Guidance for Parents

**Welcome!**

Hello! We are looking forward to the time when we can welcome you and your child to Finstall First School. We are a happy, friendly, and hardworking school providing an environment in which your child can learn and develop their full potential.

We have written this guidance to help you prepare your child for the great adventure of starting school.

When your child starts in Reception this September, they will be part of the Foundation Stage, moving on to Key Stage One of the National Curriculum in Year One. The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three, and finishes at the end of the Reception year.

Within the new Foundation Stage Curriculum there are seven areas of learning;

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design.

The following pages will hopefully give you some practical advice about how you can prepare your child in these areas to give the best possible start at school.

**Getting your child ready for September**

We want to encourage the children to be as independent as possible, especially in being able to cope with the daily routines of school life. As parents you can help tremendously in this process, by encouraging your child over the next weeks and months to practise some of the many skills s/he will need when starting school in September.

Please do not pressurise your child, however, as we do not expect them to immediately succeed at everything!

**Practise:**

Managing zips and buttons

Putting on socks and shoes

Putting on and taking off a coat

Putting on and taking off their uniform and P.E kits.

Hanging up a coat on a peg

Opening snack boxes/water bottles

**Encourage:**

Using a knife, fork and spoon

Washing and drying hands

Using a handkerchief

Going to the toilet unaided and pulling the flush!

Sharing toys with friends, brothers and sisters

Tidying up after using toys, books etc.

To know where the name label is in their clothes.

**Some ways of helping your child in each area of learning.**

**Communication, Language and Literacy**

Learn and sing nursery rhymes, songs and poems.

Listen, read and enjoy stories every day together and show them how to handle and look after books correctly.

Visit the library together, read shop signs, road names, labels etc.

Talk to your child as often as possible and encourage them to take part in conversations, listen to and answer questions and use talk to organise their thoughts.

Play memory games and encourage them to take verbal messages to others.

Extend their vocabulary by exploring new words and discussing their meanings.

Help your child to learn the letter sounds rather than their names. E.G. /a/ c a t /b/ b a t

Your child may want to write their name. Encourage your child to write the first letter in capitals and the rest in lower case. We write in ‘cursive’ which the children will learn from the beginning of Reception and use throughout school. A copy of which is included in this pack.

**Physical Development**

-Encourage your child to play safely outside; running, jumping, climbing, hopping, throwing and catching.

-Enjoy playing games together such as ‘Simon Says’ and ‘Statues’.

-Give your child experience of building with bricks, doing jigsaws, cutting and sticking to develop fine motor skills.

Teach them to dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Encourage independence by giving your child regular contact with other children, such as at playgroup or nursery.

Plan short periods of separation from you such as playing with friend or staying with a relative.

Provide stimulating imaginative play experiences. E.g. Dressing up, making dens, painting etc.

Help them to understand right and wrong and appropriate ways of playing. E.g. Sharing, taking turns, tidying up, looking after toys and books etc.

**Mathematics**

Help your child to count (actual physical counting e.g. fingers and toes.)

Teach them to recognise numbers to 20.

Look for opportunities to use words such as up, down, between, wide, narrow, light, heavy, fast, slow, few, more etc.

Help your child to recognise shapes and colours.

Help your child to sing number rhymes.

**Understanding the World**

Share everyday experiences with your child such as cooking, cleaning the car, gardening and washing up.

Talk to your child about cultural differences they may come across and past events in their life.

Answer their questions and build up their general knowledge about the world around them to encourage their curiosity.

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Make available a variety of mark making tools such as pencils, crayons, felt-tips, brushes and paper.

Sing to and with your child and have CD’s that they can listen to regularly.

Encourage children to represent their thoughts and feelings through art, music, dance and role play.

**Reception FAQ**

**The school day**

**When does my child start school?**

Please see the induction timetable for specific information – This is inside your induction pack. Please follow this timetable. You can drop off and collect your child from the Reception outdoor area at the times given on your timetable.

If your child finishes school at 12.30pm they are invited to stay for lunch at 11.50am. Please ensure that you order them a school dinner for these days.

**When does the school day officially start?**

The school doors open at **8.50am**. The Reception Teaching Assistants will be at the door to begin letting children into school. The bell will ring at **9.00am** for the start of the school day and the register will be taken. We encourage children to enter school independently.

**Where should my child’s older sibling enter and exit school?**

If you have older children in school, they are welcome to enter school through the Reception classroom. Older children need to be collected from their own classrooms at the end of the day.

**Where can I find information on breakfast club?**

Mrs Cook (Reception Teaching Assistant) runs breakfast club. Please speak to Mrs Cook if you have any questions regarding starting breakfast club. We do ask that you allow your child to settle into school at least one full week before introducing Breakfast club to their routine.

Further information about ‘Breakfast club’ is available on our website at [www.finstallfirst.co.uk](http://www.finstallfirst.co.uk). Click the ‘information’ tab and then ‘Breakfast club’ is an option to choose on the left hand side. On or after the information evening, we invite you to come and register your interest to Mrs Cook or the office. This is to give us an idea on numbers for the coming year.

**What should my child bring into school each day?**

Children must bring in their book bag every day and this should be placed in their drawer. Monday, Wednesday and Friday they should be placed in the box outside the classroom so that their reading books will be changed. Inside their book bags please include a piece of fruit for morning snack, their reading record, reading book and communication book. Please place communication books in the trays outside the classroom if there are comments that require attention.

Children should also bring in a water bottle each day and they will be shown where to keep it in the classroom. Please also send a coat/jumper/cardigan. They can be kept on their peg when they are not needed.

Indoor P.E Kits can be left in school for the half term and will be sent home to be washed during the holidays.

