

Hygge in the Early Years



**WESTCOTT**  
**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# Reception Handbook



# *A warm welcome*

Firstly, a huge warm welcome to you and your child to Westcott Primary School.

At Westcott, we are committed to providing high quality early years education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning.

We hope the information in this booklet is useful in preparing you and your child for joining us in September. We are really looking forward to meeting your little ones!

Our Reception setting has undergone a huge transformation over the past twelve months. Although the setting was providing our children with the learning they needed and that is expected, we felt as though we wanted to create a *homelier* feel; a *calm*, more *nurturing* environment and this is when we discovered Hygge.

## *So what is Hygge and how does the concept translate into an Early Years setting?*

Hygge (pronounced hue-gah) is a Danish word used when acknowledging a feeling or moment, ordinary or extraordinary as cosy, charming or special. It literally only requires consciousness, a certain slowness, and the ability to not just be present- but to recognise and enjoy the present.

There is no one English word of simple definition to describe Hygge. In essence, Hygge means creating a warm atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life with good people. The warm glow of candlelight is Hygge. Sitting around with family and friends talking about big and little things- that is Hygge, too.

In an Early Years setting, it is about creating a space that promotes emotional well-being, togetherness and friendship. It is a place that children can feel comfortable to snuggle down or explore with confidence. In Early Years settings, it is designed so that school is more an extension of their home and not a watered down version of school.

Within our Hygge classroom setting, we aim to:

- View the environment through the eyes of the child;
- Invite children to create dens or cosy corners, with the use of drapes, voiles and blankets;
- Provide plump cushions and blankets which enable children to get cosy when reading books;
- Have well- appointed twinkly lights to add a sense of wonder and magic;
- Use lighting that is soft and muted;
- Make sure artificial lights is kept to a minimum, use of table or standard lamps;
- Create a reduction of noise levels, through the use of soft furnishings;
- Create access to a range of textures;
- Provide seating where children can curl up with a nice book.

## *Our Classes*

We have two classes in Reception and your child will be placed in either Mrs Zreika's class known as RKZ or Mrs Penrose's class, RJP.

Our classes together make up the Early Years Foundation Stage Two but we like to say Reception Class. Our aim is not to only embed the themes and principles of the EYFS but to create an environment that nurtures children and helps them to become lifelong learners and valued members of the community.

### *More about our environment*

Like all EYFS settings, learning through play is a must. The children have access to all sorts of learning opportunities in line with the EYFS framework. Indoors, our setting has:

- Role play area;
- A construction area;
- Two mark making areas;
- A creative area- painting, colouring, collaging etc.
- Playdough area;
- Reading area;
- Small world area;
- Maths area;
- Curiosity area.

Outdoors our setting includes:

- Lots of water play;
- A large sandpit;
- A mud kitchen and digging area;
- A nature garden;
- A staging area;
- A zen garden;
- A large scale construction and building area.

To create the feeling of Hygge, our setting is very neutral, creating a feeling of calm. Fairy lights and lamps are used to create a cosy atmosphere, particularly in the reading area. We wanted to create somewhere they could sit quietly; even if it is just to relax and have some wind down time. We have lots of natural resources to support their developing literacy and numeracy skills.



Our 'Wow Wall' has been created, with each child having their own section. This space is to display anything that the children have done which you, we or they themselves are proud of. We actively encourage you to send us as many pictures as you want to display as part of their wall. Our displays are heavily focused on the work of the children and we try and display as many photos of the children as we can around the classroom.

We want them to feel that this is their special space.



Here at Westcott, nature is very important to us and we have brought the outdoors in! We feel that being outdoors surrounded by nature provides countless opportunities for discovery, creativity and problem-solving. Studies show that playing in nature improves not only levels of

physical activity and social/emotional development but also that nature play may deliver improvements in cognitive development as well as children's levels of attention. With this in mind, we have made sure that the classroom environment has lots of references to nature. We have lots of tree branches delicately placed in areas around the classroom. These have been utilised as natural displays over time.



Our entire setting is all based around the same theme and then adapted to individualise each area. Continuous provision transcends all areas of learning and provides children with the opportunity to demonstrate the three characteristics of effective learning. Children are given the freedom to make independent choices and are encouraged to be active learners and take control of their own learning.



