



St Mary's CE VC First School

Nurturing deep, strong Christian roots, helping us to grow and flourish

West Hill, Charminster, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 9RD 01305 263880 office@chaminster.dorset.sch.uk chaminster.dorset.sch.uk

Useful Information

Dear Parents/Carers,

Below, you will find a range of useful information about our school. We feel that communication is key to a successful education and, as such, we ask that you speak with a member of our team if you require further information or clarification around the details shared here. We very much look forward to working with you and your family throughout the years to come.

Kind regards

Mick Homer
Headteacher

School Times

Gates and Doors open	08:30 to 08:45
Morning Session	08:45 to 12:05
Lunch	12:05 to 12:55
Afternoon Session	12:55 to 15:00

Stay and Play Club and Breakfast Club

Each morning, we start our day with Breakfast Club which is staffed by one of our TA's. The children can have toast or cereal and are encouraged to sit together in a social setting, after which the children go straight to their relevant classrooms ready for the start of the school day. Please note that food is only served up to 8.20am, due to the time children need to be in their classes.

Here at St Mary's we term our after school club as 'Stay and Play Club'. This is open every afternoon of a school term and is available to every child on the school register. We staff the club with two experienced childcare workers who also work elsewhere within the school, so they are familiar to the children. There are a variety of activities on offer each day which encourage the children to relax, play and be creative.

All bookings and payments for our wraparound care should be made online via the School Gateway. Bookings will be accepted up to midday the day before, however, once the maximum places have been taken, the system will not allow any further bookings, therefore it is important to book your child's place as far in advance as possible. Parents can also make payments by childcare vouchers and bookings are made via the same way on the School Gateway. Payments made to the school through your scheme will be credited to your Gateway account. Credits will be given if a child, having booked in, is unable to attend through illness. A Guide to using the School Gateway is available on the School website and from the office.



School Gateway

All bookings and payments for Breakfast Club and Afterschool Club are made via our School Gateway app. Any other extra-curricular clubs and school trips are also booked via the School Gateway app. To register for your School Gateway account:

- Via the App, you will need to download the School Gateway app via App Store for Apple devices and Play Store for Android devices.
- If you are accessing via the web, please go to: <https://login.schoolgateway.com/0/auth/login>
- You just need to enter the email address and mobile number that is registered with our school.
- You will then receive a PIN via text, which you must enter to log into the home screen.

The School Gateway Access Guide is available on our school website.

Car Parking:

For the interest of child safety, we ask that you please do not park your car in the school car park or bus lane. You may use the car park next to the school at Charminster Community Hall.

School Transport:

The current qualifying distances for free school transport are as follows:

Under 8 years (Year 3 and younger) - 2 miles

Over 8 years (Year 4 and older) – 3 miles

Charlton Down has, however, been deemed as a qualifying bus route as there is not a safe path to walk to school. Please apply for your child's transport on: https://dorset-self.achieveservice.com/service/Entitled_transport or alternatively you can phone Admissions on 01305 221060 and they will post a form out to you.

Children are escorted off the bus in the morning and onto the bus in the afternoon by members of our staff. If you wish for your child to be taken off the school bus list on occasions, please inform the school office before the end of the school day. It is extremely important for parents to make sure that their children understand that they must remain seated and behave sensibly and quietly when using the school bus.

Equipment and Materials

All basic materials (pens, paper, books, pencils etc.) are provided by the school so children should not bring their own equipment or pencil cases. The only 'equipment', which we ask for parents/carers to supply, is a St Mary's Book Bag. These are available from our Uniform Supplier, Kitz UK.

We would prefer children not to bring toys or teddies to school unless specifically asked to do so in connection with school activities. We cannot be held responsible for items that get lost or broken.

Applying for Pupil Premium

If you are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance or Child Tax Credit, your child is likely to qualify for Pupil Premium. Not only does this mean that your child will receive a healthy meal on every school day, they'll also get access to free school/holiday clubs and extra money for our school towards staffing and activities. It's easy to find out if you qualify - complete the confidential checker at dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/free-school-meals or telephone 01305 221090 opt 1.



Home-School Communication

From September 2023, parents will receive regular 'Knowledge Organisers' which will be sent home to make you aware of the key knowledge and skills which your child will be exploring that term. These will enable you to discuss your child's learning at home and enrich it, if you wish to do so. Further to this, we will keep you updated on your child's week via our regular school newsletters and, if your child is in Reception, via the Tapestry App.

Throughout the year, we also hold a range of events with the aim of communicating your child's attainment and progress with you, as well as giving you the opportunity to keep up to date with their coverage of our curriculum. These events in Class Assemblies, Open Mornings/Afternoons, Parent Consultations and whole-school events such as Potted Sports, Sports Day and a Christmas Play.

We strongly encourage all parents/carers to speak with a member of our team if you have any questions or concerns. We know that WhatsApp groups offer a good support network to some parents, but we recommend that you look to seek answers and resolutions directly from our team, should issues arise.

Hot Lunches

The government is currently funding free school meals for all Reception and Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and 2) pupils in state-funded schools in England. That means that if your child is in these year groups, they'll get a free lunch every day if you order one for them. It's easy to start ordering school meals online – just contact our school office for a registration code and you can get going at <https://my.localfoodlinks.org.uk/>.