Outdoor P.E kits need to be sent into school on each Thursday morning. The children will come home wearing this kit on Thursday afternoon and their uniform in their bag.

**Food & Drink**

**Do I need to bring in anything for snack time?**

Yes. Please can you send a healthy morning snack, that is a recognisable piece of fruit, in your child’s book bag. Please can you ensure that you show your child how to open their snacks and if possible place them in a disposable bag that they can throw away in the bin in the snack area. Snack for the afternoon is provided by school but you may send your child with two snacks if you wish too.

**Does my child need a drink for the classroom?**

Yes please! Your child will need to bring in a bottle filled with water each day. Please ensure the water bottle has a lid to prevent spillage. The children will be shown where their bottles will be kept during the day and they will have access to this all day. Please can you ensure that the bottle is named and your child knows where the name is.

**Do I need to pay for milk?**

Milk is free until your child reaches the age of 5. When your child turns 5, you will receive a letter from the office, asking if you would like your child to continue receiving milk, and how much this will cost. Please return the forms to the class by placing in the trays outside the classroom.

**Where can I find the school menu and how do I pay/order?**

You can find the latest school menu on our website at [www.finstallfirst.co.uk](http://www.finstallfirst.co.uk)

Click the ‘information’ tab and then ‘school dinners (class catering)’ is an option to choose on the left hand side. You will be given an order form but additional copies are available on the website. School meals are free for all Reception, Year One & Year Two children. Please ensure that you return the order forms provided to the office as soon as possible. From September the forms can be returned by placing them in the trays outside the Reception classroom when you drop off your child. If you prefer, your child can have a packed lunch from home.

**PE kit**

**When is PE and what does my child need?**

**Tuesday**: Indoor P.E kit.

Please send this kit into school as soon as your child starts.

Green P.E bag to include:

* white t-shirt
* green shorts
* Black pumps

We will keep this kit in school and send it home to be washing during the half term.

**Thursday:** Outdoor games kit

Please send this kit into school each Thursday morning.

Different coloured P.E bag to include:

* White t-shirt
* Grey jumper
* Grey jogging bottoms
* Trainers

The children will come home wearing this kit on a Thursday and their uniform will be in the P.E bag.

Please make sure the kits are in separate bags and we ask if possible that they are different coloured to help the children to know which bag they need.

**Reading**

**When will my child have a reading book?**

When your child starts school in September, they will be given a ‘home readers’ book and a pink bookmark. These books are for you to share with your children. **The children are not expected to read the book themselves**. Use the targets on the pink bookmark to begin asking your child to talk about the story and demonstrate their understanding of characters and events in the stories.

When your child can recognise phase 2 sounds:

**s a t p i n m d g o c k e u r b h f l**

**and** they can blend sounds together to say a word e.g. b-a-t= bat

Then we will put them onto a reading scheme and they will have a new bookmark and targets to practice.

There is a wide range of reading schemes available at each reading stage to give your child a rich experience of reading material.

**What days are reading books changed?**

**MONDAY, WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY.**

On these days please can your child put their book bag in the box available outside the classroom when they enter school in the morning.

**What should I write in the reading record book?**

Please write a short comment about how your child did with the reading book and sign. If you would like to keep the book a little longer then please write this in the reading record.

**Who changes the reading books?**

The Teaching Assistants change our reading books.

**Who will listen to my child read?**

When your child is on a reading scheme book, the class teacher will hear them read individually at least every other week. Children are also heard read by the teacher in a guided group every week.

Children’s early reading skills are encouraged through our daily phonics sessions.

**Writing**

**When do you start cursive writing?**

In September we follow an early writing programme called ‘Write Dance’. This allows children to practice the patterns of writing in a fun way.

By Christmas, we begin to introduce the cursive formation of letters.

We group letters together of similar patterns.

e.g. (i l t) (n m h) (d o a c g) (u v w y) b e f j k p q r s x z

We let you know the letters that we are practicing so that you can practice at

home.

**Forest School**

**When will Forest School start?**

Sessions will begin after October half term. You will receive further advice and information nearer the time.

Class R Hedgehogs – Monday Afternoon

Class R Rabbits- Friday Afternoon

Please send children into school on Forest School morning wearing their forest school clothes. Send waterproofs and wellies in a separate bag ready for them to change in to in the afternoon straight after registration.

**What should my child wear?**

Winter

* Warm clothing as we go out all weathers!
* Thermal socks
* Wellies
* Trousers (tucked inside wellies)
* Jumper
* Hat
* Scarf/gloves (Thinsulate mittens )
* Waterproofs (ideally separate trousers and jacket)

Summer

Even if it is warm, children need to wear clothing that covers their legs and arms to protect against nettles and branches.

For every Forest School session please send:

* A plastic bag for dirty clothes and wellies
* Spare clothing for *when* we get messy!
* Spare coat for playtimes after Forest School.

**What is my child learning at school?**

**Target tracker**

Target Tracker is a tracking system that we use in school to record the children’s learning. During September, you will receive an email from ‘Target Tracker’. Please follow the instructions on the email to register. Each Friday, your child’s class teacher will email you photos and observations of your child’s learning in school that week.

**Curriculum maps**

What we are learning each half term will be available on the class page of the website.

**Other**

**I gave a question that’s not been answered!**

At Finstall First School we have an ‘open-door’ policy. If you have a question, query or a worry, then please let us know! The best way to do this is to write it in the communication book and put it in the tray outside the classroom. If it’s a quick word, the class teachers will be available at the end of the day. If you need longer then please ask to meet with the class teacher who will be happy to meet you at an arranged time.

There is also a wealth of information available on our website at [www.finstallfirst.co.uk](http://www.finstallfirst.co.uk) .