



**Craighalbert Centre**

Enabling Children to Achieve

# CRAIGHALBERT SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Reviewed: May 2025

## **Introduction from our Head of Learning**

Welcome to Craighalbert, formally known as The Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments.

Craighalbert is a specialist learning environment for children and young people aged 3-19 years with complex communication, learning, health and care needs. We are a through school, offering a continuous and nurturing learning environment from nursery through to primary, secondary, and senior phase education.

This handbook is designed to give you a helpful introduction to who we are, what we offer, and how we work in partnership with families.

Inside, you will find information about the range of learning, therapy, and care available to your child.

At Craighalbert, children are at the heart of everything we do. We believe in creating an environment that is nurturing, inspiring and filled with possibility. Every member of our team is committed to working collaboratively with families to support each child's development and wellbeing, and to help them thrive.

We hope this handbook gives you a sense of not just what we do, but of the warmth, dedication and ambition that shape daily life here. Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01236 456100 or visit our website [www.craighalbert.org.uk](http://www.craighalbert.org.uk). We are always happy to help.

We look forward to welcoming you and your child to Craighalbert and beginning this journey together.

Shona McMonagle  
Head of Learning

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## About Craighalbert

Craighalbert was established as The Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments in 1991. Recognised by the Scottish Government as a specialist provider, we support children across Scotland with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs. We are an 'all through school' offering on-site nursery and school placements at purpose-built facilities in Cumbernauld.

Our specially designed, well-resourced Centre is run by experienced, highly trained and educated staff, which include physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, nurses, teachers, learning, care, and therapy practitioners and lunchtime support assistants. These staff work in an integrated, collaborative manner to enable children and young people to maximise their abilities, achieve their full potential and develop their maximum level of independence.

Our experienced and highly skilled multi-disciplinary team work together to create a nurturing, supportive environment where the barriers to learning and development are minimised, enabling every child to thrive, developing their communication, learning and, life skills.

At Craighalbert, we understand the crucial role families play in a child's journey. That is why we work closely with parents and carers, providing guidance, resources, and practical strategies to help them support their child's learning and development both at home and in the community.

By sharing and demonstrating evidence-informed and best practice, we not only help individual children but also contribute to improving support for families across Scotland. Together, we can open up new possibilities for children with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs and give them the best chance to live happy, fulfilling lives.

As a charity we are governed by a board of trustees who oversee the overall management and administration of the charity, ensuring that we have a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision.

Our annual report and accounts can be viewed on our website  
<https://www.craighalbert.org.uk/information-hub>



## Our Mission

To advance practice in Scotland so that children with complex communication, learning, health and care needs achieve their full potential.

## Our Vision

A Scotland where every child no matter what their challenges is supported to reach their full potential.

## What do we do?

We provide high quality nursery, school and wider programmes of services delivered by a highly skilled team of practitioners working collaboratively in an enabling environment.

## Why do we do what we do?

Everything we do is to promote and support the development of children in Scotland with complex communication, learning, health and care needs to achieve their full potential while they experience the highest level of wellbeing possible.

## How do we do this?

We develop, model, and share best practice in holistic planning and service delivery to promote learning and development, and actively engage families to enhance their capabilities and foster ambition for their children.

## What Makes Us Unique?

### Holistic and Transdisciplinary Approach

We take a holistic and transdisciplinary approach to supporting children and their families. Our dynamic team of expert practitioners works collaboratively to promote communication, enablement, learning, development, and independence.

### Bespoke Facilities and Equipment

Our Centre is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and specialised equipment, designed to meet the unique needs of children with neurological conditions. This ensures that our programmes are as effective as possible.

### Expert Multidisciplinary Team

Our team includes highly skilled therapists, educators, and support staff, all of whom bring a wealth of expertise to every aspect of a child's development. This allows us to provide a personalised approach to care.

### Commitment to Innovation and Learning

We are committed to innovation and learning, constantly exploring new methodologies and technologies to improve our services and outcomes for children.

### Community and Family Engagement

We also recognise the importance of family and community. By integrating our practices into daily living, we help families feel empowered and supported.

### Working in Partnership

We work in partnership with individuals and organisations to share and enhance best practices, amplifying our impact and improving the well-being of children and young people with neurological impairments.

## **Our Values**

Our values guide everything we do; they shape our commitment to supporting children with complex needs to achieve their full potential.



The child's will and wellbeing are at the heart of everything we do.



We work together to achieve the highest possible wellbeing for all.



We are not afraid to set challenging goals.



We are compassionate, generous and friendly.



We seek to stimulate and influence others to improve outcomes for children, young people, young adults and families.

## About our School

Craighalbert is a purpose-built centre providing nursery, primary, and secondary education for children and young people with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs, aged 2-19 years.

Our pupils live within commuting distance, typically within a 1 hour drive of our Centre, but we are happy to explore alternative arrangements such as short-term or partnership placements for families living further afield.

We are an 'all through school' and our provision is inter-denominational and co-educational, and we offer a highly personalised, integrated approach to learning, therapy, and care.

We can support up to 30 children and young people at any one time, although our working capacity may vary depending on individual needs and the structure of our classes.

Children are grouped thoughtfully, with consideration given to a range of factors including age and stage, medical and care needs, learning styles, academic strengths, and peer relationships. This flexible approach allows us to create an environment where each child is supported to learn, develop, and thrive.

At Craighalbert, we believe that communication and literacy are fundamental rights that underpin every aspect of a child's education, social interaction, and personal development. Our commitment to fostering an inclusive, language-rich environment ensures that all learners, regardless of their physical, cognitive, or sensory challenges, have access to effective communication tools and comprehensive literacy instruction.

Children with complex communication needs and complex bodies require robust and tailored support to develop their voice through AAC systems such as PODD. Access to AAC is not just about providing a tool; it is about creating an environment where communication is valued, supported, and continuously modelled by knowledgeable partners.

Equally, literacy is a gateway to independent communication. The ability to read and write empowers individuals to construct their own messages, moving beyond relying on pre-programmed vocabulary or limited symbol sets. Research shows that literacy development is possible for all learners, including those with motor, cognitive, and sensory challenges, when provided with appropriate, systematic instruction (Erickson & Koppenhaver, 2021). Without literacy, AAC users remain dependent on others to anticipate and provide their vocabulary, limiting their ability to engage in autonomous, generative communication (Light & McNaughton, 2013).

At Craighalbert, we implement a centre-wide approach to AAC and literacy instruction that ensures:

- All learners have access to robust AAC systems tailored to their individual needs, providing multiple access methods such as direct selection, partner-assisted scanning, and eye gaze.
- AAC is embedded across all daily interactions to create an immersive aided language environment where communication is modelled and reinforced.
- All staff are trained as knowledgeable communication partners, ensuring consistent, high-quality AAC use and interaction support.
- A comprehensive literacy programme is provided for all learners, integrating emergent and conventional literacy instruction with research-based strategies that support reading and writing development.

By embedding communication and literacy within every aspect of our curriculum, we are not only removing barriers to learning and self-expression but also ensuring that our learners have the tools, confidence, and opportunity to participate fully in their learning and in their wider communities, beyond school.

## **Getting It Right for Every Child – Ensuring their Wellbeing**

The Getting It Right for Every Child Policy puts children and young people at the heart of planning and services and ensures their rights are respected across the public sector. It seeks to improve the way services work to support children, young people and families.

- The policy ensures that all children and young people from birth to 18 years old have access to a Named Person.
- The policy puts in place a single planning process to support those children who require it.
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines eight indicators of child wellbeing.
- The act places duties on public bodies to coordinate the planning, design and delivery of services for children and young people with a focus on improving wellbeing outcomes, and report collectively on how they are improving those outcomes.

Taking a 'Getting it Right for Every Child' approach to supporting every child is a priority within our school and we aim to assist every child in our school to reach their potential. The wellbeing of children and young people is at the heart of *Getting it right for every child*. The approach uses eight areas to describe wellbeing in which children and young people need to progress in order to do well now and in the future.

The eight indicators of wellbeing (SHANARRI)

*Safe*

*Healthy*

*Achieving*

*Nurtured*

*Active*

*Respected  
Responsible  
Included*

## **Why we have to get it right for every child?**

Education Services must safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of all children and young people and address need at the earliest opportunity. These functions are the responsibility of schools and establishments and those who work in them and with them. All who work in Education Services and in partnership with Education Services have a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of children and young people.



**getting  
it right**  
for every child



For more information on *Getting it Right for every Child* visit <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>

## **A Children's Rights Approach**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that sets out the rights every child has.

Children and young people have 42 rights under the UNCRC. These 42 rights give children and young people what they need to grow up happily, healthily and safely. They cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. The convention also describes how adults, services and governments must act and collaborate to ensure that all children can fully enjoy these rights. These rights are:

- Universal (they apply to everyone, regardless of who they are)
- Inalienable (they cannot be taken from you or given away)
- Indivisible (they are all equally important)
- Interdependent (a breach one is likely to impact on others)

You can access the Convention at the UNICEF site <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/> or if you want to understand more about UNCRC in a Scottish context visit <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/>



Craighalbert is a rights respecting school. We have embedded the principles of the UNCRC in all that we do. We create an inclusive environment where every child can exercise their rights fully. We work closely with children and families to navigate the challenges they face and to ensure that their rights are recognised and respected. We provide tailored support to ensure that these children are heard, valued, and given equal opportunities to thrive.

The incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into law in Scotland is a significant advancement and we strongly believe that the UNCRC provides a critical framework for protecting and promoting the rights of all children. However, we recognise that there are practical issues and concerns to consider around how these rights will be upheld in a consistent and equitable way across all organisations delivering public functions.





## Facilities

Craighalbert is designed to be fully accessible, ensuring that every child can learn, play, and thrive in a safe and stimulating environment. We offer a wide range of on-site facilities tailored to meet the needs of children with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs. These include a hydrotherapy pool, sensory room, trampoline, spacious classrooms, dining area, conference room, accommodation, and a variety of accessible toilets, including a Changing Places facility.

Learning happens everywhere at our school. Our rich and engaging environment encourages play, exploration, and curiosity-driven experiences. Outdoors, children can enjoy our accessible play park and open spaces, where they can move, discover, and connect with nature. The school is located in its own private grounds on the edge of Cumbernauld Community Park giving access to extensive private and community green space. This gives access to a vast network of safe paths providing for a strong balance between urban and natural outdoor learning opportunities.

All our classrooms are designed, sized, and equipped to accommodate children learning next to each other in specialist seating, wheelchairs, standing frames or on the floor e.g. we use range of interactive tables and screens that are accessible, vary in size, are height adjustable to floor level and tiltable.

Our primary and secondary classrooms, which have on average have 6 pupils per room are approximately 150m<sup>2</sup> and our nursery classroom which on average has 3 pupils, is approximately 72m<sup>2</sup>. To give that some perspective a typical modern classroom designed to accommodate 30 mainstream students is around 70m<sup>2</sup>. Whether indoors or outside, our facilities provide the perfect setting for children to feel safe, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.



**Oak Room**

## Movement Opportunities

At Craighalbert, we believe in the transformative power of movement. Every child, regardless of the barriers they face, deserves the opportunity to experience the joy and benefits of physical activity. We are committed to ensuring that all children can access meaningful movement experiences tailored to their unique needs and abilities.

Government physical activity guidelines recommend that children and young people with disabilities engage in 120-180 minutes per week of activity that raises their heart rate, plus three opportunities for strength and balance activities that are challenging yet manageable. We believe that every child has the right to be supported to engage in these physical activity recommendations.

Physical activity offers numerous benefits for children with disabilities, impacting their physical and mental well-being. It can improve cardiovascular health, increasing the ability and effectiveness of the heart and lungs. Regular exercise strengthens muscles and bones and improves the ability to coordinate and control movements. Physical activity can improve balance, posture and flexibility. Physical activity also has the power to improve mental health. It reduces anxiety and depression while boosting self-esteem and confidence. It enhances sleep patterns and alertness, directly impacting a child's ability to engage in learning. For many children, regular movement improves concentration and attention spans, making academic tasks more manageable and successful.

We believe every barrier to movement can be overcome with the right approach, assessment, and support. Each child receives an individual assessment where we carefully consider all potential barriers and design personalised movement solutions that work specifically for them.

We have a variety of facilities designed to make movement accessible and enjoyable. Our hydrotherapy pool and trampoline allow for unique environments offering completely different movement experiences, allowing children to experience the full benefits of physical activity in supportive, engaging settings.

Our small and large Innowalk Pro devices are robotic dynamic standing systems that provide safe, comfortable movement in weight-bearing positions. Like a fully supported cross-trainer, these devices offer as much or as little support as each child needs. We assess and support the use of trikes, enabling children to cycle independently or with assistance from our trained team during their school day. We evaluate whether supportive walkers suit each child's needs and abilities, determining the right equipment and supports required for safe, effective use throughout their school day.

Our Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP) is an established Special Olympics programme that assesses each child's unique abilities and provides a structured framework for building confidence and physical education skills. Every activity is modified to match each athlete's specific needs, interests, and motivations. This approach allows children to develop essential movement skills while preparing for potential sports participation in a supportive, non-competitive environment.

