

## Starting School at St Weonards Primary School

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage starts at birth and continues until the end of the Reception year. This ensures a smooth transition from your child's experiences at home, in pre-school and then as they start school.

We have established close links with the nurseries and pre-schools and meet with them to ensure that each child's strengths and interests are shared. During the Summer Term we have several visit days where you and your child are invited in to school and spend time meeting staff and getting used to the new environment.

We build on the information from nurseries and pre-schools and from the information that you give us to assess your child's engagement and involvement across a range of activities. This will then inform a baseline.

During a child's Reception year we are building a picture of how they learn which will be used to plan for learning when they start on the National Curriculum in Year One. We identify the strengths and areas for development for each child. We want to ensure that each child will have a good level of development to take with them on their journey through school.

### **Learning Journey**

We will be taking lots of photographs of the children and documenting their learning through an online 'Learning Journey' which we will share with you at different times during the year. Our photographs make the learning visible ~ we can show how children are learning from first hand experiences.

### **Snack Time and Lunches**

We encourage the children to drink water throughout the day. There is access to water in the classroom so there is no need to send in a water bottle unless the weather is warm and drinks need to be taken outside. Please do not put water bottles in reading bags as they can often leak. We are a healthy school and promote the eating of healthy foods. Each child is provided with a piece of fresh fruit every day. Milk is also provided and is free up until your child is five. After this you have the opportunity to pay for milk.

All children in Reception are able to take advantage of the Government's 'Universal Free School Meal' scheme. Lunches are provided daily in the Hall where children are able to enjoy the meal they have chosen from the menu that is sent home. Children can choose from a selection of pudding of the day, fruit and yoghurts. Water is provided with all meals.

We encourage children to eat with a knife and fork and develop their social skills as they talk and eat together.

If you do not wish to take up school meals then your child will need to bring in a packed lunch. They are able to eat this in the Hall along with the children having school meals

## **Parent Partnership**

Children make most progress when they feel safe, secure and happy in school. They need to be confident that parents and teachers are working together. We encourage you to work with us to address any concerns you have. We operate an 'open door' policy and provide a reading diary for day to day issues. Effective home/school communication will help your child to learn.

During the year there will be Parents' Evenings when you can meet the class teacher and discuss your child's progress.

You are welcome to speak to the teacher at the end of the day or to arrange an appointment if there are any concerns that you need to discuss. We would rather address any issues promptly as we find this is in the best interests of the children.

You will receive regular newsletters which will let you know what the children are doing and how you can support at home.

## **Learning to Read**

We want every child to have developed a love for books and to be inspired to read independently. We learn to read using phonics. At St Weonards we use 'Letters and Sounds' in a daily phonics session and will need to practise the skills with you at home every night using their sound packs. The most valuable support you can give your child when they start school is to spend just 5 to 10 minutes every day to read with them.

Once your child has settled into school they will be given a reading book and reading packet of sound cards. They will need to bring this to school every day.

## **Learning to Write**

Your child will be busy 'mark making' and starting to use pens and pencils to write their name. We will help your child to establish a secure pencil grip and good pencil control in Reception because we know how important it is for future writing. Children start with 'emergent writing' which allows them to practise writing letter shapes; this will quickly progress into recognisable letters and words as their phonics progresses.

Over the summer you can encourage your child to practise 'big' movements by playing ball games, running around outside or in the park and riding their bike. Give them big paintbrushes and a bucket of water in the garden or try making play dough with your child.

## **Things to do**

### **Over the summer holidays.....**

- Practise dressing/undressing skills including shoes and socks.
- Encourage independent toileting and washing hands.
- Encourage independent eating with a knife and fork.

### **Have fun.....**

- Reading stories, singing songs and rhymes
- Talking at meal times, in the car, when shopping
- Counting
- **Talking about 'starting school'**