



Welcome to

# Kirkcowan Primary School



December 2025

# Information at a Glance

## School Information

### School Address

Kirkcowan Primary School

Wellhouse Road, Kirkcowan

Newton Stewart

DG8 0HP

Tel: 01671 830234

Website: School blogs once enrolment complete

Email address:

[gw08officekirkcowan@ea.dumgal.sch.uk](mailto:gw08officekirkcowan@ea.dumgal.sch.uk)

Parent Council Chairperson: Mrs Jemma McNeill

Parent Council email:

[kirkcowanparentocouncil@gmail.com](mailto:kirkcowanparentocouncil@gmail.com)

Head Teacher: Mrs Kirsty Andrews

School Roll: 28

Denomination Status: non-denominational

## School Staff:

### Teaching Staff

P1-4	Mrs E McWhirter
RICCT/Support	Mr D Thomson
P5-7	Mr R Darwin
PT	Mr M Sullivan
Support for Learning	Mrs M Gordon

If you would like some help understanding this or need it in another format please contact 030 33 33 3000.

Learning Assistant Mrs S Rudd

Clerical Assistant Mrs S Milven

Quality Improvement Officer  
Mr David Maxwell

### Auxiliary Staff

Janitor Mr A McCornick

Catering Mrs C Stewart

Ms N Gray

Cleaning Ms N Gray

## The School Day

Children are supervised in the playground from 08.45am

### Primary School

09:00	Begin school
10.30 - 10.45	Break
12:15 - 13:00	Lunch
15.00	End school

School term dates can be found at:

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15239/School-term-and-holiday-dates>

## Communicating with home

Each class has its own group (Team) set up within Microsoft Teams. This is where you will find information on your child's PE days & what homework is due that week.

Text messaging, Groupcall, is used when we need to communicate with all parents quickly, i.e. school closure etc. and to send reminders of upcoming events. If you would prefer information to come to your phone or email please let our clerical staff know and ensure you keep your details up to date.

Please phone if you would like to speak to a member of staff. Parents are welcome to have a quick informal chat with the class teacher or send a message in through our homework sheets or ask your child to put on their class Team.

We send weekly newsletters by email to keep you up to date with success and achievements and to share upcoming information.

The school holds two parents' nights and links will be built up using learning conversations as part of our Personal Learning Plans where pupils, parents and teachers discuss and record learning progress and future targets.



# Welcome from the Head Teacher

Dear Parent / Carer

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all new parents, guardians and carers of Kirkcowan Primary School.

Kirkcowan School was built in 1862 and originally consisted of two classrooms and a hall. Over the years the school has been extended and now consists of a gym and four class bases made up of two primary classes and a nursery. The dining hall is housed in a separate building with modern kitchen facilities where school meals are prepared each day. We enjoy good links with our local community and work closely with our partnership school, Wigtown.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with all the key information you will need as your child starts at the school. If you have any queries about the content of the handbook, or any questions that the handbook does not answer, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

In line with the Education Bill (2015) and the National Improvement Framework the schools aim is to ensure that all children are able to reach their full potential through:

- Raising attainment particularly in literacy and numeracy and weakening the link between attainment and social-economic disadvantage.
- Ensuring early intervention.
- Supporting children to be healthy and active.
- Using data gathered from school, the local authority, children, parents and national organisations to find out what makes a positive difference to children's learning and health and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Andrews, Head Teacher

To access a copy of our Authority Handbook with information about how we support parents and work with our schools please visit - [Education Authority Schools Handbook](#)

## School Aims, Values and Ethos

**School Motto** 'Together we Succeed'

### Vision, Values & Aims

At Kirkcowan School we provide a safe and welcoming environment where individuals can realise their potential.

We are committed to ensuring that Kirkcowan School is a community in which:

- Children develop a strong sense of self-worth that endures through successes and failures.
- Children develop a sense of responsibility for themselves, others and the environment with strong community links.
- We respect and care for each other and value the diversity that exists among people, developing teamwork within school.
- Learning is engaging and challenging and fosters a sense of curiosity.
- Education is seen as a life-long experience.
- Children and their wider families feel supported.

