

**St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School Bedwell
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PARENTS' and CARERS' HANDBOOK



Autumn 2023

We welcome you to St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School and 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 or cannot find the, please do 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

To be a place of faith, love and learning, where individuals collaborate to be the best that they can be, recognising the learning struggle and aiming for excellence in personal, academic and professional spheres. 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 with life in a diverse society.

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.
- To help our children acquire the knowledge and skills that will eventually enable them to lead full lives in our society.
- To celebrate and reward success in all areas of our children's development.

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. Everyone who comes into contact with children has an important role to play. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children’s welfare and prevent concerns from escalating. It is important all staff (including those who do not work directly with children) recognise the important role they play in protecting children”. (DfE, 2023)

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, Mrs Whitty is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mrs Hargrave is a Designated Senior Person. Mrs Geraldine Cartwright is the nominated governor for child protection issues. They can all be contacted on 01438 729555.

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. We always welcome feedback on safeguarding matters.

Daily Routines

School timetable

7.30am	Breakfast club opens
8.30am	Gates open
8.45am	Class doors open
10:30 am – 10.45am	Y1,Y2, Y3 and Y4 playtime
10.50am – 11.05am	Y5 and Y6 playtime
11.45am	End of morning Nursery
12pm – 1pm	Reception and KS1 lunchtime
12.30pm – 1.30pm	KS2 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 8.30. Children should arrive at school for 8.45am when the class doors open.

Late for Morning Drop Off

Late children should be brought directly to the School Office where they will be

registered and taken to their classroom by a member of staff. The office staff have been requested to ask parents to provide a reason for any lateness, which is recorded for monitoring purposes. Children arriving after 9am are marked as late. Classroom external doors are locked as soon as possible after 8.50am 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

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 by 3.30 pm are taken to the office area. Parents are called. Persistent late pick up may result in a meeting with the Headteacher.

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 ParentMail

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 carpark. The school car park is for staff only. Please do not park inside the school grounds unless you have a parking permit. Permits are available from the school office and are assessed on a case by case basis.

Attendance & Absence

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is very important and absence is closely monitored by the school and the Attendance Improvement Officer from Hertfordshire County Council. Late attendance is also monitored.

Absence

If your child is not going to be at school, please telephone the school by 9:30am. The school answerphone 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. If we have not been notified of an absence, you will be called during that morning to clarify the reasons.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, if we are unable to contact you, we will work our way 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 by HCC safeguarding procedures to make a home visit or ask the police to do so.

Absence Request

Current legislation does not allow us to authorise any family holidays within term time. Breaks from school are detrimental to children's education and friendships. If you need to remove your child from school for any reason an Authorised Absence 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 and may be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

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 24 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.

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 the child may access them when necessary. 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 before he/she starts school. 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 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 ParentMail 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.

Cool After School Club

The independently run club starts at 3.15pm and finishes at 5.45pm. Children are collected from school by the clubs staff and are taken to the Infant Hall where the activities take place. Please call into the school office 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 8.50 am. 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). Forms are available from the school office.

Breakfast Club costs £4.00 per session and must be paid for in advance for the ½ term via Wisepay.

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 from our PSA. Please ask at the school office should you need any further information.

The uniform is as follows:

Winter– navy tailored trousers (long or short), navy skirt, pinafore dress; School emerald green sweatshirt with logo; a white shirt, blouse or polo shirt.

Summe – as winter or a dress in emerald green/light green check or stripe.
School jumpers or cardigan.

Pupils require a change of shoes for indoor use (ideally plimsolls). All school footwear must be black.

PE Kit

Children wear their PE kit to school on PE days.

Plain white T shirt

Plain Navy sports shorts or navy jogging bottoms (no logos)

Plimsolls for indoor games

School jumper or cardigan



KS2 only:

Black Trainers for outdoor games

Navy Tracksuit for cold weather (no logos) alternatively, navy tracksuit (no logos) bottoms and school jumper or cardigan

Plain white T shirt (no logo)

Jewellery

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

If you wish your child to have their ears pierced this should take place 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. High fashion styles, including colours are not permitted.

Possessions at School

Stationery

Stationery is provided by school. Small pencil cases can be brought in.

Book Bags

SVDP book bags are available to buy from the School Office at £4.

Uniform

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

Personal Possessions.

