

# Welcome to Excalibur Primary School





# A guide to starting our school Chancery Multi Academy Trust

Chancery Multi Academy Trust was set up on the 1st April 2018 and is a charitable company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. Chancery Multi Academy Trust is a MAT based in Cheshire East. The partnership is currently made up of five primary schools: Excalibur, Pikemere, The Berkeley, Williaston and Elworth Hall.

Our Trust was created with one sole aim. For member schools to deliver, through partnership and collaboration, an outstanding learning experience for all children so they flourish and thrive; enabling them to achieve their own individual excellence. Our ethos is rooted in the celebration and promotion of each member school's own diverse and dynamic character. At Chancery Trust we recognise the unique qualities of different schools; promoting their autonomy to enable each school to develop their own curriculum and practices to reflect the needs of their learners. We will share best practice by ensuring that all member schools across the Trust benefit from the successes of others and by investing in 'expert teaching' and an 'irresistible curriculum.' The schools are treated equally and are run by their own Head Teachers. At Chancery Trust we believe that strong, innovative leadership is core to any school's success and we will ensure that we promote networking and shared working and that we are relentless in our 'no excuses' approach.

To achieve our aim, we will offer a rich range of professional development opportunities for all staff. Through highly effective coaching, high quality continuing professional development and a culture of reflective practice and support, we will invest in broadening the experiences of emerging leaders. We will ensure that all staff benefit from a rewarding and successful career within, between and beyond our schools. We will combine resources where possible to build efficient organisations and share the strengths of each member school in order to bring about school improvement and therefore build better futures for all of our children.

Mutual trust and respectful relationships amongst our schools will ensure that all prosper and excel.

*You can find out more about the Chancery Multi Academy Trust by visiting its website:*

**<https://www.chancerytrust.co.uk/>**

*D. Rogers May 2022*

## Welcome to Excalibur

The information in this booklet is a supplement to the school website that we hope will help you and your child to settle into a happy school life here at Excalibur.

As a school, we are required to set up systems and procedures that help us to ensure that the children in our care are safe and happy. The following pages will clarify some of these areas as your child begins school.

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This information can also be found in the parent's handbook which can be accessed via the link on our school website,

[www.excalibur.cheshire.sch.uk](http://www.excalibur.cheshire.sch.uk) and click on the link to the school office.

# 1. Transition to school

## Getting ready

You have probably already talked to your child about starting school. You can help your child to feel positive and comfortable about starting school by talking about all the enjoyable activities they will take part in and the new friends that they will make. They may already know children who are here.

## What we will do

We have made this booklet for you to read and a smaller one for your child. Over the coming weeks we will upload more content to the 'New Starters 2023' page on our website. In June you will be invited into school to our new starters parents evening. We will be contacting your child's nursery or pre-school and speak to them regarding your child and hopefully be visiting them in their setting. In addition, your child will be invited to visit us for two settling in visits and you and your child will be invited to our 'Teddy Bear's Picnic', which is being held in July.

## Practical things

It is important that your child can do certain things for themselves before they come to school. One of the main skills your child should feel confident with is managing his/her own personal hygiene, caring for themselves in the toilet and washing their hands thoroughly after toileting and before eating.

Many children have the odd toilet accident when they are at school. Children feel more comfortable in their own things and although we always have spares at school, we recommend you keep spare underclothing and a change of clothes in a bag that can be kept on your child's peg. These clothes are also useful if your child needs to get changed, if they are very wet and muddy from playing outside.

Help your child to practise getting dressed and undressed by themselves and to fasten coats and shoes. These things might seem quite insignificant; however, they can save a lot of time getting ready to go home or when going out to play. Activities such as these also help to develop your child's independence and motor skills.



***"I can get myself dressed for school."***

### Other useful skills include:

- Using a knife and fork if your child is having a school lunch;
- Opening their own lunch box and drinks;
- Blowing their own nose.

