

Excalibur Primary School

Parent Handbook

2023 - 2024



Excalibur Primary School

**Ivy Lane
Alsager
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You will find that this is a very friendly school with an experienced and hard working team of people dedicated to your child's education. We are always able to find time to discuss with you any concerns that you may have about your child's education or to tell you more about teaching and learning at Excalibur.

This booklet provides details for parents on how we can develop the partnership between school and home.

We hold "Meet the Teacher" sessions for parents at the end of each school year and each teacher sends out class newsletters at the beginning of each term to keep parents informed about homework and what their child will be studying. Parents are then better able to support work in school if they wish to.

We welcome parental support in school. If you would like to help in school at any time either by supporting the class teacher or doing some very useful jobs please contact us.

You will be invited into school during the year for class assemblies and for seasonal productions.

You will receive a mid year report card and an annual report on your child's progress and twice a year the school has parents evenings where parents have the opportunity of discussing their child's progress with the class teacher.

The school has a very supportive group of parents called Friends of Excalibur who organise fundraising and social events for the school such as Christmas and Summer Fairs. Any parent may come along to meetings.

School Vision Statement

Excalibur Primary School provides a safe environment in which everyone is valued and learning is exciting.

In partnership with parents, carers and the wider community we aim to provide opportunities to enable all children to

- Develop as happy independent learners with a love of learning
- Achieve their highest potential

- Develop as responsible individuals with a respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Make a positive contribution to the daily life of the school and participate in the decision making process
- Develop confidence in themselves as individuals able to express thoughts and feelings
- Develop spiritual awareness with a respect and understanding of the world around them, their own and other cultures
- Understand how to live healthy lives and stay safe.

Structure of the School Day

It is important for a productive start to the day that children arrive at school on time. We ask that children arrive at school from 8.50 a.m. when they may then come into their classrooms. A morning activity or challenge is provided. At 9.00 a.m. the children who are still on the playground go into their classrooms. The register is then taken at 9.00 a.m. This ensures a calm, purposeful start to the day so that the children are ready to learn.

If children arrive later than 9.00am they are registered in as late and will need to be signed in at the front door on arrival.

Children arriving late disrupt the whole class.

Morning Break at: 10.45am – 11.00am

At morning break your child may eat a snack brought from home.

**Dinner Break at: 12.00pm – 1.00pm Reception and Key Stage 1
12.15pm – 1.15pm Key Stage 2**

Children in Reception, year 1 and year 2 are provided with a free cooked meal.

End of the school day at: 3.20pm

Please contact us if you are unable to collect your child on time at the end of the day. Your child should wait in school to be collected.

School Absence

If, for any reason, your child cannot attend school please telephone and let us know the reason on the morning of the absence. Not only is this a useful check on the child's whereabouts for safety reasons but a reason for the absence is required by the school so that the correct mark may be entered into the register. All schools have to follow strict guidelines when dealing with absence. Please remember that the school may only authorise absence for unavoidable reasons.

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.

A review has been commissioned by the Department for Education to consider the impact of school absence, especially holidays, on a child's education and achievement. There is a clear link between attendance and achievement.

Following the review, the DfE have changed the regulations allowing schools to only authorise holiday under 'exceptional circumstances'. The government want 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 Head Teacher or complete an absence request form, 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 taking you child out of school without the school's authorisation may result in the school requesting the Local

Authority to issue a fixed penalty notice to each parent/carer for each child. The penalty details are listed in the table below.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One Child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance.

Homework

Your child will be given work to complete at home. At Excalibur we try to ensure that any homework given is relevant to a child's needs, that it is worthwhile and is suitably challenging. The nature and duration of homework changes as the children move through the school. It usually consists of a spelling activity, a number activity, and a reading or research activity each week.

Homework Policy

It is our policy that children should complete homework as a matter of course. The purpose of homework is:

1. To develop the effective partnership between school and home to support the child's education.
2. To consolidate and reinforce learning in school, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
3. To encourage children to exploit resources at home.

4. To extend school learning, for example, through reading.
5. To encourage children to develop the self discipline and confidence needed to study independently.

The nature of homework

Reception, Years 1 and 2 Up to 1 hour per week

Years 3 and 4 Up to 1.5 hours per week

Years 5 and 6 Up to 30 minutes a day

How parents / carers can help with Homework

You can help your child with their homework by:

- providing the time and space for the child to work
- being positive about homework and valuing its purpose
- encouraging your children and praising them for completing work
- becoming actively involved in the homework activities
- encouraging older children, in particular, to meet deadlines and assisting them in doing so
- feeding back to the school any concerns that they may have.

Change of Details – Data Protection Act

Please remember to inform the school if you change your address, telephone number or your child develops a medical condition about which the school should be informed.

Parent / Teacher Meeting dates

During July each year you will be invited to a meet the teacher session in your child's next year classroom. This will inform you of the activities that your child will be undertaking in the following academic year and enable you to ask any questions you may have.

