

*Believe and Achieve*



We aim to be an inclusive, caring school where we give everyone the time and support needed to challenge and guide one another - to open minds and widen horizons - to work together towards the flourishing of all members of our school community so that everyone can fulfil their potential.

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.  
Matthew 21:22



# Claypole Church of England Primary School Starting School



Induction Information (04): Top Tips For Starting School in September

## Top Tips For September



Starting school is an exciting time for the whole family, and there is overwhelming evidence that children do better when their parents are engaged and involved in their education... so jump right in at the start. It'll be worth it for you and your child. The next couple of months are the perfect time to focus on helping your child feel happy and confident about starting school. There are lots of easy things you can do now. To help get started, here are some 'top tips' (thoughts, suggestions and reminisces) for helping with the transition to school in September that have been compiled by parents and all of the team at Claypole Church of England Primary School.



**Best wishes,  
Martyn Wells BA (Hons) QTS, NPQH, NPQEL  
Headteacher**



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KOINONIA

PEACE

JUSTICE

RESILIENCE

RESPECT

TRUST

CONTENTMENT

## Shopping For Essentials



Children come home covered in all-sorts: mud, lunch, paint, playdough... it's a good idea to have plenty of uniform. Uniform with the school logo can be purchased from 'Uniform Direct' (and directly from Downtown, Grantham). We also have some pre-loved uniforms in school too.

Supermarkets have excellent valued polo shirts and dresses too. To help the kiddies get excited about school, let them help choose some of their items.

Details of our uniform is shared in our Induction Book which will be shared with families shortly.

## Staying Organised



There can be a lot of admin to deal with once your child starts school. Letters and forms can come home or via ParentMail. Please read the newsletters, familiarise yourself with the school website and calendar dates.

We have an active social platform (Facebook, X [formerly Twitter], Instagram & YouTube) where we love to share successes and experiences too.

Remember to share information with everyone involved in your child's care.

## "They're going to be tired"

Even children who are used to nursery or pre-school will be tired after school. Get into a routine of early bed times and wake ups well in advance and prepare yourself form some tears. After a day of listening and learning, there can be an outpouring of emotions once your child's back home. They might be hungry too. Bringing them a snack at pick up time for a quick energy boost might also help.

## September Starters

**Transition Days 2025**

**Tuesday 24th June**  
5pm - 6pm

**Monday 30th June**  
3:45pm - 4:30pm

**Monday 7th July**  
1:15pm - 3:15pm

**Monday 14th July**  
1:15pm - 3:15pm

**Claypole**  
Church of England  
**Primary School**

## "Label it"



If it is not permanently attached to your child, put their name on it. Labels help the children identify their own clothing and also helps the team in school deal with piles of identical jumpers and bookbags. If your child isn't reading yet, use labels with pictures next to their name. There are lots of quick and effective alternatives to sew-in nametapes (including stamps, stick-on labels or even a marker pen). 'Stikins' are popular. To order them, visit: [www.stikins.co.uk](http://www.stikins.co.uk) In fact, our PTFA have already sourced some for all of our new starters.

## Developing Independence



Our team are happy to help with shoes, PE changes, buttons, cutlery etc, the effort you put in to preparing your child for school life by encouraging independence won't go unnoticed. Encourage your little one to practice getting dressed and undressed, using the toilet and washing their hands properly... and make things easier for them (think also Velcro straps and elasticated waist bands)!

## Listen



“Nothing” and “I can't remember” are standard answers to questions about your child's day. Don't be discouraged: wait a little and the stories will come out, usually at an odd time – in the bath or on the toilet! Try asking specific questions like: “Who did you play with at break?” “What made you laugh today?” or “What went well today?”

## Get Involved

Volunteering for the PTA or helping in class is a great way to be involved in school life. Attending school services, performances and fayres is a great way of meeting people too.

There are lots of ways to be engaged and get involved. Click [here](#) for our previous newsletter about parent/carer engagement.

## Positivity

Your child may feel anxious if they see you are worried. Accept that, just like them, you will learn as you go. If you have any concerns, talk to their teacher first – they are there to help. You can also always talk to the office team and the headteacher too.

On the first day, don't stay around at drop off; it's generally best to leave them to it and have a box of tissues ready at home... just in case.

## “It's not a race”

Try and dodge playground discussions around whose child can already read or can't – your child will develop at their own pace. The qualities that matter in reception age children are things like curiosity, independence, imagination, collaboration and kindness (enjoying playing and sharing with other children).

## “Let's pretend”

Do lots of school-type activities at home (you probably do lots of these already):

- read to your child and look at books together;
- talk about the time of day and days of the week;
- sign rhymes together and play musical instruments;
- role play;
- help them recognise their name when it's written on things & count together.

