



Orphir Community School Information Handbook 2025-2026



**Orphir Community School,
Orphir, Orkney, KW17 2RB**

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General Information

Orphir Community School

Orphir Community School was opened in January 1997 and replaced the former Orphir Primary School, Scorradaile, which closed in December 1996. The school is situated in the Orphir village and was built on to the existing Orphir Community hall. The school was officially opened on 15 March 1997 by the late Lady and Sir Robert Macrae KCVO MBE.



Orphir Community School

The Community school comprises of school areas, community areas and shared areas. A plan of the building is shown on Fig 2. The door has been upgraded since the original plan but in essence remains in the same spot!

School area

This consists of three class bases, nursery, general purpose room and a central resources area, which has a wet and dry area. The central resources area is utilised for teaching small groups and creative activities. The administration area consists of Head Teacher's office, staff room and school office. There is also a music room and a large hall with stage.

The central corridor provides access to staff and children's toilets, disabled toilet, janitor's room and the medical room.

Community area

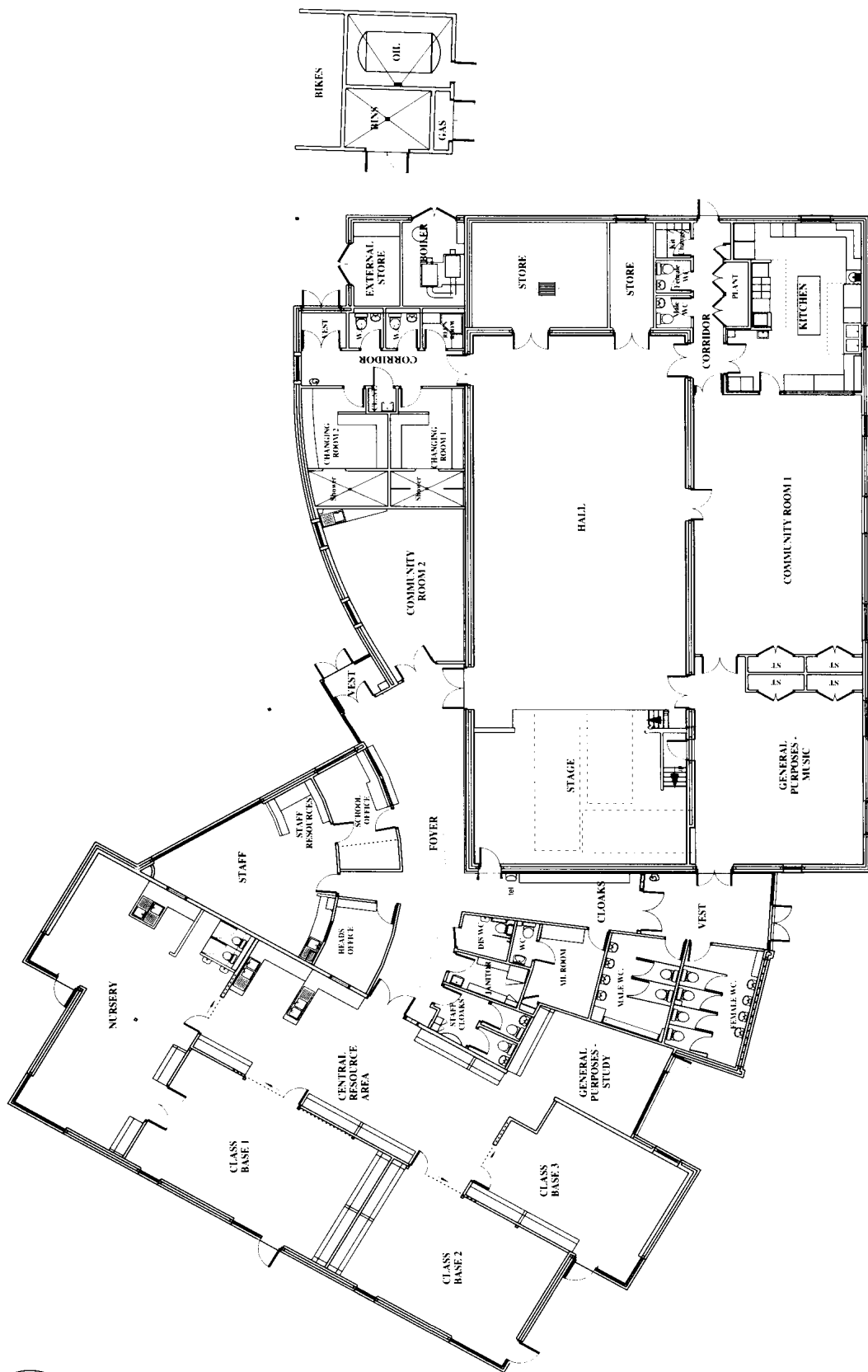
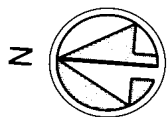
These consist of Community Room 1- kitchen and dining area and Community Room 2 - meeting room. The school may use these areas when not in use with prior arrangement with the Orphir Community Association.

