

Welcome to Mandale Mill Early Years Reception Class

Dear Parents,

We believe that successful education is a partnership between school and home. This booklet has been prepared to provide you with information about your child's transition into the Reception Class, to help us to help achieve this partnership with you. We want both you and your child to get off to the best possible start when they start full time school. We hope you enjoy reading the booklet and find it useful in answering any queries that you may have. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to speak to one of the members of staff.



Yours sincerely,

Miss L. Moore
Head Teacher

Mrs. E. Cole
Early Years Leader

The Reception Class Day is as follows:

Morning 9.00 am – 12.00 pm

Afternoon 1.00 pm – 3.05 pm

These times are the same for all Key Stage 1 children

Collecting children at the end of the school day

It is really important that you collect your child promptly at the end of the day.

We understand that very occasionally you may find yourself unavoidably running late. If this happens please contact the school so we know why and when you are likely to arrive at school. This also applies if you usually collect your child for lunch.

We need to know who else is allowed to collect your child so we can place them on your child's contact sheet. We do not expect anyone under the age of 16 to collect children from school. If you need to make a one-off arrangement for someone to collect your child please let school know who it is and what they look like before they are due to be collected.

Please make sure that your child is closely supervised while in your care on school premises. As soon as the teacher has dismissed your child you have taken full responsibility for him or her.



Contacting us

Telephone: 01642 647010

If you need to contact us for any reason please ring the above telephone number. It is the number for the main school and will usually be answered by the school secretary, Mrs. Robins. She will answer your queries, provide you with information, take a message for you, or if necessary, connect you to the Unit. Please make sure we have up to date contact numbers for yourself and two other friends or relatives in case we need to call if your child becomes ill during the session.

Attendance

It is very important that your child comes to school as much as possible. We know from experience that children who are good at attending school have a much better chance of success at school. Our school has an attendance policy which strives for good attendance through reward and positive praise, so we hope you will find that the good attendance of your child is both recognised and valued.

Punctuality

It is really important that your child arrives on time now that he or she is in Reception. Much of our work, especially reading, happens in the first session of the day so by being late your child is missing

essential learning time. As with attendance our school has a punctuality policy and we want all children to get to school on time. We encourage this with praise and reward so your child's punctuality will be recognised and valued.

Remember – be in the line for 5 to 9!

Illness



If your child is ill or absent for any reason please ring school so that we are aware.

If your child has any medical conditions which you know of please tell the staff. All such information is treated as confidential but we need to know in case it affects any of the activities we might be doing in school.

Asthma

Children with asthma must have an inhaler kept in school. These should be clearly labelled with your child's name. Please ensure your child is able to ask for his/her inhaler as is able to use it as independently as possible.

Aims of the Early Years Unit

In the Foundation Stage Unit we aim to develop your child in all areas of learning, as set out in "Development Matters for the Early Years Foundation Stage" curriculum.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding of the World**
- **Expressive Art and Design**



In their Early Years children learn best through informal, but structured, play. The children learn more readily if they are interested. They will be learning to share with others, to express their own ideas, to plan and to solve problems. Their experiences will be extended; they will meet new people and tackle more challenges. It is a further step into the outside world following on from their Nursery education. Their natural curiosity is a valuable tool to develop learning. The curriculum we offer is carefully planned through half-termly themes. Although the topics are the same for all the children in the Foundation Stage, the activities are structured differently, according to the ages of the children. We aim to develop the children's ideas and cater their learning to suit their interests, while developing essential skills which support effective learning.

Now that your child is in their Reception year, there will be more activities directed by the teacher such as whole-class work, focused number activities and writing tasks. We aim to have a daily phonics session and during the week we will cover a variety of other activities such as Circle Time, Music Makers and Topic Work.

We go to whole-school assemblies at least once a week and can use our computers in the unit.

Dinner Time

The Reception children who are staying for school dinner or packed lunch will eat this in the Lower School hall. They are accompanied by an adult at all times and then they have a short outdoor play session in the Lower School yard, supported by a Lunchtime supervisor. Children who go home for dinner should be collected from the Main School Reception at 12.00pm and returned to the Lower School yard at



12.55 pm. Please remember that dinner money should be sent into school in the School Dinner envelopes on a Monday morning for the week.

Arriving at school

When your child arrives he or she will continue to have their own named peg to hang their coat and we expect them to take off their own coat and hang it up themselves, to increase their sense of independence. He or she will be asked to find their own name card and fix it to the board so we can see who has come to school. This “self registration” is a good way for your child to practice recognising their own name.

Food

At times we may try different food in class. Some children like to bring a birthday cake to share with their friends on their birthday. We sometimes make and taste different fruits or food depending on our topic. For example in our topic about bears we may make and taste some porridge. All food that is used in school is prepared carefully with regard to Health and Safety policy and we encourage children to try or taste a range of things as appropriate to the learning we have identified.

It is very important therefore that you inform us if your child has any food allergies or other dietary requirements which may affect these activities.

Outdoor Play and P.E.



