



# Blackhall Nursery Handbook

2025 – 2026

Successful learners · Confident individuals · Responsible citizens · Effective contributors

Some children's comments:

## I like Blackhall Nursery because...

"I like building big giant things that fall down"

"I like the woodworking"

"I listen to the stories"

"I love group times"

"I like the mud kitchen"

"I love the ladies"

"I like playing with the remote control cars"

"I like playing with the phones"

"my favourite thing to do is cuddle the teachers"

# CONTENTS

<b>Welcome</b>	p4
<b>Our Ethos</b>	
- Vision statement, aims and objectives, our values	p5
<b>Starting your child</b>	p6
- Welcome Pack	
- Drop-off, Pick-up, Children's safety and Transitional objects	p7
- What to Wear, Lunch, Snack, Celebrating birthdays	p8
<b>Staff and the Key Worker System</b>	p9
<b>Learning through Play</b>	p10
- The Nursery curriculum	p10
- Additional Support for Learning	p10
- Children's Learning	p11
- Transition to school	P11
- Risky Play	p12
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	
- Absence and Illness	p13
- Fire Drills, Accident and Incidents	p14
- Sun safety	p14
- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), UNCRC	p15
- Working with Partners	p15
- Role of the Health Visitor	p15
- Policies, Reports and the SQIP	p15
<b>Working in Partnership with Parents</b>	p16
- Communication with Parents	p16
- Exceptional circumstances	p16
- Privacy and Confidentiality	p17
- Concerns	p17
- The Website	p17
- Fundraising	p17
- Employer Match funding	p18
- Excursions, Parent Helpers and Community Involvement	p18
<b>Background and Organisation Structure</b>	p19
<b>Useful contacts</b>	p20



# Blackhall Nursery Handbook

We look forward to welcoming your child to Blackhall Nursery. Our aim is to make each child's Nursery experience a happy, stimulating and positive one. The Nursery is very much community based and has a wonderful location in Ravelston Park. Children enjoy the benefits of learning outdoors in an exciting enclosed walled play area, in the adjacent Community Wildflower Garden and in Ravelston Woods.

## Classes

- we provide the statutory entitlement of 1140 hours per annum of early learning and childcare as full day places of 6 hours, 10 minutes over 38 weeks (term-time dates)
- All places are funded by the City of Edinburgh Council, *so your child's place at Blackhall Nursery must be their only funded place.*

## Hours

- Mon – Fri, 08.25– 14.35
- In addition, you may purchase an extended day option Monday to Thursday which ends at 15.35 (subject to demand and availability)

**Term dates** will closely follow those of Blackhall Primary School.

Please note that a place at Blackhall Nursery does **not** guarantee your child a place at Blackhall Primary School. Children must enrol at their catchment primary in the November of the year before they start school, with non-catchment placing requests submitted directly to the City of Edinburgh Council's Children and Families Department. Nursery will advise parents about this process at the appropriate time.

**Blackhall Nursery** - Registered Office: Ravelston Park Pavilion, Craigcrook Road, Edinburgh EH4 3RU (Tel: 0131 332 8296).

E-mail: [staff@blackhallnursery.co.uk](mailto:staff@blackhallnursery.co.uk)

Website: [www.blackhallnursery.co.uk](http://www.blackhallnursery.co.uk)



Blackhall.Nursery

Blackhall Nursery is a company limited by guarantee  
Registered in Scotland No 270878      Scottish Charity No SC029338

# Our Ethos

## Vision statement

At Blackhall Nursery we inspire curiosity, independence and a life-long love of learning to help children be active contributors to our community and the wider world.