Our ultimate goal is discovering the combination of approaches, equipment, and supports that work best for your child. Whether through water-based activities, supported standing, cycling, walking aids, or structured skill development, we are committed to providing your child with the benefits that physical activity provides.

At Craighalbert, we do not just provide access to movement, we create pathways to confidence, health, and joy through personalised physical activity experiences.

### Hydrotherapy Pool

Our hydrotherapy pool is an engaging, fun and motivational place to promote children's learning and development. At Craighalbert, our pool is used in several ways to enhance the children's health and wellbeing.

The Child's Plan identifies barriers to learning and goals which informs whether the pool as a resource could be useful in overcoming barriers or achieving goals and which of the below functions best to suit this:

- **Aquatic Therapy:** is defined by the Aquatic Therapy Association of Chartered Physiotherapists (ATACP 2014) as, "A physiotherapy programme utilising the properties of water, designed by a suitably qualified Physiotherapist". The physiotherapy team at the Centre prescribe and run blocks of aquatic therapy to work with the child on a specific gross motor or holistic goal with evidence-informed practice to achieve effective outcomes. For example, this can include twice a week post-op recovery following hip or spinal surgery to recover movement, strength and confidence. Other times it may be a once a week termly block to focus on standing ability with the water aiding by taking a proportion of their weight, our gradually increasing pool depth, steps and pool platform allow us to tailor this exactly to each child's needs. Hydro theory and competency training is provided to all staff handling children in the pool and all who may be involved in the planning or delivery of sessions in the pool.
- **Promoting Targeted Learning and Development:** This is a collaborative transdisciplinary approach where the pool is utilised by therapeutic staff and class staff working together to promote and support a targeted area of learning and development. Class staff are trained and supported by our onsite therapists to maximise children's learning with a focus on a particular outcome e.g. speech and language therapists working with class staff on the achievement of a communication goal for a child. This is often an environment where the children are more motivated to communicate and focus. It can also help them relax and use their body more than they are able to on land with the goal to translate these skills into increasing environments and function.
- **Promoting Child Wellbeing:** For some children the pool can assist in promoting emotional regulation, easing pain and discomfort or increasing mood. Access to the swimming pool can help contribute to meeting the government guidance on recommended physical activity for children with disabilities which is 20 minutes a day or 120-180 minutes in a week of

activities that increase their heart rate. It's also advised children with disabilities should engage in activities that promote strength and balance x3/week. For those with disabilities finding activities that increase their heart rate and are manageable but challenging for their strength and balance is difficult. The use of the pool at Craighalbert helps contribute to both these recommended areas of physical activity for children with disabilities. It is also used as part of our MATP (Motor Activity Training Programme). Due to the buoyancy, the pool provides an opportunity for children with complex motor impairment to be supported to explore movements that they would not be able to elsewhere. As per the UNCRC article 12, children's voices are heard at the centre for their opinions on accessing the swimming pool with one such comment being repeatedly that "swimming is beautiful".

- Swim Awards: We have qualified disability swim teachers on site who work with children through early swimming awards. The lessons vary in activities depending on each child's understanding of the task, required processing time and ability. We offer Discovery Duckling awards where appropriate which is aimed largely at pre-school children who are new to swimming lessons to gain water confidence while staying close to adult support. The Rockhopper series is an exciting programme consisting of 9 awards which introduce learners with disabilities to the joy of water. Each award has 7-8 learning outcomes. They can also achieve Emperor series distance awards using adapted strokes from 5 metres to 400 metres. Alpha awards are designed to build confidence in those who need additional support during their swimming lessons and celebrate every achievement. All of these swim programmes develop water confidence and water skills, as well as increasing water safety awareness and knowledge.
- Responsiveness to children's changing needs: e.g. After surgery or Botox or changing between above focus of pool sessions.

Swimming is a low-impact exercise that offers numerous health and wellbeing benefits, positively impacting both physical and mental well-being.

Hydrotherapy significantly improves cardiovascular health, blood circulation and efficiency of internal organ function. as the warmth of therapeutic pools enhance blood circulation throughout the body. This improved circulation, combined with swimming's stress-reducing effects, can provide relief from constipation and other digestive issues. Hydrotherapy has also been shown to enhance respiratory function by increasing lung capacity and aiding in secretion clearance, making it particularly beneficial for individuals with respiratory conditions.

Swimming has been proven to reduce pain, stress and anxiety while decreasing fatigue and improving sleep quality. Sleep is an incredibly challenging area for many children with motor function and neurodevelopmental disorders, and poor sleep can significantly impact brain function, engagement, and learning capacity. Swimming provides substantial cognitive benefits by increasing blood flow to the brain, delivering more oxygen and nutrients that boost cognitive function. The activity stimulates the release of beneficial neurotransmitters including serotonin and dopamine, which improve mood, focus, and memory.



Water provides 600-800 times more support than air, allowing individuals to perform activities more easily than on land while still providing resistance for muscle strengthening. Swimming assists with acute neurological and functional recovery, improves gross motor function and hand function in children, and enhances walking balance, gait efficiency, and endurance. Importantly, skills developed in the pool can be transferred to land-based activities and functional settings, enabling children to achieve their specific goals.

Each term the key staff involved in each Child's Plan (teachers, swim teachers and therapists) meet to plan which children should be accessing the pool and how often, based on their updated Child's Plan, timetabling access and identify the best people required for optimum benefits from the session. This remains subject to change throughout the term depending on how the children are responding to their sessions and any changing needs that arise for the children with no delay to acting on addressing their needs. As the children's presentation and energy levels can vary throughout the day and week there are opportunities to quickly reschedule within the day or week. Effective collaborative working ensures all aspects of the child are considered throughout any session in the pool e.g. communication, literacy, health and wellbeing, SQA qualifications and how they access the curriculum. These knowledge and skills are then transferred into all other parts of their school day and shared with family for home learning.

We support parents with how to handle their child safely in the pool and ways to support their child to develop in the pool. We aim to increase opportunities for the child through this as well as increasing family confidence and opening doors into the community for them.



# Hydrotherapy Pool

## Trampoline

Rebound Therapy is the therapeutic use of a trampoline. At Craighalbert our Rebound trampoline has a dedicated space surrounded by padded walls and a tracking hoist goes over the trampoline. All Craighalbert staff are trained in delivering Rebound Therapy and supported as required by experienced physiotherapists.

Rebound Therapy is used in various ways to enhance the health and wellbeing of the children as well as provide a different environment and opportunity for their learning and development.

There are multiple potential benefits of rebound therapy according to research including:

- Development of muscle strength, range of movement, coordination, posture, balance and anticipation of movement
- Increasing or decreasing muscle tone
- Improvement of stamina, cardiovascular function, respiratory function, bowel function and circulation
- Promotion of relaxation
- Promotion of good mental health
- Development of confidence
- Improvement of body awareness
- Stimulation of sensory system
- Improvement in communication and vocalisations
- Reduction in pain
- Improved quality of life

Rebound Therapy is assessed at Craighalbert to establish if it would be an effective way to help a child overcome their barriers and achieve their goals as well as ensure appropriate safety measures are in place. It is used for goal focused blocks whether this is working on their standing balance, aiming to improve their cardiovascular fitness or a focused and motivating environment for improving their communication. We use at Craighalbert to assist with secretion clearance for those who struggle with this and have shown benefit from use of the trampoline for this purpose. We also use it for aiding bowel movements for those who struggle with constipation, as yet there is no clear evidence on how often/when this would best benefit therefore this is done on a case by case basis with the aim to keep bowel movements regular and can be increased during acute periods of constipation if found to be beneficial for that child. It can also be used as part of our Motor Activity Training Programme MATP (adapted PE) or to aid sensory regulation for those struggling to regulate. It can be used as a specific block, post or pre-operatively whether to optimise fitness pre-op or to increase movement, strength and balance post-op. It is used as a tool during our health weeks and specific dedicated weeks e.g. Book Week to provide different opportunities to optimise children's engagement in their learning and socialising with their peers.

Each child's participation in Rebound should be based on overcoming identified barriers to their learning and/or helping them achieve their identified collaborative goals as per their Child's Plan developed by their Team Around the Child. This



remains subject to change at any time depending on how the children are responding to their sessions and any changing needs that arise for the children with no delay to acting on their needs. As the children's presentation and energy levels can vary throughout the day and week there are opportunities to quickly reschedule within the day or week. Effective collaborative working ensures all aspects of the child are considered throughout any session on the trampoline e.g. communication, literacy, health and wellbeing, SQA qualifications, how they access the curriculum. These knowledge and skills are then transferred into all other parts of their school day and shared with family for home learning.

The trampoline can help contribute to the government guidance on recommended physical activity for children with disabilities which is 20 minutes a day or 120-180 minutes in a week of activities that increase their heart rate. It's also advised children with disabilities should engage in activities that promote strength and balance x3/week. For those with disabilities finding activities that increase their heart rate and are manageable but challenging for their strength and balance is difficult. The use of the trampoline at Craighalbert helps contribute to both these recommended areas of physical activity for children with disabilities.



## Innowalk

The Innowalk PRO is made by Made for Movement and is a robotic dynamic standing device that allows for safe and comfortable movement in a weight bearing position. It provides children and adults with physical disabilities the opportunity to participate in dynamic standing and physical activity, which is extremely important for physical health and mental well-being. No independent ability to stand or walk is required, as the Innowalk PRO supports the user from sitting into a standing position, and provides assisted, guided, and repetitive movements in a safe upright, weight-bearing position. It is quickly and easily adjusted between different users with a range of supports available for differing postural needs.



At Craighalbert, we want to remove barriers to participation in physical activity and aim to follow government guidelines on physical activity levels for children with disabilities. We have one small and one large Innowalk based at the school and regularly use these to enhance the children's health and wellbeing, simultaneously engaging them in their learning within the classroom. Each child is assessed by a physiotherapist and reviewed regularly for growth. Class staff are all educated and trained up in Innowalk use.

The Innowalk provides numerous benefits for people with movement limitations, promoting physical activity, improving well-being, and reducing health risks. It facilitates weight-bearing movement, stimulates gross motor function, and offers opportunities for both active and passive movement.

- Physical Activity and Motor Function: The Innowalk enables dynamic standing, engaging muscles and joints, promoting improved circulation, and enhancing respiratory function.
- Gastrointestinal Function: Dynamic standing in the Innowalk can help relieve constipation and wind and encourage regular bowel movements.
- Improved Range of Movement and Flexibility: The Innowalk can increase passive range of movement and reduce spasticity.
- Cardiovascular Exercise: Innowalk provides a way to introduce cardiovascular exercise, especially for individuals with limited access to traditional methods.
- Gait Improvement: The guided movement in the Innowalk can help improve gait patterns, allowing for more efficient walking.
- Mental Well-being and Capacity to Learn: Improved physical activity and circulation can lead to better attention spans, improved sleep, and a sense of accomplishment, contributing to enhanced mental well-being.

<https://www.madeformovement.com/en-gb/innowalk/children>



## **Placing Requests**

You have the right to make a placing request for your child to be educated in a school other than the local school.

Usually in December each year, your local authority will advertise its arrangements for placing requests.

There are sound educational reasons for trying to ensure that the transfer or admission of children to a school takes place at the start of a school session. Other than those who are moving home to a new area, parents are advised to time any placing requests so that they take effect from the beginning of the new school session.

Placing requests to primary school does not necessarily ensure that your child will have a direct entry to the associated secondary. Advice on this must be sought from the Head of Learning. Further information on placing requests and procedures is available from your local council's website.

Parents and Young People have a right under the Additional Support for Learning Act 2009 to make a placing request for their child or young person to attend a nursery (including partnership nursery), special school or special class managed by the home authority. In the event of a successful placing request the authority are not required to provide transport. The Act also enables parents and young people to make a placing request to attend a school/establishment belonging to another authority.

## **School Admissions**

We provide nursery and school placements for children and young people aged 3-19 years who have complex communication, learning, health and care needs. children currently attending our nursery and school have been diagnosed with a neurological condition e.g. Acquired Brain Injury, Bilateral Polymicrogyria, Cerebral Palsy, Rare Genetic Conditions, Rett Syndrome, Syndromes without a Name, Tuberous Sclerosis Complex.

We offer both full-time attendance and partnership placements; a child/ young person may attend Craighalbert on a part-time basis and a nursery, school or college more local to their home. We are a through-school, meaning that once admitted children may progress from nursery to primary and on to secondary within the same supportive setting, provided Craighalbert remains the best place to support their complex communication, learning, health, and care needs.

Admission to our school is subject to:

- A detailed assessment by our multi-disciplinary team to confirm that we would be the very best place to support their abilities and learning and development needs;

- Submission of a placing request to the local authority in which the child is resident; and
- The agreement of an Individualised Placement Agreement (IPA) and associated fees with the child's home local authority.

If we think that your child is likely to benefit from a placement at Craighalbert, we will offer an initial, multi-disciplinary assessment.

This may take up to 5 hours, with the option to spread assessment activities over several visits to e.g. allow your child to participate at a pace right for them and minimise any fatigue.

Following the assessment, if we believe that Craighalbert is the most appropriate place to meet your child's needs, we will provide a letter confirming that we are able to offer a place. Families can submit a placing request at any time throughout the year; this should be submitted to the local authority in which the child resides.

