



John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

**ST. PETER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*firm foundations, shining bright*

Matthew 16:18 "You are Peter and upon this rock I shall build my church."

# Getting Ready for Early Years



A Guide for Parents 2020

On behalf of the staff and governors, we would like to extend a warm welcome to St Peter's Early Years. We are delighted that you have chosen our setting as the starting point for your child's journey and we hope that you and your child will enjoy their time with us.

Children begin their learning journey at St. Peter's in our Early Years classroom which is a purpose built setting within the school grounds. Here they learn to share, co-operate, explore and investigate through a wide range of rich, varied and imaginative play based experiences.

At St. Peter's we follow the Early Years Framework which starts from birth and will continue when your child starts school in F2. This consists of seven areas of learning; all areas are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for supporting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and these are known as the prime areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Physical development
- Communication and language

Throughout our daily interactions and activities we support children to build relationships and make friends. We help them to have a positive sense of themselves, develop respect for others and manage their feelings and behaviour. Together we encourage children to have confidence in themselves and their abilities. Within our setting children have the opportunity to experience a rich language environment. All of our staff have a good understanding of speech and language development and support children in developing their confidence to express themselves. Children are given many opportunities to be active and develop their co-ordination, movement and control. Children develop these skills within the classroom, in our outdoor environment and during our PE session each week. We support children in negotiating space, handling tools effectively and understanding the importance of health, physical exercise and staying safe.

The knowledge and experience gained from the prime areas naturally complement the next four areas. These are known as the specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

### ***Playing and Learning.***

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four principles: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development.

At St. Peter's Early Years we recognise that all children are unique and all develop at their own rates, we believe that all children are competent learners who can be resilient, capable and confident when they have positive attitudes and dispositions to learning. Children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. During your child's time with us we hope to develop caring and professional relationships with the children and their families and encourage positive relationships between the children and their peers. Our key person role ensures that these relationships are formed.

At St. Peter's we place a huge emphasis on our environment as this plays a key role in supporting children's learning and development. Our environment is designed to allow the children to explore and learn safely whilst supporting them to become independent, children are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment throughout each session, giving them control over their learning.

Both the indoor and outdoor environment are set up to provide challenging and engaging activities which cover all seven areas of learning. Children will spend their time taking part in a mixture of adult focused and child initiated play activities.

When children are settled into their new environment they are assessed using the EYFS development matters framework which provides a baseline for your child's education. This assessment is based upon a balance of high quality observation evidence and adult led activities designed to find out what children already know and can do. This assessment is then used to meticulously plan the environment to facilitate and set challenge for all. Children continue to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the year in order to track their progress.

***To enable all children to receive the time and support they need to settle into school life and for class teachers to assess each child, we offer the option of a flexible start to the beginning of the academic year. We will work with parents to meet their child's individual needs to ensure they quickly settle in. This will be discussed on an individual basis if required.***

## Our Day

We normally open our doors at 8.45am, this will give you time to drop off your older children at school if needed as they open the doors at 8.50am. However for the beginning half of 2020/21 we have adjusted our timings to take into account the need for social distancing. Early Years will open their door at 8:40am.

Please bring your child to the top gate of our school (see attached map). Your child's class teachers will warmly greet you. We regret that we have been advised that we are unable to allow parents onto our school site this year. We fully understand that this could prove tricky for some children and their parents. This is not how we like to operate and would, under normal circumstances, welcome parents with open arms into our classroom. We will endeavor to make this transition as smooth as possible. Over the summer holiday's please visit our top gate and show your child where you will meet their teacher and what will happen. Please talk positively about this to your child, reassuring them that you will give them a big cuddle, an encouraging wave and then return to collect them after they have had lots of fun in their new classroom. We will be sensitive to the needs of both you and your child but please be encouraged that with positive support from parents and staff the children soon settle. If there were any problems staff would always give you a call, equally if you are worried about how your child is settling please feel free to call us to discuss this.

Staff will be available at the classroom doors to answer any questions. If you would like to have a lengthier chat with your child's class teacher, we kindly ask that you wait till the end of the day when we will have more time to deal with your enquires.

All children should be settled in by 8:50am for registration. After 8:50am the classroom doors will be closed and arriving after that time will be marked late, this also ensures that we can start our morning sessions on time. If you arrive after this time you will need to take your child to the **main school office** to be signed in. The gate to the back/top of school will be locked to ensure the safety for all our pupils in school.

Parking around the school is limited but we kindly ask all parents to park away from the school and enjoy a short walk onto the school grounds. The Early Years building is located at the back to the school and you can access it from the back entrance to school. (School Hill) You are kindly asked to NOT to use the school car park at ANY time of the day. Please also adhere to the road markings outside school.

A typical day will include child-initiated activities and some adult focused activities which will be based around children's interests. We operate a continuous provision model, meaning that your child can explore the activities on offer, become an independent learner and begin to take responsibility for their own learning and development. All activities are carefully planned to ensure the children are able to experience relevant and exciting challenges and are having the opportunities to put their skills into action.