## Aims

<b>An Environment</b> that is	<b>Staff</b> who are	<b>Children</b> who are
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safe</li><li>• Clean</li><li>• Warm and welcoming</li><li>• Nurturing</li><li>• Well resourced</li><li>• Organised</li><li>• Enabling</li><li>• Stimulating</li><li>• Engaging</li><li>• Inviting</li><li>• Inspiring</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approachable</li><li>• Enthusiastic</li><li>• Motivated</li><li>• Nurturing</li><li>• Supportive (of families, <a href="#">children</a> and each other)</li><li>• Responsive</li><li>• Respectful</li><li>• Kind</li><li>• Consistent</li><li>• Knowledgeable</li><li>• Happy and fun</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Happy</li><li>• Kind</li><li>• Comfortable</li><li>• Curious</li><li>• Confident</li><li>• Resilient</li><li>• Engaged</li><li>• Included</li><li>• Leading their learning</li><li>• Developing</li><li>• Safe</li></ul>

## Our Values

**Kindness – is doing something for someone else, not because they can't, but because you can.**

We help our children to understand that kindness is putting someone else's feelings first and acting in a way that helps them to feel happy and cared for. Individual kind acts are important, but we hope that children will show a commitment to kindness as an element of their personality.

**Inclusion – is knowing and showing that everyone belongs, no exceptions.**

We help children to understand that everyone is different and that we all have strengths and things that we find challenging. Everyone has a right to feel comfortable, be included and able to contribute to their community

**Respect- is speaking and acting in a way that shows you care - about yourself, other people and the World.**

Children must respect themselves before they are able to respect anyone else. Self-respect is the foundation upon which respect for others is built. Children must also learn to respect their environment, both immediate and the wider world and understand that they have an important role to play in caring for it.

**Responsibility- is making your own decisions and accepting the consequences of your actions.**

We help our children to understand that with their rights come the need for responsibility. Others must have their Rights upheld too and we all have a role to play in this. We are responsible for our own behaviour as well as for looking after each other, our Nursery and the wider world.

**Integrity – is doing the right thing, even if it is the harder thing.**

We help the children to understand that being honest is telling the truth to others but that integrity is deeper, comes from their heart and reflects an inner commitment to truth

**Confidence – is not always being right but knowing that it is okay to be wrong.**

Confidence is not manifested outwardly – it is a deep-rooted inner strength and belief in ourselves that gives us the resilience to deal with whatever disappointments and opportunities that we are presented with.

## Starting your child

At the **start of term** in August, the children will be stagger-started in smaller groups over three days. All children will be offered the opportunity to attend for a shorter period initially to help them get used to Nursery. We are happy to devise individual settling-in strategies for your child as required.

All children develop at their own pace, but it is very helpful if children are able to go to the toilet independently by the time they come to Nursery and can manage their coat independently at pick-up/drop-off time. Children gain a great sense of pride and confidence in managing by themselves.

## Welcome Pack

The set of coloured forms included in the Welcome Pack must be returned **as soon as possible but before your child starts at Nursery**. These forms will be kept in accordance with our Confidentiality, Data Protection and GDPR Policy.

**Please ensure that all information (address, phone numbers etc.) is kept current during your child's time at Nursery.**

## Drop-off, Pick-up and Children's Safety

- Please be prompt for drop-off and pick-up as staff often have meetings at the end of the day.
- Nursery Hours: 08.25 – 14.35  
08.25 – 15.35 (Mon – Thu) if you have purchased the extended day
- Please contact the Nursery on 0131-332 8296 if you are delayed
- **Please also notify staff in advance if anyone other than your child's Nominated Parent/Carer is collecting him/her. This information will be recorded in writing in the Child Collection Log.**

We ask parents/carers to wait outside the gate until the start/end of each day. Please note that **you** are responsible for your child(ren) until they have been registered by a member of staff on arrival in the morning and as soon as they have been handed back to you at the end of the session.

## Transitional Objects

**We know that transitional objects such as a favourite cuddly toy or a blanket can help children to make a connection between home and the Nursery and therefore make settling in a little bit smoother but ask that any such item be clearly named. Please avoid small toys that can be easily lost as this can result in distress.**

## What to Wear

Painting, gluing, cooking, gardening, wet and muddy play are all offered at Nursery, so no best clothes please and please ***no shoes with laces!***

Please provide:

- **A pair of wellies** (cosy or with space for extra socks)
- **A wide-brimmed hat or legionnaire style hat** to protect your child from the sun while outdoors
- **At least 2 complete changes of clothes** to be kept in the bag provided on your child's peg



**\*Please write your child's name or initials on all clothing and footwear - if an item can be taken off it can be lost or mislaid!**

Each child will have his/her own named coat peg and cubby. Staff would be extremely grateful if children can recognise their own shoes/coats before they start at Nursery!