Shared area

The music room, hall and changing rooms are shared areas. The school has an arrangement with the Community Association to use Community Room 2 as a dining room during the school day. Similarly the Association has an arrangement with the school whereby following consultation and advance notice the hall may be used during school time to prepare for functions when necessary.

Orphir Community School Handbook

Updated 14 August 2025



School Vision, Values and Aims

Kindness **Creativity** **Teamwork** **Respect**



Our Vision, Values and Aims are always adaptable and children and staff work together to update and amend them.



Our Context

The context of the school
Orphir Community school is a bright and spacious building that was opened in 1997. It is scenically located in front of the Orphir hills and overlooks Scapa Flow. The school is at the heart of the Orphir village and serves the local Orphir parish. This year we have a Nursery class, P1-3 class and a P4-7 class. Flatts is a satellite class of Orphir and we have strong links together. Our 2 pupils from Flatts join us every Thursday and Friday and the Flatts staff work effectively and collegially across both settings. As we are a Community School the building is used by various community groups on evenings and weekends. Our outside grounds are attractive and welcoming and the children benefit from large grassy and woodland areas as well as a play park and netball court with various markings. The school has a linked Head Teacher with Stenness Community School and is well staffed. The Principal Teacher, Class Teachers, Support for Learning Teacher, ELC staff and Support for Learning Assistants work well with the Janitor, Clerical, Auxiliary, School Meals team and visiting specialists to help make Orphir a welcoming and fun place to be.

Vision
Flourish and grow into the person that you want to be.

Values
Creativity
Kindness
Respect
Teamwork

Aims
At Orphir Community School we want our learners:

- To learn in a supportive and creative environment.
- To discover a love of lifelong learning.
- To achieve their full potential.

Curriculum Rationale
We want the children of Orphir Community School to:
• Be healthy, happy and resilient.
• Be literate and numerate.
• Be open minded, creative and inquisitive.
• Experience success, learn from their mistakes and achieve aspirations.
• Take an active role in the life of the school and the wider community.
• Understand Orphir's unique location, culture and history to promote a sense of belonging.
• Have an understanding and awareness of the wider world.
• Develop a variety of skills to enable them to meet the demands of learning, life and work.
• Make the confidence, awareness and information needed to help them make positive future life choices.
• See learning in all contexts as fun, purposeful and challenging.
Our Curriculum Rationale will refresh as part of our 2024-2025 School Improvement Priorities

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Vision:

Aims:
Our aims have evolved throughout our journey towards becoming a silver rights respecting school in session 2023-2024. We uphold these six rights from the UNCRC as our school aims and as part of our school charter:

- Best interests of the child (3).
- Make rights real (4).
- Respect for children's views (12).
- Share thoughts freely (13).
- Setting up or joining groups (15).
- Everyone must know children's rights (42).

