

The A-Z of Early Years at St Mary's: A Handy Guide to School Life!

Please keep this document and refer to it throughout the year to answer your queries.

Allergies

If your child has an allergy, intolerance or other dietary requirement the school must be informed before they start. This information must be declared on the initial 'Starting School' forms and returned along with medical evidence (where applicable). Please discuss details with the class teacher during your initial meeting together. You will be required to fill out a dietary form for Caterlink (our catering company) in September.

If an adrenaline auto-injector (Epipen, Jext etc.) is required, a further meeting with your class teacher and Inclusion Manager is arranged to create a Health Care Plan for your child. Two **adrenaline auto-injectors** must be kept in school at all times, so please ask your GP for these in advance of September.

Attendance/Absences

St. Mary's has the highest expectations of pupil attendance and punctuality. There is a clear policy on attendance. All children are expected to attend school for every session unless they are unwell (see 'Illness' section). Your support is greatly appreciated to keep our school attendance as outstanding. Each school day is made up of two sessions, so if your child is absent for one day it will count as two absences.

Should you wish to take your child out of school during term time you should put your **request in writing** to the Head Teacher via the school office. **Requests for absence for family holidays in term time will not be authorised.** Authorised absences are granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher and only in exceptional circumstances. Absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Bags

In Nursery drawstring bags with a change of uniform in case of 'accidents' stay in school during term. Nursery book bags come in on *Wednesdays only*, to save them carrying it back and forth.

In Reception book bags go home every day.

See 'What your child will need' section of the handbook.

Behaviour

The school's Behaviour Policy, as well as the Home School Partnership Agreement, will be sent to all parents and we recommend that all parents/carers read them/are familiar with them. These and other key policies are available on the school website.

Cake Sales

Each class takes it in turn to hold a cake sale after school on Friday in the main playground. Parents can support these events not only by buying the cakes but also by making and selling the cakes when it is the turn of their child's class. All money raised in this way is donated to the organising class, and is a real support when buying resources. For further information contact your Class Rep (see separate section).

Church

St. Mary's Church is on Putney High Street in the Parish of Putney, in the Southwark Diocese. St. Mary's Church is the venue for special events such as the Harvest Service, the Carol Service at Christmas and the Mother's Day Service. Details will follow nearer the time.

Collecting your child

See pick up/drop off details in the handbook. If the child is going home with someone not known to the school staff **we must be notified in advance** otherwise we cannot release your child until we have spoken to you.

Collective Worship

Children in Early Years take part in collective worship (previously known as assemblies) planned by the Phase One Collective Worship Lead. Once a month, Reception have a special celebration worship, together with the whole school, to which parents are invited. Reception usually start attending this in the Spring term. School Collective Worship has a specific Christian message. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, it is expected that by applying to a Church school parents understand the distinctive Christian character and recognise that Collective Worship is

central to the life of the school. Parents who have concerns about this should discuss them with the Head Teacher.

Class Fund

In Nursery and Reception we carry out extra activities with the children throughout the year including cooking, gardening and special craft activities. In order to cover the cost of ingredients, which add up very quickly, we ask for a donation of **£40 for the year in a clearly labelled envelope**. Please hand this to a member of Early Years staff within the first half term. If you would prefer to donate for each half term at a time, then please do speak to the class teacher. Thank you so much in advance.

Class Email

The easiest way to communicate with your class teacher is via the class email system (PACT system). If there are important messages e.g. a query for the class teacher, or letting them know about pick up arrangements please email:

Nursery at classnursery@st-marys-putney.wandsworth.sch.uk

Reception at class2023@st-marys-putney.wandsworth.sch.uk.

This should be done before 9am as class emails will be **checked once a day only** due to time constraints. **A message after this should be phoned into the school office**. We send important information back via the email address. Please make sure this email address is saved so it does not go into your junk folder, and note any messages each night, as it may be about school the next day!

To set up you should send a 'test' email (simply with the subject line TEST, and your child's name included) before your child starts their first school day to the relevant class email address. See the Communication section of the handbook for further details.