We understand this can be an emotional and uncertain time. Please be assured that we aim to make you feel welcomed, supported, and involved throughout the process. We are here to offer support throughout the process. In addition, we can signpost families to other organisations that may be able to provide advice or assistance. Useful links and resources can be found in Appendix I.

Once a placement has been agreed, we will form a Team around your Child (TAC) comprised of key staff from our multi-disciplinary learning and development teams.

We will organise a pre-admission meeting for parents, key staff from the child's local learning, health and social care team and our TAC to plan a personalised transition.

## Staff List

### Leadership Team

Chief Executive Officer

Bob Fraser

Head of Learning

Shona McMonagle

Head of Health

Barbara-Ann Hagerty

Head of Quality, Innovation  
& Partnerships

Alison Philipps

Head of Corporate Services

Christina Greig

### Teachers

Curriculum and Resource Lead

Eilidh Stratton

Teacher

Katie MacDonald

Teacher

Eleanor Owen

### Learning, Care & Therapy Practitioners

Gillian Wylie

Catherine Anderson

Kimberley O'Meara

Lauren Milloy

Lorraine Meeke

Anna White

Molly McBride

Michele Cunningham

Karen McAdam

Scott McPhedran

Natalie Coulter

Esther Douglas

Nodira Akhmedjanova

Jennifer Whyte

Martin McNab

Adam Rogan

Nicola Allison

### Lunchtime Support Assistants

Ann McBride

Candace Skinner

Siobhan Hendry

Nicola Wright

Joanna Wandrum

June Hart

Kathryn McCann

Olivia McPake

### Nursing

Nurse

Katie Murphy

### Speech and Language Therapy

Speech & Language Therapy

Aoife McCaffrey

Team Lead Speech & Language Therapist	Dearbhla Gavigan
Occupational Therapy Occupational Therapy Team Lead Occupational Therapist Occupational Therapist	Rhona Carmichael Laura McLuckie Tina McNicol
Physiotherapy Physiotherapist Physiotherapist Physiotherapist	Jenni Coulter Joanna Paterson Leah O'Neil
Admin Administrator Administrator	Anne Taylor Donna Sheppard
Nutrition & Wellbeing Dietary Cook	Jason McComisky
Facilities Facilities Officer Pool Attendant Housekeeper Housekeeper Facilities Assistant	John McKellan Gavin Robertson Louise Owens Jackie Black Ben Cunningham
Support HR & OD Officer Finance Officer Business Development Manager	Caroline Glen Lynn Turnbull Alicia McKenzie



## School Calendar / Holidays 2025-26

### Summer 2025

Children last day of term:	Tuesday 24th June 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Wednesday 25th June 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Thursday 24th July 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Friday 25th July 2025
Children return:	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Please note that from Monday 28th July – Thursday 7th August children will attend from 9.30am – 3pm.	
In-Service day (staff only):	Friday 8th August 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Friday 15th August 2025

### September 2025

Holiday:	Friday 26th September 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Monday 29th September 2025

### October 2025

Last day of term:	Friday 10th October 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Monday 20th October 2025
Children return:	Tuesday 21st October 2025

### Christmas 2025

Children last day of term:	Thursday 18th December 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Friday 19th December 2025
In-Service day (staff only):	Monday 5th January 2026
Children return:	Tuesday 6th January 2026

### February 2026

Holiday:	Monday 16th February 2026
Holiday:	Tuesday 17th February 2026
In-Service day (staff only):	Wednesday 18th February 2026

### April 2026

Children last day of term:	Thursday 2nd April 2026
In-Service day (staff only):	Friday 3rd April 2026
In-Service day (staff only):	Monday 20th April 2026
Children return:	Tuesday 21st April 2026

### May 2026

Bank Holiday:	Monday 4th May 2026
In-Service day (staff only):	Friday 22nd May 2026
Holiday:	Monday 25th May 2026

### Summer 2026

Children last day of term:	Tuesday 23rd June 2026
In-Service day (staff only):	Wednesday 24th June 2026

## The School Day

The core school day is as follows, however there will be variations within the day, depending on learner needs:

Arrival	09.15
Morning classes	09.15 – 12.15
Lunch:	12.15 – 13.00
Afternoon classes	13.00 – 15.15
Home time	15.15

## School Security

At Craighalbert we have procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of our pupils and staff. These measures include the use of a visitors' book, ID badges and escorts while visitors are within the school building.

All visitors should enter through the main entrance at the front of the building. To gain entry, all visitors should press the call button, located to the left of the door, then report to reception before they go to any other part of the school.

It is Craighalbert's policy that if any staff member is unsure of a person within the school they will ask for verification of identity. This measure ensures that children learn in a safe and protected environment. We appreciate your support in carrying out all the above measures.

## Attendance and Absence

*Section 30 of the 1980 Education Act places a duty on every parent/carer of a child of 'school age' to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Attendance must be recorded twice a day, morning and afternoon. We register morning attendance 09.15-09.45 and afternoon attendance 12.15-12.45.*

*Regulation 7 of the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) amendment, etc. Regulations 1993 requires each child's absence from school to be recorded in the school register as authorised or unauthorised.*

At Craighalbert we encourage parents to work with the school to maximise the opportunities to learn for their child by encouraging good attendance.

If your child is going to be absent, we ask that you inform the school as soon as possible. Parents can call 01236 456100 or email [admin@craighalbert.rg.uk](mailto:admin@craighalbert.rg.uk) to advise of their child's absence and expected date of return. A message can be left on our answer machine 24 hours.

If you do not inform us of your child's absence, we will try to contact you. This may involve contacting you and, where necessary, your emergency contact person(s). If your child receives transport to school, parents should inform their transport provider as soon as possible, that their child will not be attending school. Please remember to contact your transport provider/escort regarding the date when the transport will be required from again.

## **Appointments during school hours**

If your child has an appointment during school hours, please provide our administration team with details of the appointment and the time your child will be collected from school, then collect them from the school reception at the specified time.

It may be appropriate for staff to attend the appointment with you and your child. Staff may ask you if they can attend with you, or if you would like someone to attend with you then we encourage you to speak with our Head of Learning, Head of Health or appropriate therapist in advance.

## **Emergency Closure**

We make every effort to maintain a full educational service, but sometimes circumstances arise which lead to disruptions. School may be affected, by for example, severe weather or power failures. In such cases we shall do all we can to let you know about the details of closures or re-opening. We shall keep in touch by using group text and email.

In the event of an emergency closure, families can access our online home learning resources at [www.craighalbert.org.uk/homelearning](http://www.craighalbert.org.uk/homelearning). We encourage you to make use of these materials to continue supporting your child's learning and development at home.

If a closure is prolonged, we will be in touch to check in and offer support where needed. Where appropriate, members of our team may also arrange a home visit to provide learning or therapy support. Our aim is to ensure continuity of learning and therapy, even during periods of disruption.

## **School Dress Code**

At Craighalbert, we believe in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all our pupils. Our uniform policy reflects our commitment to the



United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and aims to promote a sense of belonging and equality among our diverse student body.

Our school uniform consists of the following items:

1. Top: Yellow T-shirt or polo shirt
2. Bottom: Plain, dark-coloured leggings, jogging bottoms, trousers, shorts, skirt, or dress
3. Outerwear: Navy cardigan or jumper
4. Specialist Swimwear: Provided by the Centre

To ensure affordability and accessibility, we offer two options for acquiring uniforms:

1. Branded items: Parents/carers may purchase branded tops, cardigans, and jumpers from our designated uniform supplier. [www.scotcrestschoools.co.uk](http://www.scotcrestschoools.co.uk)
2. Non-branded items: Plain tops, cardigans, and jumpers in the specified colours may be purchased from local supermarkets or other retailers.

Both options are equally acceptable, and no pupil will be treated differently based on their choice of branded or non-branded items.



We recognise that some pupils may require adaptations to their uniforms due to medical, sensory or physical needs. We are committed to working with parents/carers to find suitable solutions that maintain the overall uniform appearance while accommodating individual requirements.



As part of our commitment to sustainability and affordability, we will be implementing a uniform swap shop. Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Donate outgrown uniform items in good condition to the swap shop rail
- Take items from the rail that are suitable for their child

This initiative helps reduce waste, promote recycling, and support families in managing uniform costs.

We strive to ensure that our uniform policy does not place undue financial burden on families. Help with school clothing grants may be found at the following link. <https://www.mygov.scot/clothing-grants> for those that meet the criteria. If you are experiencing difficulties in obtaining the required uniform items, please contact the Centre Leadership Team in confidence to discuss available support options.

We understand that there may be occasional circumstances where a pupil is unable to wear the full uniform. In such cases, please let the teacher know via the home/school diary. We will always approach uniform-related issues with sensitivity and understanding.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

At the start of each academic year, parents will be issued with an annual data check form. Please ensure that this completed and returned to the school. It is also important that you let us know if there are changes to your telephone number(s) or to those of your emergency contacts throughout the year.

## **School Meals**

We place a strong emphasis on the role of nutrition in supporting children's health, learning, and development. Many of the children who attend our school have extremely complex and multiple healthcare needs, and we are committed to ensuring that every aspect of their care, including nutrition and hydration, is managed to the highest possible standard.

A high proportion of our children experience eating, drinking, and swallowing difficulties. To support their safety and wellbeing, we work closely with parents, carers, and NHS professionals—including speech and language therapists, dietitians, and specialist nurses—to ensure that all food and fluids are safely prepared and delivered in line with each child's needs.

We follow the IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative) framework to provide the correct food and fluid textures for children who require modified diets. Texture and consistency are audited regularly, and all staff involved in food preparation and feeding are trained accordingly.

Our in-house chef prepares freshly cooked meals tailored to each child's medical, nutritional, and cultural needs. This includes the fortification of meals, the use of prescribed dietary supplements, and the preparation of foods that meet individualised nutrition plans. When required, meals are adapted to accommodate allergies, intolerances, or specialist diets, and we work closely with families to ensure continuity between home and school.



For children who are unable to eat or drink orally, enteral feeding may be required. This includes feeding via:

- Nasogastric (NG) tubes
- Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) tubes
- Jejunostomy (JEJ) tubes

Feeds may be given intermittently or continuously through a pump, by bolus method, or via a blended diet. We work in partnership with parents, carers, and NHS dietitians to ensure each child receives a safe, appropriate, and well-balanced diet throughout the day.

We are fully equipped and trained to deliver safe, high-quality enteral feeding through a robust and individualised approach that includes:

- Collaborative Communication: Ongoing co-ordination with parents, carers, dietitians, nutritionists, and specialist nurses to ensure care plans are consistent and up to date.
- Individualised Nutrition Plans: Each child follows a personalised plan developed by NHS dietitians, with regular reviews to meet their evolving needs.
- Staff Training & Best Practice: All staff are trained in SCCMI's best practices for enteral feeding and nutrition management. Training includes safe use of feeding devices, bolus feeding, and blended diet protocols.
- Specialist Catering Knowledge: Kitchen staff are trained to prepare food to the correct texture and nutritional standards, ensuring safety and suitability for each child.
- Ongoing Auditing & Compliance: Regular audits are conducted to ensure high standards in enteral feeding, food safety, infection prevention, and medication administration.

All staff involved in enteral feeding receive both theoretical and practical training, which is updated every two years in collaboration with nurse specialists and/or through accredited online training.

We are committed to providing a safe, respectful, and dignified approach to feeding and nutrition. Our goal is to ensure that every child—regardless of the complexity of their needs—receives the nutrition and hydration they require to thrive and engage fully in their learning.

## Curriculum for Excellence

Children and young people's rights and entitlements are central to Scotland's curriculum and every child and young person is entitled to experience:

- a curriculum which is coherent from 3 – 18.
- a Broad General Education (BGE) including well planned experiences and outcomes across all the curriculum areas from early years through to S3. This includes understanding the world, Scotland's place in it and the environment, referred to as Learning for Sustainability.
- a Senior Phase after S3, which provides opportunities to attain and achieve, including to study for qualifications, awards, and other planned activities to develop the four capacities.
- opportunities for developing skills for learning and life.
- opportunities to maximise their individual potential, benefitting from appropriate personal support and challenge.
- support to help them move into positive and sustained destinations beyond school.
- their thoughts and opinions heard.

We offer a bespoke curriculum designed to meet the diverse and complex needs of children with neurological, physical, and sensory conditions. Our approach is rooted in the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence but adapted and enhanced to ensure accessibility and relevance for all our pupils.

Key Features of our Curriculum:

- **Personalisation:** We recognise that each child's needs are unique. Our curriculum is flexible, allowing for individualised learning pathways that cater to each pupil's specific abilities, challenges, and goals.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Our curriculum integrates education with therapy, combining curricular subjects with essential life skills, and physical therapies, all underpinned by communication.
- **Sensory Integration:** We incorporate multisensory learning experiences throughout our curriculum, supporting pupils with various sensory processing needs.
- **Technology-Enhanced Learning:** We utilise assistive technologies to support learning and communication, ensuring all pupils can access and engage with the curriculum.
- **Life Skills and Independence:** Our curriculum places strong emphasis on developing practical life skills and promoting independence, tailored to each pupil's capabilities.
- **Creative Arts and Expression:** We offer rich opportunities in music and art, adapted to be accessible for all abilities, fostering creativity and self-expression.
- **Physical Education and Movement:** We are currently developing the Motor Activity Training Programme which focuses on developing motor skills, body awareness, and enjoyment of movement within each pupil's relevancy.

