

# ST MARGARET'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Early Years Parents Handbook 2021

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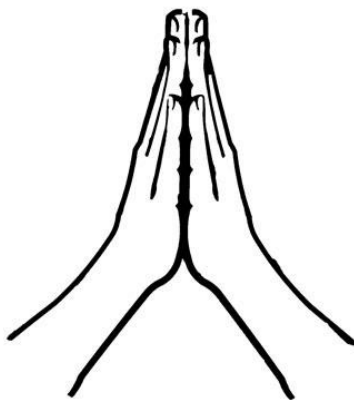
E-mail: [school@stmargaretsprimary.org.uk](mailto:school@stmargaretsprimary.org.uk)

Website: [www.stmargaretsprimary.org.uk](http://www.stmargaretsprimary.org.uk)



## **St Margaret's Parent's Prayer Group**

Please feel very welcome to come and  
join our parents' prayer group, every  
Friday between 9 am - 9.30 am



# **ST MARGARET'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **STARTING SCHOOL**

### **PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL**

Starting school should be an enjoyable experience for every child and it is imperative that every effort is made to ensure this happens. It is also so important that a child can come to school with confidence, show a willingness to 'have a go' at any activity that is given to him/her, be able to listen to and share with those around him/her, and possess a degree of self-discipline.

We, therefore, hope that the following information will help your child settle quickly and happily into our school.

Once a child starts at school he/she can no longer have the attention of one adult to him/herself. He/she has to learn to become a member of a large group and to share and wait his/her turn. This is one of the biggest and most difficult steps that a child has to face.

### **IDEAS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR SCHOOL**

- Can your child sit still and listen to others?
- Encourage him/her to listen carefully to and carry out simple instructions.
- Does your child enjoy listening to stories and poems?
- Can you find time regularly to sit and share books together? Talk about the pictures and the story and encourage your child to predict what is going to happen or retell the ending etc.
- Are you teaching your child nursery rhymes, rhythms and simple action songs?
- Are you helping your child to develop the ability to express him/herself clearly? Encourage him/her to talk about things done/seen, places visited etc.
- Do you give your child the opportunity to develop the skills of using pencils, crayons, paint brushes and scissors? Encourage them to write simple lists using their own "scribble" and/or phonetic spelling.
- Developing Vocabulary - do you find opportunities to talk about colour, shape and size of things, extending vocabulary using adjectives and adverbs?

- Do you play games with your child? For example, jigsaws, odd man out puzzles, joining the dots pictures, finding hidden objects in pictures, what is missing puzzles, playing snap, pairs, lotto, dice games such as snakes and ladders, dominoes, finding and matching similar articles, eg gloves, socks, shoes, I-spy and simple rhyming words eg cat, hat, tin, pin, bin, etc.

These activities not only help children acquire early numeracy and literacy skills, but also assist them in learning to co-operate and share with others as well as learning to win or lose.

## **CLOTHING**

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. Buckles and Velcro are easier than laces).

## **SELF CARE**

- Is your child able to go to the toilet alone and flush it?
- If you have a boy, is he familiar with a urinal system?
- Does your child know how important it is to wash his/her hands after using the toilet?
- Can your child blow his/her nose?
- **Please provide a spare pair of pants**, to be kept in PE bag in case of an emergency.

## MEDICATION

Does your child need regular medication e.g. an inhaler? If so, please give this and any other information to 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 THE CLOAKROOMS.

## EXCLUSION PERIODS OF SOME INFECTIOUS DISEASES

DISEASE	EXCLUSION PERIOD (subject to Dr's instructions)
Chicken pox	7 days from onset of rash
Measles	4 days from onset of rash
Mumps	9 days from onset of swelling
German Measles	4 days after onset of rash

## LUNCH TIMES (11:50 – 12:50 PM)

Every child in Infants is provided a Universal Free School meal and you do not need to consent to this. However, you may wish for them to have packed lunch instead; this is fine and again you do not need to do anything to let us know.

If you are receiving benefits, please complete the Benefits Related Free School Meal form in this pack, in order to access the other benefits associated with this. The school also is able to claim extra funding with every eligible child. You can check your eligibility online at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/free-school-meals/>

We have enclosed a paper form that you can fill in and return to school if you think you are eligible.

**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.**

- Can your child use a knife, fork and spoon?
- Is he/she able to open their lunch box and food container?
- Is he/she aware of the importance of good table manners?