Class Reps

Class Representatives are parents/carers who act as 'channels of communication' between parents and FoSMs (Friends of St Mary's - see separate section) and are appointed at the beginning of each school year. Their aim is to provide help and advice with regard to FoSMs. Class Reps can usually be found in the playground before or after school, or you can leave a message in the School Office. A list of Class Reps can be found on the FoSMs website. If you would like to be a Class Rep please indicate this to a member of the FoSMs committee (see www.fosms.co.uk).

Curriculum

See the curriculum section of the Handbook, the Early Years section of the website and relevant subject policies. Class Newsletters give half termly updates of children's learning and ways to support this, including workshops for parents/carers. Newsletters go on the school website on the first Friday of each half term.

Dietary requirements

If your child has a special diet for **religious** or **medical** reasons, then the School Business Manager (Mrs Sue Abraham) will be happy to assist in making the necessary arrangements. Parents with children who have medical conditions must ensure that the school has the most up to date information **at all times**. See also Allergies section. **Parents with children who have medical conditions choose for them to eat a school meal at their own risk.**

Donations

If you are discarding any **age appropriate, good quality toys or books** please do consider donating them to our Early Years classes. Just hand them to a member of the Early Years team.

Children really engage with 'junk modelling' (using recycling to make 3D models). If you have any **clean cardboard or plastic boxes/containers** throughout the year that you would otherwise recycle please do occasionally bring in a bag of them for the children to make something out of!

Please also consider donating any **uniform** your child has outgrown, including socks, pants and shoes, as these are invaluable to us.

Early Years Learning Journeys

See the 'Recording your Child's Progress' section of the Handbook. We document your child's progress using an online tracking and assessment tool. It is designed to capture key moments of your child's learning and development. This system is not only for teacher input; we would love you to contribute to it as well, so it represents your child's whole development! More details will be given to you in the first half of the Autumn term. Children's physical work will be collated in school, for you to collect at the end of the year, alongside the digital Early Years Learning Journey.

Extra-Curricular Activities

A variety of extra-curricular activities are available to the children as they progress up the school but we feel that children in the Early Years benefit from a shorter day. Children will be very tired after a long day, and so bear this in mind when planning activities after school. The school offers before/after school care through Putney Wraparound Service. For more information contact <https://putneywraparound.com/>.

Finances

St Mary's School receives an annual budget from Wandsworth Council, which the school manages. This budget is intended to cover all the costs of teaching and support staff and all the services that will enable the school to deliver the national curriculum as a minimum entitlement to every pupil. However, the Governors aim to provide a better than minimum service to pupils, alongside FOSMs. See Governors and FOSMs sections.

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge for activities outside school (i.e. educational visits). See Trips section. The Governing body may charge for the cost of materials, ingredients, equipment (or the provision of them by parents) for the following subjects: cooking; sewing; handicrafts. In addition if an item of school property is lost or damaged, parents will be asked to meet replacement costs. The Governing Body may, from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

Any monies can be handed straight to the School Office, or the school operates an online payment system called Pay360, details of which you will have already received in your starting packs. The Governors, Wandsworth Borough Council and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education do not take any responsibility for personal money or property brought to school.

Should you have any problem meeting school related costs at any time, we may be able to help. Please speak with Mrs Sue Abraham, School Business Manager. Your conversation will be completely confidential.

First Aid

Each Early Years class has at least one first aid trained member of staff, and basic first aid materials are in each class room. If your child has an accident at school the first aider will attend to their needs and fill out a first aid slip, when deemed necessary. If your child has a head bump you will be notified, whatever the severity, giving you the option to come and check your child yourself. You will be given details of what happened, and what first aid has been administered.

FoSMs (Friends of St Mary's)

FoSMs is an integral part of the school community. It is a great way of getting involved and supporting the school, and also getting to know other parents/carers. All parents are automatically members of FoSMs and are very welcome to attend the regular meetings (held either in the afternoon or evening) to discuss how they can help the school in many practical ways - the most obvious being fundraising.