Staff within school endeavour to foster an ethos of care, achievement, respect and inclusion. They have high expectations for standards of behaviour and organise classrooms to provide safe, engaging and effective learning environments.

Through continual review of learning and teaching, staff strive to promote a culture of challenge and support, drawing on current research and policy to enable children to achieve success and engage in their learning.

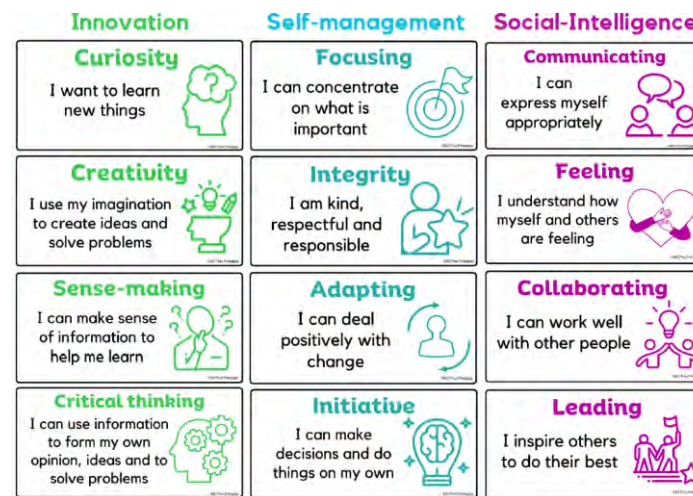
The school motto 'Together we succeed' is at the heart of everything that we do and the school's part within the local community. This is highlighted through being a UNCRC-Rights Aware Silver Award, Digital Schools Award and Eco-Green Flag School.

## Visible Learning

Over the past 7 years we have developed our skills through Visible Learning a focus on learning which puts the child at the centre and in the driving seat of their own learning. Together with you, their families we build the children's skills and confidence through links with meta skills and through our PLPs.

## Meta Skills

This year we are learning about meta skills and how they link with our future careers. These will take the place of our learning dispositions, and the children will be using them in all areas of their learning and school life. Below is a picture of the 12 key skills. Transferable skills are so important as we are preparing our children for jobs and future careers that don't even exist yet.



## Contact Us

The school welcomes suggestions and enquiries from parents and carers.

### If you need to find out something

We can be contacted by e-mail, telephone, group call text messages or face to face. Where it is not possible to resolve enquiries straight away, we will make arrangements to follow up as necessary with the most appropriate member of staff.

### Comments, Complaints and Compliments

A comment might be some brief feedback about how we have handled a situation or delivered a service. It is best to pass a comment straight to the school so that we can take any necessary action.

If you are not happy with the response you receive or a decision that has been made, you can Ask us to Look Again. You can do this by contacting

<https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/parents-carers/parental-involvement-engagement>

At this point an Officer will contact you and discuss the issue and direct the enquirer as appropriate.

Remember you can also access Dumfries & Galloway Have Your Say at

<https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/council-elections/have-your-say>



## How the School Works

### Class Organisation

For organisational purposes, schools are structured into classes. Each year it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to organise the class structure.

This year we have 2 classes. How the classes are made varies each year depending on numbers. If a stage needs to be split across 2 classes then we give careful consideration to learning needs, social groupings to find the best fit for the children. If this is for a small number of pupils we would do this in collaboration with you, their parents.

### Positive Behaviour and Celebrating Success

Our school community endorses the following approaches which help promote positive behaviour:

- Development of an inclusive and positive ethos and climate of respect, responsibility and positive relationships; and a culture where bullying and discrimination is unacceptable.
- Education exploring prejudice which clearly identifies prejudice based bullying behaviours.
- Pupil involvement and engagement.
- Circle time, peer mediation, buddies, mentoring, playground pals and playground supervision.
- Proactive information strategies and campaigns.
- Mental, emotional and social health and wellbeing programmes and activities.
- Implementation of whole organisation programmes in positive relationships and behaviour, social and emotional skills and personal development.
- Restorative approaches.
- Nurturing approaches and principles.
- Personal support and additional support.
- Supporting and enabling parents.