Twice a year the school has parent teacher meetings when parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher.

In the spring term you will receive a Mid-term report card for your child. This will be a summary of your child's achievement, effort and attendance to date.

There are no parent teacher meetings in the summer term as your child's annual written report are sent out detailing progress over the year.

In addition, at the start of each term you will receive from your child's teacher a letter detailing the activities to be undertaken in the following term.

Golden Rules

Listen carefully and follow the instructions the first time you are asked.

Be kind and thoughtful to others and respect their property.

Keep hands and feet to yourself.

Be polite and always move around school sensibly.

Allow others to work without disruption.

We have the above set of five Golden Rules throughout the school that the children themselves have generated. They are clear about our high expectations regarding behaviour in the classroom, around the school and at break times.

Educational and Residential Visits

As well as having visitors into school we ensure that all classes go out of school on educational visits throughout the year and make good use of local amenities. Carefully planned visits to places such as museums, zoos, art galleries, theatres and places of historical interest give our children first hand experiences to support teaching and learning in the classroom.

Our Year 6 children participate in an exciting two night residential visit to Laches Wood in Staffordshire where they participate in outdoor activities and have the opportunity to develop their personal and social skills further. Our Year 4 children participate in a one night residential at Standon Bowers in Staffordshire. Children's lives are enriched greatly by a residential experience. For many children this experience is their first opportunity of sleeping away from home.

Charging for Educational Visits

The success of such visits depends upon the willingness of parents to support them financially. We will therefore be asking, when you are informed of an educational visit, if you would make a contribution to offset the costs. We are statutorily obliged to inform you that the school has a charges policy. In brief, it states that visits wholly in school time are financed by contributions but that no pupil will be excluded from a visit because of a parent's inability to contribute. Please remember that where a parent cannot contribute that the school has to fund that place. In practice, however, the visit is unlikely to take place without full parental support as the school has very limited funds for this purpose. Please also remember that where a child cannot attend a visit due to illness that only any funds recovered from the trip provider can be refunded.

The cost per pupil is calculated based on the costs of the trip divided by the number of pupils in the class taking account of any pupils that the school have been informed will be absent for the trip.

Charging for Residential Visits

For visits that are residential in nature, the school can charge the full cost of "board and lodging". This will be payable in installments and parents can save for these visits by paying small amounts on a monthly basis if they wish.

If, however, the visit is to a Cheshire East Outdoor Education Centre these charges may, in some cases, be remitted (Laches Wood and Standon Bowers are not Cheshire East Outdoor Education Centres).

Parent / Volunteers in School

We welcome parental support in school. If you would like to help in school at any time please contact us, there is a handbook available for you to read through. Please note that all parents/ volunteers in school need to complete a DBS check and an application form where two references will be required.

Parent Survey

On an annual basis you will be asked to complete a parent annual survey. This is your opportunity to give your opinions about Excalibur School in a number of different areas. This survey is very important to the continuing development of the school and the staff and governor's would be grateful if as many parents as possible would complete it.

Medicines in School

It is preferable that parents or an adult nominated by the parent administer medicine to their children. Ideally, this could be effected by the child going home during a suitable break or by the parent visiting the school.

However, this might not be practical if, for example, the child's home is a considerable distance from the school or his/her parents are working or the medication is a regular long-term requirement. In such a case it is likely that a request could be made for medicine to be administered to the child in school.

Should your child need medicine to be administered at school then a medical form must be completed and handed with the medicine, by an adult, to the school office.

Children must not bring their own medicine into school or take it from school to home for safety reasons. If a pupil brings to school any medication for which the Headteacher has not received written notification the staff will not be held responsible for that medication.

Exception

Inhalers for children with asthma need to be readily available. Where children are of a sufficient maturity they should be fully responsible themselves for the inhalers and keep them at all times. Inhalers are kept by teachers in a readily accessible place and they are available for PE. A medical form should be completed on an annual basis or when there are any changes in medication.

48 Hours Policy

It is Local Authority policy for children to remain at home for 48 hours after they were last sick or had diarrhoea.

Injuries to Children

Minor injuries are dealt with by our staff who are qualified in First Aid. A note is sent home with the child to parents to inform them of the injury. If we feel that you should know about an injury straight away then we will contact you by telephone. It is important therefore that the emergency contact telephone numbers that we have in the office are kept up to date.

Uniform

The school uniform detailed below is highly recommended and we ask your support in dressing your child appropriately. If this causes any difficulty please contact us.

Grey skirt/trousers/shorts/blue and white check dress

White polo shirts or white shirts

Blue sweatshirt or cardigan

White, grey or black socks

Black shoes - Please ensure that footwear is suitable for the rigours of a school day. Fashion shoes, boots or shoes with high heels are a safety risk and trainers, besides making feet sweat, do not give growing feet the necessary support.

P.E.

White t-shirt and blue shorts.

Trainers are recommended for outdoor work as they provide more grip and protection than black pumps. As the children get older and play more structured games football boots may be more suitable.

