

# Welcome to Balcombe CE Primary School!



Our 'Starting School' booklet -  
a guide for parents & carers of children starting at Balcombe CE  
Primary School in September 2021

## Contents

1. Welcome to our school
2. Settling into school life - our starting school activities
3. Frequently asked questions:
  - *What is it like in Lake class?*
  - *What will my child be learning at school? How can I help?*
  - *What is the school day like?*
  - *What are the arrival and collection arrangements?*
  - *What should my child bring to school?*
  - *What is the school uniform like? What do I need to get?*
  - *What are the arrangements for dinners, snacks and milk?*
  - *What happens if my child is absent or ill?*
  - *What if my child has medical needs?*
  - *Once my child has started school, how will I know how he or she is getting on? How can I be involved?*
4. How to contact us at school.



## Welcome to Balcombe School!

Starting school is a major and exciting event in the life of your child and we are so thrilled to be able to share the experience with you. 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.

We hope this booklet will provide some useful information to help you and your child settle into school life.



## 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 before your child starts school.

**'Welcome Meeting'...** On June 10<sup>th</sup> 2021, we warmly invite all of our new parents and carers to come to meet our Head Teacher, Mrs Millbanks, as well as the teaching staff who will be introducing your child to school life at an evening presentation at Balcombe School. This will be a chance for you to meet the staff who will explain all about settling into school life. Dates for other starting school activities listed below will be given out at this meeting - bring your diary!

**'Getting to know you' meetings ...** In June or July, you will be invited to have an individual meeting with your class teacher. This is a chance for you to share information about your child - his or her likes, dislikes, strengths & talents as well as what challenges them.

**'Come and Play' sessions and story time...** At the end of July, Children and are invited to come and play at school as well as come for story time in order to become familiar with our class and teaching staff.

**'All about Me' books...** Children and their families are encouraged to create a booklet all about themselves prior to starting school. These are given to children when they visit school in July and can be completed in the summer holidays and brought into school in September 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.

**We will be in contact with nurseries and preschools throughout this time period so that we can**

hear all about your child's successes there!

### Working together when September comes...

Our settling into school programme continues in September. Here is an outline of how we settle children into school life when the Autumn term begins.

**Starting school in small teams.** In September, to ensure your child receives maximum attention as he or she settles into school life, all children start gradually in small groups for the first few days. We also advise that all children are part-time for the first 2-3 weeks in September, so that, again, we can carefully settle them in and help them to become confident as they learn about their new learning environment and new routines. Children are welcome to remain part-time for longer, of course, as all children are different. We will talk about this further during our 'Getting to know you' meeting with you which we will arrange for June and July.



**'Me and My World' Books** - It is so important for children as they settle, that they have opportunities to share with us their experiences outside of school. 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 comment about how kind your child was when Granny came to visit. There will be a dedicated time to share these in class once a week in 'Show and Tell.'

## Frequently Asked Questions .... What is it like in Lake class?

We asked the children what it is like in our class! Here is what they said!

*'Magical things happen in Lake class!'*

*'We have lots of fun in Lake.'*

*'We do lots of different things and have lots of surprises!'*

*'The best thing about school is that everyone is your best friend.'*

*'When I grow up, I am going to be a be a Lake teacher!'*

We believe that Lake class is a very special place to be. We love to excite the children and ensure their time with us is full of awe and wonder which we can find in the simplest of things... whether it's discovering a new fact, baking a treat to eat, a surprise visitor, perhaps dressing up or a venturing out doors! We might be pirates or princesses, rainforest explorers or palaeontologists - every day will offer new learning opportunities. We do our best to create an environment where children are very happy and willing to be curious, to explore, to be creative and to be the very best that they can be.