The outdoors is always accessible during continuous provision and the children are able to move between the outdoors and indoors freely. Both areas are fully staffed at all times.



Outside, we have created a space that focuses very much on nature around us. We have a nature garden with insect houses and it is planted with flowers to attract wildlife. The work on the garden was done during the summer as we wanted to try and establish the space during a quiet time. This was more to encourage birds to the bird feeders that we have.

There is also a fully planted herb garden which is situated between the nature garden and the mud and messy area. The children love rubbing the herbs between their fingers and smelling each one. They also pick the herbs when they are creating their concoctions in their kitchen. As well as the mud kitchen, we have a digging area where your child can dig and explore any way they wish.



We truly feel that we have a space that promotes emotional well-being, togetherness and friendship. It is a place that we hope your child can feel comfortable enough to snuggle down or explore with confidence. We feel that we have a space that is child centred; a special place where the children are the centre of everything we do.

## *Class Dojos*

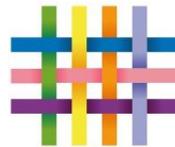


ClassDojo connects primary school teachers, students and families through communication features, such as a feed for photos and videos from the school day, and messaging that can be translated into more than 35 languages. It also enables teachers to note feedback on students' skills and creates a portfolio for students, so that families can be aware of school activities outside of meeting with teachers. This is also used as part of the school reward system.

Let us know what your child loves doing at home by sending photos and videos, helping us to understand their development at home.

## *Tapestry*

This is an online system that the school uses to record your child's personal journal, or diary, which builds over time. Photographs, videos and notes of special moments are recorded and our way of recording the attainment and progress of your child during their first year at school. When assessing achievement in the Foundation stage, we consider their successes at home to be a valuable part of their learning record. We are aware that children are often confident doing things at home that they may not do at school. Therefore, we value parent observations, photos, and video clips that show what their child achieves at home. These are then added to their electronic personal learning journal.



Once our initial assessments have been completed in September, children will get sets of letter sounds or key words to learn at home. They may also get a reading book that does not contain any words. These books are designed to enable you to talk about the pictures, characters and events and help them to develop a love of stories without the pressure of trying to read words that are too difficult for them. When children are confident spelling out and reading some simple words, they will be given books with simple captions and sentences.

## *Our School Day*

As part of our school day, your child will be asked to take part in three group input sessions: phonics, maths and literacy. Each session is around 15 minutes to begin with and increases in length as the year progresses. Between each input, we have what we call COOL time. COOL stands for Choosing Our Own Learning. It gives the children the opportunity to play independently and collaboratively; developing their social skills as they do. Sharing and turn taking is something we actively encourage. We have some adult-led activities however we do encourage the children to play in their own way. We are big advocates of learning through play and this is something we try and encompass into the day as much as possible.

Although this may be subject to change slightly, here is a breakdown of how our day looks:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 8.45am-9am      | School doors open for RKZ and RJP           |
| 9am-9.15am      | Morning Class Registration/Talking Circle   |
| 9.15am-9.30am   | Phonics Input                               |
| 9.30am-10.55am  | COOL time                                   |
| 10.55-11.05am   | Tidy up time                                |
| 11.05am-11.25am | Maths Input                                 |
| 11.25am-11.30am | Hand washing-ready for lunch                |
| 11.30am-12.45pm | Lunchtime                                   |
| 12.45pm-1pm     | Story/Talking Time                          |
| 1pm-1.10pm      | Afternoon Class Registration/Talking Circle |
| 1.10pm-1.30pm   | Literacy Input                              |
| 1.30am-2.25pm   | COOL time                                   |
| 2.25pm-2.35pm   | Tidy up time                                |
| 2.35pm-2.45pm   | Getting ready for home time                 |
| 2.45pm-3pm      | Story Stump time and snack time             |
| 3pm-3.15pm      | Home time                                   |

### *Lunchtime*

#### **Lunchtime 11.30am to 12.45pm**

Children can have a school lunch or bring a packed lunch from home. If you wish, your child can be taken home for lunch. Please use the main school entrance for collection and drop off. Please bear in mind that we do start promptly at 1pm for afternoon registration and input so your child will need to be back in school for 12.45pm at the latest.