## **Our Sessions.**

The morning sessions start at 8.40am and finish at 11.40am. The afternoon sessions begin at 12.10pm and end at 3.10pm; all day is 8.40am to 3.10pm. Please ensure all children are collected promptly at the end of each session. Lunchtime is 11.40am to 12.10pm.

## **Collecting Your Child**

If your child is attending a full day or an afternoon session, your child will be supervised by a member of staff and handed over to parents/carers one at a time from the top gate. It is very important that we know if somebody else will be collecting your child from school. If arrangements change during the day, please contact the school office to make the class teacher aware. Please make every effort to be prompt when dropping off and collecting your child to and from school. It can be unsettling for all when children arrive late and distressing for your child if you are late collecting them.

## **Snack**

At St. Peter's we run an integrated day which means we do not stop for a dedicated snack time. Instead we have a snack table available for children to access in both the morning and afternoon sessions. Children are taught how to access this and help themselves to fresh fruit, crackers, breadsticks etc and milk or water. Milk is provided free until your child's 5th birthday.

We kindly ask that you provide your child with a NAMED water bottle for use throughout the day. Please ensure this is clearly labeled. We will send this home at the end of each day to be replenished.

## **School Dinners**

We provide all meals in house. All food is cooked by a team of experienced people who prepare the meals from scratch on a daily basis. Our menu is available on the school website. A school lunch costs £2.40p. Should your child have any particular dietary requirements or allergies please complete this on your child's information via the Google form. We encourage children to try new tastes and will feed back to you in the first couple of weeks on what they have eaten, but hopefully the children will do this for us!

If you prefer you can choose to provide your child with a packed lunch. We are a health promoting school and would like to encourage all our children to have a healthy well balanced lunch and would encourage you to support this ethos.

Please DO NOT send any food that may contain peanuts. This is due to some children suffering from anaphylaxis. Also, do not send drinks in cans or glass bottles.

## **Keeping in Touch and Working Together**

We understand that communication is key to the success of our partnership and there are many ways that we try to ensure you feel informed about all that we do with your child.

In Early Years and throughout the school we use the app 'Seesaw'. This is an excellent tool which has been proven to strengthen connections between home and school. It is an app which allows us to send messages as well as photos or videos of the children learning, we can also send photos of your child's work so you can log in and see it too. Anything shared will only be seen by the parents of the children each picture is relevant to. Your child's individual work will only be seen by you. We require additional consent to enable staff and families to access Seesaw. More information about this and access codes will be provided when your child starts.

The Early Years staff have a dedicated F1 email address which is checked regularly. This can be used to contact your child's teacher for not urgent messages. It is also a platform where photographs of your child's home learning can be shared.

In the Autumn and Spring term you will be invited to Parents' Evening to discuss your child's progress. In the Summer term you will be invited to a Work Celebration afternoon. This is when you can sit with your child and celebrate their achievements by looking at their work throughout the year. At the end of the summer term, a written report will be sent home.

Parent's are also invited to join us during significant times of the year such as the Christmas Nativity performance.

Above all, we are always on the other end of the phone should you have any queries or questions. Please just come and ask.

## **Supporting your Child's Learning at Home.**

Early in the Autumn Term, we will invite you to a Curriculum Evening, to explain the curriculum we follow in Early Years, and how phonics and maths are taught. This will provide an opportunity for you to see examples of work we do, resources we use and to ask any questions you may have.

For more information on how to support your child's learning at home please see our website.

## **Visits and Visitors**

We pride ourselves on providing an exciting, engaging and enriched curriculum. During the year, we take the children out on local trips and provide visitors who support and develop children's interests. At St. Peter's we are lucky as there are numerous places to take the children in the local area, and we take full advantage of our surroundings. We feel this enriches the children's learning, and is of course fun! We welcome any parents that want to help with these trips and prior to any visit we will ask for volunteers to accompany us.

## **Early Years Uniform**

Although it is not compulsory, we do have a uniform which parents can choose to buy. Many parents find this is a good option as learning in Early Years can often be a little messy! The local stockist of school uniform with our school crest on is 'Cains of Heswall'. For more information about our school uniform please visit the *Parents* → *Uniform* tab on our website.

We ask that all children come in sensible clothing, and footwear appropriate for weather conditions as the children will have access to the outdoors all year round. Please provide a pair of wellies and a light weight cagoule that can be left on your child's peg. We suggest that all children leave a change of underwear, socks and clothes on their peg in case of accidents.

Please ensure your child's clothes are labelled, as many children choose to wear school uniform and it can often be difficult to find lost items.

We ask that all children come to school wearing trainers on their designated PE/Games day. Your child's teacher will inform you which day this is early in the Autumn term.

No jewellery is to be worn in school for health and safety reasons.

