



A GUIDE TO STARTING SCHOOL



Helping your child to settle into school

Starting school can be an anxious time for both parents and their child. Many parents and carers worry about how their child will cope with the expectations of a school day, the playground, lunchtimes and all the other new experiences that their child will encounter. At Whiteley Primary School, we want to work closely with parents to help ensure a smooth transition into the reception year at school, and beyond.

This booklet has been written in order to answer some of the questions you may have, to give you ideas about how you can help your child make a smooth transition from their pre-school experiences, and to provide you with some useful information you may need during your child's first weeks at school. For further information you may find the school prospectus useful or our school website: www.whiteleyprimary.co.uk



Things to do before your child starts school

Home visits

Each child will have the opportunity for their teacher and teaching assistant to visit them at home during the second half of the Summer term. (*Individual meetings in school may be offered for those who live a considerable distance from the school*). These individual visits are invaluable as they provide **you** with the opportunity to:

- Meet and talk with your child's teacher and teaching assistant (preferably in the quiet of your own home);
- Share your views and experiences of your child;
- Discuss any issues in confidence (medical, personal etc);
- Share information which may support your child's learning and future happiness;
- Receive advice on ways in which you can support your child in their early days at school.
- Ask any questions you may have.

A successful home visit helps the **teacher** to:

- Begin to build a partnership with your family;
- Gather information about your child, their development and their interests;
- Feel better informed about your child's needs.

Your **child** will:

- Start to get to know the people who will look after them in school;
- Ask and find out about the things they want to know;
- Share some of their favourite toys;
- See that the teacher and teaching assistant are trusted adults, as you have allowed them to come into your home, which helps them to feel more confident when they see these adults in school.

Familiarisation with the school

Before your child starts school in September, there will be opportunities for you and your child to visit the school in order to become familiar with their teacher, teaching assistant, classroom and surroundings. As well as formal visits, new families will be invited to our summer fayre and open evening. There are a number of other ways that can help you become more familiar with our school, including our vision and values. Our website contains lots of information about our school including a virtual tour, introductory video, policies and latest news (www.whiteleyprimary.co.uk). There will also be an introductory welcome meeting for parents in May.



Visits the classroom

In 2020, we had to adapt our induction procedures due to Covid restrictions, and we therefore delayed the usual classroom visits for children until the start of September, just before they were due to start. Whilst this change was due to necessity at the time, we discovered that waiting until September for these visits supported the children with their induction and we had far fewer issues with separation anxiety or worries about children being in the classroom. We have therefore kept this pattern of induction, and your child's formal classroom visits will be at the start of the Autumn term. However, there will be an opportunity for parents to visit the school towards the end of the Summer term for some 'meet the teacher' events, incorporating school tours for those who wish and a visit to the classroom—further details will be confirmed nearer the time. In addition, we offer some informal stay and play sessions after school in the summer when any new children can visit one of the YR classrooms with a parent/carer.



The children will then be invited to visit their classroom for several short sessions at the start of September. For the first visit, parents will stay with them, followed by independent visits. They will be able to spend time with their teacher and teaching assistant and some of their new class. These are valuable opportunities to become familiar with both the indoor and outdoor classroom areas, and to help prepare them for starting school.

Additional/earlier visits may be arranged for children who are likely to find the transition particularly difficult. This may sometimes be after school so that they can become familiar with the environment when there are fewer people about.

Helping your child become more independent

One of the most noticeable changes for your child when starting school is that the child:adult ratio increases significantly. Your child will be in a class of 30 children with the teacher, teaching assistant and occasional parent helpers. It is therefore important that your child can be as independent as possible when at school.

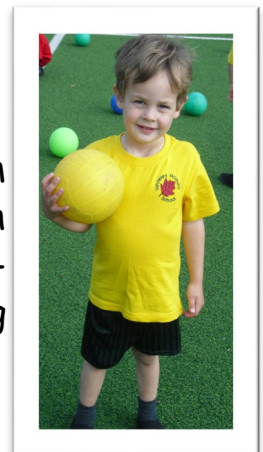
There are a number of simple ways in which you can prepare your child for this:

Dressing/Undressing

- Encourage your child to dress and undress independently at home in preparation for school.
- Help your child by choosing clothes that are easy for them to put on. Choose tops that fit easily over the head, elasticated skirts and trousers, shoes with Velcro fastenings etc.
- Help your child to practise putting on, fastening, taking off and hanging up their coat.
- Provide your child with a PE kit in a PE bag (names on the outside). The bag does not have to be the "school green". A different colour, picture or pattern will help your child to recognise it more easily. Please label every item of clothing clearly with your child's name, including shoes and coats.

