



Welcome to
Nethermill Primary School



December 2023

Information at a Glance

School Address

Nethermill Primary School, Parkgate, Nethermill,
Dumfries, DG1 3NL

Email address:

gw08officenethermill@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

Parent Council Chairperson Mrs Paula Currie

Parent Council email nethermillpc@outlook.com

Head Teacher Mr Elliot Ferguson

School Roll 22

Denomination Status Non deonominal

Status of Gaelic Not taught

School Staff:

Teaching Staff

Mrs Natalie Gallacher

Mrs Siobhan James

Mrs Ailsa Robertson

Mr Michael Kay

Auxiliary Staff

Mrs Deborah Borthwick

Mrs Patricia Robson

Mrs Michelle Baxter

If you would like some help understanding this or need it in another format please contact 030 33 33 3000.

The School Day

9.00am	School Day Starts
10.30 - 10.45am	Break Time
12.15 - 1.00pm	Lunch Time
3.00pm	End of the School Day

School term dates can be found at:

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15239/School-term-and-holiday-dates>

Communicating with home

We use a variety of ways to communicate with our families; our school Facebook Page, Twitter, School Newsletters, Group Call text messaging, phone calls and we email parents key communications. This session we have also started using online SeeSaw as a way to improve communication with home, especially around children's learning.

Twice a year we hold Learning Conversations between staff, parents/carers and pupils to discuss progress and achievements. We also use diaries or reading records to communicate between school and home.



Welcome from the Head Teacher

Dear Parent / Carer

The staff and children of Nethermill Primary extend a warm welcome to all parents, friends and visitors. It is our aim to ensure that our school is a happy, nurturing and stimulating place where everyone feels valued, achieves their potential and strives to be the best they can be. Working in partnership with families is at the centre of what we do at Nethermill and we pride ourselves on the positive relationships which exist between home and school and always placing our learners at the centre. We have a particular focus on using our wonderful natural surroundings to enhance learning experiences for our children

This handbook is designed to familiarise you with different aspects of life in our school. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I look forward to working with you all and am confident that we can provide the best educational experiences for your child as we move forward together.

Mr Elliot Ferguson
Partnership Headteacher

For more links and detailed information about how we support parents and work with our schools, please see our **Authority Handbook**. This also includes a page for financial support for Children and Families.

School Aims, Values and Ethos

At Nethermill Primary, our vision is to provide a welcoming learning environment with a fun and challenging curriculum that enables our learners to **'be the best they can be'**. This is our school motto!

We aim for all children:

- To develop and value friendships
- To become independent learners and creative thinkers To be given the best quality of education, with their needs at the centre
- To enjoy being motivated and challenged so they can achieve success

Friendship

Respect

Inclusion

Equity

Nurture

Determined

Successful

At Nethermill Primary School we:

- Promote a lifelong love for learning
- Create a sense of community and belonging
- Are all important and equal
- We are proud of who we are and what we can do

Our ethos promotes a strong sense of belonging and pride in our school and in our community. Nethermill Primary School has recently been partnered with Applegarth Primary. We worked in a strong partnership with Johnstonebridge Primary for many years. We have started to create a strong basis for this new partnership, sharing many similar values as a partnership and seeking to improve and enhance our pupil's learning through creating a positive and strong partnership.

We regularly reflect on and review our school aims to ensure that they remain fresh, relevant and seek the views of our whole school community.



Contact Us

The school welcomes suggestions and enquiries from parents and carers.

If you need to find out something

We can be contacted by e-mail, telephone, group call text messages or face to face. Where it is not possible to resolve enquiries straight away, we will make arrangements to follow up as necessary with the most appropriate member of staff.

Comments, Complaints and Compliments

A comment might be some brief feedback about how we have handled a situation or delivered a service. It is best to pass a comment straight to the school so that we can take any necessary action.

