

Reception Parents' Information Booklet

Koinonia Federation

2020-2021



Welcome to Reception

Beginning school is a major event in the life of a four year old, and it won't be long before your child will be starting with us at St Mary Magdalene School. There will be lots of new things to learn and of course you will want to ensure that your child is well prepared for this important event. We aim to make it a happy and memorable experience. We hope that this booklet will provide some useful information that will help your child to settle quickly into school.



The Reception Year

The first year of a child's schooling is critical to their future development. The purpose of the Reception Year is to ignite children's interests and excitement for learning through offering a play-based curriculum. Children learn through engaging in a mixture of self-initiated and adult-led experiences. This important stage helps to prepare children for the more formal learning they will encounter in Key Stage 1 and beyond. In addition, essential social skills and learning outcomes are acquired as children interact with their peers.

Settling in Period

To encourage smoother transition into the Reception classes, children will begin by coming into school for half a day and then lead up to full day in school over a 3 week period. This will allow the Reception Staff to spend more individual time getting to know your child. We look forward to getting to know the Parents and Carers too.

What Can I do to help my child before they start school? Some practicalities:

As Parents you play a vital role in the education of your child. The process begins long before they come to school. As the time for school approaches, there are ways in which you can help prepare your child and make their entry to school a happy time.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Get to know other children that are starting at the same time.
- Help your child to look after their own belongings, to be able to dress themselves, recognise their name on clothing, use the toilet and to eat with a knife and fork.
- Be positive about starting school (hide any of your own worries or fears).
- Play games together e.g. I spy, snakes and ladders and snap.
- Inform the school of any health, social and emotional problems.
- When teaching your child to spell their name encourage them to use lower case letters (except for the starting letter). Also teach the sound of letter as well as its name.

Getting dressed

It is very useful if your child can dress and undress themselves when they join the school.

We do not require the majority of 4 year olds to be able to tie their own laces, but we do encourage them to try! If you want your child to have laced shoes, then they need to be able to tie them themselves. Velcro fastening shoes and slip on pumps can be less frustrating for both child and teacher in the early stages.

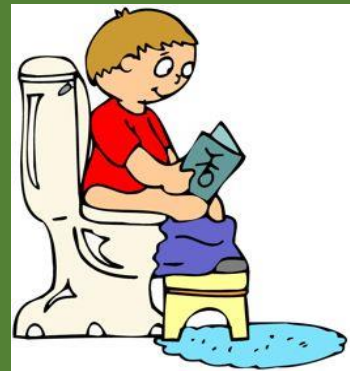


Please name your child's clothing clearly.

If your child can recognise their name, then this can be very reassuring when they are locating their special belongings.

Going to the toilet

It can be very worrying if a child cannot manage to go to the toilet without assistance. There are often stiff fasteners, particularly on school trousers or tights which can be tricky. So a few practice sessions are worthwhile before they start school. Do reassure your child that they can always go to the toilet when needed. During class time whether they are inside or out they can access the toilet independently. All children should know how to flush the toilet after use, and wash their hands.



Lunch times

Help is at hand to cut up food during lunchtime, but we would expect all children to handle a knife and fork correctly, and sit sensibly at the table.



Please be aware that:

- Playing can be very messy business. Children do wear aprons, but accidents can happen.
- Please clearly name all items of clothing which your child is likely to take off e.g. coats, each item of PE kit. Wellington boots which they are encouraged to bring in and leave at school for Forest School Sessions.
- Children will have 2 PE sessions a week and they will need to get undressed and dressed independently so please allow them time to practise at home.



'Just Playing?'

A high quality early years education is about much more than colours and shapes, numbers and letters. It's about learning to be independent, confident, strong and curious.

It's about developing children's natural joy and wonder for the world they live in.

We focus on children forming positive relationships. If children can learn to 'have a go', learn from mistakes and try again, they will succeed in their future learning. Young children learn by doing themselves, by exploring and investigating, watching and listening, talking and discussing, creating and communicating - in other words - playing. Play is children's work and playing hard is very tiring! Your children may be really exhausted and perhaps a bit grumpy when they come home - please make allowances. You'll want to know what your child has been doing all day.

