Caring for others and enjoying time together.

BOOM!

AMAZING!

COO!

YEAH!



WWW.HOUSTONPRIMARYSCHOOL.COM
TELEPHONE: 0300 300 0159