- **Communication Focus:** Developing effective communication skills is at the heart of our curriculum, using a range of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) approaches appropriate to each child.
- **Social and Emotional Learning:** We prioritise the development of social skills, emotional regulation, and positive relationships throughout our curriculum.
- **Community Integration:** Our curriculum includes opportunities for community-based learning, helping pupils generalise skills and engage with the wider world.
- **Flexible Pacing:** We allow for flexible progression through learning, recognising that learning may not always be linear for our pupils.

#### Curriculum Areas:

- Languages and Literacy (including alternative communication systems)
- Numeracy
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Studies
- Sciences
- Technologies
- Religious and Moral education
- Expressive Arts

Senior Phase pupils will engage with SQA National Awards, allowing development around strengths and interests, functional living skills and transition into adulthood.

Our curriculum is delivered by a multidisciplinary team of teachers, learning practitioners, and therapists, all specialising in supporting children with complex needs. We work closely with families to ensure our curriculum aligns with each child's long-term goals and aspirations.

We believe that every child, regardless of their challenges, has the right to a rich, stimulating, and meaningful education. Our curriculum is designed to unlock potential, foster independence, and celebrate the unique abilities of each of our pupils.



## Assessments

At Craighalbert, we understand that assessing children with complex neurological, physical, and sensory needs requires a unique, nuanced, and personalised approach. Our comprehensive assessment model is carefully designed to capture each child's progress and achievements, no matter how small or unconventional they may seem. We recognise that traditional assessment methods may not always be suitable for our pupils, so we've developed an innovative, multi-faceted approach that is underpinned by each individual's Child's Plan.

Our assessment process is deeply rooted in the understanding that every child has the right to be heard, understood, and given the opportunity to reach their full potential. We place a strong emphasis on identifying and utilising each child's preferred mode of communication, whether that's through vocalisations and speech, aided language displays, eye-gaze technology, or other assistive devices. This ensures that our assessments are as inclusive and accurate as possible.

Furthermore, our assessment model is not just about measuring curricular progress. It's designed to support both educational and therapeutic goals, providing a holistic view of each child's development. This comprehensive approach underpins each child's personalised Child's Plan, ensuring that all aspects of their growth and learning are considered and supported. By integrating learning assessments with therapeutic insights, we create a fuller picture of each child's abilities, challenges, and potential, allowing us to tailor our support more effectively.

What do we do?:

- **Personalised Communication:** We recognise each child's right to a personalised mode of communication, ensuring their voice is heard and their potential is fully realised.
- **Holistic Approach:** We celebrate all forms of progress, no matter how small, both within the school and in the child's wider environment.
- **Curriculum for Excellence and Milestones:** We assess against these frameworks to track development and provide a consistent language for describing progress.
- **Continuum of Engagement:** This tool helps us measure a child's level of engagement, which is crucial for children whose progress is measured in smaller steps or non-linear.
- **Continuous Observation:** Our dedicated staff, including both learning and therapy team members, conduct ongoing observations and conversations throughout the year.
- **Moderation:** Regular moderation ensures accurate assessment and appropriate next steps for each learner.
- **Personalised Learning:** Assessment data forms the foundation for tailored learning programmes that maximise each child's potential.

Our assessment aims to:

- Demonstrate what pupils know, understand, and can do
- Support pupils in expressing their feelings about their work



- Guide teachers in planning work that accurately reflects each child's needs
- Provide regular information to parents/carers
- Inform school improvement efforts

By using this comprehensive assessment approach, we ensure that each child's unique abilities and challenges are recognised, celebrated, and supported, paving the way for meaningful progress and achievement.

## The Four Contexts

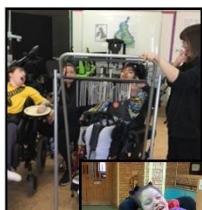
The Curriculum for Excellence is built upon four key contexts for learning:

- Curriculum areas and subjects
- Interdisciplinary Learning
- Opportunities for personal achievement
- Ethos and life of the school as a community.

Interdisciplinary learning is central to our approach. By designing themed learning experiences, we create meaningful connections across different curriculum areas. This allows learning to flow naturally while also empowering our pupils to take the lead in their own learning journey.

## Learning Across The Four Contexts at Craighalbert

### Opportunities for Personal Achievement



Look at all the smiles! Everyone around me celebrates my achievement with me.



I have the independence to go where I want to go.



### Interdisciplinary Learning



To flatten this clay, I am working on my Literacy and communication skills, numeracy, motor activity training (P.E) and the correct position to flatten this clay.



I am driving myself down the corridor using my switch to activate the controls. I am using motor control (P.E), communication (Literacy) and positional language (Numeracy) during my journey. I'm also having fun (Wellbeing)!



We joined with the theraponies and took them for a walk.



We join together with our families in our learning and explore learning together.



Everyone supports us to use our AT so that we can talk to our friends and learn to be independent.

### Ethos and Life of the School as a Community



I'm encouraged to use my foot to work on my kicking skills in P.E.



The correct position and access method allows me to model during Art.

We used our alternative pencils during Literacy to create Superhero sound words.



### Curriculum Areas and Subjects

## Extra-Curricular Activities

At Craighalbert, we place great importance on children experiencing real-life situations that add meaning to their classroom learning. Each class has the opportunity to visit local places of interest to extend their learning and connect it to the wider world. Throughout the year, we host a variety of events that bring together our pupils, families, Early Intervention families, and members of the wider Craighalbert and local community. These events not only provide opportunities for children to take part in enjoyable activities but also build meaningful relationships, encourage communication, and support social development.

Our events also give families and community members the chance to learn more about how to support our pupils, whether that's understanding how a child communicates, how to join in activities in an inclusive way, or simply taking part together. Parents and carers are regularly invited to join school trips and special activities, which allow them to experience new things alongside their child and strengthen the home-school partnership.

Where possible, we work with other organisations to provide additional after-school opportunities. Recent partnerships have included Sense Scotland delivering after-school clubs for nursery and primary pupils, with sessions designed to be attended by children, parents/carers, and siblings. We also share information with families about other clubs and community-based activities that may be suitable for their child.

We are mindful of how difficult it can be to find inclusive extracurricular opportunities that meet the needs of our pupils, and we are committed to continuing to explore ways to extend learning and enrichment beyond the school day.





## Residential Outings

Each year, our senior phase pupils enjoy a residential trip to Bendrigg Activity Centre in Cumbria. Bendrigg is a specialist outdoor activity centre that offers inclusive access to a range of exciting and adventurous activities, including canoeing, rock climbing, abseiling, zip wire, orienteering, and trike or bike rides.

These outings provide a unique opportunity for pupils to participate in physical activities that are not possible within the school setting, encouraging independence, building confidence, and supporting physical and emotional development. The cost of these trips is largely covered through fundraising, and they are often a highlight of our pupils' school experience.



## Home Learning

Home learning plays a vital role in helping pupils reach their full potential and is an important part of our partnership with families. Each term, we publish a set of home learning resources tailored to the planned learning activities for each classroom. These are supported by instructional videos, offering practical guidance and suggestions for engaging in learning activities at home with your child.

All home learning materials are available on our website <https://www.craighalbert.org.uk/homelearning> and include access to archived resources from previous terms, which families can revisit at any time. We recognise that each child is unique, and we are happy to provide additional guidance or personalised support to families who would like help adapting or extending home learning for their child.



## Physical Education

At Craighalbert we allow our exceptional young people to develop skills associated with physical activities (PE) without any limitations (physical or neurological). The Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP®) is an established programme that assesses a child's abilities and provides a framework upon which to build confidence and skills related to PE skills.

*MATP is our Special Olympics movement-based sport program that gives athletes the opportunity to practise skills that will prepare them for sport without comparison to others. The focus is on achieving personal bests. All MATP activities are modified to each athlete's needs, interests, and motivations.*

The Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP®) provides opportunities for the children to train weekly to develop sport specific motor skills as part of their PE curriculum. Children will benefit from increased physical activity which will improve motor skills, physical fitness, and functional ability. They will develop a more positive self-image through skills acquisition, having greater opportunities to develop friendships with peers and engage with the local community. MATP is a weekly sport-specific motor skill training programme that can be embedded into a school's curriculum for all students with PMLD and Complex Support Needs. Sport-specific motor skills are developed within four core movement areas: Mobility (gross motor skills), Dexterity (fine motor skills – including eyegaze), Kicking (lower body skills) and Striking (upper body skills).

Through weekly, targeted sessions and adapted learning activities within their class, children will have the opportunity to practice an identified motor skill; the sessions will be structured and with sensory elements to enable the child to focus their energies onto the task in hand. Children become athletes and through this process the children work towards participating in Challenge Days.



MATP will be a cornerstone of our physical education curriculum as it is specifically designed for students with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs. Key aspects include:

- Individualised Approach: Each child or young person will have a personalised MATP plan tailored to their abilities and goals
- Fundamental Motor Skills: Focus on developing physical skills to facilitate participation in sport such as dexterity, striking, kicking and mobility
- Recreational Movement Skills: Introduction to adapted versions of sports and games to promote enjoyment of physical activity.
- Family Involvement: We will provide guidance for families to continue MATP activities at home, promoting consistency and progress. This will be included in our home learning plan every term.
- Adapted Physical Education (MATP).
- Structured activities to allow participation of all children and young people, with activities modified to suit various ability levels and learning styles
- Specialised Equipment: Use of adapted sports equipment, such as boccia and 'home-made' equipment to allow ball rolling
- Aquatic therapy/Rockhopper/Communication Swims: Children and young people will be grouped as appropriate for lessons sessions in our accessible pool to promote movement, relaxation, communication and sensory/emotional regulation experiences
- Innowalk and Rebound: Can be used independently or incorporated into learning experiences to support health and wellbeing goals and physical targets.
- School Games Days: Regular events celebrating physical activities and adapted to ensure all students can participate and succeed will be organised and run.

Through this comprehensive approach to physical activity, we aim to promote the physical health, wellbeing, and development of all our students. We believe that being active is not just about physical benefits, but also contributes significantly to cognitive development, emotional wellbeing, and social skills. Our goal is to instil a lifelong enjoyment of movement and activity, tailored to each student's unique abilities and needs.

## **Pupil Council**

At Craighalbert, we believe that every child has a voice and with the right support, every voice can be heard. Our Pupil Council provides children and young people with meaningful opportunities to share their views, express what matters to them, and help shape the future of our school.

We recognise that our pupils may communicate in different ways, and we are committed to ensuring that each child has the support they need to take part. Staff work alongside pupils to help them share their thoughts, preferences, and ideas,

using the communication tools and methods most appropriate to each individual pupil.

The Pupil Council plays an active role in school life and is regularly consulted on areas such as the school environment, learning experiences, activities, events, and future developments. Pupils are involved in planning and decision-making, and their views directly influence our practice. We listen carefully to what our pupils tell us, whether through words, signs, gestures, or symbols, and we use this feedback to make improvements and guide our next steps.

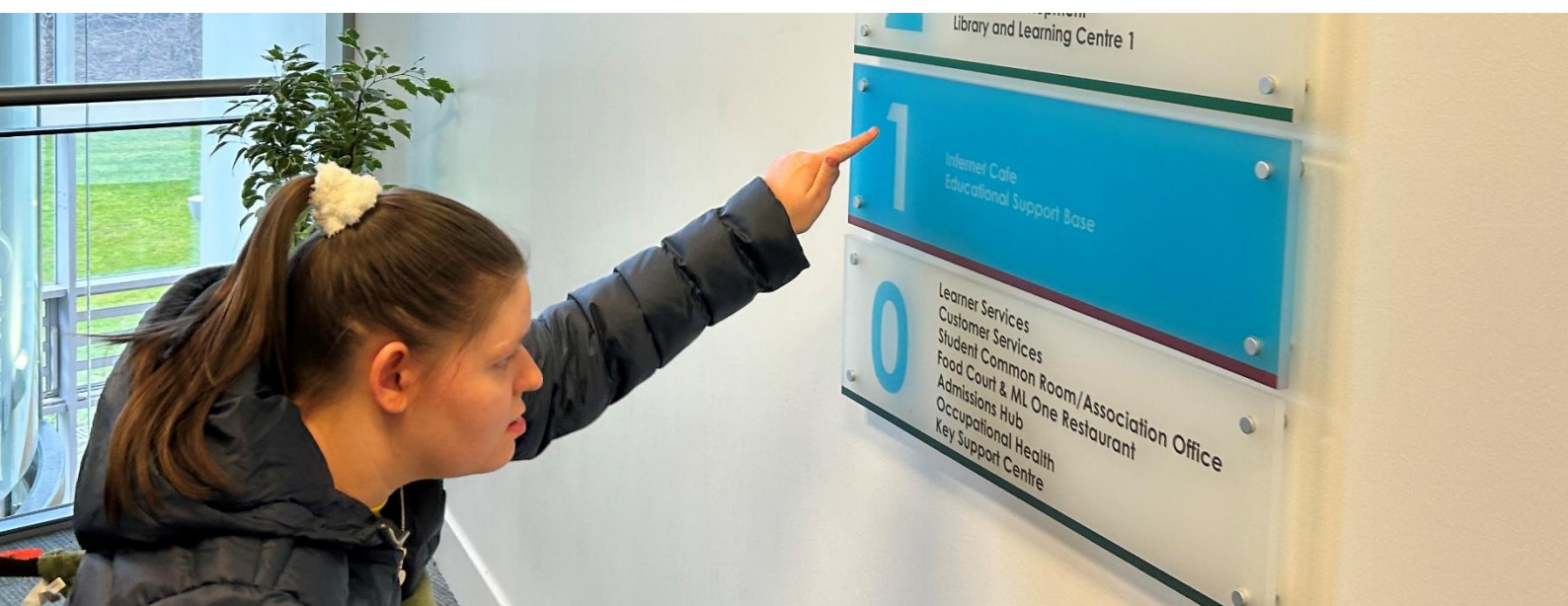
By participating in the Pupil Council, our pupils develop confidence, self-advocacy skills, and a stronger sense of belonging within their school community. Their contributions help ensure that Craighalbert continues to be a place where all children are valued, included, and empowered to achieve.

