

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Thame



Parents' Handbook

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
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Thame
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www.st-josephs.oxon.sch.uk

Welcome to the St Joseph's Catholic School family!

We are all delighted that you and your child are joining our school. St Joseph's is an open, friendly community whose values are firmly rooted in our Catholic faith, which recognises the unique nature of each child as a special gift from God. We are committed to developing all of our pupils to their full potential as confident, independent, knowledgeable, skilled, caring boys and girls. By working closely with parents and setting high expectations we aim to foster excellent learning for our children right from the start, and to promote in them positive attitudes to learning, school and life.

This Guide is for families with children at St Joseph's and for parents who are considering enrolment at our school. It is intended to provide parents with some initial information about our school routines and day to day life. It should be read in conjunction with other information about our policies and procedures which can be found on our website at www.st-josephs.oxon.sch.uk, or by contacting the school office.

I hope that this document will provide you with what you need to know about our school. If you have any questions or would like to visit us, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jess Tweedie
Principal

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the life and message of Jesus, and believing that every child is made in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, St Joseph's school is just like a family, where everyone is welcomed, where everyone is loved, respected and cared for, where everyone is helped to achieve their very best, and where God is at the heart of everything we do

SCHOOL STAFF ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-18

PRINCIPAL DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Ms Jess Tweedie
Miss Fiona Dyer

TEACHING STAFF

Early Years Unit

Miss Lisa Oakley and Mrs Claire Lowson

Year 1

Mrs Diane Harriman and Miss Mikayala Herbert

Year 2

Mrs Julie Dale and Miss Mikayala Herbert

Year 3

Miss Nicola Cox

Year 4

Miss Fiona Dyer

Year 5

Miss Rebekah Arnison

Year 6

Mrs Candy Hanson and Mrs Deborah Horner

Special Needs Co-ordinator

Mrs Deborah Horner

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT STAFF

Administration Manager

Mrs Sue McGarry

Finance Officer

Mrs Sandra Medland

School Secretary

Mrs Lesley Schmidt

TEACHING SUPPORT STAFF

Sister Anne-Marie Frearson

Mrs Kerith Bruce

Mrs Rosemary Currie

Miss Eileen Harvey

Mrs Claire Harris

Mrs Janice Heaney

Mrs Cindy Hawkins

Miss Mikayala Herbert

Mrs Monika Holland

Mrs Fiona Macfarlane

Mrs Samantha Murray

Mrs Carolyn Niedzielski

Mrs Catherine Swart

Ms Lucy White

LUNCHTIME SUPPORT STAFF

Mrs Carmel Davies

Mrs Jenna Smith

Mrs Paula Collinge

CATERING STAFF

Mrs Caroline Eele

Mrs Sarah Hobbs

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

Mrs Sue Heath

Miss Eileen Harvey

Miss Mikayala Herbert

Mrs Carolyn Neidzielski

BREAKFAST CLUB

Mrs Dana Adams

Mrs Cindy Hawkins

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL
TERM DATES
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018 – 2019

Autumn Term **Wednesday 5 September – Friday 21 December 2018***

Half term *Monday 22 – Friday 26 October*

Inset days *Tuesday 4 September*

Spring Term **Tuesday 8 January – Friday 5th April 2019***

Half term *Monday 18 – Friday 22 February*

Inset days *Monday 7 January*

Bank holidays *Friday 19 April and Monday 22 April*

Summer Term **Tuesday 23 April – Friday 19 July 2019***

Half term *Monday 27 May – Friday 31 May*

Inset days *Monday 22 July – Wed 24th July*

Bank holidays *Monday 6 May and Monday 27 May*

*** School closes at 1.30pm on the last day of each full term**

THE SCHOOL DAY

8.45	Registration
10.30-10.45	Break
12.00 - 1.00	Lunch (Key Stage 1)
12.05 – 1.00	Lunch (Key Stage 2)
3.00	School day ends

Arrival

School is open to pupils from 8.30 am. Children should assemble on the green playground until the bell rings, when they should line up to be taken into class by their teachers. Parents should ensure that there is a member of staff on duty on the playground before leaving the site.

Early Years Children should be brought directly into the classroom by their parents, but we ask that parents of all other children do not come into the school buildings at the start of the day. Before the bell rings teachers are busy preparing for lessons and will not have time for impromptu meetings. Once the bell has rung, please say your goodbyes in the playground. Classes need to settle to work straight away without any distractions from learning.

Children arriving late after registration should be signed in to school in the book in the school office.

