

**Parents Information
Starting School Handbook
2024-2025
West Park CE Primary School**



Let your light shine

Welcome to WEST PARK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

At West Park Church of England Primary School, we pride ourselves on making learning fun and fostering the skills that will ensure your child will be a lifelong learner. Everything that we do at West Park is underpinned by our four School Values: **Creativity, Faith, Independence and Teamwork**, and our journey starts with their Reception year.

Preparing your child for school

Starting school is an exciting step for children to take. As parents you can help to make your child's transition into school a successful one by helping him/her to do the following:

- Dress and undress independently, including socks, tights and shoes
- Go to the toilet independently, including wiping themselves
- Wash and dry their hands
- Blow their nose with a tissue
- Put on and zip or button up their coat independently
- Sit at a table and eat lunch independently, including opening their lunch box
- Cut their food with a knife and fork
- Tidy away toys and equipment
- Recognise and write their name

Transition Events

Welcome Meetup

This is a time for you to meet your child's new teacher and visit their classroom before starting school. It is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and find out more about the first few weeks of school. During this meeting, we give you important information about where to drop off and collect your child, how to sign up for milk and order hot dinners, and talk to you about the personal belongings you need in school.

Stay and Play Sessions

Your child will be invited to join in with a Stay and Play session. In this session parents will be invited to bring their child to play in their classrooms and outside area with other children in their year class.

Storytime Sessions

Your child will be asked to share a class Storytime with their new teacher and learning support assistant (LSA). Parents will be asked to leave their child with the teacher for this session and book in a Starting School meeting in September.

Starting School meetings

This meeting is a personal meeting for you and your child and will take place in your child's classroom with your class teacher and learning support assistant. You will be invited to spend time speaking to your teacher whilst your child explores their new classroom and spends time playing with their LSA. This is also a time to share any new information from the holiday period and update any information we already have.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is an app which allows parents and teachers to communicate via messages. You will be given a sign in code which connects you to your class teacher and class message feed. Your class teacher may also share photos and videos to share your child's learning with you. Please note, although we endeavour to respond as quickly as possible to any message, we cannot guarantee we will respond immediately. Any information regarding your child's absence, medical appointments and changes to pick up, including late collections, must be reported to the school office and not via Dojo.

Useful information about your child's day

The school gates open at 8.25am and are locked at 8.35am. Any child arriving after this point must sign in as late at the front office. Children for Peach and Apple classes are welcomed in from outside the Main Reception building, side entrance, while Cherry and Pear classes are welcomed from the outside area which is accessed by the side gate near our medical office on Clive Avenue.

We encourage the children to come into school as independently as possible. During the first few days parents will be welcome to accompany their children into the classroom, should this be necessary. After this initial settling in period we will be asking you to say goodbye to your child at the classroom door to foster independence.

Our school day ends at 3.00pm. The children from Cherry and Pear classes will be brought outside via the front entrance of our Reception building while Apple and Peach classes will come through to the side gate with the class teacher. The children will not be released unless the appointed adult is there to receive them. If a different person is to collect your child you must let us know in advance, preferably in person at the beginning of the school day.

Each day the children will need to bring a drink of water in a named bottle for snack time. If you wish your child to have milk, please complete the online registration with Cool Milk (Details can be found on our website). Milk is free until your child's fifth birthday. The children will also be provided with a piece of fruit or a vegetable for afternoon snack or, alternatively, you are welcome to send in a small healthy snack from home. The children will also require an extra drink for their lunch if they are having packed lunches. No squash, fizzy drinks, nuts or sweets at either time, thank you.

We request that every child has a book bag or a small bag for their books and brings this to school each day. This bag will not only be where your child will keep their school reading book and home diary but will also provide an invaluable method of communication between home and school. Letters and correspondence will be emailed to you as much as possible, any letters that get sent home will be placed in your child's book bag to avoid them being lost or dropped.

Children come to school in their PE kit on PE days, which you will be notified of at your 'Starting School' meeting . Please ensure that all their P.E. kit and uniform is clearly named, including their trainers.

Personal Property/Valuables including mobile phones

All items of personal property brought into school should be **clearly labelled** with your child's name. Any money brought into school, for whatever purpose, should be in a sealed envelope, which has the child's name and class clearly printed on the front. The envelope should also clearly state the amount contained within it and the purpose for which it is being brought to school. **Money left in school all day must be given to the class teacher.** We will try to limit this as much as possible by requesting payments using sQuid.

Pupils in Years 4-6 are able to bring mobile phones to school, if parents think it is necessary for their child's safety to and from school. These should be handed in to the main school office as soon as the child arrives at school and be collected from outside the dining-hall at the end of the day. **Phones must not be left in the cloakroom or be kept with the child in the classroom.**

Children must not bring valuable items of property to school unless agreed by the class teacher in advance.

