



Starting School at Downview



Parents' Information Handbook The Early Years

Downview Primary School 2016-2017

Welcome to Downview Primary School

We hope this handbook will give you some helpful information and advice as your child prepares to begin school life. We would like to provide you with information about the learning that takes place in the Early Years / Reception Classes and some of the ways in which we can work together to help your child settle confidently into school.

You will always be welcome in our school and we wish that the time you and your child share with us will be a happy one. Please see us as the need arises to ask us any questions and together we can iron out any little concerns.

We look forward to developing a close partnership with you in the education of your child.

We believe that young children learn best when they:

- feel happy and secure
- are having fun and are excited about their learning
- learn through play
- see the relevance to what they are learning

**At Downview School
we grow and learn together every day**



Home - School Links

Nursery liaison

During May and June, we made contact with our local Nursery schools and Preschools to commence liaison for the children due to attend Downview.

Welcome Day

The welcome day on **Wednesday 6th July** is an opportunity for your child to familiarise themselves with the class environment in the **Summer Term**. They will be able to meet the staff, other children in the class and make new friends.

To aid a smooth start to this day we have staggered the start and finish times for the children. **Please refer to your letter in your child's book bag for their start and finish time.**

Meet the Teacher

As your child enters school for the first time as a four year old, we wish to ensure that they will be confident and secure in their new environment. You will be invited to meet your child's teacher and one of our teaching assistants in order to get to know you and your child in their **new and exciting school** setting.

This meeting will be on either **5th or 6th or 7th September**.

This will enable you to share your knowledge of your child's development, personality and interests so that we become more familiar with them and their needs and for you to provide vital information for us to then plan to build upon their personal developments.

This will also be an opportunity for you, the parent, to ask questions and find out more about our school. During your visit we would like to take photos of things that are special to your child; e.g. a favourite toy, a photo, something they are proud of. We will then place these into their learning journey books and talk about these when they begin school.

The visit will form an important beginning to the Home-school partnership, which we will value throughout your child's time at Downview.

Please refer to your letter in your child's book bag for the appointment time for your Meet the Teacher session.



I was happy when I met my new teacher. I showed my barbies that I like to play with. I also played with the duplo in my new classroom.

Starting School in September

To introduce your child to school, for the first two days they will attend school initially for the morning, gradually increasing the time spent in school. This will give them an opportunity to become accustomed to school life, make friends within a small group and also for the teachers and teaching assistants to get to know the children and to give every child the appropriate attention to know where everything is and to settle in.

Thursday 8 th September	9.00 - 12.00
Friday 10 th September	9.00 - 1.30 (including lunch either free school meal or packed lunch)

Your child's first full day at school will be on:
Monday 12th September 2016.

Getting ready for school!

As parents you are your child's first educators. With your help your child has learned to walk, talk, play and enjoy the world around them. Although starting school is a big step for children to take, you can make it a happy experience by helping your child to look forward to starting school.

As a four year old, your child will be beginning to develop independence. We would welcome your support in helping your child master some of the skills that will make their start in school easier. Please could you help your child to learn:

- To dress and undress themselves. Please teach your child to cope with buttons and zips and to do up their shoes. (Velcro fastenings help. PLEASE avoid laces until they can tie them up themselves.)
- To be able to part from you happily; most children will have attended a nursery and playgroup. **If your child is not used to being left regularly, please try to encourage this.**
- To go to the toilet independently and wash and dry their hands (especially using a hand drier)
- To blow their own noses with a tissue.
- To use a knife and fork and carry their dinner plate to the table.
- To sit at a table and open lunch boxes, sandwich containers, bananas, crisp packets etc.
- To play with children of the same age, to share toys and resources and to think of others.
- To listen to other adults and children.
- To follow simple instructions and tasks.
- To help to tidy up.

Which group will be the top tidiers?

Starting School

The first few days and weeks of school are very tiring for many children as they are learning to adapt to different routines. In a typical busy session your child will have the opportunity to take part in many activities:

- Talking and sharing news and ideas
- Counting and sorting activities
- Drawing, mark making, writing
- Construction activities
- Sand and water activities
- Painting, collage, model making, play dough
- PE including dance, gymnastics and games activities
- Dressing up
- Role play area, puppet theatre
- Listening to and sharing stories
- Singing and playing instruments
- Riding bikes and scooters
- Playing with other children
- Discovering new things
- Reading



It is important that your child has some rest at the end of the school day, and if possible some individual time with you to talk about their day and some of the new experiences and new friends they have made; however, please understand if your child is not very forthcoming as they do so many activities in a session it may be too many things to recall!

