

**Welcome to
St Augustine's
Reception Class**



Welcome to St Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Nursery. If your child is to join us soon we know that this will be the beginning of a very happy time for you and your child. If you already have a child at the school, we are pleased to renew your acquaintance.

Beginning school is a major event in the life of a child. There will be lots of new things to learn and of course you will want to ensure that your child is well prepared for this important event. We aim to make it a happy and memorable experience.

You will probably find that your child settles into school life quickly and finds out all that they need to know.

However, there may be things that you, as a parent, want to know about too.

This booklet will provide helpful information.

However if you have any questions or areas you would like to know more about, please ask. The school office is a good point

of contact to start with; if they can't help, they will know who can.



The change from home to school can be difficult for some children. If you as parents can prepare your child for this change, you will be sending us a confident, independent and happy child ready to learn!

How Can I Help My Child Prepare for School?

Staff are often asked what parents can do to help at home.

One of the best things to do is give your child **'time and talk.'** This means just being there to do those little things in life and chat about anything. Getting your child ready for school does not mean you have to 'push them' into formal activities like sitting at a table and writing. They can learn the skills they need through playful activities. Always remember that learning should be fun. You will help your child to be ready if they can start school with confidence and be able to mix socially with friends. If your child is emotionally settled and calm then they will be more able to cope with a long, and sometimes tiring, day.

Encourage your child to be as independent as possible even if it takes far longer for them to get ready. Your child will need to be able to manage basic self care. Start now to encourage your child to dress themselves and put their coat on. Get your child to put on their own pyjamas. Take time in the morning to show them how to dress for school. They will soon learn how to dress if you are patient and give them lots of opportunities to practise.



Get them used to a routine of reasonably early to bed and up early enough for you and your child to have a stress free time to get ready for school. As part of your routine, it's a good idea to have a vocal cue to let your child know that it's bedtime. "Time for sleep now", "Goodnight, sleep tight" or some other repetitive saying will tell your child it's time to settle to sleep. Use this mantra instead of begging or pleading with your child, as discussions can engage your child and actually decrease the chance of sleep.

Don't permit your child to fall asleep watching TV or DVDs in bed - if you need to, remove the TV/DVD player from the bedroom. Make the rules simple AND keep to them. Stick to your routines and this will make life easier for everyone. A child that sleeps well and eats a good breakfast will have lots of energy for school.

Keep talking with and reading to your child. Share books regularly and talk about the pictures. Your child will develop skills more quickly if you spend time chatting at home.



Make sure your child can clean themselves after using the toilet. They may need to practise this, as well as how to wash their hands effectively and flush the toilet.

If your child has a large vocabulary then they are on their way to good language development. Encourage your child to listen to and sing along with rhymes and songs. Developing a good memory for the words in songs will greatly help your child. If your child does not pronounce words correctly or uses only a few words then your support will be needed. Model good use of language and phrases such as: 'Please may I have?' or 'Would you like?' Reflect the correct pronunciation of words and phrases for your child. Your child will copy set phrases and sentences. Be a good role model to your child. Older siblings can help too.

Make sure your child can sit at a table to eat a meal. Teach them how to use a knife and fork correctly. Show them how to hold a knife and fork. All four year olds can do this once taught. Model how to cut up food and hold the knife and fork correctly. Praise your child when they get things right. Your child will develop skills if they practise. Encourage your child to sit at the table and eat a good breakfast. Eating breakfast is very important for children.

Please remember all children are different. No two children are the same and they all learn at different rates. Many skills develop at different rates for each child. Some children will be fluent talkers and be very confident. Other children will need time to settle to school and gain confidence. Staff at St Augustine's are experienced and aware of the varying needs of four and five year olds.



Your child will be more independent in school if he/she is able to acquire the following skills at home, prior to entering school:-

- dress and undress themselves (including shoes and buttons)
- put on and zip up their coats
- recognise their own name - tell the teacher if their name is abbreviated in any way.
- use the toilet independently, flush the chain, wipe themselves and wash hands and ask to go there in a recognisable way
- tidy up after himself/herself
- use a knife and fork to feed himself/herself
- use a tissue or handkerchief
- share toys and equipment.
- handle a pencil
- sing some nursery rhymes
- count to 10
- listen well and follow simple instructions.

It will make starting school much easier and happier if they are independent and can do many things for themselves.

