Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL
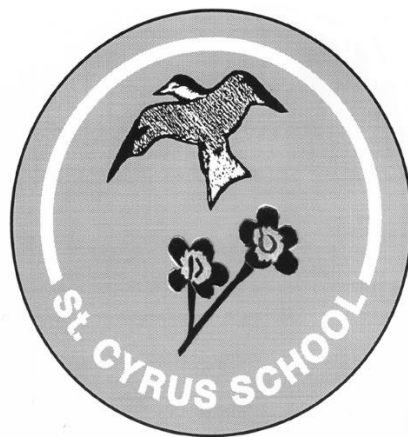**Education and Recreation**

St Cyrus School

Learning, Teaching & Assessment Policy

United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the child (UNCRC)

Article 28: Every child has the right to education.
Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.
Article 17: Every child has the right to reliable information.
Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes.
Article 2: The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Created: February 2023
Review Date: August 2023

The School and its context

St Cyrus School is situated in the east coast village of St Cyrus. The village is growing, with the on-going build of a new housing development. It is served by a shop, hotel, church and village hall.

St Cyrus has a lovely setting - on top of local cliffs with panoramic views over the Nature Reserve, North Sea and Montrose. Within the village there is access to a number of parks, community garden and also the beach.

The school was originally built in 1867 but has had various extensions and alterations since. Most recently the addition of a Nursery annexe in 2000. We are fortunate to have a gym hall, GP room, super playgrounds and a number of classrooms – we have 6 classes this year.

Our roll as of session 2022-23 is 152, including nursery, and our catchment area covers the local village and rural surrounds. Our pupils reside in SIMD 5-10, but this, we feel, does not truly reflect the financial disparity amongst our families. We also welcome members of the Gypsy/Travelling community at times, as we have a site fairly close to the village.

We are part of the Laurencekirk cluster of schools who feed into Mearns Academy.

What makes St Cyrus School special?

Our pupils, parents/carers and staff agree that:

- **We are located in a beautiful location** - we are situated on the coast, above St Cyrus National Nature Reserve and surrounded by countryside. We are also located on the border of two councils – Aberdeenshire and Angus. We have super outdoor space for learning!

- Transport links and services are limited within the village. **Feedback reports that the school is therefore an important part of the community** – "In a village like St Cyrus, which doesn't have a lot going on – the school is such an important focal point for young families, and it really has the ability to make or break such a village. You guys do it to perfection. The kids are happy, we are happy, and your contribution makes St Cyrus a nice place for us to be. Thank you" (Parent Questionnaire, May 2022)

- **There is super community spirit**. There is trust in the school and families and members of the local community will ask for or offer help if it is required. Staff, who mostly live locally, support at local events also. Everyone knows each other – We make a great team!

- **We have a positive ethos**, one which is inclusive and nurturing. Lots of people comment about it! "In my opinion, the key strengths of St Cyrus School lie in the atmosphere overall. I believe that anyone who walks in its doors will feel safe and supported" (Student feedback Feb 2022)

  "a positive, happy environment for children to learn," "been an excellent, educational journey for my children" (Parental questionnaires, May 2022)

- **We have a friendly, supportive and hardworking staff, who know the children well.** Feedback includes - "Teachers have taken time to make the work relevant to the children, and also built-up trusting relationships where the children work hard, be challenged and do their best" (Visiting specialist feedback, April 2022)

- **We are child centred and set high expectations for ourselves and each other** – "Wonderful teachers who appreciate the difference and individuality of our children to allow them to grow and develop" (Parental questionnaires, May 2022)

  Children are also making good progress in their learning across all curricular areas. In June 2022 the following percentage of children were on track –

Session	Numeracy	Reading	Writing	L&T	H&W
2021/22	79%	80%	73%	89%	84%

- **Our children behave well and work hard.**
  Almost all children are engaged and enthusiastic in lessons and respond well to the wide range of practical activities and learning experiences on offer. "Learning a lot makes me happy", "I thought I knew everything but now I'm learning new things" (Pupil feedback, May 2022)