'What did you do at school today?'

'Don't know - nothing - just playing', are common replies!

Sometimes children make something, draw or paint, so you can see what they've done. Often their play has nothing to show for it, the learning is invisible. Whatever they've done, please don't compare your child with anyone else, or put them under any pressure to make something for you - it's so easy to knock their self-esteem.

So, what have they really been doing and how will they learn if they are 'just playing'.

Young children learn from everything around them - the people, the environment, the atmosphere, the routine, and the experiences. All aspects of children's growth and development are woven together, but it is interesting to look at the different areas of learning separately to understand how young children learn. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum describes the following areas with 'Early Learning Goals' to be aimed for by the end of children's Reception year in school.

Outdoor Learning Experiences/Forest School

Children will be learning in the Forest School area at St Mary Magdalene at least once a week. We provide outdoor waterproof clothes for all children in case of wet weather. Children are asked to bring in a pair of wellies which will stay in class throughout the year.



Home Learning for Reception Children

As children spend approximately 15% of their life at school and 85% of their life at home; it is essential that they are assisted to see learning as something that happens both at school and at home. In Reception the key purpose of home learning is to develop a partnership with Parents and involve them actively in pupils' learning. The most important form of support Parents can offer their child is to read to them and, when they are ready, hear them read. If possible this should happen for a short period of time every day. We strongly encourage the setting up of a regular routine so that children can establish a reading habit.

At this age in a child's development the best learning happens through story, play and games. Once the children have settled in they will receive some homework once a week. This is to give you an idea of what they are learning in school. As well as the opportunity to sit with your child and get to know them and how they work. It is not meant to be a stressful task and we try to be flexible about when it is handed in for the first two months.

In addition to homework, the following activities are recommended:

- **Talk with your child** about what they have done at school (and about what they do at home). This offers a valuable opportunity for reflection and a chance to consolidate what has been learnt. It also provides a meaningful context for developing speaking and listening skills.
- **Sing with your child!** Children love singing familiar songs. Those with a repetitive structure or a chorus are particularly easy for them to learn (Ten green bottles; Old Macdonald had a farm; the wheels on the bus).
- Provide plenty of opportunities for **drawing, colouring and painting**. Drawing a picture is an important channel for children to communicate and express themselves. It is really good for them to draw often. Give your child the chance to use a broad range of media: crayons, felt tips, paints, pastels and chalks.
- **Make things with your child**. Children really enjoy using a whole range of different materials. Play dough helps the development of their motor skills. Replicas of every day items can be made using paper, card, tape, glue, string, glitter, beads and a whole range of recyclable materials.
- **Simple games** help children to develop basic mathematical skills. You could play the following games with your child: dominoes, snakes and ladders, connect 4 and any other simple dice game.
- **Let your child build:** duplo, lego, meccano and other construction materials help the development of their creative skills.
- **Ensure your child has plenty of exercise**. Children need to run around, visit a playground, play in the sandpit, climb up a climbing frame, chase a ball and go on the swings. All these activities help to develop the child's physical skills as well as assisting them to overcome fears and inhibitions.

- **Small world toys** such as a doll's house or a model garage allow children to act out their feelings through play.
- It goes without saying that **trips to places of interest** are hugely rewarding for children. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the world by extending their experience of life.

There are many excellent interactive learning activities on the internet that you can enjoy with your child. E.g. BBC Learning Zone, Phonics Play.



Personal Organisation

We believe that children should be taught from the earliest stages to take responsibility for bringing to school the following things. This involves placing things themselves in the correct places when coming into the classroom in the morning.

- Their book bag with their reading books they have borrowed from school and reading contact book.
- Their PE kit on a Monday to be left at school and then taken home for washing on a Friday.
- Any forms, slips or monies they have been requested to return.

Eating and sleeping properly

Children who eat a nutritionally balanced diet and take their meals at regular times are more likely to be able to concentrate and as a result learn effectively at school. Healthy, alert children arrive at school having eaten breakfast. Any child that comes to school without having had breakfast is unlikely to have the same degree of energy and consequently their learning is likely to suffer. If for any reason your child hasn't had breakfast before they come to school, please let us know and we will do our best to give them an early snack. We do have snacks time at 10.30 am every day in Reception where children have the option of milk or water and a piece of fruit. The children's growing minds and bodies require 10-12 hours sleep in order to function properly. A good night sleep helps children to concentrate better at school and enhances their



academic performance as well as their emotional wellbeing.

