

Parent Handbook

Welcome St John's Catholic Special school.

St. John's School was founded by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary in 1897 as a boarding school for delicate children. In its long history of 'Special' education the school has helped boys with ophthalmic difficulties, cardiac illness, respiratory diseases and learning difficulties – meeting each of these needs as they emerged up to 1970, when the school was closed for refurbishment. It reopened in January 1972 as a day school for boys and girls with moderate / severe learning difficulties with additional language disorders.

The specifically caring and supportive environment helps to cater for children who may also have social and emotional needs. The school, which has charitable status, is approved as a Special School by the D.f.E. (1993 Education Act, Section 188) for 100 pupils ranging in age from 5 to 19 years.

Places are available to children from L.E.A.s across London and at present 12 L.E.A.s use the school. St. John's is a Roman Catholic School, but noncatholic children are also considered where it is thought that their educational needs can best be met within the environment it has to offer. The ethos is of a caring Christian community.

St. John's provides an education for children who meet the following criteria:

- They have learning difficulties from within the moderate – severe continuum.
- They are Roman Catholic and / or whose parents / guardians would like their child educated in a setting where the education is underpinned by Christian values.
- They are ambulant (able to move up and down stairs independently)

In addition they may have:

- Language and communication difficulties requiring speech therapy and a structured language programme,
- Social and / or emotional difficulties that would benefit from a caring, structured and nurturing atmosphere (but not with behaviour of such severity and intensity that they present a serious risk to the physical well-being of themselves, other children and staff).

St. John's prides itself on being an inclusive school that has traditionally used a very flexible approach to match the provision it offers to the needs of the individual child. The pupil population at St. John's School is very diverse and the school is working with increasing numbers of young people with complex needs.

GENERAL AIMS

In St. John's School our general aims are:-

1. To help the students to grow to maturity with an awareness of their personal relationship to God and to other people.
2. To help the students prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

3. To enable them to enjoy their childhood in an environment where they can develop the physical, intellectual, cultural and emotional independence appropriate to their age.

Every Child Matters

The Government in its Every Child Matters: Change for children framework states that services should be built around the needs of children and young people to maximise opportunity and minimise risk. To this end:

1. Classes are small and led by a teacher who is supported by a learning support team
2. The curriculum is focused around developing each individual's key skills
3. Students are encouraged to develop their own interest as well as a range of vocational skills
4. Students are provided with opportunities to develop their own independence and life skills.
5. All Students in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form are entered for externally accredited schemes through AQA and ASDAN approaches. A small number of pupils may enter for GCSE through a link course with Trinity Catholic High School. Others may attend college to gain vocational qualifications.

St. John's benefits from a large green site consisting of five buildings, and a large playground and a sports field. These help to provide a calm environment. Housed within the buildings are ten tutor bases, an Art studio, Speech and Language suite, Design & Technology workshop, Food Technology area, gymnasium / sports hall and Music, Science / French and RE rooms. The school is also fortunate in having a large assembly/dining hall, small library, sensory room, soft play area and a number of spaces that can be used as quiet rooms or settings for individual-small group study.

The Sixth Form is housed in its own designated purpose built complex erected in 1998 and officially opened by Bishop Thomas McMahon in 2000. The Sixth Form centre is designed around an atrium and provides a light and airy building within which students and staff can carry out their day to day activities in comfortable surroundings. The centre has many specific facilities aimed at offering the students age and developmentally appropriate experiences.

All classroom staff are trained in total communication approaches and effective de-escalation, physical interventions and behaviour management approaches. This training is delivered internally by staff tutors largely under the auspices of the Elklan, Makaton and Team Teach approaches.

St. John's organises its secondary and Sixth Form programme so that students are taught for approximately half of their time by their form tutors. This provides the pupils with a strong significant relationship

Alternative learning

Where it is deemed appropriate selected students from St. John's take part in alternative learning sessions at a local outdoor centre. These sessions are well established and have been in existence for several years. The sessions are very much aimed at young people who are not

yet showing consistent conceptualisation of qualities such as turn taking, empathy, fellowship and caring for others. Through real experiences students taking part in these engineered outdoor are encouraged to develop appropriate and desirable social interactive skills. At the same time many of the young people gain a sense of awe and wonder of God's creation that previously they had been unaware of.

The school holds two major social occasions a year. The Christmas Concert held in December is the result of over a month's focused rehearsal and practice and the school's Fete and Fun Day in July epitomises the close bonds that exist between all the members of the schools community both past and present.