- **The quality of support.** "Individual class teachers are always available to offer encouragement and support to my children but also us as a family. X has gone above and beyond this year to make sure that this support happened" (Parental questionnaires, May 2022)

- **The engagement of all staff, pupils and partners in improving the school.** Staff, pupils and parents at St Cyrus School demonstrate a commitment to continual improvement. Staff are highly motivated and committed to CLPL to enhance their own practice and maximise impact for learners. Staff are fully engaged with the GTCS professional Standards and take part in annual PRD. They lead school improvements – *"I have enjoyed the opportunity to be part of the writing group and to work with colleagues on something beyond the classroom" "I have enjoyed being part of my group this year and am pleased with the work we were able to do. I have also enjoyed learning from the other groups",* (Staff questionnaire feedback, May 2022)

Nursery staff also record PRTL in line with SSSC recommendations. Staff frequently engage with the challenge questions from HGIOS4/HGIOELC.

We have an active Parent Council.

Parent/Volunteer helpers help in school. Pupils too lead and are involved in groups e.g., Pupil Council.

"The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community".

Building the curriculum 3

Our Vision

Reach for the Stars

Our school and its family is a happy and successful place. A place where people care for and encourage each other in order to achieve our full potential.

Our Aims

- To provide a safe, welcoming environment where everyone feels valued, respected and included. An environment which promotes the health and the well-being of all and where social and cultural diversity is celebrated.

- To plan and engage learners in stimulating and relevant experiences both indoors and out which promote and develop the skills required for life and work.

- To support learners in tackling new challenges in order to encourage growth, confidence and capabilities and to recognise these successes both in ourselves and others.

- To develop a global awareness and encourage a culture of wonder in the world, its people, places, possibilities and future.

- To reflect on our work in order to continually improve

Our Values

Successful
Together
Active
Respectful
Safe

What do these look like at St Cyrus School?

	What our pupils say	What our parents/carers and school community say	What our staff say
Successful	Learning from your mistakes Enthusiastic Working hard Helping others and including people Good Imaginations Being happy House Points Headteacher awards Good marks Not giving up! Making healthy choices Getting on with classmates When you get lots of things right Trying your best	Having the right resources to learn Support Effort Achieving Engaged Positive Being the best version of ourselves Happy Feeling proud of yourself	Making good progress Celebrating achievements Enthusiastic Teamwork Resilience Pride/self-esteem Open to new experiences Achieving
Together	Groups Getting along in teams Working together Houses Helping out if someone is stuck. Assembly Working in class – all chatting and sharing The Big Write (we wrote together) Friends Teamwork Cheer people on Being kind Being respectful A happy life	Groups Encouraged to engage with activities and make friends. Friendly/approachable Family and Friends Community Inclusive - encouraging young people to mix widely. Happy Faces Collaborative projects	Houses Teamwork Whole school events Cross class/stage activities e.g., buddies/playleaders Circle time Community Staff working together e.g., planning
Active	Joining in and having fun Outdoor learning Everyone working hard. Playleaders Daily Mile PE (working together) Good listening Lunchtime Running	Sports Lots of opportunities to engage with a variety of activities. Joining in Active Learning opportunities Group activities Using our bodies and brains	Engagement in learning Daily physical activity Utilising outdoor space Beach Schools Play and Active Learning Engaging with learning and making home links After school clubs Visitors e.g., Rhythm Nation

		After School Clubs Sports day Walking/running/cycling to school. Tennis Football Hopscotch Jumping	Daily activity Running around	Active School Co-coordinator
Respectful		Being kind Not being rude to anyone Manners at all times Listening, not interrupting Helping others Not pushing/kicking Not breaking things or stealing – look after people's things. Understand when others like something and you don't. Don't hurt people's feelings	Listening and working with others Understanding To listen to teachers and be kind to others Sharing interests Good manners Considerate Taking account of everyone's opinions Respecting self and classmates Promoting teamwork Being kind to others	Kindness Positive relationships/interactions Polite Helpful Friendly Understanding Forgiving Caring for resources Well mannered
Safe		Being cautious/careful of what you are doing. Following the golden rules Helping people when they are hurt. Keeping our hands to ourselves Adults looking after us. Washing hands No skipping line - pushing.	Rules Looking after everyone Knowing boundaries Being trusting and feeling trusted Helping children to understand and identify barriers. Doing what the teachers say	Following rules and instructions Looking after property Reporting hazards Knowledge of safety protocols P7 buddies

What do we want for our learners?

