

# Welcome to Reception



## Early Years Unit



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**ClassDojo: sign up to our class using the invite we send you**



*Developing creativity...imagination...collaborative play... problem solving...thinking skills... communication...new experiences...outdoor learning... learning through play*

# Welcome to Reception

## Introduction to Early Years

Welcome to the Reception year at Blaendulais Primary School. We hope your child has a fantastic, happy year with us - we know we can't wait to meet them/see them again! This booklet answers some frequently asked questions about Reception at our school.

We are lucky to have a separate Early Years Unit housed in our own building with our own outdoor classroom, yard and play area. We are very well resourced inside and out and make full use of the outdoor classroom. Our entrance is through the green gate on Heol Hen.

We have three year groups within the Unit:

Reception - the first year of full-time school for children who are already 4 in September and will turn 5 this school year.

Nursery - non-statutory, part-time school:

*Nursery 1: Children who turn 3 after the start of the school year*

*Nursery 2: Children who are already 3 in September*

## Teaching Staff

There are two teachers across the week:

**Monday - Wednesday:** Mrs Timmins

**Thursday - Friday:** Mrs Rudge



Mrs Rudge is also our Foundation Phase Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator.

The teachers are supported by our wonderful teaching assistants: Mrs Matts, Miss Williams and Mrs George. The number of teaching assistants in the Unit each term depends on the number of children on roll. Generally we have 1 adult to every 8 children in the morning and 1 teacher and 1 TA in the afternoons after Nursery have gone home.

*“Teachers (in early years) enhance and develop learning areas extremely well and, as a result, pupils develop their literacy, numeracy, creative and physical skills successfully” (Estyn Inspection 2019).*

# Learning through Play

Children learn best when they are happy, engaged, secure and interested in what they are doing - i.e. when they are playing and choosing what to play with themselves!



We promote child-led learning and follow “in the moment planning” which allows us to facilitate and personalise the children’s learning, allowing each child to develop, make progress and reach their own potential.

*“Teachers in the early years provide many valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their learning through imaginative play” (Estyn Inspection 2019).*

## Focus Child

Once a term your child will be the week’s focus child. This means we will photograph and write up some of their learning and activities and our interactions with them and teaching moments across the week. This is recorded as a ‘Learning Journey’ which we will go through with you and

give you a copy of to take home and keep.

## Learning Journeys

Learning Journeys help to involve you in your child’s learning, celebrating their achievements and highlighting any areas to target in school and/or at home. You have these throughout the year instead of a formal end of year report. Reception children will receive 3 Learning Journeys by the end of the year, the final one in the summer including a summary report.

## Keep in Touch

If you are not on ClassDojo please join up to see pictures of the children engaged in their learning and to read messages from us about upcoming events. We also send home newsletters of important information and you can check out the school website (address on front page). Whilst we can message directly through ClassDojo please do not use it for urgent information as the teachers will not see your message during the school day e.g. if you are running late you must phone the office.

# The School Day

## Start and Finish Times

We have new start and finish times staggered across the school. For September 2020 our times in the Unit are:

Reception: 8.40 - 3.05

Nursery 1: 8.40 - 11.10

Nursery 2: 8.40 - 11.40



*These start/finish times may change as Welsh Government guidance changes. We will give you as much notice as possible if this happens.*

**\*\* Early Years children need to be dropped off and collected before any other children you have in school \*\***

## Where to pick up and drop off

The school grounds are currently not open to non-school staff, so for September 2020, **Reception children will be dropped off and picked up from the green gates on Heol Hen.**

A member of the Early Years Unit will unlock the gate and receive your child from you in the mornings at 8.40am and will meet you there to hand over your child at 3.05pm. Please do not arrive before 8.40 as unfortunately there is no shelter at this entrance.

## What if I am late?

It is **always** important to arrive at school on time and under current circumstances we ask you to be extra vigilant about time keeping. We wouldn't want to keep the children waiting outside unnecessarily and cannot keep a member of staff on the gate indefinitely whilst maintaining the correct adult:child ratios in the classroom. Thank you for your co-operation. However, we will always look after your child should you be late, and here is what to do if you are:

## Late arriving

If you are more than a few minutes late arriving in the morning, **please walk round to the front of the school to the main school building** where your child will be received and walked down to the Early Years Unit.

## Late collecting

**Please telephone the main school number to inform them you will be late** and say what time you will be there. They will get a message down to us in the Unit where we will look out for you and bring your child out when you arrive. If you are very late, then we will walk your child up to the main building where they will be supervised by office staff until you arrive. Please try to only arrive late in exceptional circumstances. Thank you for your co-operation.

## Lunch time

Reception children stay in school for lunch. There are a few changes due to the current situation which we will provide information on as soon as possible. In the first instance, please plan to send in a packed lunch from home. We will let you know as soon as school dinners are available again.

Packed lunches -we promote healthy eating to keep the children bright and alert in the afternoons and to teach them about healthy living. Please keep treats and sugary items to a minimum. No fizzy drinks or sweets.

The children are supervised at lunchtime by our lovely dinner ladies and school support staff.

## Change Bag

Accidents happen and children can get wet or muddy in our fantastic outdoors provision, so please provide a change bag with socks, pants, t-shirt and leggings/joggers as well as a clean plastic bag for dirty clothes.



# What do I need to bring?

## Uniform

Early years children wear school uniform along with the rest of the school. However, they should wear easy to wear and dress clothes - please think of their independence in dressing when buying their uniform. We suggest:

- **school polo shirt and jumper/cardigan**
- **dark coloured leggings/joggers** (please avoid tight clothing with buttons, hooks and zips)
- **Velcro-tabbed trainers or school shoes** (no laces please!)



