

ST MARGARET'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Early Years Parents Handbook 2024

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ST MARGARET'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

STARTING SCHOOL

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

We understand that starting school is a big step for both you and your child. Starting school should be an exciting and enjoyable adventure. We hope that every child and family feels welcomed and supported as they enter the St Margarets school family.

As your child transitions from pre-school care to Early years here at St Margarets they will continue to enjoy a play based curriculum which encourages curiosity and questioning. Each class of up to 30 children has at least one class teacher and one learning support assistant who will be there to support your child's learning and care for them during the school day. The curriculum focuses largely on developing independence, communication as well as maths and literacy.

To help prepare your child for school it is useful if they can practise the following:

- Listening to and enjoying stories and poems
- Handling books, toys and resources carefully and tidying away their toys.
- Following instructions and taking turns – can they play a simple board game?
- Singing rhymes and counting songs (twinkle twinkle little star, 12345 once I caught a fish alive, etc)
- Dressing and undressing – including shoes and socks
- Mark making – drawing, colouring, painting and early writing.
- Puzzles – can your child complete a simple jigsaw or use a shape sorter.
- Using the toilet independently and flushing it.
- Washing and drying their own hands
- Blowing their own nose.
- Matching pairs –play games like pairs or snap. Can they spot what is the same and different?

These activities not only help children acquire early numeracy and literacy skills, but also assist them in developing independence and learning to co-operate and share with others.

SELF CARE

Is your child able to go to the toilet alone and flush it?

Does your child know how important it is to wash his/her hands after using the toilet?

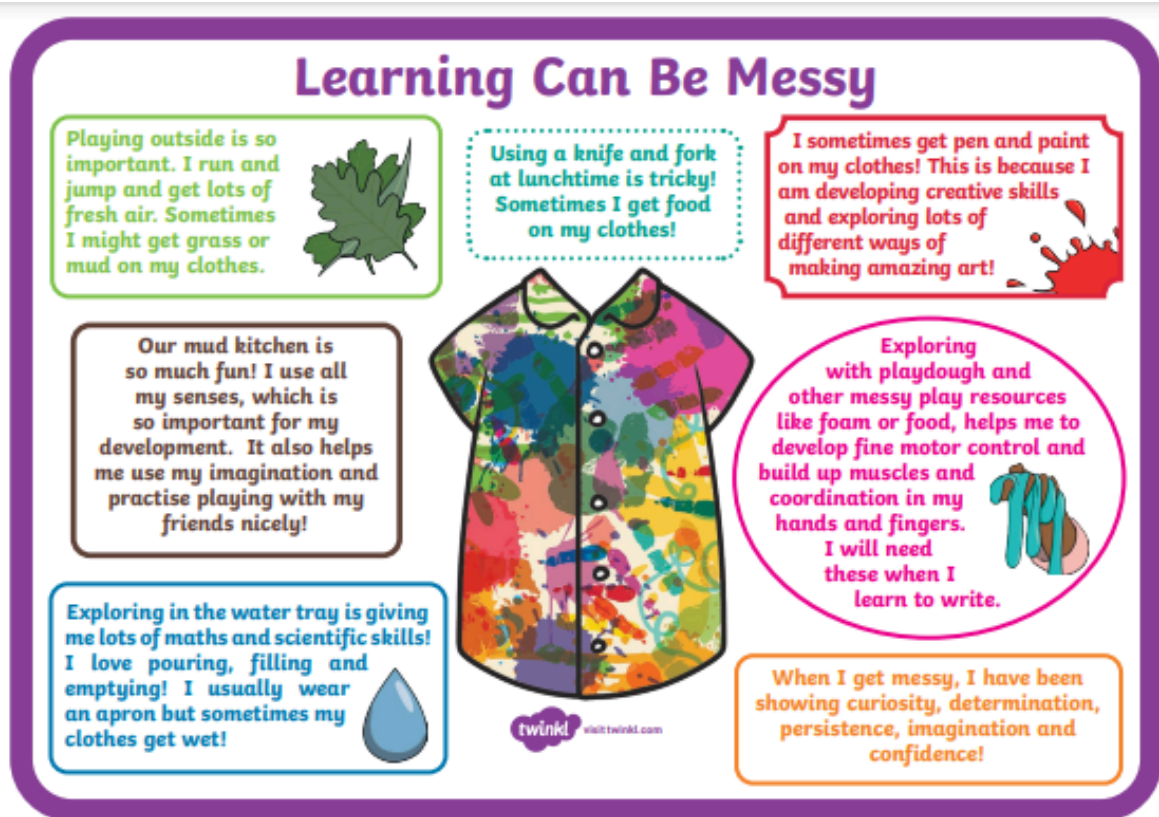
Can your child put on and take off his/her own coat?

