



Shetland Islands Council

Whalsay School

Information Handbook

2023-24



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Introduction

Whalsay School serves the Island of Whalsay. It is a non-denominational school of approximately 170 pupils. The School is comprised of 3 separate buildings, Early Years, Primary and Secondary. The School's refurbishment was completed in 1999.

Primary Pupils move into our Secondary Department where they stay until S4. At this time they transfer to Anderson High School for S5/6, go to College or leave School.

- ◆ Being the only school on the Isle, Whalsay School has always been totally comprehensive in its intake. Our aim is to meet the needs of every individual by offering a wide variety of courses, leading towards continuing education of all types at School, College or University.
- ◆ We aim to give the widest possible educational opportunity to every pupil and to encourage each pupil to develop their full potential by developing their skills and talents.
- ◆ As well as endeavouring to develop the academic potential of our pupils, the school takes its duty to develop the pupils' social and moral values seriously. Hopefully, when each pupil is finished his or her school career, he or she will be equipped to play a full and meaningful role in society.



This handbook provides information for parents for the school year 2023-24. Although the information is believed to be correct (August 2023), it is possible that changes have occurred, or will occur during the course of the year, that will affect the contents for this year or for the following school years.

For further information or clarification, please contact the school and/or look at our school website <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sh/whalsayschoolweb/for-parents/policies-documents/>

Throughout this handbook, links to the website are provided for further information. Free access to these pages can be gained at the Shetland Library Learning Centre and at Islesburgh Community Centre. Hard copies and different formats of the handbook (for example in Braille or large print) will be made available by request to the school. Handbooks for all Shetland Islands Council's schools can be found on the council's website. The direct link is:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/SchoolHandbooks.asp>

Contact Details

Name: Whalsay School

Address: Symbister, Whalsay, Shetland, ZE2 9AQ

Telephone: 01595 743800

Website: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sh/whalsayschoolweb/>

Email: whalsay@shetland.gov.uk

Stages of education: Nursery/Primary/Secondary 1 - 4

Roll: 150 (plus 20-25 at Nursery)

Denominational status: non-denominational

Headteacher: Helen Kerr (Acting)

Parent Council email: whalsayparentcouncil@gmail.com

Absence/Sickness

If your child is ill or if you think it is necessary for your child to be absent from school for any other reason, please contact the school with the details between 8:45am – 9:30am. We also request that parents continue to update us, if necessary, on a daily basis of their child's absence. All pupils arriving in the Secondary Department after 9am must inform the School Clerical staff. If we have not heard from parents on a day that your child is not in school, the Clerical Staff will make contact with home and enquire about the reason for the absence.

Section 30 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 lays a duty on all Parents of children of School Age to ensure that they attend school regularly. Attendance must be recorded twice a day, morning and afternoon. Regulation 7 of the Education (School and Placing Information)(Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1993 requires each child's absence from school to be recorded in the school register as AUTHORISED i.e. approved by the Education Authority, or UNAUTHORISED i.e. unexplained by the parent (truancy) or temporarily excluded from school.

Every effort should be made to avoid taking holidays during term time as this disrupts the child's formal education and reduces learning time. These absences must now be recorded as unauthorised. Parents should complete a Leave of Absence form, copies of which are on the school website in the Parents Section or available from either school office. Class work will not be given to pupils who go on holiday during term time.

If the pupil is to be absent due to a doctor appointment, dentist appointment etc. then parents' should phone to the school the day before the appointment to inform us of the details. Pupils do not need to bring in notes explaining their absence if a phone call has already been received.

For further information on school attendance, a guide for parents can be found on the Scottish Government's website. The direct link is:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/12/04134640/0>

School Attendance

Pupils' attendance is monitored regularly and a promoted member of staff will contact parents, if a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern (normally below 80%). If attendance continues to be concerning, a report may be sent to the Children's Reporter or to the Director of Children's Services who has powers to carry out the statutory responsibilities of the Authority with regard to defaulting parents.

The following table shows the impact attendance has on success at national qualifications level:

- Attendance	Chance of achieving national qualifications
- 93.5%	- Very good
- 92.5%	- Good
- 91.5%	- Fairly good
- 90%	- Less than 50%
- 88%	- Less than 35%
- 87%	- Less than 20%

Complaints

The School follows the procedures the Shetland Islands Council's policy on complaints.

If you have a complaint to make in relation to your child's progress please contact Lynsey Irvine (Depute Head Teacher), Pauline Irvine (Depute Head Teacher), Nursery and Primary, or Brenda Hughson (Principal Teacher of Pupil Support), Secondary. The matter will be treated confidentially and the School Management Team will talk through how best to resolve the situation and let you know how the matter has progressed.

In addition, if it is a broader issue, about the life of the school, you should address your complaint to the Head Teacher.

In line with the procedure, if you feel that the matter has not been resolved at school level, you can ask for it to be investigated further through the complaints procedure.

Visiting the school

You may wish to visit the school if your child has been offered a place or if you are seeking a place for your child. Please contact the school to make arrangements by phone on 01595 743800 or by e-mailing whalsay@shetland.gov.uk.

Communication

Routine Communication:

We have an open-door policy and parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time to discuss any aspect of their child's education. In nursery and primary, in the first instance for relatively minor matters, these queries should be directed to the

teacher. For more serious issues or concerns, parents should ask to speak to our Depute Head Teacher. In Secondary, individual contact with teachers is discouraged. Instead, all queries should be directed to the Principal Teacher of Pupil Support in the first instance. For significant issues, crises or incidents, parents should speak to the Head Teacher.

The Early Years Department have a dedicated e-mail address as an additional option for parents to communicate with staff. If your children are in primary or secondary, we ask you to contact us by phone, letter or email. Parents are discouraged from contacting staff members using social media platforms.

In terms of communicating school news with home, we are now using e-mail to help save on paper, with around two information letters written by the Head Teacher each term e-mailed out to parents. If any parent still wishes to get a paper copy instead, they should inform the school of this.

