

St. Paul's Primary School

A handbook for parents and carers



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Dear Parents and Carers,

I am delighted you have chosen St. Paul's Primary School as the school for your child. I would very much like to welcome you and your child here, and look forward to working with you as we seek to educate and inspire your child during their time at our friendly and nurturing school.

We believe that effective learning takes place when children are happy and secure. We try to provide such an environment and make every effort to ensure that our children are well motivated and happy. Starting school is one of the great milestones in a person's life. We will make every effort to make your child's introduction to school life at St. Paul's as enjoyable as possible. Visitors often comment on the relaxed, friendly and cheerful atmosphere with which they are greeted. I believe this to be the outward reflection of the spirit of an active, constructive school and a reflection of St. Paul's strength and special character. We value good relationships between home, school and the local community. When we all work in harmony, education can flourish - long may this partnership continue.

This booklet is intended to provide a short introduction to our school and answer some of the questions you may have. I hope you find it useful, but if you have any further questions or you require further help, please do not hesitate to contact me. We have organised this booklet in a 'Question and Answer' format. Please let us know if you can think of other information you would like to have included. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



Sheridan Upton
Headteacher



What time does school start and finish?

	Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Morning:	8:35 until 12:00	8:35 until 12:10
Break time:	10.15-10.30	10.15-10.30
Afternoon:	1:00 until 3:05	1:00 until 3:05

Children and parents are asked to arrive for 8.35 a.m. – waiting on the playground until the class doors open and they will be greeted by the class teacher. Unless your child is booked into Breakfast Club, children should not arrive before 8.30am and they should remain supervised by the parent/carer until they are collected by the teacher. Children arriving after the register has been taken will be recorded as 'late' and if they arrive after 9.00am, this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence.'

How are the classes organised?

Each year, the teachers and I carefully consider each child and where they would be best placed the following year. We organise classes based on the needs of the children and always set work for each child as an individual to ensure they reach their potential. The teachers and teaching assistants work closely as a team to plan, resource and teach effectively. Throughout your child's time at our school they will be placed in either straight or mixed year groups. The class organisation sometimes changes, and whilst children will move into their next class with some of the existing class, children also have the opportunity to form new friendships.



What school uniform does my child need?

We believe that wearing a clean, smart uniform is something that gives children a sense of being part of the school as something they can take pride in. It also removes any peer pressure about what to wear to school. Your child will need a named:

- Royal Blue sweatshirt or cardigan with the school logo
- Black or dark grey trousers or grey skirt/pinafore dress
- White shirt or white polo-necked t-shirt or blouse
- School tie for year six pupils only
- Wellington Boots – our field is open all year round!
- Black school shoes - branded trainers, sandals or high heels are NOT permitted.

We are very fortunate to receive funding from Chippenham Borough Lands Charity. This funding is to help support children from low income families towards the cost of uniform.

Examples of shoe styles:	
Acceptable	Non-permitted
	



In the summer children can wear a white shirt with grey shorts or a blue cotton print check dress.



In addition, your child will need a named PE kit:

- P.E. shoes / plimsolls
- Royal blue t-shirt with logo
- Royal blue shorts
- In colder weather, full length navy or black jogging bottoms



Children are expected to wear their PE Kit to school on the day they have PE. All school uniform must be clearly labelled.

Jewellery

The only jewellery which may be worn is:

- One pair of stud earrings
- A smart wrist-watch

Jewellery must be removed during PE lessons and when directed by a member of staff for safety reasons. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Make-Up

Visible make-up is not allowed, this includes nail varnish.

Second-hand uniform

The school holds second-hand school uniform items for parents to access; access to these uniforms is available upon request via the school office, at after school 2nd hand uniform sales or at the Summer and Christmas Fairs. A voluntary donation can be made to support FOSP fund-raising. Parents are invited to donate their child's uniform when they no longer need it. 2nd hand uniform is available to view Tuesday to Thursday 8.30-8.40am.

How can I work with you to support my child?

We believe that effective education for our children can only take place where there is a partnership between home and school. The class teachers will always do their best to be available before and after the school day if you need to share information about your child.

There are a few key things that you can do that will really support your child's learning and progress. Firstly, please continue to read with your child throughout their time at school. As soon as a child can read fluently, it is still of great benefit to read and share books together.



We encourage parents to visit our school and have many parents actively involved with the children's education through a variety of activities. Please feel free to volunteer your services in any capacity – such as a reading helper. In order to keep all our children safe, we will ask you to complete a DBS check with Mrs Burton in the school office.

How will I know how my child is doing?

