



Information for Parents



Starting in Reception

Reception Class Information

Welcome!

Welcome to Reception. This booklet will give you some of the daily information that you will need as your child starts school and a brief summary of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We hope to answer many of the questions you may have about your child's time in Reception at St Matthew's Primary School. Please don't hesitate to contact us if there is something more you would like to know.

Staff:

We have three Reception classes at St Matthew's Primary School. It is often possible to speak to your child's class teacher very briefly at the beginning or end of the day, but please do not hesitate to make an appointment if you need more than a few minutes to discuss your child. Please email the office and they will forward your email on to your child's class teacher.

Please be aware that teachers are not always able to check their emails before school starts.

Contact Details:

St Matthew's Primary School

19 Norfolk Street,

Cambridge CB1 2LD

Telephone: 01223 568838

E-mail: office@stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk

Transition:

The transition for children into school can create a mixture of emotions for everyone. To make it easier for the children and staff to get to know each other we have created a system to ensure that your child's transition into Reception is as smooth as possible.

Home Visits/ Individual Visits to the classroom:

This is a chance for you and your child to meet with their class teacher and teaching assistant in September before all the children start. The visit will last for approximately 10-15 minutes. It is a great opportunity for us to get to know your child on an individual basis and for you to ask us any questions you may have. The visits are optional, but highly encouraged. You can sign up for a home visit or classroom visit at the New Parents Evening. **If you are unable to attend the New Parents Evening but would still like either a classroom visit or home visit, please contact the school office.**

Starting School in September

Staggered Start:

We operate a staggered entry in the first few weeks in September. This provides an opportunity for your child to become familiar with their surroundings and school routines, in smaller groups. You will be notified about which group your child will be in at the New Parents' Evening. A number of factors are taken into consideration when deciding the groups, including age and sessions attended at your child's previous setting. We are aware that the staggered entry can cause some disruption to family routines. However, we know from experience that the initial transition is a crucial step for your child and do believe the gradual integration enables all children to feel safe and secure in our setting.

Kid R Us

There is a breakfast and after school club called 'Kids R Us' which provides play care for children and young people aged 3 – 12 years before school, after school and during the holidays. Kids R Us' also provides childcare at school during the day throughout the Reception transition period. Registration forms and newsletters can be downloaded from their website at kidsrusoosc.org or complete the booking form online at: kidsrus.magicbooking.co.uk

Alternatively, you can contact the club during club hours on: [07428187477](tel:07428187477), during weekdays (10am – 2pm) on [07920046787](tel:07920046787) or email them stmatthews@kidsrusoosc.com

Attendance and Punctuality:

The school is keen to encourage the habits of good attendance and good punctuality from the moment children start school. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance and are particularly urged to make sure that their children are at school on time, ready for when we start at **8.45am** each morning. We aim to work closely with parents to achieve this, and when necessary, we involve our Local Authority Attendance Officer if a problem involving attendance develops. If the gate is closed on arrival at school, please report to the office to sign your child in as late. You will be asked to provide a reason for why your child is late. Please note that the entrance to Mulberry and Oak Classroom is through the main gates to the school. The main gates open at **8:40am**, ready for the classroom door to open at 8:45am. Please note that Cherry class use the side gate next to their classroom, just before the main gates.

It is important that you let the school know if there are any changes to your collection arrangements. We will not hand over children to adults unless we have been informed of who they are going home with. Please ensure that you arrive and collect your child on time. Children can become very anxious if they arrive or leave late from school.

Illness and Absence:

If your child is absent from school, please send a brief note to explain the absence, telephone the school office (01223 568838) or send an email as soon as possible to office@stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk. Unexplained absences count as “unauthorised”. We aim to reduce the number of unauthorised absences recorded in registers and we ask parents to help us in this by keeping us informed of all absences.

St Matthew's School will not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there is an exceptional circumstance (rare, unavoidable and short). The application must be made in advance of the leave, and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are **exceptional**. A leave of absence is granted at the Head teacher's discretion. If the school is not satisfied with any reason given for absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised and once your child becomes compulsory school age you may be at risk of a fine.

Leave of Absence forms can be accessed on the school website:

https://www.stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk/website/useful_forms/570007. More information can be found in the schools Attendance policy on the school website.



Returning to School after Illness:

Please do not send your child back to school until they are fit and well. Too often we see children return too early and then they suffer a relapse. Children who have been vomiting or have had diarrhoea should not return to school until they are completely better. The chance of them passing the infection on to other children is extremely high. They should stay off school for **48 hours** after the symptoms have cleared up and are well enough to attend school.

