



MOUNT CHARLES SCHOOL

FIRST DAYS



WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL

Welcome to Mount Charles

Dear Parents and Carers,
This booklet has been written to give you information which we hope will be helpful during those crucial first days. Starting primary school can be exciting as well as unsettling at times. We hope that by the school and home working together, the excitement can be enhanced and any anxiety reduced!

Parents have the most important part to play in preparing their children for school. If parents feel good about the school this will be translated quickly to the child. If you ever have queries or worries, be they general or particular to your child, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Our aim is to provide a happy, secure environment where

children feel valued with purposeful, active learning experiences to enable your child to explore, develop their skills and knowledge and realise their full potential.

We are very much looking forward to you and your child joining us and beginning a long and fruitful partnership between the school and your family.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C Bunting".

C Bunting
Headteacher

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S Hildyard".

S Hildyard
EYFS/Year 1 Phase Leader

OUR AIMS

In the Reception Year we aim to:

- Provide a happy and safe environment for learning and ensure that all children feel valued in our school
- Encourage active learning. Young children learn best when they actually experience something rather than being told about it.
- Support and extend children's learning through play, providing challenge and ensuring progression.
- Provide learning opportunities inside and outside.
- Provide a variety of learning experiences which promote development within the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- Encourage children to develop independence, positive attitudes towards learning and to ensure social and emotional well-being.
- Work closely with parents in order to share understanding and provide appropriate learning experiences for all children.



Drop in play sessions Home Visits

These enable the children to get used to the school as well as meet other new children. Parents will need to stay with their children during these sessions. Dates for these sessions will be sent to you well in advance.

You are very welcome to drop in on as many sessions as you wish.

Induction sessions

New children will be able to spend time in the classroom trying out some activities. This will be an opportunity for you to leave your child for a short session but if your child is reluctant to be parted from you, you are also welcome to stay.

Before the children start school in September we like to, if possible, make a Home Visit. This allows us to meet you and your child (and any other family members or pets!) in a place that they feel most at ease.

We feel it shows the children how important they are to us and it has real benefits in building positive relationships and settling the children in.

Further information about Home Visits will be available as part of our Induction Pack to parents.



BEGINNING SCHOOL

The First Few Days

A child's first experiences of school establish his/her attitudes towards learning. Making a good start will lay the foundation for a positive attitude towards school. We aim to make your child's first experience at school a calm and happy one and so we 'stagger' the starting dates for the children. This helps to reduce stress and gives us more time to spend with you and your child on that all important 'first day'. Please check your Induction Pack giving you your child's starting day and time as they will all be different.

Organisation of classes

We have two Early Years Foundation Stage classes which each have a full time teacher and there are also two full time teaching assistants, a Higher Level teaching assistant, and a designated Speech and Language therapist. The classes are run as a unit, allowing the children to move freely between them when choosing their own activities. Staff work very closely together when working with the children and planning learning experiences.

THE SCHOOL DAY

In the morning we will greet the children from 8:30am. Please ensure that children are in school by 8:45 am as this is when the door will be locked. Children are collected from school at 2:50pm. Please let your child know in advance if someone else is collecting them and always inform your child's teacher. If you are delayed, don't panic - try to contact the school. We ring parents or an emergency contact person if

nobody has collected a child by 3:10pm.

Morning Session
8:30am - 11:45am

Afternoon Session
12:45pm - 2:50pm



Lunchtime

Foundation Stage lunch hour is between 11:45am and 12:45pm. Your child can have a school lunch or bring a packed lunch.

All children up to Year 2 are entitled to a hot, free school meal which offers a choice of traditional, vegetarian or jacket potato. If you are providing your child with a packed lunch, then we realise it can be a challenge to keep them interesting and healthy. Sandwiches are a good choice and the key is to provide a balance of appropriate foods, particularly

fruit and vegetables. Foods containing fat and sugar should be eaten in moderation.

During lunch the children are cared for by the EYFS Teaching Assistants both in the dining area and in the playground. Teachers are always on hand in case of an emergency. It would be a great help if your child is able to use cutlery correctly, has good table manners and is used to taking out and tidying away his or her own food.

Water in school and snack time

As part of our Healthy Schools status we want to encourage the children to drink more water and eat healthy snacks. The children should bring a small bottle of water into the classroom from which they can drink. Please make sure that it is clearly labelled with your child's name and is taken home daily for refilling. The children are provided with fruit at snack time.