If you are not happy with the response you receive or a decision that has been made, you can 'Ask us to Look Again'. You can do this by contacting ParentalInvolvement@dumgal.gov.uk. At this point an Officer will contact you, discuss the issue and direct your enquiry as appropriate.

Remember you can also access Dumfries & Galloway Have Your Say at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17349/Have-your-say>

If you remain dissatisfied, the Education and Learning Directorate operate within the complaints handling procedures for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Information on this can be found at www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15382/Complaints-procedure

How the School Works

Class Organisation

For organisational purposes, schools are structured into classes. Each year it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to organise the class structure.

For more information, on School class sizes and grouping please visit www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16646/School-class-sizes-and-groupings

We have two multi-composite classes at Nethermill Primary.

Primary 1-3 Primary 4-7

For more information please see the [Education Authority Handbook](#)

Positive Behaviour and Celebrating Success

At Nethermill Primary, we aim to create a relaxed, safe and happy environment where we care about one another's wellbeing, learning and achievements.

We pride ourselves in being a nurturing school. We adopt a positive, nurturing behaviour approach across our school. Learners are engaged in the design of classroom and school rules through their class charters and we have consistently high expectations of their behaviours. We regularly share strategies to support the children in school and engage in purposeful, solution focused discussions when they face difficulties. Emotion Works is also used across our school to enhance emotional literacy for everyone. We are currently a Bronze Rights Respecting School and are working towards our Silver Rights Respecting School Award.

Learners have many opportunities for achievement beyond the school day. We run various after school clubs throughout the year to cater for all of our

pupil's interests and needs. We seek the views of our pupils to try and offer a wide range of activities that they enjoy or would like to experience. Pupils are also encouraged to share successes from home so we can celebrate these at our whole school assemblies or through school communications.

For more information please see page 13 of the [Education Authority Handbook](#)

School uniform

All Dumfries and Galloway schools have a dress code which encourages pupils to dress in a way appropriate to attendance at school. For more information on School Uniform, Dress Code, and School Clothing Grants visit www.dumgal.gov.uk

At Nethermill Primary we encourage all children to wear school uniform as it encourages a sense of unity, pride and belonging across the school. The uniform consists of a blue jumper/cardigan, blue polo-shirt and dark coloured trousers/skirt.

We work hard to -

- Encourage sports clothes for PE and Outdoor Learning days.
- Wear wellies for Forest Schools.
- Discourage wearing football shirts to prevent factions.
- All pupils are provided with waterproofs at school to enable all to access Outdoor Learning

We also run 'Swap Shops' for pre-worn uniforms that have been handed in to school to help families with the Cost of Living.

Financial Support for Children and Families

Grants and Bursaries

Scottish Child Payment

Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting your family. It's a weekly payment of £25 that you can get for every child you look after who's under 16 years of age. You'll get the payment every 4 weeks if your application is successful.

Further information and an application can be made at: mygov.scot website or call us on 0800 182 2222.

Best Start Grant

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are payments that help towards the costs of being pregnant or looking after a child. Best Start Grant is made up of 3 one-off payments:

- Pregnancy and Baby Payment
- Early Learning Payment
- School Age Payment

Best Start Foods is a prepaid card that can be used in shops or online to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit. The payments you can get now will depend on:

- how far along in your pregnancy you are
- how old your child is

Further information and an application can be made at: mygov.scot website

Clothing Grant

The award of clothing grants is to assist with the cost of school clothing for families who are on a qualifying benefit or on low income. The current award is presently £134 per primary school child and £150 per secondary school child.

Further information and an application can be made at: Free school meals and associated payments - Dumfries and Galloway Council (dumgal.gov.uk)

Education and Learning Directorate are committed to supporting families through their Anti-Poverty Strategy – details of which can be found at www.dumgal.gov.uk/poverty Schools should also make parents aware of the School Uniform Bank Project. Donation and Collection information can be found at the above link.

School Meals

The Naturally D&G local provenance for a sustainable future ensures that meals are freshly prepared with seasonal ingredients and are free from undesirable additives.

