

# **PTA Parent's Guide to P1**

## **Hello!**

Welcome to P1 at Cavehill Primary School. We are the Cavehill Parents Teachers Association and we have put this booklet together to help you as you and your child start coming to school. There are so many things to remember that it can, at times, be quite confusing. We hope some of the information and advice we've included here will help you and your child to relax and to enjoy the first few weeks of school.

Good luck, and enjoy your time here at Cavehill!

The Cavehill PTA Parents Sub-Committee

## **Drop-Off/Collection**

The entrance to P1 is at the back of the school on the right-hand side as you come up the stairs. Only P1 children and their parents use this entrance. Once you get onto the regular start times, you'll find that the door will open from about 8:50. At first, it is OK for parents to take their children to the classroom door, but soon after Hallowe'en, the school will encourage you to drop them off at the door, to develop their independence. When it is collection time, the children will line up by their class inside the corridor, with their coats and bags. They are then let out by their teachers one by one. They have been taught to 'tap' the teacher when they see their parent or carer and are then 'let go'. If the parent or carer is not there, they are set to one side to wait. Collection can take a bit of time, and you might need to push through the crowd in order to actually reach your child. It's a good idea, if someone different is coming to collect your child, to let the teacher know on the day.

## **The School Door**

Notices are often posted on the doors into the P1 corridor, so keep your eyes open for them. Children will sometimes be picked for 'Show and Tell'. Notes will be sent home on a Monday and if your child has been picked then send in an item that they can talk about on Friday. Sometimes you'll see a 'Junk Needed' poster (for junk art projects) or 'No PE Today'.

## **School Noticeboard**

There is a weatherproof school noticeboard on the wall just outside the P1 entrance. It has a range of notices, including school dinner menus and items from the weekly notes/newsletters.

## **The P1 Corridor and 'The Peg'**

Each child has a peg with his/her name on it. This is where they hang their coat and where their name tag and P.E. bag are kept. After hanging up their coat,

they should remove their self-registration symbol and take it into the classroom where it is hung on a hook, to indicate they are present that day. The P.E. bag stays on the peg and holds their P.E. shoes. If there is PE that day, the children should change into P.E. shoes and place their everyday shoes into the P.E. bag.

### **The Schoolbag and the Lunchbag**

Every child needs to have a schoolbag of some kind. Most children have rucksacks, because they hang easily over the backs of their chairs. What goes into a schoolbag? A small plastic container for 'break' containing a small snack, a water bottle; and their reading folder – sent in daily containing their reading book. This could include notes or permission slips or forms.

Dinner money or other permission slips should be brought in separate envelopes labelled with the child's name, class, amount and a short explanation regarding what the money is for.

Please do not send in toys to school unless it is for 'Show and Tell' as children can become very distracted and preoccupied with them. Children take their schoolbag into the classroom with them and hang it over the back of their chairs.

The lunch should be a separate bag or lunchbox and placed on the dedicated shelf just outside the classroom door. This isn't needed until the children are in school until 2pm.

All of the bits and pieces in these various bags should be labelled with your child's name. You can buy personalised labels from companies like Stuck On You ([www.stuckconyou.biz](http://www.stuckconyou.biz)). Please ensure that labels are checked and renewed if the writing wears off to ensure that items don't get lost.

### **Morning Routine**

The P1 daily routine is set out in a visual timetable. Teachers have cards which they stick onto the front of the classroom, to show the children the order of the day and what will happen when. The children soon learn to go and check them to see what is going to happen first. Your child may run off to see if there is going to be PE (which there often is). They will then return to hang up their coat and get changed into PE shoes.

The children are arranged into tables and are given a specific place in which to sit, with their name clearly displayed. Their schoolbag goes onto the back of the chair and there will be a toy or activity of some kind with which the child must play until the school day starts; they are not allowed to run around and do 'free play' until later on. At different intervals during the year work will come home to you, and you'll be amazed at how much they do.

### **Homework**

Homework is made up of several different books and bags.

First, the 'reading folder'. This is actually a clear plastic envelope in which the teacher sends home small reading books. You are to read them with your child that night and send them back in the schoolbag the next morning – this is very

important as share the books. If your child fails to return a reading book then another child might not get the book that is required.

Second, the homework bag. This is the large, clear plastic bag that says 'school bag' on it. It contains **your child's homeworks for the week**. This is given out on Mondays and returned, completed, on Thursdays; therefore, you can spread homework out over the 3 nights, making it easier for your child. **The bag will also contain a word book in which the teacher will write the words the class is working on.** You are supposed to help your child learn these words, and you'll be sent home some pages that you can make 'word cards' out of, to help them practice. Occasionally, the children will be given a word test, although these don't start until after Christmas. You'll get the test results back in the homework bag. Words must be revised every day to ensure success.

Try to do the homework in short bursts, because the children get tired and lose concentration. Insist on high standards and good presentation. Targets will be written on to your child's homework book.