Communication around your child's progress:

We are continually developing approaches to strengthen communication with parents and the home/school partnership and this includes:

- The use of Diaries in primary and secondary. In primary, teaching members of staff have been asked to record achievements in the home-school diary. In Secondary, we encourage you to sign your child's homework diary each week and merits, given to pupils for particular good pieces of work, general hard work, good citizenship, responsible and helpful attitude around the school, are recorded in the diaries
- Developing our Achievements and School Open Days
- Regular Parent Council Meetings
- Regular updates of school news on the website, including some blogs for individual classes and subjects.

Communication in relation to Closures:

A new system is being introduced this academic year for school closures. In the event of the school being closed as a result of the weather, or any unexpected events, the Head Teacher will inform the Parent Council chair and vice-chair. They will then relate this information to the Parent Whatsapp groups as well as inform any parent who are not on a group.

Occasionally, due to weather forecast or condition of the roads, the school will make the decision to close early. A member of staff will then contact every Parent/Carer to inform them of arrangements regarding school transport or collection of pupils from their classrooms.

If a decision is taken by SIC Children's Services to close the school at the start of the day, this information will be on local radio stations, SIBC and Radio Scotland from 0700.

Staff and Parents can also follow alerts on twitter. A direct link can be accessed through the SIC's Home Page www.shetland.gov.uk click on 'follow@shetlandsCll' button at top right corner of the page. There is also a voicebank which you can phone for updates (01595 745743). Whalsay School has a Facebook page which will be updated as soon as possible to inform parents of closure information. Parents have to request to become a member of the group.

If the school is open during adverse weather, parents are responsible for deciding whether to send their children to school.

Parental Involvement

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, requires local authorities and schools to implement strategies and guidance around the following areas:

- Learning at Home
- Home School Partnership
- Parental Representation – Parent Council – HT's have a right and duty to attend the Parent Council
- Parents involved in the Development Plan process – section on parental involvement

Head Teacher responsibilities under the 2006 Act:

- To attend Parent Council meetings and act in an advisory capacity
- To ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities to support parents' in their involvement with their children's education
- To ensure that staff have the necessary skills to do this
- To ensure their schools have the necessary policies and practices to promote and value learning at home
- To promote safe and effective involvement of parents in school activities
- To promote links to community learning and family support
- To ensure flexible and effective inclusive communication between parents' and school
- To seek to take account of parental views in school improvements
- To act in accordance with Council guidelines to address any welfare concerns for individual pupils – Child Protection, ASN, GIRFEC, etc
- To collect and maintain evidence of activities in this area for external audit

Parents responsibilities under the 2006 Act:

- To ensure that children attend school regularly
- To support schools in developing and upholding the values and expectations of their child's school
- To encourage and support learning at home in whatever way possible
- To engage in the life of the school in as many ways as possible
- To support the work of the Parent Council
- To inform schools of any factors likely to impact on their child's progress or safety
- To bring any issues or concerns to the attention of school staff (Depute Head Teacher or Pupil Support in the first instance for significant factors) so that together we can improve the service we provide
- To respond to school consultations so that their views can be known.

Parental Helpers:

We do encourage and welcome parents into the school to help with trips, sporting events, Friday Fun activities etc. Parents who have regular contact with children are required to complete a PVG form. If parents have an interest in supporting classes with an aspect of the curriculum, they should contact the DHT (Primary) or Head Teacher in the first instance.

Helping your child with their learning:

Parents can support their children at home by discussing their learning with them and supporting with any homework activities. Our school blog has a number of additional online resources and links for parents to make further reference to for support and to refer to if your child is absent from school for an extended period of time.

For further information and resources regarding getting involved with your child's learning, please contact the school and/or take a look at Parentzone on Education Scotland's website. The direct link is: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

Parent Council:

The Parent Council meet regularly, around once per term under the Chair Zoe Williamson. Each class is represented by a Parent Council member who bring forward views from the Parent Forum. The Parent Council is also consulted over the School Improvement Plan with their ideas contributing to the final document.

If you wish to learn more about the role of the Parent Council, you can contact the school's Parent Council directly and/or access information on Education Scotland's website. The direct link is:

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/getting-involved>

Our Values and Curriculum Rationale

During session 2018-19 the school community worked together to develop our Values and Curriculum Rationale. This is now our reference point for further school improvement.

Whalsay School




Achieving Together

Whalsay School serves an island community. The Whalsay community has a history of being creative and working hard to make the most of the natural resources and opportunities the island presents. We value the partnerships we have with families and the community and are committed to working together to achieve the best outcomes for our pupils.

Whalsay School



Our Values

We want our pupils to experience the security that comes from **Belonging** to a strong community. We believe it is important that pupils are **Engaged** in an education that promotes **Creativity** through active, outdoor and play-based learning and through experiences like school trips and visitors. Our high proportion of pupil participation in sports, leisure and cultural activities promotes their physical and mental **Health**. We encourage pupils to take **Responsibility** for themselves, their school and their community.


Whalsay School



What makes us unique?

Our school serves a small island with a strong sense of community. We have no associated Primary schools so pupils go right through from Early Years to 54 until they leave school or transfer to AHS for 55/6. The Sea Food Sector is a major employer as is the local Care Centre and the school itself. We have strong support for vocational education and most of our pupils access Skills for Work courses provided by partner Colleges or Rural Skills, which **begin** here.

Whalsay School



Our Key Drivers

All of our stakeholders identify high quality learning and progress for all as the most important driver for our curriculum. We endeavour to make our School community as inclusive as possible and to use our resources to promote excellence and equity and build resilience in our pupils. Our Wider Achievement programme emphasises the identification and development of transferable skills.

- Building resilience*
- Transferable skills for the future*
- Challenge pupils; raise attainment*
- High quality learning & progress for all*

Relationships and Behaviour

During the 2019-20 session, our school community – pupils, teachers and parents - worked together to develop a Code of Conduct for the school. As a result of that process the following expectations for the relationships and behaviour of all involved in the Whalsay School Community were adopted:

Be Safe
Be Respectful
Be your Best

We are all responsible for ensuring that this Code of Conduct is upheld and we encourage everyone to take pride in the school community and to challenge any inappropriate behaviour.

Our values, particularly encouraging learners to take responsibility, support positive relationships, learning and behaviour. Members of staff are encouraged to discuss welfare concerns in the first instance with the DHT or PT Pupil Support. More serious incidents should be reported directly to the Head Teacher.

