

Scottish Borders Council

Cockburnspath Nursery

Early Learning & Childcare

2026/27

Information Handbook



Reviewed November 2025 - EYO

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Welcome to your Early Learning Childcare

We hope that you will very soon feel that you and your child "belong" here, know and understand what Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is about and enjoy the experiences that we offer. This booklet gives you the basic information we think will be useful.

Please feel free to come and ask questions or discuss any problems at any time.

The ELC is part of the primary school and is overseen by the Headteacher, Miss Rachel Foy and Principal Teacher, Mrs Cat Stout.

School Vision

A team that learns together... grows, succeeds and smiles together!

Our Values

Kind, Respectful, Safe, Resilient, Successful

ELC aims and objectives

To provide a creative play-based curriculum, appropriate to the individual needs of the child within a happy, safe and secure environment.

To motivate the individual child to achieve through their natural ability to learn and develop through play and therefore promoting:

- ✓ Curiosity in the world around them.
- ✓ The development of friendships.
- ✓ Working in partnership with others.
- ✓ Independence and decision making skills.
- ✓ An understanding of scientific and mathematical concepts.
- ✓ The development of language and literacy skills.

Who comes to an ELC?

The ELC caters for three and four year old children known as ELC3 and ELC4. Your child's space will begin the term after their third birthday. If there are more applications than spaces, allocation will be given according to SBC Pre School Education Admissions Policy. Needs differ for each child. All children have different personalities, different fears, different strengths and weaknesses. Most children settle quickly and effortlessly, whilst others may need a longer time to adapt.

Staff will work closely and sympathetically with the children and families to ensure this transition is as smooth as possible.

Settling into ELC

At first ELC may seem a very big, strange place to your young child. Please be patient and be prepared to stay for as long as you can and the staff feel is necessary. Children can only learn when they feel happy and relaxed. Once your children are settled, a quick, definite "goodbye" is best, but please reassure them that you will be back soon to see what they have been doing.

It is important to collect your children on time- searching the sea of faces for your mum or dad, grandparent or carer and finding no one there can be most upsetting when you are only 3 or 4 years old.

Please ensure that your children are brought right into Nursery and collected by adults they know. Parents must inform staff beforehand if someone else is picking up their child.

Right from the Start

ELC experience is very often a child's first venture alone into the larger world outside the family and the home. What children experience and learn in ELC can create strong and lasting foundations on which to build in later life, so we believe it is essential that these first experiences be of the highest quality. By working in partnership with parents, we aim to provide a stimulating, challenging environment which is a warm, friendly extension of the home. Children can explore, have fun, play, talk and learn together, developing as happy, confident and independent individuals within our community.

Parents Voice

You are the most important people in your children's lives and always will be. We can only build on the foundations, which are laid at home within the family, so we need your help to ensure that your children progress and achieve success. You can help in so many ways – talking with the children, joining in activities, sharing books with children, helping them on the computer, baking, woodwork, playing games. Please feel free to e-mail or call ELC with any suggestions to enhance your child's learning.

Email- gw18cameronjessica@glow.sch.uk or call 01368830333.

When you must keep your child at home

If a child is ill, they are better off at home, and in case of tummy upsets must stay home for at least 48 hours after the last incidence of sickness or diarrhoea.

Sometimes children become unwell at ELC. If this happens we will send for you right away, or the person you have chosen as your emergency contact. Please keep us informed of any changes in address or telephone number.

If your child is unable to attend ELC please notify School on 01368830333 before 9am.

Play is Children's Work

Play is children's work and playing hard is very tiring. Your children may be really exhausted and perhaps a bit grumpy when they come home - please make allowances.

You may ask your child "What did you do at ELC today?" The reply may well be any one of - "don't know, nothing, or played".

What have they really been doing and how will they learn if they are "just playing"? - Young children learn by doing, touching and seeing for themselves - through play. All aspects of children's growth and development are linked and it is interesting to look at the various play experiences we offer your children in ELC.

Personal and Social Play

It takes time to learn to be one of a large group of children who all have their own needs and wanting the attention and time of an adult. Opportunities to take turns, to share and help each other will foster a caring attitude and an awareness of the needs and feelings of others.

Caring and sharing is further developed through the expressing of feelings, the appreciation and exploration of the immediate and wider environment and an introduction to relevant cultural and religious events.