FoSMs organise fundraising events throughout the year for example cake sales, The Family Disco, Children's Art Exhibition, Summer Barbeque and Christmas Fair.

Being involved in FoSMs does not mean having to go to every meeting. Supplying a cake for a cake stall, contributing raffle prizes etc. and most importantly, supporting events are all just as vital. You can also volunteer to be a Class Rep (see separate section). Times, dates and venues of FoSMs meetings are posted in *In Touch*. The AGM is held in October. See the website for further details: www.fosms.co.uk

Governors Fund

St. Mary's is a voluntary-aided Church of England school and so is more independent of the local council than non-church schools. This independence has many benefits, however the Governing Body is required to contribute 10% of the costs of all school building and maintenance work. The Governors' fund is vital in order to fulfil this obligation. Each Autumn, as your child starts a new class at St. Mary's we ask parents to make a small contribution to the Governors' Fund. The suggested amount at the time of writing is £50 for part time children, £100 for full time children - though if parents are able to pay more this is very helpful. The simplest way to pay (for Reception children) is by standing order - that way it will be automatically paid for you by your bank each year. You won't have to remember to pay and we won't have to send out reminders! We also ask all parents who are tax payers to complete a **GIFT AID FORM**. It costs you nothing to fill in but it does mean that we are able to reclaim from the tax office an extra 25p for every £1 which you pay to the school.

Hair

If your child's hair is shoulder length or longer it is required to be tied back.

Home-School Agreement

The home-school agreement, which is required to be read, signed and returned by parents/carers, is included in your information pack.

Home Learning

You and your child will be informed when there is a home learning task, and when it is due, in the half termly newsletter. Please support and engage with your child's home learning to make the most of the tasks set. In Nursery children receive (from January) a 'sharing book' (picture book) and maths game each week. In Nursery these home learning tasks are entirely optional and start later in the year, but parents/carers have found them fun and beneficial. Volunteers needed to facilitate the sending out of these packs. These are sent home in their book bags at the end of their week in school.

In Reception children take home a book bag on a regular basis so that you and your child can read together. Reception also have a weekly handwriting practice to complete at home, and in the summer term have a short dictation home learning too. See the school's Home Learning Policy.

Illness

Please keep your child away from school if he or she is ill. **Sending a sick child to school is not fair to them, to other children and their families or to the staff. If they have been sick or have diarrhoea they must be kept off school for at least 48 hours after the last episode.**

Please call the office on 020 8788 9591, email (attendance@st-marys-putney.wandsworth.sch.uk) or ParentMail on the first day and each subsequent day of a child's absence between 8.45 and 9.30. A note of this will be passed to the class teacher. When your child returns to school after an illness, we require a letter explaining the absence.

If your child is ill at school he/she will be cared for by the staff whilst parents are contacted and asked to come and collect their child for treatment. It is most important that we have a phone number and a note of where we can contact you (or nominated contacts) in an emergency. We revise our lists each September, **but welcome additional information at any time.** We must have a second contact for every child in case we cannot reach you.

In Touch

Each week the school sends out a newsletter called In Touch with updates from the past week across school. Check your ParentMail, or the school website, to stay up to date.

Labels

It is imperative that you label all items of clothing, including hats, coats, socks and shoes. Please label items in an obvious, clear place in a permanent way. Please bear in mind that all items of uniform look the same to us! If an item of uniform is not labelled it is very likely to go missing permanently. We highly recommend 'sew in' labels, as these are the only ones that do not come out!

Lost Property

In the playground there is a large red Lost Property bin with a black lid. It is emptied at the end of each half term and all un-named property disposed of.

Lunch

You can choose whether your child has a school dinner or a packed lunch at school. You can inform the class teacher of which option you would prefer in September, and it is possible to switch between the two throughout the year.