Parents' views and opinions are welcomed as it is acknowledged that they have a unique perspective of their young person and know them more closely than is possible for staff to achieve on a day to day basis. St. John's bears strong witness to its Catholic identity. The school tries to actively enable all members of its community to realize its vision statement;

'To Live life to the full' John 10:10

The school also has strong links with the HCPT. Many children go on pilgrimage to Lourdes every year with a number of local groups. We would like to welcome you to our very special community of students and adults who work together to make the school a happy and successful place of faith, growth, development and learning. Each day we remember this through prayer and worship in each class or in assembly This is a happy school and one where we hope you too will quickly feel happy and part of our family Welcome!"

Sue Burnside – Headteacher

Purpose of this handbook

This handbook has been developed to provide you with an overview of the school and information on our procedures, policies and general knowledge of how things are done! It is written with new parents in mind, and is designed to help you support your child through their school life at St. Johns Address;

ST JOHN'S R.C. SCHOOL,
TURPINS LANE, WOODFORD BRIDGE,
ESSEX
IG8 8AX.

Telephone; 020 8504 1818 Fax; 020 8559 2409

Email for general enquiries: office@stjohnsrcschool.co.uk

Website; www.stjohnsrcschool.co.uk

Very often your telephone call will be answered by an answering machine because our receptionist is answering another call or helping a visitor. Please do leave a message, it will be

responded to as soon as possible.

Timing of the School Day

The doors open for morning registration at 8:55 am. Staff are on duty to supervise children from 08.55 Children must not be left in the playground unattended before this time Registration is at 9.00, assemblies will take place at 9.15 each day The first lesson will begin at 9.30. Lessons at St John's are 45 minutes long, seven lessons per day Monday till Thursday, six lessons on Friday due to early closing. A prompt arrival would be appreciated. The pick-up time for the children will be 3.25pm Monday till Thursday and 2.30pm on Friday. On the last day of each term pick-up time will be 12.30pm.

COLLECTION FROM SCHOOL AT THE END OF THE DAY

For security reasons, it is essential that we are very clear who is collecting your child from school at home time. We must be informed in writing if it is not a child's normal guardian collecting them from school or is not using local authority transport. A letter or email will be acceptable authorisation.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Please note that there is no automatic right to holiday leave and that this is now granted only at the head teacher's discretion in line with government legislation and required procedures. We strongly advise that family holidays are not taken during term time as we know this to be disruptive to a child's progress. As a school we are instructed to do everything within our means to reduce absences. In very exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to authorise a minimal amount of time out of school. This must be at least 6 weeks in advance. Failure to follow agreed procedures will result in holiday absences being classified as "Unauthorised".

Absence

No child should be absent from school without prior permission of the Head Teacher. All appointments to see the doctor, dentist, or optician, etc. should be arranged for outside school hours, wherever possible. If your child is ill please telephone 020 8504 1818 selecting option 1 each morning with an update on your child's illness or e-mail to office@stjohnsrcschool.co.uk.

Lateness:

Morning lateness:

Your child should arrive at school by 8.55am any lateness can cause disruption to the class, and is unsettling for your child. If your child is late in arriving at school, you should report to the school office, so that the register can be adjusted accordingly. NOT DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM

Accidents and Emergencies

We ask you to complete an "Emergency Contact List", which is enclosed, containing addresses and telephone numbers where you can be contacted during the day. This enables us to act quickly in an emergency. We always attempt to contact you but if unsuccessful we will act "in

loco parentis". Please help us by keeping this information up to date.

CHILD PROTECTION

Because of day-to-day contact with children, schools are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Parents should be aware, therefore, that, where it appears to a member of staff that a child may have been abused, the school has a legal duty, as part of child protection procedures, to report their concern to Children's Social Care.

CAR PARKING

Parents and visitors are welcome to use the school car park when visiting the school, there are clearly marked parking bays and it is important that all cars are parked within these. Please do not park in front of the school at the beginning or end of the day.

SMOKING POLICY

St John's is a no-smoking site. Parents and visitors are not permitted to smoke anywhere within the school buildings or grounds.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

The school runs an after school club on Tuesday and Thursday evening the Students are taken directly into the club at the end of the school day and parents collect their children from here promptly at 6.00.

SCHOOL MEALS

Our hot meals are cooked on the premises and served in our dining halls. All meals are planned and prepared in line with current Government guidelines for healthy standards and the development of healthy food choices. Money must be bought into school each Monday morning, in a marked envelope (currently £10.00 for primary and secondary children and £11.00 for sixth form each week). If you prefer, it is possible to pay for the half term in advance; please send a cheque made payable to St John's school.

