

Balcombe CE Primary School

Starting School Booklet

Our guide for parents & carers of
children starting at Balcombe
School in September 2017



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Welcome to Balcombe School!

We always look forward to meeting our new children and their families and hope that parents, children and teachers will all work together to achieve the best possible start to school life for every child. Beginning school is a major and exciting event in the life of your child and we hope this booklet will provide some useful information to help them settle into school.



School Information

Our contact details are:

Balcombe CE Primary School

London Road

Balcombe

West Sussex

RH15 0JT

Phone: 01444 811403

Email: parents@balcombeschool.co.uk

Website: www.balcombeschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Millbanks

Chair of Governors: Mr Duncan Smith and Mrs Hester Dunstan-Le



Our settling into school activities - working together to create the best possible start to school life

We know that parents and carers know their children best and the more information you can share with us about your child, the better placed we will be to plan the curriculum to meet your child's needs. We therefore plan a variety of ways for you to work together with us in these early stages of school life.

'Getting to know you' meetings ... You and your child will be invited to have an individual meeting with your class teacher at school prior to starting school. This is a chance for you to ask any questions and to share information about your child - his or her likes, dislikes, strengths & talents as well as what challenges them.

'All about me' books... Children and their families are encouraged to create a book all about themselves prior to starting school (this is provided by us). The completed booklets can then be brought into school in the Autumn Term and displayed for all to enjoy. Not only do children feel proud of their book on display, but they always have great fun sharing them with their peers. You will see samples of these at school when you visit.

'Come and Play' sessions and story time... Children and their parents are invited to come and play at school as well as come for story time in order to become familiar with our class and some of our toys. You are welcome to stay with your child and enjoy sharing these experiences together.

Dates for your diary



Date	Activity
Tuesday 13 th June	Starting School at Balcombe - a presentation
TBC at 13 th June meeting	Getting to know you meetings - individual parent and child appointments to meet the teacher
Weeks beginning 27 th June & 4 th July	Staff to communicate with nurseries and pre-schools
18 th July	Story time!
930- 1015am	All children are invited to our story time
19 th or 20 th July	Come and Play sessions
930-1015am	All children are invited to come and play at school.



Working together to create the best possible start to school life...from September



Starting school in small teams. To ensure your child receives maximum attention as he or she settles into school, the children start gradually in small groups. Each group has its first school session on different days. You will receive a timetable showing when your child will start and when he or she will begin full-time.

'WoW' notes/'notes from home'. Throughout their first year at school all children in 'Early Years' have a 'Learning Journal' where all their learning experiences are placed. These books will tell the story of your child's learning journey in reception. We will warmly invite you to contribute to these by adding any observations that you make at home. For example, you may notice that your child was able to write their name for the first time when playing 'schools'. Write it down and share it with us!

'Me and My World' Books - In addition, each child has a 'Me and My World' book. This is for children to record anything they choose about their lives outside of school. This could be anything from photos from a day out to a feather they have found on the way to school. There will be a dedicated time to share these in class once a week.

Throughout the school year, there are many other opportunities for you to share in your child's learning experiences and learn about their learning opportunities at school.

These include:

- Opportunities to talk to your child's class teacher at the start of everyday - you will find teachers and teaching assistants at the start of the day on the playground prior to the bell ringing. Our Early Years team love to chat and talk about your children - if you ever have a question or something to tell us, please come and find us there and feel free to chat!
- Weekly Celebration Assembly - every Friday a few children from each class celebrate their learning with the whole school and parents are welcome!
- Class letters and topic information - every term you will receive a letter outlining the key learning opportunities that children will have at school and how you may support them at home.
- Every term you will receive information about the key skills that your child is learning - an Individual Learning Plan.
- Open afternoons - once a term you will have an opportunity to come and look through your child's Learning Journal with them and tour the class with them.
- School trips - parent helpers are always invited.
- Sports Day.
- Regular newsletters.
- Our website: www.balcombeschool.co.uk

What is it like in Lake class?

'Magical things happen in Lake class!' (Eloise, 4)

'We have lots of fun in Lake.' (Reece, 4)

'We do lots of different things and have lots of surprises! (Ben, 5)

There is never a typical day in Lake class! We might be pirates or princesses, rainforest explorers or palaeontologists - every day will be different and offer new learning opportunities and that is what makes it a rather special place to be.

Recently, we kept a log of all the different learning opportunities that can happen in a school day in Lake class. We certainly are very busy!

Today we have been.... singing songs, reading, cutting and fixing materials to make castles, sharing a story, learning new sounds and words, counting the money from the royal purse, solving problems with the royal gold, sharing it, weighing it, investigating what floats and sinks, making castle maps, writing treasure hunt clues, making pictures on the computers, listening to our friends in 'show and tell,' building a secret den, sharing a toy, looking after each other, talking, thinking...

What will my child be learning at school?

Lake class is where the excitement begins! Children in reception learn in an environment which is developed around the children's interests. We have created a 'topic' based curriculum where children to be **active learners**, to be **creative and to think critically** as well as to **play and to explore** the world around them. This year, so far, children have become polar explorers as they explored snow and ice, the kindest and fittest Superheroes who take care of the planet and each other, as well as knights, kings and princesses creating castles with drawbridges, planning Royal Balls, creating maps and stories with their very active imaginations.

