



PARENTS'
HANDBOOK
2025/26

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

Principal: Mrs G Cuthbertson
Nursery Teacher: Mrs B Keys
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.

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.*



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 diarrhoea 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.

Nursery Structure

Type of Nursery:	Controlled Nursery Unit
Age Range:	2 - 4 year olds
Roll:	26 full-time places
Attendance:	5 days per week
Sessions:	9.15 am - 1.45 pm

Organisation and Staffing

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

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.



Board of Governors

Chairperson:

Mrs Iris Clarke Transferors' Representative

Vice Chairperson:

Rev Robert McFaul EA Representative

Secretary:

Mrs Gail Cuthbertson Non Voting Member

Members:

Mr Peter Alcorn	Parent Representative
Rev Alan Barr	Transferors' Representative
Mrs Linda Brown	Transferors' Representative
Mrs Joy Carrothers	Teacher Representative
Mrs Donna Kenwell	Parent Representative
Vacant	EA Representative

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the managing and functioning of the school and the nursery unit, including the appointment of staff both teaching and non-teaching. The Governors meet on a regular basis and take an active interest in and support the work of the school and nursery unit.

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.
- Log into Seesaw regularly to check 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 your child to develop acceptable social behaviour.
- Encourage your child to "help" at home.

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

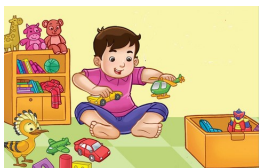
Please Help Me



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.



Principal Mrs Gail Cuthbertson

COOLEY NURSERY UNIT

90 Cooley Road

Sixmilecross

Omagh

Co Tyrone

BT79 9DH

Tel (028) 80758749

Email: info@cooley.omagh.ni.sch.uk

Dear Parent

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

Mrs Keys 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

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.

Nursery Holidays

2025/2026

Dates are inclusive

Staff Development Day	27 th October 2025
Hallowe'en	28 th October – 31 st October 2025
Christmas Holidays	22nd December 2025 – 2 nd January 2026
Staff Development Day	5 th January 2026
Staff Development Day	11 th February 2026
Mid-Term Break	12 th – 13 th February 2026
St Patrick's Day	17 th March 2026
Staff Development Day	30 th March 2026
Easter Holidays	31 st March – 10 th April 2026
May Day Holiday	4 th May 2026
Staff Development Day	22 nd May 2026
Spring Bank Holiday	25 th May 2026

School Terms

29th August – 19th December 2025

6th January – 27th March 2026

13th April – 30th June 2026

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

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. Throughout the school year we make regular visits to the Assembly Hall for our PE sessions. 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 the 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 online in January.

The Six Curriculum Areas

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



- **The Arts**
For example, we are creative, problem solvers, risk takers and investigators.



- ***The World Around Us***

For example, we ask questions and explore our surroundings.



- ***Language Development***

For example, we love story and rhyme time and talking and listening.



The lunch menu changes each term and will be made available on our school website. We encourage you to discuss with your child beforehand what options will be available for them at lunch time and what food they may wish to try.

The cost of school lunch is £2.50 per day and should be paid each Monday or on the first day of the school week.. Please place the money in an envelope, clearly marked with your child's name and leave it in the Nursery post box. Unfortunately we cannot accept a bank transfer for the payment of school lunches.

Your child may be entitled to a free school meal. To find out if you are eligible to apply, please visit www.eani.org.uk and select the parents tab for more information. If you require any help or support with this, please contact the school office.



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.

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 or alternatively paid directly to the school bank account.

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.

Milk



Children in nursery are provided with milk on a daily basis. There is no charge for this.

Dinners

As part of their full-time day in Nursery, pupils will be able to have a school lunch together. There are many benefits of children sitting down to enjoy a meal together, including the development of social interactions, knife and fork skills and the opportunity to try new foods. The school lunches are freshly prepared each day and will be served from our school kitchen.

- **Early Mathematical Experiences**

We enjoy sorting, counting, matching and sequencing.



- **Physical Development and Movement**

For example, we are adventurous with our movement and love to climb and ride our bikes.



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 them selves.
- 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.

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

Child makes a disclosure to teacher or teacher has concerns about child either as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time. Teacher should make notes of what was said or observed and must ACT PROMPTLY.

If staff or parents have a concern about an incident of child abuse then they MUST contact the designated teacher. If the incident involves the designated teacher then the Principal should be informed instead.

Staff refers matter to the designated teacher to discuss who makes full notes.

If there is any doubt about whether to take further action, advice is available from:

The designated teacher plans a course of action and ensures that a written record is made.

EA Designated Officer, Advisory Teacher for Child Protection (028 82411480), Social Services (028 71314090),, Education Welfare Officer; NSPCC.

The designated teacher contacts Social Services, EA Designated Officer and Chairman of Board of Governors; indicated that there is a Child Protection issue, and completes referral forms.

When seeking such advice you do not have to give any names. You are making an enquiry.

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

- 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/Daddy 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.

Identifying Belongings

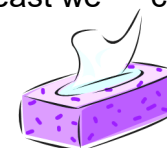
We will operate a picture system to aid the children in identifying their belongings eg peg, towel, library bag.

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 1.30 and 1.45 pm 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 behaviour is highly distressing and damaging 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.

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 any jewellery.

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.



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. Please be prepared to stay on subsequent days if your child is very insecure. Time in the nursery will be built up depending on how well your child settles, but it is hoped that your child will be able to stay for the full session by the 1st week in October.

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.