Some children choose to bring packed lunches from home. Please try to ensure that only healthy options are included: sweets, chocolate bars, fizzy drinks etc. are not permitted. If you child suffers from any allergies please inform the school asap

PLAYTIME BREAK

As we encourage all our children to develop healthy food habits, sweets, biscuits, chocolate, crisps and chewing gum are not allowed at break times. The children are allowed to bring a healthy snack.

PROTECTION DURING HOT WEATHER

During the school day, the children spend as much time as possible out of doors. However, we are conscious of the need to encourage children to be safe in the sun. During hot weather,

please would you send your child to school with a hat, and sunscreen so that he or she can develop the “slip, slap, slop” habit – slip on a T-shirt, slap on a hat, slop on some sunscreen! Unfortunately, we are not permitted to provide sunscreen in case your child has an allergy that we are unaware of. Remember also that children should drink lots of water during hot weather. Please make sure your child has a water bottle or plastic drink container in school.

MONEY IN SCHOOL

If you need to send any money in to school, please would you ensure it is in a sealed envelope, with your child’s name, the amount and what the money is for, clearly written on the outside. All monies should normally be sent to the school office via the class teacher.

COMMUNICATION

We are constantly reviewing the best way to communicate between home and school. Many parents now find it much easier to receive school letters by email and as a school we find this a far more reliable and efficient means of communication. If you do not already receive post this way, please give urgent consideration to doing so. Please contact the school office to arrange to receive email letters.

Contact with Staff

Parents’ consultation evenings/day are held three times a year. These will form an important link between home and school. Staff will write messages as necessary in the home school book on a daily basis. We would be grateful if parents could do likewise to aid communication.

PARENTAL VISITS

We operate an “open door policy” at school, which means that we are happy to meet with you to discuss issues at most times. However please make an appointment in advance. This can be done via students home school book or via the school office

[Uniforms - click for details](#)

Uniform Details

School uniform can be purchased from the school office. Post sixteen students do not have to wear uniform. Please insure that all students have sensible foot wear, all clothes (including underwear) and shoes should be clearly marked with the child’s own name

Jewellery - For reasons of health and safety, jewellery of any sort is not permitted. However, where ears are pierced, stud earrings and small sleepers may be worn. For PE, children may have to remove their earrings. Hair - Students with long hair are expected to wear their hair tied back. Shoes - Children are expected to wear sensible shoes, not boots or shoes with built-up heels or soles. Closed toe sandals are considered the most appropriate in summer.

PE - Footwear for PE should not be expensive fashion trainers. Many of the trainers on the market are not suitable for running. These will be used indoors and outdoors and sometimes in muddy conditions.

Games and PE

Your child will take part in PE/leisure activities during the course of the week. PE/Games kit will

be needed on these days. You will be notified if swimming. PE/Games kit should be brought to school on the first day and left at school.

MEDICINES and allergies

Only medicines prescribed by a child's doctor can be administered in school. Clear, written directions stating dosage, time required and signed by the student's parent or guardian must accompany the medicine. This must be agreed with the head teacher. Please do not send either prescription or non-prescription medicines into school with your child. On no account should any child be carrying medicine in school. Please advise us of any allergies your child may have. This is very important should they require emergency treatment. The school has qualified first aiders, who are called in the event of an accident. They would make the decision as to whether your child would require hospital treatment, at which time, you would be contacted to either accompany your child or meet them at hospital. You would be notified of any head injuries sustained by your child via a "Head Injury" form.

If your child has suffered from sickness or and diarrhoea we will ask you to keep them at home for two days after they are clear of symptoms to avoid passing on the infection.

Pupil support and care

The welfare and development of your child are of the utmost importance to us. There are several first aiders on the site and the children are supervised at lunch times and playtimes. Two named senior managers are available where more serious Child Protection issues arise.

Lost property:

Lost Property is kept in the school office and also laid out in the school hall during parent's evenings. Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly marked with the student's name.

Playground

There is a teacher on duty in the playground five minutes before the start of the day. We ask that children do not play football at this time. Designated football times are at lunch time twice a week. We provide equipment to ensure that all students have a happy and productive playtime.

MASS/ASSEMBLIES

Throughout the school year, the children are given the opportunity to attend Mass with school. Students also take part in daily acts of collective worship, some of which they are responsible for preparing and presenting.

R.E.

By law parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE, but in our school, as parents have chosen to send their child to a Catholic school it is assumed that no students will be

withdrawn.