## Transitions

Craighalbert is a through school, offering a continuous and nurturing learning environment from nursery through to primary, secondary, and senior phase education.

We understand that transitions can be significant events in a child's life, and we are committed to ensuring that every transition, whether into, within, or out of Craighalbert, is carefully planned and supported to promote the wellbeing and success of each pupil.

Transitions within Craighalbert, are supported through robust planning and preparation. Our pupils are given regular opportunities to interact with peers and staff across different classes, which helps build familiarity and relationships in advance of any move. This means that when the time comes to transition between key stages (e.g., from nursery to primary or primary to secondary), pupils already have established connections with the people and environments they will encounter, helping to reduce anxiety and make the experience as smooth as possible.



For pupils joining Craighalbert, we carry out a thorough, multi-disciplinary assessment before they start. This helps us understand their needs fully and prepare the right support in advance. Transition visits are arranged for the pupil and their family, and we work in partnership with parents and professionals to develop a tailored transition plan that supports the child's learning, communication, and care needs from day one.

When pupils are preparing to leave Craighalbert, we provide dedicated support to ensure that they, and their families, feel ready and confident about their next steps. We work closely with receiving placements, whether that be another school, a college, or community setting, to share detailed information about the pupil's communication methods, learning styles, health needs, and supports. Where appropriate, our staff may accompany pupils during early college placements or other settings to support a positive start. We ensure that each transition out of Craighalbert is managed with care, collaboration, and a focus on the individual child's strengths and needs.

Transitions are not one-off events, they are processes. At Craighalbert, we walk alongside our pupils and families every step of the way, ensuring they feel supported, informed, and empowered through each phase of their journey.

## **School Improvement Plan**

Each year, we publish our School Improvement Plan (SIP), which outlines the priorities we are working on to enhance learning and development at Craighalbert. These priorities reflect both local and national educational goals and are developed in consultation with pupils, staff, families, and wider stakeholders.

Our current priorities are:

1. To empower our learners to reach their full potential and perform to the best of their abilities, regardless of their disabilities.
2. To embed a learning and teaching programme that will allow our children and young people to develop skills associated with physical activities (PE) without any limitations (physical or neurological).
3. To develop a supported transition process for school leavers by increasing partnerships with external providers and stakeholders.
4. To embed Comprehensive Literacy Instruction across the curriculum with teaching relevant and accessible for Emergent, Transitional and Conventional Literacy Learners.
5. To embed rights-based child planning processes throughout the school.

Our School Improvement Plan is available on our website  
<https://www.craighalbert.org.uk/school-improvement-plan>

## **Standards & Quality Report**

At Craighalbert we follow a Quality Improvement process designed to highlight strengths and identify areas for improvement. The process is based on the school's self-evaluation.

This validation process involves talking to pupils, staff and parents about learning and improvements made by the school. This results in actions for improvement for the school to take forward in their planning process.

In addition, themed reviews are undertaken from time to time e.g. to look and report on the quality of the Broad General Education (3-18) and Senior Phase Education within secondary schools. This process is based upon standards and expectations contained within the following National Standards documentation:

- National Improvement Framework
- How Good is Our School? 4
- How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?
- How Good is OUR School?

Our Standards and Quality Report is available on our website  
<https://www.craighalbert.org.uk/standards-quality-report>

## **Allied Health Professionals (AHPs)**

Our Allied Health Professional (AHP) Team works collaboratively across education and health, embedding therapeutic support into every aspect of the school day to promote participation, independence, and access to learning for all children.

This integrated approach is delivered in practice through:

### Real-Time, On-Site Support

We maintain a consistent presence throughout the school week, enabling us to:

- Problem-solve in the moment of need – ensuring children remain as comfortable and engaged as possible
- Make immediate adjustments to equipment and positioning based on real-time observations
- Provide instant guidance during lesson delivery to optimise each child's participation
- Respond to emerging needs without delay or scheduling barriers

### Embedded Therapeutic Integration

Working collaboratively with teaching teams, we ensure that key therapeutic elements are seamlessly woven into the school day. This approach:

- Maximises frequency of practice – critical for skill development and consolidation



- Creates natural learning opportunities within familiar classroom environments
- Supports consistent therapeutic goals across all daily activities

### Flexible, Child-Centred Delivery

When a child cannot engage with pre-planned therapeutic sessions – whether due to timing, readiness, or absence – our embedded model allows for:

- Fluid rescheduling within short timeframes
- Responsive adjustment to each child's daily needs and capacity
- Timely intervention that matches the child's optimal learning moments

This flexibility ensures that therapeutic input remains consistent and meaningful, rather than rigid or missed entirely.

The AHP team are part of the Learning team working across Education and Health. Working with class teachers and curriculum leads to develop, enhance and deliver the curriculum. Promoting a can-do, independence focused approach for our children, and support class staff and children to overcome barriers to access to learning and participation in a manner that is interwoven throughout the school day.

## **Health**

At Craighalbert we are dedicated to supporting children with extremely complex and multiple healthcare needs. Every child attending Craighalbert has unique and often significant medical requirements. We are committed to providing the highest standard of care through personalised, responsive support that meets each child's health, learning, and wellbeing needs.

Our staff are highly trained and experienced in working with children who have a wide range of complex, and often life-limiting, medical conditions. All staff members complete a comprehensive induction and receive regular training updates to ensure they remain confident and competent in delivering specialist care. Training is tailored to the individual needs of the children we support and is developed in close partnership with NHS healthcare professionals and each child's specialist team.

We work collaboratively with external NHS services to deliver integrated and individualised care. Many of our children have multiple healthcare plans in place, such as:

- Seizure Management Plan (SMP)
- Breathing Management Plan (BMP)
- Children and Young People Acute Deterioration Management (CYPADeM)
- Anticipatory Care Plan (ACP)

All staff working with a child are familiar with and trained in implementing these plans. This ensures continuity of care, promotes safety, and supports the best possible outcomes for each child.

For many children, seizures are a regular part of life. Our staff are fully trained to respond quickly and appropriately to seizures and other medical emergencies. Following any incident, a structured debrief is conducted to review and improve practice, ensuring care standards remain consistently high.

Some children have significant neuromuscular weakness, which can make it difficult for them to maintain clear airways, take deep breaths, or cough effectively. These children may require assistance with airway clearance, either occasionally or as part of their daily routine. This support may include suctioning to remove upper respiratory secretions, helping the child remain comfortable and safe.

We are fully equipped and trained to support a wide range of complex medical needs, including:

- Administration of complex medication regimes, including controlled drugs
- Management of complex epilepsies, including drug-resistant and administration of rescue medications
- Respiratory support, including:
  - Ventilation support
  - Oxygen therapy (including humidified oxygen)
  - Oropharyngeal and nasopharyngeal suction
  - Nebuliser treatments
  - Oxygen saturation monitoring
  - Use of PEP masks
- Dystonia management
- Enteral feeding, including nasogastric (NG), percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG), and jejunostomy (JEJ) feeding, and support for blended diets where appropriate
- Wound care management
- Catheter care, including:
  - Intermittent catheterisation (CIC)
  - Indwelling urethral catheterisation
  - Suprapubic catheterisation (SPC)

Our goal is to create a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every child can access learning and thrive. The high level of training, collaboration, and individualised care we provide ensures that each child's health needs are met with the utmost expertise, dignity, and compassion

## Speech and Language Therapy

At Craighalbert, our Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team supports children and young people with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs to find their voice and communicate the things that they want to say. This enables them to build meaningful relationships and fully participate in their learning in school and beyond.

We take time to get to know each child, understanding how their body moves and what type of access works best for them. For some children, developing a way to control their communication system, whether through eye gaze, switches, or another method, is a key part of our work. Many of our learners use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), which includes tools like communication books or apps on devices. These tools are carefully tailored to meet each child's profile of needs.

At Craighalbert, we have a strong AAC culture that ensures communication is integrated into all aspects of learning and interaction. We use PODD (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display) books throughout the school, creating an aided language environments with staff modelling language through AAC and supporting communication in real-life situations. We also provide ongoing coaching and training for communication partners so that AAC use is fully embedded across the day.

In addition to supporting communication, our SLT team also plays an important role in assessing and managing eating, drinking and swallowing needs. We work to ensure that children are safe, comfortable, and confident during mealtimes, offering personalised strategies and support when swallowing difficulties are present.



We collaborate closely with families and school staff to ensure that every child has the right tools to thrive, whether that's connecting with friends, participating in activities, or finding their voice in the classroom. Our goal is to empower each child to engage, grow in confidence, and become an active, confident communicator. We believe every child has something to say. Our team uses Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to help children communicate in ways that work best for them, whether by replacing or supporting speech.

We begin by getting to know your child – how they move, respond, and interact – and understanding their individual language, sensory and motor needs. From there, we select the AAC tools that fit best, like Pragmatically Organised Dynamic Display (PODD) books, which provide consistent, accessible ways for your child to express themselves every day.

Your child might benefit from:

- A personalised PODD book tailored to their access, language level and visual needs
- Use of both paper-based and electronic AAC systems to suit their learning style
- Full communication models where staff use AAC in all interactions – showing children how to initiate and join conversations

We use these tools across daily routines to ensure your child sees communication as meaningful and achievable.

Our whole team - including teachers, therapists and support staff – use AAC with each other and with every child throughout the day. This creates a rich communication environment where AAC is valued and expected. We look for meaning in every child's actions and support them to develop intentional communication, even when movement is challenging.

AAC is not “one-size-fits-all.” We're committed to finding and using robust, individualised tools that work best for your child, giving them a voice and helping them to take part in learning, play, and relationships with confidence.

At Craighalbert, we believe literacy is for every child, including those who use AAC or have complex needs. Our approach helps children learn to read, write, and spell so they can express exactly what they want, when they want, to whoever they choose.

We know that children who use AAC face extra barriers to learning literacy, from physical challenges to low expectations. We also know that with the right support, every child can make meaningful progress. That's why we adapt and personalise literacy instruction to match your child's needs, giving them access to the same essential skills as their peers.

Your child might take part in:

- Shared reading where the focus is on interaction and meaning-making – not just listening, but leading the conversation

