



Tany's Dell Primary School and Nursery



Handbook for Parents of Children in Foundation Stage

Introduction

Partnership with Parents and Carers:

You, as parents, are the most important influence on your child's learning. Already you will have helped him/her during the earliest and most significant years in her/his development. Helping your child learn and supporting their education is highly important and we truly value your co-operation. For your child to do his/her best, we need to work together to build on your expert knowledge and her/his experiences. Parents / carers are asked to read and sign the home-school partnership agreement to fully promote this.

The Handbook for Parents of Children in Foundation Stage has therefore been designed for you to refer to whilst your child is a member of the Foundation Stage at Tany's Dell School. It is based upon the most frequently asked questions in the hope that it may answer any queries you may have about your child's education. It is not intended to replace any personal contact with the school.

What is the Foundation Stage?

The Foundation Stage is the very earliest part of a child's education. The Foundation Stage Curriculum has been particularly devised for very young children who attend school from the age of either three or four.

F1 = Foundation Stage One, *Nursery* – Silver Class (am) and Gold Class (pm)

F2 = Foundation Stage Two, *Reception* - Known as Ruby Class and Scarlet Class

What will my child be learning? Young children learn best when:

- The experiences are practical and relevant to the child
- The child feels successful and confident as a learner
- The environment is safe
- The learning is fun!

“To learn anything effectively you have to see it, hear it, feel it”

- Tony Stockwell, The Learning Revolution

We therefore believe that play is a central part of young children's learning. Through play, they can explore ideas, feelings and relationships. They can take risks, make mistakes and try things out without fear of failure. Play can extend the limits of what is possible and help them to be creative, flexible and imaginative. Rich play promotes control, mastery, confidence and well being.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**) is therefore planned to give pupils experiences of both indoor and outdoor learning. Sometimes this learning may be best suited to an off site visit, either in the local area or sometimes further afield. Full risk assessments are completed for all off site visits and evaluations completed on return to school. Records show that the experiences children have whilst on such visits impacts very positively on their learning and future progress. So the foundation stage teachers will plan through themes and topic work to ensure that all areas of learning in the Curriculum are covered.

Prime Areas	Specific Areas
Personal, Social & Emotional Development	Literacy
	Mathematics
Communication and Language	Understanding the World
Physical Development	Expressive Arts & Design

What are the channels of communication?

We are now a 'paperless' school. **Our main form of communication is now via email.** It is vitally important that we have your most up-to-date email address so that you receive all school communication and newsletters. You are also very welcome to email the school via parents@tanysdell.essex.sch.uk. Our school website also contains lots of information about the school and lists our key school policies as well. The website address is www.tanysdell.essex.sch.uk

Of course, we still use traditional methods of communication as well. Our receptionist is always there for face-to-face conversations, or on the end of the phone if you have any queries. We will continue to use external notice boards for up-to-date reminders and of course, the children will bring home their Home/School books every week. Teachers use the Home/School Book to let you know what your child has been learning throughout the week. We encourage you to use this book to share with us any achievements, concerns or questions you may have. In addition, please check your child's book bag **every day**.

We may also contact you by text message from time to time. If your child is unwell or we need to contact you urgently, we will telephone you or a named emergency contact if you are unavailable. **It is therefore most important that you keep us informed of up to date contact details, including mobile numbers. Also, if emergency contacts and those with permission to collect your child changes, please let us know straight away – we can only work with the information we have on file.**

There may be times when your child may have to be collected from school by an adult other than yourselves. To save you having to phone the school each time this happens, you are asked to complete a 'collection' form which lists one or two other people (with whom you have an agreement) who would be permitted to take your child at the end of the day - your child will not be permitted to go with anyone who is not on this list. However, we do understand that on an odd occasion and/or in case of an emergency, you may have to phone the school to inform us that another person (not on the list) may be picking your child up. Please make every effort to phone before 12:00 midday as messages to teachers can then be given to them during the lunch break, rather than having to disturb their afternoon lessons.

What is 'good' attendance?

Ofsted have set the figure of 96% attendance as 'average', therefore anything above this is good. Below 95% is considered to be **poor** attendance. The local authority may issue a penalty notice to parents and/or carers if their child's attendance is poor. Holidays during term time are not permitted.

What should my child wear for school?

At Tany's Dell, we teach children about never judging a book by its cover and that one's clothes do not determine the person wearing them. We celebrate individuality through children's talents, skills, determination and successes. We want children to be noticed and admired for these reasons rather than what they look like or for the clothes/shoes they wear.

Children attending Tany's Dell School and Nursery are expected to wear FULL school uniform – please see attached school uniform policy.

How can I help my child?

The best help that any parent can give to their child is to ensure that they arrive at school punctually and that they attend every day. All children should enter via the appropriate playground doors from 8.30am when they are encouraged to go straight into class and get ready for the start of the day.

Children in Reception (Ruby Class or Scarlet Class) enter via the lower playground doors and are allowed into school from 8.30am. They are encouraged to go straight into class and get ready for the start of the day. When the bell rings at 8.45am the register will be taken and any child not in class will be marked as absent or late. At the end of the day, parents meet their children at the gate on the front path at 3.10pm.

