

BENHALL ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

A Guide for Parents - written by a parent.

Starting a new school can sometimes feel a bit daunting so with this in mind, the following Guide for Parents has been written to help make the transition a little easier. Written by a parent, the Guide will hopefully answer your questions - the obvious and not quite so obvious - and give you lots of background information about Benhall St Mary's.

Benhall St Mary's is a small primary school, currently teaching children from Reception Year to Year Four. In the future, by 2011, children will be able to stay at Benhall until the end of school year six.

Children can start at Benhall Primary at the start of the term when they will be five. Currently parents can choose to send them part time from the term before they are due to start full time. They enter at Reception level and then move up to Year One at the start of the new school year in September. Each September, your child will move up to the next year group. At Benhall we have two classes, Acorns, for Reception, Year One and Oaks for Years Two Three and Four.

The Staff

Head teacher - Chris Gallagher- Mr Gallagher teaches Oaks class on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Teachers - Mrs Pearce, who teaches Acorns class, and Mrs Jenkins who teaches Oaks class on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Teaching Assistants

Jane and Rebecca are the teaching assistants in Acorns and Sandra, Pat, Sandra and Erica are the teaching assistant in Oaks.

The School Office

Val Newman and Bridget Revell are the office staff.

Kitchen

The school cook/chef is Pearl and the midday supervisors are Louise and Sandra.

Caretaker

The school caretaker is George and the School cleaner is Janet.

The School Building

The school has three classrooms, Oaks and Acorns currently use the two classrooms adjacent to each other in the main part of the school. The third classroom (or the top classroom) is situated behind the school hall. The Hall is used for Assembly, PE and many other activities and at lunchtime is used as the dining room. Behind the Hall is the library area. Adjacent to the main doors (back and front) is the school office and next to this is the Head teacher's office. Along the corridor are the teaching classrooms, the staff room and the toilets. There is also an additional teaching area opposite Oaks class.

School Uniform

The uniform policy is quite strict but everything is easy to obtain and not too expensive.

Girls: White polo shirt or white shirt/blouse, bottle green school sweatshirt or bottle green cardigan, black or grey skirt or trousers, black shoes. For the summer term (or when the weather is warm enough), green and white school dress.

Boys: white polo shirt, bottle green school sweatshirt, black or grey trousers, black shoes.

No jewellery, no trainers - shoes must be suitable for school, polo shirts must be tucked in and uniform worn smartly. Only stud earrings can be worn and these must be removed for PE, it's much easier if earrings are not worn on a PE day - no problems with them getting lost!

Children must wear a coat to school during cold weather.

School sweatshirts and coats are available to order from the school office. Good quality second hand uniform is also available from school.

PE KIT

PE kit is navy polo or t-shirt and navy shorts and black plimsolls. For the Autumn and Spring term navy joggers and sweatshirt are also required. PE kit should be kept in a bottle green PE bag - available from the school office.

What else do children need?

All children will need a book bag - the first one is supplied free by the school - if a subsequent bag is required (in case of loss or breakage!) these are available from school at a cost of £2...50. All stationery and writing materials are provided but pupils in Oaks class can bring in a handwriting pen. All children will be given a Planner at the start of each school year and this should be brought into school each day. Children can bring a pencil case to school with some felt pens coloured pencils. Gel pens are not allowed. Children are not allowed to wear earrings during PE - if they can't be removed then you will need to supply plasters to cover them over. When swimming children must have earrings removed. PE bags are available at a cost of £3.50

Lockers

Each child will be given a numbered locker where they should keep PE kit, book bags and coats. They're not locked so no problems with lost keys!

The Daily Timetable

School starts at 8.50am. If you bring your child to school by car don't park out the front, you should use the car park at the back of the school (turn down School Lane - next to the school - and then turn left). Please watch out for younger children as the playgroup also use this car park. You can then use the gate to the playground to come into school. If you walk to school then you can use the front gate and follow the path to the right which leads into the playground. Most parents wait with their children until the bell goes. The children then line up in their class group and their teacher will lead them into school. The school discourages parents from coming into the classrooms in the morning as it causes disruption but it's usually OK to do this for the first half term for reception children.

Morning break is from 10.30 until 10.45. The children in Acorns class are given a piece of fruit each day free of charge. Children in Oaks class are welcome to bring in a piece of fruit from home.

Lunch break is from 12.00 until 1.10 - the children wash their hands and then queue up outside the hall for lunch. After lunch they go out to the playground - if the weather is bad they will be allowed to stay in.

Acorns class have a further break from 2.30 to 2.45.

Reading

The School try to encourage children to read at home by stamping their bookmark every time their home school diary is signed by an adult. Every time a bookmark is completed a prize is awarded in achievement assembly

Achievement Assembly

This is held every other Friday at 2.45pm and parents/family members are encouraged to attend. It's very friendly and a great chance to see your child get an award from time-to-time - hopefully! - and to meet up with other parents.

Lunches

Your child can either eat a school lunch or bring in a packed lunch from home. School meals are cooked on the premises by Pearl, and comprise of two courses which are designed to be nutritious and appealing to children. All the children eat together in the hall and they can choose where to sit. Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

School lunches must be ordered and paid for in advance, on a Monday Please send the money in a purse or an old envelope marked with your child's name, at the beginning of the week. You may also pay weekly or termly by cheque made out to Suffolk County Council. See the School newsletter for current prices and menus. Free School meals may be available to children of families receiving benefits.

Drinks

It is a good idea to send a bottle of water in for your child to drink during the day. There is a water fountain in the playground for break time.

Illness/absence

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or any other reason, phone the school office as soon as possible to let them know. You can leave a message on the answer phone if there is no reply.

Holidays

A list of school holidays is available from the school office. If you are planning a holiday during term time, you need to get permission from the Head teacher - forms are available from the office.

Clubs

There are always several school clubs running - either at lunchtime or after school. Permission slips are required for the after school clubs. Most of the clubs are free as they are run by parents or teachers. The school are always looking for volunteers to help run clubs.

School Trips

Several school trips take place each year and parent helpers are often required, especially for Acorns class.

Reports and Parent Evenings

A Report is sent home for each child once a year July and there is a Parents Evening each term when you can book a 10 minute appointment with your child's class teacher.

Regular Events

There are many events throughout the year when parents, grandparents etc are invited to join in, including termly theme weeks, Christingle, Harvest Festival, Christmas dinner, school plays, Sports Day & Fete and many more!

PTA - the school has an active Parent Teacher association who raise funds for the school. New members and help are always welcome! Check with the school office for contact names.

Newsletter - a newsletter is produced alternate weeks and sent home on Friday, it includes the menu for the following week's dinners and lots of news and information about what's going on in school.

Parents Focus Group - all parents can come along to a termly informal meeting to talk about any issues related to school life.