Dr South's CE Primary School

Foundation Stage Unit Handbook



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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Foundation Stage Unit at Dr South's CE Primary School

We are a vibrant, creative and innovative school that embraces new opportunities and ideas, putting them successfully into practice.

"Pupils are very happy at school. Warm and trusting relationships underpin their enjoyment of learning." (Ofsted, October 2013)

"The quality of provision and practice in the unit is outstanding", Professor Julie Fisher, Independent Early Years Advisor, December 2016.

This booklet is aimed at giving you some information about the school and more specifically the foundation unit. If you have any questions or comments, please talk to a member of staff.



We look forward to working with you and your child during the coming years.

What are the aims of our Foundation unit?



Our aim is to provide an exciting and stimulating environment where each child's needs are provided for, helping them to achieve their full potential – intellectually, physically, emotionally, morally, spiritually, aesthetically and socially, and to develop a positive attitude to learning. We can best achieve these aims in a child-centred environment with opportunities for first-hand experiences and purposeful play supported by trained, experienced and caring adults.

The children in the Foundation Unit initiate their own learning and the adults support and guide them to extend the learning opportunities. We are proud to have focused children NOT focused activities as we know that high-level involvement occurs in child-initiated activity. When children show high levels of involvement the brain is at its most active that is when there is most progress and development. High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment, supported by skilful staff.

Session Times

Nursery Children

Morning Session	Afternoon Session
9.00am - 12.00am	12.00am - 3.00am

Children are entitled to 15 hours of Nursery Education per week; this works out at 5 sessions per week.

Additional sessions can be requested by filling in a form at the office. Agreement to additional sessions (above 15 hours) is at the discretion of the Foundation Stage staff and Head Teacher. Requests will be judged against staffing levels, and whether additional sessions are deemed to be in the best interests of the child.

Reception Children

8.50am - 3.15pm

What clothes should your child wear?



Children are much happier if they can manage their own clothes reasonably independently, although help is always on hand whenever necessary.

They need to feel comfortable and to know that it is not a disaster if paint or glue is accidentally spilled on their clothing!

Nursery Class

Children should wear navy jogging bottoms in the winter with school polo shirts and sweatshirts which are available from the school website. Navy elastic-waisted shorts, or blue or yellow checked dresses may be worn in the summer months. All Nursery children must have a clean change of clothes in a named drawstring bag available in the unit at all times.

Reception Class

Children should wear:

* Grey or navy blue trousers, shorts or skirt; blue or yellow checked dress (summer)
* White or navy blue polo shirt or shirt
* School sweatshirt or cardigan

Please ensure children have both indoor (plimsolls or similar) and outdoor shoes when they come to school.

During the summer months we ask that children wear suitable closed-toe footwear. They enjoy climbing and running around when they are outside, but can find it difficult to do these things safely in strappy sandals, crocs or flip flops.

We would ask that you think of the Foundation Stage Unit as a workshop and dress your child accordingly.

What should my child bring?

- Sun protection cream (summer). Please apply a high factor cream, at home before the beginning of the session, to protect your child from the sun, remembering that they will have free access to the outside area during their session in school. Please do not send sun cream bottles to school without first discussing it with staff.
- A bottle of water, clearly labelled with your child's name.
- Book bag for pupils in the Reception Class These can be purchased from online and should be brought to school every day. Children will bring home reading books. Please read with your child every day, consulting the reading diary for guidance, and do comment. This can be a valuable means of communication between you and the teacher.

Snack Time



We run a café-style snack. This means the children do not have snack as a whole group but sit down at the table when they are hungry, and when there is a space. We begin snack at 9.45am and all the children have usually eaten by 10.45am.

Children are offered (and encouraged to pour themselves) milk or water and are offered fruit to eat. Snack time is monitored by an adult so we can ensure that all children have a drink at least.

Lunch Time

Children have lunch from 11.50am - 12.50pm.

Children in the Reception year are entitled to a free hot dinner and we ask parents to book these in advance at the office. Those in nursery who stay for a full day (2 sessions) are able to have a hot meal but these are chargeable; they also need to be booked in advance at the office.

You are welcome to provide your child with a packed lunch if they prefer. Like all schools nationally, we are committed to encouraging children to eat a healthy lunch at school, so we ask parents to include healthy options such as fruit and salad rather than chocolate and sweets in the packed lunch.