You are always welcome in the school, and we are able to make an appointment to meet with you at any point during the year. As partners in your child's education we like to maintain constant contact, so please share any question or concern whenever you need to. Our teachers will always try to make themselves available before and after school to chat to you informally about your child and how they are getting on.

You will receive an annual report at the end of Term 4 (just before the Easter holidays), informing you of your child's progress. We send the reports at this time of year so that targets can be worked on during the Summer term. We also hold formal parent/teacher 'progress' meetings for all children twice a year – Term 1 and Term 6. Parents are able to meet teachers to discuss their child's progress. However, please do not wait until then if you have a question or concern – just catch teachers before or after school, or pop in to the school office.

Children in Foundation Stage will also receive an end of EYFS report in Term 6, detailing how your child has achieved towards each of the Early Learning Goals. We also take regular observations and upload them to a secure website called 'Tapestry' which parents are invited to regularly look at and add to as we share your child's learning journey together.

We also have a Home School Agreement document. It outlines the expectations of the school on Pupils and Parents and what you can expect from the school. Parents, School and, if appropriate, the child are asked to sign this document.

We use a 'teachers2parents' texting and emailing service where we can communicate information to you. Many parents find this a very useful service so they are kept up to date with school events. Please make sure we always have your up to date mobile number and email address. Thank you.

How do you celebrate my child's learning and progress?

We always like to celebrate the many achievements your child will make during their time at school. In class, teachers have a variety of ways of celebrating learning, for example verbal praise, giving out stickers or certificates. Children also earn 'stickers' towards a whole school system of Green, Silver and Gold leaves. Once a child has earned 50 stickers, they receive their green leaf and you will be invited into Good Work Assembly on a Friday to celebrate their leaf. The next milestone is 100 stickers for their silver leaf, then 150 stickers for the gold leaf.



The expectation is that each child will earn their green leaf each year as a minimum. As part of our Good Work Assembly, each class will share and celebrate your child's learning. When your child has been chosen, you will be invited into school for their certificate presentation.

We also have whole class rewards linked to a house system. When your child starts school they will be placed in one of four houses. We have the Green Hawks, Blue Kestrels, Yellow Falcons and Red Eagles. Throughout the year, and most notably at sports day, children will join their team for inter house challenges and competitions.

You will receive a weekly copy of our newsletter (via email) – which will include pupils' achievements and awards. If your child has had a particular achievement outside school, such as a sporting medal or music certificate, please let your class teacher know and we will do our best to celebrate it in our Good Work Assembly.

What do I do if my child needs to take medicines during the school day?

Please ensure you keep us informed of any changes in medical conditions. Children who suffer from asthma should keep an inhaler in school and know how to administer it themselves.

Some children may need ongoing prescribed medication such as Ritalin for example. In such cases, parent must complete a consent form giving details of dosage, frequency and special arrangements relating to the administration of the medication. The school will keep securely all medicines required in school time.

Children needing to finish a course of antibiotics after an illness should do so at home. The school cannot be responsible for administering this medication and recommend that parents request a dosage which can be administered outside the school day. If any medication has to be taken during the school day we ask that a parent or nominated adult come in and administer the medication.

Please see the medical policy for further information, which can be found on our website.



What is our Foundation Stage like?



Reception is referred to as the Foundation Stage of Learning (FS2). This stage is the second year of Foundation Stage after non-compulsory nursery/pre-school. It has a curriculum based on seven areas of learning - each area clearly states what we can expect most children to achieve by the time they are entering Year 1. There are 3 prime areas fundamental to early development and they provide support for the other 4 areas (called specific areas.)

The Reception Year is an important stage, as it is during this time that attitudes to learning are formed and social skills are developed, which lay the foundations for future education.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum includes 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'. These are closely linked to the areas of the curriculum and are welcomed by St. Pauls School, as they encourage children to develop positive learning attitudes early on. It also allows teachers to consider how each child learns best and therefore plan for their uniqueness.

We believe that young children learn most effectively through structured play. The staff in Foundation Stage work hard to plan for the children's learning within the seven areas to ensure each is covered within an interesting, stimulating and supportive framework. They also ensure that children progressively develop their skills and knowledge throughout this phase of their school life. The children are taught directly with focused activities and also have a choice of planned 'learning through play' activities to develop characteristics of effective learning. As children progress through the Foundation Stage the level of focus activities and whole class teaching gradually increases although learning through play still remains central.