To achieve our vision, we have developed a curriculum based on a shared understanding of what we want for our children and how we are going to achieve it –

Our Curriculum Rationale

Our Curriculum Rationale is built upon the following components:

The Ethos and Life of the School

Developing a **positive ethos** lays the foundations on which to build learning and teaching. Our curriculum offers a broad range of learning experiences, taking into account the **needs** and **interests** of all our pupils. Our aim is to **Get It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)**. We want our pupils to be Safe, **Healthy**, **Achieving**, **Nurtured**, **Active**, **Respected**, **Responsible** and **Included**. We ensure children understand their rights and responsibilities and that these are integrated throughout our curriculum. Children's opinions and ideas are always **listened to** and **valued**.

Through opportunities such as pupil council, pupil led groups, librarians, dinner hall helpers, play leaders, buddies and circle time children are encouraged to be involved in developing the work of the school thus having a positive impact on school improvements.

We are proud of our family ethos at St Cyrus Primary School and value the support of all stakeholders. Parents are involved in the school in a number of ways, e.g., golden ticket visits, through volunteering, through the active Parent Council, through involvement in planning, open afternoons and community visits. The community as a whole are involved in activities such as class community cafes, Friendship Club visits, fund raising events and church/minister involvement.

Through these opportunities and this positive learning environment we ensure that our pupils, parents/carers, staff and community have a pride in both the school and the local area and the people within it, whilst also recognising our place within Aberdeenshire, Scotland and the global community.

Opportunities for Personal Achievement

Our inclusive curriculum ensures that learning opportunities allow pupils to develop their potential, fulfil their aspirations, recognises and celebrates their uniqueness, in and out of school and prepares them for challenges both now and in the future.

Through assemblies and the use of Head Teacher and Star awards as well as class award systems, and the playground 'class of the week' and displays, we share and **celebrate these achievements**, sharing in each other's successes and achievements. These successes are then displayed on our achievements wall and shared with parents, families and the wider community.

Extra-curricular activities and clubs are also provided to maximise opportunities for our pupils to actively engage in a wide variety of activities, encouraging the development of skills and knowledge in a wider context.

Teaching and Learning

We have a responsibility to provide children with a **Broad General Education**. Within St Cyrus Primary School we plan effectively to ensure coverage of **experiences and outcomes** across all **8 curricular areas**, allowing **flexibility** to cater for pupil needs and interests. Planning templates can be found here –
ECS St Cyrus School Staff - Core Planning Docs 2022-23 - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

Learning opportunities are delivered in such a way that children have the opportunity to work, both individually and co-operatively, in pairs and in groups. Opportunities for **Interdisciplinary learning** will be encouraged where possible, maximising the teaching and learning experiences for our young learners, encouraging **transfer of skills** and knowledge across the curricular areas.

Children are at the centre of our planning and are involved in planning their learning experiences. The 7 design principles are considered to ensure our curriculum offers **Challenge and Enjoyment**, **Personalisation and Choice**, **Progression**, **Coherence**, **Relevance**, **Breadth and Depth**.

Active learning will be encouraged both inside our classrooms and using the **outdoor** learning environment.

Our curriculum will enhance the development of the whole child, encouraging our young people to become **confident individuals**, **responsible citizens**, **successful learners** and **effective contributors**.

It is essential that our pupils know what they are learning, why they are learning it and what success looks like. Lessons are therefore clearly structured and consist of the following key components -

- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria: Teachers explicitly share the purpose of the lesson through agreeing the learning intention and developing the success criteria in collaboration with the pupils.

- Input: At this stage of the lesson, pupils will be presented with or introduced to the new information that they are required to work with. Teachers are encouraged to present this in a variety of ways to support pupil progress and understanding.

- Learning Activity: In this part of the lesson, pupils are given the time and opportunity to develop understanding of the new information and to practice using their developing skills. This often involves practical activities, collaborative learning and continuous feedback.

- Plenary: This is a crucial element in the process of learning and teaching as teachers can challenge the pupils to make their learning explicit. It is useful to include different review opportunities throughout every lesson so that teachers and pupils can identify next steps and offer the appropriate support or challenge to pupils. Quality feedback linked to Success Criteria allows pupils to consider their own strengths and next steps in their learning. This will feed into future planning.

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How do we know we are getting our learning and teaching right?

Quality of Learners' Engagement

- There is a positive, rich learning environment (classroom organisation, displays, accessibility to resources).
- Learners are active participants who are fully engaged, resilient, highly motivated and interact well during lessons.
- Learners understand the purpose of their learning and lead the learning where appropriate.
- Learning is built on previous learning experience.
- Learning is challenging and well matched to the learners' needs and interests.
- Learners have choice and increasing responsibility for their learning.
- Digital technology is appropriately used to enrich, support and challenge learning.
- The language of learning provides and supports opportunities for learner dialogue.
- Learning from mistakes is recognised as vital for maximum development.
- Learners can apply their new learning in a range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
- A range of resources are used which are engaging and relevant for the learning experience.

We provide quality feedback.

'*Children and young people need high-quality feedback about their progress and a clear understanding of the support that is in place to help them succeed'.* (National Improvement Framework).

Feedback to children on their learning is central to effective learning and teaching and it should be given as soon as possible with the child being present with the teacher where possible. Effective feedback is the key factor to a child being able to improve their learning.

- We are specific and clear when giving feedback.
- We focus our feedback on what children can do to improve.
- We praise children for their effort, and we use praise appropriately and specifically.
- We work with children to identify the next steps in their learning and how they can improve across the curriculum.

'Parents and families must have access to information that allows them to form a clear understanding of how their child is progressing, and the information they need to help them play a key role in their child's education.' (National Improvement Framework)

At St Cyrus we believe reporting is an ongoing process, which should provide clear information on the pupil's strengths, areas for development and next steps to ensure continued progress.

Reporting can take many different forms but includes –
- Parents' consultation meetings
- Written reports
- Golden Ticket sessions
- School concerts/shows
- Wall displays showcasing learning.
- School/class newsletters highlighting learning.
- Class Teams pages
- Curriculum workshops/ information events
- School website / Facebook page
- Parent Council meetings
- Pupil Council meetings

Assessment

Assessment is an important part of the learning and teaching process. At St Cyrus we use both formative and summative assessment to identify what stage a child is at in their learning and, in reflective dialogue with the child, what their next steps in learning should be. Formative assessment is ongoing, informal and assesses those small steps which children take in their learning every day. Sources of formative assessment evidence may include observations of children carrying out a practical task, a piece of written work, information gathered from quality questioning or a piece of artwork. We encourage children to self or peer assess their work as a way of having children engage in reflective discussion about whether the intended learning has been achieved, what their strengths are and how these can be improved.

Summative assessment is a more formal approach which might be carried out at the end of a block of learning or to ascertain where a child is within a curriculum area level. In addition, all Aberdeenshire schools complete standardised assessments which are used to inform learning and teaching. This involves all children in P1, P4 and P7 participating in a short series of computer-based assessments which focus on the core curriculum areas of numeracy and literacy as well as aspects relating to thinking skills.

Progress through the Curriculum levels

Level	Stage
E - Early	The pre-school years and P1, **or later for some.**
1 - First	To the end of P4, but earlier **or later for some.**
2 - Second	To the end of P7, but earlier **or later for some.**
3 - Third	S1 to S3, **but earlier for some.**

There is clear progression across the experiences and outcomes and children move at their own pace, differentiated with support or challenge where appropriate. At St Cyrus School we track children's progress using a range of strategies including classroom observations, planned and continuous assessments and professional judgement. These are recorded in teachers planning documentation and within our online tracking system - ECS St Cyrus School Staff - Tracking 2022-23 - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

Moderation

'Moderation is integral to planning, learning, teaching and assessment. The process of moderation is not an activity that happens only at the end of a block or year. Teachers and practitioners, with senior leaders regularly consider a range of assessment evidence which demonstrates how well children and young people are making progress and achieving their potential.'

(CfE A Statement for Practitioners from HM Chief Inspector of Education, August 2016)

At St Cyrus we value opportunities to work collegiately within our school at stages, whole school level, at cluster level and beyond to support professional development and a shared understanding of standards and expectations. It involves our staff, working together, drawing on guidance and exemplification and building on existing standards and expectations to:

- Plan learning, teaching and assessment
- Check that assessment tasks and activities provide learners with fair and valid opportunities to meet standards and expectations.
- Sample evidence from learners' work and review teachers' judgements
- Agree strengths in learners' performances and next steps in learning.
- Provide feedback on teachers' judgements to inform improvements in practices.

Moderation Cycle
Moderation develops a shared understanding of standards and expectations. Moderation is ongoing before, during and after the planning of learning, teaching and assessment.
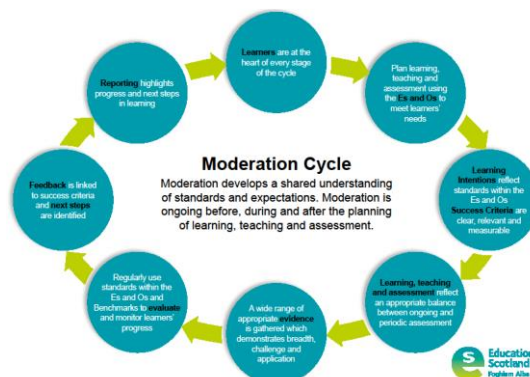
Self-Evaluation

At St Cyrus School, self - evaluation is an ongoing process. We continually reflect and evaluate our work and use the evidence from these activities to plan future improvement. We have robust approaches in place which include: use of How Good Is Our School 4(HGIOS4) and How Good Is Our School (HGIOURS), cluster working and being part of the Aberdeenshire Council Self-Improving Schools System.

Our Quality Assurance Calendar ensures that all aspects of the school's performance are systematically and regularly reviewed as part of an annual cycle.

In order that all staff, both permanent and relief have a clear understanding of expectations for Learning, Teaching and Assessment at St Cyrus School and to ensure consistency across all classes and stages, the following posters are displayed in all classes, which clearly and simply detail expectations.

Professional Learning

Books purchased for our staff library during session 2022/23:

- The Teaching Delusion Trilogy – Robertson B
- Active Learning through formative assessment – (2021), Corwin
- A Little Guide for Teachers: Formative Assessment   Clarke, S. (2021), Corwin
- Unlocking Learning Intentions and Success Criteria Clarke, S. (2021) Corwin
- Visible Learning: Feedback Hattie, J and Clarke, S. (2018), Routledge
- On Your Feet Guide to Partner Talk Clarke, S. (2019), Corwin
- Active Learning through Formative Assessment Clarke, S. (2008), Hodder Education
- Thinking Classrooms Muncaster, K and Clarke, S (2018), Rising Stars
- Creating the schools our children need, William D
- The learning rainforest, Sherington T
- Cleverlands, Crehan L
- Practice Perfect , Lemov D
- Seven myths about education, Christodoulou D
- Why don't students like school? Willingham D
- Visible learning for teachers, Hattie J
- Square Pegs: Inclusivity, compassion and fitting in – a guide for schools, Morgan F and Costello E

Courses attended

Child Protection Training

Children's Rights & Participation

GIRFEC – Information Sharing

The Teaching Delusion – Bruce Robertson

Formative Assessment - Shirley Clarke

ALDO

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Policy Review

Created	February 2023
Review Date	August 2023

References

UNCRC Rights of the Child

https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/