The children are introduced to getting changed for PE early on in the Autumn term. They are taught to 'dress a chair' with the clothes they take off so that they can find them more easily at the end of PE. Your child will feel more confident if they can manage to change without much help, and so plenty of practice at home (and pre-school) is really helpful.

(PE kits are stored in the cloakroom areas of the classroom and will be sent back home for washing at the end of each half term. Please ensure that their kit includes jogging bottoms and a fleece top/jacket for the Autumn & Spring terms).



Personal Hygiene

- Encourage your child to be completely independent when using the toilet.
- Establish thorough hand washing as good practice.
- Encourage your child to use tissues to blow their nose.

Each of the classrooms has two toilets which the children can access freely during their child-initiated time. They are taught to put their hand up to ask to use the toilet when they are sat on the carpet for teaching time.

Mealtimes

- If children are having a school meal, they will be expected to use a knife and fork to eat their dinner. They will, of course, be given a little help if needed, but your child will feel more confident if they have practised at home.
- If your child is going to bring a packed lunch, then they will need a clearly named lunchbox. You may find it useful to play "picnics" at home so that your child becomes used to opening their lunchbox and any packets and containers inside it. It is a good idea to avoid lots of 'fiddly' foods like raisins and fruit flakes as they take children a long time to eat.



Behaviour Expectations

Another way you can help your child is by beginning to introduce certain behaviour expectations at home before they start school. The following give some simple ideas to help introduce these expectations, if you haven't already:

- We have a no 'rough play' rule in the playground - if your child is very physical in their play with other children, it would help if you could begin to set boundaries regarding what is and is not appropriate when they are playing with others.
- If your child is used to getting an adult's attention immediately they ask for it (very common if they are an only child or the youngest sibling), help them to understand that at times they might need to wait. Teaching them to say 'excuse me' and then giving them praise when they are able to wait for you to finish a short job or finish your conversation with another adult will help prepare them for the 'hands up' expectation we will introduce in school.

Independent skills for the classroom

- Helping your child to recognise their own name allows greater independence within the classroom. Encourage your child to identify their name on coats, shoes, clothes, book bags and other personal belongings. Some children find it helpful if a small key ring is attached to the handle of their book bag to make it easier to locate. The children will need to be able to find their own name for self- registration when they arrive at school.
- Plenty of opportunities for your child to take part in physical activities (even just going to the park) is important as this helps them to develop their balance, to negotiate spaces and to build core strength in their tummy and shoulders—the pre-requisites for developing writing skills.
- If your child is ready for mark-making, you can help by encouraging them to hold a pencil in the correct "tripod" grip. Activities such as drawing, colouring, tracing, dot to dot etc. can be useful, as well as other activities to develop their fine motor skills.
- Help your child to develop their language skills by reading lots of stories and rhymes to them. Introduce them to new words, explaining what they mean and modelling how to use them in a sentence.
- Another way to help develop your child's language skills is to talk to them regularly about the things they see and hear around them, modelling how to use full sentences and describing the things they do as they play": "I can see the daffodils"; "I can hear a police car"; "That car is red and shiny"; "You've got the blue counter".
- It's also helpful to model the sentences they can use to ask for things: "Can I have a drink of water?" "I need help with my coat"; and to encourage and praise them when they use more than single word requests.
- Develop your child's social skills by helping them to share and take turns with you and other children. Turn-taking games are good for this eg. picture dominoes, pairs games etc.
- We have a high focus on developing listening skills in school - you can help your child develop in this area by using their name and waiting for them to stop and look at you before giving instructions. If they find following instructions difficult, try breaking them down into simple steps.
- Develop your child's early mathematical skills by saying the number names in order as you climb the stairs, saying them backwards as a 'count down' (10, 9, 8, 7...), counting out sets of objects together (we need 4 spoons for our ice cream), singing number rhymes (eg. 1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive), playing dice games/dominoes, and completing number puzzles. Games which involve matching and sorting are also useful.