Teachers carefully plan tasks and activities that build on children's prior knowledge to move their learning to the next step. Their achievements are recorded through photos and detailed observations.

The curriculum for the children in our reception class is called the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We use the framework 'Development Matters' as the basis to inform our planning as well as activities that are suited to your child's unique needs. There are three prime areas of learning and four specific areas. For each of these areas there is an 'Early Learning Goal' for your child to work towards throughout the year.

Prime areas of the EYFS

Personal, Social and Emotional
Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

Specific areas of the EYFS

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Teachers also closely observe how children learn and in particular look at

- Playing and exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and thinking Critically

How can I prepare my child for starting school?

In preparation for starting school here are some things that you can do with your child to help them.

Personal, social & emotional development

At home you can

- play games that require taking turns
- show your child how to look after their toys and precious things
- help them to develop their concentration and perseverance when doing things they find difficult
- allow them to develop their independence when visiting the toilet, washing hands and to dress and undress themselves
- talk openly and honestly about feelings and the consequences of their words and actions and whether they make others feel happy, cross or sad.

Communication & language - Speaking, listening & attention

- Model how to be a good listener, showing them eye contact and good body language
- Be patient and don't interrupt or finish their sentences for them
- Give them your full attention when they are speaking
- Respond to what they are saying by asking questions
- Play listening games
- Encourage them to talk about the books they are enjoying and ask questions
- Play rhyming and signing games
- Ask for their opinions
- Tell them about your day and then ask them about theirs!

Physical development

At home;

- enjoy trips to the park to run, skip, jump, throw and catch, climb and swing
- encourage your child to help you in the kitchen and get them to mix and knead the dough as you make bread, scones or pastry
- encourage your child to do up their own buttons and zips as they get dressed
- try different tools for making marks - crayons, pencils, felt tips, paint brushes and chalks (it's often easier for children to develop drawing and writing skills on a larger scale before trying to draw or write on a smaller scale)
- try using old rolls of wallpaper, or chalking pictures on a large scale, for example, outside on the patio

Literacy

You will be invited into school to workshops that outline how we teach phonics, reading and writing in September. In the meantime at home you can try:

- manipulating clay and different types of dough - bread, play dough as well as pastry. Activities of this nature improve the strength and control of the fingers and therefore strength of the pencil grip
- climbing on the apparatus, swinging from the bars! Such activities develop arm muscle and shoulder joints all of which are used when we write effectively.

Also;

- praise every attempt your child makes at writing or making marks—such as lines, circles or shapes
- act as a role model yourself - make sure that your child sees you writing and talk about what you are writing with your child—children love to imitate.
- encourage your child to sign birthday cards and make shopping lists with you. Have plenty of note pads around and about the house to prompt your child to write.



Mathematics

Counting opportunities are everywhere! At home you can try...

- counting the knives, forks and spoons and setting the table together
- building with blocks or Lego - how many bricks are there in a tower?
- tidying up!! Sorting and matching colours and patterns and pairing up the socks - how many do we have altogether? How many crayons can you pick up off the floor? How many bricks can you fit in your hand?
- going on a walk - count the jumps, hops, steps you take to get to a destination - how many hops do you think you can do until you get to that puddle?
- looking for common shapes as you are out and about.





Understanding the World

In this area of learning children learn about similarities and differences between objects and materials, people and communities as well as technology.

At home you can help your child by;

- discussing the weather and the seasons and enjoying seasonal walks to observe the changes that take place throughout the year
- enjoy planting seeds and watching them grow
- discussing how toys move and work
- discussing people they see and the work they do
- meeting and talking to older people so that they can learn about how things were in the past; talk about what life was like when you were a child
- talking to them about where they live and explaining about people from different cultures
- playing simple games on the computer or using CD player.

Expressive Arts and design

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play.

You can help your child by;

- encouraging them to express their ideas through a wide range of media such as drawing, painting, singing, dancing and playing musical instruments;
- joining in their role play games as they play teachers or doctors
- encouraging them to draw on different sizes of blank pieces of paper with a range of different crayons, chalks and pencils.

OUR SCHOOL DAY

8:45am	:	Playground is open
8:55am	:	School starts/register taken
8:55am-10:00am	:	Learning session 1
10:00am	:	Assembly time
10:20am	:	Break time
10:35am-12:00noon	:	Learning session 2
12:00- 1:15pm	:	Lunch time
1:15-2:30pm	:	Learning session 3
2:30pm	:	Break time
2:45pm	:	Story and song time
3:15pm	:	Home time

What is the school day like?

What happens at the start of a school session? Where do I take my child when we arrive at school?

The full school day is 8.55am to 3.15pm.

At the start of the day, parents and carers should bring children to the playground at the rear of the school. A teacher is on duty from 8.45am and all teachers are available for messages from 8.50am. At 8.55am the bell will ring and all children line up with their class and are then taken through to the classroom by their teacher.