## **Milk & Fruit**

In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 fruit is provided daily but please also bring a piece of fruit in 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](http://www.coolmilk.com)) or pick up a registration form from the school office. They will then contact you at the appropriate time to arrange pre-payment.

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

## **BEFORE SCHOOL**

The gate opens at 8:45 and your child's teacher will welcome the children into class. We do ask for your co-operation in the following ways:

1. Please do not bring dogs onto the school premises
2. Please do not engage the class teacher in long conversations, as she needs to attend to the class. The staff welcome discussions but it is helpful to make a prior appointment.
3. If you are late (the gate is shut at 8.50 am), please enter the school via the school's main entrance and speak to the secretary in the office.

## 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, eg Peter not PETER.

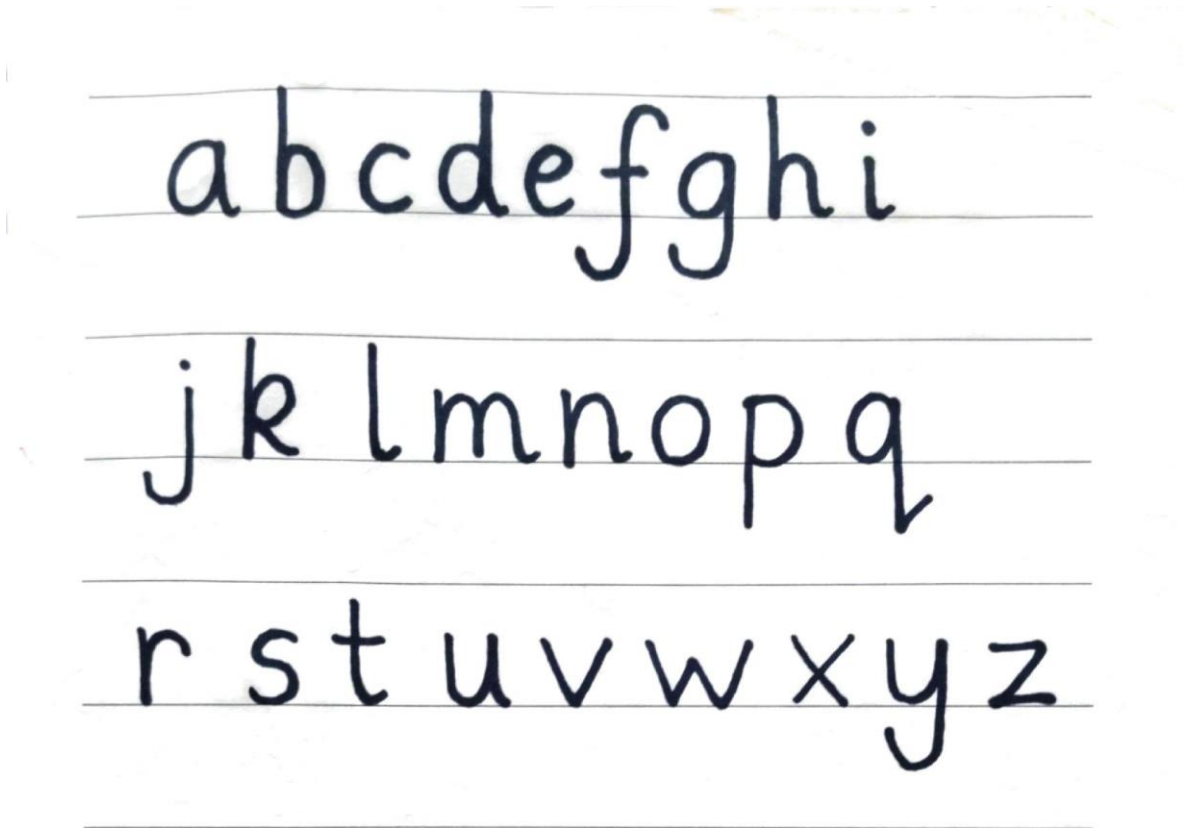
Please be positive about all your child's attempts at writing especially when they are willing to have a go by themselves. This helps him/her to regard themselves as writers right from the start and prevents the feeling of 'I can't do it'. It is very important that they enjoy 'have a go' writing – at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

## HANDWRITING SHEET

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**

## **A POLICY GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

### **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. Grouping may be determined by friendship or ability.
- During a typical session, there will be a mixture of whole class teaching, focused, adult led activities and independent child initiated activities.
- Play opportunities are planned to reinforce, practice and extend skills, knowledge and attitudes.