Values:
Creativity
Kindness
Respect
Teamwork

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2023 - 2024
Context

New aims
for 2024-2025
based on the UNCRR

2024 - 2025

WE ARE A UNICEF SILVER RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

Children's rights are learned, understood and lived in this school.



Session 2025-2026

Teaching

Head Teacher	Mr Grant Thomson
Nursery	Mrs Lorna MacIntosh, Lead Early Years Practitioner Miss Kayla Muir, Early Years Practitioner Miss Jenna Tait, Early Years Practitioner (Nursery Manager Grant Thomson)
P1 - 3	Mrs Dawn Williams (Mon-Wed) and Mrs Lynn Rendall (Thurs-Fri)
P4 – 7/Principal Teacher	Mr John Dearnness
Support Teacher	Ms Katherine Diaper

Itinerant teaching staff

PE	Ms Holly Elson (Tues AM)
Music	Ms Kate Fletcher (Wed AM)
Art	Mrs Sheila Moodie (Fri AM)

Instrumental

Strings	Mrs E Sullivan (Wed AM)
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Support for Learning Assistant

Mr Brian Darby

Non Teaching

Secretary/Auxiliary	Ms Shona Garson Mon-Fri
Janitor	Mrs Claire Smith
Playground Supervisor	Mrs Claire Smith
School Meals	Mrs Christine Anderson
School Cleaner	Mrs Christine Anderson

Supply Staff

Occasionally there will be other visiting teachers in school who may be covering for illness or staff training. When possible, you will be notified of temporary changes which will affect your child.

Students

Occasionally students train in school as part of their course work. Such students may be from Orkney College or local Secondary Schools. Parents will be notified regarding placements.

School Roll / Class Composition

Nursery	13
P1-3	16
P4-7	16
Total	45

Mr Thomson is Head Teacher of both Orphir and Stenness Community Schools. As such do not hesitate to contact or visit him at either site. If intending to visit him at Stenness, phone first to ensure he will be there to meet you. **Stenness Contact No – 850212**

School Calendar

The OIC school term dates can be found on the following link:

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/schools/about-our-schools/term-holiday-and-closure-dates/>

School term dates - 2025 / 2026 (all dates are inclusive)

Term 1 2025	Tuesday 19 August – Friday 10 October. (39 days)
October holidays	Monday 13 October – Tuesday 28 October.
Term 2	Wednesday 29 October – Friday 19 December. (38 days)
Christmas holidays	Monday 22 December – Friday 2 January.
Term 3 2026	Monday 5 January – Friday 3 April. (61 days)
Schools closed	Thursday 12 February – Tuesday 17 February.
Spring holidays	Monday 6 April – Friday 17 April. (Easter Monday 6 April).
Term 4	Monday 20 April – Thursday 2 July. (52 days)
Schools closed	Monday 4 May (May Day holiday).
Schools closed	Monday 1 June.
Staff Only, In-service days are: - Monday 18 August. - Monday 27 – Tuesday 28 October. - Tuesday 17 February. - Monday 1 June.	

School term dates - 2026 / 2027 (all dates are inclusive)

Term 1 2026	Tuesday 18 August – Friday 9 October. (39 days)
October holidays	Monday 12 October – Tuesday 27 October.
Term 2	Wednesday 28 October – Friday 18 December. (38 days)
Christmas holidays	Monday 21 December – Monday 4 January.
Term 3 2027	Tuesday 5 January – Friday 26 March. (55 days)
Schools closed	Thursday 11 February – Tuesday 16 February.
Spring holidays	Monday 29 March – Friday 9 April. (Easter Monday 29 March).
Term 4	Monday 12 April – Wednesday 30 June. (58 days)
Schools closed	Monday 3 May (May Day holiday).
Schools closed	Monday 31 May.
Staff Only, In-service days are: - Monday 17 August. - Monday 26 and Tuesday 27 October. - Tuesday 16 February. - Monday 31 May.	