### Holding a pencil and writing

- Please DO NOT worry if your child cannot write their name or hold a pencil with a tripod grip.
- Some children are very interested in mark making and may already be able to draw recognisable shapes and objects and write their name.
- However, some pre-school children are not interested in writing and drawing and will grasp a pen or pencil when they pick it up and may 'scribble' all over a piece of paper. This is quite normal!
- It is also very normal for your child not to have a dominant hand and they may even swap hands, depending on the activity. Some children can be aged 7 before they have developed a dominant hand.
- Writing is a physical process which children have to be ready for just like crawling and walking. Each child is different. Some children may be almost 12 months younger than others in the class. Try not to compare your child to others.



*“There's no **comparison** between the **sun and the moon**. They shine when it's their time”*

## 2. Personal details, emergency contact and Parent Mail



Please complete the registration forms that we give you and return them to school as soon as you can. These details are essential for us to hold, particularly in the case of illness or an emergency. Other details are requested by government for school admission and statistical purposes.

We have 'Parent Mail PMX' in school. This is a system where we can text or email you to inform you of situations such as an after-school club being cancelled or a school closure. This provides us with a useful and effective method of communicating with you. Letters and other important information are sent out in this way too. A registration email will be sent to you once your details have been entered into the School's Management Information System, SIMS.

If you want to look at the school's letters and newsletters before September, they are all on the school's website.

If your child has any medical, physical or behavioural difficulties, please share your knowledge and concerns with us so that we can ensure that the best provision possible is made for them. This includes information about any allergies (including food allergies).

### 3. Dropping off and picking up

If you need to bring your child to school by car we ask that you park legally and not in the school grounds. Please be careful where you park in Ivy Lane so as not to create an obstruction that could be hazardous to children. Please do not bring cars up the drive.



The school day begins at 8.50 am. Reception class children come into their classroom from 8:50 am through the little blue gate that leads into the covered outdoor area. They will need to be collected from here at the end of the day which is 3:20 pm.

We will ask you to say goodbye to your child at the blue gate and allow them to come into school by themselves, just as they have been doing at nursery or pre-school.

## 4. Snacks

### Mornings

Children may bring a piece of fruit or healthy snack for the morning. We ask that no sweets or chocolate are brought into school.

### Afternoons

Until the end of Year 2 all children attending primary school are entitled each day to a piece of fruit or veg under the government's fruit scheme. Children in Reception (under 5) are also entitled to free milk each day. At Excalibur, we have our fruit and milk in the afternoons. From time to time we have other snacks such as toast or crackers. There is no charge for this.

## 5. Water bottles

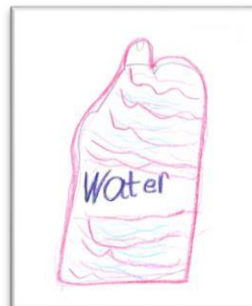
All children need a **named** water bottle in school each day which should be filled with clean **tap water only**. We have a water cooler in the classroom if children need to refill it during the day.

Children have access to their water bottle throughout the day.

Bottles are sent home each day to be cleaned and refilled.

Please do not put squash, fizzy or flavoured drinks into the water bottles even if your child tells you they do not like water!

***“Water keeps us healthy.”***





## 6. School dinners

From September 2014, under a government initiative, **all** children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a school dinner free of charge. You may, however prefer to provide your child with a packed lunch from home.

If your child is having a packed lunch from home it is easier for your child to manage their lunch if it is together in a lunch bag. Please could you ensure their lunch bag and any little plastic boxes or pots that are used are clearly named. Could we politely ask that you do not include sweets, bars of chocolate or fizzy drinks?



If you would like your child to have a school dinner, it's a good idea to encourage your child to try different kinds of food before starting school, as this will help them when choosing from the school menu. We are a nationally accredited healthy eating school and there is a varied and attractive menu offered each day. The menu is on a 2-week rotation and changes seasonally. Copies of the menu are available from the school office and can be viewed on the school website. You will also find information about allergens. Each day there is a vegan option. Please notify us as soon as possible if your child has any food allergies or intolerances. We also ask that, where possible, you provide us with a letter from your child's GP or consultant indicating their food allergies and/or intolerances.