The School Day

We open our doors at **8.40 a.m.**, at first for you to bring your child into the classroom. All children enter through the same door. (Follow the building around, past main Reception)

Please leave buggies outside the building. As you will appreciate we cannot have buggies in the reception classrooms as the children sit and play on the floor area throughout the unit.

Our school day begins at **8.50 a.m.**

When the children arrive in the morning they will;

- Self register by putting their photograph up on the wall.
- Hang up their coat and PE bag on their named peg.
- Put their named water bottles in their class Water Bottle Trays; there is a tray marked for boys and a tray for girls.
- Put their book bag in their named drawer.
- If you have not chosen a school meal then put their lunch boxes on their class lunch box shelf, (when they are full-time and if they are having a packed lunch.)



We know this seems a lot for them to remember but, with our encouragement, the children will pick it up very quickly!

Please encourage your child to be more independent by hanging up their own coat and putting their book bag in their drawer, etc., as then **they** will know exactly where to get their things throughout the day.

PLEASE name **all** of your child's uniform, coats, PE kit, water bottles, lunch box etc. as we have more upset about lost jumpers, where the name has washed out, than anything else!!

Please encourage your child to choose an activity once they have put all their things away. In each area there are questions to stimulate the children's learning; please read them to challenge your child. Once your child is settled, say goodbye, reassure them that you will be back later and leave promptly.

Letters to go home are either sent by parent mail or put in the children's drawers, or if urgent put in their book bags. **Please check your child's drawer regularly.**

Food and Drink

Drinks



Please provide your child with a named water bottle. Please make sure these are filled with only water and bought in daily. Fizzy drinks and glass bottles are not allowed in school. Children may drink fruit squash with their lunch only and not in their water bottle throughout the day. Milk is free for under 5's **but you will need to order it.**



Snacks

FREE fruit will be provided for all the children to eat in the classroom during the morning.

Children may also bring in a piece of fruit or vegetable for a snack for the afternoon and put it in a container in their drawer. Please **do not provide** biscuits, sweets or chocolate for snacks.

Lunchtimes

All children in Reception are entitled to free school meals, these have been very popular and provide the children with a balanced hot meal.



Children do not have to eat a hot meal every day; your child can have a mixture of hot meals and packed lunches.

Children are supervised and cared for by our mid-day meals team. All the Reception children sit together at lunchtimes with our Year 6 Play Leaders who also support our young children with playground activities and games. Children eating school meals sit alongside children eating packed lunches. May we remind you that all packed lunches **should not contain any nuts.**



Playtimes

In addition to their lunchtime, the children have a morning playtime and are supervised by our teachers and teaching assistants.

The Reception children have their own fenced playground which is accessible to them alone.

Assemblies

We place great value on developing the whole child and therefore assemblies are an important part of school life. Our assemblies are planned to enhance social, moral and spiritual development. Our Early Years children are introduced to assemblies through a gradual introduction during the Autumn Term.

The end of the day

Our school day ends at 3.20 p.m. **The teacher or teaching assistant** will open their classroom doors and call each child when she sees their parent or carer. The children will not be released until an appointed adult is there to receive them. If a different person is to collect your child **please let us know** preferably in person or by a letter at the beginning of the day.

The New Foundation Stage Curriculum from September 2016

The curriculum for the **Foundation** stage underpins, like the foundations of a house, all future learning. The new curriculum consists of 3 prime areas necessary for children to learn and develop healthily.

- The **prime areas** begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in other areas.

Personal, social and emotional development

Communication and Language

Physical development



- The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

Literacy

Mathematics

Expressive Arts and Design

Understanding the world

- The Unique Child reaches out to relate to people and things through the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, which permeate through all areas of learning.

Playing and Exploring

Active Learning

Creating and Thinking critically



1 Personal, social and emotional development

Providing opportunities for each child to feel they are a valued member of the class and school so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted.