If your child has any food allergies, intolerances or dietary requirements, all members of the lunchtime team will be aware of this information. Your child will be given a red or green band to make other people aware of this for their safety. For more information see Allergies section. **Parents with children who have medical conditions choose for them to eat a school meal at their own risk.**

Catering

At St Mary's we have our own kitchen where all the meals are prepared on site each day using fresh ingredients. We are committed to providing healthy, well-balanced and varied meals and actively encourage children to try new things and to make lunchtime a happy, pleasant experience. School lunches are cooked on site by Caterlink Limited. More information is available on their website at: <http://www.caterlinkltd.co.uk/>. For more details about lunch see the Handbook.

Packed Lunches

If you choose to provide a packed lunch we ask that packed lunches are healthy and well balanced. **The school is a nut free school, therefore we ask you to check carefully and ensure there are no nuts, or products containing nuts.** Please pay particular attention to pesto, spreads and cereal bars. Sweets, chocolates and fizzy drinks are not allowed. Please ensure drinks are in a non-breakable container, however water is available to all children.

Free School Meals (FSM)

For information on free meals and other benefits please see the school website or ask at the School Office for a form. If you find you are in difficulties over paying for meals please come and see us before you run up a large debt, and we will try to help.

Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) - RECEPTION ONLY

From September 2014, the Government have said that schools have a duty to provide free meals for children in Reception, Year One and Year Two. It is important that parents who are eligible for Free School Meals (above) still apply regardless of whether their child is in Reception, Year One or Year Two as the school receives extra money to support children in receipt of Free School Meals with their schooling in the annual budget.

This is not applicable to Nursery and therefore these meals will need to be paid for, unless eligible for Free School Meals (see above). See Payments section.

Medicine

If your child requires medicine/s during the school day, these **must** be brought into the School Office and given directly to the School Business Manager. You will be asked to complete and sign a form with all the information required before the school can consider administering the medication. We will do our best to accommodate all of your child's needs whilst they are at St. Mary's but it may not always be possible for us to administer medication or treatment. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. It is parents' responsibility to ensure that medicine brought to school is in date and to notify the school immediately if there has been a recommendation to change or discontinue its use.

Microsoft Teams

At St Mary's we use Microsoft Teams as our digital learning platform for children across the school. During the first term at St Mary's your child will be issued with a personalised Teams login, which we ask parents/carers to keep the login details for. During Nursery and Reception Microsoft Teams is mostly used for Progress in Learning meetings (parent meetings) where you will log in via your child's account. As your child goes further up the school Microsoft Teams is used more regularly, including for setting weekly home learning.

Mufti days

From time to time the whole school has 'Mufti days' (where children can wear clothes other than school uniform). Please watch out for In Touch updates and Parent Mail reminders. Often these are for FoSMs or charity fundraising.

Naps

In Nursery children have the opportunity to nap, should they wish; there is free access to sleeping mats in the classroom. We do find that the children usually do not take this opportunity, so may well be very tired at the end of a full day!

Newsletters

The class newsletter is available at the beginning of every half term on the website and is filled with important information - please do make sure you download it! **It is really important to read and note the dates for your diary and information section - thank you in advance!**

Nuts

We are a nut free school! There are children in the school who suffer from a serious allergy to nuts. Children (and adults) are therefore **not permitted to bring nuts or any foods containing nuts or sesame seeds into school (please take care with biscuits, cereal bars and pesto)** as even being with someone who has eaten food containing nuts can be enough to trigger an allergic reaction.

Parking

There is no parking available at St. Mary's. Please have consideration for our neighbours and avoid parking across driveways/access etc. **especially AVOIDING THE ENTRANCE TO FELSHAM MEWS.** The School has a Gold School Travel Plan award - and we encourage all families wherever possible to walk, scoot or bike to school. Should a car be a necessity - we would appreciate drivers parking away from the main entrance of the school to help avoid congestion. Beware of the traffic wardens! The school will take no responsibility for parking offences occurred at any time.

PACT

PACT stands for Parent and Class Teacher. See Class email section.

ParentMail

Parents are encouraged to sign up for whole school communications on the ParentMail system via the office. Information is included in your induction pack. See the communication section of the handbook for further details.

Payments

Parents make payments for lunches, as well as class trips, online (Sims Agora). All new parents will be sent a registration form for the parent pay system in September. When a child is absent after payment has been made, a credit will be carried forward. For further details contact the school office.

Personal Property

Money, valuables and toys should not be brought into school. The exception to this rule is when class teachers have specifically asked for items to be brought in from home to aid learning in class. If children are struggling to settle in Nursery a child may have a small comfort toy, but this should be agreed with the class teacher. Children may NOT bring toys, play guns, or electrical goods to school.

Phonics

We follow the Jolly Phonics Scheme. See the Curriculum section of the Handbook, Early Years Policy and English Policy. Class Newsletters give half termly up-dates of children's learning and ways to support this, including workshops for parents/carers. There will be a Jolly Phonics Workshop for parent(s)/carer(s) in the first Autumn term.

Photos

Individual and whole class photos are taken in the Autumn Term every year. In addition, children in the Nursery, Reception and Year Six Class have a whole class photo taken in the Summer Term. Please look out for further information in *In Touch*, or via ParentMail. Once every 2 or 3 years a whole school photograph is taken. The last one was taken in 2022.

Policies

School policies are available on the school website.

Punctuality

Lateness can be extremely unsettling and disruptive for pupils, not just your own. Please ensure that your child is punctual and that they are collected on time. **The school gate closes promptly at 9am - after this time you will be asked to enter through the main office and your child will receive a late mark. School finishes at 3.20pm (3.15 for Nursery). We ask all parents to ensure that their children are collected promptly. See pick up/drop off section of the handbook.**

Rain

If it is due to rain make sure your child/ren has appropriate clothing as they will still have access to the outside classroom. Children are welcome to come in wearing wellies - please provide school shoes in a labelled plastic bag for them to change into. Umbrellas from home are not permitted. If it is raining heavily the children in the main playground will be invited straight into the classroom when they arrive at school from 8.45am.

Religious Education (RE)

St Mary's is a Church of England school and therefore RE is taught as a discrete subject. Both Nursery and Reception follow the Southwark Diocese scheme of work which continues throughout KS1 and KS2 (see curriculum maps on the website).

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Under the Education Act 2002 (section 175), schools must make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. **Parents and carers should know that the law requires all school staff to pass on information which gives rise to a concern about a child's welfare, including risk from neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse.** The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Kerry Dunford) will discuss any concerns with parents or carers, and where possible inform them of the referral to Social Services. **This will only be done where such discussion will not place the child at increased risk of significant harm.**

In accordance with Local Information Sharing protocols, we will ensure that information is shared effectively and sensitively. Information will only be shared with other services where it is deemed necessary and proportionate to ensure that children and young people are safe and receive the right service. The school will seek advice from Social Care when they have reasonable cause to suspect a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. **Occasionally, concerns are passed on which are later shown to be unfounded.** Parents and carers will appreciate that the designated person for child protection was carrying out their responsibilities in accordance with the law and acting in the best interests of all children.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs Kerry Dunford, Inclusion Manager. The Deputy DSLs are Miss Cheryl Payne, Head Teacher, and Mrs Amanda Bishop, Deputy Head Teacher.

School News

School News, the school magazine (not to be confused with *In Touch*, the weekly newsletter) is published online once a term. It provides a fun review of the term at school, put together by parents, teachers and children. If you would like to be part of a team planning its content, helping with advertising, photographs, typing, editing etc. you would be very welcome to join the editorial team.

Scooters and Buggies

Reception store their scooters in the **scooter park available in the main playground.** Nursery store their scooters in a closed off area of the Nursery outside area. If your child comes in late through the office there is no place to store them, so you will need to take them home with you.

Second-hand Uniform sales (Hand to Hand)

Sales of second-hand school uniform, called Hand to Hand, take place and are organised by FoSMs and the Year 6 children in the playground. Watch out for notices in *In Touch*.