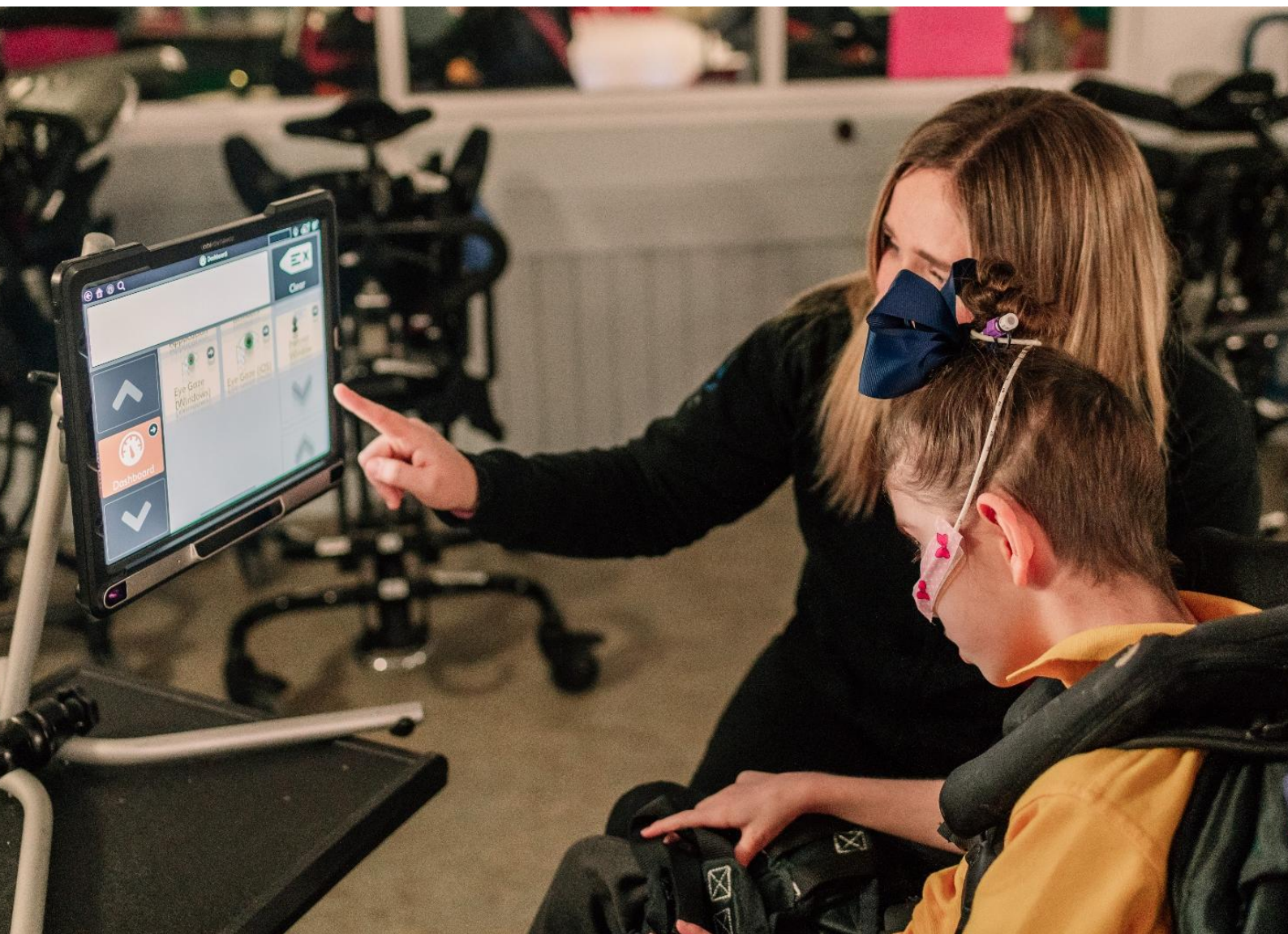


- Predictable chart writing, a fun group writing activity that helps every child take part in creating written messages
- Independent writing using alternative pencils to support children with motor challenges to write in their own way
- Self-selected reading where your child explores books at their own level and interest
- Letters and sounds instruction to build phonological awareness and help children connect letters to their sounds

These experiences help your child develop the building blocks of reading and writing in ways that are accessible, engaging, and tailored to them.

We are committed to embedding literacy across your child's day – in learning, play, and communication. Our team works together to create genuine opportunities for reading and writing, and we seek out global expertise to ensure we are using the most up-to-date, evidence-based approaches for children with complex needs.

We see literacy not just as an educational goal, but as a life skill that opens doors and empowers your child to be an autonomous communicator.





## Supporting Communication with PODD

At Craighalbert, we have implemented a whole-school PODD approach to ensure a consistent, robust, and inclusive communication environment. By using PODD as our primary AAC system, we provide learners with a reliable language tool that supports their communication across all settings. This unified approach enhances AAC best practices, strengthens staff expertise, and fosters a school-wide culture of aided language learning, ensuring that all learners have equitable access to effective communication.

PODD is a structured, yet flexible AAC system designed to support individuals with complex communication needs. Developed by Gayle Porter, PODD organises vocabulary in a way that enables users to communicate across a variety of contexts, promoting interaction and self-expression. It facilitates communication through a combination of core and fringe vocabulary, pragmatic branch starters, and structured pathways that guide sentence formation.

PODD provides us with an accessible common language, offering various access options to accommodate for different motor, linguistic, cognitive and sensory needs. This ensures that each pupil has the best possible means to communicate tailored to their own unique profile of strengths and needs.

These access options include:

- Direct Access – where a learner points to symbols on a PODD book or screen.
- Eye Gaze/Eye Pointing – for those who have limited motor control, enabling them to select words and phrases using eye movement.
- Partner-Assisted Scanning – where a communication partner presents options systematically and the learner signals selection through an agreed-upon response. This can take the form of:
  - Visual Scanning – the communication partners scans through the PODD book, pointing to rows & columns but not reading the label.
  - Auditory Scanning – the partner verbally scans through the PODD book, reading the label attached to each symbol. Necessary when a pupil does not have any functional vision.
  - Auditory-Visual Scanning – the partner presents both visual and auditory cues as they scan through the PODD book. This would be used when a pupil has a visual impairment such as CVI, allowing them to use the visual or auditory channel. These PODD books tend to have high contrast symbols which support visual discrimination.

Providing access to PODD in both paper-based and electronic formats ensures flexibility and consistency in communication. By tailoring PODD books and electronic AAC devices to each individual's language level, access needs, and visual presentation preferences, we maximise communication potential.

We also support learners who use alternative electronic page sets, such as TD Snap, and our staff have the knowledge and expertise to implement and support these systems effectively, alongside PODD.

### Creating an Aided Language Environment

Children who use AAC often experience an input-output asymmetry—they hear spoken language as input but must use other modalities such as symbol-based AAC as their expressive output. To support their language learning, they must be immersed in an environment that ‘speaks AAC’ i.e. models AAC use in natural interactions.

At Craighalbert, we prioritise an Aided Language Environment, ensuring that AAC is integrated into all aspects of daily learning and interaction. Our approach includes:

- PODD books readily available for learners and staff, ensuring immediate access to communication tools. All staff have their own Group PODD book.
- Personalised PODD books for individual learners, taking into account language complexity, motor control, and visual presentation to meet their specific profile of needs. Anticipation of future needs is also a consideration so that the child’s communication system can grow with them.
- Staff using PODD to communicate with each other and with learners, demonstrating the value and functionality of AAC in everyday interactions.
- Teachers and Learning, Care, and Therapy Practitioners (LCTPs) using PODD to deliver accessible and interactive learning experiences.
- Encouraging and responding to all communication attempts, shaping these into more specific and meaningful interactions.
- Embedding AAC across the curriculum, ensuring learners can use their communication systems in all aspects of their education and social interactions.

By creating an immersive aided language environment, we empower learners to develop their expressive and receptive language skills naturally and meaningfully.



### Knowledgeable Communication Partners

To build a strong AAC culture, our learners require support from skilled and knowledgeable communication partners. Effective AAC implementation depends on adults who understand how to scaffold communication, model language use, and support individuals with complex needs. At Craighalbert, we ensure:

- A strong belief in the potential of every child to learn and communicate, following the 'least dangerous presumption' approach.
- An understanding of how motor challenges impact communication, ensuring that learners receive appropriate support tailored to their movement abilities and challenges.
- Mandatory PODD training for all child-facing staff, ensuring consistent and effective use of AAC across all learning environments.
- Specialist expertise in communication and motor challenges, with SLTs, teachers, and LCTPs collaborating to assess and support learners' complex communication needs within the context of their wider holistic needs.
- Ongoing professional development, including hands-on CPD sessions and external training opportunities to refine skills and enhance AAC strategies.
- Regular coaching and mentoring from Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) to ensure best practices are maintained and improved over time.

### Working with Families

- We recognise, that it is essential to provide support tailored to the unique needs of each family, working at a pace that suits them while considering any additional challenges or barriers they may face.
- We offer regular parent training sessions, but we also recognise that some families may prefer one-on-one coaching at a slower pace, acknowledging that there is no "one size fits all" solution.
- We encourage continuous and close collaboration with parents and families, valuing them as integral team members in the AAC and communication process. This approach ensures that a child's communication system is effective in all contexts and promotes participation in both family life and the broader community.
- Given the recognised issue of rejection and abandonment of communication systems in the AAC field, ongoing parental involvement is vital to ensure long-term success.

### Comprehensive Literacy Instruction

Communication and literacy are closely intertwined. Literacy skills empower AAC users to become autonomous communicators, reducing reliance on pre-programmed vocabulary and fostering independent expression.

Research from Karen Erickson and David Koppenhaver informs our approach, ensuring a robust literacy curriculum that includes:

**Emergent Literacy Instruction**, focusing on foundational skills such as:

- Shared Reading – Encouraging active engagement with books in a supportive and interactive way, providing opportunities for meaning-making and



language development. The focus is on the interaction between the pupil and their communication partner, reading with the pupil rather than to the pupil.

- Independent Reading – Enabling learners to explore books at their own pace, fostering self-directed learning and a sense of autonomy in literacy. This may involve the use of assistive technology and e-books to enable accessible independent reading opportunities.
- Independent Writing – Supporting the early stages of writing development facilitating the use of written language to express communicative intent, beginning writing can often look like drawing or ‘scribbling’. Where children have motor challenges, it is necessary to find a suitable ‘alternative pencil’ that provides access to the full 26 letters of the alphabet, minimising the physical demands of the task to focus on the cognitive aspect of writing. The alternative pencils used by our learners are specific to their individual needs and engagement levels.
- Shared Writing (e.g., Predictable Chart Writing) – Predictable chart writing is a type of modelled writing developed by Dr. Patricia Cunningham as a strategy for helping all learners, irrespective of their language skills, to be successful in the writing process. It provides structured opportunities for learners to contribute ideas and construct written messages collaboratively, with contributions as complex or as simple as their writing development allows.
- Alphabet and Phonological Awareness – Teaching essential pre-literacy skills, including letter recognition, sound-symbol relationships, and phonemic manipulation, to build a strong foundation for reading and writing. The goal of instruction in the alphabetic principle is to teach students to apply their knowledge of letters and letter sounds rather than targeting identification and matching.





**Conventional Literacy Instruction**, building on emergent learnings with a focus on:

- Comprehension instruction - focuses on teaching strategies to understand and engage with texts, fostering critical thinking and connection-making. It includes teaching specific strategies like predicting, clarifying, and self-monitoring to improve comprehension.
- Independent reading - encourages students to practice reading on their own, promoting fluency and fostering a love for books. Matching interests and providing a variety of texts at an appropriate reading level is key to ensure a sustained engagement with reading.
- Working with words - involves activities focused on phonics and vocabulary building, which strengthen students' understanding of language. Integrated word study activities that focus on understanding the structure and meaning of words helps students build strong foundational skills leading them to better identify patterns and connections within words and in the future having the ability to decode and comprehend texts.
- Writing instruction is central to helping students express their ideas clearly, developing skills in writing for different purposes and audiences through structured support. Practice, feedback and opportunities to 'edit' before 'publishing' are key to learning and improving writing skills.

We provide opportunities for all learners to:

- Be read to and read with others.
- Read and write independently.
- Develop phonological awareness and discuss reading and writing.
- Develop a love for literacy and see themselves as readers and writers.

We are guided by Karen Erickson & David Koppenhaver's Four Key questions to determine whether a pupil is an emergent or conventional literacy learner:

- 1) *Can the learner recognise letters and sounds?*
- 2) *Can the learner decode simple words and comprehend text?*
- 3) *Is the learner able to write independently using letters or words?*
- 4) *Does the learner engage with text in meaningful ways, such as through prediction or making connections?*

By considering the answers to these questions, we can better understand where a learner is in their literacy development and provide the appropriate level of support.

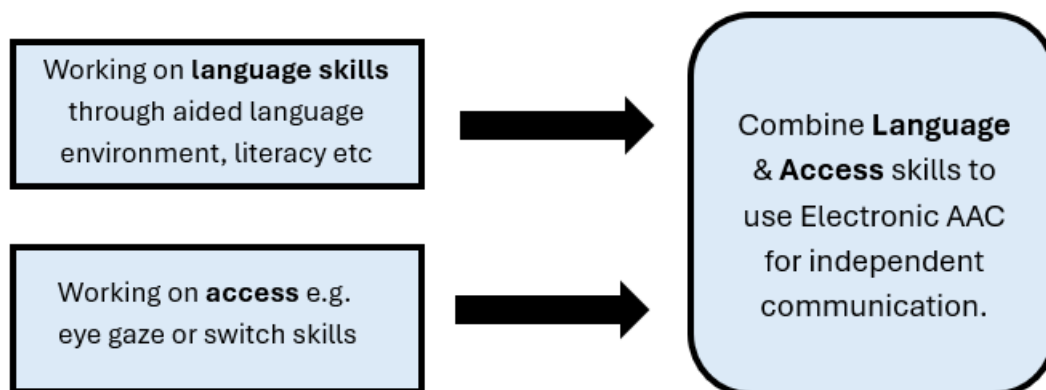
By embedding AAC and literacy instruction throughout our curriculum, we empower learners to communicate confidently and independently, ensuring they have the skills they need for future success.

### Electronic AAC

At Craighalbert, we recognise the crucial role of technology in supporting learners with complex communication needs through the implementation of electronic AAC. In addition to paper-based AAC, we provide access to a range of electronic communication systems, incorporating various hardware, software, and access options, such as eye gaze and switch scanning. Guided by our SLT and OT teams, our staff have the expertise to support these technologies, ensuring that each

learner has a communication system tailored to their unique needs, abilities, and preferences.

We take a time-efficient, integrated approach by teaching learners' complex operational skills in parallel with language learning, enabling them to build automaticity in the multiple skills required to use complex alternative access options such as eye gaze or switch scanning for communication in the future.



Electronic AAC falls under the broader umbrella of Assistive Technology, which has the potential to break down barriers and level the playing field for learners with disabilities (Edyburn, 2020). We recognise that, beyond facilitating independent communication, Assistive Technology empowers our learners to actively engage in their learning, develop greater independence in their surroundings, and explore self-directed mobility, enriching their overall participation in daily life.