Social Skills

Providing opportunities that enable children to learn how to co-operate, to care, share, make friends and work alongside each other and to listen to each other.

Positive attitude towards learning

Through encouraging enthusiasm for knowledge and learning.

Developing each child's confidence and the ability to try and have a go at new activities.

Attention skills and persistence

Developing the children's capacity to concentrate on their learning, their play, or within group tasks and developing good listening skills.

2. Communication and Language

Talking

Encouraging children to ask questions, say what they think, responding to adults and to each other, to practise and extend the range of vocabulary and communication skills they use and to listen carefully. Learning **letter sounds** and applying these when spelling and reading.

3. Physical Development

Through opportunities for all children to develop and practise their fine motor skills, hand eye co-ordination, e.g. pencil control and gross motor skills, large body movement and to increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe.

We have PE lessons each week, Gymnastics, Dance or Games throughout the year. All the children in Reception are given a school drawstring bag for their PE kits.

Please send in PE kits on a **Monday** and take them home each **Friday**.

The PE kit is: plain white or logo T-Shirt, blue or black shorts, trainers, blue or black tracksuit/ jogging bottoms and a sweatshirt (only for outside use when cold)



No earrings or jewellery- Please note that earrings may be taped only for the first 6 weeks after being pierced. After this date the children need to remove their earrings (or parents remove before school) for P.E.; in accordance with the WSCC Safety Policy.

We are currently developing our Woodland School, the children will be learning in this outside environment so we would please ask that you provide your children with a pair of named wellington boots to keep in school.

Reading and writing

Through opportunities for all children to explore, enjoy, play, learn about and use words and text in a wide range of contexts and to experience a rich variety of books. We are developing confident writers using Jolly Phonics to sound out words. We write using all different materials, e.g. corn flour, chalk, paint

Mathematics

Through opportunities for all children to develop their understanding of number, measurement, pattern, shape and space by providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, learn, practise skills and enjoy.

Understanding the world

Through opportunities for all the children to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts, and to explore and find out about their environment and people and places that have significance in their lives.

Expressive Arts and Design

This includes opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, music, dance and imaginative role-play activities.

Our Early Years/Reception Classes

Our Early Years classrooms are situated in a large, semi-open plan area at the front of the school. It is mainly carpeted with areas of lino for creative work, sand and water play. There are sinks for hand washing and for children to take responsibility for washing their own paint pots, brushes etc. There are boys and girls toilets adjacent to the area.

The Early Years/Reception area is broadly arranged in the following areas for learning:

- **Classrooms** with word walls, sound walls, number lines and Book corners.
- **Creative Area** - where the children have access to a variety of pens, crayons and white boards to develop writing, drawing and colouring skills.
- **Maths drawers** with a variety of equipment to support counting, weighing and measuring etc.
- **Discovery Area** providing access for magnifiers, mirrors and information books and **Computers / Learn Pads** - to develop Computing skills
- **Construction Area** for making models, painting and drawing
- **Music and Dance Corner**
- **Small world**, imaginative toys
- **Interactive Whiteboards** for use by both children and staff
- **Puppet Theatre** -to develop language skills
- **Home Corner** for language and social development
- **Role Play Area** - a topic related role-play
- The **Outside Area** is fenced, this area reflects, supports and enhances the indoor learning areas. It has a gardening area, mud kitchen, blackboard, whiteboard, water tray, sand tray, music area, outside Role Play, bikes, scooters and a wide range of other equipment.



Health and Safety

Illness at school:- If your child is unwell during the school day they will be looked after by staff who are trained in first aid. If your child is considered unfit for school, you will be contacted and asked to collect them. If your child is sick we ask you to keep them at home for 48 hours to prevent the sickness spreading - thank you in advance for your support with this.

Asthma:- If your child needs an inhaler, please complete a medical form and label the inhaler clearly with your child's name and give it to the class teacher. It is often sensible to obtain one inhaler for school and one for home, which avoids problems at the weekends if the inhaler has been left at school!

Bumps and cuts

If your child hurts themselves at school our trained staff will look after them. You will be informed at the time should the first aider feel this is necessary. Should your child receive a bump on the head the school will inform you either by telephone or in a note sent home.