## Lunch

We provide children with a hot, two course meal at lunchtime, except for Fridays when we provide a packed lunch for all children. Our hot lunch provider makes lunches specifically for children, adhering to all the required policies and healthy eating guidance for early years settings. We generally find that over time, even the fussiest eater will try new things when they see the other children doing so, but we always provide an alternative and no child will go without.

We are unable to accept food from home due to allergies and storage considerations.

## Snack

The children are offered a healthy snack each day, with milk or water, in line with NHS Health Scotland's guidance "Setting the Table". **We do not use nuts at all and ask parents not to bring nuts or products containing nuts into the building.**

## Celebrating Birthdays



Birthdays will always be celebrated in Nursery, but staff are unable to hand out sweets or birthday cake on behalf of children and parents when it is a child's birthday – this is at the request of parents and supports our healthy eating and tooth brushing programme. We are happy to hand out invitations if the whole class is invited but if there are only a few children being invited please arrange to hand out invitations in a different way.



## Staff and the keyworker system

The Nursery is staffed by qualified early years practitioners led by the Nursery Manager and a part-time Business Manager who assists with the running of the Nursery.

- The noticeboard at the entrance to the cloakroom displays photographs of the staff on duty each day.
- The Nursery Manager is in day-to-day charge.
- In the absence of the Manager, there will be a designated Person in Charge.

### Key Workers

Children are placed into teams and each team will have their own keyworker. Children will largely experience free-flow play during the session with some activities taking place in teams, e.g. gather time, woodland walks, show & tell. Your child's keyworker should be your first point of contact within the Nursery as they will observe and record your child's progress and development. You may speak to a keyworker at any time and they will also be available to discuss your child's learning achievements at Stay and Play sessions and the parent consultation meetings. However in our small community nursery, all the staff get to know all the children very well.

Children will be supported to create and follow nursery rules. Praise and recognition are given by staff whenever they observe the rules being followed. We explain to children that the rules help to keep everyone safe and happy in Nursery (see our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy).

## Learning through play

“Through play, children and young people of all ages develop problem solving skills, imagination and creativity, language and observation skills, and memory and concentration. Children and young people use play to test their theories about the world and our place in it.” (Education Scotland)

## The Nursery Curriculum

At Nursery the emphasis is on learning through play. Learning opportunities are provided across the eight curricular areas\* and follow the “experiences and outcomes” outlined in the Early Level of [Curriculum for Excellence](#). Children’s interests inform our responsive planning and staff use these in order to extend the learning opportunities available. Cultural events will be celebrated throughout the year, for example St. Andrew’s Day, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

- \* Literacy
- \* Numeracy
- \* Health & Wellbeing
- \* Science
- \* Technology
- \* Social Studies
- \* Expressive Arts
- \* Religious and Moral Education

The purpose of the Curriculum for Excellence is to enable each child or young person to be a **successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen and effective contributor**, with a particular focus on health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.

Parents and carers have the biggest influence on a child’s development, particularly in the early years, and when staff and parents share information, discuss concerns and celebrate successes this provides the best possible start for children.

More information for parents of children aged 3-18 about education in Scotland, including ideas on how to support your child’s learning, can be found at <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/> and <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum>

## Additional Support for Learning

An additional support need comes from anything which is a barrier to learning. The education authority has many legal duties towards children with additional support needs. More information can be found in a booklet called *In On The Act: Information For The General Public* which is published on the

local authority website at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/inontheact](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/inontheact) - or contact the additional support for learning team on (0131) 469 3444.

Blackhall Nursery welcomes children who may require additional support for learning. We work to meet individual needs with the assistance of parents/carers and, when appropriate, with the health visitor and specialists (e.g. speech and language therapists, educational psychologists) in an integrated manner, following the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework. The Nursery has a very detailed Additional Support for Learning Policy which is available to read at any time.