### Dynamic Assessment

We believe in a dynamic approach to communication assessment and monitoring progress led by the SLT Team. This is an ongoing and interactive process whereby communication tool(s) are introduced alongside supportive strategies and opportunities to learn, within the child's zone of proximal development.

As this is a responsive process, we observe the learner's responses and making gradual modifications to ensure best possible fit for the learner and their family. We use tools such as the Roadmap of Communicative Competence (ROCC), Pragmatic Profiles and/ or the CODES Framework to support our assessment processes.

Teachers also assess against the Curriculum for Excellence and Milestones, which track significant developmental points within a pupil's communication development, using consistent language to guide next steps. This dual approach ensures that learning, assessment, and target-setting remain interconnected.

In addition, the Continuum of Engagement complements learning assessment by measuring levels of engagement, recognising that progress for our pupils may be non-linear. This dual approach evaluates both developmental and engagement outcomes, enabling us to optimise teaching strategies, learning environments, and resources.

## Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy involves promoting movement, maximising potential and supporting a child to have the highest quality of life possible. At Craighalbert, our highly skilled and experienced Physiotherapy team supports children with complex communication, learning, health and care needs to improve their physical development, movement, and overall wellbeing. We work closely with each child and their family to develop tailored approaches that help children achieve their individual goals. We focus on three key areas which are supporting posture, improving gross motor skills, and supporting optimum respiratory health. Our Physiotherapists use specialist techniques and equipment to make everyday activities more accessible and enjoyable for each child.

Our team brings a wealth of knowledge and skill in paediatric physiotherapy, the specialist area of physiotherapy that supports babies, children and young people from birth to 19 years old. Physiotherapy is an Allied Health Profession that focuses on improving health and wellbeing through movement and function. At Craighalbert, we take a holistic approach, working in partnership with families and other professionals to provide therapy that is child-centred, evidence-informed, and built around each child's needs and potential.

### Postural Care

24 hours of every day you are in a posture. Normally, our postures continuously shift and change position to allow us to engage in functional activities from extreme sports to chilling on the sofa or even sleeping. If you lie, sit and stand well, and move your body often, you will be taking care of your posture. This can help avoid muscle and postural changes, help avoid pain and help your internal body systems function as best as they can. Your posture throughout the day and night will impact on the shape of your body.

People who struggle to change or maintain their own posture will eventually assume the shape of the posture they spend the most time in.

Postural care is a collaborative 24-hour approach that aims to prevent or improve poor postures to prevent harmful changes to body shape and function, and help individuals make the most of their abilities. Postural care allows the children at Craighalbert to engage most comfortably, easily and functionally in all their learning activities.

At Craighalbert, our physiotherapists are trained in specialist postural assessments that aim to closely monitor and identify any early changes to body symmetry and help put the appropriate supports in place to preserve and promote body symmetry.

Scotland has its very own National Postural Care Strategy called 'YOUR POSTURE MATTERS' and a National Postural Care Forum which is continuing to support the best postural care across the country.



Craighalbert physiotherapists and occupational therapists have been part of developing this strategy and online learning modules which you can access here <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/60811#resources> . Craighalbert continue to participate in the National Forum's ongoing work.

### Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills are the bigger movements of the body. They normally develop during infancy and early childhood. A child's gross motor skills typically continue to improve throughout their early years and develop further until adulthood. Gross motor skills include learning to hold their head up, roll, sit up, stand and walk. It also includes coordination, posture and balance. There are a number of reasons children might struggle to develop their gross motor skills including challenges with their muscle tone, weakness, vision and understanding. Struggling with their gross motor ability can also influence other functions such as fine motor skills for example playing, picking up objects and writing as well as tiredness and ability to concentrate.

At Craighalbert, our physiotherapists thoroughly assess your child to help identify key issues that are affecting gross motor skill development. Our physiotherapist will then work alongside the wider Craighalbert team and external colleagues to assist your child to fulfil their potential in developing their gross motor function using a variety of methods and activities. This will include understanding what is important to your child and you and provide blocks of treatment for functional goals. We also upskill parents and the team around your child to enhance their opportunities to practise their gross motor skills in meaningful, functional ways throughout their day.



## Respiratory Care

Respiratory physiotherapy promotes clearing secretions from the chest and maintaining the chest clear.

At Craighalbert, our physiotherapists upskill Craighalbert staff with chest physiotherapy techniques as part of a child's breathing management plan for those with identified challenges of their respiratory function.

We also respond to changes in children's normal respiratory function with timely assessment and treatment as required.

## Physical Activity

We actively promote participation in physical activities throughout the day and are skilled at identifying and addressing any barriers to movement or activity.

In all aspects, we work closely with the child, their family, and all those involved in supporting them. As a team, we are always exploring new therapies and approaches to ensure our practice is informed by the latest evidence and research. At Craighalbert, physiotherapy is more than a clinical service, it's an essential part of how we enable children to achieve their full potential and enjoy the highest quality of life possible.

The physiotherapists may use the hydrotherapy pool, the trampoline, supportive walkers or other facilities and equipment to help with all of the above aspects of care for your child. This will be assessed and tailored on an individual basis.

## **Occupational Therapy**

Occupational Therapy (OT) helps people improve their ability to do everyday tasks that are important to them. At Craighalbert, OT is about helping children become more independent by overcoming challenges relating to daily life activities. These can include; playing, learning, dressing, eating, going to the toilet or going to sleep.

We believe in:

- Focusing on real activities - We help children do things they need and want to do at school, like getting dressed, making art, playing with friends and siblings, and moving between classes.
- Working together - We partner with teachers to help students participate in all school activities. We also work with families, local therapists, and other support services to help children.
- Considering the environment - We look at how physical spaces, social settings, and sensory aspects affect a child's ability to participate. We recommend practical changes that help children succeed.
- Finding solutions - We identify what might be limiting a child's participation and find practical solutions that build on their strengths.

What makes our approach and our school so special is our ability to work collaboratively with our Education team and our Allied Health Professional (AHP) colleagues, to help design the curriculum, work together on lesson plans, so that therapeutic elements can be integrated and woven throughout the child's day in a practical and meaningful way. For example, fine motor skills might be practiced during art projects, or dressing practice incorporated after a swim session.

This integrated approach means your child receives consistent therapeutic support throughout their school experience, helping them develop skills that transfer to all aspects of their lives.

Our goal is to support every child's right to develop to their full potential, following the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Occupational Therapists help your child master the everyday activities that matter most - from getting dressed to eating meals and participating in school activities.

We start by watching, assessing, and talking with you and others who know your child best. This gives us a complete picture of their strengths and challenges with daily tasks, allowing us to create strategies tailored specifically to your child.

Your child might benefit from:

- Breaking down complicated tasks into simpler steps
- Specially adapted clothes with easier fasteners, or hands-on help that decreases as your child gains confidence
- Mealtime assistance with specially designed utensils or positioning techniques to help your child eat more independently, in partnership with our Speech and Language Therapists



We may suggest helpful equipment or simple changes to your child's surroundings at school, while coordinating with community therapists to ensure similar support at home.

Our therapists work closely with both families and teachers, ensuring techniques can be consistently used throughout your child's day. We'll show you practical ways to incorporate these strategies into everyday routines.

With creativity, expertise, and respect for your child's preferences, we turn daily challenges into stepping stones toward greater independence and confidence.

Our capacity to be proactive, responsive, and reactive is what truly distinguishes our support and addresses the complex, ever-changing needs of the children we serve.

We maintain a consistent presence throughout the school week, enabling us to:

- Problem-solve in the moment of need – ensuring children remain as comfortable and engaged as possible
- Make immediate adjustments to equipment and positioning based on real-time observations
- Provide instant guidance during lesson delivery to optimise each child's participation
- Respond to emerging needs without delay or scheduling barriers

Working collaboratively with teaching teams, we ensure that key therapeutic elements are seamlessly woven into the school day. This approach:

- Maximises frequency of practice – critical for skill development and consolidation
- Creates natural learning opportunities within familiar classroom environments
- Supports consistent therapeutic goals across all daily activities

When a child cannot engage with pre-planned therapeutic sessions – whether due to timing, readiness, or absence – our embedded model allows for:

- Fluid rescheduling within short timeframes
- Responsive adjustment to each child's daily needs and capacity
- Timely intervention that matches the child's optimal learning moments

This flexibility ensures that therapeutic input remains consistent and meaningful, rather than rigid or missed entirely.

Some of the activities you might see an OT carry out over the course of the school week:

- Make adjustments to a child's equipment to optimise comfort and visual access to the classroom at point of which any discomfort or change is noted
- Trial a child's specialist head switch to allow them to independently access an art activity in class.
- At the end of the school day deliver a staff workshop on how to make the learning environment as supportive as possible to children with CVI.

- Update a child's manual handling risk assessment.
- Write a referral to social work OT for collaborative assessment.
- Set up a driving course with our drive deck to develop switch skills.
- Join our SLT in the pool to work on communication and hand function.
- Plan a lesson with the class teacher to bring a story to life through interactive opportunities with switching to ensure child can participate as independently as possible, providing specialist paint brushes to allow a child to hold by themselves.
- Carry out a home visit to look at how assistive technology might support independence at home.
- Join our Music Therapist to deliver family focused music and play sessions
- Check a hand splint for fit and range of motion to promote function.
- Join in messy play in the nursery to promote fine motor skills.
- Host a training day with NHS and social work colleagues on new equipment.

The list is truly endless as we seek to bridge the barriers to learning and play through skills development, equipment and creativity as part of whole school planning, but also as each day unfolds and opportunities arise.

### Assistive Technology and Powered Mobility

Assistive technology (AT or ATech) increases functional skills, reduces barriers to curricular access, and has the capacity to transfer to home and community to maximise participation and independence.

It is not simply a classroom Big Mac switch with a pre-determined recorded message for a child to press, without a true connection to what they are doing, too often deemed as using switches and "supporting participation." It is so much more, requiring a very specialist level of knowledge to use successfully and meaningfully to break down barriers and support children to reach their potential.

*"Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. (ATIA definition)*

AT supports curricular access, facilitates play and mobility at Craighalbert through various methods and technologies.

Alternative access methods, where motor impairments are a barrier to learning:

- Specialist switches. These vary in properties that are matched to the child's specific needs, such as shape, size, and responsiveness.
- Switch interfaces; These can turn main adapted household items into switch-activated opportunities, or change the quality of the switch activation (e.g., "timed": once a switch is activated, the child does not need to keep pressing the switch—the activity will continue for a pre-set period) This offers different skill development and is prescribed in a manner that best supports success while also considering progression.
- Mounts: table top wedge, adjustable arms which are utilised to optimise ease and consistency of independent access.



- Switch-adapted toys and resources: Examples include art spinners and water pourers, which can interface with switches to support the child in activating independently.
- Switch adapted power mobility options: Examples include Bugzi and drive deck

Environmental Control Systems (ECS) /Smart home technology: technology that supports interaction and control of the environment:

- Home automation (e.g. media control, lights, heat, windows, doors, blinds etc.)
- Smart Plugs
- Listening devices e.g. Google, Alexa

Specialist Software and Apps developed to enhance learning experience:

- Help Kidz Learn
- Tar heel gameplay
- Environ

Computer access devices:

- Alternative pointing or access method devices/hardware e.g. keyboards, other input devices like eye-gaze
- Low or no vision / hearing support e.g. screen readers, amplifiers etc.
- 'Baked into the operating system' accessibility options (e.g. Windows, MacOS, iOS iPhone, iPads etc.)

Communication aids:

- Various High-tech devices with differing manufacturers and operating systems.

Also known as AAC - Alternative Augmentative Communication, VOCA - Voice Output Communication Aid with multifunction capacity beyond communication.

Evaluating a child's capacity to use switch-based assistive technology requires a unique blend of clinical skills, observational expertise and technical knowledge that goes beyond standard Occupational Therapy assessments.



This process demands:

- Detailed analysis of fine and gross motor control patterns, including isolating specific movements that could reliably activate a switch of children with significantly complex motor impairments.
- Careful observation of postural stability and its effect on controlled movement.
- Assessment of visual tracking, scanning abilities, and cause-effect understanding.
- Evaluation of sustained attention and cognitive processing when engaging with technology.
- Understanding of sensory preferences that might impact switch placement and design choices.
- Understanding of relevant environmental factors.
- Knowledge of range of switch types, interfaces, hardware and software.
- Access to various assessment hardware to allow trial and refinement.
- Use of progression frameworks to set goals, track progress and successes, and ensure just right challenge.
- Child centred goal setting to ensure AT activities are meaningful.
- Capacity for ongoing review to ensure ease of access, refinement of equipment placement, collaboration with class staff to support curricular integration.

Ensuring successful use of AT in the classroom requires:

- Creating an "AT-positive environment" with a tiered knowledge base across all levels of class-facing staff on how to support use successfully
- Investment in and maintenance of skills and knowledge of AT solutions, due to rapidly changing landscape and new technologies
- Connection to a network of technology suppliers and education and therapy colleagues across the world with similar interests and expertise for knowledge sharing and troubleshooting.