HOME / SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

We believe that education is a partnership. When your child joins Mount Charles we are continuing the education which you have already started. Your child's education began at birth and you were their first teachers. Now you are handing over part of that responsibility to us. From now on we will be working together to ensure the best for your child.

Your interest and involvement in your child's education, now they are at school, will have a considerable positive influence. Staff are always

prepared to discuss your child after school, although if it is likely to be a longer chat it would be best to make an appointment as staff are often involved in meetings.

Each term there is the opportunity to meet on a formal basis. These are organised on an appointment system where parents can discuss privately their child's progress. In the summer term all parents receive a written report which is a summary of their child's development and progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

It is vital that you make every effort to support your child by attending these meetings.



PLAY

If you ask your child, 'What did you do at school today?' and the answer is 'Nothing' don't despair, they did actually do something! Much of your child's early learning experience in Reception is through play and it is an essential part of children's learning. Through quality, structured play they are able to develop good concentration powers as well as good learning attitudes, knowledge, skills and understanding. They still need adults to extend their play, through talk and intervention when appropriate.

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors is a key way in which your child will learn with enjoyment and challenge. Every day the children have the opportunity to look at books, paint, draw, sing, play with construction equipment, do puzzles, play language and maths games, take part in imaginative play, play outside and so on. We have an excellent indoor and outside environment and children will be expected to take part in activities outside in nearly all weathers. The school provides waterproof clothing but parents will need to make sure that the children have a pair of named wellington boots which can be kept in school.

Children learn through working (playing) on their own, in small groups and in sessions where they are all together as a class e.g. at story time. At all times the staff try to ensure that the children feel supported in a safe and secure environment where they will feel confident enough to take part in a wide variety of activities. We hope that they will learn, amongst other things, to become independent, to listen, to concentrate, to observe, to recall events, to express themselves and have confidence to tackle new tasks.





THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process however, it depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabled environments. The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically – underpins learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

The Prime Areas are fundamental, work together and run through and support learning in all other areas.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** by providing opportunities for each child to become a valued member

of the group, form good relationships so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted as well as managing their feelings and behaviour

- **Communication and Language** with opportunities for children to talk to adults and to each other and to practise and extend the vocabulary they use and to listen carefully
- **Physical Development** with opportunities for children to develop their fine and gross motor skills and what they need to do to be healthy and safe

The Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

- **Literacy** with opportunities for all children to develop their writing and to experience a rich variety of books

- **Mathematics** with opportunities for children to develop a deep understanding of number, measurement, pattern, shape and space through practical activities

This is like the curriculum in the rest of the school but is suitable for very young children and is designed to be flexible so that we can follow your child's needs and interests.

- **Understanding the World** with opportunities for children to find out about their environment, uses of technology and people and places that are significant in their lives

- **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

- Playing and exploring – engagement – finding out and exploring; playing with what they know; being willing to 'have a go'

- **Expressive Arts and Design** with opportunities for all children to explore their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, music, dance and role play activities. These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities which take place both indoors and outdoors. The staff teaching and supporting your child make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs.

- Active learning – motivation – being involved and concentrating; keeping trying; enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- Creating and thinking critically – thinking – having their own ideas; making links; choosing ways to do things.



EYFS CURRICULUM AT MOUNT CHARLES

At Mount Charles we offer an exciting, whole-school curriculum grounded on four Cornerstones: Engage, Develop, Innovate and Express. This cross-curricular approach is designed to enrich learning and enable the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage our learning follows an exciting half-termly Imaginative

Learning Project which enables us to 'hook' children's interests through an exciting theme. Each project begins with a high quality text which is used as a stimulus for the learning journey.

Each half term you will receive a Topic Web which will outline the learning opportunities that will take place within the theme.



Autumn Term 1
Do You Want To Be Friends?

Do you want to be friends? Would you like to play with me? Explore these questions and more in the project about friendship, being kind and working together.

Autumn Term 2
Why Do Squirrels Hide Their Nuts?

Why do squirrels hide their nuts? Why do hedgehogs hibernate? Explore these questions and more in this project about the seasonal changes in the natural world during autumn and winter.

Spring Term 1
What Happens When I Fall Asleep?

Why are there stars in the sky at night? Does everyone go to bed at the same time as me? Explore these questions and more in this project about night time.

Spring Term 2
Will You Read Me A Story?

Was the Big Bad Wolf really so bad? How many bowls of porridge did Goldilocks eat? Explore these questions and more in this magical project all about fairytales, goodies and baddies!

Summer Term 1
Are We Nearly There Yet?

