



## Parent Information Sheet

### Help Your Child Get Ready For Reception

*There's a lot to think (and worry) about when your first child starts school. Will they make friends? Do they need to be able to read and write already? What will the other parents be like? These concerns can feel all-consuming at the time, but before you know it, it'll be your child's last day in Year 6, and you'll be wondering where the time went.*

*The main advice is not to worry about learning to read and write before starting school. This is what they go to school for. Instead, focus on helping your child become independent, resilient and have the ability to take turns and share with a friend.*



Here are some things you can do to help your child be ready to start Reception:

- **Transition** – Ensure that you and your child attend the transition meetings, visits and play sessions suggested by school. This will help you and your child become familiar with their new school and what to expect when they start Reception in September.
- **Toileting** – Teach your child to use the toilet (and urinal when older) independently if possible. This will improve their self-esteem when they are at school with their peers. It will also reduce any potential medical issues that arise from not using the toilets when at school because they can't do it for themselves. Talk to boys about sitting or standing when toileting. Most boys find it easier to toilet independently (and it's more hygienic when they are younger) by sitting down until they are older and have better control. Teach boys to put the toilet seat up when they learn to stand up. Teach your child how to wipe their own bottom before they start school. Talk them through how to do it when they are old enough and check at the end. Remember – schools don't have wet wipes available for use, so ensure your child is comfortable using toilet paper. Ensure that your child can flush the toilet and wash their hands independently without being reminded. We know little accidents happen at times (especially when younger children are busy at play), but remind your child to tell a someone so that they can be cleaned up.
- **Use Cutlery** – Teach your child how to use cutlery when eating. Instead of using hands or spoons to eat, let your child eat using a small knife and fork. Lots of shops have small metal knives and forks just like adult ones that children often find easier to manage. Sit at a table together when eating so that your child can see you modelling how to use a knife and fork – not just a fork. Teach your child how to cut their food up independently.
- **Coats** – Ensure your child can put their own coat on and take it off. If it has a hood, children who are struggling can use their hood to help by putting on the hood first and then each arm in turn. Teach your child how to zip up their coat. This can be very tricky, so ensure the coat your child wears zips up easily. Remember – the quicker their coat is on, the quicker they get outside to play with their friends!
- **Shoes And Socks** – Choose shoes that your child can put on and take off independently. Velcro shoes at this stage are best until your child learns how to do laces independently. Teach your child how to

put on and take off socks and tights. When taking socks and tights off, show your child how to turn them in the right way. Show your child how to store socks inside their shoes so they don't get lost.

- **Uniform** – Children can find it difficult to wear uniform when they first start school – especially if they haven't worn uniform or formal shirts/blouses before. Make sure uniform is purchased in plenty of time before starting school and let your child practice wearing it around the house. Each item will need different skills and there will be a trick for each style. Encourage children to do buttons by themselves starting at the bottom (top buttons are trickier and teachers will always help here). Teach your child to undress and dress themselves - this will mean PE lessons are much quicker in school.
- **Stories** – Go to the library and choose some books about starting school. Share these with your child and talk about how they feel about starting school. Reassure your child that they will have lots of fun at school and make lots of new friends.
- **Tidy Up** – Encourage your child to tidy up their own toys, books, games and equipment.
- **Friends** – If you know some children who are starting Fernhurst at the same time, perhaps arrange a playdate or visit to the park together. This will ensure that your child sees a familiar face on their first day at school. This can continue through the year. If you don't know anyone starting school, then link up with friends' children who are the same age.
- **Talking** – Help your child improve their vocabulary and grammar. Move away from 'baby talk' and increase the amount and complexity of the vocabulary you use with your child. By being a role model for language, your child will follow from your example.
- **Positivity** - Spend time talking to your child about what will happen when they're at school. Make it exciting and fun. Don't let your child see if you feel nervous or worried as they may pick up on any nervous feelings you might have which will enhance your child's anxiety.

### **Ten activities to prepare your child for school**

1. Read stories and talk to them about the characters, events and outcomes.
2. Encourage your child to talk about their daily experiences for example, what they have done in Nursery.
3. Point out common words in the environment such as shop, bus stop, car park and supermarket. Play games to encourage them to remember the words.
4. Allow your child to draw and 'play write' and encourage them to tell you what they have done.
5. Do dot-to-dots, tracing and colouring.
6. Share books, comics, newspapers and magazines.
7. Play counting games, learn counting rhymes / songs and learn traditional nursery rhymes.

8. Make collections of things - sort them by colour, type, size and shape.
9. Give your child responsibilities, such as laying the table, tidying their room, making their bed and clearing up after themselves.
10. Play outside and get dirty.

### **When Starting School**

When children first start Reception, they often get tired due to the long days of learning lots of new things at the start of the year. This can lead to tears, tantrums, bed wetting or nightmares at home. Letting your child have a nap when they get home from school might seem like a good idea. However, this will disrupt meal times and push bedtime later, which will lead to further problems. A drink, snack and a little downtime when they come home from school (cuddle time on the sofa, share stories or watch a little TV) will help your child have a little rest. Your child will quickly get used to the busy days in school.

Bedtime routines are very important to help your child be ready for the next day of learning. Children of Nursery and Reception age should be getting 11 – 13 hours of undisturbed sleep every day. Consider making sure your child has a good bedtime routine at a reasonable time. Think carefully about reducing the use of screen time after dinner. Consider a bath to help your child relax before sharing a story and then sleep time.

### **Some advice from other Parents about starting school:**

Be prepared – "Name everything"

- "Ensure they are able to do the simple essential life skills like use a knife and fork, take self to toilet, dress themselves etc."
- "If nothing else, make sure they can at least get themselves dressed."
- "Don't be surprised if your child is extremely tired after school for the whole first term."
- "Get organised, have a calendar with important dates and make extra time for tired children."
- "Be prepared to go through lots of new tops as they explore their use of pens – they tend to stain their shirts. Invest in a stain remover."
- "Expect your child to be very tired, it's a big adjustment for them. They often don't want to talk about school and sometimes their behaviour is worse having been concentrating at school all day."
- "Talk to your child about starting school and what to expect."
- "Encourage independence over the summer so they can dress/undress themselves, go to toilet/wash hands, use cutlery, carry their own bags, spot letters/words/numbers in everyday things like street signs, cereal packets, get children to recognise their own name written down. Get involved with school - whether it's with the teacher about learning, or to other parents for fundraising and socials."
- "Talk to other parents or friends to find out what you need to organise, buy and plan for the school start."
- "Make friends with other parents in your child's class."

- "Relax and be there to support your child. Don't be stressed, your child will pick up on your emotions."
- "Don't worry – our children are ready more than we are and they take all these things in their stride. They are like little sponges so embrace their hunger and need to continue to learn while they explore the world around them."
- "It's ok to be a little worried and sad when your little one starts primary school but enjoy every step of the next stage in their growing up."
- "Relax and let your children enjoy school."
- "Don't be upset or stressed! They will be fine! And have a great time!"

**More Information can be found on the following websites:**

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/For-Parents/Be-School-Ready/Primary-School>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/tips-for-starting-school>

<https://www.mumsnet.com/education/starting-primary-school>

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/primary/learning-school/starting-primary-school/>

<https://www.motherandbaby.co.uk/baby-and-toddler/toddler/starting-school-tips-reception>

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/being-school-ready/#readyforschool>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/how-to-prepare-your-child-for-primary-school>