

PARENTS' and CARERS' HANDBOOK 2025/2026



We look forward to you working with us in partnership to provide the very best for your child, supporting their academic, spiritual and emotional development.

This handbook contains day to day information necessary for the smooth running of our school. We hope that you will find it useful. If you have any queries, please contact the school office.

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School Ethos

Mission Statement

We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together.

School Vision

We are a loving, caring and serving Catholic community, ambitious to educate the whole child to thrive personally, academically and spirituality by putting Christ at the centre of all we do. Rooted in our Catholic faith, we provide a curriculum that is relevant, coherent and intended to develop the skills and knowledge that will enable pupils to engage fully, wholly & morally with life in a diverse society.

We belong to the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust (DOWAT).



Aims of the School

- To create a living, Christian community of pupils, staff, parents, governors and parish where the teaching and values of Christ are at the heart of all our activities
- To sustain the Catholic life of the school through religious teaching, through experiences of prayer and Worship and through the Christian values which permeate the school
- To provide a secure, caring and welcoming environment for the children, parents, staff and visitors
- To offer our children the best possible education so that they may develop their aptitudes, abilities and interests to the best of their abilities within a stimulating learning environment
- To promote excellence
- To foster self-confidence and to motivate our children to take pride and pleasure in their work
- To encourage in our children a sense of responsibility for the community and for the world in which they live

Safeguarding

The school works in partnership with parents to support children in every way possible. Government statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” highlights the school’s role in protecting children from a range of potential dangers and places a clear responsibility on schools to ensure that they work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

(Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2025)

As a result, if concerns are raised within the school or a child, parent or staff member reports a situation involving a possible allegation, we refer the case to Hertfordshire County Council. Mrs Curry is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are Mrs Whitty, Mrs Hargrave, Mrs Batty and Mr Crump. They can all be contacted on 01438 729555 or safeguarding@stvincent.herts.sch.uk.

Our school's Child Protection Policy and other related policies are all available on the school website. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be happy to discuss any questions or concerns parents/carers may have about child protection policies and practice.

Catholic Life

Assembly and Collective Worship

Monday – whole school collective worship

Wednesday – singing assembly

Thursday – Celebrating the Word assembly

Tuesday and Friday – collective worship in class

There is a year group assembly once a year to which parents are invited (see calendar of events).

Throughout the year there are a number of liturgical events which parents are invited to e.g. Nativity, rosary, May procession, Advent reflection (see calendar of events).

Parish Links

The parish priests work with the teachers to maintain contact between school and parish and they are regular visitors to our school. Liturgies and Masses are arranged on a regular basis which parents and parishioners are invited to attend.

Classes attend Mass in Church on a weekly rota and throughout the term there are opportunities for children in Y4 – Y6 to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Daily Routines

School Timetable

7.45am	Breakfast club opens
8.30am	Gates open
8.35am	Class doors open
8.45am	Class doors close
Y1 – Y6 children have a 15 minute morning break	
11.45am	End of morning Nursery
12pm – 1pm	Lunchtime
12.30pm	Start of afternoon Nursery
3.15pm	End of school Rec-Y6
3.30pm	End of afternoon Nursery
3.15pm – 5.45pm	Cool After School Club

Morning Drop Off

The school gates open at 8.30am. Children should arrive at school for 8.35am when the class doors open. Classroom doors shut at 8.45am.

Late for Morning Drop Off

Children who arrive late at school should be brought directly to the School Office where they will be registered and taken to their classroom by a member of staff. You will be asked to provide a reason for any lateness, which is recorded for monitoring purposes. Children arriving after 8.45am are marked as late. Please be mindful that children arriving late to school can feel very unsettled, miss out on vital information and learning and disrupt the rest of the class. Classroom external doors are locked at 8.45am for security reasons.

Afternoon Pick Up

At the end of the school day, the school gates open to parents at 3.05pm for you to pick up your children at 3.15pm from the external classroom door. Responsibility is handed over to the parent or responsible adult once you have been identified and the child has been given permission to leave.

Children must be collected by an adult. If a different person from usual is collecting your child, please let the class teacher or school office staff know. Throughout the school, children will only be released to named authorised adults who have your consent to pick up. A form is available to nominate those whom you authorise to collect your children.