A support ethos within the school with all staff committed to the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of our pupils with co-ordination and additional support from Pupil Support, ASN, the DHT and HT also underpins positive behaviour.

The Support structure for pupils is embedded in the school and pupils are continually reminded that they can approach staff if they are experiencing difficulties and concerns and therefore require support.

Time is afforded to pupils to enable them to express their feelings both formally at Pupil Support meetings, and on an ad-hoc, emergency type situation.

Whole School Self-Evaluation has highlighted that positive relationships between pupils and staff is a real strength in the school with a high level of trust and confidence existing between staff and pupils. Pupils are: able to ask for help; respectful and polite; involved in the running of the school with their views of the school canvassed through Pupil Councils and workshops at Assemblies. Children are treated as individuals and all staff are aware of individual personalities. There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere creating a good ethos within in the school.

All members of staff are aware of individual needs. We have excellent learning support workers and classroom assistants who are committed to each individual child and who act as an extra layer of support for them and help ensure positive behaviour.

More detailed information on classroom behaviour, school behaviour, serious misconduct, etc, is contained in the School Guidelines which are explained to pupils each year at the beginning of the session.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND DEVICES

In line with Local Authority guidelines, mobile devices should be switched off in classrooms. The use of camera/video facilities, in any part of school grounds, is not permitted, to protect privacy of all the school community.

Pupils often access social networking sites and it is important that they understand the levels of privacy as well as how to behave online. Pupils are taught in school to respect others on-line and not to post anything that will cause offense.

Please support us by ensuring school lessons on netiquette are applied at home. To stay up to date with further information and advice please visit <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents>.

Primary pupils are not allowed to bring mobile devices to school.

All pupils have access to the telephone in the Office if there is a need to contact Parents. Parents can leave messages with Office Staff to pass on to pupils if necessary.

Celebrating Pupil Achievement

Pupil achievement is recognised throughout the year by giving pupils certificates and merits for recognition of their hard work. Notice boards and the CfE Four Capacity Boards in both departments are updated regularly, as is the Whalsay School website, with photos and news of achievements. We also highlight our pupils' achievements in our class and subject blogs. At the end of the school year staff and pupils come together to celebrate sporting and academic trophies at our Achievements and School Open Day.

Pupils have Learning Stories in Nursery, Scrapbooks and PLP's in Primary, Achievement Folders and electronic blogs in Secondary where they can reflect on their learning and record their successes and achievements from both inside and outside of school.

The School's role within the Community

We are keen to maintain and strengthen links with the local community.

For example:

- With the support of the Parent Council, we organise regular community musical and fundraising events.

- We invite the community into the School for our annual School Open and Achievements Day.
- External Speakers, including ministers and former teachers, attend some of our Assemblies.
- S3 pupils go out on Work Experience Placements within the Community
- We have really good links with the local care centre, Fernlea, the Leisure Centre and the Learning Centre, who are located in the Secondary School Library
- Projects attempt to link with the community, for example our Open Afternoon to celebrate the King's Coronation
- Nursery pupils have recently visited a pelagic boat, the Fire Station and have had visitors to the setting i.e. ambulance and nurse
- Wider Achievement – in Secondary we set time aside on Friday afternoons to enable pupils to take part in activities that focus on helping them to develop their skills, for example, The John Muir project, planning the Pupils' Christmas Party, organising the Community Cafe.
- Youth Philanthropy Initiative – S3 pupils choose research and make a presentation to an audience, about the work of a local charity and explain how they could benefit from winning a sum of money from YPI.

External speakers

We welcome a number of organisations, bodies and persons into the school to support and enrich topics like alcohol, relationships, health, the environment, volunteering, rights and responsibilities, study skills including:

- Youth Voice
- Environmental Health
- Shetland Amenity Trust
- Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency
- Police Scotland
- Community Police and Drugs Dog
- Women's Aid
- Volunteer Action Shetland
- SIC Psychological Services
- OPEN Per Support Workshops
- CLAN
- Alzheimer Scotland

Health and Wellbeing

The health of the school is actively promoted in different ways:

- Healthy Eating including Healthy Tuck Shop in Secondary and merits for tooth friendly snacks in Primary
- Daily Mile in Primary
- Teeth brushing in the Early Years and early Primary
- Inter-house, sports events
- Primary Play Leaders
- Eco-group activities
- Primary JRSOs
- Healthy snacks in the Nursery
- Clear Anti-Bullying policies and procedures
- Lunchtime Clubs
- Quiet Areas at intervals
- Social Education – focus on healthy lifestyle
- ASN/PS staff work closely to support pupils
- Weekly review meetings with Support Staff and SMT to discuss concerns that may be impinging on pupils' mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- External Agencies are consulted and work with pupils where appropriate as outlined on IEP's and GIRFEC Care Plans.
- Partnership working takes place with comprehensive transition programmes from playgroup to nursery, nursery to primary one, primary seven to S1 and S4 to AHS and Hostel or an alternative destination

Curriculum – overview

The Curriculum for Excellence is designed to provide a coherent, flexible and enriched curriculum throughout a child’s life from 3 to 18 years old.

The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work.

A Curriculum for Excellence defines five levels of learning. The first four levels provide a broad general education, with progression to qualifications described under a fifth level, the senior phase.

Level	Stage
Early	The pre-school years and P1, or later for some.
First	To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some.
Second	To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some.
Third and Fourth	S1 to S3, but earlier for some. The fourth level broadly equates to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 4. The fourth level experiences and outcomes are intended to provide possibilities for choice and young people’s programmes will not include all of the fourth level outcomes.
Senior phase	S4 to S6, and college or other means of study.

Teachers and practitioners will share information to plan a child’s “learning journey” from 3-18, helping their progression from nursery to primary, primary to secondary and beyond. This will ensure children continue to work at a pace they can cope with and be provided with challenge they can thrive on.

Detailed information about a Curriculum for Excellence can be found on Education Scotland’s website. This includes:

- how the curriculum is organised
- the entitlements of every child
- how progress is assessed.

