



CLIFTON HALL  
SCHOOL • EDINBURGH

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# Nursery Parents' Handbook 2025-26

## Our Nursery Ethos

### **Safe. Looked After. Play To Learn.**

At Clifton Hall we aim to foster children's curiosity, creativity and resilience through play-based learning in a natural setting, offering a holistic and well-rounded educational experience.

We offer high quality indoor and outdoor provisions which stimulate and extend your child's learning.

Children are supported by our highly trained Nursery staff team who value the uniqueness of each child and encourage a lifelong love for learning.

Our emergent curriculum embraces flexibility, creativity, and collaboration, nurturing confident and capable learners.



## The Nursery Team



Mrs Julie Cockburn MA, PGDE, FOLA 8  
Head of Nursery/Nursery Teacher  
Child Protection Coordinator



Mrs Nicola Affleck SVQ3  
Nursery Practitioner



Mrs Sue Kelly SVQ3  
Nursery Practitioner



Mrs Lindsay Duff HNC  
Nursery Practitioner / After School Club

### **Nursery Contact Details**

Telephone - Clifton Hall School Office -0131 333 1359  
Telephone - Nursery Office direct line -0131 335 5697  
Email - [julie.cockburn@cliftonhall.org.uk](mailto:julie.cockburn@cliftonhall.org.uk)

## Clothing - Dress for Mess!

It is preferred that the children dress in the Clifton Hall School tracksuit which is available to buy from school blazer at [www.schoolblazer.com](http://www.schoolblazer.com) or from the School Uniform Shop.

Please take care to clearly name all clothes and shoes.

Please ensure that you provide the following items:

- A Warm, hooded jacket is essential as your child will be out in all weathers. The children also have to walk to the lunch hall each day...come rain or shine! The school storm jacket from Schoolblazer is ideal.
- Velcro fastening shoes, or shoes that your child can put on and take off independently.
- Slip-on or Velcro fastening gym shoes.
- Slippers (optional)
- A pair of warm wellies (ideally neoprene lined).
- A pair of lined waterproof trousers or dungarees.
- Weather appropriate accessories such as sun hat, woolly hat, snood (no scarves), gloves and waterproof mittens.
- A full spare set of clothes - We do have some spare clothing in Nursery for occasional accidents but is **essential** that a spare set of clothes in a small bag is always left on your child's peg. A Clifton Hall School drawstring bag or rucksack as stated on the uniform list is ideal. Please wash and return any spare clothes belonging to the nursery as soon as possible.



## The Nursery Day

We offer a flexible nursery day. Whilst our Nursery provision runs from 8am to 3pm (5.30pm including wrap around care), we appreciate that parents have to balance work and personal commitments. As such, parents can opt for longer or shorter days to suit their, or their children's needs. We do ask that if you are planning to drop your child off later than 9am, or have any planned absences, that you let the Nursery staff know in advance where possible or inform the school office.

When your child arrives at Nursery, they will be warmly greeted by nursery staff, who will help them to self-register and encourage them to explore the Nursery in any way they choose, creating a positive and reassuring start to the day. At this stage, please do inform the nursery staff about any important information or updates regarding your child. We discourage bringing in any toys from home, but if it helps the settling in period, they can be played with until your child is happy to allow a member of staff store them and keep them safe until the end of their day.



## Curriculum

At Clifton Hall Nursery whilst being aligned with the **Curriculum for Excellence** Experiences and Outcomes, we follow an emergent curriculum. This is an approach that is **child-centred** and **responsive** to the interests and needs of your child. It focuses on recognising and building upon the natural curiosity and abilities of each individual. This ensures comprehensive coverage across the curriculum.

With this approach, learning experiences are not predetermined or prescribed, but rather emerge from the interests, questions, and ideas of the children themselves. The teacher or key worker, takes on the role of a facilitator, observing and actively participating in the children's play and exploration, and using their observations to inform the direction of the curriculum. So please do pass on or share any particular interests your child may have to Nursery staff.