Where and what age is education provided for?

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/>

Catchment area

The school serves the area of Orphir which extends to Greenigoe in the east and the Hall of Clestrain in the west. Any child living out with this area may submit a placing request and may be enrolled if a place is available. In such cases, transportation would be at the expense of the parents. Children may travel as nominated passengers on the school buses if space is available at the discretion of the Education Department.

Early Learning and Childcare

If your child is three or four years old and is currently attending their first year of Early Learning and Childcare they will automatically be carried forward for their second year of Early Learning and Childcare in their current setting.

If your child is not yet five on or before the first day of school in August your child can start school. However, you have the option to defer your child's entry to school. If you choose to defer your child, please confirm this with your Early Learning and Childcare setting and your child will automatically be carried forward for an additional year. You will not therefore be required to complete a registration form for Primary One.

If your child turns five on or before the first day of school in August your child will start school. To register your child for primary one, please see below for Primary One Enrolment.

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/early-learning-and-childcare/>

Primary One Enrolment

In Scotland, there is one intake to Primary School in August of each year.

If your child's birthday is on or between 1 March and the first day of school in August, your child will start school the beginning of the Autumn term when they are 5. If your child's 5th birthday is between the second day of the autumn term and the end of February your child can start school. However, you have the option to defer your child's entry to school. If you choose to defer your child, please confirm this with your Early Learning and Childcare setting and your child will automatically be carried forward for an additional year. You will not need to complete a registration form for Primary One.

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/schools/school-enrolments/>

School Day

School hours

9.00	-	9.30	Playground supervision
9.30	-	11.10	Class time
11.10	-	11.25	Break
11.25	-	12.45	Class time
12.45	-	1.30	Lunch
1.30	-	3.30	Class time

Snack

Primary 1-2 children will receive free fruit for snack from Christine on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and do not need to bring snack these days. P3 children and upwards need to bring their own snack.

The school always has the option of oatcakes or rice cakes for the children to have.

Outdoor

Children will be supervised in the playground. There are playground rules and boundaries which are expected to be followed. Children who use the playing field must bring a change of footwear. Small play equipment is provided for use in the playground. Waterproofs were purchased in 2020/2021 which means more outdoor play can happen.

Indoor

If the weather is really rough, the janitor may decide it is indoor play-time. Children may choose from a range of activities organised in the different areas. Children will be supervised during indoor breaks.

Lunch times

Lunch time lasts for 45 mins, 12.45 -1.30pm. Children are supervised both in the dining room and in the playground.

Home time

School ends at 3.30pm. Members of staff take the children to their respective buses or transport. Children walking home are escorted across the road. Parents who are collecting their children wait in the playground and children will not be allowed to cross the car park unaccompanied. Please ensure that anyone collecting your child(ren) is aware that they need to come to the playground to collect the children.

Appointments

Where possible, please ensure the office staff are aware of appointments in advance or if children are going to be late. Staff will collect your child from the classroom. If playtime or lunchtime, please do not take your child without informing a member of staff

School Meals

All P1-5 children receive, should you wish, a free school meal each day. School meals are transported each day from the Stromness Academy School kitchen. P6-7 children's dinner orders and payments are made online.

<https://www.ipayimpact.co.uk/>

Free meals from P6 onwards

Families on a low income may be entitled to free school meals. Forms are available from the school or the Education Department.

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/grants-emas-and-bursaries/school-meals-and-clothing-allowances/>

Schools Meals Links

Parents can now access the nutritional breakdowns of our meals by accessing

- Nursery <https://orkney-nursery.mysaffronportal.com/>
- Primary [Home - Orkney - Primary \(mysaffronportal.com\)](#)

What to bring

School Bag

Children should have a school bag big enough to hold an A4 sheet of paper without folding.