The direct link is: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-in-scotland>

Curriculum

Under Curriculum for Excellence, everyone involved in education has a responsibility to develop young people's literacy, numeracy and health and well-being skills across all areas of their learning.

Entitlements

All young people are entitled to:

- A coherent curriculum – smooth progression through the experiences and outcomes
- A broad general education – the period from age 3 to the end of S3, covering all of the experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas up to and including the third level, and further experiences and outcomes at the fourth level, chosen to provide greater specialisation and depth
- Support – assistance to help learners access the curriculum, for example because of short or long term needs or circumstances, and help to build resilience
- Skills for learning, life and work – to develop prevocational, enterprising and employability skills, personal skills, high levels of cognitive skills and the opportunity to put learning into a practical context
- A senior phase – to prepare for qualifications and develop skills for future learning, life and work
- Positive destinations – to support young people to move successfully on to work of further study

Early Years and Primary:

Early Years and primary pupils address the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes in each of the following curricular areas in their class at Early Level (Nursery up to P2 but earlier for some), First Level (up to P4 but earlier for some) and Second Level (up to P7 but earlier for some).

Curricular areas:

Expressive Arts	Religious and Moral Education
Health and Wellbeing	Sciences
Languages, including French from P2	Social Studies
Mathematics	Technologies
Religious and Moral Education	

Various interdisciplinary projects take place. Teachers submit termly plans to the DHT that include reference to the outcomes and experiences being covered, success / assessment criteria, key questions for learning, differentiation and evaluation.

Secondary:

S1 to S3: Broad General Education

As part of the Broad General Education, S1 and S2 pupils study subjects from each of the Curricular Areas, addressing the level 3 experiences and outcomes:

Curricular Area	Subject (s)
Languages	English, French
Mathematics	Maths
Science	Science
Expressive Arts	Art and Design and Music
Health and Wellbeing	Home Economics, PE
Social Studies	Social Subjects
Technologies	Technical IT
Religious and Moral Education	RE

In, S3, the final year of the Broad General Education stage, pupils have the opportunity for some personalisation and choice, choosing up to eight subjects, with at least one subject from each of the curricular areas, that address level 4 experiences and outcomes and also provide appropriate prior learning for the formal commencement of the Senior Phase of pupils' learning in S4.

Curricular Area	Subject (s)
Languages	English, French
Mathematics	Maths
Science	Biology, Chemistry and Physics
Expressive Arts	Art and Design and Music
Health and Wellbeing	Health and Food Technology, PE, PSE
Social Studies	History and Geography
Technologies	Design and Manufacture (formerly Craft and Design), Graphical Communication, Administration and IT
Religious and Moral Education	RE – a core subject, not one of the pupils' 8 choices.

An options booklet for the final year of the BGE is provided and information on entry into the Senior Phase in S4.

Some of the work that we do with pupils as part of this process:

- S2 begin the personalisation and choice process in term 3. A new booklet for the final year of the BGE is provided and information on entry into the Senior Phase in S4.

- Individual interviews
- Interviews with parents
- Social Education programme are comprehensive in this area, with Health and Wellbeing resources and textbook being referred to.

S4: The Senior Phase

Our S4 pupils study “National” qualifications at levels 1 – 5.

The table below sets out further information about these qualifications:

National 3	National 4	National 5
Equivalent to Foundation Standard Grade Level	Equivalent to General Standard Grade Level or Intermediate 1	Equivalent to Credit Standard Grade Level or Intermediate 2
No exam at the end of S4	No exam at the end of S4	Exam and/or Externally Marked Assessment at the end of S4 in almost all National 5 subjects.
Qualification awarded on a pass/ fail basis	Qualification awarded on a pass / fail basis. Pupils who fail National 4 will automatically receive Access 3 certification	Qualifications will be graded from A-D. It will be possible for pupils who teachers feel may fail National 5 to be entered at National 4.
Around 3 internal assessments at the end of units during the course	Around 3 internal assessments at the end of units during the course	
	There will be an Added Value Unit in each subject, which will be like a project or an investigation	
	Literacy and Numeracy units are included in the National 4 English and Maths syllabus.	There will be additional stand alone Literacy and Numeracy units that will be organised by the English and Maths departments.
	Pupils will have the opportunity to progress onto National 5's in S5 at AHS.	Pupils will have the opportunity to progress onto Highers at Anderson High School in S5

Beyond S4:

Options for our pupils after S4:

- staying on at school
- going to college or university
- entering work-based learning or community-based learning
- volunteering.

Support for pupils and parents at this time:

- S4's have access to S4/5 AHS Options Booklet
- Interviews with PS teacher in this school and AHS, along with Hostel Interview
- Parents Evenings
- SDS input
- My World of Work website
- Mock job interviews in English and Social Education
- ASDAN Key Steps, includes choices and change
- Visits from Shetland College and Train Shetland staff
- Opportunity to apply for Academy place in Care or Engineering through Shetland Learning Partnership initiative

Opportunities for pupils to achieve and develop skills for learning, life and work in recent times include:

- The Inter house system with a series of sports events. House captains receive awards at the end of the year
- Our pupils take part in a range of county sports competitions
- Christmas concerts and internal / external musical events, including the School's Music Evening and Shetland Music Festival



- We continue to enjoy really productive links with Joy Duncan teaching African Drumming in the primary. Both Primary and Secondary pupils have enjoyed individual and group successes at school Music Festivals
- Fundraising opportunities, including the Christmas Card Delivery Scheme and themed events such as Children in Need, Red Nose Day and Christmas Jumper Day
- Work Experience for pupils where possible
- All our Secondary pupils take part in wider achievement activities on a Friday afternoon to develop key skills such as communication, numeracy, working with others, ICT and problem solving.
- Pupil Councils in both primary and secondary departments and pupil voice is encouraged through this forum and in other contexts, including assemblies and evaluations of lessons and plans.
- A number of our S3/4 pupils take part in the Rural Skills programme, which includes trips to a local croft and work in our Polytunnel. Other pupils attend NAFC Marine Centre or Shetland College, for Skills for Work courses in Maritime, Engineering, Aquaculture, Early Years & Child care, Art, Hairdressing and Sports Leadership.
- A number of outside speakers and agencies come into the school to support with the delivery of Social Education and the curriculum more generally, including Youth Voice, Skills Development Scotland, Train Shetland, SYIS, Voluntary Action Shetland, Police Scotland, Shetland Amenity Trust and Dogs Against Drugs.
- We organise a number of cross curricular, interdisciplinary learning opportunities for our pupils.
- Secondary Activities
- Extra-Curricular activities include - school trips within Shetland.
Duke of Edinburgh, run by Youth Services in school.
Sports Ambassadors, Gardening & Growing group, Reading group and Engineering club.