Can your child blow his/her nose?

Please provide a spare pair of pants and socks, to be kept in PE bag in case of an emergency.

CLOTHING

All children will be required to wear school uniform, please buy plenty and be prepared to wash it often.



During the day, the children will need to change into and out of outdoor and PE clothing. You can help your child to prepare for this.

Please ask yourself:

- Can he/she recognise his/ her own clothing? (Please name all your child's clothing clearly).
- Can he/she take off/put on their jumper?
- Can he/she get dressed and undressed? Folding clothes and turning them the right way from inside out. (Please help them by practising at home).
- Will he/she be able to put on a hat, coat or gloves at playtimes?
- Can he/she put on and do up shoes? (N.B. Velcro is easier than laces).

MEDICATION

Does your child need regular medication e.g. an inhaler? If so, please complete a medical form with the School office as soon as possible.

Please note that the school can only administer antibiotics etc if they have been prescribed by the doctor 4 times or more per day, once the administration of medicines form has been completed in the school office.

N.B. NO MEDICATION SHOULD BE LEFT IN SCHOOL BAGS/LUNCH BOXES.

EXCLUSION PERIODS FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES please see current NHS guidelines.

LUNCH TIMES (11:50 – 12:50 PM)

Every child in early years through to year 2 is provided with a Universal Free Hot School meal. In order for your child to receive their Hot School Meal you must now pre-order, 2 weeks in advance using the “ParentPay” app or alternatively you can order via the website <https://www.parentpay.com/>

Once we have received your child’s completed enrolment pack, we can generate a unique username and password in order for you to access ParentPay and start the process of pre-ordering your child’s free hot school meals.

If your child does not wish to have a Free Hot School Meal then they are welcome to bring in their own packed lunch instead.

Please do not give your child nuts (or food containing nuts) to eat in their lunch box because some children have nut allergies. The children eat their lunch with classmates in the school hall.

All the children visit the school hall for lunch where they will be met by school meal staff. Children are closely supervised while eating and encouraged to demonstrate good table manners. We ask that children be used to using a knife, fork and spoon independently and that if they are having a packed lunch they are able to open their own lunch box and food packaging. We will always help children with these things if required, but with the number of children in the hall developing children's independence is essential.

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

If you are receiving benefits your children may be eligible for additional funding whilst at school. This funding is extremely valuable in supporting children and their families in accessing activities and learning opportunities and we would really appreciate you checking your eligibility online at

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/free-school-meals/#is-my-child-eligible>

SNACK - milk/water and fruit

In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 fruit is provided daily but please also bring a piece of fruit each day for your child to eat as a snack in the morning.

Free milk is available for all children under the age of five in school, funded by the UK government. In our school, this milk is provided by Cool Milk, the UK’s leading school milk supplier. We will register your child for their free school milk on your behalf by providing Cool Milk with your child’s name and date of birth.

When your child turns five, you are able to pay a subsidised rate for your child to continue to receive milk. If you wish for your child to continue receiving milk from the age of five, simply register with Cool Milk directly via their website (www.coolmilk.com) or pick up a registration form from the school office. They will then contact you at the appropriate time to arrange prepayment.

