

Gayhurst



Junior School
Handbook for Parents
2011 – 2012



Dear Parents

I am delighted that your child will be joining us in the Junior School at Gayhurst. I hope this time will be a happy and fulfilling experience. We aim to make the curriculum as enjoyable as possible as well as providing a caring and stimulating environment.

Starting at Gayhurst is an exciting new beginning, whether your child is joining us in the Nursery, Reception, Year 1, 2 or 3. We are aware that new beginnings can be daunting, but we very much hope that the information contained in this booklet, together with your introductory visits to the school will answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

The Junior School comprises 5 year groups from age 3 (Nursery) to age 8 (Year 3). The Nursery is housed in its own purpose built environment. Reception and Year 1 occupy Woodruff. This building also houses the Library/ ICT room. Year 2 are housed in Chantry, and Year 3 in Little Gayhurst. We have our own playground and also use of the field at playtimes. There is also an adventure playground.

All children in Reception to Year 3 eat lunch in the school Dining Room.

Lessons are taught by form teachers and they are helped by classroom assistants. The exceptions to this are Games, P.E., Music and Swimming.

Throughout the Junior school the emphasis is on building firm foundations for the future.

If you have any concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact us at school and come in and see us. We hope you enjoy a long and happy association with us at Gayhurst.

Joan Terrar

Head of Junior School

Before Starting School

If your child is joining us in Reception, it is very helpful if, before they start school, they are able to carry out most of the following basic tasks:-

- Be able to dress and undress themselves
- Be able to put their shoes on the correct feet (we recommend Velcro-fastening shoes and trainers)
- Take themselves to the toilet and attend to their own needs
- Be able to wash their hands thoroughly
- Hold a knife and fork correctly
- Be able to blow their nose

We do understand that young children have 'accidents' occasionally and we have a supply of the necessary garments at school to deal with this.

We hope that all the children will be confident members of their new school. At the Induction morning you will be given names of the children in your child's class. You may be able to make arrangements with other parents for your child to meet up with one or two other children during the summer holidays.

It may also be useful, though not essential, if your child could write their own name using a capital letter followed by lower case letters, before the start of term.

We do not feel it is necessary for you to prepare your child in any other way. Children enter Gayhurst with a wide range of skills and of course their stages of development vary.

Forms

The names of the forms at Gayhurst relate to year groups. All ages are taken from 1st September, with Reception being for children aged 4+, Year 1 being for children aged 5+ etc. All forms are identified by the initial of the teacher, so for example, RW is a Reception class taught by Mrs Whitaker and 2G is a Year 2 class taught by Mrs Goldson.

All forms in the Junior School are of mixed ability and the average age in each of the year group forms is more or less the same. At the end of Year 2 the children are usually mixed. This is done after a lot of consultation between the teachers, with the children's personalities, as well as friendships taken into consideration. From Year 3 onwards the children usually stay in the same form as they progress through the school.

Houses

In Year 1 the children are allocated Houses. If your child has an older sibling in the school they will be in the same House. In Year 1 the Houses are named Blue, Green Red and Yellow. In Year 2 upwards we use the names Campbell, Gibbs, Stafford, Taylor after previous Headmasters or Senior Masters. Children from Year 1 upwards earn stars and Red Marks not only for themselves, but for their Houses. At the end of each term a cup is awarded in final assembly to the House from Year 2 and 3 with the most Red Marks.

The School Day

We like the children in Reception and Year 1 to be in their classrooms between 8.45 and 9am. The children in Year 2 and 3 should be in their classrooms by 8.45am. However, you are welcome to leave Reception children in the Nursery (by prior arrangement with Mrs Harper in the school office) between 8.15am and 8.30am. Children in Year 1, 2 and 3 may be dropped from 8am at the front of the school where they are supervised in the dining room by a member of staff.

The school day finishes at 3.15pm for Reception and Year 1 and 3.30pm for Year 2 and 3.