Departure

Parents may wait for their children on the green playground. Teachers will bring the children out onto the playground, where they may be collected by their parents. Early Years children should be collected from their classroom.

Children in Years 5 and 6 may walk home from school by themselves, provided that parents have given their written permission.

Please call the school to let us know if you will be late collecting your children from school. They will be taken to wait safely outside the school office until you can collect them.

School staff will try to telephone you if you are delayed without explanation and, if you cannot be reached, will contact the other adults named as contacts on your child's school record.

Please let the school know if you have arranged for someone else to collect your child as we will not release children to anyone other than their parents without your permission.

Site Security and Health and Safety

The gates to the driveway at the front of school and to the church car park will be closed at 9.00 am and re-opened at 2.45 pm. During these times please come to the gate at the front of school and use the intercom system to call office staff to let you in.

Parents should always report to the school office whenever they visit during the school day. If your child has to leave school during the school day, for example for a medical appointment, you should call at the school office to sign them out and should sign them back in on their return.

Travelling to and from School

We encourage children to walk or cycle into school wherever possible. There are cycle and scooter racks available. If cycles or scooters are left in the racks they should be securely locked. We do not advise leaving cycles or scooters in the racks overnight – in an emergency they may be left in school. Scooters are not permitted inside the school gates.

Car Park

For parents who need to drive their children to or from school, we are fortunate to have the use of the Church Car Park. Although it is quite large, it can become congested, particularly at the end of the school day. In order to help us to take care of our children parents should observe important safety procedures when using the church car park:

- In order to ensure the safety of all of our children when entering or leaving the site, please *always escort your child* in the car park. An unaccompanied child could very easily be unseen amongst vehicles manoeuvring in and out of spaces and the car park itself.
- For everyone's convenience we operate a one-way system within the car park, circulating *clockwise* through the gate nearest the school and round through the gate nearest the convent.
- Please do not park *in front of the church, in the disabled bays or on the double yellow lines*. We know that the car park can get very congested, particularly in the afternoons. Please do not worry about being late to collect your children because you cannot find a parking space - we would rather look after your children while you find somewhere to park safely than risk an accident in the car park.
- The part of Brook Lane that runs from the Presbytery to the top of the school drive is for pedestrian access into school. Please keep this area safe by not using this area for parking.
- Please do not leave cars in the church car park during the day. The bottom part is used by the school as a playground. The top part is used by people attending church services and activities in the church hall.

Lunch Time

Hot school lunches are freshly prepared in our school kitchen. All children in Key Stage 1 (EYU and Years 1 and 2) are entitled to a free school lunch. Children in Key Stage 2 may also take lunch at a cost of £2.10. Information about ordering school lunches and menus can be found on the school website.

If you prefer your child to have a packed lunch, please note that as a 'Healthy School' we encourage parents to provide a packed lunch which is a healthy balanced meal, including protein and carbohydrate and some fresh fruit or vegetables, and which should not include fizzy or sugary drinks, chocolate or sweets. Children are told that they should not on any account share food with others; this is particularly important as we have a number of children in school with severe nut allergies.

Children in Key Stage 1 can bring in a piece of fruit from home which will be eaten in the morning and in the afternoon they are currently provided with a piece of fresh fruit as part of the Government's Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. We also operate a fruit bar at morning break and children in may wish either to bring 20p to buy a piece of fruit or bring in fruit from home.

Water is available in all classrooms and we encourage children to drink throughout the day.

Visiting Church and Sacramental Programme

We hold school Masses in church several times a year. All parents are welcome to attend. In addition, the children will attend parish Mass at least once a term. Father David and Sister Anne Marie are important members of our community and frequent visitors to school.

In Year 3 children take part in the Sacramental Programme for First Holy Communion and in Year 6 they are prepared for Confirmation as part of their RE studies.

Sharing and Gospel Assemblies

We hold a number of Sharing Assemblies at 9am on Friday mornings throughout the school year. These are hosted by specific classes and give an opportunity for the children to tell parents and the rest of the school what they have been doing during the term. Gospel Assemblies are also held on Friday mornings throughout the school term. We present Merit Certificates and Birthday Biscuits at most Sharing and Gospel Assemblies. All parents are welcome to attend our Sharing and Gospel Assemblies – a calendar will be published in the School Newsletter.

After School Club and Breakfast Club

Our Breakfast and After School Clubs provide childcare from 7.30 – 8.30 am and from 3.00 – 6.00 pm Monday to Friday, subject to availability of places. Information about these Clubs can be found on the school website.

Activity Clubs

We run a number of after school activity clubs throughout the school year ranging from sports to music and crafts. These are run by teachers, volunteer parents and outside organisations and are available for children in Years 3– 6.