We try to go outside every day to use our Outdoor Play Area. It may be to play with balls, ride bikes, climb on the climbing frame, or to play a game related to the learning we have been doing indoors. Sometimes it may be an activity related to the half term’s theme, for instance looking in puddles on a rainy day to see our reflections. Whatever the weather, please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

Outdoor play is a vital part of your child’s educational entitlement and, although we focus on Physical Development, we also use outdoor play to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge in other parts of our curriculum.

We also have a designated P.E. session in the Lower School hall. Your child will enjoy this lesson but a few things will help him or her to be more independent and confident. Please encourage your child to dress and undress himself, including managing his or her own shoes. Remove earrings on P.E. days and make sure **all items of clothing are clearly named.**

School Uniform

The school uniform colour at Mandale Mill is navy blue and we hope that all the children will wear uniform. We have uniform sweatshirts and other items with the school badge available to buy from the school office.

Appropriate footwear is important. Please remember the children play outside running, riding bikes and climbing, so sandals, “flip-flops” or backless shoes are not suitable.

We spend some time each day playing outside, so please make sure your child has a suitable coat to wear.

Please make sure all uniform and coats brought to school are labelled with your child’s name.



The Early Years Fund

A contribution of 50p per week is requested for the Unit fund. This is to cover the costs of salt, flour and oil for the dough, and ingredients for cooking.



Fruit

We promote healthy eating habits at school. A carton of milk and a piece of fruit are provided for the children every day. We have a break each morning and afternoon, when we sit



down, have a snack and a chance to chat to each other. The fruit varies each day and we encourage each child to try to eat as much as they can.

Jewellery

For your child's safety, it is the school policy to allow only one pair of stud ear-rings in the ear lobes to be worn during school time.

How you can help your child's learning

Most parents want to help their child to learn but aren't sure how to begin, or if they are doing it in the same way as the school. On the following pages are some of the things you can do at home to assist your child's learning. Time spent listening and giving encouragement to your child is always well spent. Don't forget if you are unsure of anything or want to know more about any aspect of your child's learning please ask one of the teaching staff.



Listening for Sounds

Being able to discriminate between different sounds is an important stage in a young child's education. In the Early Years we focus on this in many of our activities. During your child's Nursery placement, your child will have been introduced to some of the initial sounds of the letters of the alphabet. We use the "Jolly Phonics" approach. This teaches your child to remember the sound of the letter with an action, a picture and a little story. In the Reception year, your child will build on these first sounds and go onto learn the rest of the alphabet, ready for spelling and reading.



We aim to learn new sounds each week and will be sending some activities home with your child for you to practice together.



Counting and Numbers

We use maths every day and everywhere. We try to encourage children to become confident with saying numbers and counting objects from as early as possible. The recognition and writing of numbers will be introduced once a child is able to count things and recite the number names easily.

Throughout the year, your child's teacher will provide a range of activities to support number work at home.

Reading

Now that your child attends full time school he or she will be given a school book bag with a reading book for you to share with your child. Please encourage your child to talk about the story in the book, even if there are not many words. Talking about the story from the pictures is an important first step to understanding what is being read. Please sign the reading record to show that you have shared the book and make a comment on how your child has coped so we can monitor how he or she is progressing.



As we learn letter sounds your child will begin to read by blending and the books will reflect this. Regular practice really helps! Each book has some tips to help you with how to do this.

We introduce "Tricky words" later in the first term. These are words to learn "on sight" and each one has a simple action to go with it to help your child to remember. The words are the most frequently used words when reading so it really helps if your child can learn them.

Please remember to send your child's book bag to school every day and check it each evening – there may be important letters from school and daily reading practice is very important.

Handwriting



In Mandale Mill Primary School we teach a specific handwriting style. In the Early Years, we encourage the children who are beginning to “write” letter symbols to adopt this style when forming their letters. An example of your child’s name using this handwriting style is found on his or her name card. It is difficult to “unlearn” something once it has been taught so we try to get it right at the very beginning. Sometimes children try to write their own name in capital letters as they see these around at home or in the shops. In school we only use a capital letter at the beginning.

Different children are ‘ready’ to write at different times and it is also important not to put them off writing by pushing them to do it before they are ready. If you want to help your child with writing his or her name we will be happy to provide you with a copy of his or her name in the style we use, for you to use at home. If you are helping your child to write please encourage him or her to hold the pencil comfortably with the thumb and first finger.

Assessment

In the Early Years we use the Local Authority’s “STEPS” assessment. Whilst your child has been in Nursery, he or she has been assessed while involved in informal, play activities. Your child has not been aware that he has been assessed. During their Reception year we continue to update these assessments regularly to see how your child is progressing. These assessments are used when we plan our weekly activities so that the children get the most appropriate education. At the end of the Early Years, at age 5, the teachers compile a “Foundation Stage Profile” for each child in line with national standards. From time to time your child’s teacher will meet with you to discuss his or her progress towards these Early Learning Goals.



Please remember that we want your child to get off to the best possible start. We hope he or she continues to enjoy coming to school and becomes an active and enthusiastic learner. If you have any questions however small, please ask one of the staff who will be only too happy to help!