

PARENTS HANDBOOK ST JOHN'S SCHOOL



**Welcome to
St John's Roman Catholic Special school.**

St. John's School was founded by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary in 1897. Initially as a boarding school, catering for children with special needs until 1970, when the school was closed for refurbishment. St. John's re-opened in January 1972 as a day school for boys and girls with moderate to severe learning difficulties.

St. John's is a Roman Catholic School, however, we admit all young people, irrespective of faith where it is thought that their needs can best be met within our school. The ethos of our school is one of a caring Christian community which encompasses all faiths and ethnicities.

Over the years St. John's has evolved catering for young people between the ages of 5 - 19 years of age, with various different types of learning disabilities. Our young people are not defined by their diagnosis, our hope for all our pupils, is to reach their full potential and be the best they can.

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

- They have learning difficulties within the moderate - severe continuum.
- 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 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 diverse.

GENERAL AIMS

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

1. To help the children to grow to maturity with an awareness of their personal relationships.
2. For the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
3. To enable them to enjoy their childhood in an environment where the ethos is to encourage them to achieve 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 that 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. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own interest as well as a range of vocational skills.
4. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their own independence and life skills.

St. John's benefits from a large green site, consisting of two buildings, large playgrounds and a sports field. These help to provide a calm environment. Housed within the buildings are ten tutor bases, speech and language suite, food technology room, gymnasium, music room, science room, and two computer suites. The school is also fortunate in having a dining hall, small library, sensory room, soft play area and additional space that can be used as a quiet setting for individual-small group study.

The Sixth Form has its own designated purpose built complex. It 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 pupils are taught for approximately half of their time by their form tutors.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING

Where it is appropriate selected pupils from St. John's take part in alternative learning sessions at a local outdoor pursuits centre. These sessions are well established and have been in existence for a number of 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 pupils taking part in engineered large outdoor activities and husbandry tasks with farm animals, are encouraged to develop appropriate and desirable social interactive skills.

The school holds a Fete Fun Day in July and epitomises the close bonds that exist between all the members of the schools community both past and present.

Parents' views and opinions are always welcomed, if you wish to discuss your child and their needs, please call the office to make an appointment to speak with the class teacher. If they are unable to resolve your query, you can address your questions to the Speech and Language department, or Head of School, if appropriate.

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

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 organised. 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 JOHNS SCHOOL., TURPINS LANE WOODFORD BRIDGE ESSEX
IG8 8AX.**

Telephone; **020 8504 1818**

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

Website; **www.st.johnsrcschool.co.uk**

TIMING OF THE SCHOOL DAY

The doors open for morning registration at 9:00 am. Staff are on duty to supervise children from 9.00 am. Children must not be left in the playground unattended before this time. Registration is at 9.05. The first lesson will begin at 9.15. Lessons at St Johns are 35 minutes long, six lessons per day Monday until Thursday, five lessons on Friday due to early closing. The collection time for the children will be 3.25pm Monday to Thursday and 2.30 pm 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. 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 Headteacher'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 from school.

ABSENCE

No child should be absent from school without prior permission of the Headteacher. 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 prior to 9am when the registers are taken for the day. Please update us on a daily basis or if you know your child will be absent for a prolonged period of time, inform us of the duration. We are happy for this information to be e-mailed to office@stjohnsrcschool.co.uk

LATENESS:

Morning lateness:

Your child should arrive at school by 9.00 am. Any lateness can cause disruption to the class and is unsettling for your child. If your child is late in arriving to school, you should report to the school office, so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE PARENTS TO TAKE THEIR CHILD STRAIGHT 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 first, 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, as our school transport systems park there. Your co-operation is appreciated.

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 Thursday evening. The children are taken directly into the club at the end of the school day and parents collect their children from here promptly.

SCHOOL MEALS

Our hot meals are cooked on the premises and served in our sixth form atrium. All meals are planned and prepared in line with current Government guidelines for healthy standards and the development of healthy food choices. **Payment for meals is to be paid into school each Monday morning, in a marked envelope (currently £10.00 for primary and £11.00 for secondary and sixth form students). If you prefer, it is possible to pay for the half term in advance; please send a cheque made payable to St John's R.C. School. If your child is eligible for free school meals, application has to be made to your Local Council via the Benefits Department.**

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. No food containing nuts please. If your child suffers from any allergies, please inform the school as soon as possible.

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, ie. fruit, to eat at playtime.

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 Headteacher to arrange to receive email letters: office email office@stjohnsrcschool.co.uk.

Contact with Staff

Parents' consultation evenings are held twice a year.

Home/School Diaries - These will form an important link between home and school. Staff will write messages as necessary and sign the diaries 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 to see a member of staff any time throughout the school. This can be done via students home school book or via the school office.

UNIFORMS

Uniform Details

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

Jewellery - For reasons of health and safety, jewellery of any sort is not permitted. However, where ears are already pierced, stud earrings and small sleepers may be worn.

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. Any T.Shirt and Shorts or tracksuit bottoms will suffice.

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 child's parent or guardian, must accompany the medicine. This must be agreed with the Headteacher. 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**" letter signed by a first aider.

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

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 lunchtimes and playtimes.

Four named senior managers are available where more serious Child Protection issues arise.

LOST PROPERTY:

Lost property is kept in the school office and also sometimes laid out in the school hall during parents' evenings.

Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly marked with your child's name.

PLAYGROUND



We ask that children do not play football at this time. Designated football times are at lunchtime 3 days a week in the cage area of the playground, this is to ensure no one gets hurt by a flying ball. We provide equipment at playtimes and ensure all students have a happy 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 children will be withdrawn from RE lessons.

HOMEWORK

We appreciate parents' desire and willingness to help their children at home, so extra work is available for individual students.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL TRIPS

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 a general permission slip for local trips; for longer trips there will be permission slips per trip.

Payments and donations for any school trip or activity must be provided to the school office in an envelope clearly marked with the child's name and class.

AWARDS

Each Thursday, 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 children's out of school achievements, as we believe these 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 pupil 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 of School

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.

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. At St John's 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

We accept that accidents do happen and if this is the case the school would be understanding. However, it should be noted that you will be asked to pay for breakages where this is a result of your child's inappropriate behaviour e.g. a defaced and/or damaged property repeatedly.

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 would not take place.

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 of School or to the Chair of Governors.

GDPR

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 viewed by parents on application to the Head of School. Alternatively they are on the school Website.

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 Headteacher 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 Headteacher 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 Johns School offers a full curriculum, both formal and semi-formal in order to meet the needs of all our pupils.

Please notify us if you want your child withdrawn from any of the following subjects:

- Occasional 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.

Facilitating contacts and links with the wider community from which the school might benefit. Providing expertise or time with one off projects. Financial or and fund raising activities.

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)