



St Helen's CE Primary School Cliffe

Starting Reception
Useful information for parents & carers



St Helen's Church of England Primary School

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Cliffe

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Welcome to Reception at St Helen's

Firstly, we'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a very warm welcome to St Helen's Church of England Primary School. We hope that this booklet will give you all the information you may need to help you through the process of your child starting full-time schooling in Reception. As a school, we operate an open-door policy, should you wish to contact us with any queries or concerns, please feel free to contact us via the School Office.

At St Helen's our EYFS staff plan and deliver an exciting, creative and engaging curriculum through the use of both indoor and outdoor learning environments. We strive to deliver the EYFS curriculum through a holistic approach, with a large emphasis on child-led play, where each child's unique interests are considered. With our Christian Values at our core, we support and encourage children to be resilient, curious, inclusive and kind thus equipping them with the vital skills that they will use throughout their future school-life.

School Staff

Head Teacher	Mrs A. Kember
Assistant Head	Miss N. Scanlon
EYFS Teacher	Mrs J.Lane
EYFS Teaching Assistant	Mrs F. Hansen
School SENCo	Mrs E. Le Mar
School Office Co-ordinator	Mrs S. Mead

Reception Times

Drop-off

Between 8.40 – 8.55 am
Gates are closed at 8.55am

Collection

The end of the school day is 3.10pm for EYFS and KS1 and 3.15pm for KS2.

Adverse Weather Conditions

Two ways to check if the school is closed due to adverse weather:-

1. School Website: www.sthelens.medway.sch.uk
2. You will receive a message from School Comms, if you have downloaded the App.

Starting Reception

Starting Reception can be a great adventure but it can also be new and frightening for young children with unfamiliar adults and children as well as new surroundings to explore. Before starting Reception there will be an opportunity for parents and children to become familiar with the environment at a social meeting.

We acknowledge that each child is an individual and may take some time to adapt to Reception, whereas others may involve themselves confidently from the start.

If we feel that your child needs the presence of a familiar adult for a longer period of time, we will discuss this with you. The class teacher is responsible for the overall wellbeing of your child when at school and will work closely with you, as parents, to help your child feel confident, safe and familiar with the Reception environment.

Please be prompt to collect your child at the end of the school day; school finishes at 3.10pm. Children can become very anxious if they feel they have been 'forgotten'. If you are unavoidably delayed, please telephone the school office so that we can reassure your child until you arrive.

Please make sure that we know who is collecting your child at all times, especially if it is not you. In an emergency, please telephone the school. No Reception child should be brought to or collected from school by another child.

Reception Entrance

We have our own gate into the school grounds which will lead you across the KS1 playground and to the entrance to our Reception classroom. This gate will be locked at 8.55am and remain locked whilst the children are in school. If you arrive at school after 8.55am, please bring your child to the School Office.

Large apparatus and other resources are occasionally left outside, in the EYFS garden, at the end of the school day, please ensure that your children, including siblings, do not use this equipment when you are dropping off or collecting your child. This is for Health & Safety reasons.

No dogs are allowed on the premises and the whole school site is a non-smoking area.

Fruit & Milk

Snack time is a very sociable time and is an enjoyable part of our daily morning routine. Milk is provided free for every Reception child under the age of 5. Once your child has had their fifth birthday you will need to register and pay for milk. This can be done through the Cool Milk website <https://www.coolmilk.com>. Children are encouraged to bring a **named, clear water bottle with a sports cap** into school which they can access throughout the school day. Please ensure you provide your child with water only; flavoured water, squash, juice or other drinks are not permitted. School logo water bottles are available to purchase at the office for the cost of £2. Fruit is provided daily under the 'Free Fruit Scheme' and includes the option of apples, bananas, pears, satsumas, tomatoes, cucumbers or carrots to name a few.



School Uniform

School uniform that is branded with the St Helen's school badge can be purchased from Uniformbase in Chatham. There is an online ordering facility on their website www.uniformbase.co.uk. However, please note that 'branded' school uniform is completely optional and plain, royal blue cardigans and jumpers are also accepted. These can be purchased from any major supermarket or high street clothing shop.

Please ensure all of your child's uniform and PE kit (including shoes) are labelled with their full name.

Reception Uniform is to include the following:

Grey skirt or pinafore
Grey trousers or shorts for summer (optional)
White polo shirt
Blue dress for summer (optional)
Royal blue sweatshirt or cardigan
White or dark grey socks
Black school shoes

We ask that all children bring a pair of named wellie boots into school in September. These will remain in school throughout the year and will be used when children are in the outdoor area when the weather is wet and for use in the mud kitchen area.