Please ensure that your home address, telephone number, place of work and emergency contacts are always kept up to date.

Our school nurse is available for you to meet with. Please call in at the office should you wish to arrange a confidential time to talk to her.

Helping your child

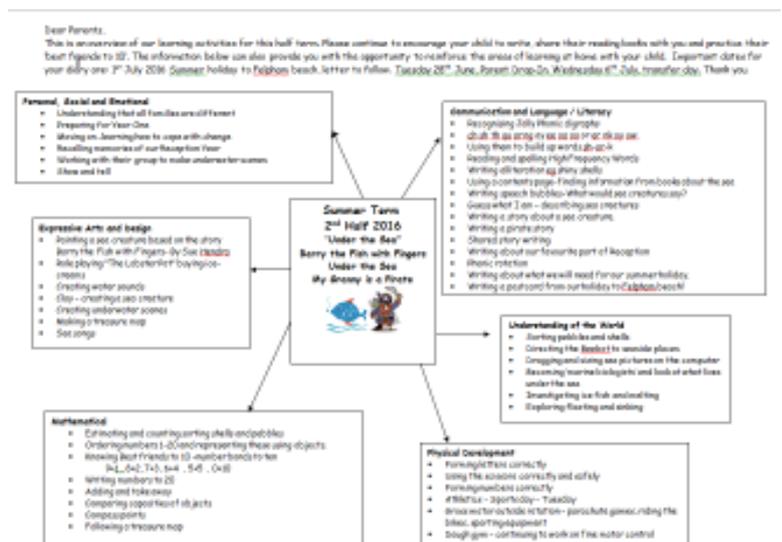
At school

We look forward to welcoming parent helpers into the school. Many aspects of school life could not take place without parental help and your support is greatly valued. Please contact the teachers if you are able to spare a little time to help.

At home

Giving your child the opportunity to talk and discuss the activities they are doing in school is an important way of supporting their learning.

An example of a topic overview: Each half term we send home a topic plan so you can see what your child is to be learning in school so that you may be able to send in something of interest. We also send home suggested games/activities you may like to do at home to support your child's learning.



We also send "Messages from home" for you to fill in to tell us special things your child does at home.

Did you know

Tom rode his bike without stabilisers.

June 2015

News from home

Learning:

To make learning both fun and REAL we like to invite visitors in to school and to arrange trips related to their learning so the children can learn through first-hand experience. We will be asking for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of each of these activities, as there are no additional funds in school available to subsidise these. If parents are able to pay but do not, the activity may not go ahead. Should any parents experience financial difficulties, we would ask that you contact the school in the strictest confidence. We also welcome the children bringing in items from home to support their learning.#3

Support with reading, writing and maths:

This will be further explained at the reading / writing / maths workshop. Once your child has some understanding of sounds and knows the Oxford Reading tree characters, they will bring home a reading book. Until then your child will bring home a "Chatterpack" - a book with discussion prompts or Activity Packs based around our Reading scheme, including a CD of the story and suggested activities. Your child will have a reading diary for **both teachers and parents** to write supportive comments to help develop your child's reading skills. Your child will also have the opportunity to bring home a maths game to play.

SPECIAL DATES

All Reception Parents and Carers will be invited to an evening **Reading Writing and Maths Workshop** on

Tuesday 4th October 2016 at 7:00p.m.

in order that we can explain in more detail how we teach basic literacy and maths skills to young children and how you can support your child's learning at home. Please put this date in your diary, even if you have attended something similar before as there have been numerous changes compared to previous years.

On **Tuesday 18th October 2015 at 1:30pm** we would like to invite you to our **6 weeks in Afternoon tea.**

We will review your child's start to school and you will have an opportunity to meet with us and with other organisations which help and support us with your child's learning such as the West Sussex Library Service, School Nurse and the Children and Family Centre. We will then bring your child into the hall where we will all be able to share an afternoon tea.

We strongly believe that children develop and learn best when parents and school work together; we hope you will be able to support these workshops.

Throughout the year there will be opportunities to celebrate your child's learning through drop-ins, assemblies and parent's evenings. The children will receive "Next Steps" every term detailing their development and strategies for supporting their learning at home.

We hope you have found this booklet useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or if you wish to share anything you think may affect your child in school.

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet.