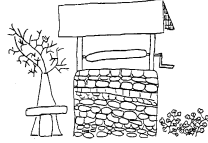


# Westruther E L C



## Welcome to Westruther Early Learning Centre

Welcome to our ELC handbook. I hope it provides helpful information for all parents, carers, children and anyone who has an association with Westruther Early Learning Centre.

We see it as our role to work together to provide our pupils with the best possible opportunities to enable them to be happy children and successful citizens of the future.

If there are any matters which you would like to discuss, or if you need further clarification please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Charlotte Shortel  
Head Teacher



Charlotte Shortel  
Head Teacher  
Westruther Primary School  
Westruther  
GORDON  
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TD3 6NE  
01578 740271  
[westrutherps@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:westrutherps@scotborders.gov.uk)  
[www.westrutherprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.westrutherprimaryschool.co.uk)



## Early Learning and Childcare Provision

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to up to 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and for the first time, some two year olds will also be eligible. This is allocated on a pro-rata basis depending on when children start throughout the year. This helps young children gain vital language and learning skills, improve their social development and help them do better at school later. It also supports parents to work, train or study.

Westruther Primary School has an ELC which is open each morning from 8:35am until 3:05pm on Mondays – Thursday, and 8:35am – 12:35pm on a Friday. It is a Scottish Borders Council nursery so SBC and national policies relating to Curriculum, Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety and Complaints Procedures are in place. All SBC nurseries' work is based on *A Curriculum for Excellence, How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare, Building the Ambition and underpin Getting It Right For Every Child and the Health and Social Care Standards principles and aims.*

In the ELC setting there is a strong emphasis on learning through play with an investigative approach.

Children are encouraged to:

- Actively explore their world both indoors and outdoors
- Discover new information
- Develop language and critical thinking skills
- Apply their ideas in meaningful ways
- Develop social and emotional skills



## Westruther Early Learning and Childcare Environment

Westruther Early Learning and Childcare Centre is a small, happy and thriving setting situated in the school in the quiet, rural village of Westruther. The ELC Centre is in one end of a large shared room with P1-4 and has a dividing wall, which can separate the two areas if required. It has a secure playground within the Primary School grounds.



## Visions, Values and Aims

‘Small schools do big things’



The Vision and Aim for our school is...  
‘For everyone to do W.E.L.L. at Westruther’

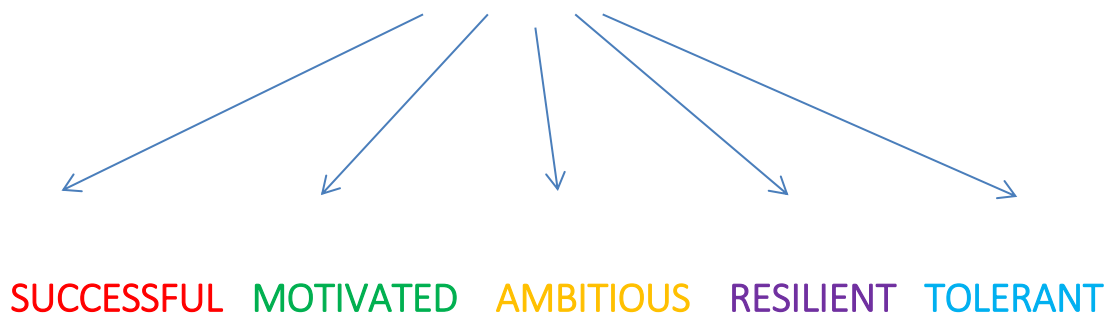


Wellbeing, Excellence & Equity and Learning for Life



Our school Values make us SMART

S M A R T



## Play Rationale

The aim of our Play Rationale is to ensure practitioners have a shared understanding of play that enables all children to access high quality learning experiences in an environment promoting equity for all.