For example, in the midst of winter, children were fascinated by the cold and the ice forming outside and so we posed to challenge to the children to find out 'where is the coldest place on earth?' Together, we then planned a very special week - bespoke to their needs and interests - all about the Antarctic. During the course of the week, we kept a log of all the different learning opportunities



## *We had been...*

*looking at non-fiction books learning fact books all about Antarctica, looking at Google Earth to find places near and far, asking questions to people we know who have been to The South Pole, meeting an explorer and listening to her adventures, making books about penguins, drawing them, cutting and fixing materials to make a sledge, climbing over and under the trim train during our explorer training, making explorer base camps and dens, exploring how the frost and ice melt, creating frozen art, learning new sounds and words, reading to a friend, reading to an adult, weighing ice blocks, investigating what floats and sinks, making maps, writing thank you letters to our explorer visitor, making pictures on the computers, listening to our friends in 'show and tell,' sharing a toy, looking after each other, talking, thinking..*

*We feel that Lake class is a rather special place to be!*

## FAQ What will my child be learning at school?

Lake class is where the excitement begins! Recently we have explored Antarctica, become astronauts learning about life in space, travelled to the Amazon and become swashbuckling pirates creating dens, maps and stories! We base our planning on the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum' and use the framework 'Development Matters.' However, we also take time to listen to the children and observe their interests and make sure that our curriculum planning focuses on their passions. We also observe children's skills, knowledge and understanding of the world around them so that our planning not only motivates them, but also meets their individual needs directly. We also work with you closely to make sure that your views on your child's learning and development are valued and used as part of the planning process.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, 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. In September, we will be offering more information about the curriculum that children will experience at school once they have settled into school life.

### 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

## FAQ 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.



### 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
- 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 singing games
- Ask for their opinions
- Tell them about your day and then ask them about theirs!

### Physical development

At home:

- support your child to become independent when toileting and getting dressed
- 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 - such activities strengthen the fingers ready for writing
- 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.

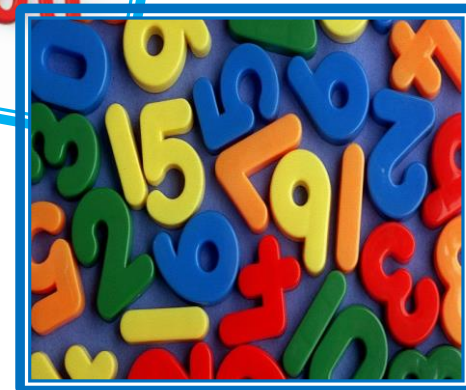
## Literacy

You will be invited into school to attend 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 you 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.

## FAQ What is the school day like?

### Our school day

8:45am	:	Lake classroom is open and children gradually arrive from this time. All children need to be in the classroom from 8:55am <small>Please note that if you would like your child to attend 'Breakfast Club,' which is open from 7:20am in the school hall, you will find details about this later on this booklet.</small>
8:55am	:	School starts/register taken
8:55am-10:15am	:	<b>Learning session 1</b>
10:15am	:	Assembly time
10:30am	:	Break time
10:45am-12:00noon	:	<b>Learning session 2</b>
12:00- 1:15pm	:	Lunch time
1:15-2:30pm	:	<b>Learning session 3</b>
2:30pm	:	Break time
2:45pm	:	<b>Story and song time</b>
3:15pm	:	<b>Home time</b>

## The school day continued

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

Although the school day starts at 8.55am, we open the doors at 8.45am to enable children to enter gradually, rather than all at once. This ensures that everyone gets an individual welcome by their teacher at the door! It really is a calm way to start the day. All children should arrive by 8.55am.

The class entrance for children in our class is via the wooden side gate in Westup Road to the left of the school (as you face it). Simply enter through this gate and follow the signs!

The full school day is 8.55am to 3.15pm

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

### **Part-time children:**

If children are part-time they should be collected at midday. We ask that parents/carers wait at the front of the school and their child will be brought to them one at a time.

### **Full-time children:**

Children who attend school full time should be collected at the end of the school day at 3.15pm, from Lake's patio doors - exactly where you drop off in the morning.