## **7. Attendance**

### **Hectic morning? Late for school?**

We all have 'one of those mornings'. If you are late, after 9am, please come into school through the front door and 'sign in' so that we know that your child is in school.

### **Absence due to illness**

Please ring school on the first day of absence so that a reason for your child's non-attendance can be recorded in the registers. Our registers are checked regularly by Educational Welfare Officers and need to be kept up to date and accurate. If we do not have a valid reason for a child being absent, this time will be recorded as 'unauthorised' by school.

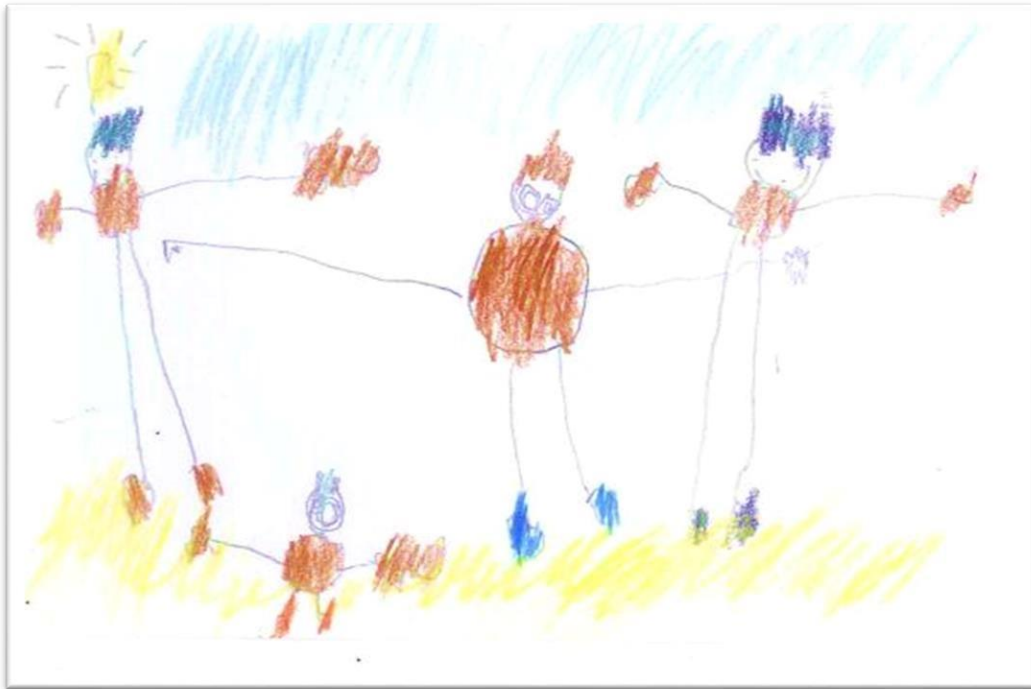
### **Holidays**

In response to the statutory changes by the Department for Education, introduced in April 2013, all Alsager Community Trust schools have had to amend their 'Attendance Policies' to reflect the changes in law. These are particularly applicable to holidays during term time. Following the review, the DfE have changed the regulations allowing schools to only authorise holiday under 'exceptional circumstances'. The government wants to dispel the belief that there is an automatic entitlement to an annual two week term time holiday.

To illustrate the impact of taking holidays in term time it was noted that if children are taken away for a two-week holiday every year and have the average number of days off for sickness and appointments, then by the time they leave school at sixteen they will have missed a year of school.

If, despite this change in the law, you wish to request holiday leave, you should write a letter addressed to the Headteacher, outlining the exceptional circumstances. We recommend that you do this before booking the holiday.

With the achievement of our pupils of paramount importance and the regulations clear we will be extremely unlikely to authorise any holiday leave for pupils next school year. We need to point out that in an effort to address poor attendance and unauthorised absences from schools the local authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and/or prosecute parents under The Education Act 1996 if a holiday is taken during term time.