Children Walking Home Alone

Only children in Year 5 and 6 may walk home alone from school, however parental permission is required in writing.

Late for Afternoon Pick Up

If you are running late, please call the School Office so we can inform your child's teacher. Equally, if another adult is collecting your child, please inform the School Office or your Class Teacher. Children who have not been collected on time are taken to the office area. Parents are called. Persistent late pick up may result in a meeting with the Headteacher.

School Grounds expectations

For safeguarding reasons, mobile phone use on the school site is strictly forbidden.

Visitors must not smoke on the school grounds (this includes e-cigarettes).

Dogs are expected to be tied up outside the school premises or must be carried the entire time they are on school grounds. Family pets must not be brought into the school building at any time.

Bikes or scooters must not be ridden whilst on the premises. We have many toddlers and elderly relatives who are regularly on the school grounds and children on bikes or scooters will raise the risk of an accident.

School Dates

The school term dates can be found on the website and are available from the School Office. Additional dates are sent out via Arbor email.

Parking

Parking can be a significant issue on Bedwell Crescent. Please leave enough time to factor this into your journey to school. Please use either the Fairlands Valley car park or the car park in Colestrete when delivering or collecting children. Please abide by the Highway Code and local parking restrictions, whilst demonstrating common courtesy to other users. Please show respect to our local neighbours, including users of the church car park.

The school's car park is for staff only.

Attendance and Absence

Attendance

Every child of compulsory school age is entitled to full time education and it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. Absence and lateness is closely monitored by the school and the Attendance Improvement Officer from Hertfordshire County Council. We send out regular communication to parents about their child's attendance figures, particularly when it falls below 90%. If appropriate, we will invite you in for a meeting to discuss ways in which we can support you to improve your child's attendance. Our attendance policy can be found here: [SI – Policies](#)

Absence

If your child is not going to be at school, please telephone the school as early as possible and, at the latest, by 9:00am. The school answer phone is on 24 hours a day, so you do not have to wait until school time to call. Please ensure you leave your child's name, class and reason for absence. You can also email the school: absence@stvincent.herts.sch.uk. If we have not been notified of an absence, you will be emailed and called during that morning to clarify the reasons.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, if we are unable to contact you, we will also work through any other contact numbers we have for you. Please keep all changes to numbers up to date as if we are unable to contact you in such circumstances, we are required to contact Children Services if we identify this as being the most appropriate action.

Absence Request

Current legislation does not allow us to authorise any family holidays or similar non-essential events within term time. All events, celebrations and trips should be organised within one of school holidays. Breaks from school are detrimental to children's education and friendships. If you need to remove your child from school for any reason an exceptional reason, an absence request form is available from the school office – this must be completed and returned to the school prior to the proposed absence. Mrs Whitty will then consider whether regulations allow the absence to be authorised. Failure to do this will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

Health and Safety

Sickness

Children feeling unwell at school are attended to in the medical room by a member of staff. Parents are informed when a child needs to be collected.

If your child has been sick, had an upset stomach, or diarrhoea, they must not come into school until 48 hours after the last episode.

Accidents

First Aid is administered as and when it is required. All minor accidents requiring first aid will be recorded on our electronic system, Medical Tracker. For minor head bumps, children will be issued with a red wristband and an electronic notification will be sent via email to parents/carers. Any incident that the school deems more serious, will result in a phone call home.



Medicine

Medicines should only be taken to school when essential; this is where it would be detrimental to a child's health if the medicine were not administered during the school day. The school can only accept medicines that have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist or a pharmacist prescriber. Medicine can only be given at school if it needs to be taken more than 3 times a day. Medicines that need to be taken less than three times a day can be taken in the morning, after school hours and at bedtime and therefore do not need to be administered whilst the pupil is at school.

Medicines should always be provided in the original container with the child's name on the prescription label, including the prescriber's instructions for administration. Arrangements must be made in advance and a consent form signed by the parent. These are available from the school office.

When medication is administered, including use of an inhaler, parents will be informed via a Medical Tracker notification.

Epipens

Epipens are kept in the dining hall and in the class medical box. It is the responsibility of the parents to update these Epipens when necessary. Training is given to staff at regular intervals. Medication is taken on class trips.