Where in the world would you like to go? How would you like to travel there? Explore these questions and more in this project about transport, travel and places near and far.

Summer Term 2
Who Lives in a Rockpool?

Which creatures live on the seashore? Why do crabs have shells? Explore these questions and more in the project about the seashore and the planet and animals that live there.

Early Reading

It is our mission to ensure every child becomes a confident, fluent reader and therefore early reading is our priority. Children in Reception begin their reading journey by learning letter sounds through the synthetic Phonics program Read, Write, Inc. Children are then quickly taught to blend sounds into whole words before moving on to explore more tricky diagraphs and trigraphs.

Your child will bring home 'Sound Blending' books that match the sounds that they have been taught in RWI lessons. This ensures that all words are fully decodable. All parents are invited to attend a reading session in the first term of their child starting school. This is to ensure that parents can fully engage and support reading at home.



The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

Throughout the Reception year staff assess your child's development against all areas of learning.

These assessments are based on observations and everyday classroom activities – for example, looking at a book. Your child will not even know they are being assessed. These assessments find out what he/she knows, understands and can do – so teachers can plan effectively for each child's learning needs.



Parents are invited in to school during every term in order to discuss their child's development. This is in addition to the daily contact that most parents/carers have with the school. At the end of the year the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile provides a way of summing up your child's development and will form the basis for the end of year report to parents.

Parents are always welcome to talk to their child's teacher or the head teacher, to discuss any issues relating to the progress their child makes at school.

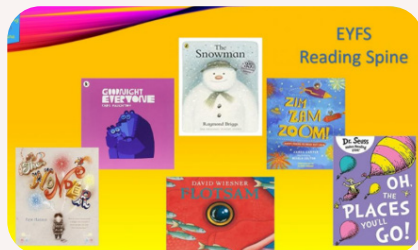
Health & Safety

On occasions children may become ill during the course of the school day. Please ensure that we have an up to date contact number for you and notify the school of any changes as soon as possible. If your child has had a sickness bug or had diarrhoea during the night please do not send him/her to school for 48 hours.

All playtimes are supervised. However accidents do and can occur. We have strict procedures and staff are trained to deal with minor injuries. In serious cases parents or emergency contacts will immediately be contacted so children can be taken to their doctor or hospital. All accidents are recorded and in the case of

Reading Spine

As well as sharing many stories together as a class, we challenge all children (and families) in Reception to become familiar with our very special set of Reading Spine books. These are accessible for the children in our classrooms too!



bumped heads a note is sent to parents advising them to carefully observe their child over a 24 hour period.

If your child is unwell and unable to come to school it is vital that you either phone or send an email explaining their absence. If a message has not been received we will contact you for an explanation. Please see our website for more guidance on medical and safety issues. On occasions when the weather is hot please send your child to school with a sun hat and apply sun lotion at home beforehand.

Helping Your Child

Try to establish a routine for school days:-

- Wake your child up in good time to have breakfast and wash and dress.
- Make a time after school to listen to him/her about the events of the day. Tell your child what you have been doing.
- Your child will be very tired when he/she comes home from school. Please make sure that they go to bed early. If your child does not get enough sleep they will not learn efficiently.



Helping Us

Starting school is a big step for your child to take and we hope to make the transition as smooth and problem free as possible.

As parents and carers you can help by encouraging your child to:

- Dress and undress his/herself.
- Remove his/her outer garments and hang them up.
- Organise their belongings e.g. PE or book bag
- Use the toilet properly and wash his/her hands
- Use a knife, fork and spoon
- Tidy away
- Listen to and follow simple instructions
- Please make sure that ALL your child's belongings are named clearly as it is very difficult for us to reunite lost items with the correct child if things are unnamed.
- Use good manners
- Share

As part of our ongoing assessments of the children over the year, the staff use an online learning journey. This allows us to take photographs and record comments and details of the learning that has taken place and store them in an online secure facility that can only be accessed by appropriate members of staff.



To Finish

These days the most precious commodity you can give to your child is your time. The child who gets the most from home gets most from school.

If you have done all you can to prepare your child for school and continue to give your love, time, interest and support, then you can be certain that he/she is in the best possible position to use all his/her unique abilities. We, for our part, will do our utmost to help your child realise his/her potential.

Please remember that a mutual consideration and respect between parents and teachers is vital, not only before your child starts school, but for as long as your child is at school.

We do hope you have found this booklet helpful. Please remember that if there are any worries or queries do see the class teacher, Phase Leader or Head Teacher.