Encourage your child to develop skills of independence such as:

- going to the toilet
- putting their coat on/taking their coat off
- using a knife and fork
- eating healthily and follow the 5 a day approach to fruit and vegetables
- fastening their shoes (easy fastening shoes can be very helpful)
- recognising their name on the labels which you have put in their clothes
- holding a pencil correctly
- saying goodbye in the playground and not accompanying them into the cloakroom

Practise:

- counting with them
- pointing out colours to them
- reading nursery rhymes and traditional stories with them, such as Baa Baa Black Sheep and Goldilocks
- saying the letters of the alphabet with them and their sounds
- sequencing the days of the week with them

Plan a regular time to:

- look at their home/school book **and remember to comment and sign it**
- share their school reading book with them and remember to sign the Reading Record
- make cakes so that they can practise weighing out and mixing the ingredients for themselves
- go to the local library

Remember to:

- give them lots of praise when they do as you ask
- give them thinking time after you have explained what they have done wrong (no more than 5 minutes). Some parents find it useful to have a special chair or a step for their child to sit on whilst they are thinking about what they have done.
- check their hair every week for headlice. A good routine is to check their hair just before bed time.
- establish a **regular routine** for school days eg. time to get up, time to have breakfast, time for cleaning teeth and time to leave for school so that you arrive just before the start of school. Try and keep to the same routines after school, teatime, bath time etc.
- attend any appointments you are given to attend clinics such as Speech Therapy, Child Development and hospital Clinics. The school works closely with these partner agencies to ensure that children receive all the help that they need.

What can I do to help them at weekends or during school holidays?

Children often complain that they are bored when they are not at school. There are lots of things which they can do at home and within the local community which will help them to understand better what they are learning at school. The following list is just a sample of what could aid their learning:

- making cakes from scratch, not from packet mixes
- making a sandwich and cutting it in half
- writing/drawing thank-you cards or letters for presents that they have received
- playing traditional board games
- listening to story tapes/CDs
- disassembling cereal packets etc ready for the recycling bin so that they get used to net shapes
- visiting the library
- visiting Pets Corner in the Town Park
- going for a ride on a bus or train (even if you have a car!)

These are just a few activities- if you need more ideas ask your child's class teacher.

Remember that if you leave children to watch TV or play computer games unsupervised they may end up watching unsuitable material. The watershed at nine o'clock has been established to ensure that programmes unsuitable for children are broadcast once children are in bed. Unfortunately we have found that this often does not work because children watch recorded programmes and DVDs or play computer games that clearly are aimed at older audiences. We have also become aware that a number of children have Sky or Cable TV in their bedrooms and are therefore channel hopping when their parents believe them to be asleep. Forewarned is forearmed!

What if.....?

My child is ill/ my child needs to take medicine?

If your child has a temperature, upset stomach or any childhood illness they should be kept at home until they are well enough to return to school. Parents will need to phone and leave a message choosing Option 1 (to report a child's absence) on the first morning of absence and send a letter confirming the reason their child's return to school. If we do not receive a signed letter, a proforma will be sent for you to complete and return to school immediately. If a G.P. has prescribed a course of medication such as antibiotics, but your child is well enough to return to school, you can contact the school receptionist who will advise you whether a member of staff is voluntarily able to administer a dose during the school day. If this is the case you will be asked to complete an authorisation slip. That said, most parents/carers are able to adjust the times of the doses to the start and end of the school day. Fact sheets about childhood illnesses are available from the school reception.

I notice my child has headlice?

You must treat your child **immediately**. Advice can be sought from your local pharmacy as to which lotion or treatment is currently most effective. Once treated, your child should return to school, but you must ensure that you continue to check your child's hair everyday in case you have missed any of the eggs. If you do not treat your child straight away it will cause them considerable discomfort and they will become distracted during lessons. Remember to let the school know so that they can alert other parents of the need to check their children's hair.

What are school dinners like?

Yummie!!! All pupils in Reception and Key Stage One are entitled to a **free** school meal – every day. Menus are on a 3-week cycle and this information is on the website. There are two menus: summer and winter and you will be sent updated copies when they change. It

helps the office staff if you could book in a week at a time but we appreciate that sometimes our younger children prefer to sample a particular day's menu. As the children move through the school they become more familiar with the menu cycle and are able to record their own choice of meal.

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Children in the Nursery only attend on a part-time basis and therefore are not offered a school dinner. During the course of their nursery session they will be offered a variety of healthy snacks and tasters.

My child wants to have a packed lunch?

Please try to encourage your child to have a school dinner. They're free of charge for all infant pupils and absolutely delicious. Children soon forget about their fussy eating habits and enjoy a variety of delicious meals. We monitor our children carefully at lunch time and will inform you if we feel they are not eating sufficiently.

You should only provide a packed lunch (which should be healthy) if your child has severe issues with the school dinners.