If you have not already done so, establishing a routine which includes a regular bedtime is a good beginning.

If you are helping your child to learn to write, please use capital letters only at the beginning of names. Once children have learnt capital letters, they can find it difficult to change into lower case. Correct letter formation is very important for the continuation into more formal writing. There is an attached information sheet showing you how letters should be formed.

Allowing your child to see you writing, and encouraging them to 'write', perhaps by letting them write you a shopping list, will show the child that writing has meaning.

We encourage you to let us know about exciting things by completing "wow cards". These are always available for you to take, and, once filled in, they are added to your child's learning journey.

We can be more successful if we work together.



Preparing your child for their first day

- ◆ It is really important that your child is ready for their first day at school. Be prepared and have everything ready. You will need to be relaxed in order to help your child. It is an emotional time for both mums and dads and you may feel a little tearful. Remember, children do settle in school; it might just take a little time and patience. At St Augustine's we work hard to ensure that children's transition into Reception Class runs as smoothly as possible for all our children.
- ◆ Do talk to your child and tell them about going to school.
- ◆ Be positive and talk about all the interesting things that will happen.
- ◆ Stories about starting school can help.
- ◆ Tell your child how they will be getting to school in the morning and what they will see when they get there. This is really helpful to children who have not been to our nursery.
- ◆ Make sure that you take the opportunity to look at the school with your child.
- ◆ Attend any information evenings or parent/teacher meetings for your child.
- ◆ Talk to staff about your child and let them know any important information.
- ◆ Talk to your child about lunchtimes, how they will need to be responsible for choosing, collecting and eating his/her own lunch, and will need to stay sitting down with the rest of the children until the meal has been finished.

- ◆ Talk to your child about looking after their clothes and belongings.
- ◆ Make sure that all clothes are clearly labeled.

If you have a child that does not like leaving you then take time to prepare them. Get a family member or friend to help you. Leave your child for a short while with a friend. Tell your child you will be coming back later and let them know they will have a lovely time playing with toys or sharing a book. This is the same when your child starts school. Be positive even if your child is tearful.

Encourage your child by telling them they will enjoy school and you will see them later. Always let them know you will come back. And don't worry, staff at St Augustine's work hard to help every child settle as quickly as possible.



Rules and Expectations

Sharing – A large proportion of the time children are expected to share space, equipment or games. We always say they have to wait if there is no room to play and ask the children playing to either include the child immediately or as soon as possible. There are routines like having line leaders and fruit monitors and this trains them to take turns and be responsible.

Rewards – These may be in the form of stickers, stamps on work, verbal praise individually or as a group or a celebration of their efforts by making an instant display of their work.



What Does the Day Look Like?

School starts: 9am

School finishes: 3.15pm

Reception Class is open for children from 8.45am.

Registration is at 9am sharp and all children should have arrived by 8.55 in order to put their coat and bag away and be ready to learn.

Children are offered a mid morning snack of fruit, and lunch is 12-1pm. We have playtime in the playground 2.30-2.45pm.

The end of the day is 3.15pm. Please make sure you are punctual to collect your child, as lateness can be very distressing for children. You should drop off and pick up your child from the Reception playground gates.

Arriving at School

A member of staff is on duty from 8:30am in the main school playground; children can be dropped off from this time. Children may enter the classroom after 8:45am. Reception children enter their classroom through the Reception playground gate.

If you are late (after 9am) you should take your child to the office. You will need to sign your child into the late book. Unauthorised lates will have an impact on your child's overall attendance figure.

Collecting from school

Collecting is in the same place as drop off, in front of the Reception playground gate.

If you know you are going to be late, phone the office as soon as possible and let them know. Children will be taken to the office until you arrive.

If you need to collect your child early let the office know beforehand.

If someone else is collecting your child, tell the teacher at drop off in the morning. If this is not possible, call the office and let them know.

Snack

The school provides fruit for children in the Early Years and KS1. There is drinking water in the classroom and there are also water fountains throughout the school grounds.

Lunch 12-1pm

School lunches are freshly made on site and provide a nutritious midday meal. There is always a choice of food and a salad bar. Menus are sent home to help children with their choices. Throughout the year we have themed menus and a celebratory meal at Christmas. Special diets are catered for; see the office to arrange this.



From September 2014, all children in EYFS and Years 1 and 2 are entitled to free school meals. We would encourage children to try school lunches for a term.