Asthma/Inhalers

Asthma medication is kept in the classroom in a place where they can be accessed when required. It is the responsibility of the parents to update these inhalers when necessary. These inhalers will be taken on trips, ideally carried by the child.

Care Plans

It is important that the school is made aware of any medical conditions that will impact upon your child's time at school. Where the condition is serious, you will be asked to complete a Care-Plan for your child. These are kept electronically on Medical Tracker. Care Plans must be updated each year, or sooner should the condition change. A meeting with Mrs Curry may also be arranged at this time to ensure that all needs are met.

Extra Curricular Activities

Music Lessons

Peripatetic music teachers visit the school for brass, wind and violin lessons with Junior pupils. A charge is made for these sessions. Please contact the school office if you would like your child to participate.

School Clubs

A number of extra curricular activities are available for the children. Information about these are sent out via Arbor email and are also available at the school office. If any of these activities are held after school, children must be collected promptly when the club finishes.

Swimming

Children attend swimming lessons in the summer term of Y3 and the autumn and spring terms of Y4. These take place at Stevenage swimming pool and the children travel by coach to and from the pool. A charge is made for swimming lessons. Please note that swimming is compulsory as it is part of the National Curriculum for PE.

Cool After School Club

The independently run club starts at 3.15pm and finishes at 5.45pm. Children are collected from school by the club staff and are taken to the Infant Hall where the activities take place. Please call into the school office or check the school website for more information.

Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club runs from 7.45am every school day and the last breakfast is served at 8.20am. The children stay at Breakfast Club until it is time to go into class for registration at 8.35am. If you wish your

child to attend the Breakfast Club, please fill in the application form on the school website (including medical and dietary needs): [PI - Breakfast Club \(stvincent.herts.sch.uk\)](http://stvincent.herts.sch.uk). Breakfast Club costs £4.00 per session and must be paid for in advance via Arbor. Entrance to the Breakfast Club is through the main door to the Infant Building.

Uniform

Our school colours are emerald green and navy.

The compulsory school jumpers or cardigans are emerald green with our school logo. These are available direct from Smarty Schoolwear: Unit 2, Mulberry House, Park Place Plaza, Stevenage, SG1 1BF; 01707 263909; customerservice@smartyschoolwear.co.uk; www.smartyschoolwear.co.uk. Alternatively, they can be purchased second-hand for a small contribution via the school office.

The expected school uniform is as follows:

Winter Uniform:

- Long or short navy tailored trousers (no leggings or joggers) or a navy skirt or pinafore dress.

- School emerald green sweatshirt or cardigan with school logo

- A white shirt, blouse or polo shirt.

- Black school shoes (no trainers or shoes of other colours) plain grey, black or green tights or plain grey, white or black socks must be worn.



Summer Uniform

- As winter or a summer dress in emerald green/light green check.

- School jumpers or cardigan with logo

- Black school shoes (no trainers or shoes of other colours) plain tights/socks must be worn to school.

PE Kit

Children wear their PE kit to school on PE days.

- Plain round necked white t-shirt

- Plain navy sports shorts (no cycling shorts) or navy jogging bottoms/tracksuit bottoms/plain navy leggings (no logos)

- Plimsolls for indoor games, trainers for outdoor games
- School jumper or cardigan (no other sweatshirts). Y6 may wear their Leavers' jumper on a PE Day

Jewellery

Children may wear a small pair of plain stud earrings (no hoops) and a watch (not a smart watch). These should not be worn on PE days or should be removed before the PE lesson.

For the safety of your child - If you wish your child to have their ears pierced please do so at the beginning of the summer holidays to ensure the ears are healed before returning in September.

Hairstyles

Hair should be kept tidy and presentable. If hair is long enough to be tied back, then please do so. Please keep hair accessories to a minimum.

Possessions at School

Stationery

Stationery is provided by school. Pupils in Year 3 upwards may bring in a small pencil case.

Book Bags

SVDP book bags are available to buy from the School Office at £4.50. Early Years, Y1 and Y2 do not need a rucksack due to storage.

Uniform

Please make sure all your child's clothes and shoes are clearly labelled.