Detailed information on school meals is available at www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmenus

Special Dietary Requirements

Facilities Services – Catering provide special dietary requirements for food allergy and intolerances; medically prescribed diets; or diets for religious or cultural reasons specific meals for children of different ethnic origin. Simply ask the school for a Special Diet Request Forms to allow us to inform the catering team who will discuss your child's requirements in full. For more information contact DGschoolmeals@dumgal.gov.uk or the Solutions Centre on 01387 271 112 or solutionscentre@dumgal.gov.uk to access the Legislation & Nutrition Officer.

All Children with allergens should register with the catering team as soon as they are aware that their child has an allergen or intolerance to food.

Free School Meals

Free school meals are provided for all pupils in Primary 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Confirmation of when this will be rolled out to Primary 6 and Primary 7 from the Scottish Government has yet to be confirmed.

In Nursery, eligible children can receive up to 1140 hours a year of Early Learning and Childcare. As part of this funded offer, the child will be entitled to one free meal and a snack each day.

Online pre-ordering of school meals is currently being rolled out to all secondary schools, information will be supplied by your school.

Free school meals can lead to a large saving in each year, nursery and primary school pupils can save £361 and secondary school pupils can save £370. You'll also be helping your child's school if you qualify for free school meals. Some Scottish Government funding provided directly to schools is linked to the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

For more information visit www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals

Scottish Child Payment and Bridging Payments

The Scottish Government's Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting your family and, as of 14 November 2022, applications are now open for all children under the age of 16. The weekly value of this award will also increase to £25 as of this point.

School Transport

Free school transport is available for some school children attending primary or secondary school if they live within the school catchment area and if they meet certain criteria. For more information and guidance visit <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15245/Free-school-transport>

Free Travel for 5 - 22 year olds

From 31 January 2022 all children and young people aged 5-22 will be entitled to free bus travel in Scotland. You can apply for free travel online from today at www.getyournec.scot (This cannot be done through your school)

Attendance

It is your responsibility as parents to ensure that your child/children attend school regularly. For the safety of all children it is important for you to telephone the school office prior to/at the beginning of the absence. Absences are recorded in class registers and frequent or irregular absences not supported by a reasonable excuse, will be notified to parents and the matter may be referred to the Opportunities for All Service. If possible please, try to make dental/medical appointments outwith school hours. However, if this is not possible please inform us in writing or by telephone of the appointment and arrange to collect your child from class.

For more information on Attendance, Absences, Lateness and responsibilities of parents please visit www.dumgal.gov.uk

Absence from School

Pupils who need to leave school during the school day ie doctor /dentist appointments, must be collected by a named contact confirmed with the school office. They must also report to the school office on their return to school.

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), now known as 'Scotland's Curriculum,' is bringing learning to life in the way education is delivered for all 3-18 year olds in nursery, primary, secondary, at college and via workplace or community learning. It aims to respond and adapt flexibly to meet the needs of an ever changing and evolving world and Scotland's place within it. At its heart lies a constant commitment and drive towards excellence and equity, to raise standards, improve knowledge, develop skills for all learners and close the gap between the lowest and highest achievers by ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to be successful, no matter what their background or circumstances. Ultimately, it aims to nurture children and young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Broad General Education

Children and young people work their way through Experiences and Outcomes in each of the five Curriculum Levels (Early, First, Second, Third, Fourth) and in each of the eight Curricular Areas. The five Curricular Levels span pre-school to the end of S3. This is the Broad General Education. Pupils progress at their own pace, working through the Experiences and Outcomes of the most appropriate level for them. Pupils will be supported in collecting evidence of their achievements, with a profile of these being produced in P7 and S3.

CfE also includes Languages, Expressive arts, Religious and moral education, Sciences, Social studies and Technologies. The responsibility for the curriculum offer in your school sits with the Headteacher.

