



PARENTS'  
HANDBOOK  
2023/24



**COOLEY NURSERY UNIT  
90 COOLEY ROAD  
SIXMILECROSS  
OMAGH  
BT79 9DH  
TELEPHONE NO: 028 80758749**

**Principal: Mrs G Cuthbertson**

**Nursery Teacher: Mrs J Byrne**

**Nursery Assistant: Mrs D Pinkerton**

**Secretary: Mrs A Anderson**

## **Ethos**

Cooley Primary School and Nursery Unit provide a warm, welcoming, happy and caring environment where all are nurtured, valued and respected as part of our Christian ethos. In partnership with parents/carers, wider school family and local community, we offer high quality learning experiences to enable every child to reach their full potential.

# NURSERY STRUCTURE

Type of Nursery:	Controlled Nursery Unit
Age Range:	2 - 4 year olds
Roll:	26 part-time places
Attendance:	5 days per week
Sessions:	9.15 am - 11.45 am

## Organisation and Staffing

Our Nursery Unit caters for children aged 2 to 4 years. We have facilities for up to 26 children in morning sessions.

Two permanent members of staff are employed in the unit. A fully qualified, experienced teacher and a fully qualified, experienced classroom assistant. We have extra help on occasions from students training as classroom assistants as part of training programmes.







Principal Mrs Gail Cuthbertson

Tel (028) 80758749

Email: [info@cooley.omagh.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@cooley.omagh.ni.sch.uk)

**COOLEY NURSERY UNIT**

90 Cooley Road

Sixmilecross

Omagh

Co Tyrone

BT79 9DH

Dear Parent

I wish to extend a very warm welcome to you and your child joining us in Cooley Nursery unit.

Mrs Byrne and myself are trained teachers with experience in Nursery and Primary Education.

The Nursery Assistant is fully qualified and trained to further develop your child through the medium of play.

We encourage a wholesome partnership between home and school as we feel it is vital to ensure your child gains maximum benefit from their year/s in the Nursery Unit.

As a team we strive to provide a rich and meaningful range of activities designed to stimulate and develop our pupils.

We will always act in the interests of your child.

It is my sincere hope that your child will have a happy and productive time in our purposeful environment linked closely to home.

Yours sincerely

*G. Cuthbertson*

G Cuthbertson (Mrs)  
Principal

# Admission Arrangements

Parents considering sending their children to this Nursery Unit are invited to make a prior visit to see the school and to talk to the Principal and staff. An Open Day is also held each year. The admission arrangements as set out on the EA website ([www.eani.org.uk/digitaladmissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/digitaladmissions)). Our policy is to admit children in small groups during the month of September to enable them to settle into the school. Parents are encouraged to support this settling in policy.

## Admissions Criteria

Children who are not normally resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed application will not be considered for places until all children who reside in Northern Ireland have been considered.

**When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors/Management Committee will only take into account information which is detailed on the application. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on their application form or attached to it.**

The Board of Governors of Cooley Primary School have determined that, in the event of there being more applicants than places available, the following criteria will be applied, in the order set down, to select children for the available places.

1. Children from socially disadvantaged circumstances in their final pre-school year who were born.:
  - On or between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020 (inclusive) and whose parents have not exercised their right to defer their child's entry to primary school; or
  - On or between 1 April 2019 and 1 July 2019 (inclusive) or were due to be born on or between those dates but were born earlier; and,

- Have not attended or are not currently attending a funded pre-school setting under the Pre-School Education Programme as a target aged child; and,
- That child’s parent has completed a request to defer their child starting P1 until September 2024

*Note: Children from ‘socially disadvantaged circumstances’ means a child whose parent has an entitlement to (i) Income Support, or (ii) Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, or (iii) Income related Employment and Support Allowance, or (iv) Universal Credit. When parents apply for places for their child on this basis they must provide Benefit Verification to confirm that they have an entitlement. The application procedure for Pre-School will outline how Benefit Verification can be submitted.*

2. Children not from socially disadvantaged circumstances (as defined above) who are in their final pre-school year (as defined by Criterion 1).

**Sub-Criteria**

If there are more children satisfying the last criterion, which can be applied, then selection for the remaining places will be on the application of the following sub-criteria in the order set down below:

- I. Children whose brothers/sisters, half-brothers/half-sisters, step-brothers/step-sisters or legally adopted brothers/sisters who are presently enrolled in or have previously attended Cooley Primary School or Cooley Nursery Unit or who are the eldest/only child in the family.
- II. In the event of over-subscription in the last criterion which can be applied selection will be made using the random selection of letters0903 (based on the initial letter of the surname as per the birth certificate) as listed below.

