

Parent Information Booklet for New Starters





Welcome to St. Michael's Catholic Primary School

We understand how unusual the past few years have been and that many children may have missed time in educational settings. We have worked hard on our induction process to make sure you and your little ones can settle into school life happily. We hope this booklet will give some insight into what the first steps might look like for your child and give you some idea of key information you will need for September 2022.

A child's first weeks in school are an exciting and sometimes bewildering experience, this year more so than most. Come September children will have a relaxed and staggered start to their school life. This has been a real success over the past few years and has helped children settle quickly and happily. The gradual start to school will spread over 2 weeks and children will begin school full time on Tuesday 13th September.

Most children adapt relatively quickly and happily to this new and interesting environment but some can be a little overwhelmed. We will strive to make your child's entry to the school as easy and joyful as possible.

We hope that parents feel comfortable and happy to approach staff with any questions and queries during this transition time. We hope to meet all parents with their little one in the summer term before September 2022, ensuring you all are familiar with our staff and building. We hope that this booklet will help you become familiar with the school and the routine here at St Michael's.

Meet our Foundation Team



Hello everyone! My name is Miss Parkin, I will be your class teacher in September, and I am very excited to meet you all. One of my favourite things to do is spending as much time as I can with my family and friends. I also have a dog called Jake who I love taking to the beach for long walks. I hope you all have a wonderful summer, and I cannot wait to hear what you have all been up to! See you all very soon.



Hi all, my name is Mrs Spence and I will be your class TA. I can't wait to meet you all on your first day of school. I love spending time with my 2 young boys, we love to read and watch Disney books and films. We also enjoy spending time as a family at our caravan in Whitley Bay. I am very excited to start your learning adventure with you all 😊

Both Teacher and Teaching Assistants will liaise with parents and carers to support their child's individual needs. The Class F team are keen to build positive relationships with children and their parents and welcome regular consultation to talk about their child's development and progress.

Getting Ready for School

Uniform

- Round neck white or blue T-shirt – either from a supermarket or with the school logo available to order from school
- Plain navy shorts or jogging bottoms
- Plain navy round neck jumper – from supermarket or available to order with school logo from school.
- Black Velcro Trainers/Plimsolls (for outdoor use)

Children will not need to bring a bag to school and will be given a book bag to take story books home.

1. Clothes - Please label **all** items of clothing and shoes with your child's name to avoid missing items and confusion. If your child can recognise his/her own coat, hat, gloves etc. and put them on themselves, we will be delighted!
2. Changing - Our classroom extends to the outdoor environment and so children will be spending a lot of time exploring with water and mud outside. Although we have waterproof suits for the children to put on top of their uniform there are inevitable accidents – a spare set of clothes would be handy to keep in school. Children will also be changing into wellington boots regularly so **velcro shoes would be easiest** for children to change in and out of.
3. Outdoor clothes – Children will need to bring a pair of wellies, which can be kept in school for the year. We also ask that children have a bag of spare clothes that can be left in school- a small drawstring bag would be suitable. When spare clothes have been used school will send the messy clothes home in their spare clothes bag to be returned with a fresh set of spare clothes the next day.
4. Toilets - We expect children to be able to use the toilet independently – staff will not be able to assist the children with cleaning after toileting. We are aware that some children have accidents and staff will help your

child clean up as much as possible. We have some spare clothes in school but it would be helpful to bring a spare set of clothes for your child in a small bag. If school spares are used, please return the borrowed items of clothing, washed if possible.

5. Names – We would be so impressed if your child could recognise their own first and last name to identify their pegs/trays and items of clothing. Children will receive a welcome pack which contains a pencil and a name card. The name card has a picture of an animal which will match any name cards they have in school, ensuring children are able to identify their belongings easily.
6. Please ensure that the school has any information concerning speech, hearing and sight impairments and any other medical and dietary needs. This should be noted on the data collection sheet.
7. We always encourage children with long hair to wear it fastened back for school – for their own safety and for working purposes. Jewellery, earrings and nail varnish are **not** to be worn in school.