Daily wear

Children should wear suitable and serviceable clothing. Footwear should be worn according to their ability to fasten, laces, etc

General

All clothing and footwear should be clearly marked with the child's name where possible. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own belongings and have respect for the property of others.

If clothes come home with your child that doesn't belong to your household, please do return to the school. If your child has needed a change of clothes and received clothes from the school, please wash the items and return at your earliest convenience.

Outdoor Breaks Clothing

Children should have warm waterproof outdoor clothing hats, gloves, coats and wellies for break times especially for the months between September and March. Children should have a spare set of dry clothes in school. Please ensure where possible, these are named. We recommend children will have a spare set of clothes in their PE bag which is kept in school. We provide waterproof coats and trousers for the children but if you wish to provide your own that is fine too but we do ask that they remain in school for everybody to have access outside when required.



School Uniform

School colours are royal blue with a white logo. Uniform items are available from Trek and Travel or Logo Orkney, Kirkwall.

We have a supply of second-hand uniform too which can be obtained for a donation to school funds. These are items donated by parents when children have outgrown them. They are available all the time – just ask the school office and we try and put them out at parents evenings and school sports days too.



Footwear

Children should wear sensible and safe footwear. We recommend that in winter children bring a change of footwear for indoor use eg, plimsolls, slippers etc.



PE/Swimming

A change of clothing is necessary for PE. We provide a PE bag which should hold PE kit and be left at school, taken home at the end of term. Comfortable shorts and a T-shirt are adequate. In the interests of safety, such garments should not have decorations such as zips, laces, buttons or fasteners. Please ensure your child(ren)'s name is clearly marked on their PE kit. Long hair should be tied up so please make sure your child has suitable items. PE kit should be available all week for the children as class teachers also deliver PE on different days throughout the terms.

The P4-7 class receive swimming tuition allocated as a 8 week swimming block. Notification of specific dates and classes will be given. The children receive swimming tuition at the one of the Orkney Mainland pools and transport is provided.

Art wear

Children can bring in an old shirt for artwork. This garment can remain in school and will be sent home periodically for washing. Please ensure your child(ren)'s name is clearly marked on it.

Hi-visibility Safety vests

All pupils are issued with fluorescent safety vests at the beginning of Term 2, which they are required to wear during Terms 2 & 3 (up to the end of February) when arriving and leaving the school regardless of what transport, if any, they take.

Free School Meals and Clothing Grant

A clothing grant for those in need may be available from the Education Department. Please use the link below or contact the school office if you have any problems accessing online forms.

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/grants-emas-and-bursaries/school-meals-and-clothing-allowances/>

Learning at Home

Following a parental consultation survey in 2017 and guidance from Education Scotland, the Learning at Home 'homework' at Orphir Community School is designed to:

- Give pupils the opportunity to consolidate their learning
- Foster opportunities for children and carers to discuss, review and analyse learning that has taken place through the week and develop learning targets
- Provide all pupils with resources (mainly through reading books) that give them opportunities to challenge themselves

We also listened to the parents and are very aware of the children's wider achievement opportunities, which can make for busy week, so we endeavour to spread homework, when given, over, at least 4 nights.

Communication

Absences/Lateness

If your child is ill and will be absent from school please try to let school know in the morning by 10.00am, by phone if possible. We are not always able to access emails or texts first thing in the morning as we are busy welcoming in the children. In the interest of your child's safety, at our earliest convenience, we will attempt to contact you should you not have contacted us by 10.00am. It is important that we are made aware of the reason for absence as these are recorded using a national code and are categorised as authorised and unauthorised absence. Throughout Scotland, schools are given attendance targets to which they strive to achieve.

Holiday Absences

A list of school holiday dates is provided routinely through the school year and can be access via

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/schools/about-our-schools/term-holiday-and-closure-dates/>

Where possible we recommend that holidays are taken during these times. However if this is not possible and family breaks are to be taken out with the school holidays it is important that the school is informed by email on admin.orphir@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk. You will be asked for the reason for taking the child(ren) out of school so that the correct absence code can be attributed to this absence.