All information handled by Cool Milk is processed in accordance with current Data Protection Legislation. The data will be stored securely on Cool Milk's UK-based servers and will not be passed to third parties other than to UK Government departments for audit purposes.

Please let us know if you would prefer us not to register your child for free school milk.

EARLY WRITING EXPERIENCES

Please encourage your child to hold the pencil or crayon correctly from the start (tripod grip – please see the picture below).



As writing requires delicate control of hand and eye muscles, give your child as many opportunities as possible for scribble and pattern making on large pieces of paper.

Use the letter forms shown on the separate sheet in the pack for your child to copy and any words you write for him/her. These are the letters he/she uses to begin writing. Avoid using capitals as it will cause unnecessary confusion.

If you write your child's name or captions for his/her pictures, please use the lower case letters, except for the first letter of names, places, e.g. Peter not PETER.

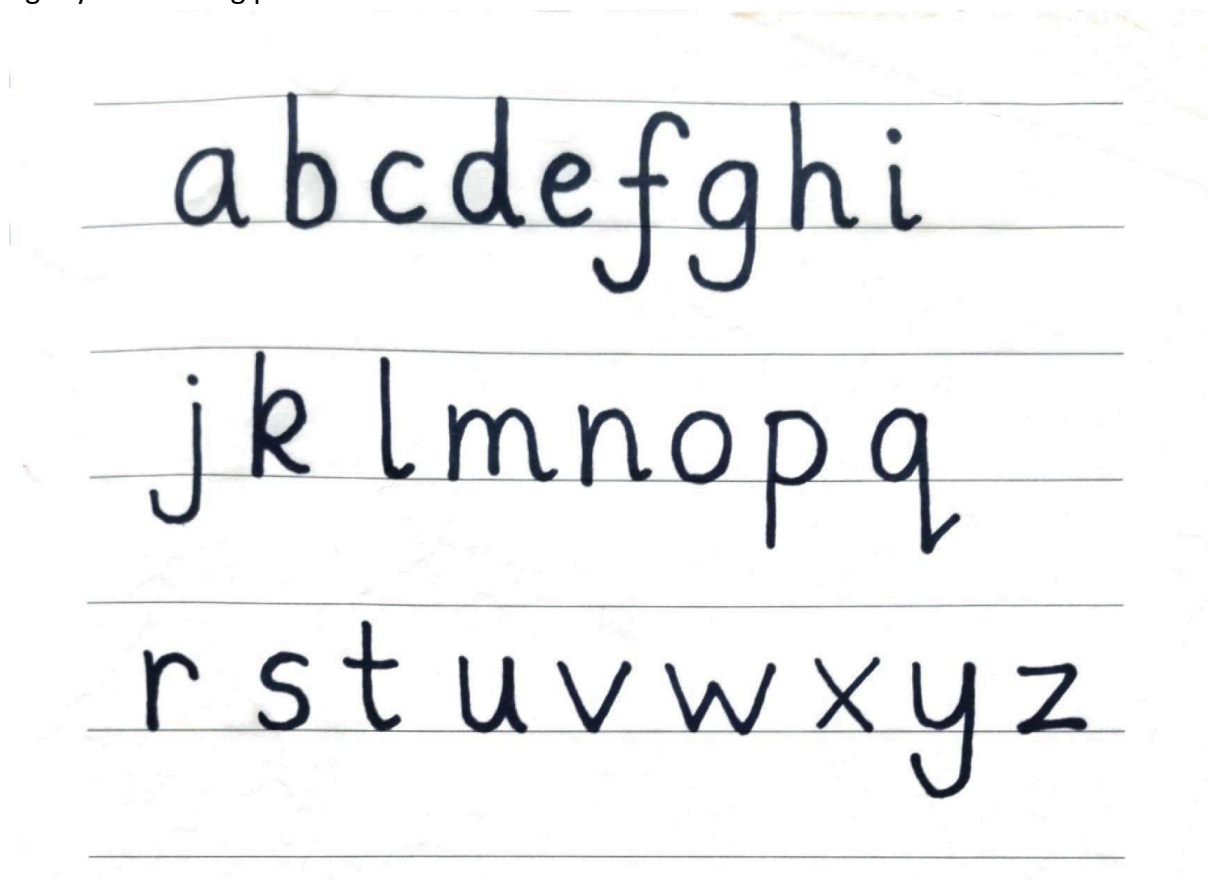
Please be positive about all your child's attempts at writing especially when they are willing to have a go by themselves. This helps him/her to regard themselves as writers right from the start and prevents the feeling of 'I can't do it'. It is very important that they enjoy 'have a go' writing – at this stage, spelling is not important.