School Meals

- * School lunchtime menus are agreed between the school and the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust catering staff.
- * School meals include a portion of vegetables, which they are always encouraged to try.
- * You can select the meals you wish your child to have online for each week.
- * If you wish for your child to have a packed lunch, it should be a healthy meal and we encourage you to include some fruit or vegetable e.g. piece of fruit/fruit juice, dried fruit, cherry tomato, raw carrot, cucumber etc.
- * Sweets, sugary drinks and chocolate should not be included in packed lunches.
- * If possible, uneaten food is returned in the lunch box so that parents know what has been eaten.
- * All children in Foundation are able to have free school lunches each day under the Government initiative.
- * Parents will need to decide if they would like their child to be on packed lunch or school dinner.
- * If you wish to change to a packed lunch or school dinner please inform the school office – **this change can only be made for each half term.**
- * **When children bring their own snack or packed lunch into school it must not contain **nuts**, (including chocolate spread/nut butters) **prawns/shellfish** (including prawn flavoured crisps) due to allergies. **This also applies to packed lunches for school trips.****



Snack

- * Children are provided with a healthy snack in school each day. We have a set time to eat our snacks every morning.
- * You are welcome to provide a snack for your child if you wish - this must be a piece of fruit, dried fruit or a cereal bar and again **must not** contain nuts or shellfish.

Milk Money

- * Children will also have a circle time on an afternoon, where they will have some milk and a snack.
- * **We ask for a small donation of £0.50 - £1 each week for 'milk money.'**
- * This is to ensure all children can receive milk throughout the year and we will provide a range of different afternoon snacks to try – biscuits, breadsticks, crackers etc.
- * We will also use these donations to buy resources for the children to explore and use in their play.

Drinks Policy

- * Children are encouraged to drink sufficient water at school particularly after PE, active play and in hot weather.
- * Children **will be provided** with a school water bottle, which will be kept and washed in school.
- * Water fountains are available across the school for bottles to be refilled.



Weather

- * In Class F the classroom extends to the outdoor area and so we will be spending a lot of time outside.
- * Please bring in a pair of **wellington boots** for your child, which could be kept in school for the year, as well as a bag of spare clothes that can be kept in school.
- * In cold weather, please ensure your child has a warm hat, gloves, scarf and a warm coat.
- * In hot, sunny weather, please ensure your child has a sun hat and a labelled bottle of sun cream – children are not allowed to share sun cream.

- * We do have sun cream in school and will allow children to use the school sun cream if they do not have any – **please let us know if you do not wish your child to use the school sun cream.**
- * In sunny weather, if you have asked your child not to use school sun cream and have not provided sun cream, your child will have to stay inside for their safety.





Foundation Stage at St. Michael's

- * This September, children will have just over a week before they start the school day full time. This is to ensure children have a positive start to their new school. It gives staff and children invaluable time to get to know each other and settle into new routines.

Drop Off and Pick Up

- * At St. Michael's we have a 'relaxed start' to the school day. The school day begins at 8:50, however, gates are open between 8:30 and 8:55.
- * For Foundation Stage, the school day ends at 3:20 (KS2 children finish at 3:30 – if children have older siblings, they will finish together at 3:20 and can both be picked up from the Class F Garden.
- * The drop off and pick up point for Foundation Stage children is at the Foundation Garden.
- * When dropping off your child, they may become upset, please do not worry. The Class F Team are used to this and are well trained in how to settle children during this transition.
- * It is helpful for parents to leave their child with a member of staff quickly – the longer you stay the more difficult it is for the teacher to settle them and for your child to calm down.
- * Please try not to get upset yourself; if children are finding this transition difficult, the Class F team are more than happy to update parents once they have left. Most of the time children settle very quickly once parents have dropped them off and are happy to play and explore the environment.
- * Please encourage your child to put their belonging on their pegs independently.
- * Do not be surprised if at first your child returns home very tired and does not want to tell you everything they have done - this is normal. Children will use a lot of energy at school and will react to their new environment in different ways.
- * When you collect your child after school, please wait in the Foundation garden at 3:20pm where the class teacher will open the gate for parents to come to the Classroom door.
- * Children will stay seated on the carpet until a member of the Class F team calls their name; this is to ensure all children are passed over to their parents safely.

- * For safeguarding, parents are not allowed in the cloakroom during pick up and drop off.
- * Can we please ask that parents leave the Foundation garden once you have collected your child so that staff can secure the area once the last child has been collected and to take any of those who need it to Tea Club.