- Junior Road Safety Officers activities across the school
- The Eco Group consists of pupils across the Primary classes, along with parent volunteers. The group have activities planned for inside and outside the school to make it more eco-friendly.



- The **Knitting Club's** contribution to Shetland Wool Week sums up how successful this group has become.
- The **Early Years children** have regular outside visits
- The **Primary Play Leaders** scheme encourages older primary pupils to organise activities for younger peers at lunchtimes.



Our School website and Primary class blogs highlight all our achievements and stories during the year.



Religious Observance

The School Chaplain is Rev. Irene Charlton, the Parish Minister for Whalsay.

In the Primary and Secondary Departments, assemblies are held regularly.

Religious & Moral Education (R.M.E.)

The main religions studied during Primary & S1 & 2 Broad General Education are Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Buddhism. The focus in RME in S3 Broad General Education & in S4 is on moral and philosophical issues.

No religious system is evaluated or judged as all systems are seen as having value in their own right.

Parents, who do not wish their children to attend R.M.E. classes and/or Assemblies, should contact the Head Teacher to discuss.

Queries about the Curriculum we provide in the Whalsay School

Finally, if you have any queries about your child's progress within the curriculum, please contact their Nursery or Primary teacher in the first instance then for more serious issues the Depute Head Teacher, Head Teacher for Nursery.

In Secondary, all queries should be directed to either Mrs Brenda Hughson (PT Pupil Support) or the Head Teacher.

Assessment, Reporting and Profiling

How are we assessing, reporting and profiling on the work and achievements of our pupils?

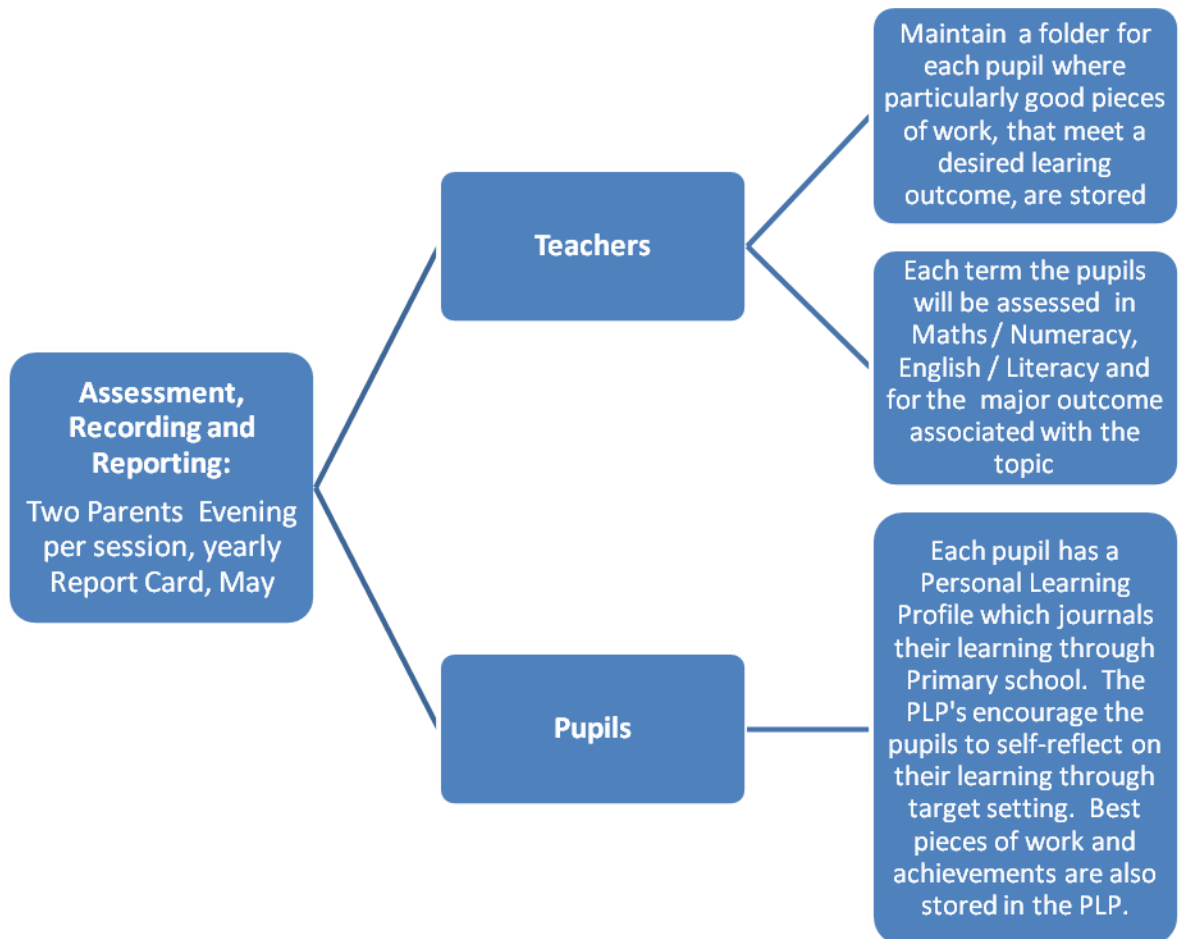
Assessment Early Years, Primary and S1 to S3 in Secondary is now based on the principles of assessment associated with the Curriculum for Excellence. In 2017-18 Standardised Tests (SNSA) were reintroduced by the Scottish Government for P1, P4, P7 and S3. These tests are diagnostic – meaning that they are used by class and subject teachers to plan work for individuals and groups to help them achieve the appropriate outcomes for their age and stage. As well as these tests, pupils are assessed by their class teacher using a range of assessment pieces, whether that be general class work or specific tests, and a judgement is reached taking into account everything that the pupil has done relating to the outcome or subject area. The principle is to engage pupils in assessment and to have an ethos of continuous assessment. These assessments can be formative or summative depending on how the teacher or department wants to use them. Throughout the school year, the DHTs complete various quality assurance activities as well as pupil progress meetings to track pupil progress and support teachers with their judgements. Whole school moderation activities take place yearly.