Seesaw

Seesaw is a learning platform that helps pupils, teachers, and parents communicate and collaborate. It's used in school to support students allowing them to show family members what they are doing in their learning at school and allows teachers to communicate directly with families.

Groupcall/Xpressions

The school office uses Groupcall to send information to the whole school family via email or the Xpressions App. This means that communication is electronic, fast and free! Xpressions is a portal where parents can receive messages from the school, such as updates, information about trips, emergency closures and more. Parents can get messages about multiple children in the same place – even if they attend different schools. Xpressions uses banking-level encryption meaning a child's sensitive information will never be seen by the wrong person. The Xpressions app can be downloaded at all the usual app places. The default setting is to send the email/Xpressions information to all parents so both parents can receive the same information.

Xpressions App Download Links

Android

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.groupcall.emerge.parental&hl=en_GB&pli=1

Apple

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/groupcall-xpressions/id787308623>

Consultation Groups

Some school developments require consultation with parents. Throughout the year you may be asked to participate in a working group to assist in the development of school programmes.

Parental Involvement

Parents are welcome in school. There may be times when parents can assist with some activities such as visits, school library, art and craft activities. If you are willing to offer occasional help please contact school so that your name will be added to our list.

We currently have one parent group – Orphir Community School Forum. We encourage as many parents as we can to get involved as possible. The Forum meets termly with the Head Teacher and is a constituted organisation that looks at the more strategic aspects of the school but also has a fundraising branch.

Contacting staff

It may be necessary for you to want to discuss matters with the class teacher or the head teacher. Staff are available by phone from 9.00am. It is advisable to make an appointment so that time and privacy can be ensured, but we realise that there may be a need for urgency and matters may need prompt attention.

There may also be times when the class teacher or head teacher requests an opportunity to discuss your child's progress or behaviour and an agreed meeting time will be arranged.

Parents Evenings

Parent's evenings are held twice a year usually in the winter and spring terms. Appointments are allocated for approximately 10 minutes per child. Arrangements can be made directly with the class teacher if additional appointments are requested. Reports are normally sent out in Term 4, May/June.

Newsletter

A school newsletter is sent out regularly via email. The newsletter gives general information about what is going on in school and includes a pupil section and a community section.

<https://www.orphircommunityschool.co.uk/newsletters-1>

Transport

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/schools/about-our-schools/school-transport/>

Entitlement

The Council provides free transport to all pupils who live more than the statutory walking distance from their designated catchment school, which is over two miles for pupils less than 8 years old and over three miles for pupils aged 8 and over. In Orkney, this reduces to over 1.5 miles for all pupils during the winter terms (October break to Easter break). These distances are measured by the shortest available safe walking route. Distances will be measured electronically using the Council's geographic information system and Ordnance Survey large scale digital mapping.

Catchment Areas

Transport is only provided to the school for the catchment area where you live. If you elect to place your child in a school within a different catchment area (known as a Placing Request), the Council will not provide transport.

The Council does not provide transport for pupils attending nursery or pre-school.

More details are provided on the Council website at the link below:

Cycling

We advise that children who have passed their Bikeability training, wear a safety helmet and have a roadworthy bike and may cycle to school at the discretion of their parents who will take total responsibility for their safety.

Cycles can be left in the designated cycle area (at the owner's risk).

School Emergency Closures

In certain circumstances that qualify as emergencies such as bad weather - snow or high winds, heating failures, power cut etc, schools can be closed.

How to get Information

During the school day, schools have arrangements in place to contact parents if the school is closing early or if school transport is operating early. Please ensure that the school has up to date emergency contact numbers.

Disruptions to School Transport

If there is no school transport due to bad weather, and the school is still open, it is the parent's decision whether or not it is safe to transport their children to school. We expect that parents base this decision on the condition of roads in their area – there is no expectation that all parents will be able to transport their children. If a parent decides it is not safe to put their child to school, then they should contact the school stating that the absence is weather related.