For new Reception Class starters, a letter with your activation code will be given to you in your welcome pack. The menu for ordering in September will be available mid-July - please do not order on the system before then.

For parents of children in Year 3 and 4, you will be required to pay for your child's meals, unless they are entitled to Free School Meals due to you being in receipt of qualifying benefits. If you feel that you may be entitled to this for your child, please complete a Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Registration Form, which you can collect from the school office or in your Welcome Pack if your child is joining us in Reception.

Children in Reception, Years 1 and 2 will be provided with fruit for their mid-morning break through a Government scheme. Children in Years 3 and 4 may bring in their own fruit snack, if they wish.

Cool Milk

If your child is under five...

- Register your child online at www.coolmilk.com/register.
- If you register before 5pm on a Tuesday, your child will start receiving milk the following week.

Cool Milk

Our schools provides free milk for children entitled to Pupil Premium. If you feel that your child is entitled to free mid-morning milk, please contact the school office to register your child with Cool Milk – we will add your child to our Cool Milk Account on your behalf.

To pay for your child's school milk if your child is over five and not entitled to Pupil Premium...

- Register your child online at www.coolmilk.com/register.
- Milk costs around £18 a term. By registering online, you can make a payment straightaway. If your payment is received by 5pm on a Tuesday, your child will receive milk the following week.



School Uniform

School Uniform can be ordered directly from our supplier, Kitz UK either by telephone, by visiting their shop (South Western Business Park), or online at: <https://st-marys-charminster.secure-decoration.com/>

Our compulsory uniform consists of the following:

- Green sweatshirt (branded or unbranded)
- Either: Yellow polo shirt (branded or unbranded) and Grey trousers/shorts/skirt/pinafore
OR: Green/white or yellow/White check dresses
- Black shoes
- St Mary's book bag

Our compulsory PE Kit consists of the following:

- Green PE t-shirt (branded or unbranded)
- Dark coloured PE shorts/skirt
- Trainers

In addition to our compulsory uniform, your child may also wear:

- Green zipped fleece (branded or unbranded)
- PE hoody

To ensure that your child does not lose items which belong to them, it is essential that their name is clearly marked on everything! There is a company called My Name Tags that you might find useful for labelling your child's clothing: <https://www.mynametags.com/>. When ordering please quote the code 24758 as some of the money goes to our School Association.

Any parents who have successfully applied for Pupil Premium will qualify for an allowance for school clothing. Please contact the school office for an application form.

We also have an ECO uniform shop in our school hall on the first Friday morning of each month.

PE Guidelines – Safe Practice

The Dorchester Area Schools Partnership agreed a PE policy and guidelines for all schools across the pyramid. The health and safety measures outline that:

- Long hair must be tied back for ALL physical activity.
- ALL jewellery must be removed before participating in PE lessons. This includes watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets and earrings.
- Pupils with pierced ears MUST remove earrings wherever possible for PE lessons. If stud earrings cannot be removed, they should be taped up using medical tape. FOR SAFETY REASONS pupils may NOT do PE with earrings other than studs, at all.

Medicines in School

If your child is prescribed medicine that needs to be administered whilst in school, please take the medicine to the school office, where you can fill out a form asking the name of the medication, the dose to be administered and the time it needs to be administered. The medicine must be clearly labelled with the child's name. Children should not be responsible for carrying medicines to school. Medicines should never be sent with a child on the school bus.



School Health and Welfare

If you have any concerns about your child's health or welfare, there is a School Nursing Administration Hub based in Wareham serving the whole of Dorset. Their details are: dhc.snadmin.hub@nhs.net
Phone number: 01929 557 558 There is also a confidential texting service called Parent Line which operates term time only. The number to text is: 07312 263131.

All children have a range of medical checks during their first year in school. This includes hearing, height and weight checks. You will be notified when these examinations will take place, although it isn't necessary for you to be present.

Although it is important that your child's attendance is as high as possible, we ask that you carefully consider whether or not they are well enough to attend school, if they are unwell. There are a number of guidelines around illnesses and school attendance, so if you are unsure then please contact our school office. In particular, children must not return to school for 48 hours after being sick or suffering from diarrhoea.

If your child becomes unwell or suffers a significant injury during school hours we will contact you immediately. Please ensure that we have your current emergency telephone number.

Emergency Closure of School:

If the school has to be closed during term time, you will be notified via a text message to your mobile phone through our SchoolComms messaging system. Every effort will be made to advise parents on the rare occasions of emergency closure, for example extreme weather conditions or power failure. We will keep you informed on our school website www.charminster.dorset.sch.uk and updates will also be on the Dorset for You School Closure Information webpage.

If buses do not run in the morning due to extreme weather, they will not run in the afternoon whatever the situation. Information can also be found on the Dorset for You School Transport updates webpage.

School Association

Our School Association supports the work of our school. Events for families, parents, children and all in our school community are planned and run by our School Association. These events include our Charminster Family Fun Day, children's discos, movie nights, Family Bingo evenings etc.

In recent years funds raised have supported our school in purchasing curriculum materials, equipment, toys and new laptops. We are great believers that more hands make light work! We appreciate any time that can be given to support us. We have a great team at present but always welcome more volunteers! Please look at the calendar for events taking place and contact us on: stmarysassndt2@gmail.com or via our Facebook page: St Marys first School Charminster School, if you'd like to get involved.