Music

Music is an important part of our school curriculum. Children take part in music lessons across the school, we sing as a whole school in hymn practice and mass. Additionally, peripatetic teachers from the County Music Service visit the school to give flute, clarinet, saxophone, violin and cello lessons to the children. The school office can provide information about instrument lessons.

Sports

Children take part in PE lessons in class as part of their curriculum work. We also offer after school activity clubs in various sports throughout the year. The school takes part in sporting events through the Thame Partnership of Schools.

Cycling Proficiency

All children in Year 6 will have the opportunity to take part in sessions, taught and supervised by parent volunteers, leading to the Cycling Proficiency test.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

In accordance with DfE guidelines, we believe that our school uniform can instil a sense of pride in our school among our pupils and will support positive behaviour. We have taken steps to ensure that our uniform is affordable and is available to all families. In cases of financial difficulty, assistance may be available

Uniform
Navy blue full zip fleece or sweatshirt (school logo/plain)* or jumper or cardigan
Grey school trousers or knee length school shorts or navy blue skirt or pinafore
Light blue polo shirt (school logo*/plain), worn tucked in to trousers or skirts
Navy blue summer check or stripe summer dress
Grey or white socks or navy blue opaque tights
PE Kit
Navy blue tracksuit (plain with no branding) - optional
Navy blue shorts*
White T-shirt
Trainers or plimsolls

Items marked with an asterisk, together with PE and book bags may be ordered online from our suppliers, Price and Buckland, either by following the link on the school's website or by going directly to:

www.pbparentsonline.co.uk/stjosephsprimary

The above web address should be entered into your browser address bar, not a search engine such as Google or Yahoo. You will need to register and create your own username and password and then you are ready to order.

To avoid ordering the incorrect size and then having to pay return postage, we strongly recommend pupils try on samples of the uniform to determine the size required – please ask at the school office.

Delivery to your home is made within 5 working days for a charge of £2.50. Alternatively you may have your order delivered to school free of charge. Deliveries to School will be made on the second and 4th Monday of each month, with the order deadline for guaranteed inclusion within school deliveries being the first Monday of every month.

If you do not have access to a computer, you can pick up an order form from the school office and order by post.

All other items of school uniform are widely available from department stores and supermarkets.

Shoes—all children should wear black school shoes – not boots or trainers - and should have a separate pair of black plimsolls or black soft shoes to wear inside. For health and safety reasons, open-toed sandals are not acceptable.

Swimming Goggles—If, for medical reasons, you wish your child to wear goggles during swimming lessons you should complete the permission form found on the school website.

Outdoor Play—you may wish to provide your child with a pair of tracksuit bottoms to wear over their uniform at playtimes, particularly in winter, when the playground and field can be wet and/or muddy.

Bags—Pupils will need a book bag, shoe bag and a bag to hold PE kit—all available from Price and Buckland. As space in the classrooms is very limited, we ask that no large bags or backpacks be brought into school.

Jewellery—Children should not wear jewellery in school. This includes everything except watches. If pupils have pierced ears they may wear small discreet sleepers or studs. If they are unable to remove these themselves, they must be covered over for PE and swimming lessons.

Make up – Make up and nail varnish are not acceptable in school.

Hair—Long hair should be tied back. Hair ornaments should be discreet and be in school colours.

Lost Property

The lost property box can be found in the school office and is usually full to the brim with un-named items of clothing, many of which are never claimed. **Please do ensure that all items of clothing, including shoes, are clearly and indelibly marked with your child's name.**

MEDICAL MATTERS

The Oxfordshire Health Authority arranges for optical tests at regular intervals during the time a child is at primary school. These are of a routine nature and parents will be notified beforehand. Children are weighed and measured in Reception and Year 6 under the Government scheme. Parents have the option to withdraw their child from any of these screening programmes.

If your child is ill or injured whilst at school we will always inform you, so please ensure we have an emergency telephone number so we can contact you.

Teachers and other school staff will act like any responsible parent to ensure that children are safe, and to take action when necessary in the event of accident or illness. In exceptional circumstances this might mean giving medicines, seeking medical advice or contacting emergency services.

School staff are trained in first aid and will be able to deal with any minor incidents and injuries that do not necessitate contacting a parent. If your child has a minor bump to the head we will

monitor them carefully, put a 'bumped head' sticker on their sweatshirt or fleece and ensure that you are notified about the incident when you collect your child.