Personal Possessions

Valuables (including mobile phones) and toys of any kind are not allowed in school. Parents of children, who have given permission for their child to walk home on their own, may feel that their child needs a mobile phone. Only in this case can the child bring a phone to school. The parent must make the teacher aware and the phone must remain switched off when on the school grounds and during the school day (8.45am - 3.15pm). They must not be used for any purpose, on school premises or during off-site activities. Occasionally, books or items of special interest may be brought in if requested by the class teacher. St Vincent de Paul School accepts no liability for personal property brought into school.

Lost property

Lost property can be found in the container outside the school office. Please ensure all your child's belongings are clearly named.

School Meals & Healthy Eating

School Lunches

All meals are prepared daily by our Head Chef and her team from Herts Catering Ltd. Local, seasonal produce is used where possible and we aim to create a culture where our children and staff enjoy and appreciate tasty, healthy food in a happy environment. The menu changes with the seasons and is available on the school website or from the school office.

All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal.

Dinner money should be paid in advance via Arbor. It is £3.50 per day for KS2 children and £3 for Nursery children. Please check Arbor to see the dinner money balance. We reserve the right to request for your child to be provided with a packed lunch if there is a debt on your account.

Free School Meals

If your child is in Reception to Year 6 and you claim certain benefits, your child may be eligible to a Free School Meal. The benefits of qualifying for a Free School Meal extend beyond lunch. Please note this is completely unrelated to Universal Free School Meals in Reception to Year 2 and your child can be eligible for both. Do speak to the office in confidence for more details or click here: [Free school meals | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

Packed Lunches

Children who bring a packed lunch will eat with the children who have a school meal. The lunch should be packed in a suitable container with your child's name and class.

Drinks should not be in cans or glass bottles. Carbonated drinks are not allowed. To encourage healthy life-styles, packed lunches should not contain chocolate bars or sweets.

Many children have allergies and, as such, children are not permitted to share items from their lunch.

We ask parents not to include nuts or any products containing nuts in their child's packed lunch as we have a number of children with potentially life-threatening nut allergies (please check cereal bars and chocolate spread).

Snacks

Children in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 receive free fruit at morning play. Children in Key Stage 2 are welcome to bring in a piece of fruit from home. No other snacks are permitted.

Water Bottles

Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school, which can be replenished throughout the day.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are always exciting and we love to join in the celebration at school. The best way to celebrate your child's birthday at school is to donate a book to your child's class/ school library, signing the inside cover and having it read to the class. We do not allow sweets/cakes etc to be brought in for birthdays.



Home School Communication

We believe positive, friendly, communication with parents is an essential part of a happy school home relationship. The school communicates with parents via:

Arbor

Arbor email is used to communicate information. Please do check your emails regularly and keep your personal information (including email) updated on Arbor.

The link to Arbor is: [Log in to your School | Arbor](#)

Parents can log on to their child's profile on Arbor to see pupil information including attendance and dinner balance.

Curriculum meeting

Year group teams hold a meeting for parents during the first few weeks of each academic year. This provides an opportunity to meet the team, learn about the year ahead and ask questions.

Open mornings

These are held termly – parents and carers are invited in to see their child's books with them.

Day-to-day communication

Staff are available briefly at the start/end of the day to share important information. Please remember that teachers are very busy greeting pupils and therefore it is easier to speak to them at the end of the school day or ask the teacher to give you a phone call at a mutually convenient time.

We prefer the personal touch, however if you can only email, please email admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk and it will be passed on to the relevant member of staff by the office. Please remember that staff are busy during the school day so they will aim to get back to you within 48 hours. Staff have been directed not to respond to emails sent directly to them.

Termly class letter

All classes will receive a class newsletter each term providing information on the forthcoming topic, key dates for the term, any changes to routines and, where necessary, reminders with regard to points made in the welcome meeting.

Headteacher Newsletter

The Headteacher's newsletter is sent termly.

Website

Please do visit our website regularly: [SVDP Catholic School](#). There is a calendar with key school dates as well as important news and information.

Social Media

We currently use X to share good news about our school. We will never use the children's full names. If you do not wish your child to be included in photos/videos on school social media sites, please make that clear when you fill in the consent form.

