

Questions and Answers about starting school

1) How do I prepare my child for school?

Every child will respond to this new experience differently so just try to make conversations light-hearted and relaxed, don't spend too much time building up 'big school.' Little discussions of reassurance every now and again help children to start to make sense of this new experience. Try driving past the school every now and again to wave 'hello' and help it to start to feel familiar.

In terms of useful skills, it is extremely helpful if your child is able to do the following independently; use the toilet including washing hands, be able to zip up their coats, put their shoes on and off, remove jumpers, recognise their own name on their drawer/peg.

In the meantime, the BBC have produced some great resources for parents that are linked below

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1>

2) How can I find out about Breakfast Club or After School Club?

You can find this information on the school website. There is a tab for After School Club which provides contact details for Linda Croshaw, who runs both of these. Our website is www.highdownschools.co.uk

3) How do I order school uniform?

You will receive information on this when your child receives their welcome pack. If you want to have a look beforehand you can find all information required on our school website.

<http://highdownschools.co.uk/parent-info/school-uniform/>

4) My child has dietary or medical needs

We can discuss your child's needs during the parent-teacher consultation meeting held in the first week of September, just before school starts. Your welcome pack will contain a medical plan form which will need completing by you, please can you have this form already filled out so we can discuss it together at the consultation. We will need to have a school supply of any medication, clearly labelled with instructions to be kept in class. Thank you.

5) What if my child appears to have more friends in another class?

When we place your child into a class there are a lot of variables that we take into consideration. You would have had an opportunity to fill in an 'additional request form' where you as parents can say which friends your child knows. If your child already attends a nursery either at High Down or elsewhere then we have liaised very closely to establish friendship groups.

In addition, we pay careful consideration to a balance of boys and girls, the children's birth dates and any additional needs. We appreciate that other friends may have been placed into other classes but try not to be anxious about this, there are a lot of opportunities for the classes to mix and play together during the school day so your child will still see other friends. Rest assured your child has been very carefully placed into these classes. If you have any major concerns please speak to your child's teacher or the Early Years Leader: rachelhayward@highdownschools.org

6) How do I order/ know what food my child will have for lunch?

All school meals for children in the Infant school are free. You will be given an individual log-in code to select your child's meals for the week using Aspens. You will therefore be able to select the meals you know your child will be happy to eat or try and when you would rather they bring a packed lunch. The teachers liaise very closely with the SMSA's (school meals supervisory assistant) and we will always communicate to the parents where a meal hasn't been overly successful.

7) My child is called a different name (not full name e.g. Tilly not Matilda)

Please let us know as soon as you can, via email, if you would like your child's name on his/ her drawer to have an alternative name. In the welcome pack you will have a data collection sheet which will need to be filled out and returned to the office. There is a box at the top for preferred names for you to state if it is different.

8) What does my child need to bring on the first day?

On your child's first day we would expect them to bring their school bag, named water bottle and a piece of fruit which they can eat themselves. It is very helpful for the fruit to be in a small named tub to be easily recognised. We will not need P.E. kits in Term 1 but will let you know when to start bringing these in in due course. If your child could also bring a pair of wellies (named) to be kept in school for use outside in our digging pit which can stay all year round. If needed, please bring a named coat with a clear hook so they can hang it onto their peg with ease.

We make sure we cook with your child every term as we kindly request a contribution of £5 to cover these yearly costs. Also a box of tissues for the classroom as we do run out very quickly! Thank you!

9) How will I receive information from school?

In the welcome pack there will be forms to aid communication between school and home. Once all forms have been filled in and returned the office will then send you an email (check junkbox as sometimes it can get lost in there) where you will need to follow a link to set up your Parentmail account.

Parentpay is separate to Parentmail and is used for you to make any payments to the school. This is used for things like school trips, wow visits to the school to promote learning, and also a way to pay for breakfast and afterschool clubs. There is a separate form in the welcome pack which explains how you can set up Parent pay.

10) How do you communicate my child's learning with me, is there a learning diary?

We currently use an app called Interactive Learning Diary (ILD) which is a fantastic online learning diary which can be used by both school and home. We appreciate and value learning at home and encourage parents to contribute to these learning diaries too. You are able to download a parent

app from the app store to upload photos and video clips of any learning at home that you would like to share with the teacher. More information will be sent out to you in the welcome packs.

11) What do I need for a PE kit?

P.E. kits will not be needed in Term 1 but when they are required you will need a named bag with a pair of named trainers, shorts and t-shirt (also named) and a long sleeved top and joggers for outside P.E. More information can be found on our website

<http://highdownschools.co.uk/parent-info/school-uniform/>

12) I would like to help in class, are Parent helpers welcome?

Parent helpers are very welcome in class once all the children have settled – probably after October half term. Please let us know if you are interested in helping.