- Acting on patterns of bullying incidents through monitoring.
- ChildLine Schools Programme.
- ‘Buddying’ or mentoring systems.
- A system which identifies vulnerable pupils and takes steps to remedy this as in a circle of friends.
- Involvement of pupil and parent councils.
- Regular anti-bullying campaigns, posters, assemblies.
- Working within cluster groups to develop and promote a consistent approach to anti-bullying and implement preventative action at all stages of learning.
- Encourage pupils to report bullying incidents using “worry” & feedback boxes.
- Sharing Good Practice - When pupils have achieved academically, worked hard, shown consideration for others etc. they may be sent to the Head Teacher and / or other classrooms to share this. Pupils may also be asked to share this good news with the school during a Pupil Voice Assembly.
- Recognising Personal Achievements through Achievement Walls, Pupil of the Week certificates.
- Encouraging peer support, positive interactions and good choices within the playground through use of the Friendship Bench/ Playmakers activities.





## School uniform

All Dumfries and Galloway schools have a dress code which encourages pupils to dress in a way appropriate to attendance at school. For more information on School Uniform, Dress Code, and School Clothing Grants visit <https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-uniform-clothing-guidance-information-parents-carers/>

### Our everyday uniform consists of:

Red school sweatshirt/jumper or cardigan with badge.

Yellow/white school polo shirt with badge.

Grey/black school trousers, shorts or skirt

Grey/black school skirt - gingham dress for summer

Shoes (preferred) or dark coloured trainers with as few markings as possible

### For formal occasions such as concerts and festivals:

School tie (First tie is presented by the School to pupils in P1)

White school blouse/shirt

Our Uniform Suppliers are Border Embroideries and items can be ordered directly from this company on their website [www.border-embroideries.co.uk](http://www.border-embroideries.co.uk)

We also have a swap box in school so please ask and you can look through for your child's size.

## School Clothing grants

Our Anti-Poverty Strategy can be found at <https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/news/2024/about-poverty-inequalities-partnership>

and for information on our School Uniform Bank Project. Donation and Collection information can be found at the above link.

The award of clothing grants is to assist with the cost of school clothing for families who are on a qualifying benefit or on low income. The current award is £134 per child. Guidance and more information is available at

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals>

## School Meals

School Meals, Naturally D&G local provenance for a sustainable future.

Detailed information on school meals is available at <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmenus>

## Pre-ordering lunch

All menus are nutritionally analysed, offering a fantastic choice and flexibility. Primary schools have introduced an advanced pre order system for lunch.

## Special dietary requirements

For food allergy and intolerances; medically prescribed diets; or diets for religious or cultural reasons specific meals for children of different ethnic origin may be catered for. Ask the school for a registration form or call 030 33 33 3000 and ask for Facilities Operations (Catering). We recommend that all children with a food allergy or intolerance register even if your child does not have school meals.

## Free School Meals

Free School Meals are provided for all pupils in Primary 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Online payments for school meals for Primary 6 and 7 parents / pupils has been rolled out to all schools in Dumfries and Galloway. Younger children at nursery or older pupils at primary may also be eligible for free school meals in certain situations as well as those families on qualifying benefits.

In Nursery eligible children can receive up to 1140 hours a year of Early Learning and Childcare. As part of this funded offer the child will be entitled to one free meal and a snack each day.

The Council Webpage and Facebook will be updated with information for parents.

For more information on free school meal entitlement visit <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals> or contact Education Support Services on 01387 260 493



## School Transport

Free school transport is available for some school children attending primary or secondary school if they live within the school catchment area and if they meet certain criteria. For more information and guidance visit <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15245/Free-school-transport>

## Attendance

It is your responsibility as parents to ensure that your child/children attend school regularly. For the safety of all children it is important for you to telephone the school office prior to/at the beginning of the absence. Absences are recorded in class registers and frequent or irregular absences not supported by a reasonable excuse, will be notified to parents and the matter may be referred to the Opportunities for All Service. If possible please, try to make dental/medical appointments out with school hours. However, if this is not possible please inform us in writing or by telephone of the appointment and arrange to collect your child from class.

