

# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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## Parents' Handbook Reception Class 2018-2019

# Welcome to St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Reception Class

### Introduction

This handbook has been designed to introduce you to our school and to describe briefly how we work together with you in the education of our children. At St. Joseph's we aim to provide a sound education in a caring Catholic environment. We are an active part of the parish of Our Lady and Saint Thomas of Canterbury, Dudley. Good relationships between home and school are vital, and we depend very much on the trust, support, and active help which we receive from parents. The governors and staff welcome you to St. Joseph's School and look forward to a happy and successful association over the coming years. You are very welcome to contact the school at any time to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding your child's education.

### General Information

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dudley, is located in the St. Thomas' ward of Dudley Central and serves the parish of Our Lady and St. Thomas of Canterbury, Dudley. Children also come to our school from many surrounding parishes and areas of Dudley and beyond. We are a multicultural school with a very strong Catholic ethos. We have a nursery for children aged three and above, and one class in each of the year groups from Reception through to Year 6. In total we have approximately 260 children including our nursery pupils.

Our mission statement is:

*At Saint Joseph's we work, learn and grow together guided by Jesus' teachings*

Our Catholic faith is at the very heart of our school and is evident as soon as you step through our doors in what you will see, hear and feel inside St. Joseph's. We work very hard to treat everyone in school with care and respect just as Jesus taught us to 'love one another as I have loved you'. Our close link with our Parish is very important to us and our school chaplain is the Parish Priest, Father Emmanuel. All of our assemblies and prayer services throughout the week are rooted in the teachings of Jesus.

St. Joseph's serves a vibrant multicultural community and care and respect for individual differences is very much at the heart of our ethos. This is emphasised regularly throughout the day. As well as the daily acts of collective worship our children also pray regularly throughout the day in their classrooms. Our entire curriculum and school culture is based on the teachings of Christ and children are taught to become kind, respectful, forgiving and caring young people. Great care is taken to make links between the Gospels and our day to day behaviour and treatment of others. Jesus is at the heart of our school and as such we welcome and value equally all members of our school community, Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017) states that "Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St. Joseph's we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

### Our Philosophy

At St. Joseph's we have developed a shared philosophy where we all believe young children's experiences are crucial in developing confidence, health and wellbeing and laying a secure foundation for future learning and development. Our shared philosophy has enabled us to develop a strong vision where we all believe each child is unique and is a competent learner from birth. Every child can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We are committed to developing positive relationships so that all children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and a key person. As a setting we aim to provide enabling environments that support and extend learning and development for all children. We believe children learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important.

Our shared philosophy and strong vision provides us with a clearly defined aim that enables us to create principles that underpin our effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his / her full potential.

### Transition - From Nursery / Feeder settings to Reception

To ensure your child settles into our Reception Class safely and securely we will endeavour to meet their individual needs. Beginning Reception for the first time can be very daunting, therefore we introduce children and parents to our Reception Class firstly through a "Stay and Play" session. For those families new to the school we arrange a parent meeting at your home. **The Children's start date for Reception Class is Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018.** Staff will work collaboratively together to ensure your child settles happily and comfortably into our Reception Class.

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes and any concerns they may want to express.
- During the summer term parents are encouraged to complete an "all about me" booklet. It is used during the autumn term to support transition and to inform planning.
- The children are invited to a stay and play visit.
- Members of staff from school make visits to the home or feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.
- Children at St. Joseph's Nursery (main feeder setting) will have opportunities to be taught by the Reception class teacher in the Reception classroom.
- Children will have time to share their learning journey with the Reception class teacher.

### Learning in the EYFS

The EYFS is based upon four principles. We therefore aim to promote and support the four key principles of the EYFS as described below:

- **A Unique Child:** Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments:** Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- **Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Nursery and Reception together comprise the Foundation Stage Unit within the school. They have their own curriculum and assessment. Children learn best by feeling secure, valued and confident and also through quality play. The learning experiences we provide are based on our assessment of each child's stage of development and then matched with the Developmental Stages and Early Learning Goals set out by the Government. Profiles of the children's stage of development are drawn up at the start of the Nursery and these are added to as they progress through the Foundation Stage.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- the partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure and safe at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in the provision offered to the children;

- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- having a balance of child initiated and adult led activities, that help children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the EYFS.

At St Joseph's, we follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which is mandatory for all early years providers. The EYFS Framework explains how children will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through **7 areas of learning and development**. Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- Communication and language - We give children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- Physical development - We provide opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- Personal, social and emotional development - We help children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

These prime areas are those most essential for children's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**.