Contact Details and Medical Information:

Please ensure that you have completed the admissions form for your child and returned them to the school office as soon as possible. If any contact information changes throughout the year please ensure that you update the office immediately.

If your child has any medical requirements that we need to be aware of please make sure you have discussed these with your child's class teacher as well writing all the relevant information on the contact forms.

We prefer not to administer prescribed medicines to children at school. However, if it is essential, please inform your child's class teacher **and** the school office who will give you a permission form to sign. Prescribed medicines will only be administered by nominated staff. The nominated staff will supervise the taking of medicine, when possible, provided that:

- the medicine has been prescribed by a doctor
- full written instructions are enclosed with the medicine e.g. dispensing label
- the medicine is clearly labelled with the child's name.

All tablets and medicines must be handed in at the school office and will be kept there. When children go on class trips, it is the responsibility of the parents to approach staff should any medicines need to be administered.

The only sure way of guaranteeing that medicine is administered is for parents to come into school and give it to the child themselves. The school will make its best effort but cannot be held responsible if medicines are not administered.

If your child requires an inhaler or has an epi-pen, please ensure that all the components are clearly named, are in date and are handed in to your child's class teacher.

Clothing & Jewellery:

Please be sure that your child is dressed in clothes that allow him or her to be independent both indoors and outdoors. We would like the children to be as independent as possible so please think carefully about buckles, buttons and laces. Please ensure that the children wear suitable footwear as they are very active throughout the day. It is very important that all clothing (including hats, scarves and gloves) are clearly labelled with your child's name and please check regularly that your child's name is clearly visible.

We advise you to leave a spare pair of clothes on your child's peg. We do have some spare clothes should an accident happen at school. However, it is often easier if the children have spare clothes on their peg. If your child does borrow any of the Reception clothes, please wash them and send them back in as soon as possible.

Children are not permitted to wear jewellery to school, with the exception of stud earrings. These must be removed on PE days for safety reasons.

Lunch time



All infant children (Reception – Year Two) qualify for free school meals. The children can choose either a hot or cold school lunch and this can be decided on a daily basis. The menu will be sent to you at the beginning of term via email, or you can ask for hard copy from the school office.

Alternatively, you can provide a packed lunch for your child. If you would prefer your child to have a packed lunch from home, please start with just a few basics like a sandwich, fruit and a drink. Please do not send in sweets, chocolate or fizzy drinks and for safety reasons, please do not use glass containers.

Throughout the year, the children are gradually introduced into the main playground at playtimes to start their transition into year one.

Snacks and Drink:

The children are encouraged to bring a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable to eat in the morning. Please ensure it is placed in a clearly named container or use a sticker to help distinguish which piece of fruit/vegetable belongs to your child and place it in the designated box in the classroom. **Please note that only fresh fruit or vegetables are allowed.** The school will provide a piece of fruit/vegetable for the children in the afternoon.

Your child should bring a water bottle into school. Please ensure this is clearly named and place in the water bottle box. **Juice and squash are not permitted in their water bottles**, although it is fine to have juice in their lunch boxes.

Please note that we are a nut-free school to ensure the safety of all children, including those with severe allergies. We kindly ask that no nuts or nut products are brought onto the school premises.

Special Occasions:

If you would like your child to celebrate a birthday or another special occasion with classmates, please send either individual small cakes or biscuits and include a list of ingredients. These are easy to distribute amongst the children.

Since children's feelings are easily hurt, please ensure that party invitations are distributed outside of the classroom. Please give them out before or after school, directly to the parents concerned.



Outdoors:

The outdoor areas are an extension of the indoor classroom and will be accessed on a daily basis by the children in all weathers. It would be beneficial if children could have a pair of named wellington boots and waterproofs (an all in one rain suit is ideal) which could be kept at school as we cannot predict the weather. However, please feel free to take them home when they are needed.

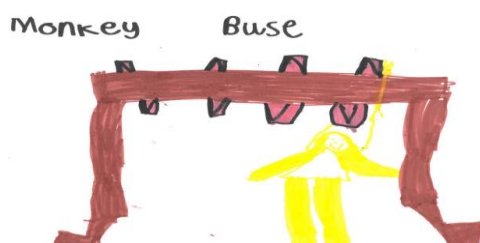
Physical Education:

Your child will need a PE kit. This consists of black/blue shorts, white t-shirt. PE will start once all the children are in school full time and the children will need to come to school in their P.E Kit on the relevant day.