We ensure our curriculum provides all learners with breadth, challenge and application of skills across all subject areas. Health and well-being is central to our learning and our nurture approach supports the development of our learners. We ensure we identify and, wherever possible, remove barriers to learning, providing necessary supports and challenges to allow learners to achieve and often exceed their learning potential.

Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing are inter-woven throughout the curriculum and staff provide rich contexts for learning. The children are involved in the design and direction of their learning each term and help plan the Inter-Disciplinary Learning activities collaboratively with their class teachers. Staff are continuously involved in self-evaluating the learning process to ensure all children are achieving their expected targets. Children are involved in this process across the school year and set these targets regularly with their class teacher. They also plan and deliver Skills Groups weekly to enhance experiences and develop new skills.

At Nethermill, we believe that there is a need for each child to be able to learn at their own pace, with enough challenge and support to stretch them. Using Curriculum for Excellence, our curriculum is joined up from 3-18 years and is built on previous learning, making connections between subjects to help make sense of the world and it has more focus on knowledge and skills. Wider achievements are celebrated across the school and we aim to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities to enhance our learner's experiences.

Parental Involvement and Engagement

Parent/Carers and the Parent Council

Every parent who has a child at our school is a member of the Parent Forum. The parent council is a group of parents who have chosen to represent the parent forum. As a member of the Parent Forum, each parent can expect to:

- Receive information about the school and its activities
- Hear about what partnership with parents means in our school
- Be invited to be involved in ways and times that suit you
- Identify issues you want the parent council to work on with the school
- Be asked your opinion by the parent council on issues relating to the school and education it provides
- Work in partnership with staff
- Enjoy taking part in school life in whatever way possible

For more information or support for how you can become involved in or to run your Parent Council please visit www.dumgal.gov.uk/

For more information on what is meant by parental involvement visit www.dumgal.gov.uk/

More information and support for Parents/ Parent Councils is available at <https://connect.scot/>

Parentclub Scotland <https://www.parentclub.scot/> provides support information and guidance to expectant parents, baby, toddler, Child, Pre-teen and Parents and Carers.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland's (NPFs) Curriculum for Excellence in a Nutshell series. Free Downloads for parents/carers: <https://www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/category/in-a-nutshell-series/nationals-in-a-nutshell-series/>

Parentzone Scotland

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone> information about the Curriculum and how you can be involved in your child's learning.

How is my child doing?

There will be several opportunities for you to discuss your child's progress. This may be through informal discussion with the teacher or at Parents' Nights/ Learning Conversations, formal reports or for some it may be through more formal, focussed meetings with other agencies.



Helping Your Child and Family Learning

Homework is most effective when supported by parents/carers and also when a routine is formed to encourage a 'homework time'. Once this is established it can defuse any conflict over when homework is done. We always encourage our learners to try their best in homework tasks and to share their learning at home. Any homework set is part of a planned programme of work and is there to consolidate learning that is happening in school. Homework tasks are usually set at the start of the week with specific dates for return to allow for some flexibility around when to complete.

Learning Conversations are discussions that teachers have with the learner and their families (in November and May) to talk about successes in learning, to set targets to work on and discuss next steps. Reports are then sent home as a record which include both parent/carer and pupil views.

We provide Open Days and information sessions throughout the year where families are encouraged to come into school and find out about what their child is learning and how best to support this at home. The children also lead assemblies to showcase skills and knowledge they have developed.

Support for All

Support for Learners

All children receive support at school and nursery to help them learn. 'Additional support for learning' is how we describe any support that is extra or different to the help that most children receive. Most of this additional support is provided by teachers in mainstream classes, focussed on learning and support to be fully involved in school life. For the majority of children and young people this will be delivered in a mainstream classroom supported by their classroom teacher for a few this will mean some additional support alongside the classroom teacher, and for a very few this will be part-time or full-time provision in a school with a learning centre or an inclusion base.

More information is available at www.dumgal.gov.uk/ and on page 18 of our [Education Authority Handbook](#)

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

You are the expert on your child and what you think matters. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) means that the School will always seek to involve you, to listen to your opinions and take them seriously.