Key documents that guide our understanding include:

- Building The Ambition – Scottish Government
- Realising the Ambition: Being Me
- How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare – Education Scotland
- Playwork Principles – Skills Active
- Play Strategy For Scotland: Our Vision – Play Scotland

*Play... "encompasses all children's behavior which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development which seeks to improve play experiences for all children"*

*Building the Ambition 4.1*

At Westruther, we will place the child at the heart of our setting enabling active engagement in learning through all experiences that are firmly rooted in play.

To support and promote play in our Early Level environments and experiences will:

- Be flexible and responsive reflecting children's interests which are used as a vehicle to engage children and support meeting their learning needs
- Include an effective balance of spontaneous, planned and purposeful play experiences indoor and out
- Be stimulating and interesting using open-ended and authentic resources to encourage a sense of wonder, creativity, curiosity and problem solving as children are supported to question and challenge the world around them assessing risk together
- Encourage independence and choice as we allow children time and space to become absorbed in, re-visit and re-explore their play

Our adult interactions will:

- Include skillful observation of children in play, as Practitioners take time to watch, wait and wonder
- Include open-ended discussions with children during play
- Include information from observation and discussion, alongside a continually developing knowledge and understanding of child development to plan purposeful play experiences

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve, we will take into account current and relevant pedagogy, plan and self-evaluate regularly using How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare, Building The Ambition, Realising the Ambition: Being Me and other relevant documentation.

Definitions as understood by Practitioners at Westruther ELC:

### *Spontaneous play*

Play that is initiated by the child without reference to any Practitioner planning or intention. This often informs future Practitioner planning.

### *Planned play*

Play that is promoted through experiences and environments planned in response from observations of the children's interests and learning needs.

### *Purposeful play*

Play that has meaning to the child.

Play that is illustrative of high level engagement (see Leavers Scale of Engagement)

Both of the above are encouraged through effective planning and high quality, skilled adult interaction.

### *Open-ended*

A child engaged in open-ended play is exploring – there is no definitive outcome

Materials – objects that have multiple uses and infinite possibilities such as paint, clay, sand, mud, water, blocks, twigs, stones, buttons, gems

Questions – promote higher order thinking, creativity, reasoning and problem solving as well as language skills. They have no pre-defined answer and encourage longer more descriptive responses ie “Can you tell me about your creation?”, rather than, “What are you making?”. See Blooms Taxonomy

### *Authentic*

Real life resources such as foodstuffs, kitchen equipment, tools and home furnishings

### *Skillful observation*

They are formed out of.... Watching children/interacting with children/listening to children

Should give us information linked to the knowledge of the child; skill in learning; progression; interest and need

Should include factual information that is non-biased and non-judgmental

Should support the Practitioner to help the child progress in their learning





## Our Staff

Westruther Primary School Staff	
Head Teacher	Mrs Charlotte Shortel
ELC Support Teacher (to support ELC provision)	Mrs Sara Green
Early Years Officer	Mrs Valerie Young
Early Years Practitioner	Miss Julie Davidson
Early Years Practitioner Modern Apprentice	Miss Hannah Forbes
Early Years Support Worker (lunchtime cover)	Mrs Kath Lothian
Teacher of P1-7	Mrs Ellie Spence
Curriculum Support Teacher	Mrs Sara Green (PE)
Support for Learning Teacher	Mrs Lorna Sanderson
Support Staff	
Pupil Support Assistants	Mrs Emma Bouwens Ms Liz Meenagh Mrs Kath Lothian
Pupil Supervisor (PE)	Mrs Marie Howey
School Administrator	Mrs Amanda Brown
School Cook	Mrs Grace Donaldson
Janitor (Peripatetic)	Miss Marie Todd

## ELC Opening Times

Westruther ELC opens Monday to Thursday from 8:35am to 3:05pm, and from 8:35am – 12:35pm on a Friday, during term time only (see page 15 for 2022-2023 term dates). We have an 'open door' policy. Practitioners are available at the beginning and end of the session or at an agreed time, if you wish to discuss anything or have any questions.