These are:

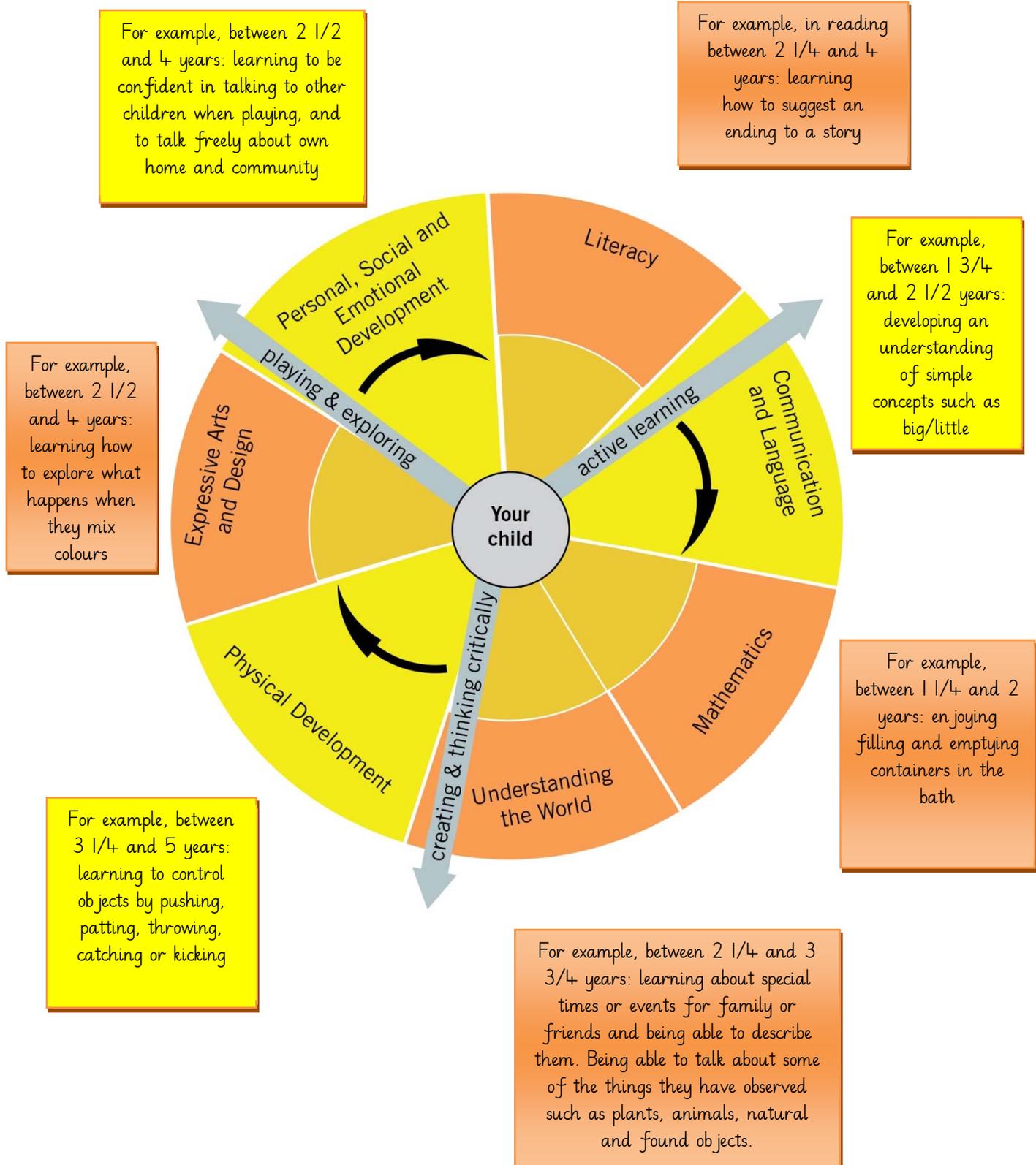
- **Literacy** – We encourage children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** – We provide children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** – We guide children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** – We enable children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

Throughout our EYFS we plan to ensure our youngest children receive high quality learning experiences that build upon existing knowledge, understanding and skills. We aim to ensure children receive rich and stimulating learning opportunities that support learning and development. Planning and guided children's activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At St. Joseph's we support children in using the three characteristics of effective learning (CoEL). The focus of the CoEL is on how children learn rather than what they learn i.e. process over outcome. Underpinning the CoEL is the understanding that during children's earliest years, children form attitudes about learning that will last a lifetime. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement during these years will be creative, and adventurous learners throughout their lives. These are;

- **Playing and exploring** – We enable children to investigate and give plenty of opportunities to experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** – We encourage children to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** – We provide children with opportunities to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The diagram below gives examples of the areas of learning and development and shows the links between the way in which your child learns and what they learn.