After School Club

If you would like to collect your child a little later than the usual time we have an After School Club which runs until 5.10pm for children in Reception to Year 3. This is held in the Nursery. Details and a booking form for the After School Club are available from the School Office.

After School Activities

There are a number of After School Activities available for children in Year 2 and 3. A form with all the necessary information is sent out before the end of the term, so that children may sign up for their chosen activity. We recommend no more than two activities for each child. There is usually a charge made for these activities.

Homework and supporting learning at home

The homework given to the children in Junior school is relevant and appropriate. We all appreciate that it is important for each child to have time to relax at the end of a busy school day.

In Reception reading books are sent home when the teachers feel the children are ready. In the Autumn term, children are required to do homework related phonics. In the Spring term the homework is based mainly on handwriting. In the Summer term reading books will be sent home twice a week

In Year 1 reading books are sent home twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays). A maths homework is given out on Thursdays. Sometimes the homework will be related to topic work and this will replace the maths. Spellings are usually sent home to learn twice every half term.

In Year 2 and Year 3 we ask that children read for 10 minutes each evening. Spellings are sent home to learn weekly. Maths homework is also given each week. There may also be other homework as appropriate.

More details on how you can best help your child at home will be outlined during the 'Welcome' meetings which are held at the beginning of the Autumn term.

Absence from School

If your child is absent from school owing to illness we ask that you telephone the school office. On your child's return we ask that you complete a School Absence form or write a letter explaining the reason for the absence. The school is bound by regulations concerning school registers and all absences have to be recorded. Should you wish to apply for Leave of absence for your child a request should be made to the Headmaster, either by using the Request for Absence Form or by letter.

If you, as parents, are going to be away from home, please let the form teacher know who will be collecting your child.

Discipline

Discipline is maintained in The Junior School by a system of reward and praise for good work and behaviour. Merit Badges and Good Conduct Badges are presented to children in Assembly on Fridays. These Badges are earned for achievement in academic work, kindness, or for overcoming specific difficulties. The Badges are worn for one week. Stickers and Stars are awarded throughout the week as and when they are merited. In Year 2 and 3 these Stars are converted into Red Marks.

‘Circle Time’ and the ‘Golden Rules’

At Gayhurst we are keen to promote self-esteem and encourage positive behaviour. We incorporate ‘Circle Time’ into the curriculum. This provides the children with an opportunity to experience positive relationships with other children in their form. The games and activities during the sessions are devised in order to create a sense of community within the class and to establish a safe boundary within which other activities can take place. The six ‘Golden Rules’ are the means by which the values of ‘Circle Time’ are extended into every area of school life.

From Reception upwards the concept of ‘Golden Time’ is introduced. This is a special time set aside for activities chosen by the children and is a reward for their having observed the ‘Golden Rules’ and it acts as a major incentive.

Junior School Rules (Golden Rules)

1. Do be gentle
2. Do be kind
3. Do be honest
4. Do work hard
5. Do look after property
6. Do listen to people

Home-School Liaison

Each child has a book bag (In Year 3 children have a back pack) in which to take home reading books, homework, letters and any other correspondence or information. The Reading Record book is useful for passing messages to and from the form teacher. The children should get into the habit of bringing the bag to school every day and we encourage parents to look in the bags regularly. Letters to parents are usually sent out on Thursdays via clarion call, or hard copy if a reply is required. Letters are also available to download from the school website.

At the beginning of the school year we hold Information/Curriculum Meetings for Parents, during which we discuss the work the children will be covering during the course of the year and the most productive ways in which you can help your child. A written synopsis is sent to you after the meeting.

These meetings will be held on the following evenings:

- Reception parents -Thursday 8th September
- Year 1 parents - Monday 12th September
- Year 2 parents – Tuesday 13th September
- Year 3 parents - Wednesday 14th September

Reports and Monitoring Progress

At the end of the Autumn Term and Summer Term you will receive a written report informing you of your child's progress.