Please place lunch boxes in the box provided outside the foundation classroom.

What will your child do at Dr South's School?



Everything in school is carefully planned and structured to support your child's development. We provide a wide range of experiences as children need to be actively involved in exploring and discovering the world around them.

Children communicate in all play situations - sand, water, role play area, stories, construction, outside play, to name but a few.

We encourage all children to listen, talk, sing songs and rhymes, express themselves and to communicate with adults and children. Sharing ideas and feelings is important to us all and is the basis for all learning.

Reading and Writing



Looking at and sharing books with each other and adults are amongst the most highly-valued activities in school, as are speaking and listening skills.

We have a Going Home Library that you and your child can use at any time. Enjoyment of books is vital for the development of language and imagination, and encourages your child to want to read.

Just as children want to read for themselves, they also want to write. They make marks and symbols and tell us what they say. We value and encourage their mark making and encourage children to become aware of the link between the spoken and written word. Children have many opportunities in school to develop this emergent writing and to use many writing tools, both inside and outside the classroom.

Painting, drawing, modelling and cooking



We have the opportunity to use the Lin Cooper Practical Skills Building which provides the children with lots of opportunities for learning.

Cooking provides many opportunities for sensory, social and cultural experiences, as well as developing language, mathematical and scientific skills.

Through painting, drawing and modelling children gain experience of colour, line, tone, shape and texture. They develop control of essential fine-motor skills and hand/eye co-ordination in the use of tools such as pencils, scissors, paintbrushes, hammers, saws and screwdrivers, which help develop pencil control.

Children learn and gain pleasure from "doing". They value adult interest and encouragement, taking pride in displaying their work at home and at school.

Water and sand play

Using these natural materials children learn to play together and experiment. Through first-hand experiences, children will discover mathematical and scientific ideas such as weight, capacity and flotation.

Children are encouraged to talk about their discoveries - this helps to develop concepts and broaden their vocabulary, thus extending their language.

The Role Play area and imaginative play

The Role Play area is a wonderful place for make believe, dressing-up and trying out different roles. It provides scope for developing imagination, language, sharing, co-operation and mathematics, for example setting the table or sequencing the making of a cup of tea.

There are also opportunities to enter a world represented in miniature - the farm, dolls' house, railway, road set, etc. Through this play, children work through their own experiences, widen vocabulary and share ideas with each other.



Construction toys and games

Our school is well equipped with resources to develop concentration, co-ordination and observation of similarities and differences - all vital concepts.



Important skills of fine and large motor co-ordination, perception of shape and structure are developed through this play.

Science, maths and technology are also involved: children can test out their own ideas through direct experiences.

By using these resources, children are developing their imagination, planning, discussing, and sharing ideas, predicting - the finished product providing a great sense of achievement - even if demolition cannot be resisted.

Computing

We will encourage your child to use our computer equipment and programs in an open-ended way.

There are a number of computers for children's use that are available every day. As well as developing mouse and other computing skills, we also encourage children to use the hardware for a variety of purposes. These may include painting, drawing, using digital cameras, inserting the digital photos in presentations, and using the scanner to view objects in different ways.

Rhymes, music, dance, poetry and drama

Children have a natural love of these and they are vital for the development of language, reading, imagination, confidence, co-ordination and self-expression.

Your children will have access to pre-recorded music as well as a range of musical instruments for composing their own music.



Outdoor Learning



Our garden is used by children daily and all year round (the sheltered area offers some protection from the elements!). Children have opportunities to play in our garden, exploring the space around them with a sense of adventure and discovery.

There is a wide range of resources available and children are encouraged to work together, negotiate and solve problems. Working in our garden supports all areas of the curriculum and is a highly valued resource for our school.

Children have access to a digging pit and are allowed to dig in this as long as they are wearing wellington boots. We have a few pairs to lend, but if you have spares you wish to donate they would be very welcome).

If possible please can you supply your child with a pair of wellington boots to wear during the winter months as well as their normal outdoor shoes.

"The quality of the learning environment — particularly outdoors — contributes substantially to the stimulation of children's development and their engagement in learning." Professor Julie Fisher, Independent Early Years Advisor, December 2016.

How do we record your child's progress?