The **emergent curriculum** encourages active learning, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. It supports the holistic development of the child by encompassing cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects of learning. At Clifton Hall we strive to create a rich and stimulating environment where children are encouraged to explore, experiment, imagine, and create.

**Documentation** is an important tool for understanding and extending your child's learning. Observations, photographs and recordings are used to capture your child's experiences and provide evidence of their progress and achievements. We recorded these observations in **Floor Books** and **On Learning Journals**. Group updates will be posted weekly, Individual updates every second week. Floor books are available for you to look at any stage...just ask a member of the Nursery team.



## Daily Activities and Routines

At Clifton Hall Nursery we offer a continuous provision of indoor and outdoor learning experiences, with **self-directed play** at the centre of your child's day. Children are encouraged to follow their own ideas and interests and may choose to do this on their own or with others.

At an appropriate time during every day the children are invited to listen to a story and participate in singing or rhymes. We enjoy these activities in one large group or may split into groups, depending on individual interests or developmental needs.

After a busy morning children are invited to help set up for snack. Children are offered a choice of milk, water and fruit. In addition, their snack may include a plain biscuit, rice cake, cheese or sandwiches

**Lunch** - Children enjoy sitting together with staff, in the lunch hall. The children are served a hot main course from the main school menu and can have pudding or fruit to finish, before walking back up to the Nursery building. All dietary requirements are catered and the national guidance *Setting the Table* is consulted. The lunch menus can be found on the school's Firefly page.



**Tooth brushing** - After lunch all of the children are supervised and instructed in brushing their teeth. The toothbrushing programme follows the National Standards for toothbrushing, details of which can be found on the 'Parent Noticeboard' on Teams. Parents may opt out of this if they wish.

**Green Time** - After lunch, there is Green Time for approximately 15 minutes. This period is intended to enable the children to digest lunch in a calm and relaxed environment. The children are given a choice of relaxing activities during Green Time. These activities can include listening to a story, listening to music, having circle time or joining in with mindfulness exercises.

**Outside** - Following Green time, all children are encouraged to enjoy some outdoor play in the well-equipped nurse's garden. They can experiment in the mud kitchens or stem shed, create obstacle courses using loose parts, explore the wooden fort climbing frame, hunt for bugs or help with planting in the raised bedding area. We make use of our wonderful outdoor area in all seasons.

## Weekly Activities

### Music

This is a structured time for playing and experimenting with musical instruments. This enables children to explore rhythm and to learn new songs with a member of the Clifton Hall School Music department.

### Enquiry-Based Learning

Every week our groups will be involved in enquiry-based learning activities. The aim of these sessions is to encourage the children to explore and learn about the world around them. The children will shape their own learning experiences and will use our outdoor spaces to learn and discover.



## **Modern Foreign Languages**

The pre-school (N2) children can choose to take part in weekly session of listening and responding to stories, songs and rhymes with a member of the Clifton Hall School Modern Language department.

## **Swimming**

The pre-school (N2) children enjoy a weekly swimming lesson with qualified swimming instructors from Clifton Hall's P.E department. At the end of the year the children take part in a swimming Gala

## **Forest Kindergarten**



Currently we offer the nursery children bi-weekly opportunities to participate in Forest School sessions, 'Tree Trunk Tuesday & 'Forest Friday'. Along with fully qualified staff, the children set off to our base camp in the woods for a morning or afternoon of fun and exploration. With 52 acres of outdoor space, we have ample opportunity to set up our base camp, which is located a short walk from our main school and nursery, in a lovely native broadleaf woodland. The children have a very diverse environment encouraging them to develop a lifelong love for nature through play and exploration, observing seasonal change with

opportunities to challenge themselves, take risks and progress their learning and development.