***"I like playing on the beach with my family."***

## 8. School uniform

### **School uniform:**

White polo shirt or shirt; grey trousers or skirt/pinafore; blue jumper/cardigan with school logo.

These should be worn with grey tights or white socks for girls and grey or black socks for boys.

Please ensure that your child has suitable shoes for school – no trainers please.

Black school shoes without a heel are best.



Please could your child also bring a pair of named wellies to **leave** at school for use outdoors?

In the summer, grey shorts and blue/white dresses can be worn.

### **P.E. kit:**

Blue shorts;

Plain white t-shirt with school logo;

Trainers or black plimsolls, the ones with Velcro are best; it is ideal to have a spare pair of socks in the P.E. kit, especially for girls who may be wearing tights that day.

### **Purchasing uniform**

The school no longer stocks uniform. Excalibur uniform can be purchased directly from Smart Choice Uniform, 63 Crewe Road, AL sager. Telephone – 01270 747170. Smart Choice is run by Mr. Mittal who has been the supplier of our uniform for many years.

## 9. Medicines in school

On occasions, it is necessary for children to take medication in school. In line with Health and Safety guidelines school policy is to administer only medicines prescribed by a doctor. Please fill in a form and give the labelled packets/bottles in at the office. They will then be kept in a safe place until administered to your child. You will need to collect the medicine from the school office at the end of each day.

For safety reasons children must not bring their own medicine into school or take it home. It must be handed over to us by an adult.

It is Cheshire East policy that children remain at home for **48** hours after they were last sick or had diarrhoea.

### Asthma

Asthma medication is kept in the classroom so that it is easily accessible when needed. It is essential that you fill out an asthma form (also located outside the school office) and label the medication and volumiser.



*"We take medicine when we are poorly."*

## 10. Educational visits

What I hear I forget,  
What I see I remember,  
What I do, I understand.

As a school, we believe that real, 'hands-on' experiences provide children with a solid foundation on which to build and extend their learning. We will make local visits as well as trips further afield to enable us to access a variety of 'off site' learning experiences.

Sometimes these visits incur a cost and parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution towards transport and entrance fees. You will be informed by letter at the times that these are arranged.



***“We went to the farm to see the animals.”***

## 11. The school day

8.50am	children may enter school from this time
9.00am	welcome and morning activities, includes snack time
12.00pm	dinner time
1.00pm	afternoon session, includes snack time
3.20pm	home time



***"We like reading stories."***

## **12. Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

During their Reception Year children continue to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS). The Foundation Stage is centred on learning through play and giving your child opportunities to acquire skills through practical experiences which form the foundation for future learning. The EYFS curriculum is designed to place each child at the centre of the learning process through playing and exploring, active learning and creative and critical thinking.

### **The curriculum**

There are 3 'prime' areas and 4 'specific' areas of learning.

### **Prime areas**

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

This area focuses on forming relationships, self-confidence and independence. The children are also supported in the development of their feelings and behaviour. Play is used to build up basic skills such as sharing, self-regulation, turn taking and looking out for others.

#### **Communication and language**

This area focuses on the development of children's language skills for communication. This is an important skill which will enable the children to learn effectively in other areas. We will support your child's listening skills, questioning and explanations of events around them. This will be achieved through talk sessions, circle times, show and tell and language play through stories, songs and rhymes. We value these skills highly and always allow children thinking time when speaking. We also promote an environment where all children's thoughts and ideas are listened to.



## **Physical development**

Throughout Reception we will help to develop both children's fine and gross motor skills. Activities range from handling play dough and our daily 'Dough Disco and Funky Finger' sessions, using scissors and pencils to riding bikes and climbing large equipment. We will help to develop the children's spatial awareness and control movements. The children participate in weekly sessions of P.E. These sessions include parachute games, apparatus, gym and ball games. This area will also support your child's awareness of their health and social care by promoting healthy eating and encouraging an active lifestyle.