Physical Development

Healthy young children have lots of energy. They need space and opportunities indoors and out to climb, balance, run, jump, manoeuvre toys and dance to develop physically and become aware of their self and others. Handling a variety of tools and materials such as pens, brushes, crayons, clay tools, baking equipment, woodwork tools, clay, paint, play dough will develop fine control and skill, confidence and imagination. ELC have PE indoors or outdoors once a week, weather permitting. Please send your child in suitable clothing and footwear – preferably trainers.

Language and Literacy Experiences

We aim to encourage the development of children's language skills in all we do. In both small and large groups, the children will be encouraged to talk about their experiences and to listen to others. The most important thing you can do for your children is to talk to them and listen to what they have to say to you. Books, stories and poetry help with language development and also extend children's view of the world, excite their curiosity and fire their imagination. They also bring great pleasure, expand other play activities, encourage concentration and listening skills. The children will be actively encouraged to handle books to nurture skills needed for reading. Opportunities for "mark-making" will aid writing.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Children will be encouraged to talk about where they live, their environment, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They need to explore and recognise features of living things, objects and events in the natural and man-made world and look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. They will be encouraged to use all senses to explore, experience and make sense of the world around them.

Playing with various sized building blocks and construction sets children can build creatively, estimate, predict, develop spatial awareness, measure and begin to solve problems. Jig-saws, threading and playing table-top games help develop coordination skills and the ability to sort and match shapes and colours.

Collecting and sorting activities encourages mathematical ideas such as size, shape, number, length, height and comparison to emerge.

Aesthetic Experiences

Children love to dress up and pretend. Playing at real life situations can help children to understand their own feelings and how it feels to be someone else.

We offer the children a whole range of experiences using a wide variety of materials and tools, paint, glue, junk, dough, etc.

The children are able to explore, experiment and develop creative expression and imagination. Creating something that is uniquely his / her own gives each child satisfaction and a sense of achievement. Through playing with musical instruments, dancing, singing and creating sounds children discover how to make their own music and rhythms and new ways to express themselves.

Showbie / Digital Learning

We give all children the opportunity to develop skills, independence and confidence. To meet the needs of the children and support them to reach their full potential, observations are made to record their progress. This is done during the ELC's planned activities, through discussions with the children and observations of their play.

Information gathered goes into the child's Showbie feed. The Showbie feed will be shared, discussed and added to regularly by staff and children in ELC. Parents will also have the chance to discuss them at Parent Consultations. Showbie also has a daily class feed where all parents can see daily activities, learning opportunities, weekly snack menu, and many more posts. This is a lovely way to create digital memories of your child's time at Cockburnspath Nursery.

Showbie also offers a confidential feed where parents/ carers can message staff out with the whole group.

Lunches & Snack

Lunches/Home Service- ELC have lunch at 12.15pm in the school canteen. We have our own table in the canteen and the children can choose who they would like to sit with. ELC lunches can be ordered through Parentpay. Children can bring a packed lunch from home if preferred which will be stored in the ELC. Margueritta in the School canteen will provide ELC staff with the required/ordered trays of hot food in heat proof dishes where children, with support from staff will serve their own lunch.

Snacks- Nursery provide a morning and afternoon snack. These are free of charge. Snacks are generally fruit based with baking taking place once a week, usually on a Monday or on a child's birthday. Children are all given the opportunity to select their own snack choice over a period of 2 or 3 weeks.

Visits and Visitors

We will take the children out on visits to stimulate and enhance themes of work. Permission slips will be put on Parentpay at those times for you to consent to. A consent form covering local walks will be given out at the start of your child's attendance at ELC and the beginning of each academic year thereafter. This will also be on Parentpay.

Visitors such as the dental nurse, health visitor or police officer may be invited into the ELC to support a particular theme. We may have a Modern Apprentice from SBC working with us to gain valuable experience in childcare. We also have an Early Years Teacher who visits our ELC regularly.

Collection from ELC

Please ensure you inform a member of staff at the beginning of a session, telephone the school office or message on showbie during the session if your child is going home with someone different at the end of the session. If we do not have parental permission we are unable to allow your child to go with a different adult.

ELC Staff

We receive regular visits from a teacher from the Early Years Team based at SBC to assist the ELC staff with any development areas within the setting.

Things you can do to help

*Encourage your child to talk about ELC

*Please ensure children do not bring toys in from home, this causes upset when they are broken or lost.

*Sweets, crisps, biscuits and other food sometimes cause problems in ELC – please save them for your child to eat at home.

*Telephone the ELC if your child is ill and keep them at home until they are free from symptoms, which is 48 hours from last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. If a child is absent and no contact has been made with ELC, we will telephone the parents in accordance with our Absence Policy.

*Provide your child with practical work clothes. Label your child's clothes and footwear.