At St Paul's, children within the Foundation Stage are offered a variety of play provision both inside and outside including sand, water, construction, play dough, painting, role play, book corner, reading/writing areas, instruments, climbing equipment, a pond, planting and discovery. We are very lucky to have such a large, well-resourced outdoor learning environment especially for our Foundation Stage children. We spend as much time learning outside as possible.



We are a Platinum OPAL school – the first in Chippenham!

OPAL – which stands for Outdoor Play and Learning – is a programme to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, co-operation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play. It is based on the idea that as well as learning through good teaching, children also learn when they play, and as 20% of their time in school is playtime, it is important to make sure that this amount of time (equivalent to 1.4 years of primary school) is as good as possible. A typical playtime at St. Paul's will include swings and hammocks, mud café, scooter track, music and dancing, ride-on toys, loose parts, dressing up clothes, tyres, low-buggies, table tennis and basketball. There is a chill-out area if you want to draw or read, a Rainbow Garden to sit and relax – or make tacos!



Children all socialise together – the older children love the opportunity to help the younger children in their play. One half of the field is left to grow wild – so by the Summer term the grass is long and can be an extra hiding place, or for children to just enjoy walking through the long grass. Also a haven for butterflies, bees and insects from the wild flowers that have been sowed. If you want to sit and relax, there is always the canoe! The school captures quotes from the children about their experiences outside. Not only do they tell the school what they particularly enjoy, but also give their own ideas of what else should be included.

How can I be more involved in school life?

FOSP – Friends of St. Paul's – work closely with the school to organise events and raise money for enriching experiences or special resources. We like all parents to think of themselves as a FOSP member – either by attending events or helping organise and run activities. FOSP rely on volunteers to share ideas and help out whenever possible. FOSP activities can include school discos, Bingo or Quiz nights for adults, Easter Egg Hunts and the Christmas and Summer Fetes.

In recent years, FOSP have contributed to whole school trips to London, Caerphilly Castle, Wild Place Project in Bristol, a Theatre and Beach visit to Weston-Super-Mare and a host of other smaller, but equally necessary items for the classroom.

What is the purpose of the Governing Body?

The Governing Body is like a Board of Directors for the school, and helps to decide how the school should be run. The Governing Body meets termly, but individual Governors also attend school at other times. Our Governing Body is made up of parents, staff at the school, local council representatives, community representatives, and businessmen and women. The Governors are responsible for raising standards at the school by setting the strategy of the school, ensuring the Headteacher delivers this strategy, and by managing the budget. Governors usually serve for four years. The Governors are always interested to hear from people who are considering becoming Governors, or have skills to offer, or just want to talk about an aspect of school life; please ask at the office to make an appointment.



For a list of our School Governors please refer to our website: www.st-pauls.wilts.sch.uk.

What do I do if my child is ill, or needs to take time off school?

We recognise that your child may pick up illnesses from time to time and needs to be at home to recover. Please make sure you telephone the school or send an email, each time your child is absent. Thank you.

We respond to 'unauthorised' absences by contacting home to make sure that your child is not lost on the way to school. To avoid this, it helps if we are told before planned absences occur and on the day when an unplanned absence occurs.

If your child has been physically sick (more than once in an episode) and clearly have a stomach bug, they may not return to school for 48 hours since the last episode of sickness. We realise this can be difficult for working parents to manage, but we enforce this to ensure other children stay as healthy as possible.

How will you keep my child safe at school?

The school follows Wiltshire's Child Protection procedures and aims to work together with other agencies that support child welfare and families. We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are well cared for, safe and protected. The school is legally obliged to discuss and/or refer urgent or repeated incidents to other agencies. Mr. Upton is the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' and is responsible for implementing these procedures.



What are the School Rules?

Each class will agree a set of school rules, sometimes called the 'Golden Rules' that the class all agree to adhere to. These rules will be relevant for their class and age group, but each class will have a rule or rules about respecting each other. This reinforces our school values about being a school that cares and looks after everyone in it. Our whole school expectations are:

Be Safe, Be Ready, Be Respectful

How do we deal with any poor behaviour from children?

We expect that children should behave with courtesy and work hard in lessons. We follow a policy, which positively reinforces good behaviour. We have many positive rewards for children behaving and working in an appropriate manner. We try to ensure that they play safely and with concern for others. When children fall short of the standards expected of them, various sanctions are implemented in line with our Behaviour Policy. This is available from the school on request. In severe and persistent cases, parents are consulted.

What are school dinners like, and how can we buy them?