## Snack Time

We are proud to be a Healthy School. All children receive a **daily morning snack** and all take part in activities like cooking, playdough making and trying celebration/cultural food.



**\*\*\* We ask for £1 a week contribution towards snack and activities. This works out at 20p a day \*\*\***

Please pay half-termly if possible - we offer a reduced amount of £5 for each half term. If you prefer to pay weekly this is fine too. All money should be sent in an envelope marked with your child's name, how much is in there and what it is for (e.g. 'snack'). Any problems paying just let us know. We offer a discount for 2+ children.

## Fruit

In the afternoon the children have a fruit snack brought from home. Please cut up some fruit and put in a small pot labelled with their name. Eg peeled tangerine, small banana/apple, grapes cut up lengthwise to avoid choking, sliced strawberries, carrot or cucumber sticks.



**Drinks** We provide milk at snack time and give each child their own water bottle which they have access to throughout the day, so please do not send in any additional drinks.

**Allergies** Please make any food allergies or intolerances known to Early Years staff before your child starts. You can detail these and any other medical issues on the consent forms.

## Outdoor Clothes and Wellies

We learn and play outside as much as inside and go on welly walks around the school and nearby area. Please send in a pair of wellies to stay in school and dress your child in weather appropriate clothing each day, including a warm coat and sensible shoes. Remember hats and mittens in cold weather.



Please also provide a set of waterproofs (jacket and trousers) if possible so they can benefit from the outside even on rainy days. We do have a few waterproof suits in school so don't worry if you cannot provide this. In sunny weather, please apply suncream to your child before they come in and send in a sun hat.

## Labelling

Remember to label everything that comes into school with your child's name! Help us find your child's things by writing their name or sticking/sewing a label on their cardigans, jumpers, coats, wellies, bags and shoes! Thank you.



*“Staff make very good use of outdoor learning areas and these are particularly effective when developing pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills” (Estyn Inspection, 2019).*

# How can I help my child?

## Sleep

A good night's sleep is essential for being alert, happy and settled throughout the school day. All children are different, but as a rule, 4 years olds need around 11 and a half hours sleep a night (NHS, 2017) so around 7pm is a good bedtime to ensure they are getting enough rest.



## Dummies and Bottles



Parents often ask, “Should I stop my child using a dummy and a bottle before they start school?”. The answer is yes! Spending time away from home is made harder for children if they don't have their usual comfort objects to hand.

Dummies and bottles also interfere with speech development so the sooner the dummy/bottle is gone, the better your child's progress will be. After age 1 dummies can interfere with children learning to speak properly (NHS, 2020).

## Wellcomm

Wellcomm is the speech and language screening and intervention tool we use, along with most schools in NPT. We start Wellcomm in Nursery.

**Does Wellcomm continue in Reception?** Yes, we will continue to use the Wellcomm toolkit to work on speech and language development with all Early Years children. If your child has Wellcomm targets, we will continue to work on them and monitor them over the year. New targets will be sent home as existing ones are achieved.

**What if they can't say some words?** If you notice your child saying some words incorrectly (e.g. tour instead of four, “look mum, **tour** cars”), speech therapists suggest rather than correcting them, try repeating the word back to them correctly in a positive way (“that's right Ben, there are **four** cars, **Four**).



**Speech and Language at home** - Take time each day to talk and listen to your child. Read stories and sing songs together. Limit screen time, particularly on phone screens or tablets. Instead, try playing turn-taking games, puzzles and jigsaws, arts and crafts or cooking activities.

## Jolly Phonics

In Nursery we worked on Phase 1 Phonics - developing listening skills. In Reception we start on Phase 2 Phonics - recognising letter sounds. We use the Jolly Phonics programme.

The children will learn to recognise all the letter sounds in the alphabet ("phonemes") along with blended letter sounds such as th, ch, oa, ai, ie etc. ("digraphs").

After they become confident recognising letter sounds, they start to read simple words that can be sounded out e.g. cat, mat, on, in. They also learn to sight read 'tricky' e.g. the, said, he, she.



## Reading Books

Once immersed into the Phase 2 Phonics Programme we start giving out reading books to read at home. Initially these have no words to help the children understand the structure of books, hold them the right way up, turn pages, use pictures for clues and retell stories themselves. As they progress we start sending home books with words in. **Please read their reading book with them every night and fill in the reading record.**

Please remember, all children develop at different paces. We send reading books home when they are ready.



## Book Bag

Please buy a bookbag to keep their reading book, reading record and flashcards / tricky word sheets in. Bookbags should come into school every day so we can listen to children read/change their book. They are kept in a box in the classroom - please do not send in big or bulky rucksacks as we don't have room. The school office sells flat bags or you can buy your own.

# Four Core Purposes

There is a new Welsh Curriculum that is based on four aims to help children and young people be:

## 1. Ambitious and capable learners

They believe in themselves and what they can do. They want to learn and do better. They have the skills to learn.

## 2. Enterprising and creative

They can be creative and think of new ideas. They can solve problems. They can use this in their work.

## 3. Ethical and informed citizens

They understand their rights and responsibilities. They take part in their community. They care about the world.

## 4. Healthy and confident

They have healthy minds and bodies. They feel good about themselves and what they believe in.

# 6 Areas of Learning Experience

Alongside the 4 core purposes, we work on 6 Areas of Learning Experience specified by the Welsh Government. These are developed in Early Years through our child-led learning and in the moment planning approach to ensure the children have the opportunity to develop across all areas of the curriculum, in a fun, positive and respectful learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

**Expressive Arts**

**Languages, Literacy & Communication**

**Health & Well-being**

**Maths & Numeracy**

**Humanities**

**Science & Technology**

**You will see references to the 4 Core Purposes and the 6 Areas of Learning Experience in your child's Learning Journey**