***"I like climbing on the apparatus in the hall."***

**We base our learning outdoors as much as possible. Therefore, we ask that each child has a pair of wellies that we can keep in school.**

## Specific areas

## Literacy

This area of learning relates directly to developing your child's reading and writing skills. Through daily phonic sessions we help your child to develop the ability to use knowledge of sounds and letters to aid reading and writing. We also help to build knowledge and enjoyment of books, the ability to form letters correctly, write simple words and build basic sentences.

## Mathematics

We ensure that the children have a firm foundation in number skills, counting objects and counting forwards and backwards. We then build on this with basic addition and subtraction skills. We also learn about patterns, shapes, measures and real life problems.

## Understanding the world

Children are given the opportunity, both through structured play and focused activities, to question and explore the world around them. They will find out how things work, about landmarks and features of their local surroundings. They will look at their lives, past and present and about others in their class as well as exploring other cultures and beliefs. They are also given the opportunity to learn through IT equipment; we have 6 mini i-pads and programmable toys permanently in the classroom and pay a weekly visit to the ICT suite.



## **Creative development**

Children are encouraged to develop their own creativity in music, art and drama. The role play allows children to explore real and imagined experiences. Role play also takes place out of doors too! Art activities include opportunity for the children to explore various art techniques (weaving, printing, painting, collage etc.). The children are also given the chance to compose and explore the sounds made by different instruments. As part of our P.E. session children can become creative in their movements as they take part in dance and music and movement.



***Our Reception Class motto!***

### **13. Assessing the Early Years Curriculum**

All schools and early years' providers must follow the new early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework from September 2021.

#### **Assessment arrangements**

The early learning goals summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the academic year in which they turn 5, the reception year.

#### **The changes**

The early learning goals have been changed to make them clearer and more specific. They are more focused on the main factors that support child development at age 5. Assessment against the early learning goals takes place at the end of Reception and the results are shared with parents.

#### **Year One**

When your child moves into Year 1 there will be a transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum to the Key Stage 1 Curriculum during the Autumn Term.

## **14. Supporting your child's learning at home**

Once the children have settled into school, we will offer suggestions as to how you can support your child at home. Some of the activities might be to support phonics teaching. Here at Excalibur we deliver our phonics teaching using a scheme called Read Write Inc. You can learn more about Read, Write Inc. at a Parents meeting usually in October. There may also be activities to encourage 'maths talk' and help to develop your child's early number sense.

To begin with children will bring home a picture story book to share with you that they have chosen themselves. When they are ready they will come home with a 'reading book' they can 'read' to you. To begin with this book is wordless. We will explain further about teaching your child to read as we go.

Sharing a book with your child and helping them with their Read Write Inc. sounds for a few minutes each day will significantly improve his/her progress.

We are aware that many children are ready and eager to learn before attending school, wanting to count objects, write their names, read, letters etc. If you feel you would like to support your child over the summer here are a few ideas.

### **Mathematics**

- When counting make sure your child has 1:1 correspondence between the number said and the object counted, pointing to each object as it is counted.

- Look out for numbers, shapes and patterns in all situations.
- Encourage your child to recognize patterns of 1, 2 or 3 objects without the need to count or touch them.
- Play games that involve a dice or dominoes.

### Communication and language

- Make lots of opportunities to share stories with your child.
- If your child has started to write their name, help them to form the letters correctly.
- Notice signs and writing in all situations.
- Play games together and practise taking turns.
- Share familiar stories and encourage your child to retell it in their own words.
- **Above all make it fun!**

### **Seesaw**

We use an online learning platform called 'Seesaw' as one means of communication. Here we can share photographs with you of what your child has done at school. We can post videos so you know how to continue your child's learning and support them at home. We will also send messages and announcements. We hope to get you signed up to Seesaw before your child starts school then we can send you videos, stories and messages. We will send all the information out about how to sign up before the summer.

We hope that you have found these notes useful – if we've missed anything please let us know.

Here's to a happy start to school!