Valuables and toys of any kind are not recommended at school. Mobile phones are not needed in school and we actively discourage them. 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. 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 to school if requested by the class teacher. St Vincent de Paul Catholic School accepts no liability for personal property brought into school.

Lost property

Lost property can be found in 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. 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 (for KS2 pupils only) should be paid in advance via Wisepay.

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 to include reduced rates for Night Owls and some school trips. 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.

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 on the bottom.

Drinks should not be in cans or glass bottles. Carbonated drinks are not allowed.

Encouraging 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.

Snacks

Children in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 receive free fruit at morning play. Children in Key Stage 2 are welcome to bring 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 favourite book to your child's class library, signing the inside cover and having it read to the class. We do not allow sweets/cakes etc to be brought in for birthday.



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:

Parentmail (email)

Parentmail is used to communicate important information or as a reminder of something communicated earlier. Please do check your emails regularly.

Welcome 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.

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 send the email to the class teacher via admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk and it will be passed on by the office. Staff have been directed to not respond to emails sent directly to them.

Termly class letter

All classes send home 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.

School Newsletter

The Headteacher's newsletter will be sent half termly.

Website

Please do visit our website regularly. There is a calendar with key school dates as well as important news and information.

Social Media

The school uses Twitter/X to share good news about our school. @svdp_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.

Pupil Post

This is sent out weekly with images of the week at school.

Post Box

There is 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 towards the end of the Autumn and Spring term. Consultations last 10 minutes and provide an opportunity to share important information.

Report

Annual school reports are sent out towards the end of the Summer Term. They include an assessment of the progress, behaviour, overall development of your child and their attendance record.

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

Year 4 will take the National Multiplication Test

Year 1 undertake a phonics test

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.

Special Educational Needs

We make provision for children with a wide variety of individual needs in our school. Further information can be found on the school website or please contact Mrs Curry if you would like to discuss this further.

Homework

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. We also like children to follow up topic work by visiting libraries, museums etc.

In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, children are encouraged to read at home every evening and library books will also be brought home. CGP workbooks, Literacy, Maths or topic tasks are also set on a weekly basis. Some work may be online via Purple Mash or Google classroom



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

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

Behaviour

We have 3 school rules:

- Be Ready
- Be Respectful
- Be Safe

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 appearance of the school. Any behaviour which causes hurt or offence to others is not acceptable. If a child is persistently troublesome or is involved in a serious breach of conduct, parents are consulted so that home and school can work together in solving the problem and planning the measures to be taken.

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

Most classes will 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. Cheques to pay for school trips should be made payable to 'St Vincent de Paul School'. You can also pay via electronic transfer using Wisepay, the link is on our website.

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

Parent and Staff Association (PSA)

All parents are automatically PSA members and are warmly invited to attend PSA meetings on a regular or occasional basis. The PSA makes 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 publicised well in advance. Please consider how you could support this great work by our parents and staff volunteers.

School Grounds expectations

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

Dogs are expected to be tied up outside the school premises or, if feasible, they must be carried the entire time they are on school grounds.

We ask children and adults not to ride bikes or scooters 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.

Mobile phone use on the school site is strictly forbidden.

Volunteers

We warmly welcome parents who wish to help in school. This need not be in your own child's class. Tasks involved might be helping with displays, computer work, art and craft etc. We also need parents to help in the school library. If you would like to assist, please contact a member of staff or contact the school office.

Parish Links

The parish priests work with the teachers to maintain contact between school and parish. Liturgies and Masses are arranged on a regular basis which parents and parishioners are invited to attend. Class masses are on a weekly rota, please see schools calendar of events.

School Building Fund

As a Voluntary Aided Catholic School, we are required to pay our buildings insurance and if we are successful in bidding for funds, 10% of all major repairs to the school buildings. The Diocese of Westminster has set up a fund to which all VA schools contribute. These schools can then access this Fund when they need help to finance larger projects. We ask that each family contributes £50 per year to our School Fund from which we pay our insurance costs and make our contribution to the Diocesan Building Fund. Information is sent out to parents in the Autumn Term.

If you are an income tax payer, we would like you to consider the Gift Aid Scheme which allows us to reclaim the income tax which you have already paid on this money.

We greatly appreciate your understanding in this matter.

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 a member of the Senior Leadership Team and / or Mrs Whitty. If the situation is still not resolved a formal complaints procedure will need to be followed (Policy is on the website).

Please remember that no concern is ever too big or too 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.