For more information on Attendance, Absences, Lateness and responsibilities of parents please visit

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/schoolattendance/>

## Absence from School

Pupils who need to leave school during the school day i.e. doctor /dentist appointments, must be collected by a named contact confirmed with the school office. They must also report to the school office on their return to school.

## Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence(CfE), now known as 'Scotland's Curriculum,' is bringing learning to life in the way education is delivered for all 3-18year olds in nursery, primary, secondary, at college and via workplace or community learning. It aims to respond and adapt flexibly to meet the needs of an ever changing and evolving world and Scotland's place within it. At its heart lies a constant commitment and drive towards excellence and equity, to raise standards, improve knowledge, develop skills for all learners and close the gap between the lowest and highest achievers by ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to be successful no matter what their background or circumstances. Ultimately it aims to nurture children and young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

### Broad General Education

Children and young people work their way through Experiences and Outcomes in each of the five Curriculum Levels (Early, First, Second, Third, Fourth) and in each of the eight Curricular Areas. The five Curricular Levels span pre-school to the end of S3. This is the Broad General Education. Pupils progress at their own pace, working through the Experiences and Outcomes of the most appropriate level for them. Pupils will be supported in collecting evidence of their achievements, with a profile of these being produced in P7 and S3.



## Curriculum Structure

We reviewed our curriculum structure in line with Curriculum for Excellence. Across the partnership we plan for the same experiences and outcomes throughout the whole school, at the same time where appropriate. It also gives us a whole school context and means that we all benefit from guest visitors or local community links. This ensures better pace and progression for pupils as all teachers are planning together for these contexts. Children are involved in deciding possible activities to meet the learning intentions (the skills they are learning) from these themes. Through the children's Personal Learning Plans parents are also able to contribute. Children also select areas they would like to learn about at the start of the academic year.

Underpinning our curriculum structure is a belief that we are preparing children for real life and as we cannot predict what careers will be available to them as adults, we need to equip them with transferable skills to give them the best possible opportunities in life.

To achieve this we highly value:

**Visible Learning.** This involves the children at the heart of their learning and builds the skills which over time allow them the self-evaluation and reflection skills to identify their own next steps in learning along with their teachers. Our children are assessment capable and able to drive their own progress.

**Outdoor Learning.** This gives children an opportunity to develop skills for life in real situations and to transfer skills from the classroom to new situations and vice versa. This gives children a context and purpose for learning.

**Developing the Young Workforce.** Supports this belief and through using the skills of parents and local community members we have recently been able to provide a variety of activities like career day where local businesses and parents shared the skills they used in their line of work. We also held STEM days and take part in the maths and Young Engineer, K'Nex challenge. The skills developed are outlined in the My World of Work Profile. Children will highlight skills they have covered and may include some evidence to show their achievements.

## Organisation of Learning

We have a whole school approach to planning, teaching and assessing learning where the staff team co-operatively plans and delivers the same experiences and outcomes across levels. This is achieved through a balance of contextualised learning (topics), interdisciplinary learning, core and discrete subjects. Core skills include English and literacy, maths and numeracy and health and wellbeing which are the responsibility of all staff. Our active and engaging opportunities are organised into learning groups across the school to allow pupils to be challenged and supported at the appropriate level. Careful consideration is given to the composition of classes ensuring that gender and friendship groups are taken into account too. To ensure we make best use of staff skills, resources and space available, we have small focussed teaching groups and pupils are challenged to ensure application and depth of learning. Our curriculum structure follows a three year cycle ensuring all experiences and outcomes are covered at each level, regardless of the number of classes within the school. We have a flexible column to allow room for child chosen interests to be explored alongside our curriculum structure. These allow the pupil voice to be heard & also for personalisation & choice.