To smooth your child's transition into Nursery, it is essential that you discuss any additional support needs or any developmental/wellbeing concerns you have about your child **before** your child starts at the Nursery - please contact the Nursery Manager to do this.

More information about Getting It Right for Every Child in Edinburgh can be found at <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/girfec>

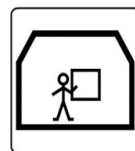
## Children's Learning



Children's progress and achievements are recorded in the form of pictures, photos, writing and learning goals in their 'All About Me' books. Every child has approximately one 'focus week' per term, where staff record several observations about your child over the week. This gives you a good snapshot of your child at that particular time and staff will then invite you in for a Stay and Play session where you can discuss this and your child can show you round the nursery.

**Please feel free to have a chat with the Nursery Manager or your child's key worker at any time, either informally or by appointment.** Individual parent consultations will also be available in September and May/June.

## Transition to school



A Transition Report will be completed by each child's keyworker in May / June of the year they are moving on to school. We aim to support children well through the transition to primary school. Whilst we have a programme in place with Blackhall Primary which gives our pre-school children the chance to become

familiar with the building, the early level staff team and assemblies, we also work collaboratively with all primary schools and parents/carers at transition time to make the process as easy as possible.

## **Risky Play**

The Care Inspectorate supports care service providers taking a positive approach to risk in order to achieve the best outcomes for children. Risk is anything where the outcome of an action is unknown. It could be a physical risk such as jumping from height or it could be taking the risk of giving a 'wrong' answer to a question. Children develop resilience through taking a chance, helping them to develop an understanding that mistakes don't matter – in fact, sometimes the best way to learn is by getting things wrong! As adults, we support the children to TRY and to appreciate that often, the process is more important than the outcome.

In the course of the year the children will be taken into Ravelston Woods by Nursery staff to enjoy exploring nature, observing the changes that occur across the seasons, and for some topic-based hunts.

We regularly use our woodworking area, where children can develop their skills using real tools.

Nursery staff will carry out risk assessments prior to such activities and the children will also be involved in discussions about risks and keeping safe.

It is recognised that such risk assessments should appreciate the benefits of risk, be proportionate and should support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities as safely as possible.

**It is important that children are allowed to take risks when playing** as otherwise they may grow up to be over-cautious or unable to judge potentially dangerous situations.

# Health & Wellbeing

## Absence

Tel: 0313 332 8296 anytime (answering machine for out-of-hours calls)

or

Email: [staff@blackhallnursery.co.uk](mailto:staff@blackhallnursery.co.uk)

You should inform the Nursery **in advance or at the start of a session** if your child is going to be absent **for any reason**. If a child does not come to Nursery at the start of a session, and we have not been notified that they will be absent, our Child Absence Policy requires the Nursery staff to contact you by telephone immediately after registration. If staff members are unable to contact you, they will contact the other adults on your child's Emergency Contact list as a matter of course. You should advise your child's other Emergency Contacts of this procedure.

**If staff members are unable to establish a child's whereabouts, the Child Protection Policy will be implemented by the Nursery Manager and a Referral will be made within one week of the first date of absence.** This is in line with City of Edinburgh Council practice and guidance.

## Illness

**Children with any form of sickness or diarrhoea must be kept at home for 48 hours after the last episode.** If in doubt, please phone the nursery for advice - Nursery staff have guidelines covering most infectious diseases.

**Children should not be given paracetamol/ ibuprofen prior to Nursery in the morning** as this may mask illness. Children should be well enough to engage in all Nursery activities and stay at home if this is not the case.

**Please also inform the staff in confidence** of any infectious diseases or of the presence of head-lice as soon as possible so that other parents can be alerted by a general message.

**Information about allergies, special dietary requirements or food intolerances must be included** on the Enrolment Form sent out with your Welcome pack, especially if your child is at risk of suffering anaphylactic shock. Written parental consent is required if staff are asked to administer medication and a record will be kept of any medication given. The manager or nominated person-in-charge will be responsible for administering medication.



## **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are carried out regularly and are recorded in the Fire Log.

## **Accident and Incident Records**

If an accident or incident involving your child occurs, it will be recorded in our Accident and Incident Record book and you will be notified and invited to countersign the form.