The school is a nut free zone, make sure your child does not bring in any food that has nuts in (this includes peanut butter). Some children in school have severe allergies to nuts.

Care is taken to ensure children eat healthily and parents are asked to support this. Chocolate bars and sweet drinks are not allowed in school. Children having packed lunch may only have water.

Learning Through Play

Our main focus in Reception is to provide a stimulating and enjoyable teaching and learning environment. This enables the children to settle in quickly and happily, develop their personal and social skills, and encourage independence and responsibility.

Play is at the forefront of the Early Years curriculum. Through play your child will be encouraged to learn new skills and practise skills they have already acquired. Play is important for children's all round physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning are fostered through play. In particular, an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and a confidence in their ability to be successful learners.

Social skills are promoted by providing opportunities that enable children to learn how to co-operate and work harmoniously alongside, and with, others and to listen to each other.

During the day the children will take part in activities covering all aspects of the curriculum, sometimes individually, in small groups or as a whole class. The curriculum will be taught both indoors and outdoors.

Their attention skills and general persistence is encouraged by giving them time to concentrate on their own play or on group tasks



Role play, sand, water, painting, construction and creative activities will be on offer daily, and children will be able to access indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.

Often the children will be learning through activities which will cover more than one area of learning and they will be encouraged to make choices and develop independence in their learning.



They will have access to a range of activities which will cover all aspects of the EY Curriculum. Your child will take part in daily maths, English (including phonics) sessions. They will learn through fun activities and will be encouraged to develop skills of perseverance and concentration.

What Will My Child Learn?

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning and development.

The three prime areas are:

- ☺ Communication and Language
- ☺ Physical Development
- ☺ Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The four specific areas are:

- ☺ Literacy
- ☺ Mathematics
- ☺ Understanding the World
- ☺ Expressive Arts and Design

Religious Education

We follow a programme of study called 'Come and See'. There are nine topics in the year. We share aspects of the programme through prayer, discussion, story, drama, roleplay, art and a written response.

At Christmas time the children perform a Nativity and will participate in an Infant Easter Liturgy. The children will learn the Sign of the Cross, morning, lunch and end of the day prayers, as well as the Hail Mary and the Our Father.

How Can I Find Out About My Child's Progress?

Children's learning will be assessed using the Foundation Stage Profile, which is an assessment process that sums up the progress and learning across the Reception year in July. It is based on observation across the seven areas of learning. Parents will be involved in an ongoing dialogue, both formally and informally throughout the year. This will help us to gain a shared picture of your child.

Parents Meetings and Reports

In the Autumn term there is a 'meet the teacher'. This is an opportunity to discuss your child and the class teacher will feed back on how your child has settled into their new class and how you can help at home.

There is another parents evening in the Spring term. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's progress so far. Details/times will be available nearer the time.

Finally, at the end of the Summer term there is an optional meeting if you want to discuss anything on your child's Foundation Stage Profile

If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress during the year you are encouraged to make an appointment to speak to the class teacher to discuss this further.

How Can I Be Involved?

Parents are invited to come and help in school on a regular basis. They have opportunities to join as a volunteer when trips are arranged. Parents are invited to their child's assemblies and Nativities, to join the Parent and Staff Association and attend fund-raising occasions.

How Will I find Out What is Happening in School?

Curriculum overviews are sent home each term. These explain what is happening that particular term.

- ◇ School and class letters will be sent via your child's bag, so do check bags daily.
- ◇ Check the school website for information.

There is a notice board by the front entrance which has weekly events.

Emergency information such as an emergency closure is communicated through text messages.

All parents receive a monthly newsletter which is also posted on the school website.



What About the Uniform?

Please ensure all clothes and bags are clearly **NAMED** with your child's full name – all uniform looks the same!

Details of uniform and how to order can be found on the school website www.staugustines.lewisham.sch.uk. Order early to ensure you order arrives on time.

Your child will need a PE kit for their P.E. lessons. Children bring their P.E. kit into school and leave it in school until half term when it can be taken home and washed. P.E. kits should be kept in a drawstring bag and will be hung on your child's peg.

Please provide spare socks and underwear which are labelled, in PE bags, in case your child has an accident and needs to change.

We provide aprons for artwork during the children's Reception year.