C S N Mac Y Q A L G R P D O B V F Mc  
Z E I K M T W H U X J

The order was determined by a randomised selection of



letters. In the event of surnames beginning with the same letter the subsequent letters of the surnames will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of 2 identical surnames the alphabetical order of the initials of the forenames will be used as per the birth certificate.

### **Non-Statutory Criteria**

Note: Applications falling under Criterion 3 are processed only during Stage 2 of the admissions process, after final pre-school year (Statutory 1 and 2) applications.

3. Children who were born:
- On or between 1 April 2019 – 1 July 2019 (inclusive), or were due to be born on or between those dates but were born earlier; and
  - Have attended or are currently attending a funded pre-school setting under the Pre-School Education Programme as a target aged (not penultimate aged) child; and
  - That child's parent has completed a request to defer their child starting P1, or
  - On or between 2 July 2020 and 1 July 2021 (inclusive); or
  - On or between 1 April 2020 and 1 July 2020 (inclusive) or were due to be born on or between those dates but were born earlier; and that child's parent has completed a request to defer their child starting P1 until September 2025

### **Tie-Breaker – Non-Statutory Criterion 3**

Children within Criterion 3 will be selected in Chronological Order of Age – eldest child first. In the event of two or more children having the same DOB the above random selection of letters will be used.

### **Duty to Verify**

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application form. If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a

place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

### **Waiting List Policy**

Should a vacancy arise after 13 June 2023 all applications for admission to Nursery that were initially refused, new applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided will be treated equally and the published criteria applied. This waiting list will be in place until 30 June 2024. The school will contact you in writing if your child gains a place in the school by this method. Your child's name will be automatically added to the list. Please contact the school if you wish your child's name to be removed from the list. Parents should also note that if their child is seeking nursery provision for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year they MUST reapply.

## **Why Nursery Education?**

It is now widely recognised that Nursery Education is of great value. The professionally trained teacher and trained nursery assistant provide opportunities for the intellectual, emotional, physical and social development of each child who enters the Nursery. A Nursery teacher has probably the greatest influence on a young child, apart from parents. The teacher will:

- ❖ Help the child to build up self-confidence.
- ❖ Give the child time to enjoy life from a child's perspective.
- ❖ Help the child to form good relationships and to respect both adults and peers.
- ❖ Encourage the child to ask questions and seek answers.
- ❖ Help the child solve problems.
- ❖ Provide equipment, materials and ideas to extend learning.

Our Nursery Unit aims to meet these needs through a variety of play activities where the child is treated as an individual with his or her own needs and rate of development.

# The Six Curriculum Areas

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development,**  
For example, we work together and help our friends.



- **The Arts**  
For example, we pretend and we explore dough creatively.



- ***The World Around Us***

For example, we learn about different animals and explore seasonal changes.



***Language Development***

For example, we draw and we love story time.



- **Mathematical Development**

We sort and count.



- **Physical Development and Movement**

For example, we climb and we love cutting.



The Nursery Curriculum seeks to:

- Develop and build on children's interest in the world around them.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities for learning through doing.
- Encourage autonomy, children doing things for themselves.
- Develop confidence, a positive self image and a sense of responsibility.
- Provide appropriate support for children with disabilities and special learning needs.
- Build on what the child has learned at home.

Our Nursery Unit aims to provide children with a rich and stimulating environment which will promote effective learning. For example, by:

- Presenting children with opportunities to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions independently, thereby enabling them to progress in their learning and development.
- Creating learning environments both indoors and outdoors.
- Providing a wide range of stimulating and motivating activities.
- Providing activities which are safe and secure.
- Allowing for development in all six curriculum areas.
- Displaying children's work.
- Ensuring that children's learning is challenged.
- Making good use of space, resources and time.

Staff meet regularly to plan a progressive programme to enable children to develop their potential. Children are also observed regularly and their achievements and needs are noted.

Teacher/ parent interviews take place during the year in August, November and again during the summer term.

## Nursery Unit Premises

The Nursery Unit is a purpose built, self-contained building, situated in the grounds of Cooley Primary School. It comprises of a large indoor play area, children's toilets with facilities for disabled children, kitchen, quiet room and staff room. It has a safe outdoor play area.

Both indoor and outdoor play is well catered for with a large range of safe, stimulating, educational, exciting play equipment.

## Settling New Children

All Nursery Units and Schools try to smooth the path from home to school. During the first few weeks children are admitted in small groups to ensure that each child has settled reasonably well before any other children are received.

This, of course, means that children will not all start on the same day or at the same time, so please be patient and understand that we have the interests of your child at heart.

Your child's nursery day will last for one hour on their first day and I would ask you to stay with him/her. When you bring your child along on the appointed day, please arrange to have any younger children left at home. It is important that you share this day with your child. Time in the nursery will be built up depending on how well your child settles. Please be prepared to stay on subsequent days if your child is very insecure.

Our aim is to bridge the gap between home and school. This should never be hurried and parents are asked to do as the Nursery teacher asks during this period.

## Uniform

There is a specially designed uniform consisting of a sweatshirt, polo-shirt and jogging bottoms. These are available to order from school. **Please make sure all items of clothing are clearly named.** For safety reasons children are not permitted to wear open-toed sandals or earrings.

## Spare Clothing

A complete change of clothes must be left in school. This is in case your child would happen to have a little accident! In the event of a mishap, a plastic bag with the soiled clothes will be left on your child's peg for collection. The clothes should be replaced when your child subsequently returns to school.

## Outside Clothing

All outdoor coats must be named and should be brought to school every day regardless of the weather. During the winter months a hat, scarf and gloves are necessary for cold and windy days. For safety reasons children are not permitted to wear open-toed sandals or jewellery of any description in the Nursery.





# Identifying Belongings

We will operate a picture system to aid the children in identifying their belongings eg peg, towel, library bag.

Each child will be assigned a picture eg a lady-bird this will be displayed beside/on all their belongings at Nursery.



## Tissues

It would be appreciated if each parent would bring along a box of tissues on your child's first day. It is nearly impossible to keep up with the demand for tissues, especially over the winter months. In this way, at least we can start the year with a substantial supply.



## Illness at Nursery

The right place for a sick child is at home. Children should not be sent to school when they have bad colds, sickness or symptoms of communicable illness. If your child should feel ill while at school or be involved in a serious accident we will endeavour to contact you by phone if possible. We will look after your child until you are able to come and collect him/her.

In the event of a serious accident every endeavour will be made to contact parents. When a child has been off school through sickness a note is required on their return to school.

## Coming and Going

Nursery begins at 9.15 am and the door will be opened at this time. Adults should wait with their child until this time. Please note that even though staff are on the premises, they do have preparation to carry out. Please make sure that your child is placed into the care of a member of staff. Your child should **never** be left at the door.

Please try to be at the nursery in good time. Children can be collected between 11.30 and 11.45 am when nursery finishes. Please ensure your child is collected by this time. Children soon become anxious if they are kept waiting. If for some reason you have to arrange for another person to pick up your child, please make sure that both your child and the teacher are aware of the situation. It must be clearly understood that the person bringing and collecting your child should be a responsible adult (ie over the age of 16).

## Pastoral Care

We seek to support each child's whole development. Interactions will foster security, confidence and independence and be an intrinsic part of every aspect of the curriculum. The Pastoral Care Policy is available on request.

# Children with Special Needs

Parents are encouraged to inform the Nursery Unit at an early stage if their child has any special educational needs. The special educational needs of most children are met quite adequately within the Nursery setting. Other children may have needs which require specialist advice, intervention or support.

Some children may be identified prior to entry into the nursery unit as having significant learning difficulties which are likely to affect their learning development, but for a number of children with special educational needs the identification will occur after they have commenced nursery and parents will be involved at an early stage. The Special Needs Inclusion Policy is available on request.

## Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy

We in Cooley Nursery Unit believe that bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated. During the “settling in” period the children are made aware of the School Rule to be kind and helpful. Each child will be encouraged to develop a sense of respect and the growth of self-discipline. It is the policy of our nursery that any child displaying disruptive behaviour, will be channelled and directed into more constructive, challenging and meaningful play. The Principal and staff will consult parents in the event of any particularly serious problems arising with a specific child.

We teach children to tell others how they feel. If they do not want to be involved in a game or activity we encourage them to put up their hand and say “No Thank You”. Our Nursery’s policy is based on a system of positive reinforcement and rewards.

In order for our Nursery to have a happy, safe, secure learning environment we have expectations of appropriate behaviour.

