

St James' Church of England First School & Nursery
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Headteacher: Miss Jo Hudson
Assistant Headteacher: Mrs Kathryn Cousins



11 September 2026

Dear Parents of Hedgehog Class,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to Reception. The children have settled in so well and I am looking forward to learning and exploring with them as the year progresses. This letter is intended to give you an overview of the routines and expectations in our class so that the day-to-day running can go as smoothly as possible. I hope that the information below answers any questions that you may have at this stage.

Break/ snack times:

- Your child will be offered a fruit/vegetable snack each day which the school will provide. You can send your child in with a piece of fruit for snack if you wish.
- All children under 5 are entitled to free milk which will be provided alongside the fruit snack at break time. If you wish for your child to continue to have milk after they are 5, please see the office for instructions on how to pre-order.
- Your child must bring a named water bottle each day from which they will be encouraged to drink from throughout the day.

Reading books:

- At first, the children will receive wordless picture books which are pivotal in this stage of their development to fostering the children's ability in storytelling and encouraging early comprehension skills - a very important step before moving onto reading words.
- The books are to be kept in their book bags at all times as on occasions children will be asked to read in school. Book bags should be in school each day.
- When they are ready, each child will receive a levelled reader matched to their phonics/reading group
- We encourage the children to read their book at least 3 times before moving on. Please record when you read in the reading records. A simple 'read at home' is sufficient for us to know you have shared the book or you can add more detail about how they got on if you wish.
- Reading books will be changed on Tuesdays.
- Children will also take part in regular library visits, during which they may choose a "love to read" book. A record is kept of all library books, and we kindly ask that these are looked after and returned to school so that your child can exchange them for another. Our library day is a Tuesday so the books need to be in book bags on that day so they can exchange them.
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Home learning:

- At the beginning of Reception, we do not give out set weekly home learning, but rather ask that you read as much as possible with your child. We want to encourage children to develop a love of books by reading to them daily, at home and at school.
- Although I will not be setting formal home learning yet, later in the year the children will receive a request to complete a little project at home. This will be linked to our topic and will not be too arduous! More on this to come later in the year.
- As we move through the Read Write Inc - phonic program, every week your child will receive reading and writing practice sheets for the sounds that they have learnt that week. It is useful to keep these at



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home and go over them with your child. You may find that they find some sounds easier than others and you may want to revisit these help sheets. Alongside these sheets, you will also receive an email with a link to some online resources that you can use to help supplement our learning in class.

Uniform:

- It is essential that your child comes to school with a jumper, cardigan or fleece as we often work and play outside on a daily basis.
- ALL items of clothing should be **clearly labelled** with your child's name, including any spare kit, shoes/wellies that are brought into school. No need to buy expensive labels - just a name written in the label with a sharpie or biro is great.
- Due to our unpredictable weather it would be a good idea to send your child with a waterproof coat or keep one in school. Even on a wet day we endeavour to get the children out for some fresh air, wellies and spare socks are a good idea!
- Hair should always be tied up and adornments should be kept to a minimum.

Physical development:

- The children will have an element of physical development each day through our 'Leap into Life' scheme. In addition to this they will have an outdoor learning session and a PE lesson. Both of these will take place on a Thursday. **Please ensure your child comes to school dressed in PE kits on this day.**
- Please also ensure we have wellies in school (in a carrier bag) as Outdoor learning will go ahead in wet weather. The wellies can stay in school on your child's peg. We provide waterproof trousers for the children if required.

Toys:

- It is preferred that your child does not bring toys into the classroom in case they get broken or lost.
- Items brought in for show and tell should be educational e.g. swimming certificates etc... or topic related.

The children have come in so well and we have been very pleased to see them settling so quickly. I appreciate it is all very new for them, but please try as soon as possible to say your 'goodbye' at the gate and let them come into the cloakroom independently. This just helps with the congestion in the mornings.

It is very important to me that your child enjoys their time in Reception so if you feel that there are any problems whatsoever please do not hesitate to come and speak to me. Please remember that we operate an open-door policy and I welcome any information or comments that may affect your child's learning or happiness during school time. If you have any questions for me, please feel free to email me using the staff email account - staff@alderholt.dorset.sch.uk. I thank you for your support and I look forward to working with you this year.

Yours Sincerely,

Kathryn Cousins