**Committees** - All of our pupils belong to a committee with their house mates, which meet fortnightly. They will stay on the committee all year and then rotate around on a 3-year cycle, meaning they will have been in each committee between P3-P6. In P7 they will get the choice to lead a committee.

This year we updated our committees to cover all aspects of school life so each committee leads on aspects of Rights Respecting Schools, Eco work, Walk to School Week, Scottish Fisheries, Children in Need, Digital Schools etc.

Our committees are now called the Bladnoch Bandits, Barhoise Brains & Terrific Tarff. These were decided by the children this year and will be reviewed annually.

We achieved our Silver Rights Respecting Schools status in November 2024. We are now working towards Gold.



We also achieved our Digital Schools Award with P6 digital leaders teaching skills across the school.

As well as our Core Reading Schools status linked with our positive relationship with Wigtown Book Festival.

## P7 Committee

The P7 Committee are responsible for certain fundraising within the school & take the lead to organise events such as Hallowe'en, Remembrance Day, World Book Day & a Burns Supper.

## UNCRC - Rights Respecting Schools Steering Group

Pupils from P6/7 through pupil voice work on the action plan and feedback to staff, pupils and wider school.



## Parental Involvement and Engagement

### Parent/Carers and the Parent Council

Every parent who has a child at our school is a member of the Parent Forum. The parent council is a group of parents who have chosen to represent the parent forum. As a member of the Parent Forum, each parent can expect to:

- Receive information about the school and its activities
- Hear about what partnership with parents means in our school
- Be invited to be involved in ways and times that suit you
- Identify issues you want the parent council to work on with the school
- Be asked your opinion by the parent council on issues relating to the school and education it provides
- Work in partnership with staff
- Enjoy taking part in school life in whatever way possible

More information is available at <https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/parents-carers/parental-involvement-engagement>

More information and support for Parents/ Parent Councils is available at <https://connect.scot/>

Parentclub Scotland <https://www.parentclub.scot/> provides support information and guidance to expectant parents, baby, toddler, Child, Pre-teen and Parents and Carers.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland's (NPFS) Curriculum for Excellence in a Nutshell series. Free Downloads for parents/carers: <https://www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/category/in-a-nutshell-series/nationals-in-a-nutshell-series/>

### Parentzone Scotland

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

information about the Curriculum and how you can be involved in your child's learning.

### How is my child doing?

There will be several opportunities for you to discuss your child's progress. This may be through informal discussion with the teacher or at Parents' Nights/ Learning Conversations, formal reports or for some it may be through more formal, focussed meetings with other agencies.

## Helping Your Child and Family Learning

There are many things which as a parent you can do to support your child's learning in school:-

- Listen, talk, and encourage - this can have a big influence on children's learning.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their learning, what learning is happening at school and do what you can at home to build on that.
- Talk to your child about their strengths and interests and how they are progressing.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their next steps in learning and find out how you can work with the school to support this.
- Ask for help if you think your child needs it for any reason.
- Praise your child if he/she is working hard at something or has achieved something within or out of school.
- Encourage any reading.
- Look for opportunities at home to develop literacy and numeracy skills: money, number problems, time, measuring, matching, size, reading, writing, understanding instructions, questioning information.
- Encourage your child to take part in activities e.g. hobbies, clubs which will provide opportunities to develop a range of skills
- Help them work on tasks on their own and then talk about it with you afterwards.
- Do things together where appropriate - learn together e.g. if your child has a project or task to do, take an interest and discuss with them what he/she is doing or offer support if this is needed.
- Help prepare for change particularly at key transitions - talk about the change together.
- Talk to them about how they are feeling.
- Work together with the school by taking part in discussions about your child's learning and progress e.g. at parents nights, reviews, etc.

## Support for All

### Support for Learners

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the well-being and educational development of all learners. The process of inclusion requires all involved in the business of learning and teaching to demonstrate commitment, innovation and flexibility to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality learning opportunities and experiences.