## **Sun safety**

We ask that families follow sun safety guidance and dress your child in tops which cover their shoulders, provide a sun hat and ensure that you apply sunscreen to exposed parts of your child's body (face, neck, arms, legs, feet) **before** they arrive at Nursery during the summer months. More information about our Sun Safety Policy will be shared with families as required.

## **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)**

In Scotland there are many frameworks to ensure that children can have the best start in life. The Children and Young People Act 2014 sets down ways in which this can be achieved and children's rights respected.

Getting it Right for Every Child is a national approach which will be adopted by the various agencies who work with children and families e.g. education, health, social work to ensure that children's wellbeing is given priority and that families receive the right support at the right time to ensure the best outcomes for the child.

## **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

This recommendation is in the process of becoming law in Scotland, we uphold them and support children to understand the rights to which they are entitled. You can find more information about how we are embedding UNCRC into nursery life on our display in the cloakroom. Further Details of UNCRC can be found at <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>.

### **Working with Partners**

Implementing GIRFEC means working with children, their parents/carers and partners such as the Health Visitor, Additional Support for Learning Service, Educational Psychologist etc. to bring about positive change and to improve the child's experiences and opportunities during their time at nursery and beyond.

### **Role of the Health Visitor**

The Health Visitor is a child's "named person" until they start primary school and will be involved in any discussions involving parents and outside agencies. This may lead to a Child Planning Meeting if needed to coordinate support strategies for a child.

Within the GIRFEC approach eight wellbeing indicators have been identified as areas in which children need to progress in order to do well now and in the future. These are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI).

### **Policies, Reports and the SQIP**

Blackhall Nursery has adopted a wide range of policies covering all aspects of Nursery life which are regularly reviewed by the staff and the board of directors. Copies of all our child-related policies can also be found on the website at <https://www.blackhallnursery.co.uk/governance>.

Copies of our most recent inspection reports by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland are always on display on the Blackhall Nursery noticeboard (within the main room), along with copies of the Nursery's registration and insurance documents.

Here you will also find a copy of the Standards, Quality and Improvement Plan (SQIP) which the Nursery produces each year for the City of Edinburgh Council. This lists our priorities and task list for the coming year.

## Working in partnership with parents

### Communication with Parents

The Nursery uses a variety of methods to communicate with parents, including e-mail, newsletters, letters, parent consultations, and face to face discussions. Paper communications are put in each child's cubby in the cloakroom, so please check this at pick-up time. As an Eco friendly Nursery we encourage the use of e-mail to reduce paper consumption.

- **Class Dojo app** We ask all parents to sign up for a free App called 'Class Dojo'. This is a secure app which will allow us to share photographs of the children and information about their day - giving you a snapshot of what happens in Nursery and a starting point for conversations with your child. Please complete the consent form included in the welcome pack to indicate your preference for this. Once enrolled you will receive a link to join and we will use this to support your child's transition in to Nursery.

- The **weekly update**, emailed on a Friday, contains everything you need to know about events in Nursery, your child's learning and dates for your diary. Please take time to read it to the end.

- The **Committee Newsletter**, emailed on behalf of the parent committee, will keep you up-to-date with fundraising and social events and what the committee has been doing on your behalf.

### Exceptional circumstances

In the unlikely event that the Nursery is unable to open (e.g. due to extreme weather conditions), parents will receive a text message to their mobile number advising of the closure. They will also be sent an email and message via the Class Dojo App. ***Please notify us immediately if your mobile phone number changes.***



## Privacy and Confidentiality

The Nursery operates a Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy. The Nursery has also adopted a Privacy Policy for Parents to give guidance to parents and when parents/carers accept a place for their child at the Nursery they are deemed to have accepted the terms of this policy. Copies of these policies can be found on our website at <https://www.blackhallnursery.co.uk/governance> .

## Concerns

Please do not hesitate to speak to your child's key worker, to the Nursery Manager or, where appropriate, to the Chair of the Parent Committee or the Chair of the Board if you have any concerns. You can also make an appointment if you need to talk in private. Our aim is to be open and constructive in relation to all Nursery matters and we hope that you will feel free to come forward with any comments or suggestions at any time. Our Complaints Procedure for Parents provides a mechanism for both informal and formal complaints.