Snacks

There is no need to bring anything to school. Children have fruit, milk or water at snack in the morning and afternoons.

Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The term 'special educational needs and disabilities' covers a wide range of needs, and affects many children at some time during their school career. It includes, for example, children who have a significantly higher than average ability in an aspect of the curriculum, as well as children with difficulties that affect their progress. The school uses the "Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years" (2015) for identification of SEND and guidance on appropriate provision for children. The school also produces an Inclusion Policy and SEND Information Report, which outline more details. Both are available on the school website. Our own staff are knowledgeable about their roles with regard to SEND and we work closely with the Council's Integrated Support Service for children with SEND. Most parents experience a wide range of feelings when it is found their child may have a Special Educational Need and/or disability. We aim to reassure parents that identifying and addressing a need will have a positive outcome for the child concerned.

If your child has or develops a medical condition, including allergies, which requires support in school please let the Class Teacher, School Business Manager and Inclusion Manager know as soon as possible. Care and support must be planned for, in collaboration with parents and health professionals and a health care plan put in place.

Should you have any concerns or questions relating to issues around SEND or support for children with medical conditions during your time at St. Mary's please contact **Mrs Kerry Dunford**, Inclusion Manager.

Sunny days

If the weather is good, please send children with appropriate clothing i.e. sun hat. If sunglasses are brought into school please be aware that these sometimes get broken, and the school does not take responsibility. Children will have access to outside, even on very hot days. **We are unable to apply or provide suncream to your child.** Please apply suncream before school, and do investigate suncream which offer full day coverage. If your child burns very easily you may wish to consider sending in suncream via the office with a signed medical form (see Medicine section as it is a similar process).

Trips

We arrange a number of educational visits over the course of the Early Years. If these are not local then specific permission will be sought. A fee to cover costs may be requested - see Finance section. Parents/carers are asked to sign a local visit permission slip at the start of the year which covers walking to church and other local visits. You will always be notified if your child will be going out of school - watch for notices on the class

newsletters and email. Trips can only happen with the help of parent volunteers. See Volunteer section.

Toileting

We encourage children to have a high level of independence in the area of toileting so they can be as relaxed and happy as possible. We ask for your support in this before they start at St Mary's. We will supply children with extra support where needed - please see our Personal Care policy, as you may need to fill out a Personal Care plan with the class teacher. We recommend visiting the following NHS website for help and support in this area (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/potty-training-and-bedwetting/how-to-potty-train/>) and your Health Visitor is always able to support you directly. We have found ERIC's guide to potty training a very helpful resource in the past, available here: <https://www.eric.org.uk/guide-to-potty-training>

Twitter

St Mary's is on Twitter! Our handle is @PutneySMPS. Please follow us, in order to stay up to date with school events.

Uniform

See 'What Your Child Will Need' section of the handbook. A uniform list is on the school website, and included in your induction pack. School uniform can be ordered from Stitch Design <http://www.stitchdesign.co.uk/> Follow the guidance under the parents and pupils tab on the school website to register and order uniform. **Please label everything!** Please note that **Nursery uniform is slightly different** to the rest of the school's, to encourage increasing independence. **Nursery do not change for PE.**

Volunteering

There are many volunteering opportunities throughout the school and we rely on parents/carers giving up their time to help out. Parents/carers can help hear readers, organise maths packs, or come on school trips. **All these volunteers, including for a one off trip, MUST have attended the Parent Induction session and have a DBS check carried out through St Mary's, therefore we find organising this at the start of the year helpful as the DBS can take time.** Please organise this in September. Induction sessions will be advertised in In Touch.

Workshops

From time to time St Mary's organises useful workshops for parents/carers to support your child's learning. Please keep an eye out for details via In Touch, ParentMail or Class emails.

Website

The school website (<http://www.stmarysschoolputney.co.uk>) is full of useful information. Please refer to it if you have queries, as often the information will be available here.