Pupils in S4 sit prelims and their final exams at National 5 level. The new National courses also include Added Value assessment at National 4, assessing pupils on the work they have done across the course.

Procedures in the Early Years Department:

Learning Stories are used to record pupil progress and achievements in the Early Years Department. Within these, staff capture any significant observations with photo evidence where possible. Focused observations are complete at least twice per year with input from home and a summary report sent home to parents. The learning stories move with the pupil into Primary and are continued throughout Primary 1 to build up a picture of the early level.

Procedures in the Primary Department:

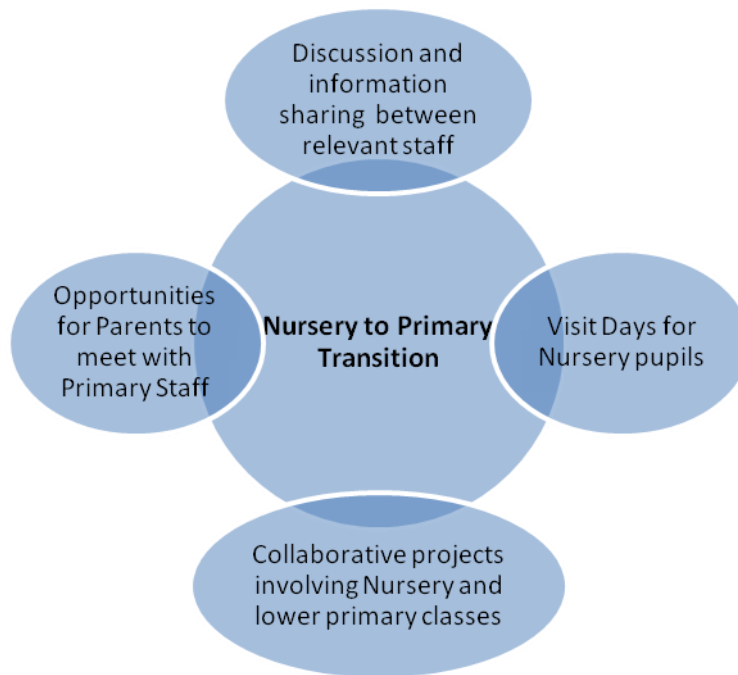


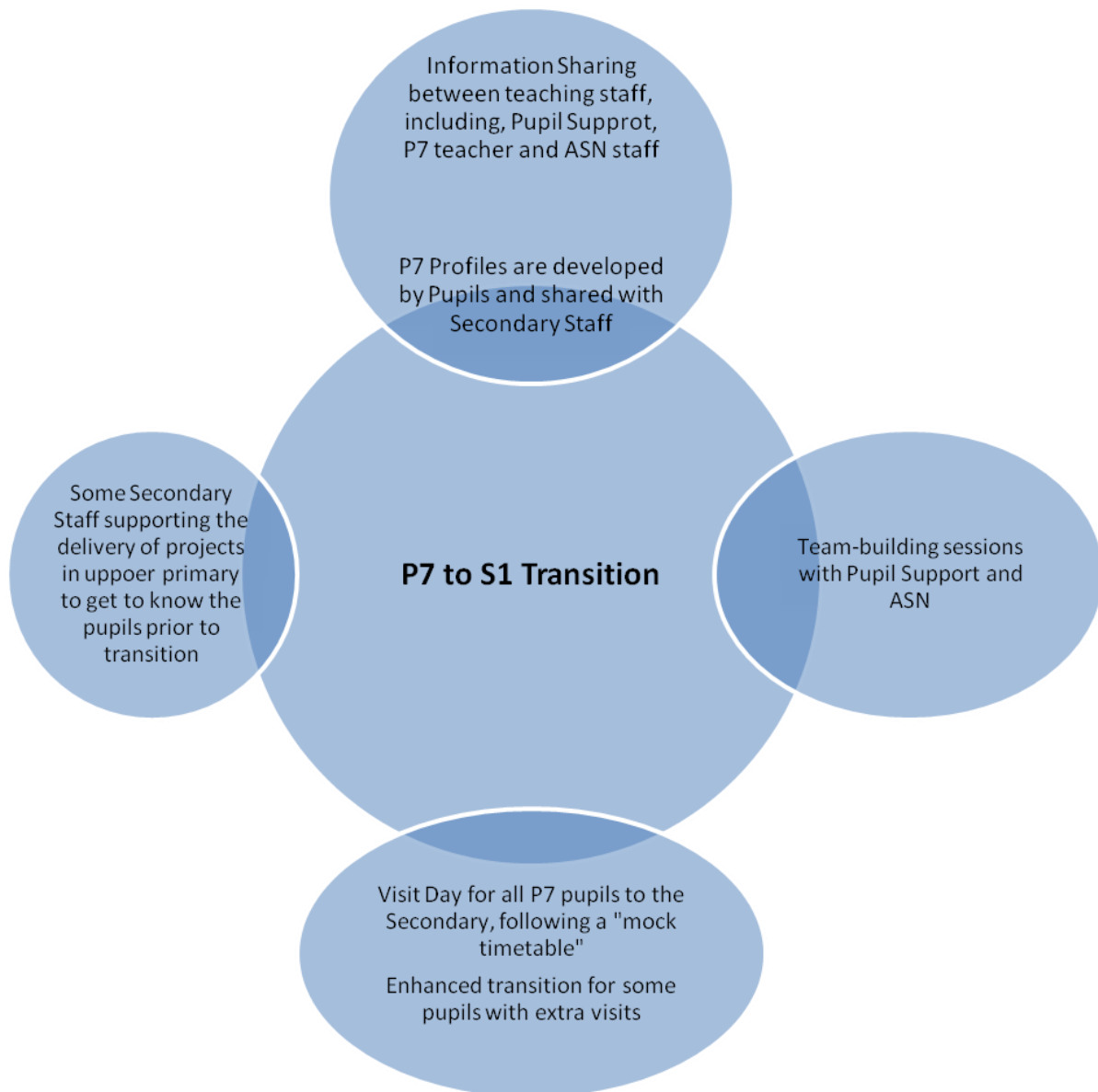
Procedures in the Secondary Department:



Transitions

Transitions occur at key points in a child's education when they move on to a different stage of learning. Transitions can include starting nursery, moving from nursery to Primary, moving through the stages of Primary and Secondary, moving from Primary to Secondary, moving to the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence and then post-school learning, training or work. Transitions can also include any changes in a pupil's learning journey, for example when a pupil changes school or when learning is interrupted.