All children need a suitable and waterproof coat as we play and learn outdoors every day, in all weathers! In hot weather, please ensure your child brings a named sun hat.

PE Kit

PE lessons are an important part of our weekly routine as they encourage children to learn and develop new skills such as travelling in a variety of ways, negotiating space around them, jumping and landing safely as well as enjoying fun and competitive team games. PE kit can be brought into school in September and will remain in school for the duration of each half term. Kit will then be sent home to be washed and must be returned for the first day of the new term. Whilst we will take every effort to ensure that children without PE kit can borrow spare clothes to join in, there is no guarantee we will have enough kit or the correct size for your child. Children who do not have PE kit or cannot be provided with spares may not be able to join in with the lesson for that day, depending on the activity planned.

Please also ensure that any jewellery, including earrings, are removed on PE days and that long-hair is tied back. Staff are not permitted to remove children's earrings, children wearing earrings on PE days may not be permitted to join in, depending on the activity for Health and Safety purposes.

Please ensure that your child has the following, named items in their PE kit:

White polo top or t-shirt

Navy blue or black shorts

Navy blue or black tracksuit bottoms and jumper (important for winter months as PE may still take place outdoors)

Black plimsoles or trainers

White or grey socks

Other information regarding clothing

Aprons are provided for art & craft, water play, cooking activities and messy play. A small amount of clothes are available for changing in case of toileting accidents or very wet or messy activities. Should you wish to bring a spare change of clothes and/or underwear for your child, please ensure everything is labelled with your child's name, this can then be left on their peg in class. Please note that this is optional and entirely up to you.

Messy Play

At St Helen's we encourage children to explore and learn through play and we believe that 'Messy Play' is a enjoyable, exciting and sensory opportunity for children to have fun, take risks and learn through real-life scenarios. We have a large 'mud kitchen' and digging area where children love creating mud pies, a large water play area which is used throughout the year, an indoor sensory tuff spot that usually features sand, shaving foam, powder paint or other 'messy' material as well as painting and playdough to name just a few of the activities on offer. We will, of course, ensure that children wear aprons for water play & painting, wellies for digging and take every precaution that 'messy play' does not get too out of hand. Nevertheless, we advise parents to remember that children will occasionally come home with 'messy' uniforms.

Toys

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home into school. They invariably get lost or broken as other children want to share them and use them and this is more upsetting for your child than leaving it safely at home. However, objects of general interest or those that are linked to our termly topics are very welcome and children are encouraged to bring these into class to share.

Attendance and Punctuality

It is vital that your child attends school at the correct time every day unless they are unwell or there is another valid reason for absence. Holidays will not be authorised in line with the Government initiative to reduce holiday absence during term times. Please ensure that your child arrives on time for every session. Persistent lateness will mean that your child is missing out on important teaching and learning opportunities.

Administration and Absences

Please ensure that we have an up to date address and telephone numbers for your child at all times. We also need an additional contact number in case we cannot reach you. Please complete and return all forms as soon as possible to the school office.

The school should be notified of all absences. Please email the school office or send a school comms message on the first day of absence for illness.

Please keep your child at home if they are unwell and inform us of any contagious diseases e.g. chicken pox or measles. We would also like to be advised of any outbreaks of head lice so that we can advise other parents to check their child's hair.

After sickness and / or diarrhoea – your child should be kept at home for a clear 48 hours after their last episode.

As a school, we do not administer medicine in school. However, we will hold asthma inhalers and ask you to complete an asthma administration form. If staff have to administer an asthma inhaler, a note will be made on an individual log sheet for your child only and the parent will be asked to sign at the end of the day. If a parent needs to come into school to administer medication, this will also be recorded on a separate sheet for your child.

The class teacher and one Teaching Assistant currently hold a Paediatric First Aid Certificate and all staff are first aid trained. Any minor injuries will be treated and written into an accident book and parents will be informed.

If an injury occurs that appears to require immediate medical attention other than a plaster or cold compress, parents will be contacted immediately by telephone.

Toilet Training

Whilst we encourage children to be fully toilet trained when starting Reception, we also understand that some children may experience some difficulties with this and appreciate that every child develops at their own pace. If your child is experiencing any problems with toilet training, there will be an opportunity for parents to discuss this with the class teacher during a Home Visit in September.

Additional Help with Special Educational Needs

Should you have any concerns or information with regards to your child's development we encourage you to please share this with us and we will do the same with you. Information relating to your child's speech, sight, hearing or a diagnosis of a medical condition or statement of special educational needs is very useful to have at school and will help staff to plan and aid your child's transition into school. Early intervention programmes, such as the Nuffield Early Language Intervention and speech therapy, can be delivered in school by trained staff. If we feel that your child would benefit from the support of any external agencies, we will have a conversation with you and outline the reasons why we believe this and the next steps that we recommend.