Your child's packed lunch box should be clearly labelled with their name. In line with our Healthy Schools Award, we ask that you prepare a well balanced and nutritious packed lunch for your child, which should include:

- At least one portion of **fruit** and / or **veg every day**
- A **starchy food** such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals **every day**.
- Fresh meat, fish or other source of protein **every day**
- **Oily fish**, such as salmon, at least once **every three weeks**.
- **Dairy food** such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard **everyday**.
- Only still or sparkling water, fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, yoghurt or milk **drinks** and smoothies.

Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets ARE NOT PERMITTED. Cakes and biscuits are allowed but encourage your child to eat these only as part of a balanced meal. Also try to avoid snacks such as crisps. Instead, include seeds, vegetables and fruit (with no added salt, sugar or fat). Savoury crackers or breadsticks served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food are also a good choice. Preserved meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages / chipolatas should be included only occasionally.

The above advice has been taken from guidelines produced by the School food Trust. Visit www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk for further information and advice on healthier packed lunches, along with a suggested three week cycle. If you do not have access to the internet, copies are available from our reception.

I need to collect my child early?

Occasionally parents find themselves facing an emergency which necessitates collecting their child early from school. The school will authorise this as long as it does not become a regular occurrence when it will impact on their child's progress. Similarly parents may find themselves delayed at the end of the day and unable to arrive at school on time to collect their child. If you find yourself in this position you must telephone the school reception to ensure that we are made aware of this situation. Children will be asked to wait seated on the chairs in the main reception area. School staff are very busy after school and there may not

always be someone available to supervise your child. The school may need to refer a family to other agencies if a child is regularly collected late and we believe that this impacting on their welfare.

My child doesn't want to talk about school at the end of the day?

When your child comes out of school they will be tired and will probably want to leave their day behind them. For many children school is school and home is home - two different worlds and at 3.15pm all they are really interested in is getting home, playing with friends or watching TV. You will probably find that they will talk about school later in the evening when they are ready. Don't feel that there is a problem because they don't want to share everything with you, be prepared to accept that this is a sign of their growing independence. Try to remain positive and if they have had a problem at school try and ascertain the whole story, what was happening before, who was involved, what did your child do, before automatically jumping to their defence. Try and talk through the problem with your child and help them think of what they could do if they find themselves in the same situation again. Talk to your child's teacher if a problem is on-going or unresolved.

I want to discuss something with my child's teacher?

Please write a note either in your child's Home/school Book or on a separate piece of paper giving the class teacher an indication of what you would like to discuss and when you might be available. Alternatively you can telephone the school reception for an appointment. If you need to speak with the Receptionist at the start or end of the day you must proceed to the front entrance and report at reception. **Please do not enter the building by any other door as this breaches our health and safety procedures.** The class teacher will then get back to you as soon as possible to agree a mutually convenient time to meet. **It is not possible for you to catch the teacher at the start of the school day, either in the playground or in the building, as this can delay them from their professional duties.**

Sometimes parents feel the need to see the Headteacher about a particular concern. Again it is important that you contact the reception for an appointment and that you appreciate that the Headteacher's diary is very busy and therefore cannot always see parents upon demand. We will always endeavour to ensure that you are allocated an appointment as soon as possible. It is also helpful if you have discussed the matter first with your child's class teacher otherwise the Headteacher might need further time to consult with them before getting back to you.

We need to take a holiday in school time?

Headteachers are no longer permitted to authorise holidays during term time. Please ensure you are familiar with term dates so that you can book holidays during school breaks. If you do take a term time holiday, the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice (£60 fine) to each parent of each child. (For example... two parents + 2 children = £240).

I am worried that my child is being bullied?

There has been much about bullying in the press and media in recent years. This has been very helpful in making everybody aware of this anti-social behaviour but at the same time has confused many parents. When children are young and in the early years at school they are only just beginning to learn how to make friends, to share resources and to remember school rules. Often they will be friends one day and not the next. Frequently they will come home and tell only a part of the story because they are still not mature enough to realise that actions have consequences. **This is normal childhood behaviour.** Adults in the school will always be monitoring to check that a child is not coming into school each day to systematically and intentionally hurt another child. A good rule for parents is to remember to ask their child "What did you do?" rather than to always jump to their defence or rushing into school before being sure of what has really happened.

Please be assured that Tany's Dell has an Anti-bullying policy. Staff are trained to look out for any signs of bullying and children are continually reminded about what to do if they are worried about another child's behaviour towards them. Any incidents of negative behaviours are recorded and pupils disciplined appropriately. If necessary the Headteacher will ask to

see parents of children who are continually breaching the school's code of conduct to agree an appropriate behaviour management plan.

What happens when they are due to move up the next Key Stage?

During their Reception Year, they will be offered a number of opportunities to work with the staff and children in Year One of Key Stage One. These opportunities are planned as our transition programme so that the children smoothly transfer from one phase to the next. Listed below are just a few of the activities which help to bridge learning in the two phases:

- shared playtimes, story times, concert performances
- role play/activity corners in both classrooms
- if appropriate, gifted or talented children will be given opportunity to join some lessons with the next year group
- a lesson with their new teacher before they move up.

And please do remember...



“Every child is different; they look different; they behave differently; they develop differently and from different starting points” ...**we will!!**

Please keep this handbook to refer to throughout your child's education in the Foundation Stage.