## Westruther ELC and School



Westruther Primary School is very supportive during transition times (into ELC, ELC to P1 and P7 to Earlston High School). With our shared session in the Westruther Village Hall, children attending Westruther Under 5s Playgroup get to know us as a staff as well as their peers who will be with them in ELC. This makes for a smooth transition into the ELC setting when they become three. As an ELC setting we join with P1 in activities as we share the room. This is built upon throughout the year and children are then familiar with routines and expectations for transition into P1. ELC pupils occasionally attend assemblies with the P1-7 school children and spend time in the playground to meet peers, as well as joining in with whole school trip and events. We arrange classroom visits to Primary 1 as the school year ends.

## ELC Curriculum for Excellence: Early Level

At Westruther ELC Practitioners and children have created an environment which is rich in experiences, enhancements and real-life, natural, open-ended resources that generate and promote excitement, curiosity and challenge. The children are at the heart of the ELC and as practitioners we allow the children to engage deeply in their interests and play whilst we are being sensitive, responsive and motivating to their needs.

We use seasonal themes to engage the children's holistic learning and use responsive planning to take into account the individual interests and needs of the children. As ELC staff, we actively encourage and provide opportunities for the children to lead the learning.



## Assessment and Reporting

Westruther staff regularly use a variety of approaches to gather information on each child's progress. This information is used to adapt teaching and learning activities, to identify any barriers to learning, to offer more support if required, to plan next steps in learning and ensure children achieve their potential. General progress and daily/weekly activities and interests in learning are evidenced in our **ELC Floor Book**. This is kept in the Playroom and has a variety of photographs, children's work, children's views, links to ELC planning and planned next steps.

Each child has a **Learning Journey** which sets out their learning targets and records their success. We use tracking sheets for Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing, which tracks individual children's progress. These are linked to National Wellbeing Indicators as follows:

<b>SAFE</b>	Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, school and in the community.
<b>HEALTHY</b>	Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable health care and support in learning to make safe and healthy choices.
<b>ACHIEVING</b>	Being supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, school and in the local community.
<b>NURTURED</b>	Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting with additional support if needed, or in a suitable care setting.
<b>ACTIVE</b>	Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sports which contributes to healthy growth and development both at home and in the community.
<b>RESPECTED</b>	Having the opportunity along with carers to be heard and involved in decisions which affect them.
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	Having opportunity and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in schools and communities and appropriate support and guidance if necessary.
<b>INCLUDED</b>	Having support to overcome social, emotional, physical and economical inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

## The Curriculum

The Scottish Curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence, is for all 3 – 18 year olds wherever they learn. It aims to raise standards, prepare our children for a future they do not yet know and equip them for jobs of tomorrow in a fast- changing world. The Curriculum is the ‘totality of all that is planned for young people throughout their education. The curriculum is made up of 4 distinct areas:

- ✚ Ethos and Life of the School as a community
- ✚ Curriculum areas and subjects
- ✚ Interdisciplinary learning
- ✚ Opportunities for personal achievement



The curriculum areas and subjects are:

- ✚ Languages, English and Literacy Modern Languages
- ✚ Mathematics and numeracy
- ✚ Health and wellbeing
- ✚ Expressive Arts (Art, Music, Dance, Drama)
- ✚ Religious and Moral Education\*
- ✚ Sciences
- ✚ Social Studies
- ✚ Technologies



\*Parents who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from religious instruction and/or religious observance should contact the Head teacher to arrange a meeting to discuss alternative arrangements for your child.



## Pre-Birth to Three

We also refer to the Scottish Pre-Birth to Three guidance, underpinning the four key principles of Rights of the Child, Relationships, Responsive Care and Respect.