Bare feet are used for indoor work, if your child does need to wear footwear for any reason then please supply black pumps.

All articles of clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name.

All school uniform, school logo reading bags, school logo P.E. bags and water bottles can be purchased from Smart Choice Uniform, 63 Crewe Road, Alsager. Telephone: 01270 747170. Smart Choice Uniforms is run by Mr Mittal who has been the supplier of our uniform for many years.

Wellies / Outdoor Shoes

Wellies or outdoor shoes can be provided by parents to be stored in our outside welly stores so that pupils can access the field at playtimes, even in wet weather.

P.E

Each child is time-tabled for two PE sessions per week. During these class sessions they cover a range of activities including; athletics, outdoor games, dance, gymnastics. We aim to give a balanced programme that gives the children the experience of challenge, competition, aesthetic movement, teamwork and physical fitness.

During year 3, 4 and 5 children receive swimming lessons at Alsager Leisure Centre.

We are following health and safety guidelines when we state that jewellery, including earrings, must not be worn in P.E. sessions. It causes a danger to the wearer and to others. If they cannot be removed then they should be covered up. It is inadvisable to wear jewellery of any kind in school. However, if your child's ears are pierced, then only studs should be worn.

The class teacher will let you know which days your child needs their P.E. kit but they should be kept in school from Monday to Friday. For health and safety reasons children should get changed for these activities into the appropriate kit. We cannot normally allow a child without kit to take part in P.E. sessions. Any normal school shoes, especially ones with a heel, would not be suitable for outdoor games.

If your child is unable to take part in P.E. sessions for health reasons we request that you always inform us by sending a note with your child to the class teacher. Parents will be informed if their child regularly misses P.E. because they do not have any kit.

Clubs

We offer a wide range of After School Activities here at Excalibur, please see our website for further information.
www.excalibur.cheshire.sch.uk

Music Tuition

Individual instrument tuition is provided by Music for Life which is a not-for-profit organisation set up in 1995 working in partnership with Cheshire Schools. If you are interested in your child learning a musical instrument then pick up a leaflet in reception, they do offer a 12 week taster course so that it can be tried out first.

Before and after school care/holiday care - Treetops

Our before and after school club is called Treetops and we provide facilities on the school premises for children before and after school and during school holidays.

School Lunches

School meals cost £2.40 per day (£12.00 per week) payable each Monday in advance. Payment should be made using ParentMail. Should your child require a hot snack at break time, these can be purchased in the same way.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are provided with a free cooked meal.

The menu is reviewed regularly and may alter “seasonally”. However the menu is rotated on a two weekly basis. The current menu is available from the school office and website.

Water bottles

Children should be provided with a plastic bottle filled with fresh water on a daily basis, these should be labelled clearly with the child's name. The bottles are kept on the desks in the classroom and the children are allowed to drink from them when they need to. These bottles should be taken home each evening for cleaning. Children who don't drink enough water are more prone to tiredness, poor concentration and dehydration. The bottles should only be filled with water and not fruit juice, diluted squash or fizzy drinks.

Free Fruit for Infants

All infants are given a piece of fruit during the afternoon.

Junior Play Leaders

To improve activity levels among pupils, especially infants, we have year 6 children within school that are play leaders. The school provides training to the pupils. This gives them the knowledge and skills to plan and organise other pupils in warm-ups and a range of physical activities and games. Their work is supported and monitored by teachers and midday supervisors, who ensures that the play leaders are providing suitable, well-planned activities.

Peer Counsellors

We have a team of year 6 children trained as Peer Counsellors who have undertaken training in year 5 in order that they may offer support to other students experiencing particular problems. They are available to all students in the school at lunchtime from 12.30 to 1.00pm.

Children's Voice

We give many opportunities for our children to develop independence and responsibility. For example, we have a Head Girl, Head Boy and a

group of House Captains who have important responsibilities throughout the school on a daily basis.

We have a committee of two Child Representatives from each class that meets regularly to discuss issues of concern to the children such as fair and safe playground use and caring for the school environment.

Holiday Listing 2023/2024

Holiday Period	Date of Closure	Date of Re-Opening
Autumn Half Term 2023	20/10/23	31/10/23
Christmas	22/12/23	8/01/24
Spring Half Term 2024	16/02/24	26/02/24
Easter 2024	28/03/24	15/04/24
May Bank Holiday	03/05/24	7/05/24
Summer Half Term 2024	24/05/24	3/06/24
Summer 2024	19/07/24	

Security

All school doors and gates are closed and locked at 9.00am until 3.15pm. Parents and visitors are to access the school through the main entrance and, if staying in school, should sign in and out at the school office.

Parking

Parking or stopping by parents is not permitted on or opposite the zig zag markings outside the school gates. Also parents should be mindful of Excalibur's neighbours and not park in front or opposite driveways.

Parking by parents is not permitted on the staff and visitors car park **at any time** unless by prior agreement.