We are very proud of our excellent range of healthy and nutritious school lunches. St. Pauls Kitchen is provided 'in house' and provides choices of hot main meals daily directly for the school and not by an external catering company. This allows us to choose our own menus and suppliers. We cook from scratch, making all of our own stews, casseroles, cakes and puddings. All meals are prepared freshly on the day according to what has been pre-ordered. A healthy salad bar and delicious puddings are always available. We have some wonderful local suppliers providing us with excellent quality meat and locally produced fruit and vegetables.

All children in Reception and Key Stage 1 are entitled to a free school meal each lunch-time. The termly menu can be downloaded from our website, to help your child choose what food they would like each day.

Our standards – We follow the guidelines set by 'The school food plan'. You can find these at www.schoolfoodplan.com and also some of our recipes such as the very popular chicken, lentil and butternut squash curry.

If you have any allergy concerns and wish to speak to a member of our catering team please let the office know, who will ask someone to contact you.

We encourage our children to enjoy their dining experience and we like to reward good manners.

All school meals must be ordered and paid for online a week in advance.



There is no charge for school meals, for all children in Reception and KS1 – and children in KS2 who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Included in your starter pack is an application form for Free School Meals, which we kindly ask all parents to complete if they meet the criteria.

It is really important that parents still complete the forms for Free School Meals, even when your child is in Reception and KS1. This is because the school receives further additional funding for every child who is entitled to Free School Meals – even if the child chooses not to take them. A successful application for FSM will bring other benefits, such as a uniform voucher and discounts for school trips.

Can my child bring in a snack for morning break?

We want children to be ready for learning and encourage children to bring in a healthy snack for morning break. We request that chocolates, sweets and crisps are not consumed during morning break.

To keep children hydrated, they may bring drink bottles to school, however we expect children to drink only water during lesson times which they can bring in in a named plastic bottle. Children may bring a soft drink for lunchtime only please.

Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 receive free fruit each day, which is either consumed during quiet time in class, or at one of their mid-session breaks.

Is there anything my child cannot bring to school?

For children's safety, they may not bring into school dangerous items such as knives (including in packed lunch boxes – we can provide cutlery) or matches. We also do not allow children to bring in **any** toys or gadgets including mobile phones. We say this so children are not risking losing or damaging precious and expensive items.

What happens if the school needs to temporarily close?

In the case of very severe weather conditions or other extraordinary circumstances which make it necessary to close the school you will, where possible, be notified in advance by letter. If it is not possible to provide advance notice, Heart FM will air announcements and our website will contain an update. We will also use the 'teachers2parents' service where we can communicate information to you quickly. Please make sure we always have your up-to-date mobile number. Thank you.



How do I book my child in for your breakfast club or afterschool club?

We run a Breakfast Club from 7:50 a.m. every day, which includes a breakfast of cereal, toast and a drink. We also run a daily After School Club from 3:05-4:00pm or 3:05-5:30pm which includes a light tea.

Registration forms, pricing information and termly booking forms are available at the school office and on the school's website.

If you are interested in either of these clubs or need any more information, please speak to staff in the school office.

What clubs are available for my child?

After school clubs vary each term – and these are run on a voluntary basis by school staff. We also use outside providers – such as Up and Under Sports. They provide coaches to deliver more specialised sports provision – this has included Tchoukball and basketball. Other clubs have included Dance and Cricket.



What home learning will my child receive?

We have worked hard to ensure each child receives an appropriate amount of Home Learning for their age. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 this can take the form of phonic work, reading or a topic focused activity. As soon as children are put on our reading programme sound cards, word lists and reading books are sent home in a child's book bag. We encourage children to learn non-decodable, high frequency words (red words) at home with our red rocket reward scheme. When children can read words in their red rocket on sight, they receive a certificate and a new rocket to take home. We ask parents to spend 10 minutes each evening hearing their child read and commenting in the Reading Record Book. This does make a real difference to their progress.

In Key Stage 2 it is important that parents still share books with their children to maintain progress and also an enthusiasm for reading. Children in Year 1 to Year 6 receive a login for Spelling Shed – where children can practice spelling rules using fun and engaging games. Children are also given a login for Times Tables Rockstars – to support with Times Tables learning.

Home Learning is not necessarily a formal written exercise, and may be research or discussion topics, which enable home to extend the learning in school and vice versa.



How do you support children with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability?

At St Paul's School, we believe that every child matters and should be given the opportunity and encouragement to reach their full potential. Many children may have additional needs at some time during their school life. This might be a learning need, a medical problem or an emotional difficulty. Our SENCo and Senior Leadership Team will work in partnership with you to ensure that those children with additional needs are given the appropriate support and challenge so that their needs are met and they are able to see themselves as successful, resilient learners.

