

# OptionsAutism

## STATEMENT of PURPOSE

A Guide to Residential Care and Education

**Options Closeburn**



for  
**Parents/Carers and Professionals**

**2024**

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# Welcome

## Welcome to Options Closeburn

*We believe every child is an individual and that every child is deserving of the opportunity to thrive in an environment that is respectful of their needs and their challenges.*

At Closeburn House we care for children and young people with a range of needs, many of whom are care experienced. In beautiful rural settings we offer small, therapeutic groups in the home and school. Our staff are trained in trauma informed practice and are experienced in best practice for supporting young people with autism and a range of additional support needs.

We provide a nurturing and therapeutic environment where all young people are encouraged and supported to feel safe, secure and thus settled to learn, grow and develop. Our ethos is underpinned by trauma informed practice.

We can support children and young people from age 12 to 23 and offer both 39- and 52-week placements. The education and care teams offer an integrated service, with our care team providing support in both the home and school settings, which promotes strong relationships between the staff teams and consistency of support.

Our team receive robust ongoing training to ensure we are up-to-date with the latest in best practice.

We have an in-house Clinical Service Lead supporting our young people in his role as a Psychotherapist. As lead clinician he also supports access to other clinical services such as Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy as part of our comprehensive package of support.

Our vision is to create a happy, safe, nurturing environment, which supports children to become settled to learn and to develop to their full potential.

If you would like to hear more about our school, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

### Grace Little - Head of Care

*"I have worked across numerous roles here for over 15 years. I love my role and work within a team of dedicated staff at Closeburn House where we all strive to deliver outstanding support and care for all our young people."*

### Nicola McDonald - Head of Education

*"It is my privilege to work with our young people and the teams around them. I am passionate about supporting our young learners to achieve their fullest potential and to build the foundations of better outcomes for each of them."*

# Care

## Closeburn House



Our children and young people are accommodated in our house.

**Closeburn House** is an impressive country house on the edge of Closeburn village. We are registered to accommodate 11 girls, with each young person having their own personalised room.

The accommodation is furnished to a high standard with good quality decor and furnishings. The school is situated within the same building which supports school attendance and wraparound care for our young people.

Suited to young people going through a troubled period, Closeburn House offers a structured yet nurturing environment, where negatives are challenged, with opportunities for positive change and where young people are encouraged to appreciate their self-worth.



The staff team possess a comprehensive range of professional skills, experience and knowledge which are updated through a process of continuing professional development to ensure high standards are maintained.

## Clinical Team at Options Closeburn

At Holistic Childcare and Education, our in-house clinical team is dedicated to providing comprehensive support through Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Psychotherapy, embodying our ethos of person-centred and trauma-informed care. Speech and Language Therapy helps children develop essential communication skills, enabling better interaction and learning. Occupational Therapy focuses on enhancing children's daily living skills, ensuring they can engage in everyday activities with confidence and independence. Psychotherapy offers emotional and psychological support, fostering resilience and mental well-being.

A range of multi-disciplinary assessments may take place once the individual transitions into our services, allowing us to develop clinical plans, contribute to positive behaviour support plans, create communication profiles, 'sensory world' documents and so on. Our recommendations can also include plans for adapting the environments in which the individual spends their day with the education and care teams.



### The Scottish Promise



The Scottish Promise is a commitment to the young people of Scotland who are in care, a commitment to ensure they feel loved, safe and respected. We uphold the principles outlined in The Promise, ensuring that every child receives nurturing, respectful, and responsive care. The most recent update of The Promise emphasises the importance of listening to children's voices, providing stability, and ensuring that all practices are rooted in kindness and compassion, which aligns perfectly with our holistic approach.



# Our Young People Can Expect

- To have a key-worker who will work with the whole team to oversee a responsive and reflective care plan designed to ensure they are supported effectively in all aspects of their life ●
- Support with relationships in their peer group involving the use of a range of resources such as packs from Barnardo's, the NSPCC and RSHP programmes ●
- Support to engage in local activities thus promoting social interactions with peer groups and encouraging self-identified hobbies ●
- To be empowered to be responsible and make informed decisions through person-centred practices. Our children and young people are involved in creating their own Daily Care Plans with identified targets around the SHANARRI Indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible) and Care Standards focusing on SMART targets ●



# Safeguarding



Safeguarding and child protection is our highest priority and at the forefront of everything we do at Closeburn House. A proactive, comprehensive, approach across education and care is in place to ensure safeguarding and child protection are embedded in all decisions, planning, policy and day-to-day operations and activities.