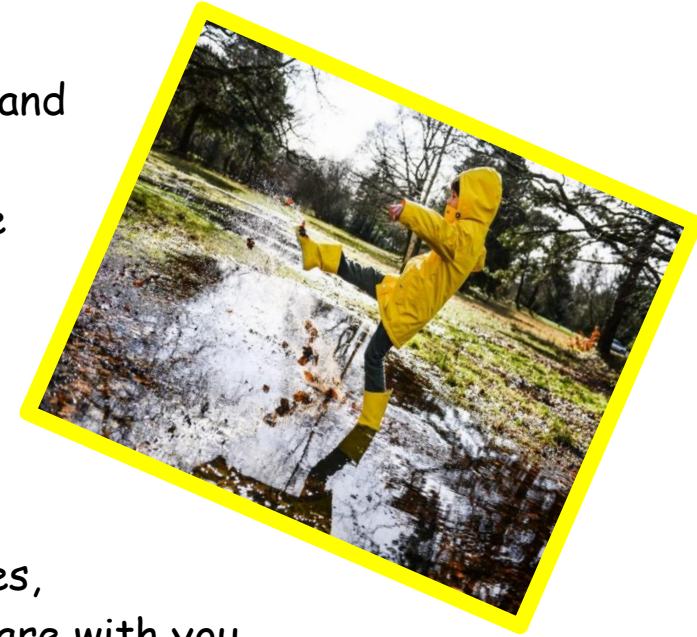
### **Our tips for the start of the day - especially the first day!**

- 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 ☺



## FAQ 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 (these 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
- A water bottle (filled with fresh water).



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 one item that fits into the book bag.

## FAQ What is the school uniform like?

### What do I need to get?

Our uniform is robust and comfortable for a busy day of active learning at school. Children are proud to be in our Balcombe blue! Please have a look at our uniform by viewing the photos in this book and by visiting the Sussex uniforms website by clicking on the link here <https://www.sussexuniforms.co.uk/collections/balcombe> We have generous families who donate used uniforms that are in great condition - please contact the school office for information about viewing this.

The key pieces that everyone will need are listed below. The website will contain additional items that are optional (e.g. fleeces). Please note that the items marked with a \* are those that will need a Balcombe logo on and can only be ordered from the Sussex Uniform website/shop mentioned above.

#### GIRLS

- Grey skirt/trousers/pinafore (girls may wear a blue gingham dress in summer months)
- White blouse/polo shirt\*
- Royal blue sweatshirt\*
- 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 - do not worry we will give you plenty of warning! The kit consists of

- Royal blue shorts/blue t-shirt/white socks/plimsoll - the PE kit must be purchased from the Sussex uniforms website.

#### BOYS

- Grey trousers/shorts
- White shirt/polo shirt\*
- Royal blue sweatshirt\*
- Sensible **black** shoes.

NB We ask that everyone has at least one or two polo shirts with our logo on that can be used for special days, including school photograph day. We understand and accept that families would like to buy packs of plain white polo shirts which can be purchased from supermarkets.

~ **Jewellery of any sort should not be worn** ~



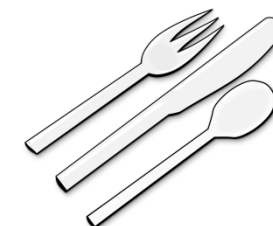
## **FAQ What are the arrangements for dinners, snacks and milk at school?**

### **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 directly from the Cool Milk website

<https://www.coolmilk.com/>



### **Lunch at School**

All children in reception, year 1 and year 2 are entitled to receive the government funded scheme known as Universal Free School meals which provides a hot lunch every day.

Once a school place for your child has been confirmed, you will be sent a 'joining form' where you will be asked which days you would like your child to have a hot lunch so that we can book meals for you.

This is to ensure that we limit waste. Parents should advise the school office if the need for a meal changes. A menu will be available on Chartwells website <https://westsussex.mealselector.co.uk/>

**Please ensure that you advise Chartwells of any allergies or special dietary requirements in advance of your child starting school.**

Should you choose for your child have a packed lunch from home instead, 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 the severe allergies of some children in school, children must not bring in food containing KIWI or NUTS.** Please note that Nutella and some other products contain nuts.