National organisations, such as Parenting Across Scotland, provide advice to parents on supporting their child's transitions.

The direct link to Parenting Across Scotland is:

<http://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/>

Regarding transition into adult life, more information can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website.

The direct link is:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/support-pupils/additional-support-needs-information/3>

We recognise that children with additional support needs may need transition arrangements that are additional to those made for their peers. Information sharing

and planning will take place in advance of each transition. Further details can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website.

The direct link is:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/support-pupils/additional-support-needs-information/3>

Placing Requests

If you do not wish for your child to attend the catchment area school, you can place a request with Shetland Islands Council that your child attend another school. Details of how to make a placing request can be found in Shetland Islands Council, Children's Services, Admissions Policy.

Paper copies are available on the school and on the Shetland Islands Council website.

Please make your Placing Request in writing to:

Director of Children's Services
Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick ZE1 0QD

To help you, the Scottish Government has published a guide for parents on choosing a school and the placing request system. It is available on the Scottish Government's website.

The direct link is:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/10093528/0>

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. If your child requires additional support for learning and you wish to place a request to have your child schooled elsewhere, you may wish to look at leaflets that Enquire have produced. Please refer to Enquire's website.

The direct link is:

<http://enquire.org.uk/publications/>

In Shetland, we have two special Additional Support Needs departments (attached to Bells Brae School and Anderson High School). A request for a child to access a place in one of these special departments is at the discretion of Children's Services. Further information can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website,

The direct link is:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/support-pupils/additional-support-needs-information/3>
and in Shetland Islands Council's Children's Services Admissions Policy.

Support for Pupils

Most pupils will be given the support they need to fully access the curriculum in the general course of their education. There will be times when some pupils will need additional support. This could be on a long-term basis with the amount of support varying according to the needs of the pupil as progress is made through school or as a temporary support when a need arises.

Information on how pupils' additional support needs are identified and addressed can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website. The website also provides information on mediation and dispute resolution services, links to the NHS and other agencies or organisations that can provide further support, information and advice about support and advocacy.

The direct link is: http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/asn_home.asp

Additional Support Needs

The School's policy for pupils with Additional Support Needs is encompassed in the Pupil Support for Learning Policy.

The Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 was introduced in Scotland to ensure that support is provided to children who need extra help at school to enable them to get the best out of their education. The system of assessment and recording of children and young people with special educational needs is now replaced by a framework for additional support needs.

Children who face barriers to learning and need additional support to make progress are said to have **additional support needs**. Additional Support Needs can be short or long term and may be required because of needs relating to family circumstances or physical, medical, behavioural, emotional, mental, social or learning needs. ASN is any need which could or will have an impact on how your child is getting on at school.

Whalsay School is a mainstream school that provides an inclusive education for all pupils. Any additional support needs are met within the school by the classroom teacher, Additional Support for Learning Teachers or Learning Support Workers. This support may be provided within the classroom setting, in the school nurture room or as individualised/small group support. The ASN Teacher and Class Teacher will decide on the best way to support the pupil's needs.

ASN staff support mainstream teachers and pupils by developing and co-ordinating a range of strategies that respond to any ASN identified. Examples of the type of support that ASN staff can offer include:

- Development of materials and resources tailored to individual pupil's needs

- Small group or individualised sessions with a pupil/s to meet their specific need
- Creation, monitoring and review of IEPs for certain pupils
- Team teaching and working co-operatively with the class teacher
- Identifying technology to support pupil's needs
- Acting as a reader and/or scribe for examinations
- Supporting the able pupil

For some children, however the difficulty can persist and additional help may be required. Some may require further specific assessments. The class teacher and/or ASN Teacher will discuss this with the pupil's parents. Following discussion it is likely the child will be referred to specialist staff from Speech and Language, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy; Educational Psychology; Behaviour Support or Advisory Staff in Additional Support Needs.

Pupils with ASN may have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). For those with more complex needs involving different agencies a GIRFEC Child's Plan and perhaps a Co-ordinated Support Plan will be opened. These clearly identify areas of strength and areas of concern, they include targets and an action plan to support the pupil in making progress and they may include targets for improvements in behaviour/Health and Wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with IEPs, CSPs or a Child's Plan will be fully involved in discussions about starting the plan and will be invited and encouraged to take part in regular reviews of the plan. These reviews are attended by parents, the child, school staff and staff from any other agencies involved. We encourage regular discussion and informal meetings are also held at the request of the family or school to ensure this.

You may request additional support for your child by contacting, in Primary, their classroom teacher or the Depute Head Teacher or our Pupil Support Teacher in Secondary.

You may then be invited into school to discuss this further with the SMT and ASN/Pupil Support Staff.

Other useful information and advice regarding additional support for learning can be found on Enquire's website.

The direct link is: <http://www.enquire.org.uk/>

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

In Shetland, we believe that children can be better supported by adults working closely together and sharing important information with each other. This process is known as GIRFEC: getting it right for every child.

Before GIRFEC can be used, consent from the parent of the child and/or the child (depending on the age of the child) is required. The staff asking permission will explain more about what GIRFEC means. Detailed information about the process can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website.

The direct link is: http://www.shetland.gov.uk/children_and_families/GIRFEC.asp

Child Protection

It is every child's right to be cared for and protected from harm. It is every person's responsibility to make sure that happens. The Shetland Child Protection Committee provides help when there is a need. Their website gives information on how to access that help.