Starting School

Uniform

The basic school uniform is a grey skirt/trousers, white polo shirt and a bottle green sweatshirt or jumper. School sweatshirts and polo shirts can be purchased at 'Skoolkit' in Fareham, through the supplier 'AJ Embroidery' (details on the website - order at the school office) or from Tesco online (see back page for website).

PE -shirts in our house colours are available through AJ Embroidery or from the school office - your child will be allocated a 'House' team nearer to September so that you will know which colour to purchase. Our suppliers also offer a number of other approved uniform items with the school logo, although you may prefer to provide your child with plain items in the school colours from elsewhere. We hope that there will be the opportunity to browse and purchase uniform during some of the induction visits.

Please ensure that **all** items are clearly labelled with your child's name. Long hair should be tied back (please keep hair accessories to school or 'neutral' colours—green, black, white, grey, brown etc). Hair accessories such as 'Jo-Jo' bows, flowers and novelty hair bands are not appropriate for school.

Arriving at school

The school day begins at 8:50am in all year groups (classroom doors open at 8.45am). School finishes at 3:15pm but in Year R, we operate a staggered pick up at the end of day, with classroom doors open from 3.05—3.15pm. There are also different arrangements for reception children for the first few weeks of term - more details of the induction arrangements will be provided nearer the time. The gate to the Reception playground is kept locked between 9am and 3.00pm when pupils are using the outdoor classroom. We ask that parents wait outside the gate until 8.40am.

All children should enter their classrooms via the classroom patio doors. When your child comes into school in the morning, there are two adults to look after them. We ask parents to drop children at the patio doors and allow them to enter the classroom independently. We have found that children tend to settle more quickly if parents do not linger unnecessarily!

We find that the majority of children settle quickly into the morning routines and are happy to come into the classroom. However, on occasions a child may find it difficult to detach from their parent to begin with. If your child does find this difficult, we may suggest that you arrive slightly later to the classroom on the next day when there are fewer people around to give a calmer start for your child. If the drop-off continues to be difficult, we will discuss strategies with you so that we can ensure your child is calm before they enter the classroom. Any tears are usually very short-lived, but we know it can be distressing to leave your child if they are crying. In our experience, we find that parents can help their child to settle in by staying calm and 'smiley', and keeping goodbyes brief. If you are anxious about leaving your child, try not to let them see this, but do discuss your concerns with a member of staff so that we can give advice to support you and your child.

Late arrivals

If your child arrives late, please bring them to the school office where they can be registered. A member of the office staff will then take them down to the classroom.

Whenever possible, children's medical/dentist appointments should be arranged for school holidays or after the school day. Where this isn't possible, please inform the school office of the details - children need to be signed in/out at the school office and a copy of the appointment letter/card will need to be provided for our records.

The school is required to monitor punctuality. If you have on-going difficulties with getting your child to school on time, the school's home-school link worker will be in touch with you to discuss how we can work together to ensure that your child arrives on time. It is important that good habits are put into place from the early years.

Illness

If your child is ill, please inform the school office by **9.15am**. The office is open for calls from 8am, although you can leave a message on the answer phone before this time. Alternatively, you can make use of our on-line system called 'Studybugs' to inform us of your child's absence. More information about this system will be provided to you in September. Contact as soon as possible on the first day is very important for us, so that we know your child is safe at home and should not be in school. Our safeguarding duty requires us to follow up if we do not have notification regarding an absence. Please note that if your child suffers from sickness or diarrhoea, they should not return to school until they have been clear of symptoms for 48 hours.

If your child is unwell during the school day, they will be taken to the school medical room to be dealt with by a first aider. We will contact you if they need to go home. It is therefore very important to keep the office up to date with any changes of contact details, including mobile numbers. The school is able to administer liquid paracetamol or anti-histamine, with parental permission, to alleviate minor symptoms. Further information regarding our medicine policy is available on the school website, as well as in our 'permissions' booklet which will be sent electronically to parents.