Our practice is underpinned by the core requirements in the [National Guidance for Child Protection \(2021\)](#), [Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) and the [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#).

We are committed to providing the highest standards in relation to the safeguarding of the children and young people entrusted to our care.

## **All Outcomes First Group employees working directly or indirectly with children must ensure that:**

- Children and young people feel safe and that they are listened to
- They create an environment and culture in which children and young people feel valued
- The best interests of the child are always considered and acted upon
- Safer recruitment procedures are rigorously followed (please refer to the Outcomes First Group Safer Recruitment Policy for further details)
- They understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe through ongoing learning, development and supervision
- They are vigilant in monitoring possible signs of abuse including for those children and young people who have complex learning difficulties or specific communication needs, who may be particularly vulnerable
- They maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'
- They follow the appropriate procedures that are in place for sharing safeguarding concerns and that these are shared with relevant professionals in a timely manner
- They understand and implement local safeguarding procedures as set out in local authority arrangements
- Children and young people have opportunity to learn about appropriate relationships with adults and recognise unacceptable behaviour by adults
- They are aware that children can abuse other children (i.e., child-on-child abuse)
- There is a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, violence, abuse, inappropriate behaviour and bullying of any kind are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

# Admissions

We're more than happy to consider admission requests directly from parents and carers. Options Autism and the wider Outcomes First Group have a range of schools and services, we can support you in identifying the most appropriate provision for your child.

If you prefer, or would like to learn more about, a specific service we would like to hear from you.

When you get in touch we will start with a discussion with one of our Senior Leadership Team. During this call we will describe our service and learn more about your child's needs.

If we feel we may be an appropriate provision for your child, we will invite you to visit. This will allow you to experience the school environment, meet some of our children, young people and staff. If we are not a suitable provision, we will provide support through signposting to alternative services which are more appropriate for the additional support needs of your child.

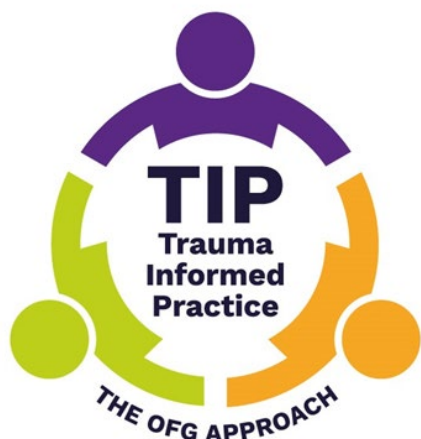
Following your visit, if you feel that we are the right school for your child we will provide you with a next steps pack. Contained in the pack is information which details the process for Parental Placement Requests, links to the advice centre, Enquire, who can detail your child's rights including information about how to ask for support. Information about several advocacy groups who can offer you support. We will also signpost to legal support, directing you to specialist in Child Education and Disability Legislation.

The school's multi-disciplinary team will be actively involved in the referral and admissions process. They will pull together all the assessment information which will be used by staff upon a young person's arrival and subsequent care plan and individual education plan.

Families and carers are invited and welcome to visit the service at any point throughout the referral process.



# Supporting Behaviour



Many of our young people come to us having experienced trauma, attachment difficulties, low self-esteem and they struggle with separation and loss. We know that these young people need a nurturing and therapeutic environment to ensure they feel safe and cared for.

All our staff are trained in Trauma informed practice, good practice for supporting children and young people with ASD and other needs. Under this approach we ensure our children and young people have fair and consistent boundaries and routines and where they struggle we use a PACE model to support them. We have an unconditional positive regard for all our young people and understand that we must look at their behaviour through a trauma informed lens.

Our approach in promoting positive relationships and positive choices in behaviour is about being positive and having an awareness of each young person's own triggers and most appropriate strategies to support.

Our staff are trained in the use of CPI as a means of verbal intervention and physical intervention if necessary. We aim to reduce and eliminate the need to use physical intervention wherever possible, it is always only a last resort.

