

Do everything in love



1 Corinthians 16:14

Learning to Love, Loving to Learn

Welcome to St Mary's C of E Primary School

Reception Information Booklet for Parents/Carers

Our vision is to *inspire* and *grow* a compassionate community of excellence.

A happy place for our children to shine for God, for each other, and for themselves.

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St Marys C of E Primary School

Aims

Deeply rooted in the love of Jesus we are committed to - :

Creating a happy, healthy and honest school, where everyone feels secure and valued.

Providing excellent teaching and learning opportunities which develop independent, confident, and resilient lifelong learners who can think for themselves.

Celebrating and supporting all children to unlock and fulfil their unique potential.

Preparing children to contribute to society with wisdom, hope, tolerance, and dignity.

Living by our school values of Love; Honesty; Courage; Compassion; Determination, and Respect

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A word from the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

Here at St Mary's we are very proud of our children and their achievements so thank you for choosing our school. However, we are most proud of the children they become as they journey through our school.

St Mary's is a warm, friendly and very popular school. As a Church of England school our Christian Values are at the heart of everything we do. Pupils love coming to our school because they are taught by dedicated, talented and experienced professionals who ensure that our pupils are given every opportunity to succeed.

Our focus is on learning in the richest sense in order to enable every child and adult to be the best that they can be. We believe that through offering an exciting and enriching curriculum delivered by interested and interesting adults each child is inspired to develop their talents and skills and so achieve their potential.

I hope that this booklet will give you all the information you need to know. St Mary's really is a lovely place where the care and nurture of your child takes priority over everything else. Being part of such an environment is a real joy, and you are part of our community now. Staff here work tirelessly to ensure all needs are met and that your children have fun too, but we also recognize that we need to work in partnership with yourselves. We are always happy to meet with you and discuss any concerns you may have, and share any joys too.

I look forward to working with you as part of this team over the next few years.

Kind regards,

Rachel Tainsh
Head teacher

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Your child is about to start school and we would like to welcome you. We hope this booklet will answer some of the questions you may have before your child starts school in September. Many of you with older children already in the school may be familiar with some of this information but please do read it carefully. There may be things which have changed, that you may have forgotten or indeed, never knew. Please keep this booklet as a reference for the future.

Starting school is a very big step for both you and your child. The way your child settles into school is very important and we do our best to help each child come to school happily and enjoy learning.

Home Visits

A home visit will be arranged before your child starts school (depending upon the Covid situation). This is your opportunity to meet with the class teacher and another member of staff and ask any questions. During the visit we will fill out any necessary paperwork and find out more about your child so that s/he can be best supported at school. We believe that a home visit can help to develop positive relationships with children, parents and practitioners. It gives children the opportunity to observe staff as new adults in their home environment and allows for a more relaxed discussion. We have found that for children it is a significant event; one which they will remember for a long time and refer back to.

Staff have put together some photographs that you can share with your child to familiarize them for what will happen at school. Please take time to talk through these with your child

So that they know for example what happens in our dinner hall, where to keep their coat etc.

School Uniform

Please order uniform from the school office before we break up for summer. We do always have a small supply of spares which can be bought from the school office throughout the year. Our uniform is bottle green sweatshirts/cardigans, white polo shirts, grey trousers/skirts. Please make sure all items of clothing is labelled with your child's name. Please also make sure your child has a PE kit (white t-shirt, black shorts, training shoes for indoors legging/jogging pants, sweatshirt, training shoes for outdoors) in school at all times. Your child will also need a book bag which can be bought from the school office.

Shoes – we recommend Velcro strips for our new starters for ease of getting changed for PE. Please remember to label shoes too.

From Easter through to October half term, children can wear the summer uniform – shorts for boys and yellow / green gingham dresses for girls. For safety reasons we do not allow flip flops or any strappy sandals.

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Starting School – the first few weeks

We operate a staggered entry during the first few weeks. This provides an opportunity for your child to become familiar with their surroundings and school routines in a smaller group. Children will attend for mornings and lunchtime only during the settling in period. We hope that at the beginning of the third week of term, every child will be able to stay fulltime; however teachers will use their professional judgements on an individual basis.

Children may settle into school happily or they may cry on the first few days or after a few days. Be patient. Starting school can be stressful and tiring. Any parent is welcome to stay to settle their child however please ask the teacher's advice. Most children settle best without their parents around. Our teachers have a lot of experience in settling the children in their care and try to do the best for them at all times.

Preparing your Child for school

There are some things that you can do to prepare your child for school life, to help your child become independent and grow in confidence. Please read our school readiness document on our website that goes through things that your child needs to do before they come to St Mary's. Having them prepared will really help them to settle and feel confident about this big new venture.

Most importantly, please talk to your child in a positive way about school and try to hide any worries you may have. It is only natural that you have concerns.

Breakfast Club

Whilst we do not operate an official breakfast club, we do provide bagels for everyone as they come into school. These are optional for our children and free of charge.