Home Time

At the end of each day, please wait outside your child's classroom patio doors. The teacher will see each child safely out one at a time when they have seen you. If another adult will be collecting your child, please let the teacher know in advance. If you only know this information on the day, please contact the school office who will let the class teacher know.

Older brothers and sisters

If you have a child in Y1 or Y2, as well as in YR, we have made arrangements to avoid parents having to drop off/collect children at the rear of the school as well as the YR classrooms. In the morning, the rear door to the KS1 corridor will be open from 8.40-8.50am for Y1/2 siblings to get to class. At the end of the day, you will be able to request for your YR child to be brought out to the Y1 outdoor classroom for collection from the piazza.

Please note that if your child is collected by a childminder who is also collecting Y1/2 children, they will be asked to collect your child from the rear of the school—our regular childminders are all aware of the routines for drop off and collection.

What to bring on the first day

Your child will need:

- A coat with their name labelled clearly- we try to get outside whatever the weather! It is helpful if the coat can have a 'loop' at the neck so that it can be hung up.
- Their PE kit (House-coloured T-shirt, green shorts, plimsolls). Please include jogging bottoms and sweatshirt/fleece (any colour) which will be used for outdoor PE.
- A clearly named bottle of WATER - sport-type/pull top lids are best—not screw top. (Please do not carry this in your child's book bag as they can be prone to leaking.)
- A book bag - your child will use this independently in the classroom as a place to store work to bring home.
- A pair of wellies (clearly named). It is helpful if these can be left in school for the majority of the time so that children can go outside in all weathers - they are also needed for the big sandpit.
- A spare pair of pants and socks in a small plastic bag to be kept in their bookbag.



Your child will not need a pencil case, as all necessary equipment is provided by the school.

Please **do not** send in a rucksack as we do not have the space to store these in YR.

We also discourage children from bringing in their own toys from home as they can become very upset if they get lost or someone else touches them.

Routines

Snack time

You do not need to provide a snack for your child. All children up to Year 2 are provided with a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable and under 5s are also entitled to a small bottle of milk (in the Autumn term, there is often enough for any 5 year olds who'd like it, too). Once your child is 5, if you would like to ensure that they have milk every day at school, there is the opportunity to order this via our supplier 'Cool Milk' at a subsidised rate. Further details will be provided to you after your child has started school.

Snacks are usually eaten inside the classroom at the snack café areas, although the children do enjoy an outside snack time on fine days.

To help us reinforce the healthy eating messages which we convey to the children, parents are asked **not** to send in cakes or sweets to share with the class on special occasions such as birthdays or after holidays.



Water

The children are asked to bring a named water bottle each day, as we recognise the importance of drinking adequate amounts of fluids and encourage the children to get in to the habit of helping themselves to a drink. There is free access to drinking water within the classrooms and the lunch hall. We ask that **only water** is provided in the children's water bottle for the classroom. They may bring a fruit drink in their packed lunches if they wish (no fizzy drinks, please). We frequently find that children who don't choose to drink water at home are happy to do so at school as they can see that their peers are doing so.

Playtimes

Reception children do not have a separate playtime as they have access to the outdoor classroom throughout the day. They will be introduced to a playtime with Y1 and Y2 pupils during the summer term.

Lunchtimes

The majority of the Reception children eat together in the dining hall with their friends. We take them to lunch earlier than the rest of the school so that the Reception staff can stay with the children until they are settled. We then have 'midday supervisors' who take over the supervision alongside the classroom teaching assistants.



School meals are provided free by the government for all children up to Y2. Our school meals are provided by HC3S, who serve schools across Hampshire, and are cooked on site. A copy of the three week menu is provided to parents so that you know what is on offer each day, and can help your child to choose whether they would like the 'red' (meat) choice, the 'green' (non-meat) choice or the 'blue' (jacket potato) each day. Please discuss this with your child before school each day. Your child may choose to bring a packed lunch instead. Please can we ask that lunch boxes are NUT FREE (ie no peanut butter sandwiches/cereal bars with nuts etc.)