Children with asthma should have an inhaler in school which will be kept in their classroom, where they can have access to it at all times. Please make sure that inhalers are in-date and clearly labelled with your child's name. If your child requires an Epi-pen, please ensure you bring 2 into school, where they will be kept in the Office.

Under certain circumstances, school staff are able to administer medicine to children. Please speak to the school office staff if you need information about this.

If your child is too ill to attend school you should notify us before 9.15 am on the morning of the first day of absence and on any subsequent mornings. Children suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting should be kept out of school until 48 hours after the last episode.

If your child accidentally wets and/or soils themselves in school, staff will make sure that they are cleaned, freshened and given clean clothing if appropriate. This will be done in a friendly and reassuring way. If you do not want school staff to look after your child in this way, but would prefer to be called to do this yourself, please notify us in writing.

ABSENCE

If your child has to have time off school because of illness or for any other reason, you are required by law to let us know by phone or letter. New legislation now requires us to identify and total the reasons for absences e.g. family circumstances, emergencies, illness etc. If we have not heard from you by 9.15 am we will call you to check that your child is safely with you.

Holidays should be taken during school holiday periods. If you wish to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, please make your request in writing to the Principal, who will only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances, and will take into consideration your child's attendance record.

COMMUNICATION

Curriculum

Teachers produce a Curriculum Letter at the start of each term, which outlines the work the class will be undertaking over the coming term, weekly routines and administrative information.

Newsletters

You will receive school Newsletters regularly during the school year. They will keep you up to date with events in school. Newsletters and most other school correspondence are posted on the school website.

Progress Reports and Feedback

We hold Parent Consultation Meetings in the Autumn and Spring Terms when parents have the opportunity to talk about their child's progress with their Class Teacher. Reports are sent out towards the end of the Summer term. However, you are welcome to speak to your child's teacher at any time and should speak to them to find a mutually convenient time to meet.

Policies

Most school policies are available to view on the school website but parents are welcome to ask for paper copies from the school office.

Letters Home

We use an electronic messaging system for communicating with parents. This allows us to send you school letters, newsletters and other communications by email or text message, thus saving paper and ensuring that letters are more likely to reach you rather than languishing in your child's book bag.

Paying for School Lunches and other Items

We ask that all payments for school lunches, trips, clubs and other items be made online rather than by cash or cheque. Information about School Gateway, our online payment service, can be found on the school website.

THE FRIENDS OF ST JOSEPH'S

The Friends of St Joseph's is our Parent Teacher Association which raises funds to support the children's education at St Joseph's. They do this principally by organising social event for both parents and children. The highlight of their year is the annual School Ball, but they also run quizzes, bingo and poker nights, children's discos, our school and parish fete and other events. Over the years the Friends have bought equipment for the school including playground equipment, audio visual equipment for the hall and classrooms and have funded activities including school trips and visiting theatre groups. All this work is done by a committee of volunteers. If you have some time to spare you may consider joining the Friends – just speak to any Committee member.

CHARGING FOR VISITS AND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The school can ask for voluntary contributions for educational visits or activities. If insufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost of a visit then it may be cancelled at the discretion of the Principal and the Academy Committee. The law makes it clear that there is no obligation for parents to contribute and pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made a contribution.

Charges may be made for any activity not required as part of the National Curriculum, which takes place outside of school hours. Charges may be made for the actual cost of board and lodging of any residential visit, but any pupil whose parents are in receipt of Income Support or Family Credit will not be charged.

PARTNERSHIPS

In April 2013, St Joseph's became an academy as part of The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company (DBMAC), a group of seven Catholic schools in South Oxfordshire. As part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham family of Catholic Schools, we share our mission with the Archdiocese and all their schools and academies. Membership of the DBMAC gives us support with the strategic direction of St Joseph's and helps to maintain the distinct Catholic nature of our school.

Through the DBMAC, our schools will benefit from working together to provide increased opportunities for all our children, whilst retaining their unique characteristics.

St Joseph's is also an associate member of the Thame Partnership of Schools, whose members are Lord Williams's School and its other feeder primary schools. Membership gives us many opportunities for cross-school activities in sports and other areas of the curriculum.

HELPING IN SCHOOL

We are always grateful for parents who volunteer to come in to help in school to help with reading or other classroom activities. Please speak to the Principal if you would like to help.

We would be pleased to hear from parents who have skills, interests or experiences they would like to share with the children - again, please speak to the Principal if you think you have something to contribute.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

If you are worried about any aspect of the school, please contact the class teacher in the first instance. If you are still concerned, contact the Principal to discuss the matter further. If the matter is still unresolved, you can refer the matter to the Chair of the Academy Committee via the school office.