HOMEWORK

We appreciate parents' desire and willingness to help their children at home, so extra work is available for individual students on request. Extra Curricular Activities and School Trips The school organises a range of after school activities, these may vary from year to year depending on the students' abilities, involvement of teachers, and the availability of resources. School trips. Every child in the school goes on at least one trip during the academic year. When your child joins the school we will ask you to complete general permission slips for local trips; for longer trips there are individual permission slips. Payments and donations for any school trip or activity must be provided to the school office in an envelope clearly marked with the Students name and class. You will be informed of all extracurricular activities and school trips

AWARDS

Each Friday, during our end of week assembly, we present children with certificates or awards that they have achieved out of school and have brought in to share with us. We try to acknowledge students out of school achievements, as we believe they play an important part in their personal development. Please feel free to send evidence of achievement such as sports trophies, swimming, dancing, music, drama awards etc.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

We recognise that the school has a central role in the children's social, moral and spiritual development, just as it does in their academic development. At school we try to work with you to encourage standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

We aim:

- To create an environment which encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To define acceptable standards of behaviour.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
- To promote self-esteem, self-discipline and positive relationships.
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the development of good behaviour.

Our policy is underpinned by promotion of good behaviour/ through lots of praise the children see the expectation and strive to achieve. Where this falls down, the student is invited to discuss the issues with a member of staff and make amends to those affected. There may be

loss of privileges as a consequence and parents are involved if appropriate. As a final sanction a students may have to be suspended from attendance at the school. Parents are always informed in writing; this sanction is always reported to the Chairman of Governors and the Local Authority to both of whom any parents may appeal against the suspension of their child. Further information on procedures can be obtained from the Head teacher

BULLYING

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils are able to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at St John's. There is never any justification for bullying behaviour; it will not be tolerated in any form. Differences of race, religion, gender or ability are absolutely rejected as reasons for intolerance. Thankfully, incidents of bullying are rare at St John's but are dealt with swiftly if they occur. We believe that bullying behaviour is a problem for both the bully and the victim. We will address any incidents in positive and constructive ways that provide opportunities for growth and development for the bully and victim alike. Please contact us immediately if you have any concerns.

BREAKAGES

It should be noted that you will be asked to pay for breakages where this is a result of your child's inappropriate behaviour

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The restrictions that are placed upon charging for school activities do not prevent the school from asking for voluntary contributions, for the benefit of either the school or any particular school activity - be it during or outside school hours. No one would be discriminated against on the grounds of a family's inability to pay, but regrettably, if there were insufficient voluntary contributions, the visit/activity could be cancelled.

COMPLAINTS

Parents should note that it is the wish of the Governing Body to deal with any complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. Parents are, therefore, asked to refer any complaints in the first instance to the Head teacher, or to the Chairman of Governors, Fr. Bob Hamill, care of the school.

DATA PROTECTION

As the school holds information on pupils, we must comply with the terms of the Data Protection Act. This means that the data we hold is only used for the specific purposes allowed by law.

SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENTS

These are kept in school, and may be reviewed by parents on application to the Head teacher.

THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governors of St John's constitute a decision making body, whose function is to determine all policies and procedures to ensure the efficient running of the school. This is achieved through regular meetings. The full Governing Body meets at least once a term, and its committees and working groups meet more frequently. The Head teacher is appointed and employed by the Governors and entrusted with the day-to-day management of the school. As the chief professional adviser to the Governors, the Head teacher is accountable to them for the full and proper implementation of all school policies, and is required to provide them with regular reports and up-dates.

Curriculum

St John's School offers a full curriculum. Please notify us if you want your child withdrawn from any of the following subjects:

- Mass At least once a term
- Sex and Relationships Education (pupils aged 7+)

Parental Involvement

We believe that this is crucial to the process of education and in supporting the school. Parents are the first educators and from the introduction of the child to the school we make every effort to develop and strengthen the links between home and school. Parents are invited to become involved in the school as little or as often as they are able. You are able to do this in a variety of ways: Helping on a regular or an occasional basis with one off activities, providing help in the classroom, library work, or on educational visits.

Facilitating contacts and links with the wider community from which the school might benefit. Providing expertise or time with one off projects Financially or with fund raising activities Please note: for the safety of all children, parents who wish to be regularly involved in the school will be asked to complete a CRB check (Criminal Records Bureau). The school offers several opportunities for parents to meet including coffee mornings and social events.

ST. JOH.N'S GOVERNORS

Fr. Bob Hamill

Sr. Catherine McLaughlin

Sr. Julie Rose

Mrs. T. McHale

Mr. K. Petty

Cllr. Mrs. J. Ryan

Mrs. T. Baumann

Mrs. Y. Inije

Dr. S. Tranmer

Mrs. Sue Burnside

Notification of change to end of day collection arrangements When completed, please hand this form to your child's Class Teacher

Name of child(ren):

I hereby give notice that on

_____ (date)

my child(ren) will be collected at home time by

(insert name)

who is

(Grandmother, friend etc)

Signed

(Parent/Guardian)