## **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, with some children going beyond them.

### **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 anytime. 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 planned for thoroughly, but there is flexibility to allow for 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, a parents' evening in the Autumn and Spring terms and an end of year report.

## **Tapestry**

We have created an individual 'Learning Journal' for your child through a piece of educational software called 'Tapestry'. By logging on with a secure username and password you will be able to view only **your** child's observations, photographs and videos from their time in Early Years. You will even receive an email telling you when a new observation is available for you to view. This will enable you to follow your child's progress and reflect upon achievements with your child at home. You can add comments so that we know which activities they enjoy.

Tapestry also allows you to add observations and photographs of your own as well, as we love to hear about learning and special news from home.

We understand how much as parents you enjoy looking at children's work, which is why we are also keeping a folder of any writing or special work the child has produced. These folders are in the cloakroom and you are free to look at your child's work at any time.

We have created your child's Tapestry account using the email address you provided on your enrolment forms. You will receive an email with the Tapestry instructions and log in information. If this is not your preferred account then please let us know via email on [tapestry@stmargaretsprimary.org.uk](mailto:tapestry@stmargaretsprimary.org.uk)

If your child already has a Tapestry account with another setting, please email stating which setting they currently attend.

## Parents

When parents 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. There are regular information letters from the class teacher throughout the Autumn term and a half-termly 'curriculum letter'.
- 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.
- 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.
- Parents coming into class for 'Parent Time' to join in activities with their children.

## Introduction to phonics

Most pre-school children are fascinated by books, sounds and letters and parents are keen to support and encourage this. However, many people are unsure about how children will be taught to read in schools and are concerned that they don't want to do anything that may confuse or disadvantage their children in any way.

Don't worry. Anything that you do to develop your child's love of language is a good thing. If you are looking for specific ideas, there are lots of starting points here.

There is no need to try to teach children phonics before they start school. However there is lots that you can do as a parent to help them be really ready for phonics when they do start school. In a nutshell: read lots of books, listen to all kind of sounds, make all kinds of sounds and talk about all kinds of sounds.

Phase 1 is all about developing these pre-phonics skills. There are many ideas for developing these skills at home. None of these need to be planned or formal or a big deal. They are just little things that can be added into everyday play with your child.



### **Suggested games to play**

#### **Being aware of sounds all around us**

**Toy sounds** - When your child is playing with their toys encourage them to make the right sounds. Farm animals, train sets, vehicles, dolls etc are great for this. Help your child to notice these sounds around and about. E.g. Listen to the sound that cars, trucks and fire engines make in the street. Practise making these noises, then use them with car, truck and fire engine toys.

**Big ears** - Cup your hands around your ears and listen to sounds all around. Talk about what sounds you can hear. Try doing this in the house, in the street, on a bus (if you don't feel too silly), in the park, on the beach etc. Talk about the sounds: Are they loud or quiet? Are they short or long? Can you make a similar sound with your voice?

#### **Experimenting with musical instruments**

**Shake it all about** - Make simple shakers by filling plastic bottles or tubs with rice, pasta, pebbles etc. Play with them and talk about the sounds that they make. Are the sounds soft, sharp, smooth, jiggly, scratchy?

**Tap it out** - Use the shakers above or use drums (pots and pans and wooden spoons are perfect) to play along with songs, rhymes and the radio. Try making the loudest sounds that you can then the quietest sounds that you can. Tap out simple rhythms. Can your child repeat the rhythm back to you?

**Interesting instruments**- If you see or hear instruments being played either in real life or on TV, talk about the sounds that the instrument makes. Which instruments does your child like the sound of best? Can they tell you why? Can they imitate the sound with their voice?

#### **Playing around with rhythm and rhyme**

**Rhyming books** - This is the time to bring out your inner performer and have as much fun as possible using silly voices, making sound effects. Encourage your child to join in as much as possible. You may want to develop your own actions, sound effects etc. When children are really familiar with a particular book, try pausing before the rhyming word. Encourage your child to fill in the missing word.

**Clap it out**- Encourage children to think about the rhythms in words. Say simple nursery rhymes and clap along with one clap for each syllable. Repeat with knee taps, head pats or stamps.