### **Curriculum Information Meetings**

After a few weeks in P1, you will be invited to a curriculum information meeting when the teachers take you through the basics of what you need to know. They explain the curriculum and what they will be teaching the children, and how they approach reading.

### **School Uniform**

School uniform can be ordered online and over the phone directly from our suppliers. Visit the school web site ([www.cavehillps.co.uk](http://www.cavehillps.co.uk)) for further information.

Don't wait until August/September to buy your uniform. Many of the sizes will be sold out. Don't get cheap boys' trousers, as they wear out very quickly. The M&S wool blend trousers (about £12 a pair) were excellent and you could get by with just two pairs for the whole year (although a third pair in a larger size might be a smart investment for April/May, when they've grown). It isn't essential to purchase 5 sweatshirts; 3 would suffice. Three polo shirts would also do, but extras are always useful, since some will get ruined because of paint and the like. The uniform sizing day at the school is a great way to try on and get the size right. Remember as well that the branded school fleeces, hats and coats are all optional, so only buy if you think your child will wear them, or if you need one anyhow.

### **PE**

You will need a P.E. bag to hold 'P.E. slippers'. The P.E. bag should just hang on your child's peg. It won't be needed right away, as PE doesn't really start until later in the term. You'll be told when. P.E. shoes are lightweight shoes that are sold in the school uniform section of clothing shops. Children will often run into their class to check the visual timetable. Often it will say on the school door if there is PE or not. Sometimes other children will be more than happy to keep you informed! Children should be encouraged to change their new shoes right from the start to foster independence and confidence.

## **Tuesday Notes**

You will get lots of notes home in your child's schoolbag, mainly on Tuesdays but still remember to check everyday. These are to inform you about things going on at the school, to ask for money for a fundraising initiative or school trip, or for forms to be returned, or for bits and bobs to be brought in (for example, plant pots, 'junk' for junk art projects, glue sticks, etc). Much of the news and information can also be found on the website, in case notes go missing. If you have anything to return to the school, it goes in the schoolbag. It is important, give it directly to a teacher as often children don't remember to even when reminded if they have a note to give to the teacher.

## **Buddy System**

You'll know from the P1 Inductions that your child will have been assigned a 'buddy' from one of Cavehill's senior classes. The buddy is there to help your child adjust to their new classroom environment. They stay close to your child, encourage them to try different activities in the classroom and pay particular attention to them, so they don't feel neglected or left out. While buddies are not around as much after the first few weeks, they will continue to have a relationship with your child throughout the year, visiting the classroom and sending Christmas or Easter cards. Buddies will visit the P1 classroom on a rota basis at lunchtime. Different events will be held with the buddy throughout the year.

## **PTA**

The Cavehill PTA represents all the parents at the school. When your child comes to Cavehill, you automatically become a member. The PTA is involved in a huge range of activities. It actively raises money for the school through events like the Christmas Fair and Summer Fete. It runs social events, so parents can meet each other. It advertises all of these events in its regular newsletter, which will come home with the Tuesday notes. Do come along to an event or activity, for they are excellent opportunities to meet parents just like yourselves.

### **Things I Wish I'd Known**

- Lunchboxes, schoolbags, jumpers, shoes etc can go missing so label everything!!!
- The PTA is a great community for new school parents!!
- Other people's kids were also finding settling in difficult: at the time it felt like mine was the only one in tears each day
- One way to solve the problem of who to invite to birthday parties especially if your child does not have a clear friendship group is to invite all the children of the same sex as your child in that class
- Being one of the youngest in the class really makes a difference at first but this gets less as the years go by
- To buy school uniform BEFORE the summer holidays and not in the middle of August, when it's already all sold out
- To buy a big enough school bag to fit all the bits – even if it is nearly as big as your child! - a rucksack is perfect, because it hangs over the chair
- Not to worry too much if your child doesn't want to talk about their day as soon as they get out of school – small bits and stories will seep out after a bit of downtime
- Not too worry too much if your child doesn't seem to be making friends; they will in time

### **Things I'm Glad I Did**

- Bought 2 Sweatshirts and kept one new until School Photos were finished then I started to use it!
- Made sure that my son could write his own name before coming to school
- School pick-ups - the wait until the P1s get out (usually 15 minutes after everyone else) was a great way to get to know other parents
- Had a big box of dressing up clothes, fabric pens and face paints - really helped for all those fancy dress days
- Didn't worry too much about the notices telling me to leave my child off at the door; if your child is anxious or a bit clingy, then no one will mind;
- Didn't try to do my child's homework, especially the creative/craft stuff; although most of it looked like the dog's dinner, it was his and he was hugely proud of his efforts
- Had a box for homework materials (pencils, coloured pencils, sharpeners) on hand and ready to go – this made sitting down to do homework a fairly 'fuss' free process
- Had a homework routine working
- Made up a homework book for my younger children – this kept them busy whilst helping the older one with the real homework
- Had a basic set of craft materials like junk/scrap paper/ glue ready to hand for unexpected craft assignments