Breakfast Club and Tea Club

- * Breakfast club is available from 7:45 and costs £4. Breakfast will be served until 8:10.
- * Tea Club is available until 5:00pm Monday-Friday and costs £2/30 minutes.
- * Please book your child into Tea Club by 3pm the day before you wish to use it as booking will close.

Different Adult's Picking Up Children

- * If for any reason you need to alter your pick up arrangements, please inform the school i.e. if another adult is picking up a child, staff will not allow them to go if they do not know whom they are/ have not been informed.
- * If a new person is picking your child up from school staff will ask the child who you are before sending them home and if we were unaware of the new adult picking up we will phone the child's parent or guardian to check this arrangement.

Aspects of the Day

- * Throughout the day children will be exploring the indoor and outdoor classroom, taking part in small group circle times and story times and learning through play with peers and adults.
- * Children will also experience time in the school yard, we have a big and small yard in school. Foundation Stage children keep to the small yard, which is less crowded and less overwhelming.
- * Staff will take children onto the play equipment and yard at quieter times throughout the day.
- * At St. Michael's we have a unique lunch set up, we have to cross the road to get to there. We cross the road in pairs with 'walking feet, holding hands and listening ears.'

- * We use 'stop, look, listen, think,' to promote a good sense of road safety.
- * Children will cross the road with staff from Class F and, for the first few weeks, their buddy from Class 6.
- * Children will have 2 PE lessons each week with Miss Parkin or Mr Storey.

Buddies

- * To support the transition into school, children will be partnered up with a Year 6 buddy. This buddy will support play at break times, read to the children and become a good friend throughout their start to school. We have seen how well this buddy system has supported children's transition into school and helped them feel part of our St. Michael's school family.

Parental Involvement

- * After the first few weeks, we will invite parents to a drop in session or phone call appointment where you will be given the chance to chat to the staff about how your child has settled into life at St. Michael's.
- * Throughout the year we will invite parents to join the Class for a Stay and Play – to see what the classroom and what the children have been getting up to.
- * We hope to invite parents into school to join Foundation Class for a parental engagement half day in the summer term.
- * As a Catholic school, we will hold daily Collective Worship and pray together throughout the day.
- * Once in the school year we will invite parents to join us in Collective Worship for our class 'Stay and Pray' sessions – these will be shared online if we are unable to invite parents into the school building.
- * Classes also attend Mass throughout the year in the school chapel, which parents are invited to and information on mass times and dates are given throughout the year, through the school newsletter.

We have many opportunities throughout the year for parents to get involved and see what we are getting up to! There is a weekly Head Teachers email, the school website and the school Facebook page to keep an eye on to keep up to date on activities, events and dates.



The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years curriculum is taken from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage document, provided by the government. In this document it outlines the Early Learning Goals, which are statements of learning we expect children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage – the end of the Foundation Class year (July 2023).

The Early Learning Goals are divided into 7 areas of learning and development. These 7 areas shape the Early Years curriculum here at St. Michaels, details of our curriculum can be found on our website. Each of the 7 areas of learning are important and inter-connected.

There are 3 areas which are identified as being particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These 3 areas are called the **prime areas** and the remaining 4 areas are referred to as the **specific areas** of learning.

The 7 areas of learning and development

The prime areas of learning are:

- * Personal, Social and Emotional Development – *Managing feelings and interacting with peers.*
- * Communication and Language – *Using and understanding language.*
- * Physical Development – *Ability to use gross and fine motor skills.*

The specific areas of learning are:

- * Literacy – Comprehension, word reading and writing.
- * Mathematics – *Number and Numerical patterns.*
- * Understanding of the World – Looking at the past and present, people culture and communities and the natural world.
- * Expressive arts and design – Creating with materials and being imaginative and expressive in a range of ways.