Appropriate behaviour includes:-

- Taking responsibility for tidying and helping.
- Being polite.
- Developing an ability to share.
- Learning to listen and follow simple instructions.
- Allowing for the initial settling in period of approximately eight weeks, if a child does not then begin to display appropriate behaviour we will following this procedure:
  1. We will keep the parent informed on an informal basis during collection time. We like to work closely with the parents and value their support.
  2. If inappropriate behaviour is displayed in the Nursery we deal with this by removing the child from the situation. He/she is put on their own for a couple of minutes, we talk with the child and explain why. We will then help to integrate them back into play with the others. Parents will be kept informed.
  3. As we notice small improvements we will give lots of praise and encouragement eg stickers or telling Mummy how good the child has been.

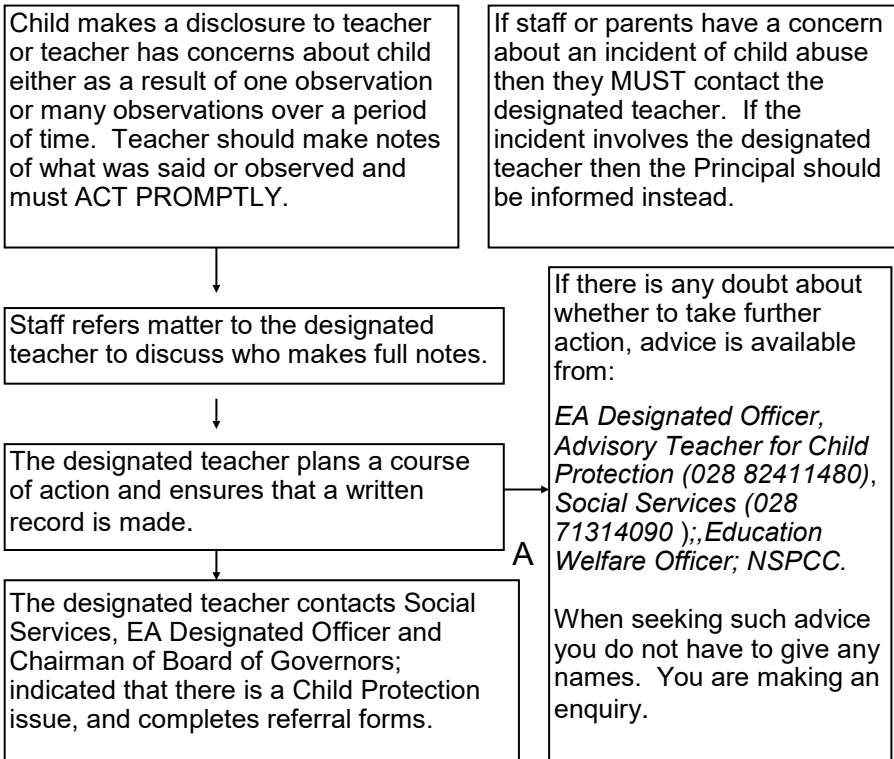
We aim to make the discipline of children as positive as possible, helping them to understand how better to handle a situation and how happy others are when they are good. We reward good behaviour by praise and encouragement. We also reward the “trying to achieve” good behaviour in the same manner.

Full policies are available on request.

# Child Protection

We in Cooley Nursery Unit have the responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of our pupils and we seek to support pupils' development in ways to foster security, confidence and independence. This is viewed as central to the well-being of each individual and therefore seen to be an intrinsic part of all aspects of the curriculum.

All our staff have been subject to appropriate background checks and have adopted a Code of Conduct for behaviour towards pupils.



A full copy of our Child Protection Policy is available on request.

## Snacks

We operate a Nursery Fund whereby, through parental contributions, we are able to provide all the children with a mid-session snack. Snacks range from toast, cereals, crackers and cheese to a variety of fruit, etc. The Nursery Fund is £8.00 per month regardless of holidays. This money should be in an envelope with your child's name on it and left in the Nursery post box on the first day of each month at the beginning of the session.

The Nursery Fund is also used for running repairs to bikes and trikes, on-going art and craft equipment, parties and entertainment, baking ingredients and other incidental items.

As the children are being provided with a snack – sweets, drinks or any other edible products should **not** be brought to school.

We rely on your contribution in order to provide a high standard of care for your children.

Please note that Cooley Nursery Unit has achieved a Smart Snacks Award.

## Milk

Children in nursery are provided with milk on a daily basis. There is no charge for this. A water dispenser is also available throughout the morning for children.



# Charging and Remissions Policy

The Board of Governors has adopted the following Charging and Remissions policy:

## **Charging Policy**

It is the policy of the Board of Governors to charge for the cost of daily snacks.