## The website ([www.blackhallnursery.co.uk](http://www.blackhallnursery.co.uk))

The Nursery website contains lots of useful information including the application form, term dates, information about how the Nursery works, policies, curriculum and contact details.

## Funding and Fundraising

The Nursery's main source of funding is a 'per capita' grant from the City of Edinburgh Council. This covers overheads such as wages, rent, heating, lighting and insurance, but it is not inflation-linked and it does not reflect general increases in the cost of living. **We therefore rely on fundraising for all other expenses, especially new equipment and educational resources.**

The Parent Committee organise a variety of fun fundraising events and activities during the year. These events are not just about raising funds - they are also a great way to bring families together and to foster the community spirit which plays such an important part in our Nursery. **Please support our fundraising efforts whenever and however you can** in order to maintain and improve the facilities and opportunities on offer.

## Employer Match Funding

If you or another family member can access match funding through an employer, please tell a member of staff or a committee member as it can make a huge difference to our fundraising efforts.

Fundraising, corporate match funding and grant bids all help to provide the extras that make Blackhall Nursery special, such as the sports specialists who work with our staff to support the delivery of the curriculum, and we are very grateful for the support which Blackhall Children's Sports Committee has provided in recent years.

## Excursions, Parent Helpers and Community Involvement

There will be opportunities for regular visits to Ravelston Park and Woods, and we hope to finance an annual trip further afield e.g. to East Links Farm or the zoo through fundraising. Parent/carer volunteers may be invited to take part in these excursions, but please note that **we are unable to accommodate siblings for insurance reasons.**

The Nursery has an ethos of community involvement which is reflected in a variety of ways, e.g. the Parent Lending Library, the Children's Lending Library, the promotion of eco awareness with the children, fundraising initiatives on behalf of the Nursery and other child focused charities. These promote an awareness of the Nursery's position in the community and introduce the idea of citizenship at an early age.

## Background and Organisation Structure

Blackhall Nursery was established by parent volunteers in 1999 to meet the need for a catchment and feeder nursery for Blackhall Primary School. We hope that children who attend Blackhall Nursery will benefit from the opportunity to play and learn in a unique and nurturing community nursery before moving on to P1 with an established group of friends.

Blackhall Nursery is a partner provider with the City of Edinburgh Council and provides the statutory funded provision of early learning and childcare. It is

- a Scottish charity (registered with OSCR, the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator)

- a company limited by guarantee (registered with Companies House)
- managed by a voluntary Board of Directors and supported by a voluntary Parent Committee
- run by professionally qualified and dedicated staff

All parents/carers of children at the Nursery are invited to become company members of Blackhall Nursery and are warmly invited to stand for election as Committee office-bearers or to attend committee meetings which are open to all parents/carers. Details of meetings and copies of the Minutes will be posted on the Committee noticeboard in the cloakroom.

Details of the Parent Committee and the Board of Directors, together with the appropriate contact numbers, are available on request. The class rep is there to represent parents and can be asked to raise an issue on a parent/carer's behalf.

Please also feel free to get in touch with the Chair of the Parent Committee or the Chair of the Board about any matters of concern or with any ideas for the improvement of Nursery.

## Useful Contacts

Blackhall Nursery

Phone: 0131 332 8296

E-mail: [staff@blackhallnursery.co.uk](mailto:staff@blackhallnursery.co.uk)

Website: [www.blackhallnursery.co.uk](http://www.blackhallnursery.co.uk)

Care Inspectorate

Tel: 0345 600 9527

3 C & D South

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Parent Club: Scottish Government website covering all aspects of parenting

[www.parentclub.scot](http://www.parentclub.scot)

Parentline:

0800 028 2233

Phone & email support for anyone caring for a child

[www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)

Enquire:

0345 123 2303

The Scottish advice service for additional support for learning

[Enquire.org.uk](http://Enquire.org.uk)

GS 04/22, SM 05/22, GS 03/23, SM 05/24, SM 04/25