Things you can try at home to support Maths:

- Practise counting - you can do this anywhere; count toys, how many buses you can see when you go out.
- Play hide and seek -again good practise for counting.
- Save your cereal boxes and cardboard tubes for making models. Your child will think you're making a castle; you will know they're learning about shapes!
- Do a jigsaw together- a fun way to develop spatial awareness and matching skills.
- Play card games-even a simple game of snap helps to develop number recognition.
- Have a teddy bears' picnic; count out toys, place settings, and share out the cakes.
- Get a height chart and mark each member of the family's height on it.
- At bath time, play with different size containers.

Things you can try at home to support Literacy:

Speaking and Listening

- Sing songs together.
- In the car, listen to story CDs.
- When you read a new story, ask your child to predict the ending.
- Look at a picture book together and play a spotting game.
- Read with your child everyday - little and often is the best way to learn.
- Make it enjoyable- if your child isn't in the mood, try again later.
- Rhyming books are great fun and your child can join in.
- Be a role model- it's important to let your child see you reading.
- Play with letters: make them out of dough, bricks, or buy some magnetic letters and stick them on the fridge.
- Play I-Spy when you go out-use the sound the letter makes, rather than its name.

Activities to do at home:

- Develop fine motor skills: try modelling with clay or play dough or threading beads. Anything fiddly is good for the hands.
- Practising forming letters - it's often easier to make them big at first.
- If your child doesn't want to pick up a pencil, try finger paints, or drawing in sand.

Record of work folders

During your child's time in the EYFS he/she will have a Learning Journal which will contain observations, specific achievements and set class work. Samples of your child's work and photos are collected by Reception staff and will be annotated against the EYFS Learning Outcomes to show the progress your child has made. Children learn best when there is a strong partnership between home and school and when parents and staff share their knowledge and skills. It is very important therefore for parents to contribute to their child's Learning Journal, about significant developments at home and there will be many opportunities for this.

Other useful Information

Start of day:

When you arrive at school you may wait in the playground with your child until the door is opened. Reception door opens at 8:50am and parents/carers should say goodbye to their child at this point. The door will close at 9:00am and if children arrive after this they must enter school through the main office and be signed in as late. All children will self register by finding their name card and then writing their name on the whiteboard. Following this, they will take part in our daily Wake and Shake activity.

End of day:

The Reception door will open at 3:15pm in line with the rest of the school, giving parents/carers a chance to talk to staff. All children must be collected at 3:15pm. After 3:20pm any children not collected will need to be collected from the main office. Please bring and collect your child promptly, as punctuality aids the smooth running of classes. Children must be brought and collected from the school by a 'named adult'; older children may not collect their siblings. Please let us know in advance if someone different is collecting your child.

Money

All money will be collected through SchoolComms. If money is handed in to teachers, it needs to be in a sealed envelope with the child's name and the reason written on the front. Please do not leave it in book bags or with children.

Absences

At this age, if your child is feeling unwell, or has suffered from sickness or diarrhoea, it is advisable to keep them at home for the next 48 hours. Encouraging them to come to school when they are unwell, can have the detrimental effect of making them hesitant if nervous about coming in the future. Please contact the office as soon as you are aware that your child will not be attending, so the absenteeism can be recorded in the register.

Lunches:

Our school dinners are of a high standard and we encourage children to have them. Should you wish your child to have a packed lunch, please bring it in a clearly named box. We are a healthy school, therefore no sweets, chocolates and fizzy drinks. Each day, fruit, water and milk are provided for the children.



We hope that this handbook has been useful to you in answering some of the most common questions that arise when children start school for the first time. If you have any further questions or would like to discuss any of the points covered, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff. We hope that you and your child will enjoy this important year in school and it is the beginning of a happy and successful journey in St Mary Magdalene Primary School.