Within these principles runs 9 key features:

- Role of Staff
- Attachments
- Transitions
- Observations/Assessment/Planning
- Partnership Working
- Health and Wellbeing
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Environments
- Play

## The Importance of Loose Parts

In the ELC environment we have lots of 'Loose Parts'. Loose parts create richer environments for children to play, giving them the resources they need to do what they need to do. The list of possible loose parts is endless but can include; natural resources, straw, mud and pinecones, building materials and tools, planks, nails, hammers, scrap materials, old tyres, off-cuts of guttering and, most essentially, random found objects. There is a growing body of evidence of the benefits of playing with loose parts including: increasing levels of creative and imaginative play, children play co-operatively and socialise more, children are physically more active, and curriculum outcomes occur through informal play with loose parts, loose parts facilitate communication and negotiation skills when added to an outdoor space. For information go to:

<https://www.playscotland.org/parents-families/loose-parts-play/>

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Loose-Parts-Play-web.pdf>

## Community Links

Westruther Primary School has strong links within the village of Westruther. Westruther ELC runs with the local playgroup on a Tuesday morning at the village hall for a joint session. We explore the village as a learning resource and utilise the Village Hall for Pantomimes and School Shows. We use the Community Playing Field for PE and Sports Day. Neighbours and local residents are invited to our Christmas Performances and other open days, and school takes part in the Westruther Flower Show every year. We have a community garden to which the community are encouraged to come and take part in the growing and tending of the plants and generally spend time enjoying the wonderful space. We are fortunate to have a voluntary Local Winter Resilient Team who keep our paths gritted and clear of snow in winter weather.



## Parent Council

Every parent/carer is a member of the Parent Forum. The Parent Council is the voice of the Forum. Being a member of the Parent Council can influence plans for your child and others. All parents/carers are welcome to come along and be involved. If you have any points you wished raised, please speak to a member of the parent council. The Parent Council has a notice board in the playground where contact details of Office Bearers and dates for forthcoming meetings are displayed.

## Communication with Parents

Outside, at the entrance to our ELC Playroom, there is an information notice board. Please read it regularly - it is there for your information and will keep you informed of news, events and daily activities. Parents may in consultation with the staff also use this board to share events/things of interest.

Staff will regularly display documents, which inform pedagogy and practice, on the board and ask for you to respond to this. The feedback received influences staff practice, nursery environment and is your opportunity to let ELC know your thoughts.

Nursery news is contained in the a weekly ELC newsletter, 'This week in ELC', as well as the school newsletter. In line with our Eco School policy, newsletters will be sent out to parents electronically using the email addresses recorded on each child's enrolment form. Please ensure you inform the school of any changes to email addresses during the year. A copy of the ELC newsletter will be displayed on the notice board in ELC, and a copy of the school one is posted on the school website. Paper copies of the newsletter are available by request.

## Stay and Play

We regularly hold Stay and Play Sessions in our Learning Weeks. These are an opportunity to share our learning environment with everybody. We will let you know the dates of these via the Parents' Notice Board. You are also welcome to come in and spend time in the playroom, share a skill, read a story, play games et cetera with our 'open door' policy.

We occasionally ask for Parent Helpers to assist with activities such as helping with the gardening. Parental involvement is occasionally required for outings and excursions too.

## Other Useful Information

### Free Flow Play

The outdoors is regularly used for learning and we operate a 'free- flow' play policy. We aim to have the door to the outside playground open at all times and encourage the children to move around freely between environments. Please ensure that your child has suitable clothes, a coat and outdoor shoes. On wet days please send your child to ELC with wellies. We do have wellies and waterproof suits for use in the mud pit.



Children are encouraged to be independent when going to the toilet, changing for PE, going outside/home. Where possible, children should be sent with shoes they can fasten and unfasten independently.



Please could you provide a sun hat with your child's name on it to be kept within their bag in ELC. Sun cream should be applied before your child comes to the ELC. Due to the free-flow approach that the ELC operate the children have access throughout the session to the outdoor environment therefore it is very important that they have protection from the sun.

### Important Documents

- ✚ **Personal Plan** Westruther ELC will send home a *Personal Plan* with your child every six months. It is important that this is filled in and returned to us as the Care Inspectorate has stated it is a required document that we must keep.
- ✚ **All about Me** We also send out an *All About Me* document for you to complete with your child. Both of these documents are very helpful helping us get to know your child and support their growth and development.
- ✚ **Learning Profile** It is important to celebrating success within our ELC environment. Your child's achievements will be recorded in their Learning Profile which will be sent home regularly. We encourage you to fill in the *Flying High* section of the Learning Journal with successes and achievements gained at home, whether it is certificates awarded at a club or tasting a new food or even learning to ride a bike! These can be written in the journal or a photograph or drawing could be attached.