**If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask the office.**

### **Breakfast Club**

Breakfast Club runs from 7:20am until 8:40am, Monday to Friday, term time only.

Children have a selection of breakfasts, including cereal, toast, pancakes, fresh fruit and a choice of water or milk. They have a variety of resources available for the children to use as well as lots of outside play opportunities.

Breakfast Club is run by Tree Tops Clubs. Prices and booking details can be found on their website.

<http://www.treetopsclubs.co.uk/listing/balcombe-school/>

We also have an extensive extra-curricular club schedule which is updated on a regular basis that children can enjoy from year 1 up.

### **Pupil Premium**

The government gives money to schools to help children from lower income families do their very best. This funding is called 'Pupil Premium' - we will provide more details about this scheme in due course.

## FAQ What happens if my child is absent or ill?



If your child is feeling unwell while they are with us at school, we will contact you (or your emergency contact).

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](mailto:parents@balcombeschool.co.uk)) before school starts at 8:55am letting us know the reason for the absence. You should do this **on each day** of the absence.

Parents should notify school immediately of any contagious diseases, e.g. Coronavirus, Chickenpox, German measles, Measles, Impetigo, Ringworm, Head lice, Sickness/Diarrhoea or Slapped Cheek. Your child should stay at home until they are completely well, keeping to government guidelines or Public Health England advice. When you contact us we will guide you through such guidance in order to stop the spread of any infection and keep us all safe.

Please note the following;

- 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 they are brought into the school environment.

## **Medicines**

Generally speaking, we advise parents to keep children at home if they have been unwell and prescribed a short course of medicine from a GP, such as antibiotics.

Of course, each situation is different.

If medicine is required during school hours, school staff are able to administer prescribed medication only. Parents must bring the medicine to school in the prescribed container with the prescription/dose label.

## **Medical needs**

If your child has a chronic, long term medical need, 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 as soon as possible. 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.

## **Absence for reasons other than illness**

An absence request form must be completed for any proposed absence from school that is not because of illness. Absence requests for holiday during term time **will not be authorised except in**

exceptional circumstances.

## Accidents at School



We have trained first aiders at school every day who will take care of your child should they hurt themselves.

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.

## Also...

### Please note -

- Dogs are only allowed within the school grounds for education purposes or as a registered service dog.
- It is illegal to smoke on school premises.

**FAQ When my child is at school – how will I know how he or she is getting on? How can I be part of school life?**

Throughout the school year, there are many opportunities for you to share in your child's school experiences and feel part of our school community.

These include:

- **Opportunities to talk to your child's class teacher at the start of every day.** When you drop your child off at school in the morning, you bring them into the classroom where you will find us at the door, waiting for you all! We are always available for quick messages then. You can also see us at the end of the day as well when it is time to collect your child. It is also possible to telephone the school and speak to us over the phone at lunch time, or, arrange to see us at a mutually convenient time. We will always make time to chat.



- **Class letters and topic information.** Every term you will receive a letter outlining the key learning opportunities that children will have at school.
- **Individual Learning Plans.** In addition to the above, every term we will share with you individual plans for your child so that you know exactly what specific skills he or she is learning at school.
- **Open mornings.** Once a term you will have an opportunity to come and look through your child's 'Learning Journal' with them.
- **Parents Evenings.**
- **School trips.** Parent helpers are always invited.
- **Sports Day.**
- **Assemblies.**
- **Regular newsletters.**
- **Our website:** [www.balcombeschool.co.uk](http://www.balcombeschool.co.uk)



**And finally...**

Please remember that you are welcome to contact 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.

us if you have



Our contact details are:

Balcombe CE Primary School

London Road

Balcombe

West Sussex

RH17 6HS

Phone: 01444 811403

Email: [parents@balcombeschool.co.uk](mailto:parents@balcombeschool.co.uk)

Website: [www.balcombeschool.co.uk](http://www.balcombeschool.co.uk)

Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Millbanks

Chair of Governors: Mr Ian Tremble