The direct link is: <http://www.childprotectionschetland.com>

Shetland Islands Council's website also provides information on our responsibilities towards children and includes where to find help and support.

The direct link is:

http://www.shetland.gov.uk/children_and_families/child_protection.asp

School Improvement

The School Improvement Plan 2023-24:

Our School Improvement Plan is finalised in the Autumn term each session. It sets out our progress in implementing the previous year's plan, the self-evaluation that has taken place to identify areas of development, the context of the school as it looks to move forward, including local factors like the school reconfiguration project, the SIC financial situation and the target areas for this session.

Agreeing Priorities for Development as a School:

Where do our ideas for School Improvement come from?

- Robust and rigorous whole school self-evaluation over the session, involving the school community
- Staff Meetings
- Staff Working Group Meetings
- PRD Reviews
- Parent Council Meetings
- Pupil Council Meetings

- Parents Information Evening
- Local Priorities, Children's Services Plan
- National Priorities, Education Scotland

The School Improvement Plan for 2023-24 and the Standards and Quality Report will be on the website in the *Parent Section* by the end of October.

Information about the school's performance at national level can be found on the Scottish Government's website and on the Education Scotland's Scottish Schools Online website which also includes HMIE Inspection Reports.

Direct links are:

[School education statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

HMIE Inspection reports and School Consultation reports can be accessed directly on Education Scotland's Reports webpage.

The direct link is:

[Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)

Other useful websites

Information on the following websites may also be of interest to you:

Scottish Qualifications Authority

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41292.html>

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

<https://scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-learners-parents/>

School Policies and Practical Information

School Policies can be found on the Whalsay School Website at; <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sh/whalsayschoolweb/for-parents/policies-documents/>

Policies applicable to all schools across Shetland can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website. The policies include:

- healthy eating
- bullying
- exclusion
- school trips
- equality and diversity
- adverse weather.

The direct link is:

http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/policies_guidelines_and_forms.asp

Shetland Island Council's website provides information on Instrumental Instruction along with other creative learning opportunities.

The direct link is:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/schools-learning/instrumental-instruction>

Pupil School Council

The Schools Management Team feels that Pupils should have their say in the efficient functioning of the school and its social demands. We therefore have Pupil Councils in both the Primary and Secondary Departments of our School. These meet as independent groupings, representing all classes and pass on suggestions, requests, concerns to the Management Team.

School Meals

The School Meals Service is run and managed by Shetland Islands Council Catering Service. All queries regarding this service should be directed to the Catering and Cleaning Manager on 01595 744129.

The School Meals Service provides a healthy and nutritious lunch, which is cooked on the premises at Whalsay School. The menu is available on the school website.

The current charge for school meals are:

- ELC, P1-5 - Free
- P6-7 - £2.30
- Secondary - £2.75

Any charges for school meals must be paid through ParentPay – www.parentpay.com. Parents will be provided with activation details for ParentPay at time of enrolment. All queries regarding ParentPay should be directed to the Children's Services – Finance Team on 01595 743844.

School Milk

School Milk is offered to all pupils. For Pupils in P1-7 there will be a weekly charge of £1.10. This must be paid through your ParentPay account. Please note this is a weekly rate regardless of how many days milk is taken.

Financial Help for Parents

Grants are available for school meals and clothing. Guidance and an application form can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website.

The direct link is:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/support-pupils/ema-bursaries-financial-support>

Information on the provision and finance of transport can be found on Shetland Island Council's website.

The direct link is:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/schools/school-transport>

The Education Maintenance Allowance is available for qualifying 16-19 year olds. Guidance and an application form can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website.

The direct link is:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/support-pupils/ema-bursaries-financial-support>

The School Day

EARLY YEARS DEPT	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
8.15 – 16.15	8.55 – 10.30	<i>Registration 8.50 – 8.55</i>
		Period 1 8.55 – 9.45
	<i>Interval 10.30 – 10.50</i>	Period 2 9.45 – 10.35
		<i>Interval 10.35 – 10.50</i>
	10.50 – 12.40	Period 3 10.50 – 11.40
		Period 4 11.40 – 12.30
	<i>Lunch 12.40 – 1.40</i>	<i>Lunch 12.30 – 1.10</i>
		Period 5 1.10 – 2.00
	1.40 – 3.30	Period 6 2.00 – 2.50
	<i>1.20 – 2.00 (Friday)</i>	Period 7 2.50 – 3.40
		<i>Friday school closes at 2.00</i>

Calendar of Events

2023 – 2024

August

Wed 16th – Term 1 begins

September

Tues 12th – Parent Council meeting

Tues 26th – Primary Parents Evening

Wed 27th – Primary Parents Evening

October

Wed 4th – S1 Parents Evening (HT and Pupil Support only)

October Holidays – Monday 9th October – Tuesday 24th October

Wed 25th – Term 2 begins

November

Tues 7th – S4 Parents Evening

Wed 29th – S3 Parents' Evening

December

Wed 13th – Christmas Concert

Mon 18th – Secondary Christmas Party

Thur 21st – Christmas Lunch

Christmas Holidays – Monday 25th December – Monday 8th January

January

Tues 9th – Term 3 begins

Mon 15th – S4 Prelims begin

Wed 31st – *Local Holiday*

February

Tue 13th – S4 Parents' Evening (tbc)

Fri 23rd – Local Holiday

Mon 26th – Local Holiday

March

Thur 7th – S2 Parents' Evening (tbc)

Easter Holidays – Friday 29th March – Friday 12th April

April

Mon 15th – Term 4 begins

May

Primary reports sent home

Mon 20th – Local Holiday

Tue 28th – S1 Parents' Evening

June

Mon 10th – Sports Day

Tue 11th – Alternative Sports Day

Fri 28th – Last day of term

Summer holidays: Mon 1st July to Tue 13th August 2024

Term dates for the following school year can be found on Shetland Islands Council's website.

The direct link is:

http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/term_dates.asp

Additional Information

Online Protection

For information about online protection for your child, you may like to look at the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre's website.

The direct link is:

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents>

There is also information for young people, about keeping safe, at the Safer Shetland website:

<http://www.safershetland.com/for-children-and-young-people>