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The School day

School starts at 9.00 am and children should be brought to the class door where the teacher will greet them. Children will be allowed in any time after 8.50 am - we operate a 'soft start' which allows parents to take their child straight to their classroom at 8.50 am. However, the official school day starts from 9.00am; therefore all children must be in class – ready for learning - by this time. Classroom doors shut at 9.00 am – if your child arrives after this time, they should come to the main school reception with an adult who must sign them in as late.

There are mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks when the children go out to play, supervised by several staff members.

Lunchtime is from 11.45 am when the children go to the dining hall for lunch followed by an outside playtime until 12.45 pm, supervised by lunch time staff. Your child will be helped with their lunch time routines but they will be expected to carry their own trays and choose their own meals.

Families are welcome to join our collective worship on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 2.30pm. Occasionally these will be replaced by a class led worship session. We invite a number of different speakers to lead these sessions and would dearly love you to join us.

School ends at 3.00 pm once children are attending all day. Please be prompt in collecting your child. If for any reason you will be late, please call school to let us know and then collect your child from the main reception.

For safety reasons, only those adults that have been listed by the parents will be allowed to pick up the children. You may pick up your child from outside their classrooms. Please do not bring dogs onto our school grounds (even if on a lead). If someone else is picking up your child, you must inform the school office, we can't let the children go with anyone.

School Meals

Cooked school meals are available. These are healthy meals which always include vegetarian options and salads are available daily. A menu is provided by the school, which is a rolling 3 weekly menu. Each menu contains choices. Menu choices can be made in advance on the School Gateway App. Please talk to your child to let them know what will be served for dinner and help them to make their choice.

Whilst in key stage 1 (which includes Reception), your child is entitled to a free school dinner. You may prefer your child to have a packed lunch. Please ensure the lunch you provide is a balanced, healthy meal. We do not allow sweets, chocolate or food containing peanuts. As we are a 'healthy school' children may only bring water or juice to drink.

Your child may change from packed lunch to school dinner or vice versa. We try to be flexible if a child has difficulty.

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Fruit and Water

Children are entitled to a piece of fruit daily. This will be available during break times; each child also needs to have a water bottle for use in class. This is in addition to the water in their lunch box. You can provide your own water bottle clearly marked with your child's name or purchase one from the school office. These are available throughout the school year. We currently ask if children can bring their bottle in filled from home.

Snack

You are free to provide your own snack but please remember it must be a healthy one – piece of fruit, muesli bar etc. No crisps, biscuits or cakes please.

Medicines

If your child needs regular medication for asthma or eczema it should be handed into Mrs Hughes at the school office. A form must be signed before any medicine is administered. Please talk with Mrs Hughes if you have any queries. Occasionally we may need to call you if your child is unwell. You must ensure that all details are up to date and have been filled out correctly on the **contact form**. It is also important that we know if your child has an allergies. Please inform Mrs Hughes at the school office if this is the case and we can take all necessary precautions.

The Curriculum:

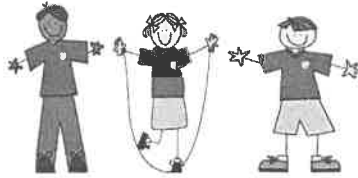
Our curriculum is based on the Government's curriculum for 0-5 year olds (The Early Years Foundation Stage). Early year's education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. It is a crucial stage in terms of children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. All children are asked to read nightly.

The Outdoor Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum states that children should have opportunities to play outside every day. Children in Reception have opportunities to play outside most days. Outdoor play offers opportunities for different activities and learning to take place that cannot be provided in the indoor environment alone. Many larger scale activities are done outside as well as those that help children to develop gross motor skills such as climbing, throwing, catching, etc. Children also have opportunities for first-hand experience of the weather, seasons and natural world.

Trips may be planned to enrich our curriculum. Parents will always receive a permission and payment request for such trips. Be assured that staffing ratios will be high and risk assessments are thorough and carried out weeks in advance. Parents do not accompany these trips, although occasionally we may ask for volunteers to help.

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Assessment

Staff are continuously assessing children to find out their stage of development in all areas of learning as well as their individual needs and interests. Assessment is done through observing children in their self-chosen play activities as well as during activities carried out with an adult. These assessments form part of your child's individual profile that is called their 'Learning Journey'. You will have opportunities to see your child's Learning Journey throughout the year. We encourage parents to contribute their comments about their child's learning too as often children demonstrate different abilities in their home environment.

Open Evenings

We hold several meetings over the year to discuss your child's progress. All parents are expected to attend. This is an important opportunity for you to find out about your child's progress and for you to ask any questions you may have. You will receive information during the year about such meetings and can use School Gateway to book a convenient appointment.

We also run parents workshops and meetings throughout the year to help parents understand how and what we teach.

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Attendance

Children are expected to be in school every day unless they are sick. Attendance is monitored by Halton Welfare Officers. If your child is sick please let the school know by ringing 01928 565995. Please inform us by 9.15 am and keep us updated about an expected return date. If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea they do need to be 48 hours free before returning to school.