More information is available at www.dumgal.gov.uk/girfec and on page 20 of our [Education Authority Handbook](#)

Child Protection

All children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect. The vision for all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that they should be: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and responsible and included. Schools and front-line education and child care services will play an important role in ensuring all children and young people are safe and well.

Further information can be found at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16640/Support-for-children-and-families>

Parents, carers and pupils have a key role in keeping the school community safe. We would therefore urge parents to share any information which would keep everyone safe, and to support and encourage their child(ren) to do the same.

Enrolment in Schools - School Places

Information on enrolment in school and catchment areas is available at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15241/School-places> Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website by accessing "Find My Nearest".

School Improvements

Each year the school will publish a School Improvement Plan which outlines the key priorities for the school during the year ahead, following engagement with staff, pupils and parents. The plan indicates the expected impact of priorities on pupil learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward. Both the report and the plan are published on the school's web-site and are also available in hard copy, on request. A copy can also be found by searching for your school at www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools

The Improvement Plan indicates the expected impact of priorities on pupil learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward. Both the report and the plan are published on the school's web-site and are also available in hard copy, on request. We share a parent/carer friendly overview with our families every year and look forward to working with our whole school



community throughout the session to work towards achieving our priorities.

Our Improvement Priorities this year are focussed on:

- Increasing Parental Involvement and Engagement through consultations, ensuring parents are supported and represented, open days, strong relationships and using Seesaw. These also reflect our RRS. Digital Literacy. This will be through embedding throughout the curriculum, reflecting on planning, staff training and working towards digital schools award.
- Inclusive Learning. This will be further delivered through training of staff in 'Respect Me', Inclusive Practice Leads in schools and reflection through Education Scotland as well as Boxall Profiling.
- Developing Number Knowledge. Development of this within the school planning and training. Adapting DNK across the cluster and reference too DNK strategies in the classroom.

Health and Safety

Emergency Procedures (including Safer Together Guidance)

If your child feels unwell or have hurt themselves during the school day they must report this to an adult in the school. If we feel that they would be better at home we will telephone you or your emergency contact. Minor accidents, e.g. cuts, bruises, are dealt with by the school staff. Serious accidents are few, but should one occur your child will be immediately taken either to your doctor or to hospital, if necessary, and you or your emergency contact will be notified. We cannot stress enough the importance of supplying the school with the relevant information we require in such a situation, i.e. your own home and work number and a telephone number of an emergency contact. **Please remember that if your child stays in more than one home setting contact details should take account of this.**

Health Care (inc First Aid)

Many children will require their health care needs to be met at sometime within the nursery/school environment, for most children this will be for short periods of time only, but for some children this may require more long-term planning and support. If your child has any health care needs, please contact the school to discuss arrangements. Full details of the support available and your role as a parent and the role of your child are contained within Health Care in Schools 3-18 (NHS and Dumfries and Galloway Council) which is available from the school.

For more information see our [Authority Handbook](#)

Severe Weather and School Closure Arrangements

Headteachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it necessary in the best interests of the pupils. In these circumstances parents will be communicated with in a variety of ways including text messages/ phone calls and emergency contact arrangements. All school closures will be notified on the Council Website.

www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15240/Emergency-school-closures

Data Protection

Information on how the Council uses personal data is available at www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15129/Data-protection and www.dumgal.gov.uk/privacy

ICT in Schools

For more information on ICT in school please see page 14 of the [Education Authority Handbook](#)

Use of the Internet, Social Networking Sites

As part of the process of learning we allow our children supervised access to the Internet and e-mail. The authority runs its own filter system to ensure that young people are not at risk from exposure to inappropriate material. This filtering system is regularly being upgraded. We have a policy for use of the Internet and a contract for responsible use, which we ask parents and young people to sign up to.

For more information visit our [Education Authority Handbook](#) and [Safe Digital Learning and Social Media Leaflet](#)

