

Starting School



Information for parents

Starting school is a fun and exciting time for both children and parents. Here are a few tips that will help make starting school easier for all of the family.

Life Skills

Confident children will settle into school more easily. Where possible children should have shoes and clothes that they can take off and put on by themselves. Basic skills like going to the toilet, washing their hands and using a knife and fork are important skills, which are used throughout life.

Sensible sleep patterns

Starting school can be tiring for everyone, especially the children. Tired children will become grumpy, unable to cope and not enjoying themselves. Adopting a regular sleep pattern is vital, particularly for young children.

Expectations

Give your child as much information about school as possible, so they do not experience any shocks or unpleasant surprises! If they are going to have hot lunches, it is advisable for them to know the routine and what is expected of them.

Illness

If your child is unwell, they should not come to school. Infections among children can spread easily and it puts other children and staff at risk. Sick children are unhappy away from the home environment and also take longer to recover. Remember that you must inform the school if your child will not be attending – for whatever reason.

Problems

If any problem arises, they are always dealt with immediately, rather than being left. It may be necessary to talk to your child's teacher or Head Teacher as soon as you are aware. All our staff are approachable and will endeavour to assist you with any problems that may arise. Once 'aired' the problem may turn out to be nothing, or something which can be easily remedied.

Safety for all

Starting school is a great new adventure for children and we need to make it as safe as possible for them. There are a number of ways in which we can help.

Safety Issues

Talk to your children about these safety issues so that they understand the dangers, without frightening them.

Some of these issues you could discuss are:

- Road safety
- Not talking to strangers
- And staying at school until your child is picked up

Be Bright, Be Seen

Children wearing bright clothes are more likely to be seen by motorists and you will also be able to spot them easily in a crowd.

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Parking

School gateways are very busy areas with cars and people around at different times of the day. Children are excited and motorists need to be vigilant. If at all possible, walk or cycle to school as it is better for you. If you have to drive to school, allow time to park in a sensible place away from the main gate – even if it does involve a short walk.

Collecting your Child After School

If you are unable to collect your children, make sure the school is aware of who will be picking them up.

Cycle Helmets

For children cycling, or being cycled to school, a cycle helmet that fits correctly is a necessity.

Eating for Health

Enjoyment

Children 'eat with their eyes'. If food looks appealing they are more likely to try it and enjoy it. Healthy food also needs to sound exciting to encourage children.

Variety

It can be so easy to find a food that your child likes and then keep giving it to them. Children need to eat a variety of different foods to give them a well balanced diet. Asking your child 'what do you want to eat' will generally invite the answer – Burger and Chips or Fish Fingers and Chips. If this is the case, try offering some amounts of new foods along with familiar foods.

Foods plentiful in Starch and Fibre

A high starch diet is essential, as at least half of our energy should come from carbohydrates (British Nutritional Foundation). Fibre is essential for the digestive system to work properly.

Reduce Fat Intake

Avoid using too much fat during cooking and look to using low fat alternatives such as low fat spreads and yoghurt. Remember that crisps, chips, biscuits and chocolates are all high fat foods, which is alright as long as they are eaten in small quantities.

Fruit and Vegetables

For your child's vitamins and minerals – **GIVE ME 5!** It is recommended that all children should eat five fruit and vegetable portions every day. These can be raw or cooked, fresh or frozen, but not including potatoes. Try raw carrot sticks – children often prefer raw vegetables to cooked. Offer a selection of fruit pieces for them to pick at. Introduce new tastes as frequently as possible. Cook vegetable for a short time only in a little boiling water with the lid on the pan to retain the vitamins and minerals.

Reduce Sugar Intake

Sugar foods consumed regularly are bad for children's teeth. Sugar is not the best food for energy as it provides a quick release. Children require a longer sustained source of energy which is provided from starch foods. Remember there is hidden sugar in lots of foods – 5 teaspoons are in the average can of fizzy drinks.

Healthy Weight Gain

Active children require far more calories than non active children. It is alright for an active child to eat as much as an adult, although a chocolate bar and can of fizzy drink would not be suitable for a child sitting down watching television all afternoon.

The Right Balance

Children need to eat a healthy diet, which means fatty and sugary foods should be eaten in moderation.