## Religious Education

As a Catholic school, our faith is at the heart of all we do. It is embedded in our curriculum and is implicit in all we do. We use the diocesan scheme and assessment procedures. Throughout our practice and provision our Catholic vision also permeates our curriculum as we work, learn and grow together guided by Jesus' teachings. Throughout our Catholic curriculum children develop a knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, gospel values and good citizenship. As our children grow and learn together in a faith school we aim to nurture and encourage them to become adults who can transform our world into a more just and loving society. Children are encouraged to become caring, responsible and compassionate individuals.

## Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. At St. Joseph's parents and practitioners work together and the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. Positive parental partnerships are crucial for providing the most effective teaching and learning strategies. Equally they are vital for personalising learning opportunities effectively. We aim to develop positive relationships with parents that enable us to share information about children's interests and learning. This information is used to personalise learning opportunities and provide continuity and progression. We work together and support learning through warm and trusting relationships. The implications of this ensure knowledgeable adults support children's learning more effectively. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school; the teacher makes contact with children in their previous setting prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher and support staff before starting in Reception;
- parent meeting at the home;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- inviting all parents and children to a stay and play session during the term before their child starts school.

We continue to build and maintain positive parental relationships through;

- Offering parents regular daily opportunities to talk
- Encouraging parents to discuss any worries or concerns.
- Morning learning activities alongside their children
- Parent Workshops
- Involving parents in the curriculum
- Parent Notice Boards
- Home school link books

- Newsletters / Questionnaires
- Parents evening
- Bilingual Support

### Key Person

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen and value responses and contributions. At our school all children in the EYFS are assigned a Key Person. A key person is an important person in a child's life whilst at school. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. This person should help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. Parents/carers should take the time to build on relationships at any given chance, for example, discussing any important events in the child's life.

### Staffing and Organisation

Our Foundation Stage provision is integrated therefore Nursery and Reception children are together for certain times throughout the day. In Reception there is one Reception teacher and one teaching assistant who are committed to providing your children with a secure foundation.

### Learning environment

We provide a secure, safe and happy environment which ensures that the children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers to support children's experiences and respond to their individual needs.

Within our setting we recognise that an enabling learning environment is vital to provide children with rich and stimulating experiences where learning can flourish. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, learn and investigate through first-hand experience. Also we aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence.

Our learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. We develop and organise learning areas that are responsive to the curriculum and individual needs. Our learning environment consists of an indoor and outdoor learning environment that offers opportunities that inspire and engage children. Outdoor provision has a positive impact on children's health and sense of wellbeing. It provides them with the freedom to explore, to be physically active and exuberant, to work on a larger scale and experience the natural world. Therefore children are provided with the opportunity to learn outside every day unless it is unsafe to do so. The learning environment also provides children with secure emotional provision where learners can grow and flourish as confident and creative learners.

## Behaviour

In order for St. Joseph's Reception Class to be a happy and effective setting we believe that the highest standards of behaviour must be expected of all our children. As a team we adopt positive behaviour management strategies. Positive recognition, descriptive praise and encouragement are crucial tools we use in the Foundation Stage to reinforce, reward or improve behaviour. Tools used to ensure this are positive, descriptive praise, smiley face system, stickers, certificates, merit certificates, postcards home etc. Professional strategies are continually used to redirect behaviour.

## Race Equality

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is committed to the promotion of race equality in all areas of school life and to the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination.

## Equal Opportunities

At St Joseph's we aim to provide all children regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual.

Equality, inclusion and diversity are all matters that are crucial to providing high quality care and education. At St. Joseph's we are aware that underlying inequality may occur through different policies, adult interactions, displays, planning and the curriculum. We have developed a strong awareness that in early years children are vulnerable and adults have the power to affect children's future actions, behaviour, intentions, learning outcomes and beliefs. Equality has enormous implications for inclusion and diversity. We have a firm awareness of how each child is entitled to practice and provision that reflects the unique characteristics, fascinations, enthusiasms and individual needs of all children. Inclusion is not optional and children have defined entitlements and settings have a legal responsibility. We value and celebrate diversity as we differentiate play as a tool for learning, the learning environment, resources, the role of the adult and activities effectively to support individuals, groups of learners, individuals with additional needs, individual with EAL and individuals from diverse social, cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

We adopt an inclusive approach aiming to support all children to reach their full potential and celebrate children's uniqueness, gifts and talents. Inclusion also involves us listening to children's voices and giving them a sense of ownership in their learning.

## Anti - bullying

We believe that all children, staff, parents and governors have a right to learn and work in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. We promote good

behaviour and relationships. It is made clear that bullying is a form of anti - social behaviour. It is wrong and will not be tolerated.

### Child Protection

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people both within the school environment and outside. We recognise our duty of care and we work closely together to keep our school safe.

### Pupil records for emergencies

Please inform the school of any changes in circumstances such as a change of address, telephone, parents' work telephone, access/custody arrangements (if any), doctor, etc. A "Pupil Records" form must be filled in for school records, so that parents can be contacted quickly in an emergency. Please ask at the school office.