## **Medication in School**

We require parents/carers to complete and sign an Administration of Medicines form with all relevant information appertaining to their child's medication and/or medical condition. If your child suffers from Asthma, we ask that an inhalers and one Spacer be provided for school. An Administration of Medicines form will need to be completed with dosage requirements. This can be downloaded from our school website. Please visit the *Parents* → *Administration of Medication* tab. Each child's inhaler will be clearly labelled with the child's name and the expiry date.

## **Head lice**

Unfortunately, as with all childcare settings nationally, we do have occasional outbreaks of headlice. We advise that you check your child regularly so that we keep on top of this situation. Children with long hair must have it tied back whilst with us.

## **Starting Compulsory School**

The children in our Early Years spend some time each day visiting the main school. In normal circumstances, all early years children visit the main school for lunch and have an allocated time each week to use the sports facilities in the main hall. They also attend significant collective worship times with the whole school. Although the Early Years children are immersed into school life at St Peter's, this doesn't automatically entitle them to a place in the school when they begin compulsory schooling. For more information on admission into the main school please visit our website *Parents* → *Administration of Medication* tab.

## Admissions and Funding

All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours Universal funding, starting the term after their third birthday. An additional 15 hours Extended funding is also available, subject to eligibility. **If you are eligible to claim the Extended 15 hours we will need your eligibility code and national insurance number.**

Born between these dates	Eligible for a free place
1 <sup>st</sup> April and 31 <sup>st</sup> August	1 <sup>st</sup> September following their 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday
1 <sup>st</sup> September and 31 <sup>st</sup> December	1 <sup>st</sup> January following their 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday
1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> March	1 <sup>st</sup> April following their 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday

If your child is not yet eligible for funding, or for any hours which exceed your funding entitlement, an invoice will be issued. The cost of each session is currently £15.00 and a full day is £33.75. (Lunch time is £3.75)

For more information and to check eligibility for 30 hours and to apply for a code to access the funding please visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

### **Lunch Club**

If your child is staying for Lunch Club and attends a morning session they should be picked up after lunch at 12.30pm. If they are attending an afternoon session they should be dropped off before lunch at 11.30am. Drop of and pick up during the day should be at the main school office.

If bringing a packed lunch, we recommend that a cool pack is placed inside your child's lunch box and **NO NUTS OR NUT PRODUCTS ARE INCLUDED IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH AS WE ARE A NUT-FREE SCHOOL.** Hot dinners are also available at an extra charge of £2.40 – please ask for more details.

## School Communications and Payments

### **Parent pay:**

In an attempt to remove all cash and cheques from Early Years and school we ask all parents to only use our e-payment method to pay for dinner money, trips etc. This can be done online using a very secure website called ParentPay.com. For more information please see our website. You will receive log in details for this early in the Autumn term.

**ParentPay is NOT to be used for payment of invoices for fees. Information about how to pay for session fees will be on your child's invoice.**

### Data Protection Information

During your child's time with us, we will gather and use information relating to you. Information that we hold in relation to individuals is known as their "personal data". This will include data that we obtain from you directly and data about you that we obtain from other people and organisations. Please see our website for more information *Parents → GDPR* You will be asked to give consent for school to hold this information via the google form sent directly to our parents.

## **How can I help my child when starting Early Years?**

Before your child starts with us, there are many ways in which you can make this transition as smooth as possible. Here are a few suggestions.

### **Practical Support**

- Help your child to develop the skills they need to be independent, such as getting used to playing with other children, beginning to dressing themselves, for example putting on their shoes and recognising their possessions such as their coats.
- Decide early who will be taking your child on their first day so they can know as soon as possible what will happen on the morning.
- Explain to children that although you will be gone for a little while, you will be back and plan a treat for the end of the day; it's likely they will be tired so a simple trip to the local park or their favourite dinner would be more than enough.

### **Emotional support**

- Talk positively to your child about starting Early Years, as well as listening to and acknowledging any anxious feelings or fears they may have.
- Help your child to build their confidence. For example, make sure they know that it is ok to ask to go to the toilet.
- If you are feeling worried, make sure you have someone to talk to so that your children don't pick up on any negative feelings – and remind yourself that it is perfectly normal to have a bit of the jitters yourself.
- Encourage them to be thoughtful about other children's feelings and try to remember to think about taking turns and sharing toys.
- If you sense your child will feel clingy and not want to leave you in fear they will miss out, let them know what you have planned for the day – the duller the better

**We do hope that we have been able to provide all the necessary information here and that many of your questions have been answered. If you have any questions or if you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact our school via email at our Early Years office [earlyyears@stpeters-heswall.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:earlyyears@stpeters-heswall.wirral.sch.uk) or our main school office at [schooloffice@stpeters-heswall.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@stpeters-heswall.wirral.sch.uk). Alternatively please phone 0151 342 9909 or 0151 342 2556**

**We look forward to welcoming your child to St. Peter's and hope you have a very long and happy association with our school.**