All 7 areas of learning are taught through a mixture of child-led and adult-led learning experiences. The classroom environment is set up to support child-led playful learning experiences, through carefully resourced provision. These resourced areas enhance the learning of all 7 early learning goals. Learning takes place through enhancements to the environment, adult-led activities, small group and 1:1 learning experiences.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Alongside the Early Learning Goals are the Characteristics of Effective Learning which teachers will use to help assess and plan for children's learning. There are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Literacy in the Foundation Stage

Literacy is broken up into reading (split into comprehension and word reading) and writing. Both reading and writing is taught through daily systematic synthetic phonics sessions which begin after the baseline assessment period (around 2-3 weeks). At St. Michael's we use the Read Write Inc. scheme of work to deliver daily phonics sessions. Phonics teaches children to read and write through learning letter sounds in stages.

The stages of reading are as follows:

1. Communication and Language
2. Sound recognition
3. Reading VC/CVC words
4. Reading captions
5. Reading simple sentences + Tricky Words
6. Reading age appropriate phonics based books

The stages of writing are as follows:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development - Gross and Fine motor skills – developing pencil grip and movement in the wrist and fingers.
3. Writing names – We write names on a daily basis in the first term.
4. Forming new letter sounds
5. Writing CVC words
6. Writing captions
7. Writing simple sentences + tricky words.

Mathematics in the Foundation Stage

Mathematics is taught using our school curriculum, which has been developed with the children's needs in mind, the Early Learning Goals and White Rose Maths as a supporting scheme.

The stages of learning in Mathematics are as follows:

1. Communication and language
2. Number sense – Understanding quantity
3. Number representation and recognition (Counting, matching numerals and amounts)
4. Shape and spatial awareness
5. Measurement – comparing and communicating about size
6. Patterns – recognising and creating
7. Addition and subtraction with quantities and objects
8. Problem solving – halving, doubling and sharing amounts

RE

- * In Class F we have 2 sessions of RE every week.
- * We follow the 'Come and See' scheme of work – which covers 11 topics throughout the year including 2 other faiths.
- * We gather daily for prayer/collective worships in school. Collective worships are where the children gather as a group (class, KS1 or whole school) to reflect and rejoice in prayer in preparation for the day ahead.

P.E

- * Children will have two P.E. sessions a week.
- * In PE children develop many skills within the prime areas of learning. Children develop their gross motor, communication and collaboration skills.

When children are playing in the classroom environment, it is the role of the adult to mould those playful experiences into learning opportunities. Adults will observe and interact with children's play. Staff can then plan enhancements and learning opportunities to support and challenge children's development and progression. Children are assessed throughout the year and parents will be kept informed of their progress and development through midterm reports and parents evenings.

The Classroom Environment

The classroom in the Foundation Stage has been considered to be the second teacher. It is an essential part of the curriculum, as it offers a wealth of learning opportunities for children. It is the main tool staff use to challenge children's learning and development. It is carefully planned for and adapted throughout the year.

The classroom environment consists of the indoor and outdoor areas, both of which are of equal importance. Children can explore, experiment and develop their own interests and skills through a mixture of child-led learning and planned adult-led learning.

Each area in the classroom is equipped with provision, which is enhanced throughout the year to ensure the promotion of a range of skills and learning opportunities, for children to meet all 7 Early Learning Goals.

Areas of the outdoor classroom:

- * Sand Pit
- * Mud Kitchen
- * Water Area
- * Garden Area
- * Construction Area
- * Den Building Area
- * Role Play – wooden hut, bikes and car
- * Large writing equipment
- * We are also developing a range of enhancement boxes, which will support learning for motor skills, investigation, problem solving and reading/researching.

Areas of the Indoor Classroom:

- * Creative area – painting and DT
- * Sand/water area
- * Playdough area
- * Maths investigation area

- * Book and puppet area
- * Small construction area – Duplo/Bricks & Lego/Mobilo
- * Jigsaw and games area
- * Small world and blocks area
- * Mark making area
- * Home role play area

Ready Set Go!

Here are some things you can help your child with before September to help them prepare.

- ★ Support your child's independence – going to the toilet, getting dressed, putting on shoes, eating and solving simple problems. Encourage your child to resolve problems by talking when they don't understand or something isn't going well. It is important that they know when to ask an adult for help.
- ★ Social Skills – Practise having conversations, sharing toys and playing with other children where possible.
- ★ Help them recognise their name
- ★ Share stories and talk about them together
- ★ Practise some fine motor skills – building with Lego, using scissors and threading beads onto string.
- ★ Help practise following instructions