Our school meals are *free* for all EYFS and KS1 children and fall in line with government guidelines covering healthy eating. We have our own school kitchen - which provides a range of hot and cold meals. We have a two-weekly menu which is available to view on our website. Meat or vegetarian meals, as well as jacket potatoes are all available from the hot food counter. Sandwiches, wraps and salads are available from the deli bar as well as a range of desserts and drinks.



You are encouraged to pre-order a meal for your child through Parent Pay; an online payment system which allows you to order for school meals and pay for activities, trips etc. You will be registered with Parent Pay in due course and information will be sent to you.

Your child is taken down with us for their lunch in the hall. They are the first children to have lunch so that they are settled by the time the older children arrive. Lunchtime staff are available to help children with their choices and meals. However, we, Mrs Zreika and Mrs Penrose are also with the children in the dinner hall over lunch time until they return to the classroom for outdoor play.

If your child is bringing a packed lunch, please help us to promote healthy eating and safety by ensuring that it does not contain *fizzy drinks, glass containers or sweets*. We may have children coming into school with nut allergies so avoiding sending *peanut butter sandwiches, nuts* etc. would be helpful.

*End of the day*

At the end of the school day, we encourage your child to get ready independently to go home. Children leave via the Reception classroom door leading on to the Key Stage 1 playground under the supervision of the Reception staff.

Please come to the door to collect your child as children are not permitted to go out onto the playground on their own. If someone different is picking up your child, please make sure you let us know by ringing the office or telling staff on the playground in the morning. Also ensure that the person knows your password as no child will be permitted to leave if staff are in any doubt.

### *Uniform*

Please refer to the uniform section on the school website for full details about school uniform. All Westcott items and PE kits can be ordered from [www.steadyschoolwear.co.uk](http://www.steadyschoolwear.co.uk)

We ask parents to name **ALL** items of clothing. Having a uniform can cause problems as many of the items look the same! Even writing their initials on the washing tag is helpful.

Children will have access to the outside learning environment even when the weather is cold and a little wet, so a warm coat/waterproof jacket is a good idea. In the first half term, it would be helpful if children had a change of clothing in their bag in case of any mishaps. This does not have to be school uniform.

In Reception, we do take part in a Physical Education session weekly. We call our session 'Funky Fitness Friday' and we encourage the children to come to school in their PE kit as we take part in a range of activities throughout the day. PE kit is also available from the above website.

**No jewellery** is allowed in school (*except one pair of ear studs*) and long hair should be tied back for safety reasons.

**Book Bags** with the school logo are available to purchase from Steady School Wear (see uniform website details above).

### *Attendance*

If your child is unable to attend school, please contact the school office as soon as possible so that their absence can be authorised. You can contact the school on (01482) 783576. Taking children on holiday during term time is not encouraged. The absence may not be authorised by the school and could incur a fine.

### *Illness*

If your child becomes ill or injured at school, a member of the administrative staff will inform you. For minor injuries, a note will be given at the end of the day by a member of staff who will explain what happened.

If your child bumps his/her head and receives first aid treatment, we will telephone you to inform you of the incident. Should you be unavailable, we would then contact your emergency telephone number. Please make sure the school has a current mobile phone and home number so that you can be contacted quickly.

### *What to expect in September*

In due course, we will be sending some helpful suggestions of how to support your child with their transition to school. Please be aware that your child may be able to do some, none or all of the suggestions on the list. However, children develop at different rates, so do not worry if they cannot. We will help them to progress their skills in all areas from where they are when they start school.

As we all know, Covid 19 has had a huge impact on the way we have had to conduct ourselves both as staff and families over the past 18 months. As we write this, we do still have Covid 19 restrictions in place such as quarantining of reading books, facemasks for adults on school site and class bubbles. Like everyone, we have to follow government guidance and therefore we cannot say what will be in place when your child starts with us in September. We will send out up to date guidance in regards to Covid 19 regulations/restrictions as per the school policy nearer the time.

If you have any further questions, queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us either by email, phone or Dojo message.

We look forward to meeting with you all soon.

Mrs K.Zreika and Mrs J.Penrose

Email: [kelly.zreika@hcat.org.uk](mailto:kelly.zreika@hcat.org.uk)

Tel: 01482 783576