More information is available in our Authority Handbook, see link above.

### Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

You are the expert on your child and what you think matters. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) means that the School will always seek to involve you, to listen to your opinions and take them seriously.

More information is available at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/girfec](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/girfec)

### Child Protection

All children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect. The vision for all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that they should be: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and responsible and included. Schools and front-line education and child care services will play an important role in ensuring all children and young people are safe and well. Further information can be found at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16640/Support-for-children-and-families>

Parents, carers and pupils have a key role in keeping the school community safe. We would therefore urge parents to share any information which would keep everyone safe, and to support and encourage their child(ren) to do the same.

### Enrolment in Schools - School Places

Information on enrolment in school and catchment areas is available at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15241/School-places> Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website by accessing "Find My Nearest".

### School Improvements

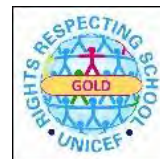
Each year the school will publish a School Improvement Plan which outlines the key priorities for the school during the year ahead, following engagement with staff, pupils and parents. The plan indicates the expected impact of priorities on pupil learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward. Both the report and the plan are published on the school's web-site and are also available in hard copy, on request. A copy can also be found by searching for your school at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools)

The school priorities for session 25-26 are to:

**-to further develop our maths skills and knowledge through Numicon with new activities in class and teachers attending training.**



**-To achieve Gold Rights Respecting School award by working together with our community and learning how we can influence national issues.**



**-To achieve Gold Sports Scotland award through our in school activities like playmakers and active school clubs & events. To continue to offer football & netball league opportunities.**



**-To continue on our Digital Schools journey by encouraging all our families to use our new app and look at our new school blog.**

**-To make use of our amazing outdoors to take our learning outside the classroom.**



**-To welcome our families into school for learning sessions in literacy, numeracy and developing the young workforce.**

**-To use our big books, fab folders and PLPs confidently and be able to tell our families and Mrs Andrews what we are learning.**

## Health and Safety

### Emergency Procedures (including Safer Together Guidance)

If your child feels ill during the school day and we feel that he/she would be better at home, we will telephone you or your emergency contact. Minor accidents, e.g. cuts, bruises, are dealt with by the school staff. Serious accidents are few, but should one occur your child will be immediately taken either to your doctor or to hospital, if necessary, and you or your emergency contact will be notified. We cannot stress enough the importance of supplying the school with the relevant information we require in such a situation, i.e. your own home and work number and a telephone number of an emergency contact. Please remember that if your child stays in more than one home setting contact details should take account of this.

### Health Care (inc First Aid)

Many children will require their health care needs to be met at sometime within the nursery/school environment, for most children this will be for short periods of time only, but for some children this may require more long-term planning and support. If your child has any health care needs, please contact the school to discuss arrangements. Full details of the support available and your role as a parent and the role of your child are contained within Health Care in Schools 3-18 (NHS and Dumfries and Galloway Council) which is available from the school.

## Severe Weather and School Closure Arrangements

Headteachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it necessary in the best interests of the pupils. In these circumstances parents will be communicated with in a variety of ways including text messages/ phone calls and emergency contact arrangements. All school closures will be notified on the Council Website.

<https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/schools/emergency-school-closures>

## Data Protection

Information on how the Council uses personal data is available at <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15129/Data-protection> and <https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/council-elections/data-finance-performance/data-privacy-information-requests/privacy-statements/education-skills-community-wellbeing-privacy-statements>

## ICT in Schools

For more information on ICT in school please see page 15 of the [Education Authority Schools Handbook](#)

## Use of the Internet, Social Networking Sites

As part of the process of learning we allow our children supervised access to the Internet and e-mail. The authority runs its own filter system to ensure that young people are not at risk from exposure to inappropriate material. This filtering system is regularly being upgraded. We have a policy for use of the Internet and a contract for responsible use, which we ask parents and young people to sign up to. Parents at Kirkcowan Primary are actively encouraged to join the Safer Schools App. which is regularly updated and gives parents access to our secure blog.