What happens at the end of the school day? Where do I collect my child?

If children are part-time they should be collected at midday. Children who attend school full time should be collected at the end of the school day at 3.15pm. We ask that parents/carers wait on the school playground at the rear of the school and their child will be brought to them one at a time.

Our tips for the start of the day - especially the first day!



- Get ready early to avoid rushing
 - Arrive at school early
- Be positive and encourage your child to be excited
- Settle your child and give them a big kiss and a hug before you go
- Leave straight after with a big smile on your face 😊



What should my child bring to school?

- A **named coat** every day to keep them warm and dry during the wet and cold weather. Every day children will be learning inside and outside. Approximately half of the school day in Lake class takes place in the outdoor learning environment—whatever the weather!
- A **named pair of wellington boots** to be kept at school
- A **named waterproof coat and trousers** (or 'all in one') that should be kept at school
- A **school book bag** that can be used to carry not only books but notes, newsletters and pictures or items children want to bring home to share with you.

We also understand that children at times feel the need to bring items from home to share. We ask that parents encourage children to only bring in items that fit into the book bag, where they should be kept.

School Uniform - please make sure that everything is named clearly!

GIRLS

- ✚ Grey skirt/trousers/pinafore (may wear blue gingham dress in summer months)
- ✚ White blouse/polo shirt with school logo
- ✚ Royal blue sweatshirt with logo
- ✚ Sensible **black** shoes

PE KIT

- ✚ Initially, Reception children will not change for PE but their class teacher will advise you when a PE kit is required
- ✚ white shorts/white t-shirt/white socks/plimsoles

BOYS

- ✚ Grey trousers/shorts
- ✚ White shirt/polo shirt with school logo
- ✚ Royal blue sweatshirt with logo
- ✚ Sensible **black** shoes

NB items of school wear with our Balcombe School logo (sweatshirts, t-shirts, PE & book bags etc) are supplied by **tecSchoolwear** —order forms available from our website or the school office.

~ Jewellery of any sort should not be worn ~

Will my child have a drink or a snack?

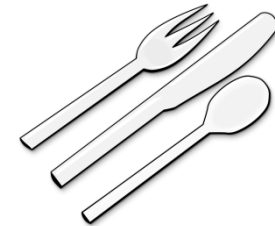
We provide free fruit every day so that children can have a healthy snack. Children should bring in full water bottles which they can sip throughout the day. We do have drinking water in the classroom to enable water bottles to be refilled as it is important that children have access to water throughout the day. Learning is such thirsty work!



We also participate in a milk scheme which you may join if you wish, details of which can be sought from our school website or the office.

Lunch at School

As of September 2014 all children starting school are eligible for a free school meal. Details will be provided to you separately.



Should your child have a packed lunch from home on any occasion then a healthy balanced packed lunch is crucial as a school day can be very exhausting. Please make sure that your child has a range of healthy foods to eat and water or juice to drink. **Due to severe allergies of children in school children must not bring in food containing KIWI or NUTS.** Please note that Nutella and some other products contain nuts.

Hot school meals may be booked through 'Chartwells' - 0845 603 7998 - www.mealselector.co.uk or ask at the school office for details. Menus are displayed in the school hall.

What happens if my child is absent/ill?

If your child is ill and unable to come to school you should notify the school by telephone (01444 811403) or e-mail (parents@balcombeschool.co.uk) before school starts at 8:55am giving the reason for the absence. This should occur **on each day** of the absence.



Your child should stay at home until they are completely well. Parents should notify school of any contagious diseases, eg Chickenpox, German Measles, Measles, Impetigo, Ringworm, Headlice, Sickness/Diarrhoea or Slapped Cheek. If your child has been sick or had diarrhoea he/she should not attend school for **48 hours** following the last episode. If your child has a rash or spots you should seek medical advice before a child is brought into the school environment.

If your child has a chronic illness such as asthma or any allergy parents must complete a Pupil Health and/or Asthma Pupil Health form which can be found on our website - this should be completed and submitted. If your child requires medication for such an illness, a medical log will be completed by the school on receipt of the completed forms from the parents.

An absence request form must be completed for any proposed absence from school other than for illness. Absence requests for holiday during term time **will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.**



Illness and Accidents at School



Trained teaching assistants or teaching staff deal with minor injuries and first aid. If a child is unwell at school we will contact you or your emergency contact. In the event of a more serious accident or illness occurring, and the school being unable to contact you, we will make arrangements for your child to be accompanied by a member of staff to hospital if we consider it necessary.

Under no circumstance should a child bring in any kind of medicine, including cough sweets, to school. It should not be necessary to administer medicines in school hours but, should this be necessary in rare cases, parents must bring the medicine to school (in the prescribed container) and administer it themselves. Generally speaking, we advise parents to keep children at home if they have been unwell until they have finished any medicine that has been prescribed for them.

Also...

Please note - dogs are not allowed within the school grounds and it is illegal to smoke on school premises.

And finally...

Please remember that you are welcome to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about school—whether during these initial stages or at any time throughout your child's schooling.

We very much look forward to meeting you and your family and hope that you will enjoy being a part of Balcombe School.