## Lunch



School dinners are fantastic: freshly cooked in our own kitchen every day! Miss Kurvink and Miss Hammond... well most the staff to be honest... tend to eat with the children at lunch time too. If your child is having a free hot dinner, look at the menu together in advance. Maybe try out similar meals at home so they get used to the food on offer, but don't underestimate peer power – children will often give new things a go at school. If you're sending packed dinners try to make sure the quantities are manageable. Families are welcome to order meals on a weekly basis for the children to try and if it's not for them, children are to bring in packed lunches; for these we encourage them to be healthy in content and ask parents not to include sweets, chocolate, crisps or fizzy drinks.

## Resilience

Being resilient means that we are able to cope with change and bounce back quicker when things go wrong. Three easy things you can work on together that will help build resilience are feelings, positivity and coping. Encourage your child to talk about how they're feeling, teach them the names of the different emotions and how they can recognise how other people might be feeling. When problems come up, show your child how to look at them in a good way with a 'glass half-full' attitude. Let them know that sometimes things go wrong but there are ways to distract themselves if they feel upset or angry.

## 'Big Up' School



How you and your family talk about school with or within earshot of your child will have the biggest influence on how they feel about going. Even if your own memories of school aren't particularly positive, make sure you talk positively to your child about what school will be like for them. If there's something you're concerned about, ring the school – reach out and ask... share your worries with us so you don't pass them onto your child.



JOIN US FOR OUR  
**SUMMER FAYRE**

**FRIDAY  
4TH JULY  
4PM - 7PM**



**FREE  
ENTRY**

**CLAYPOLE  
PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

**MAYPOLE  
COUNTRY DANCING  
FAIRGROUND GAMES  
TOMBOLA  
RAFFLE  
REFRESHMENTS  
INFLATABLES  
HOG ROAST**



**LITTLE JOHN'S  
HOG ROAST**



## Chaos Into Calm: Mornings

- ✓ Get up half an hour earlier than your child to give yourself a head start;
- ✓ Open curtains or switch on a lamp in your child's room 10 minutes before they need to get up, to give them a chance to wake up naturally;
- ✓ Use the morning checklist with your child so they learn what they need to do each day - as they get older encourage them to do more by themselves;
- ✓ Allow enough time for breakfast - try and leave 15-20 minutes to sit at the table, it'll give you a few minutes to talk about the day ahead, and eating a filling breakfast will help your child concentrate at school;
- ✓ Switch off distractions like TV or tablets - perhaps build in a few minutes for a bit of telly if everyone's ready on time, but not if you know it's going to cause problems leaving the house...

It might take a while for your new routine to become a habit (or to even remember that you have a routine), but stick with it and on the days when it all goes to plan, you'll find mornings are much calmer.

## Chaos Into Calm: After School

Even the most organised parents with years of school-run experience will tell you that mornings can be a challenge. You'll need to be adaptable, but having a routine will help you manage the mayhem - making it easier for your child (and you) to enjoy the day ahead.

- ✓ Check your child's book bag for any letter and notes from their teacher, the school office, or PTA - party invites are often sent out this way too;
- ✓ Talk about their day, read together and (when the time comes) help with homework tasks;
- ✓ Make sure any books that come home are back in their bag each evening;
- ✓ Find out if there's anything special going on the next day that they'll need something out of the ordinary;
- ✓ Help your child layout their uniform read for the morning (including BOTH shoes);
- ✓ Get them to bed on time, because tired and grumpy children aren't fun in the morning!

## “What is phonics?”

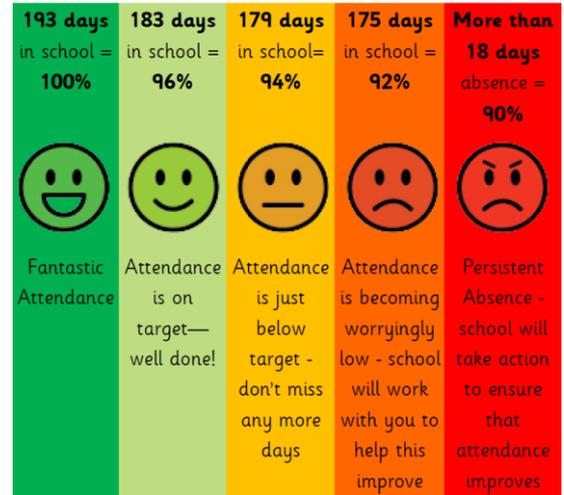
Children link sounds (phonemes) and their written form (graphemes) in order to recognise and read words, using basic units of knowledge to “decode” new or unfamiliar words. According to the Department for Education's guidance for parents, "Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex – it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read. It is particularly helpful for children aged 5 to 7." Words are made up of just 44 sounds in English. You may have heard your child or their teacher use particular words that form the core of understanding phonics. Here's a quick explanation of some of the key concepts:

Phoneme - the smallest unit of sound as it is spoken.