Reception children are given longer to eat their meal than other pupils, but once they are used to the routines, we do encourage them to eat more quickly to ensure that they do get to go outside with their friends at lunchtime. We find that pupils with packed lunches tend to take longer to eat than those with school meals. You can help by making sure that lunchboxes only contain the amount of food you know they usually eat for lunch, avoiding lots of fiddly foods such as raisins and fruit flakes, and ensuring that you only provide packets/containers which they are able to open themselves - there are older pupils and adults on hand to help, but this can slow them down.

For a few children, eating in the lunch hall can be a bit overwhelming. If needed, we therefore run a 'lunch club' at the back of the Year R classrooms for a small number of children who would benefit. This includes some children who might need particular support with eating due to a disability, as well as those who need additional support for a short time whilst they are settling into routines. The class teacher will discuss with you if they feel that lunch club is appropriate for your child, but we do aim for the vast majority of children to eat together in the main lunch hall.

After eating, the Reception children are provided with a separate play area with toys and activities, supervised by the Reception teaching assistants. Later in the year, the



children will be introduced to an extended boundary for their lunchtime play. This enables them to play alongside children from all years and to take part in other adult-led activities. Brightly coloured bibs are provided for the Reception children to wear when they are playing with the older children so that they are easily identifiable. The separate reception play area is available throughout the year for children who still prefer the security of this smaller area.

Outdoor Play

Children have access to the outdoor play areas on a daily basis. This enables them to participate in activities which support all areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in the outdoor environment.

Please could you therefore ensure that your child wears suitable shoes, has wellies to leave in school and brings a coat to school each day. A warm hat and gloves are recommended during the winter months. We also recommend that children bring a sun hat for protection during sunny spells, and would encourage you to apply an all-day sun protection to your child before they come to school in the morning.



Accidents

It is inevitable that at some point your child will fall over or get hurt when playing. We do have a no rough play rule which includes no 'Minecraft'/Marvel type adventure games. The younger children often think they are invincible like their heroes, but they are not! We would be grateful if you could reinforce this at home.

If for any reason your child requires minor medical attention, First Aid will be given and a "bump note" will be sent home. If we have any concerns about an injury, we will let you know via the telephone.

Coming home from school

Most children are very tired at the end of a morning or day at school and some can be rather grumpy! Your child may need to spend some time "unwinding". They may want to spend time close to you or to be left quietly on their own. Only you will know what your child needs most. Please don't be concerned if your child does not want to talk about their time at school - this is perfectly normal. We provide regular information on the year group blog to tell you about what the children have been learning about—you can then use this information to help to start conversations with your child later in the day.



Frequently asked questions

What happens if I am late picking up my child?

If for any reason you are delayed, your child will remain in the classroom with their teacher for a few minutes. After this time, they will be taken to the school office where they will be looked after whilst we try to contact you.

Am I able to come and help in the classroom?

We welcome parents into the school to help with a wide range of activities, either in their own child's classroom or elsewhere in the school. However, we do not have parent helpers in Reception for the first half-term so that we can allow the children time to settle.

Each term, we also hold 'open' events where parents (or grandparents) can come and join in with activities in the classroom, or watch a performance from the children.

How will I know how my child is getting on at school?

Meetings are held with parents each term to share your child's achievements, progress and targets, and a written report is sent at the end of the summer term. You are also welcome to make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher at any other time throughout the year.

Teachers are available at the start and end of the day to answer any quick questions you may have, although we ask parents to use the year group email address to communicate with class teachers where possible, or send messages via the office, to avoid congestions at the classroom door. If you need to make a longer/private appointment with any member of staff, feel free to contact the school office who will arrange this for you at a convenient time.

What sort of things should I do at home to help my child?

There is a blog for the Reception year group at WPS. This is updated on a weekly basis to keep you informed about what your child is learning, how you can support them at home and any other important information. It will suggest ideas for things to talk about with your child or practical activities that support their learning in school. During the year, workshops are offered to parents of Reception children to explain how we teach phonics and maths, and how parents can support at home. We encourage parents to attend if at all possible.