Please make sure your child is fit to be in school. We are only able to make arrangements for children to be kept indoors at break times in exceptional circumstances. It is not advisable for children to miss school for other reasons other than illness. Leave can be requested by filling in a form available from the school office, however, it will only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**. The school office will need to see evidence of medical / dental appointments before absences can be authorised. No holidays will be authorised.

Lost Property

Any misplaced clothing is kept in the Key Stage 2 area. We strongly advise that you label each item of your child's clothing, including hats, scarves and PE kits. It is much easier for lost items to be returned to their owner if they are named.

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Toys and Jewellery

We do not encourage children to bring toys to school because they can be easily lost or broken. If your child has something to show the class the teacher must know so that it can be kept for her safe keeping. Each class teacher arranges 'show and tell' differently so if you have any questions talk to him/her directly.

Child Protection

We work in partnership with parents to support children and their families in every way possible. However, we have a clear legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our children. If concerns are raised within the school, or a situation is reported to us involving possible abuse, we are obliged to refer it to Social Services. This is in line with Government and Halton policy. Mrs Tainsh is the Safeguarding lead and Mrs Hulse and Mr Owen are deputy safeguarding officers too. We also have a Family Support Worker who is available to help families and children in our school. Mrs Charnley is at school 2 ½ day a week. Please call the school office if you would like some help / advice from her.

Please inform us of any change to personal circumstances that are likely to affect the well-being of your child.

Can You Help?

We ask that you help us primarily by supporting us. If your child knows that we are working together, they are far more likely to thrive under our care. We also need your support with reading and later on homework tasks. In Reception children need to be reading (and read to) every evening. Making this part of your routine enables your child to see how you value reading, and they will learn your behaviour and copy it.

Later in the school year children will go on trips. All activities are very carefully supervised and we may require parent volunteers to accompany us in order for them to be possible.

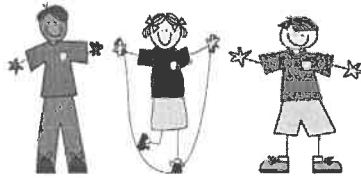
If you would like to help in the classroom please make your class teacher aware. It is school policy that all parent helpers are DBS checked and they are not usually permitted to support in the same class as their child.

We respectfully ask parents to model good behaviour whilst waiting to pick up. Please do not bring arguments onto our school playground.

Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is a sum of money given to schools each year by the Government to improve attainment. Pupil Premium is intended to directly benefit the children who are eligible. If you are in receipt of benefits, we would urge you to apply for Pupil Premium. This can be done through The Link or by coming to the school office where Mrs Jackson can help you with the forms.

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Concerns and Complaints

Please see the class teacher in the first instance. You may speak to the Assistant Head (Mr Owen) Deputy Headteacher (Mrs Hulse) or Headteacher (Mrs Tainsh) if your worry or concern is not resolved. If you want to speak with the class teacher feel free to approach them at the end of the day. If they can't speak with you then, they will arrange a mutually convenient time. If you wish to speak with a member of the leadership team, please call the school office on 565995 to make an appointment.

We aim to make school a happy and supportive place for children and parents and hope you and your child will enjoy the time spent at St Mary's.

We hope your child's time at St Mary's C of E school will be both enjoyable and rewarding and we look forward to your future involvement with us.

Website/Twitter

Please use our website

<http://st-marys.halton.sch.uk>

We do update this regularly and you can find out what your child is learning by looking through this website. You will find our holiday dates and performance data here too. In fact this is a really good place to start to look to get a good feel for our school.

We have a Twitter account where photos and information about what has been going on in school are regularly uploaded. This is a closed group. Request permission to Follow and you will be given access to view. Search for @stmaryshalton in Twitter to find us.

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Entry to Reception:

- Children need to be ready to be separated from their parent or carer.
- They should be used to not having a nap during the day.
- They should be used to going to the toilet on their own and wiping properly using toilet roll.
- They must be used to using a knife and fork if they are having a school lunch. If they opt for a packed lunch, they must be able to open containers and packets.
- Children should be able to put their own coat on and dress and undress for PE
- Able to demonstrate listening skills in being able to show interest and pay attention to a subject or stimulus for approximately 10 minutes.
- Children need to have enough language to be able to express themselves if they need something and be able to communicate something about what makes them who they are, such as name, age and something about family or relevant factors in their life.
- Children need to be able to interact with an adult and/or a peer. For example, during play to be able to take turns and take some responsibility for their actions.
- Children should be able to focus on, and show interest in, their work and the world around them. To make observations, notice things and ask questions.
- Children should be able to hold a book correctly, turn the pages and be able to join in with rhymes and predictions.
- Children should be able to respond to some boundary setting- engage positively and without aggression with other children and the ability to respond appropriately to requests from teachers.
- Be able to hold a pencil correctly and make a mark.
- Children should be able to hold and use tools correctly and safely.
- Children should be able to wipe their own nose and dispose of the tissue used safely.
- Children should be able to put own shoes on.