### Contacting parents via text

Sometimes we need to pass on information to you e.g. if the school is closed because of the snow or to remind you to bring something into school. In these instances we are able to send you a text through a special service for schools. It is important therefore that you keep us informed of any changes to telephone numbers.

### Reporting of Accidents and First Aid

All accidents in Reception are recorded in the "Accident Book". If your child has an accident, first aid will be administered with your permission, details of the accident will be recorded and you will be handed a report slip. If your child has a bump to the head, they will receive a report slip and have a sticker on their jumper to notify you of the head injury. In the event of a more serious accident all parents / carers will be contacted immediately.

### Illness

If your child becomes ill at school we will contact you and ask you to take your child home. If specialist help is needed you will be contacted and arrangements made to take your child to hospital. Please contact the school if your child will be absent from Reception.

### ParentPay

We operate a cashless system for the payment of dinner money, trip money and swimming money. All payment for these items are made online via your 'ParentPay' account. You will be given a letter with your 'ParentPay' account details including; instructions of how to log-in to the website with your first username and password, which can then be changed once you have registered your own details. If you have any problems with 'ParentPay' or need help logging on

please don't hesitate to contact the school office for help. No more looking for cash – just pay by card online 24 hours a day and have your payments instantly recorded and receipted!

### Uniform and Appearance

Boys
Royal Blue St Joseph's pique polo shirt: either plain Royal Blue jumper or Royal Blue St Joseph's sweat-shirt: grey trousers. Sensible black shoes
Summer Alternative: Knee length grey shorts, sensible shoes (no flipflop sandals)
Girls
Royal Blue St Joseph's pique polo shirt: either plain Royal Blue jumper or Royal Blue St Joseph's sweat-shirt: grey skirt/grey uniform trousers. Sensible black shoes.
Summer Alternative: Blue Gingham dress: either plain Royal Blue jumper/cardigan or Royal Blue St Joseph's sweatshirt, OR knee length grey shorts. Sensible, flat-heel shoes. (no flip-flop sandals)
PE Kit
All children should have: Plain black shorts: a plain white T-shirt and a pair of pumps: all kept in a PE bag.
Children are welcome to bring tracksuit bottoms and tracksuit tops for outdoor PE during the cooler weather.

Trainers, boots or fashion shoes are not allowed. Reception Class is an exciting place, with lots of fun activities. We hope you share our enthusiasm for play and please understand that sometimes your children may come home with messy clothes. While we take every opportunity to remind your child to wear a protective apron, it is very likely that they might come home "wearing" the fruits of their creative labour!

### Jewellery

As a safety precaution and to prevent accidents, the wearing of any item of jewellery in Main School is strictly forbidden without exception.

### Hairstyles

The Academy Committee request that all children attending school must do so in a standard and acceptable hairstyle.

### Labelling

All items of school uniform and footwear must be labelled with the child's name. This makes it easier to identify lost items. The school accumulates a lot of "Lost Property", which, if unlabelled, is very difficult to return to its owners.

### Cloakroom Facilitates

Your child will be allocated a cloakroom peg with a number and name on it during their time in Reception.

### Bathroom

Children are encouraged to be independent in the bathroom before coming to school. If you have any concerns regarding this matter please come and talk to us.

### Sunny Days

UV from the sun can be harmful, especially to young children's skin. On hot and sunny days please remember to:

- Provide a sun hat for your child.
- Apply sun lotion before coming to school.
- Dress your child in light, cool clothing.

We will ensure your child has:

- Plenty to drink.
- Access to shade during outdoor play.
- Avoids strenuous exercise.

With your consent sun cream will be kept in school and children will be supported to apply sun cream to their face, neck shoulders and arms.

### Reception times

The school day starts at 8:45am

The school day ends at 3:15pm

Please try to be punctual at the start and end of each day. It is also important that all parents are available during the school day to be contacted if necessary.

## Collecting children

If anyone other than yourselves is collecting your child parents / carers must let us know. We operate a password system where parents / carers will complete an authorised adult collection consent form. This form will list the adults which you give consent to collect your children from Reception. You will need to agree a memorable password with staff and share this with the adults on your list.

## Helping your child's learning

All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development, and have a long lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school.

Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas. If you make the time every day to do some of the following things with your child it will make a real difference to your child's confidence as a young learner.



We hope this information is beneficial to you. If you have any worries, concerns or queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

### Reception Information

**Address:** St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
Hillcrest Road  
Dudley  
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**Telephone:** 01384 818925  
Office hours: 8:30am – 4:30pm – Monday to Thursday and  
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**Fax:** 01384 818930 (24 hours)

**Website:** [www.st-jo-dud.dudley.sch.uk](http://www.st-jo-dud.dudley.sch.uk)

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**Principle:** Mr M Hinton