[Behaviour at St Helen's](#)

Good behaviour is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place. At St. Helen's we believe that discipline is primarily about the development of an individual's sense of responsibility for himself/herself, and tolerance towards other people. Through our four Christian values of Love, Friendship, Perseverance and Trust we aim to teach the children in a positive way how to behave within the school. This can best be achieved by school, parents and children working in partnership. We also believe that every adult and child in our school community has the right to exist in a safe and secure environment without fear of prejudice, violence (including bullying) or discrimination.

Further information can be found in our Behaviour Policy which can be downloaded from the school website.

[Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)

St. Helen's Church of England Primary School recognises our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, governors, leaders, parents, families, and learners) are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and have an essential role to play in making this community safe and secure.

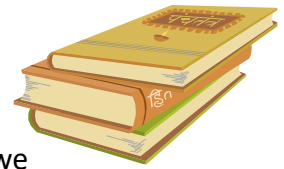
We also recognise the importance of providing an ethos and environment within school that will help children to be safe and feel safe. In our school children are respected and encouraged to talk openly. All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.

All Schools follow agreed local procedures where concerns arise. Our Head Teacher, Mrs Kember, is the designated safeguarding lead to whom staff report concerns. This would usually result in a conversation with parents to ascertain background information unless we believe a child to be in danger of physical harm – in which case a referral is immediately made to Medway Council Children's Services. School have "a duty of care" to all pupils and we hope that you will support us in achieving this important task.

Further information can be found in our Safeguarding policy which can be downloaded from the school website.

[Home Loan Book Schemes](#)

It is vital for young children to share books, tell stories and be read to in order to develop early reading skills. We have a large collection of reading books in school with titles from the Oxford Reading Tree as well as Dandelion Readers, Floppy Phonics and more. In Reception, we initially change children's reading books once a week to allow children time to become familiar with the process and to develop early story-telling skills and to extend their vocabulary. Further into the year, when children have a better understanding and knowledge of segmenting and blending (sounding out words to read them) through the use of daily Phonics lessons, children's books will be changed three times a week. As a school we encourage children to read three times a week, as a minimum and record this in the blue reading record. Children are awarded certificates for every thirty reads completed at home and have a chance at winning prizes at the end of every half term.



It is important that children are taught how to look after books; to handle them carefully and to keep them safe from younger siblings and pets. A school book bag can be purchased from the school uniform supplier Uniformbase in Chatham.

Learning in Reception

Lessons and activities are carefully planned around a new and exciting topic for each half-term. Topic overviews provide useful information about some of the activities and learning children will be engaging with in school. These will be sent home and are also put onto the EYFS section of the school website, you may also wish to use these to further support your child's learning at home.

Our current topics are as follows:

- Term 1 – 'Marvellous Me'
- Term 2 – 'Celebrations'
- Term 3 – 'People Who Help Us'
- Term 4 – 'We're on the move'
- Term 5 – 'Down at the bottom of the garden'
- Term 6 – 'Under the Sea'

Whole-school termly newsletters are also sent home with important news and dates.

Speech & Language Link Interventions

In Reception we use the Speech & Language Link programmes. These are programmes for children in Reception (4-5 years) designed to support children with speech & language and early literacy skills. The programmes involve a trained teaching assistant providing short small-group and individual teaching sessions to around 3-6 pupils throughout the year. They will be delivered during the school day by Mrs Hansen, our teaching assistant. Mrs Hansen will work with a small group, following a structured programme of songs, stories and listening & learning

activities.

Transition to Year One

Whilst this seems like a lifetime away, your child's time with us in Reception will fly by and they will soon be ready for Year One. At the end of their time in Reception, the children are able to visit their new classroom and teacher ahead of the new academic year.

During your child's time in Reception, detailed records of progress are kept. You will be provided with an "End of Year School Report." You will, of course, be welcome to discuss the contents of the report in the term before your child moves into Year One. There will also be opportunities throughout the year to discuss your child's progress at school and any concerns you or your child's teacher may have at termly Parent's evening meetings.

You will also receive the option to download your child's online Learning Journal through Tapestry. Tapestry is an online platform in which we post pictures, videos and comments detailing your child's learning experiences whilst in Reception.

Finally

We hope that you have found this booklet helpful and that it has provided you with all the information you needed. If you have any questions or require any further information then feel free to reach out to us. Reception staff are available at the beginning and end of each school day and are always more than happy to talk to parents.

We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to St Helen's Reception class!

Mrs Lane and the Reception Team