*Let your child try to dress and undress themselves, even if it takes a little longer.

*Accidents do happen in ELC and children need to be changed. It is more comfortable to change the children into familiar clothes so it would be helpful to leave a change of clothes in your child's peg bag, which will be provided.

*Bringing and collecting your child on time is very important. As activities and materials must be prepared at the beginning of each session please do not bring your child more than a few minutes before starting time.

Things your child will need

- ✓ A pair of soft indoor shoes for PE and indoor play, preferably plimsolls which are inexpensive to buy and easy for children to put on and take off themselves.
- ✓ Work clothes so children can enjoy activities without worrying about "keeping clean". Children do get paint, glue and water on themselves.
- ✓ A full change of clothes to be kept in a bag in cloakroom in case of any accidents in ELC.
- ✓ ELC have waterproof suits, wellies, snow boots, salopettes, winter jackets, hats and gloves for each child so that outdoor experiences are not adversely affected by the weather.
- ✓ School logo jumpers are available but are NOT compulsory.
- ✓ A water bottle, filled with water, your child can access when required. This will be returned daily to be washed and refilled at home.

Useful information

School telephone number 01368830333

Head Teacher	Miss Rachel Foy
Principal Teacher	Mrs Cat Stout
Early Years Officer	Mrs Jessica Cameron
School Admin	Mrs Marie Murray

We offer 1140 hours term time for all pupils.

	Monday to Thursday	Friday
Open	8.45am	8.45am
Lunch	12.15pm – 1pm	11am – 11.45am
Close	3.15pm	12.30pm

School term dates for 2025-26

Autumn term

- Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 August 2025 - Staff resume, In service days
- Wednesday 20 August 2025 - pupils resume

Mid-term holidays

- Monday 13 to Friday 17 October 2025 - October holiday
- Monday 20 October 2025 - in service day
- Tuesday 21 October 2025 - Pupils resume
- Monday 1 December 2025 - St Andrew's Day, schools closed
- Tuesday 2 December 2025 - Pupils resume Berwickshire, Galashiels, Hawick and Selkirk
- Wednesday 3 December 2025 - Pupils resume Earlston, Eyemouth, Jedburgh, Kelso and Tweeddale
- Friday 19 December 2025 - last day of term

Christmas holidays

- Monday 22 December 2025 - Friday 2 January 2026

Winter/Spring term

- Monday 5 January 2026 - Term starts, all resume

Mid-term holiday

- Friday 13 February 2026 - last day of term for pupils
- Monday 16 - Friday 20 February 2026 - Mid-term holiday
- Monday 23 February 2026 - In service day
- Thursday 2 April 2026 - last day of term for pupils and staff

Easter holidays

- Friday 3 to Friday 17 April 2026

Summer term

- Monday 20 April 2026 - Term starts, all resume

Mid-term holidays

- Monday 4 May 2026 - May Day holiday, schools closed
- Tuesday 5 May 2026 - Staff resume, in service day
- Wednesday 6 May 2026 - Pupils resume
- Thursday 2 July 2026 - last day of term for pupils and staff

School term dates for 2026-27

Autumn term

- Monday 17 and Tuesday 18 August 2026 - Staff resume, In service days
- Wednesday 19 August 2026 - pupils resume

Mid-term holidays

- Monday 12 to Friday 16 October 2026 - October holiday
- Monday 19 October 2026 - In service day, staff resume
- Tuesday 20 October 2026 - Pupils resume
- Monday 30 November 2026 - St Andrew's Day Holiday - Schools closed
- Tuesday 22 December 2026 - Last day of term

Christmas holidays

- Wednesday 23 December 2026 - Tuesday 5 January 2027

Winter/Spring term

- Wednesday 6 January 2027 - All resume

Mid-term holiday

- Friday 5 February 2027 - Last day of term
- Monday 8 to Friday 12 February 2027 - Mid-term holiday
- Monday 15 February 2027 - In-service day, staff resume
- Tuesday 16 February 2027 - Pupils resume
- Friday 26 March 2027 - Good Friday Holiday, Schools closed
- Friday 2 April 2027 - Last day of term

Easter holidays

- Monday 5 April to Friday 16 April 2027

Summer term

- Monday 19 April 2027 - All resume

Mid-term holidays

- Monday 3 May 2027 - May Day Holiday
- Tuesday 4 May 2027 - In-service day, staff resume
- Wednesday 5 May 2027 - Pupils resume
- Thursday 1 July 2027 - Last day of term

Eyemouth Casual Holiday

- Tuesday 1st December 2026