All our young people have their own plan and risk assessment to ensure the best support and clear guidelines in managing any distressed behaviour.

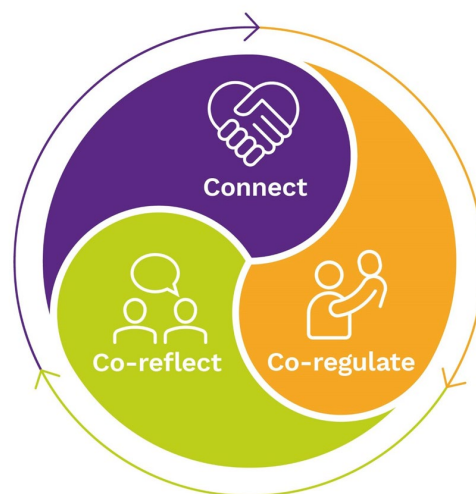
We will work closely with the local authorities and families to ensure they are included in all aspects of their child's placement with us, and we hope they feel their views are valued and listened to.

## Therapeutic Support

Our in-house clinical lead is a psychotherapist who supports the staff and the young people. He is able to observe our children and young people and build relationships with them.

He provides one to one therapy where appropriate and he works with the staff team through reflective practice to ensure we are giving the best possible support at all times.

We have training from the Crisis Prevention institute that allows us to support young people in their moments of crisis and dysregulation. This allows us to hold a young person safely if necessary. This would always be a last resort after all other de-escalation strategies have been tried. It is a strategy that will be employed only to keep to everyone safe.



# Education

The curriculum aims to provide children with rich experiences which will meet their complex additional support needs and comply fully with the expectations of Curriculum for Excellence, aligned with the requirements of GIRFEC (now at the core of the Children and Young People's Act).

**Closeburn House** is a secondary school, accommodating students from first to sixth year. Teachers and the education team plan within the 4 contexts for learning: Inter Disciplinary Learning, Subject and Curriculum Areas, Personal Achievement and the Ethos and Life of the School. All of which are underpinned by a clear focus on Health & Wellbeing. Our young people benefit from our therapeutic and trauma informed approach which help to support them in managing their often-complex behaviours and emotions. GIRFEC principles are at the heart of our professional practice at Closeburn House School.

We have well-resourced classrooms with small numbers allowing young people to benefit from a rich learning environment, one to one support and an exciting outdoor learning environment on the doorstep.



In the senior phase, young people are supported to achieve to their fullest potential through a personalised pathway. We have young people who volunteer in the local community, this helps them gain the confidence and skills they need for their next steps in life. We aim to always ensure our young people leave Closeburn and go on to positive outcomes, we work hard to ensure that transition is as smooth as possible in order to set them up for success in their future.

# Health

Closeburn House works closely with social workers, relevant health professionals and families to make sure we have an accurate picture of the health needs of the young people in our care.

Within Dumfries and Galloway, we work closely with the LAC Health Team and will refer each young person on admission to their service. They will benefit from a full Health Assessment and be offered a treatment plan which the team around the child will assist with

Young people will be registered with a local GP, Dentist and Optician and will have access to a psychotherapist and OT and SALT if needed.

Young people will be supported to

- Have a healthy, balanced diet.
- Take part in regular exercise.
- Attend all health appointments.
- Have access to sexual health information when appropriate.

We have beautiful grounds where we can enjoy outdoor activities and exercises. We have a multigym in the house to engage young people in exercising, all our young people have access to local leisure facilities and lots of equipment to support activity games and activities.



## **Medication**

We adhere to the Outcomes First Group policy for the management of medication, which sets out arrangements for storing, dispensing and recording medication and has been created in line with relevant national legislation. Please ask for more information.

## **Key Team**

On admission each young person will be allocated a Key-worker, Co-worker and a Key Teacher. These roles involve taking lead responsibility for general parental tasks such as ensuring that health matters are satisfactorily dealt with, suitable clothing is purchased, and contact is maintained with important people. The key-worker will also have primary responsibility for assisting young people to maintain cultural and social networks.

Individual work may also include counselling, life story work, special interest activities and projects, communication skills training and risk assessments. Individual work can offer valuable opportunities for young people to achieve and should, in turn promote self-esteem and confidence.