Early Years Foundation Stage:

The children in Reception follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and work towards seven areas of Learning and Development. It is a very holistic approach to learning and places a strong emphasis on the individual child. It is a continuation from the curriculum in Nursery/Pre-School and focuses on play and exploration, active learning and creativity and critical thinking. The curriculum values individual children and where they are in their learning. It ensures that doors are open to new experiences and opportunities are created to help children progress socially and academically. Each week we send out an information sheet which outlines what your child will be learning and includes ways you can help at home.



What will my child's learning look like?

Play and Exploration is a fundamental within our Reception classes. It means children are able to choose activities where they can engage with other children or adults or sometimes play alone. During these activities the children will learn by first-hand experiences; by actively 'doing' as well as being guided by the adults in the classroom. We will provide them with sufficient space (both indoors and outdoors), time and choice with a range of activities to support their next steps in learning. There will be a good variety of planned, prepared and guided activities by the teachers, as well as opportunities to allow time for the children to initiate their own learning. Activities will be planned through discussion with the children around their current interests, as well as taking into account their learning styles and stages of development. We will also focus each term on a different context to help support our guided learning. Our environment will enable children to try things out and make sense of relationships, allowing all children to fulfil their potential.

Phonics:



At St Matthew's we follow a scheme called Monster Phonics. Phonics is a way of teaching children to learn how to read and write.

How does Monster Phonics work?

Monster Phonics enables children to learn how to read and write in a simplistic way. Monster Phonics uses 10 monsters to categorise all sounds into 10 simple areas. Furthermore, each monster has a different colour and that colour also represents the sound. This means children can recognise the monsters and the colour associated with the sound, which helps them learn how to spell, read and write.

You can learn more about the monsters and how they work by watching these videos:

Meet the Monsters - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uON7LJIWQ>

Learn how it works - <https://monsterphonics.com/how-it-works/>

Look out in the Autumn Term for details of how to join a Monster Phonics Webinar which will teach you all about how to help support your child with Monster Phonics.



Queries about reading:

All children progress at different rates and most have spurts of learning coupled with periods of consolidation. If you have any queries or questions about your child's reading please speak to your child's class teacher to arrange a meeting.



Writing:

If you are helping your child learn to write their name, please ensure that the children use a capital letter at the beginning of their name and lowercase letters for the remainder e.g. Charlotte. If children have learnt to use capital letters for their entire name, they can find it difficult to relearn how to write lowercase letters. Correct letter formation is very important for the continuation into writing.

Writing for pleasure is a key ingredient in our Reception classes. We work hard to build the children's confidence and self esteem to become independent writers who are excited about writing. We find that praising all mark making encourages the children to be early writers. If you want to encourage your child to write then please ensure writing is exciting and does not become a chore.

What if my child needs extra support at school?

We have lots of support on offer for your children to both help them with their learning and also any social or emotional support they may need throughout their time in our school. Some of the support on offer is outlined below:

- If you feel your child has any SEND (Special Educational Needs) please speak to your child's class teacher. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator for the school is Christina Bates cbates@stmatthews.cambs.sch.uk
- If you are worried about your child's Speech and Language please speak to your child's class teacher who will ask you to complete our speech and language descriptors to see if your child needs to be referred for Speech Therapy.
- If your child is struggling to manage their feelings or having social difficulties either in school or at home, please talk to your child's class teacher who can put you in contact with the Early Intervention Family Worker and/or our Social Emotional Support Worker
- If your child is struggling with friendships or managing their feelings at lunchtimes they are able to go to access a Lunch Club where they can play games in a supportive environment.

Checklist before September:

- Fill out all the contact information forms and hand them back to the office including all medical information as soon as possible.
- If you have any concerns about your child's hearing or eye sight, we recommend taking them for an eye test and/or hearing test before they start school.
- Talk positively about school to your child. Try and avoid words such as 'big school'
- Encourage your child to learn how to put on their coat and shoes on independently.
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- Have play dates over the summer holiday with other children who will be attending St Matthew's.

Parental Involvement:

Supporting your child's learning at home is invaluable. Each week we send out an information sheet which outlines what your child will be learning and includes ways you can help at home. However, please be aware that your child will have had a busy day at school.

We do hope that you have found this booklet useful. If you have any other queries or questions then please do not hesitate to come and talk to us.

The Reception Team