The only jewellery allowed is small stud earrings which should be removed on PE days. No nail varnish.

We will be using the outside area in all weathers, so ensure your child has the appropriate clothing: for example, a coat, hat, gloves and scarf in cold weather and a sunhat in hot weather.



The Book Bag

All children will need a book bag from September. This enables children to safely carry their books home and prevents things getting lost.

Parents are encouraged to purchase “The Book Bag” which is stamped with the school emblem from our official uniform suppliers.



The Book Bag is also the place to find school letters. Parents need to check the bags on a daily basis. Whilst in school, children are responsible for emptying their bags i.e. their reading books and especially any letters or items to hand in to the teacher, but they are supported in doing so in the first term.

Good to Know

Absences

If your child is absent from school it is important that you inform the School office by 9:30 on the first day of absence. We operate a first day response system which means that if we do not receive a telephone call to inform us of your child's absence, we will contact you. If your child is away from school for three or more days, a Doctor's Certificate is expected.

If your child has had diarrhoea and vomiting they should not come to school until **24 hours** after the last bout. If you think your child has a contagious illness or infection contact the office who can advise you if they should attend school. Children should stay home if they have conjunctivitis or other contagious illnesses or infections. It is very important that we are notified of these illnesses as there may be pregnant staff that need to be advised and there are certain infections which are designated as 'notifiable' diseases by the NHS.

Absence for other reasons

We urge parents not to take absences in school time. Headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Educational Welfare Officer has the powers to issue penalty notices (fines) to a parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. **Research shows a direct link between good attendance and school achievement.**

Health and Medical Issues

The school takes health and medical issues seriously and has trained first aiders on site. All children get cuts and scrapes at school. It is part and parcel of everyday play. Any minor injuries are dealt with at school. If your child bumps their head, they will be given a blue slip to bring home giving details.

If there are more serious injuries the school will phone you to arrange for your child to be collected and taken to hospital. If parents cannot be contacted then the school will arrange for the child to attend hospital.

If there is an emergency/very serious accident the school will contact parents AFTER an ambulance has been called.

Sometimes children are ill during the day. Parents will be called and children sent home if they have vomited, had diarrhoea or have a temperature. For other problems, school will assess the child and call parents accordingly.

If your child needs to take medicine during the day you will be asked to complete a form at the Office. Medicines will usually only be given if they need to be taken 4 times a day.

If your child is asthmatic they must have a pump in school and an asthma form completed. If your child has a serious allergy the school will have a health care plan to ensure their safety.

It is essential that the school is kept informed of any changes to contact information e.g. address and telephone numbers, including mobile numbers.

Assemblies

Assemblies are held throughout the week. There will be a class assembly for each class once a year which parents and relatives are invited to attend. Dates are advertised in the newsletter and on the website well in advance.

Celebrating Success

Teachers at St. Augustine's adopt a positive teaching style and are know that it is important to give positive reinforcement and praise whenever the opportunity arises. A child will be praised and rewarded for varied achievements. Outstanding behaviour and achievement is also shared with the school during our weekly Celebration assembly where several children in each class are awarded a certificate by their class teacher for good work, effort or achievements.

Breakfast and After School Clubs

We provide a breakfast club onsite in our school hall. See the Office if you require this service.

Breakfast club: 8am – 8.45am (£2.50 per session)

Children can use a privately run after school club which should be arranged in advance. We can provide details if required.

Texting Service

We have a system which enables us to contact parents via a text. We require an up to date mobile phone number!

Educational Visits and Visitors to School

Your child will have the opportunity to go on a number of Educational visits throughout their time at St Augustine's. You will always be given prior warning and your consent requested before any educational visit. All of these experiences are extremely memorable for the children.

Educational visits are an important part of the children's learning experience. Educational visits take a variety of forms. From visits to parks and facilities in the local area, to zoos, museums, art galleries and other places of interest to the residential school journey offered in Year 6. Visits are planned to support the curriculum and enthuse children in their learning.

Visits are part of the curriculum. However, the school cannot afford to fund every visit and so a voluntary contribution is requested so that costs are covered. Payment requests are sent via ParentPay.

Sometimes, additional adult help is needed in which case requests will be made for parent helpers at the time.

Throughout the year we will have a range of visitors in school to help to support the curriculum.





“ God provides the wind,
but we must raise the sail ”

St Augustine of Hippo

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