# Meet the Team



Hi, I am **Grace Little, Head of Care**. I have worked across numerous roles here for over 15 years. Through continuous workplace training and stepping outside comfort zone on occasion I was offered the role of Registered Manager in 2018, the rest so to speak is history. I love the role and work within a team of dedicated staff at Closeburn where we all strive to deliver outstanding support and care to all our young people. I look forward to sharing our journey in the future with you.

Hi, I am **Nicola McDonald, Head Teacher**. It is my privilege to work with the young people and the whole team here, I am passionate about supporting our young learners to achieve their fullest potential and to build the foundations of better outcomes for each of them. I believe the key to achieve this goal is to place relationships at the centre of everything we do. I am committed to maintaining positive, effective relationships with the entire school community, from pupils to parents, carers and education professionals – relationships which are key to ensuring our pupils receive the very best education and go on to lead happy, fulfilling lives.



Hi, I'm **Julie McNairn, Registered Manager at Closeburn House**. I have supported in this home for almost five years and have grown in knowledge and experience along with many of those that I have supported. I believe that through a person centred, therapeutic approach, we can truly empower our young people to believe in the beauty of their dreams and support successfully in making these come true. I have a passion for making a transformational difference in young people's lives. With our nurture-based approach, I believe we can victoriously support our young people to successfully learn and grow, to build on their confidence and self-esteem and effectively make their way in the world. I actively encourage positive growth, providing an empowering environment enabling both staff and children to believe in themselves and their achievements.

Hi, I am **Alison Goodman-Vaughan, Deputy Head Teacher.**

Working with the team and the young people here is an honour. Every day is different, and I thrive on the challenges this brings. My focus is on the students and their wellbeing, I believe that every student can unlock their potential if supported and motivated appropriately. I work closely with our school community to ensure that students are supported by everyone involved in their care. This allows students to access their education more effectively and they can go on to achieve to their highest potential.





# Quality Assurance

Outcomes First Group provides an independent visitor to each home, they visit once a month working on a particular theme, they will appraise the work of the home, speak to the young people and outside professionals where appropriate. They compile reports of their visits every month.

Closeburn House is inspected regularly by the Care Inspectorate and the reports are available online. Here are some comments from our August 2023 inspection.

**“Staff had developed very positive relationships with the young people. All young people who spoke with us stated they felt safe in the service knowing they could trust the staff who were there to care for them”**

**“Young people were empowered and encouraged to engage in their care plan and to voice their opinions”**

**“Young people's access to independent advocacy was clearly evident. They had access to external advocacy services but also to responsible adults outwith the service such as social workers, health professionals and their family. This assured young people that their views would always be represented.**



## What do our young people say

Some comments from our young people

**“The school is more relaxing than other schools as there is less people and I like the Warhammer Club”**

**“I get lots of one to one support, it is a more nurturing environment than other places”**

**“I like maths, I like going on Sumdog and I like all the teachers”**

## Policies and Additional Information

Outcomes First Group owns and operates many different services and has a set of common policies and procedures which apply to all settings. Copies of most of policies are freely available on our website or can be supplied on request.

# Proprietor



**Closeburn House** is operated by Options Autism and is owned by Acorn Care and Education Ltd, a subsidiary company of Outcomes First Group (proprietary body). The Chairperson of the proprietary body is Richard Power (COO).

Oversight of school management is provided by the Regional Director for Options Autism, responsible to the Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer.

Key decisions are referred to the Outcomes First Group's Board of Directors,

In addition, the group extends its robust governance through local governing committees, a national education performance board and an independent Safeguarding and Quality Committee with three independent members.

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**Chair of Proprietary Body:** Richard Power