Whilst the school will make every effort to safeguard pupils' property, and will do its very best to trace lost items, the school cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items.

Useful information about your child's first term

Your child will come home with a reading diary during the first half term at school. Please write in the reading diary each time your child reads, or practises phonic sounds with you at home. Reading books will be sent home once the children have learnt all of their Set 1 phonic sounds which are outlined at the beginning of your reading diary.

We expect you to share a book and hear your child read each evening to encourage a love of books and enable them to practise their reading skills as often as possible.

Key letters are emailed to parents where possible unless a response or a permission slip is required by the school. Please check your child's book bag daily so that important information that has been sent in paper form is not missed. Please also check 'class dojo' for up to date information for your class.

The first parents' consultation evening will take place in October and is an opportunity for you to discuss how your child has settled into school and find out about their next steps in learning.

We look forward to welcoming parent helpers into school. Many aspects of school life could not take place without parental help and your support is greatly valued. Please let your child settle in for the first term and then contact your child's teacher or the school office if you can help.

How you can support your child's learning in the Foundation Stage

Every half term a curriculum outline is posted on the school website www.westpark.w-sussex.sch.uk. The curriculum outline explains what the children are learning in school and the activities that your child will be engaged in. This can be invaluable for starting conversations with your child about their learning.

Below are some practical ideas for supporting basic Numeracy and Literacy skills at home. In addition, any opportunities your child has to practise activities such as sticking, painting, or threading, will help to improve their motor skills leading to better pencil control when they begin to write.

Basic Literacy Skills

- Share books, comics and stories with your child
- Visit the local library
- Encourage your child to talk about the story and to look closely at the pictures
- When you are out and about look at signs and logos together. Discuss familiar words or phrases when you see them
- Ask your child to find things for you when shopping
- Play 'I Spy' using initial letter sounds
- Sing nursery rhymes and other songs
- Tell stories to each other

- Practise writing their name using an initial capital letter then lower case letters
- Drawing pictures and colouring
- Using scissors safely to cut straight lines and simple shapes

Basic Numeracy Skills

- Recognise numbers 1 to 10 initially then look at numbers above 10
- Encourage your child to look for numbers in the environment, e.g. on car number plates, on the television remote control
- Counting sets of objects. How many apples? How many toys in the bath?
- Recognising simple shapes
- Make shape pictures, looking at the shape of tins and packets
- Make simple repeating patterns from everyday materials such as stones or leaves or lego bricks
- Recognising coins. Can your child pay for an item at the shop using the correct coin?
- When your child is ready, practise adding and subtracting using the language of 'one more/less', 'altogether'.

Areas within the Foundation Stage Environment

The Early Years classroom has designated spaces to support each curriculum area which supports the children's development and encourages learning through play. These areas include;

Writing Area

A writing area/table will encourage children to write for a variety of purposes and explore mark making. All children are encouraged to 'have a go' at writing and have access to a range of print and phonic aids, such as letter mats, to support their exploration in early writing.

Creative

Children have access to a range of materials and equipment including paints, collage, chalk and recyclable materials. Simple percussion instruments are also available for the children to use and explore sounds and rhythm making.

Book Area

Each classroom also has its own reading area with a wide range of books available for them to choose from.

Sand and Water

Through exploring the sand and water trays and areas, children develop early concepts of capacity, weight and volume. In our outside area we have a large sand pit where the children can create sculptures on a large scale. We also have a range of resources that the children can select and use to explore ideas.

Role Play Area

Our role-play area is regularly updated to support and foster the children's interests and is often linked to our topics. This area enables children to act out their own experiences and take on the roles of other people, building their self-confidence and helping them to understand the feelings of others.

Construction

Children are encouraged to build structures and objects linked to their play themes such as small world. The children will also be developing their fine and gross motor skills while sharing and working with others.

The Outdoor Area

We are very fortunate to have a large area with a safety surface. The children are able to use this area in their everyday learning, and it is widely resourced to spark their imaginations and encourage exploration. All of the prime and specific areas are catered for in this outside area, and it is utilised to enhance topics linked to our curriculum such as growing plants and playing in the mud kitchen.

Within the classroom children will:

- be provided with a range of first hand learning experiences linked to each area of learning
- build on their existing knowledge to further their learning
- have access to a range of indoor and outdoor encounters
- be encouraged to engage in imaginative, investigative, open-ended and structured activities
- be encouraged to follow their own interests and make choices for themselves
- persevere when challenge arises and share their ideas with their peers
- collaborate and share ideas and experiences with their peers

The Three Prime Areas of Learning

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

When the children start school we want them to settle happily and enjoy playing with other children and adults. We encourage independence, and support the children in making good decisions in their learning and help them to share and take turns with others. We will support the children to be able to manage their own feelings and behaviour, as well as being aware of the needs and feelings and opinions of others.