Where an 'Amber' warning is issued from the Met Office, this will automatically mean school transport will not operate for the duration of the warning (when any of the warning period includes school hours).

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/schools/school-contacts/school-emergency-closures/>

Further Information

[https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Downloads/Files/Education-and-Learning/Education Winter/School%20Transport%20Winter%20Newsletter.pdf](https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Downloads/Files/Education-and-Learning/Education%20Winter/School%20Transport%20Winter%20Newsletter.pdf)

Welfare of pupils

Access during the day

To ensure children's safety there is access only through the main entrance located at the back of the building through the playground. Please ensure you close all gates behind you. The main door is locked during school hours and has a security system. Most days there will be a member of staff in the office. However should you arrive at school when no adult is present, please ring the bell. A member of staff will be with you as soon as possible.

Visitors to school will be required to sign the visitor's book and wear a security badge.

Medical Information

It is important that school is notified of any known medical condition pertaining to your child, eg, diabetes, allergies, sight or hearing loss etc.

First Aid

We have a qualified First Aider in school who will attend to accidents, injuries, illnesses and minor problems. In the event of something more serious parents will be notified and additional medical help will be sought.

Medicine

Occasionally it may be necessary for children to bring medicines to school. Medicine can only be administered by a member of staff if there are clear, written and signed instructions from the parents which state name of medicine, required time and dose.

Children using inhalers should have their name on the inhaler and parents should inform class teachers of their child's needs. Please ensure that your child has a spare inhaler left in the school for their use. This would normally be stored in the staffroom with the medical supplies.

Parents should inform the school office if their child is to remain indoors.

Dentist

The school dentist team visit school each year for routine dental inspections and for administering fluoride varnish. Parents will be notified of the dates and where relevant, consent will be obtained.

Speech Therapy

This service is available to all children. If parents and staff are in agreement that a child is experiencing difficulties, we can jointly refer a pupil.

Psychological Services

This service is available to all schools. If parents and staff are in agreement that a child is experiencing difficulties, may have a special educational need or would benefit from the advice of psychological services this can be arranged. School can refer a pupil following a parental request.

Transfer to other schools

Please let us know as early as possible if your child is moving school so that the transition can be smooth and transfer records sent to the new school. Children from Orphir usually transfer to Kirkwall Grammar School at the end of Primary 7. (KGS). When children transfer to secondary school, visits are arranged and members of staff from KGS visit school. The same arrangements are in place for any pupils transferring to Stromness Academy.

Orphir Community School Forum (OCSF)

All parents are, by right, members of the Parent Forum, who elect the Parent Council.

Details will come out in the new term of OCSF members and the chair.

Fundraising

From time to time we fundraise for various activities like school trips, or equipment or to boost the school funds. Your support of these fundraising activities is vital. It is these funds which pay for extracurricular activities, class visits etc.

The School and the Community

The Role of School in the Community

The school and the wider community are in agreement that we should work in partnership for the good of all. There is an OIC Community Liaison Officer Kerry Spence who is available to discuss specific community issues.

Community Involvement

Where possible we try to involve the community in the life of the school. Some school projects lend themselves more to community involvement than others. The pupils perform for different community groups when requested. There is an annual Community and school fundraising event held in June. The school organises the day events and the Community Association organise the evening events.

Community School Operational Handbook

A handbook was issued by the OIC Department of Education and Recreation to all community schools in October 1997 and updated in Sept 2003. It is currently under review and a draft copy can be obtained from the Education Department.

Arrangements for bookings

The community facilities may be hired for private use.

Fire regulations state a maximum of 194 persons at functions. Hire charges are set each year by the Orphir Community Association. A key holder should be available during all lettings.

The Bookings Clerk for the Community Association is Emma Stevenson and bookings should be made by email via bookings.oca@outlook.com