On our website you will find information about our Special Educational Needs policy which is reviewed by the Governing Body annually as well as the School Information Report and a link to the Wiltshire Local Offer website.



We recognise that able, gifted and talented children also need to be supported and challenged. Generally, their needs will be met in class. Special events are also organised to provide opportunities for stretching and challenging. These events are usually in school time and often school based. From time to time they may take place at other venues where a cost may be incurred. Your permission will always be sought before such an event.

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their particular needs. We have an accessibility audit plan aimed at continuous improvement. The school provides disabled parking, ramps, wide corridors and easy access to all school facilities, including disabled toilets.



What does the School Council do?

Our School Council plays an exciting and active role in the life of our School. Children have the opportunity to put themselves forward for the role of School Councillor; they will write a letter to the rest of the class who then decide on a democratic basis who will be most suitable for the job. Once elected, they will represent the views of their class at meetings, sharing their thoughts and ideas. These discussions are positive and lively and each member is made to feel valued.

Children have the opportunity to develop projects related to the school and the wider community such as fundraising for playground equipment for school or a specific charity. School councillors are also involved in important school decisions such as recruitment of new staff and are consulted on things which affect all the children in school.

Will my child be taught to swim?

During their time at St. Paul's, all children will be given the opportunity to learn to swim using the large indoor swimming pool at The Olympiad. Children will not attend every year, but we aim to provide three opportunities before they leave at the end of Year 6. We are very proud of the fact that it is quite rare for there to be any non-swimmers amongst the older pupils. Many of our children are extremely proficient swimmers who gain a variety of swimming awards.

What type of Religious Education is taught at St. Paul's?

We strive to provide our children with an insight into faiths and belief whilst providing a broadly Christian education. Our assemblies are essentially Christian or non denominational in content and ethos. We often invite the vicar from St. Paul's Church and other local churches to help speak at these assemblies. We follow the Local Authority Guidelines on Religious Education, but parents who wish their children to opt out of religious education or assemblies need to indicate this to the Headteacher in writing.



What are SATs (National Curriculum Tests) and what impact do they have on my child?



All children are tested at certain 'key stages' in their school life. At primary school this is at seven and eleven years of age. The National Curriculum sets out a list of skills that children of each age are expected to have mastered which are then tested. Many of the younger children are often completely unaware that they are being tested. We work hard as a school not to apply an undue amount of pressure to our children. Often, children in year six will say they actually enjoy the experience of the tests as it is an opportunity to show what they know. For children in year six, their individual results are sent home in term six.

All schools are also required to administer a year one phonics screening check, which assesses children's abilities to read real and non-real words using their phonic knowledge. Children in Y4 will take a short, online multiplication check – which will take place in June.

We also complete baseline assessments on our Reception children. Again the children are unaware that they are being assessed, but the results provide us with information, which can be used to track each child's progress through the school and support our teachers to teach the curriculum.

Can I take my child out of school for a holiday or for a family event?

Annual Holidays taken in term time require the Head Teacher's permission. This must be requested by completing the Holiday Request Form, obtained from the school office. Guidelines from September 2014 mean that holidays will not be authorised during term time – unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

Some of the circumstances where a holiday will **not** be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term.

Parents who take their children out of school during term for unauthorised reasons, could receive a penalty notice. Please see the website for further information about holiday absences.

Will I need to pay for school trips or activities?



Any activity that takes place mainly during school hours or is an essential part of the curriculum is always provided free of charge. However, we often try to enrich our curriculum by arranging exciting trips to places of interest and having educational visitors at school. We will request voluntary contributions towards the cost of these activities so that they can go ahead. However, if an insufficient number of parents are prepared to make contributions then the visit would be cancelled.

We also visit places within walking distance of the school. Each parent is requested to sign the General Visits Consent form, which gives us permission to go off the school site at short notice for local visits to continue our studies.

A residential trip is organised for Year 6. We currently visit Liddington PGL in Swindon, in November.

We are very fortunate to receive funding from Chippenham Borough Lands Charity. This funding is to help support children from low income families with trips and activities.

What do I do if I am concerned about something?

From time to time, you may have queries or concerns. We always operate an 'open door' policy and will try to answer your question or concern. We hope that your child's time at St. Paul's School will be a happy and fruitful one and that you seldom have cause for complaint. In the first instance you are invited to come and discuss the matter with your child's class teacher. If the problem is not resolved then a visit with the Headteacher would be next.

A copy of the formal Complaints Procedure may be found at school.