Parental use of WhatsApp / social media

The school understands that parents find it useful to communicate with

other parents for advice and reminders. The school asks that these platforms are **never** used to comment on children, families, parents or staff.

Pupil Post

This is regularly updated on our school website and is always worth a look.

Post Box

There is a post box by the school office to deposit envelopes for the school office. Please ensure all correspondence is clearly marked with your child's class and name.

Consultation meetings

These are held in the Autumn and Spring term. Consultations (which are booked via Arbor) last 10 minutes and provide an opportunity to share important information.

End of year report

Annual school reports are sent out via Arbor towards the end of the Summer Term. They include an assessment of the progress, behaviour, overall development of your child. Attendance can be viewed on your child's profile on Arbor.

Pupils in Year 6 undertake National Curriculum Assessment Tests (SATs).

Year 4 take the National Multiplication Test.

Year 1 undertake a phonics check.

A statutory assessment also occurs at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (end of Reception).

All these take place in the summer term and results will be reported to parents.

Homelearning

Children in Reception, Y1 and Y2 will have a weekly reading book and library books to share with family. Key words and spellings may also be sent home. A reading record is also sent home for parents and teachers to make comments about books enjoyed and progress made.

In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, children are expected to read at home every day and regularly practise their spellings and multiplication facts. English, Maths or topic tasks are also set on a weekly basis.



We ask that parents oversee this work and ensure books are returned

promptly. A fee will be charged for lost or damaged books.

When appropriate, unfinished work may be sent home for completion.

Behaviour

We have 3 school rules:

- Be Ready
- Be Respectful
- Be Safe

On Monday, we have a whole school assembly where we focus on one aspect of a school rule for the week. We also use this assembly to share which class achieved the highest attendance in the previous week.

Children are taught to respect each other, their teachers and all who are associated with the school. We encourage them to be well mannered and courteous, to take pride in their work, their appearance and the school environment. Any behaviour which causes hurt or offence to others is not acceptable. This includes behaviour online which impacts on school life.

Any form of bullying (including online) is unacceptable. Children are encouraged to report any problems to teachers, and parents who have concerns in this area should let the class teacher know immediately. Our school policy is available on the school website.



If you have an issue with another child which concerns your child, please do not approach the child or his/her parents directly, but please do inform the class teacher or member of staff know so that the matter can be addressed.

Trips

We aim for each class to have a trip during the year which will be linked to the curriculum. We ask parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of these visits. No child will be excluded from any trip if parents/carers are unable to pay. However, the visit will be cancelled for all the children if we receive insufficient funds to cover our expenses. All payments are made through Arbor. Information and a

link can be found on our website.

These guidelines also apply to swimming lessons. If any charge causes difficulty, please make an appointment to speak to Mrs Whitty. This will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Friends of St Vincent de Paul

All parents are automatically 'Friends of St Vincent de Paul' members and are warmly invited to support the running of events. The Friends of St Vincent de Paul make a major contribution to the life of the school by running social events, fund raising and helping to foster a spirit of community. Dates and times of meetings and events are published well in advance. Please consider how you could support this great work by our parents and staff volunteers. If you would like to get involved please send an email to admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk or speak to a member of the senior leadership team or speak to a volunteer at the next event. The more the merrier, so please get involved!

Project Fund

All families are asked to contribute to the school's project fund which benefits all children in the school. A typical annual donation is around £50 per family. Direct Debit and gift aid forms are available from the school office.

Complaints

If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's school life, please first draw the matter to the attention of the class teacher.

If necessary, the matter will be referred to your child's Key Stage Assistant Headteacher or Lead.

- EY & KS1 Assistant Headteacher: Mrs Hargrave,
- KS2 Phase Leader: Mr Crump
- Assistant Headteacher Mrs Batty.
- It may also be investigated by Mrs Curry, Deputy Headteacher.

If you feel that the matter has still not been resolved please follow the school's formal complaints procedure. Policy is on the website.

Please remember that no concern is ever too big or small for us to deal with. Small concerns easily become bigger problems if not addressed. We are always happy to speak to you.

We hope that you have found the information in this booklet useful.

If there is something that you feel would have been useful to know, please do inform us so that we can update our information for parents. Your constructive feedback is always appreciated.