## **Voluntary Contributions**

The Board of Governors reserves the right to seek voluntary contributions from parents or others in support of any school activity or for the benefit of the school. Pupils whose parents are either unwilling or unable to make such contributions will not be treated differently. However, the school reserves the right to cancel planned activities if the voluntary contributions are insufficient to meet the costs of the planned activity.

## **Breakage/Losses**

The Board of Governors reserves the right to seek to recover from parents the whole or part of the cost of breakages and losses incurred as a result of a pupil's behaviour.

## *Transition to Year One in Cooley Primary School*

We aim to make this move as stress free as possible. During the Summer term we will arrange for the children to meet with their new teacher in the nursery and also in their new room. We will visit the school environment, including Assembly Hall, Library and playground. We will talk with the children and discuss various aspects of Year 1 life – all in a very positive manner.

Please remember that your child does not automatically transfer to Primary School from the Nursery Unit. An application must be completed in January.

# School Terms

## 2023/2024

**Dates are inclusive**

Hallowe'en	30 <sup>th</sup> October – 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2023
Staff Development Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023
Christmas Holidays	21 <sup>st</sup> December 2023 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2024
Staff Development Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2024
Staff Development Day	12 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Mid-Term Break	14 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
St Patrick's Day	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Easter Holidays	27 <sup>th</sup> March – 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
May Day Holiday	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Staff Development Day	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Spring Bank Holiday	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2024

### ***School Terms***

31<sup>st</sup> August – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023

4<sup>th</sup> January – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

8<sup>th</sup> April – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024

**Please note that nursery will close early on the last day of each term at 11 am.**



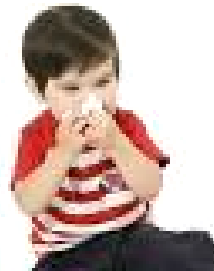
# Great Expectations

In September we would expect children in the pre-school year to be able to:-

- Say “Please” and “Thank You”.
- Be wearing pants and be able to use the toilet.
- Drink out of a cup.
- Leave their dummy at home.
- Attempt to blow their nose and use a hanky.



Use the toilet properly and flush toilet after use.



Use a handkerchief efficiently

# Please Help Me



Remove my coat, gloves  
and hat and hang each item  
up.



Share my toys and  
be prepared to take  
turns.



Wash and dry my  
hands.



Tidy/clear away my  
toys.

# How You Can Help

Worried children cannot learn properly. Anything you can do to help means a happier time at nursery for your child. Here are some suggestions:-

- Talk to your child about going to nursery and make it sound exciting.
- Always read the notes and newsletters about nursery.
- Check the Parent Board for any additional notices, eg holidays, trips, etc.
- Listen and talk to your child and answer questions.
- Encourage them to talk about what goes on in nursery.
- Allow your child to have opportunities for messy play, ie water, sand, dough and paint.
- Sing songs.
- Read rhymes and stories to your child and visit the local library.
- Create opportunities for your child to mix with other children and adults.
- Help you child to develop acceptable social behaviour.
- Encourage your child to “help” at home.

## Attendance at Nursery

Although Nursery Education is not compulsory, we need to know the reason that children are absent. Please send an absentee note on your child's return to nursery.

Children who are unwell should not attend school until they are fully recovered, as infection can spread very quickly with young children.

Children should not attend school:

- ❑ If vomiting during the night/morning.
- ❑ Having diahorrea in the night/morning.
- ❑ Having a temperature.
- ❑ With a headache.
- ❑ With stomach pains.
- ❑ With severe cold symptoms, runny nose,
- ❑ Persistent cough.

It is essential that we are able to contact you or your childminder in the event of an emergency, eg accident, illness during the day. Please remember to update telephone numbers if necessary.



## School Trips

We value going on outings from Nursery. We will seek your permission to take your child on trips. All trips are well organised and adult to child ratios will be appropriate for each trip.

## Home/School Contact

Starting nursery will be a happy time if parents help to play their part. Remember you are placing your child into the trust of a qualified teacher who is always willing to discuss any of your child's problems in a confidential manner and at an appropriate time. Parental contacts with the nursery are actively encouraged by the teaching staff. The parents' support is essential in working with the nursery for the child's benefit.

The nursery encourages parental participation in various ways such as news sheets, invitations to meetings with teachers, and other events. The teacher will be available at the start and finish of each session to receive any relevant information. Consultations with the teacher can be arranged at any time for a more in-depth discussion. If and when needed, please contact us to make a suitable appointment for all parties.



*Working together we  
can strive to provide the  
best quality  
education for your  
child.*