### Some more information

Westruther ELC offer parents and carers the opportunity to order a purple ELC sweatshirt and white polo shirt for the children to wear when they are busy learning through play. If you would like to place an order please use the link below.

<https://www.border-embroideries.co.uk/schools/westruther-nursery.html>

We aim to develop children's independence in dressing and undressing. Children are encouraged to remove coats, hang items on their own pegs, put on soft shoes and pull up tights and trousers et cetera themselves, if they are able to. Black plimsolls are required for indoor footwear, and shorts and t-shirt for PE. A full change of clothing, to be kept in their bag, is helpful to cover any accidents or spills. Please can clothing items, especially sweatshirts and PE kit, all be named so that it is easy to tell what belongs to whom.

It is most helpful if children know the toilet routine and how to wash their hands, as well as when and how to use tissues. Please help us with your encouragement at the beginning and end of ELC sessions and at home.



## Snack

The children have snack twice every day through which healthy eating is promoted.

Following the introduction of the *Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme* in ELC in August 2021, we are able to provide ELC children with milk and snack completely free of charge. Snacks are largely vegetable and/or fruit based however during colder months one of our daily snacks will be carbohydrate based, such as toast, porridge or (plain) popcorn.

Children are given the opportunity to suggest healthy snack ideas and try new foods.

ELC children take part in tooth brushing every day as part of the NHS Borders Childsmile Tooth Brushing Programme.

## Lunches

Children attending our ELC are entitled to a cooked lunch each day, which is free of charge. Details of meal options and how to book lunch will be given at the beginning of the new session in August (or prior to your child's start date, if later). Lunch will be served approximately 11:30am – 12:15pm.

Although we would encourage your child to choose the meal provided by ELC, your child can bring their own home packed lunch. Please note however that home packed lunches should have a healthy content and **must not** contain peanut products. Further to this, *we are not able to refrigerate your child's home packed lunch, therefore it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that home packed lunches are kept in cool bags/boxes with cool blocks.*

## Absence and Illness

A register of attendance is kept in ELC. If your child is absent please let us know why by phoning or emailing the school office. It is especially important that we are made aware about infectious illnesses e.g. chickenpox. Please also inform us of cases of head lice.



## Policies and Procedures

Westruther ELC is a Scottish Borders Council (SBC) ELC. This means that SBC and national policies regarding the curriculum, Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety and Complaints Procedures apply, as do some school policies and aspects of organisation where appropriate. The work of all SBC Early Learning and Childcare settings are based on 'A Curriculum for Excellence' and 'The Child at the Centre' Westruther ELC is registered with Care Inspectorate and will be inspected by it to make sure that the ELC is meeting the regulations under 'The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001' and in doing so will take account of the national care standards. Further information about the Care Inspectorate and what it does can be found on its website [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Child Protection Policy

We have a duty to report any concerns regarding the suspected abuse of a child immediately to the Head teacher, who is the Child Protection Coordinator. Concerns shall be recorded clearly. The child will at no time be asked leading questions. If appropriate the concerns will be passed on to the Child Protection Officer based in Galashiels. They have the statutory responsibility for protection of children from abuse, or suspected abuse and they will decide whether to proceed with a formal referral or not. There are clearly defined guidelines which must be adhered to. If you require any further information, or wish to speak in confidence, please contact Mrs Shortel.

## Pupil Collection Policy

Westruther ELC recognises that there are times when parent/carer situations change unexpectedly, and alternative collection arrangements need to be quickly put in place. If a situation arises where you need to ask another parent, or someone you have not previously introduced to ELC staff to collect your child, then please contact the school office to advise, giving as much notice as possible.