Within Craighalbert we have:

- Dedicated AT OT role with a view to developing expert competence in complex assessments and a training role for staff across the centre and the families of the children we support.
- Onsite SLT with extensive experience in AAC high-tech provision.
- Strategy in development to continue to develop and enhance knowledge across the workforce to ensure a level of competence and skills in the embedding and use of AT to support curricular access and participation.
- Access to a broad range of assessment equipment and established relationships with SCTCI, CALL Scotland, and ATech providers.
- With AHPs onsite, we are in a position to intimately understand the learning environment (and opportunities) to support pupils with complex needs to use assistive technology embedded in the curriculum and through meaningful moments of the school day.
- We primarily use the 7 stages of switch development. This provides a structured approach to switch progression. These are flexible and adaptable to meet the unique needs of each user. This framework provides a guide to

measure and track progress, offering a path that can be tailored to individual preferences.

Resources also available to us include a Drive deck and Bugzi powered wheelchair with switch access. These offer significant advantages over abstract switch activities in developing meaningful access skills.

Unlike static switch activities (such as pressing a Big Mac switch to hear a pre-recorded message), powered mobility provides immediate, meaningful feedback through movement.

This creates a powerful learning environment where:

- The child experiences genuine cause-effect relationships (pressing forward means moving forward)
- Capacity to capture interest and motivation remains naturally high as mobility is intrinsically rewarding
- Learning occurs within a functional context rather than an abstract exercise
- Skills develop through genuine play and exploration rather than repetitive drills
- The child gains support and independence alongside technical skills
- There is extensive and growing research into the value of powered mobility for complex physical needs users, and the value it offers in many aspects of learning, development, cognition, language and wellbeing.



When assessing a child's readiness for powered mobility and switch access, our assessment of child's individual needs to support success considers several developmental domains:

- Motor Skills
  - Active range of motion in potential control sites (head, hands, feet, etc.)
  - Consistency of movement patterns
  - Fatigue factors during sustained activity
  - Ability to grade force when activating switches
- Cognitive Skills
  - Understanding of cause-effect relationships
  - Ability to remember and apply learned sequences
  - Problem-solving when encountering obstacles
  - Sustained attention during mobility activities
  - Directional concepts understanding
- Visual Processing
  - Ability to visually attend to environmental cues
  - Visual discrimination skills necessary for navigation
  - Processing speed when interpreting visual information
  - Visual field awareness and scanning abilities

We have applied knowledge of powered mobility driving skills progression tools in order to monitor and track progress for those for whom this is an option.

It's essential to recognise that assistive technology extends far beyond switch access for mobility or communication. Our holistic approach incorporates assistive solutions across the curriculum:

#### Adapted Art Activities

We design art experiences that prioritise the child's autonomy and creative expression:

- Adapted brushes, stamps and tools with customised grips that match the child's motor abilities
- Mounted easels and stabilised materials positioning for independent access
- Alternative painting methods such as pendulum painting or splatter techniques that require less fine motor control
- Digital art platforms with personalised access methods
- Emphasis on child-directed creation rather than hand-over-hand assistance, preserving ownership of the creative process

#### Physical Education Inclusion (PE)

We implement adaptations that enable meaningful participation in PE:

- Custom ball ramps allowing independent release and direction control
- Modified equipment such as larger targets or adapted bats
- Switch-activated ball launchers for independent participation in throwing games
- Sensory-friendly equipment options that match individual preferences



## Everyday activities

- Equipment to help make a cup of tea or mix a cake batter
- Equipment to help water the school plants
- Switch water pourers for water play activities
- Robots that can turn the lights on in class
- Alexa to choose the music you want to play

Where there isn't a commercial solution we will also try to build it!

Our assessment is never a one-time event but rather the beginning of an ongoing collaborative process.

We work closely with families and teaching staff to:

- Customise switch placement and sensitivity based on the child's unique abilities often requiring repeat and close monitoring and assessment to refine
- Develop staged learning goals that build confidence and competence
- Adapt the environment to support successful engagement
- Provide strategies for generalising skills across different contexts
- Constantly refining and ensuring opportunity for repetition

By focusing on meaningful, motivating activities like Bugzi mobility, adapted art materials, or accessible PE equipment rather than abstract switch exercises, we've observed more rapid skill development and greater engagement. This approach fosters not only technical competence but also builds confidence, independence and communication opportunities that extend far beyond the initial technology goals. Most importantly, it shifts the focus from what children cannot do to celebrating and expanding what they can do independently, promoting genuine inclusion across all aspects of school life.

4 phases of effective implementation of AT in education (Slaughter 2025)

**Assessment:** The process of collating information about current or intended AT users, and using this information to identify appropriate AT tools, strategies and interventions. This may include both formal and informal assessment methods, trials of equipment and outcome measurement.

**Provision:** The process of sourcing and providing AT tools and resources. This may include funding, procurement, setup, training and other activities related to the introduction of new AT for an individual learner or a whole school and college.

**Ongoing Support:** The process of supporting a learner and their immediate support team (both in school and at home) to use their AT system successfully. This may include aspects related to maintenance of the equipment, as well as providing support and training for those involved in day-to-day use of the equipment.

**Review:** The process of ensuring the AT that has been provided remains useful, through identifying review points in the learner's AT journey. This may include regular, scheduled review or being able to recognise triggers for review or changes to the AT system. In this report, the phrase "AT implementation" is used to refer to this four-phase model.

## Equipment examples

Switches:



Mounts:



Interfaces



Smart technology



Powered mobility



Adapted PE equipment



Adapted Art



Everyday activities





## Music Therapy

At Craighalbert, music therapy is delivered in partnership with Nordoff and Robbins, the UK's largest music therapy charity. Their highly trained therapist works closely with our team to support the emotional, social and communication development of children and young people with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs.

Music therapy provides a creative outlet for pupils to express themselves, build relationships and experience a sense of confidence and control in a safe, supportive space. Working one-to-one or in small groups, the therapist uses live music-making — including singing, instruments, rhythm, and movement — to create moments of shared attention, emotional connection and joy.

The therapist follows the child's lead, responding musically in real time to their sounds, movements or actions. For many pupils, especially those who require AAC or have significant communication challenges, this is a rare chance to connect and be heard on their own terms.

Each session is carefully tailored to the individual, with goals that might include supporting emotional regulation, encouraging interaction, or fostering early communication. The therapist works closely with teachers, families and the wider multidisciplinary team to ensure a joined-up approach.

Through our partnership with Nordoff and Robbins, music becomes more than just an activity, it becomes a vital therapeutic tool that supports wellbeing, builds confidence, and creates meaningful learning opportunities for connection and growth.





## Partnership with Parents

We recognise the vital role parents and carers play in their child's learning. Building strong, positive partnerships with families is a central part of our work at Craighalbert.

We aim to keep parents informed and involved in their child's learning through a variety of regular communications. These include our home-school diary app, termly newsletters, parent meetings, and family engagement days. Families are invited into school to take part in classroom activities and to gain insight into how their child is learning, along with ideas for how they can support this learning at home.

We also provide training for parents and carers, both in groups and individually, covering areas such as communication, postural care, epilepsy, and other relevant topics. Staff are always available for questions or support and will offer one-to-one guidance or group sessions based on family needs. Where helpful, we also signpost to additional services and supports.

Parents are welcome to contact the school at any time to arrange an appointment to discuss any matter with the class teacher, Head of Learning, Head of Health or Therapists.

Parents are active participants in planning their child's plan and are consulted regularly to ensure each child's plan reflects their unique needs and goals.

At Craighalbert, we use a variety of ways to keep in touch:

- Open Door Policy – Our Centre Leadership Team (CLT) are available for all parents and carers at any time providing they are not teaching or in another meeting. Please phone for an appointment.
- Home/Class Diaries – are used to communicate between classroom staff and parents.
- Newsletters – will be published on our website on a regular basis to keep parents informed about what has been happening at the school, future plans and key dates.
- Letters – further information which requires a response may be sent out in letter form.
- Craighalbert Website – will contain lots of information about the school. It is a good idea to check this regularly.
- Text Messaging – You may also receive text reminders about events/school closures etc.
- Meetings – There are various planned opportunities throughout the year when parents can discuss their child's progress with the Team around the Child (TAC). Parents and carers are welcome in the school to discuss their child's



## Parent Council

All parents and carers of children attending Craighalbert are automatically part of our Parent Forum.

As a member of the Parent Forum, you can expect to:

- Receive information about what your child is learning;
- Be kept up to date on events and activities at the school;
- Access advice and support to help you contribute to your child's learning;
- Be informed of opportunities to be more involved in school life;
- Contribute to the selection of the Parent Council;
- Raise matters for the Parent Council to address in partnership with the school.

Our Parent Council represents the voice of our parent community and works closely with the school to support and improve the learning experience of our pupils.

Their responsibilities include:

- Supporting the school's work;
- Representing parental views;
- Consulting and feeding back to the wider parent body;
- Promoting links between school, home, and the local community;
- Fundraising for the benefit of pupils and families;
- Participating in the recruitment of senior staff;
- Receiving updates from the Head of Learning;

All parents are welcome to attend meetings and are encouraged to contribute to the continued success of the school through the Parent Council.

## **Comments and Complaints Procedures**

At Craighalbert we encourage feedback from parents and pupils, whether it be comments, suggestions or complaints. We are committed to providing the best possible service and feedback supports our commitment to partnership working.

If you have a comment or complaint about any aspect of school life, please contact the Head of Learning in the first instance.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Craighalbert is committed to promoting equality and inclusion throughout all aspects of school life. We ensure that our policies, practices, and learning environment do not discriminate against any individual or group. Opportunities to promote equality are actively pursued and embedded in the ethos of the school.

We follow the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance for Schools in Scotland, which provides a framework for inclusive education and supports our commitment to equity. This guidance is available online at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/technical-guidance-schools-scotland>

## **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 has been drawn up to tackle inequality and prevent discrimination against people on the basis of 'protected characteristics'. It brings together several existing laws and aims to make understanding the law simpler and also introduces a new single public sector equality duty, which requires public bodies to actively advance equality.

The duties set out in Chapter 1 of Part 6 of the Equality Act apply to all schools.

These provisions protect pupils at the school and in the case of admissions, those applying or wishing to apply for admission. Former pupils are also protected from discrimination or harassment.

Guidance on the Act and its requirements for schools in relation to the provision of education can be accessed via the Scottish Government website via here: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/research/equality-act-2010/>

## **Child Protection**

Ensuring the wellbeing of children/young people and protecting them from harm is a major priority for SCCMI. It is the responsibility of all associated with children including staff, parents/carers, students and volunteers to safeguard children who

have the right to be safe, nurtured, healthy, to achieve, to be active, respected, responsible and included.

SCCMI is cognisant of its organisational duty to refer any concerns and allegations of child abuse and/or neglect to appropriate external and statutory organisations promptly and to co-operate with their processes as directed and acknowledges the role of such statutory organisations in investigating allegations of abuse and/or neglect and taking action in relation to their findings.

SCCMI's Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that SCCMI is fully compliant with all current child rights, welfare and protection legislation and guidance and that all staff, parents/carers, students and volunteers are competent in dealing with concerns and allegations of child abuse and/or neglect. The day-to-day management of all child welfare and child protection matters rests with the Chief Executive (CEO) of SCCMI, who is assisted in discharge of these duties by the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC).

All staff receive training related to child protection as part of SCCMI's staff development programme,

Our Child Protection Policy is published on our Website  
[https://www.craighalbert.org.uk/\\_files/ugd/03dcdd\\_ad7c18955d9d4326b032f02a01cdeb5a.pdf](https://www.craighalbert.org.uk/_files/ugd/03dcdd_ad7c18955d9d4326b032f02a01cdeb5a.pdf)

## **Data Protection - use of information about children and parents/carers**

We collect information about children attending Craighalbert (and also about parents/carers, emergency contacts etc.) to allow us to carry out our functions. Most of the personal information we process is provided to us directly by you by filling in forms or by corresponding with us by post, phone, email or otherwise. The lawful basis for processing this information is that it's necessary for our legitimate interests.

There may be times where we release personal information to other organisations, particularly in relation to child protection issues or criminal investigations.

Information held by Craighalbert, under the Data Protection Act 2018, is treated as confidential and used only in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the General Data Protection Regulations and Craighalbert Privacy Policy.  
[03dcdd\\_ef3fcec6cc1448c98d969288cc414cce.pdf](https://www.craighalbert.org.uk/_files/ugd/03dcdd_ef3fcec6cc1448c98d969288cc414cce.pdf)

Your information is securely stored on our server. we will only retain your personal data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for, including for the purposes of satisfying any legal, accounting, or reporting requirements.



## Appendix I: Useful Contacts

### Enquire

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. Providing easy to understand advice and information about additional support for learning legislation and guidance for families and professionals.

<https://enquire.org.uk/>

### Children in Scotland

Specialist services that provide practical support, advice and representation for children, young people, parents and families throughout Scotland.

<https://childreninscotland.org.uk/>

### Reach

A website to help you understand children's rights to be supported and involved in decisions.

<https://reach.scot/>

### Parentzone Scotland

A unique website for parents and carers in Scotland, from early years to beyond school. The website provides up-to-date information about learning in Scotland, and practical advice and ideas to support children's learning at home in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and science.

Information is also available on Parentzone Scotland regarding additional support needs, how parents can get involved in their child's school and education.

Furthermore, the website has details about schools including performance data for school leavers from S4-S6; and links to the national, and local authority and school level data on the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