HANDWRITING

It is important that we work together with those at home to ensure we are all using the same style, therefore please make yourself familiar with this information and use it as a guide for writing opportunities at home.

The children start with a printed style which later (in year 1) follows with a cursive style.

Please see below the printed handwriting style that we use at St. Margaret's. The dots signify the starting point.



EARLY LEARNING AT ST MARGARET'S SCHOOL

Introduction

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of early learning in our Reception Classes for parents. A full copy of our Early Years Policy may be seen upon request.

Principles for Early Years Education and their implications

- For effective learning to take place young children need to feel included, secure and valued in their environment. We aim to promote this by developing a partnership with parents and by being sensitive to each child's needs.
- Young children have specific needs, therefore, this stage of school is unique and important in its own right and needs to be planned for accordingly. Our curriculum and planning is specifically designed for our Reception Classes.
- All aspects of a young child's development – intellectual, social and emotional, are equally important and should be fostered. All areas of learning and experience are planned for.
- Early years experiences should build on what children already know and can do. We make use of information from pre-school groups and parents in our planning.
- Young children are seen as individuals and learning is differentiated so as to motivate children to progress at their own level.
- Young children are generally active and spontaneous learners. We, therefore, plan a range of first hand experiences, stimulating a range of senses.
- Children learn naturally about themselves, others and the world around them through structured play. Play is not seen as something that is done after work is finished.

Organisation and Management of Learning

- In the classroom, children may work individually or in groups.
- During a typical session, there will be a mixture of whole class teaching, focused, adult led activities and supported free flow play.
- Play opportunities are planned and resourced to reinforce, practice and extend skills based on children's interests. The Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Foundation Stage is for children aged 0-5. It continues to the end of the Reception year. It is organised into a progressive series of 'Development Matters', that identify what children need to learn in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into three 'prime' and four 'specific' areas of learning, although children's learning often encompasses more than one area at any time. The areas are:

Prime areas – vital to development of the specific areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

Specific areas – skills and knowledge, dependent on the Prime areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

Curriculum planning is based on the Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals and continues the curriculum provided by pre-school groups.

Planning, Assessment and Recording

Learning experiences in the Early Years are based on The foundation stage curriculum and topics based on children's interests, and events that arise spontaneously. Much of our observation and assessment of the children is undertaken by working alongside them across a wide range of experiences. From this, we hope to get to know how each child is developing and plan for future learning. This information is shared with you through informal daily contact, use of Seesaw (online learning Journal), a parents' evening in the Autumn and Spring terms and an end of year school report.

Parents and carers

When parents/carers and teachers work together in the early years setting, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. At St Margaret's, a successful partnership between home and school is fostered in several ways:

- Providing information for parents on how learning is planned and organised within the classroom. Once your child starts school you will receive a weekly memo via Seesaw with news, updates and plans for the week ahead.
- Meeting with parents prior to children starting school to discuss their child's development.
- A staggered settling in period to give time for each child to become secure in their surroundings.
- Encouraging parents to come into the classroom and be involved in a variety of ways (eg sharing stories/supporting reading/events)
- Sharing information about individual children at regular intervals, including future targets.
- Providing examples of activities that can be used at home to support and consolidate learning at school (included in weekly memos)