Our overall aims are to create an exciting and stimulating environment where children can regularly learn and develop transferable skills, while building confidence and self-esteem. Fostering a love of the outdoors and promoting woodland conservation.

We have developed a Forest School handbook which contains more information regarding the ethos of Forest School, risk assessments/benefits and detailed policies and procedures. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to look at this document. Alternatively, you can access it on the nursery page on Firefly.



## **Communication and Parental Engagement**

The Nursery is committed to working in partnership with parents. As well as constantly striving to build children's self-esteem and confidence, the Nursery places high importance on the safety and protection of children. The School has Child Protection Guidelines in place that all staff must follow where there are concerns about a child. Should any parent wish to see the Guidelines, these can be made available.

As well as informal daily contact there are a number of ways in which we encourage parental engagement in the Nursery:

## **Learning Journals**

We will use the online platform **Learning Journals** as a way of sharing information between Nursery and home. This can be used to share wider information and also more specific information about your child. This is a two-way communication platform and so parents are actively encouraged to use this to communicate with the Nursery and with other parents.

The *General and Parents Noticeboard* will be used to share information with the whole Nursery community. Here you will be able to find any relevant information about the Nursery. It will also be a place to find information about what will be happening in the Nursery in the coming weeks.

Your child's *Individual Journal* will give you specific information on what your child has been doing in the Nursery and more details on their development. We will regularly share photos of your child's experiences in the Nursery. This is also a great place for you to share information or photographs detailing what your child has been doing at home. No other parents can see the content of your child's *Journal*, and so this can be used to ask questions or share information confidentially at any time.



## **Email**

For any general enquires or questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mrs Cockburn directly [julie.cockburn@cliftonhall.org.uk](mailto:julie.cockburn@cliftonhall.org.uk)

## **Routine Communication**

Any routine communication will be emailed to you by the School Office. You will be sent a weekly link to the school Bulletin, which is published every Friday. It is a great way to see what is happening in the wider school community and notify you

of any up and coming events. Parents can also access information on the school's website which contains term dates and other information.

### **Parents' Evenings**

All parents will be offered an opportunity to formally discuss their child's progress during the school year. Additionally, parents are most welcome to discuss their child's progress at other mutually convenient times. Please remember that sometimes it is not appropriate to discuss anything other than very simple issues at drop-off or pick-up times and it can be better to make an appointment. We are happy to communicate with you in the method you feel most comfortable with, whether that be on Teams, over the phone or face-to-face.

### **Reports**

Towards the end of the Summer Term, the pre-school children will receive a Report. This contains a written report on children's development and progress in relation to 'A Curriculum for Excellence'.

The parents of younger children will have an additional Parents' Evening appointment at this time to discuss their child's development with the focus on their personal, social and emotional development.

### **Nursery and School Events**

During the year there are a large number of events, which we welcome and encourage parents to attend. These include The Nativity, Highland Games, Grandparents' Coffee Morning, Family Forest Kindergarten afternoon, Swimming Gala and Picnic Sports.



## **Standards, Quality and Development Report - Improvement Planning**

Details of the Nursery's Improvement Plan can be found on the Nursery section on Firefly. This is based on self-evaluation of the Nursery and refers to performance indicators published in the document 'A quality Improvement Framework for the early Learning and childcare sectors. The results of the ongoing self-evaluation are then, in turn, reflected in the Improvement Plan.



### **Nursery Audits, Care Inspectorate**

#### **Care Inspectorate**

SCSWIS (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland) was created by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, it will inspect, regulate and support improvement of social care and social work across Scotland. The previous responsibilities of Care Commission were passed to SCSWIS and are now known as Care Inspectorate.

A copy of our latest Unannounced Inspection Report (28.05.2018) can be viewed on the through the Care Inspectorate website [Inspection Reports \(careinspectorate.com\)](http://careinspectorate.com).

If you wish to contact the Care Inspectorate for any reason, their national telephone number is: 0845 600 9527