We believe that reading to and with your child is one of the most significant ways in which you can help your child at home and would encourage you to get into these routines early - hearing and joining in with stories is a great way to help your child to develop their language skills. In the Autumn term, we introduce reading logs for you to record when your child is reading. In the Summer term, we introduce a reading challenge to the children to encourage them to be reading with an adult every day.



When will my child bring home a reading book?

Your child will be encouraged to bring home books to share with you on starting school. There will be a range of books for your child to choose from. Once they have begun to learn their phonic sounds, they will bring home books to read each week to practice their skills. We also provide access to an online reading programme called Bug Club Phonics where they will be able to access texts at their level. Your child will also be able to choose a library book to share with you at home.



Will we be able to take our child out of school for a holiday in term time?

Government guidance states that parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term times. Schools can only agree to term time absence in exceptional circumstances (the fact a holiday is cheaper in term time is not considered special circumstances). Further guidance from Hampshire County Council and a 'Leave of Absence' request form can be found on our website, along with details of the use of penalty notices (fines) for unauthorised absences - we would encourage you to familiarise yourself with the guidelines before booking any term time holidays. Please note that the Headteacher is required to monitor all pupils' attendance and punctuality. Where there are concerns (for example, if attendance is falling below 90%), these will be raised with parents in order that the school can work with the family to establish better attendance habits.

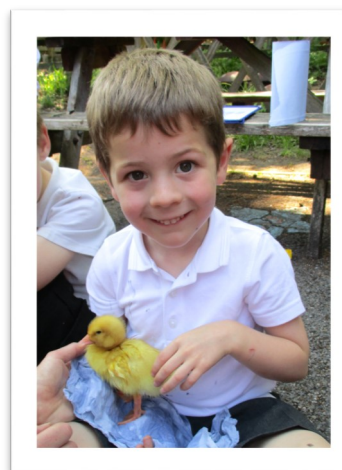
Who should I speak to if I'm worried about my child?

If you have any concerns about your child in school, the class teacher or the teaching assistant should be the first port of call. Please don't hesitate to speak to them if you have concerns. If you are unable to see the teacher at the start or end of the day, please phone the school office and leave a message or email and the class teacher will get back to you. If you have further concerns, you may want to make an appointment to see the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or YR/1 Phase Leader via the school office.

If you would like advice about issues you have with your child at home, the school has a Home School Link Worker, Nicola Bevan, who is available in school from 8.30-10.00am most mornings. We can also signpost parents to support from the school nurses or other local groups/agencies. We also offer regular drop-in sessions for parents who would like help or guidance with a range of issues with their children such as anxiety, behaviour and sleep.

Are there any after-school clubs that my child can join?

We do not offer school-run after-school activities for Reception children. For younger pupils, a school day can be exhausting! There are lots of exciting, practical activities that happen in class, and at lunchtime the children can take part in a range of adult-lead activities every day if they wish. We begin to offer a taste of extra-curricular activities in Key Stage 1 (year 1 and year 2), with a full range of activities on offer to our older Key Stage 2 children (year 3 - 6).



Does the school offer any childcare before or after school?

A breakfast and after-school club are run in the school hall by Timeout Childcare. Contact details are on the back of this booklet.



We hope that this information booklet answers some of your questions about starting school. Please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff if you are unsure about any of our procedures. Further information about our policies can also be found on the school website. We sincerely hope that your child will be very happy at Whiteley Primary School and that you will enjoy your time as a parent at our school. Our partnership with you is vital in ensuring that your child has the best possible start to their school life.

www.whiteleyprimary.co.uk

e-mail: adminoffice@whiteley.hants.sch.uk

newyr@whiteleyapps.com (for specific enquiries about starting school)

Telephone: 01489 881601

Timeout Childcare: 07740 783561

(Breakfast/After-school Club)

AJ Embroidery (Uniform supplier): 01489 573839

(price list and order form on school website - orders delivered to the school office - sample rail in the school entrance)

Skoolkit (Uniform supplier): 23, Trinity Street,

Fareham,

PO16 7SD

Telephone: 01329 822509

Embroidered uniform is also available on-line from Tesco:

<http://www.clothingattesco.com/icat/embschoolwear>