During the year there are two Parents' Evenings which will give you the opportunity to discuss your child's development (October and Feb/March). At the Parents' Evening in the spring term you will also be able to look at your child's work. If you would like to discuss progress at any other time, please arrange a convenient time with your child's form teacher or contact the Head of the Junior School.

Learning support

There are often children who require a little extra help with learning. If your child experiences difficulties their teacher will discuss this with you and arrange for extra help to be given if necessary. Children from Year 2 upwards may receive an individual weekly lesson. There is a charge for this.

Music

Children are taught class music throughout their time at Gayhurst. The children in Year 3 learn the Recorder. From the Spring term onwards in Year 2, children are given the opportunity to have individual music lessons where appropriate. The Director of Music makes the arrangements for these lessons and she will send a letter to parents outlining the details.

Games and P.E.

Games and P.E. is an important part of our school's curriculum and we offer a wide range of activities in Games and P.E. lessons. The children are encouraged to work together and develop their level of fitness.

In P.E. the main emphasis is on developing co-ordination skills and balance, and on encouraging all children, regardless of ability, to enjoy physical activity. From Year 3 upwards, the children have the opportunity to play in matches against other Preparatory schools in the area.

All the children have swimming lessons at Maltman's Green School, in two half-termly blocks.

School Uniform / Equipment

You will have already received a copy of the School uniform list. There is a different list for each year group and there are also alterations and additions for each term. It is important that all items of clothing and equipment are clearly named. The lists for each Year group are available on the school website.

Money

No money should be brought to school except in special circumstances.

Toys

Please do not allow children to bring toys to school unless they are specifically asked to do so.

School Events

A Gayhurst Diary for each term will be given to your child at the beginning of the term. You will, of course, receive letters inviting you to specific events and informing you of matches. You are also most welcome to attend Senior School events whether your child is involved or not.

Gayhurst Parents' Association (GPA)

The Gayhurst Parents' Association co-ordinates and organises a number of social events which take place during the school year. Some events are purely for the parents, while others, such as the Christmas Fayre and the Fun Day, include the children. Some of the events raise money, donating to local or national charities, or indeed providing extra things for the school. This work is very much appreciated and the GPA always welcomes new parents.

Each form has a 'form representative' and these parents usually liaise with other parents in the form regarding social events.

Food

We offer a hot lunch every day at school. Salad, bread and fresh fruit is also available. Special diets are catered for and we ask that you let the school know in advance if your child has an allergy or any special food requirements.

We like to encourage good table manners at school and parental reinforcement is always appreciated.

The children may bring a snack to eat at the beginning of morning break. Fruit is the healthy option! We ask that no food containing nuts is sent in as we have children in school with nut allergies.

Medicines

We will **only** administer medicines prescribed by a Doctor during school hours. This should be sent in to the form teacher, with clear instructions on dosage filled in on our Medication form or by letter. However, if your child is unwell they are much better off at home. Not only because they may infect others if they are at school, but also because they will not do their best if they are not fit. If your child has been unwell during the night or has a high temperature, we would prefer that you do not bring them in to school the following day.

You will have already received a Medical form. It is important that this is returned to the school office so that children who have long-term medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes, can be monitored and the correct medication administered.

School Office

The school office is open from 8.15am until 5.15pm daily. It is located at the right hand side of the school. There are signs to direct visitors and an entry phone system.

An answer phone service operates outside school hours and messages regarding absences may be left.

Policies

If you wish to see any of the school policies please look on the school website or contact the school office.

Website

Gayhurst website www.gayhurstschool.eu contains a wealth of material about the school and it is updated regularly.

Concerns

Your child may possibly experience certain difficulties during their time at Gayhurst. If this occurs a member of staff will contact you to discuss the situation.

If either you or your child has any concerns or worries at any time, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher. Mr Sims and Mrs Terrar are also happy to discuss any issue with you.

We look forward to welcoming you to Gayhurst.