During the year, all children are observed working in all areas of the unit. Twice a year we have discussion weeks where you are welcome to come into school and talk to staff about your child's progress on a formal basis, but we greatly value the frequent, informal discussions which happen spontaneously throughout the year.



We create individual 'Learning Journeys' for your child through a piece of educational software called 'Tapestry' which you can access online. By logging in with a secure username and password you will be able to view some of your child's observations, photographs and even

videos from their time in Willow class. You will even have an email telling you when a new observation or piece of work is available to you. This will enable you to view your child's progress closely and you can reflect upon achievements with your child

In addition to viewing our contributions, we encourage you to add to your child's Learning Journey by uploading photos, videos and comments, or by commenting on observations made by us. We love finding out about which activities your child really enjoys and about the learning they get up to at home.

Nearly all children have some learning, social or emotional difficulties at some stage in their school life. If you have any concerns about your child, please come and see a member of staff so we can discuss these with you. Equally, if staff have any concerns about your child, they will discuss them with you at the earliest opportunity.

Safeguarding Children



The school has a Child Protection Policy and there are laid down procedures to follow in any situation concerned with the safety of children. This forms part of our overall Safeguarding Children Policy.

'Under the Education Act 2002 (Section 175), schools must make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Parents/carers should know that the law (Children Act 1989) requires all school staff to pass on information which gives rise to a concern about a child's welfare, including risk from neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse. The staff will seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the parent/carer, and where possible, seek their consent to a referral to Social Care. This will only be done where such discussion will not place the child at increased risk of significant harm. Schools will seek advice from Social Care when they have reasonable cause to suspect a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Occasionally, concerns are passed on which are later shown to be unfounded. Parent/carers will appreciate that the designated person for Child Protection was carrying out their responsibilities in accordance with the law and acting in the best interests of all children.'

The safety of the child is paramount.

Funded Places

Children are entitled to fifteen hours of funded sessions per week at the beginning of the trimester following the child's third birthday (ie September, January, usually April). We do our best to allocate the funded sessions to which three year olds are entitled by the April preceding each academic year irrespective of the trimester in which each child joins the class so aim to reserve requested sessions for children we know will be joining the class in January and April. Places for children for whom admission is subsequently requested are accommodated as remaining places allow.

Wrap-Around Care



If capacity allows, children may attend further sessions on a fee basis and this is known as Wrap-Around. The fees are currently £12.00 per session. We require one term's notice (approximately six weeks) if you wish to withdraw your child from Wrap Around Care so that we can reallocate the place. Since there are fewer children eligible to attend the Nursery Class in September there is more scope to offer Wrap-Around sessions in the first trimester. However, as the academic year proceeds the Nursery becomes increasingly full of children entitled to their funded sessions. Priority has to be given to the entitled sessions and for this reason we can only allocate Wrap-Around places on a term by term basis and cannot guarantee them for the whole year. By April the Nursery will be almost or full to capacity and therefore Wrap-Around places will be extremely limited in the final trimester. During the course of the year it also becomes increasingly difficult to accommodate requests to rearrange sessions whether entitled or Wrap-Around.

What should you do if your child is ill or away for any reason?

Please let us know the reason for any absence. We need to know about any infectious diseases e.g. chicken pox, rubella (German measles) etc.

As part of our Safeguarding duties, we have a responsibility to know where children are if they are not in school. Parents must telephone or email the office and let us know if their child is absent from school, but on the rare occasions when we haven't been informed of a reason for absence, we will need to contact you to find out the reason.



If your child has an upset stomach or sickness there needs to be a **clear 48 hours** before coming back to school.

It is the school's policy that staff do not give out medicine to the children, other than supervised inhalers other than in exceptional circumstances. Please see the Administration of Medicine Policy on the school website for more details.

It is essential that you let us know if someone other than you is going to collect your child from school. We cannot allow your child to leave the school unless you have notified us. The person collecting your child must be over the age of 14.

The Friends of Dr South's

The Friends Committee is comprised of parents of pupils in the school. The committee plays an important social and fund-raising role and welcomes fresh ideas. New parents are warmly invited to functions and encouraged to attend meetings and offer their support.

Where should I park?

As you may be aware, availability of parking around school can be difficult. Please remember our neighbours and park in a considerate way.

We thank you for your co-operation in this matter.