## Photographs and Video



Under the 'Consent Under Data Protection Act 1998' parents are asked to give permission for their children to be photographed and filmed whilst attending education facilities provided by Scottish Borders Council. Parents and carers may not photograph or video children or staff without consent.

ELC photographs and videos may be shared with parents' via Microsoft Teams.

## Complaints Policy

Our aim is to create a successful three-way partnership between the child, the parent/family/carer and ELC.

It is our policy to encourage open communication between staff and parents at all times. Throughout the child's time in ELC the needs of the children are our prime concern. Should a parent wish to make a formal complaint however, it should be made in writing to the Head Teacher, who will then consult staff and parents before deciding on an appropriate course of action. All complaints will be recorded, dealt with promptly and all parties concerned shall be informed of the outcome. This too, shall be recorded. If you are dissatisfied with the response being given, make it clear to the member of staff that this is the case. Write to the Director of Education at SBC Headquarters in Newtown St Boswells and ask for a meeting with an appropriate official. If a complaint has not been dealt with in a suitable manner you may also write to the Care Inspectorate. Their address is as follows:

Care Inspectorate

Ettrick Riverside Business Centre

Dunsdale Road

Selkirk

TD7 5EB

01896 664 400

[www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Policy on Confidential Information

Parents have the right to know what information is recorded about their child and to ensure that records are accurate.

All children's records are confidential and will be kept in a secure filing cabinet.

The consent of parents must be sought if their child's details are to be passed on to other people. However, in cases of Child Protection it may be necessary to pass on information to the main investigating agencies without the consent of parents.



## Equal Opportunities Policy

We are committed to providing an inclusive experience for all children in our care.

Each child in our care will be

- Valued as an individual.
- Encouraged to participate in a range of educational experiences appropriate to their needs in order to support their progress and allow them to achieve success.
- Introduced to appropriate themes of diversity through appropriate resources – taking into consideration our local context here at Westruther
- No child or adult will experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race or ability or any of the other relevant '*protected characteristics*' as identified in the Equalities Act 2010.



## Term Dates

Here are the school closure dates for the forthcoming year. Please visit Scottish Borders Council website for the planned dates for the next two years at:

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20009/schools\\_and\\_learning/621/term\\_holiday\\_and\\_closure\\_dates](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20009/schools_and_learning/621/term_holiday_and_closure_dates)

Autumn Term	Monday 15th August 2022 to Thursday 22nd December 2022
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> August	Staff resume, in-service day
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> August	Staff in-service day
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> August	Pupils resume
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> September	National Public Holiday for funeral of HRH Elizabeth II
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Last day for pupils and staff – mid-term holiday
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> October	Staff resume, in-service day
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	Pupils resume
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> November	St Andrew's Day Holiday, school closed
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> November	Earlston Cluster local holiday, school closed
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December	Last day of term for pupils and staff
Winter Term	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2023 to Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> January	All resume
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> February	Last day for pupils – February holiday
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> February	Earlston Cluster local holiday, school closed
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	In-service day for staff – February holiday
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> February	All resume
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Last day of term for pupils and staff
Summer Term	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2023 to Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> April	All resume
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> May	May Day holiday, school closed
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	In-service day for staff
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Pupils resume
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> June	Last day of term for pupils and staff
<i>School resumes for pupils on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023</i>	

## Westruther ELC 2022-2023

We hope you have enjoyed reading our ELC handbook. Westruther ELC Staff are committed to providing the highest standard of childcare and are constantly looking at development and reflective opportunities for further information of the codes of practice and standards adhered to, please visit the **Scottish Social Services Council website**:

<http://www.sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/multimedia-library/publications/37-about-the-sssc/information-material/61-codes-of-practice/codes-of-practice-pdf-text-version>

and the **Scottish Government website**:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/06/1327>

Other useful websites with Early Years information are:

**Scottish Borders Council website**:

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20038/school\\_and\\_nursery\\_places](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20038/school_and_nursery_places)

**Education Scotland /Parentzone website**:

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-in-scotland/Learning%20in%20the%20early%20years>