- Grapheme - a written symbol that represents a sound (phoneme) that's either one letter or a sequence of letters
- Digraph - two letters that work together to make the same sound (ch, sh, ph)
- Trigraph - three letters that work together to make the same sound (igh, ore, ear)
- Split digraph (sometimes called 'magic e') - two letters that work together to make the same sound, separated by another letter in the same word. This enables children to understand the difference in vowel sounds between, for example, grip/gripe, rag/rage, tap/tape. Rather than memorising words individually, children are taught a code which helps them to work out how to read an estimated 95% of the English language. A workshop for parents/carers will be arranged early in the Autumn term to share how phonics is taught and how you can help at home too.

# Government Enforced Changes to Attendance & Absence

From August the government is introducing new rules that will increase the amount of money parents who are fined for taking their children out of school will need to pay - with County Councils expected to apply the measures comparably and consistently (*under the current rules it is the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents - which means the process can vary from council to council across the country*). Please be prepared for a far stricter approach/enforcement by our Local Authority come September onwards.



Under the Education Act parents have a legal duty in England to make sure their child is getting an education when they reach compulsory school age. This is defined by law as the school term after they turn five to the last Friday in June in the school year in which they turn 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

From August all Local Authority schools will be obliged to consider a fine when a pupil misses 10 or more school sessions for unauthorised reasons. A session counts as either a morning or an afternoon in school. Therefore 10 missed sessions are the equivalent to five whole days of school.

Unauthorised reasons can include:

- Holidays;
- Days off;
- Feeling tired;
- Bad weather;
- Parent unwell to bring child to school;
- Child refusal;
- Birthday celebrations...

*We love being part of your child's life and want them in school with us every day. It's an honour & a privilege to watch them grow... and it happens in a blink of an eye. We meticulously plan our curriculum so that it builds on prior learning & threads together various subjects to help children deepen their knowledge and appreciate how learning interweaves. Consistent attendance ensures the best chance at achieving the outstanding progress your child deserves.*

As the Headteacher, I can only grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

The current penalty is £60 per parent, which rises to £120 if not paid within 21 days. From August 2024 when the new policy is introduced, the fine for school absences across the country will rise to £80 - per parent - if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

Under the new rules, education chiefs are also pledging to tackle repeat offenders and those who may choose to regularly allow their children to miss school in favour of paying the fine. If a parent is given a second fine for the same child within a three-year period, this fine will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for a discount if paid early. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution may be considered. If you're prosecuted and have to attend court because your child hasn't been going to school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

The Department for Education expects children to attend school every day that it is open - unless they are ill; and if your child is missing - without permission in advance from the headteacher - then families may risk a fine if the number of absent days breaches the threshold.

The Department for Education says there has been a 'worldwide rise' in absence and persistent absence from school since the pandemic, which broke the habits of coming to lessons each week combined with other barriers such as mental ill health.

# Getting Ready to Read & Write

Every child is unique and will develop at their own pace. Children aren't expected to be able to read and write before they start school, but there's plenty you can do at home that will help them get off to a great start.

## Reading to your child



The benefits of reading regularly with your children are well documented. Beyond academic success, here are other reasons why it's such an enjoyable and simple way to support your child's learning:

### Imagination & Creativity.

Looking at the pictures, talking about how the characters feel and what's going to happen next can really ignite their imagination.

### Concentration.

Sitting down regularly to read together can help increase the length of time your child can sit still and concentrate – this will help them when they start school.

### Language skills.

Children hear and learn words that are different from their day-to-day vocabulary through books.

### Learn about the world.

Choosing books from a wide variety of topics helps children learning about different places, cultures and interests. They'll develop a greater understanding of the world around them and an empathy for others.

### Time together.

Cuddling up and having some quality time is a great way to relax and enjoy a story together away from the regular demands of busy lives.

## Learning to write



Learning to write is tricky. Young bodies need to develop muscle strength in their fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders and back to be able to hold a pencil properly. Here are some ideas for building strength through play:

### Messy play.

Get out the playdough and do some modelling. Use pinching, chopping and squeezing actions to help develop all the muscle groups needed for writing.

### Puzzles & games.

Jigsaws are brilliant for developing hand-eye coordination and building with wooden bricks and Lego can help strengthen little hands and fingers.

### Helping at home.

Get your child involved in a bit of housework: pegging washing, dusting and sweeping all builds strength (why is it that children enjoy tidying and cleaning when it's not their bedroom)?

### Play outdoors.

Pretty much every outdoor game will support physical development!

### Tummy time.

It's not just for babies – when your child is looking at books or watching a bit of television, by letting them lie on their stomach, they'll be developing core strength and coordination.

### Painting.

Bring out the paper, paints and brushes – building up arm and chest muscles helps with writing too.