Physical Development

Physical skills are developed through a range of indoor and outdoor activities. Through these activities the children develop gross and fine motor skills. In the outside area they use wheeled toys and a range of small and large equipment, including climbing and balancing equipment. Fine motor skills are developed through a variety of activities such as cutting, lacing beads, using pegs, pencils and play dough.

Communication and Language

Speaking and listening skills are encouraged through role-play, puppets, sharing stories, and conversations with adults and peers. A variety of activities across each day are planned around developing the children's self-confidence and ability to express themselves. We ensure children access a wide range of opportunities to experience a rich language environment.

Four Specific Areas of Learning

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Knowledge and understanding of the world is gained through a wide range of practical experiences. These include looking at the local environment, trips and visitors, investigating and exploring materials, designing and making a range of items, using a range of construction and IT equipment.

Mathematics

Mathematical skills and understanding are developed mainly through practical experiences. These include using games and a wide variety of practical equipment. The children are given lots of opportunities to count, sort, recognise numbers, explore shape, space and measure. They are encouraged to develop their own strategies to solve mathematical problems.

Literacy

Children are encouraged to link sounds and letters and begin to read, mark-make and write through a range of fun and interactive games and tasks. We ensure that the children have access to a very wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest and spark their imaginations.

Characteristics of Learning

The ways in which your child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas of the curriculum and support your child to remain an effective and motivated learner. Their characteristics of learning become an integral part of how we plan for their next steps.

Children can learn in a variety of ways:

Playing and exploring - engagement

- Finding out and exploring - engaging with open ended activities and showing particular interests
- Playing with what they know - representing their experiences in play
- Being willing to 'have a go' - seeking challenges and taking risks

Active learning - motivation

- Being involved and concentrating - showing high levels of energy and fascination and maintaining focus
- Keeping trying - persevering and trying out different methods
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do - being proud and showing satisfaction when things go well

Creating and thinking critically - thinking

- Having their own ideas - finding new ways to solve problems
- Making links - making predictions and links, spotting patterns in their learning
- Choosing ways to do things - planning, making decisions and reviewing how things are going

We strive to provide a wide range of opportunities and activities that encourage these characteristics of learning and support their further development to enable them to grow as learners.

School Uniform

A school uniform is beneficial in creating a school identity and in maintaining high standards of dress and behaviour. **It is important that all items of clothing are named**, and that every effort is made to adhere strictly to the lists provided below. Parents are particularly requested to support the school by ensuring that pupils wear a strong pair of school shoes and **not allow the wearing of trainers or boots as a substitute**. Trainers form part of the P.E. wear and are also used when pupils wish to play football on the playground or field at break times.

In the Autumn and Spring terms pupils are expected to wear a white shirt (with long or short sleeves). In the **Summer term only** pupils may prefer to wear a plain white Aertex (polo) shirt or summer dress (yellow and white check).

Uniform - General - Boys and Girls

White shirt (Long or short sleeves and polo shirt in Summer if desired)

Navy/gold tie

Grey jumper

Grey cardigan

Tailored trousers or knee-length shorts (boys and girls) in charcoal grey (not stretch please)

Charcoal grey knee-length skirt/culottes

Black or navy school skirts, trousers and shorts are not part of our uniform and must not be worn.

Grey, black or white socks

Grey or black tights

Black shoes

Pupils are not expected to wear ties in Years R and 1.

P.E./Games - Boys and Girls

1 pair navy shorts

1 House T-shirt

Navy tracksuit

Change of socks

Strong trainers - suitable for playground and field, Years R to 6

There is also an option to purchase a skirt and hooded sweatshirt.

If the weather is wet, games is changed to indoor PE when hall time is available. Football boots are only necessary for pupils engaged in club activities or matches. N.B Trainers do not include the expensive and brand named basketball boots which are not suitable for athletics or indoor games.

School jumpers, school ties and PE T.shirts can be purchased from either:

Broadwater Sports
37 Broadwater Street West
Worthing
West Sussex
BN14 9BY
Tel: 01903 234589

Or

First 4 Uniform
32 North Road
Lancing
West Sussex
BN15 9AB
Tel: 01903 751181

West Park School uniform can only be purchased online at First 4 Uniform.

There is also an option to have your child's surname embroidered on the front of the T-shirt above the badge. Whilst we do not insist on this, we encourage this as it makes it more likely any mislaid items are successfully returned.

We can't wait to welcome you and your family as part of our school, and look forward to starting our amazing learning journey together.

The West Park Reception Team