**Registered Office:** Atria, Spa Road, Bolton, BL1 4AG

**Telephone number:** 01204 522667

**Registered Numbers:**

Closeburn Care – SC2003010884

Closeburn School – 5980348



**the promise**  
**scotland**

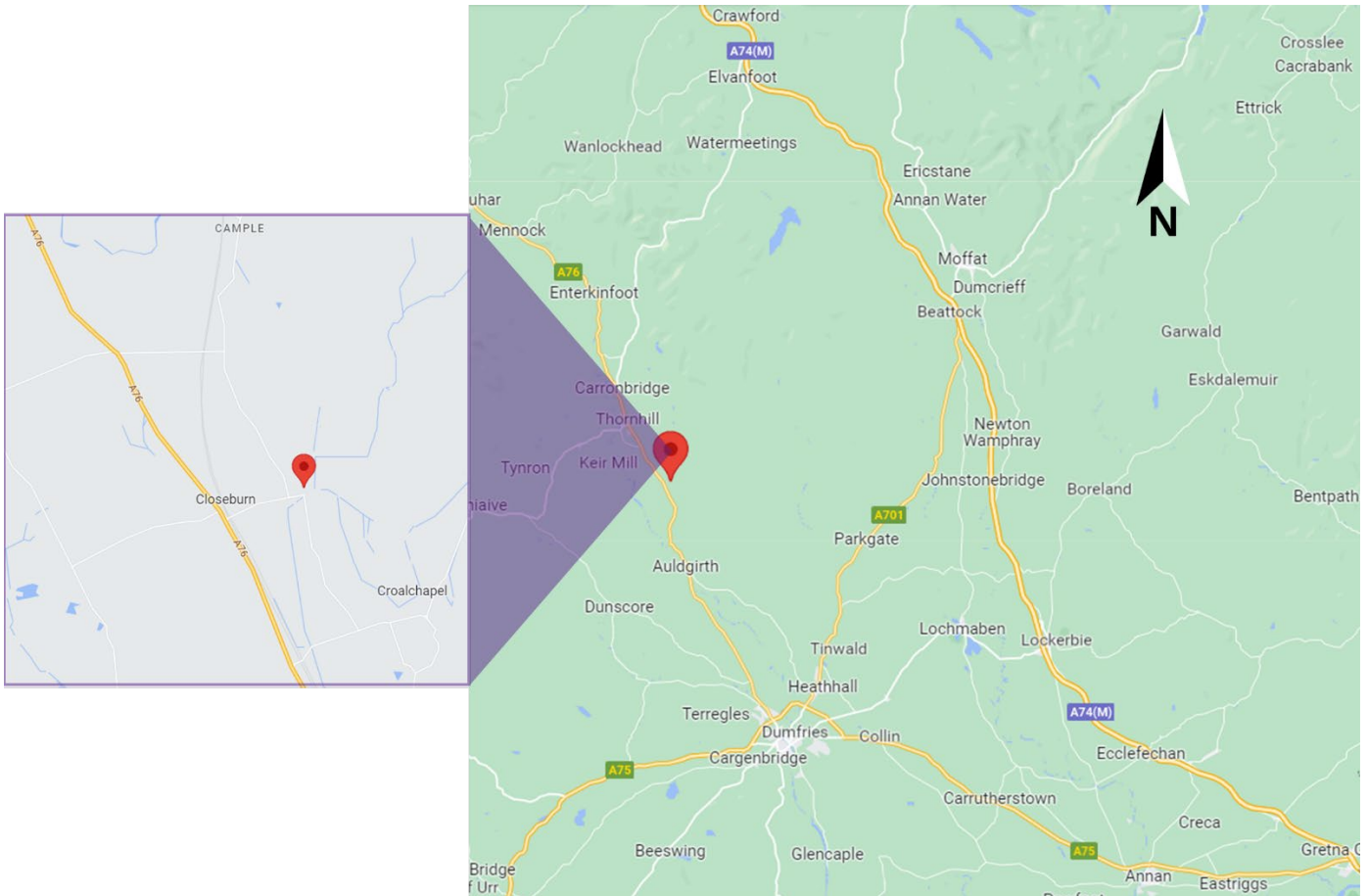
# Contact & Find Us

Web: [www.holisticchildcare.co.uk](http://www.holisticchildcare.co.uk)

Email: [office@closeburnhouse.co.uk](mailto:office@closeburnhouse.co.uk)

Tel: 01848 331352

## CLOSEBURN HOUSE



### CAR

.5 miles off the A76 through Closeburn village.

Sat nav address: Closeburn House School, Closeburn, DG3 5HP

### RAIL

Nearest railway station: Dumfries

### BUS

Nearest Bus stop: Closeburn main street, A76. Half a mile walk to the school, footpath all the way to the school

Services: 102 service Dumfries – Edinburgh, 236 Penpont – Dumfries, 246 Cumnock – Sanquhar