

FAQ for Starting School

Attendance

What are the school opening and closing times?

School starts at 8:40 am each day and Reception pupils will be ready to pick up in the afternoon at 3:10pm each day. This is 5 minutes before other year groups so that parents can collect their younger children first.

What do I do if my child is late for school?

The classroom doors will be closed at 8:50am. If you do not get to the classroom doors before this, please enter via the office and provide a reason for the lateness. The school will monitor late marks for individual pupils and will contact and support parents/carers in ensuring that the child/ren arrive to school on time to minimise learning time lost. Please read our [attendance policy](#) for full details.

What do I do if I am late collecting my child?

There are times when parents/carers are late collecting their child from school due to traffic or other unforeseen circumstances, if this is going to happen, we ask that school is informed and the expected delay is given. If a child is not collected and no reason is given, we may issue a charge for the additional childcare provided. Please read our [attendance policy](#) where full details of the penalties can be found.

How do I report my child's absence from school?

If your child is ill your first action is to call the school as early as possible (and before 9.30am) and let the School Office know your child will not be in school – 01384 818200. The school has a dedicated answer phone system for registering your child's absence option 1. This needs to be done every day of absence (unless your child is admitted to hospital or has a long-term illness-related absence for a period of time – in this instance you do not need to ring every day). If your child is not in school and we have not had a phone call by 9.30am one of our Office Staff will contact, you to find out why your child is not in school. The school also has a [Medical Policy](#) that contains information about time allowed for certain illnesses e.g. 48 hours for sickness bugs in line with the Public Health guidelines.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Attending school is a compulsory obligation that parents/carers must adhere to and therefore you should avoid taking your child out of school. If you wish to have a special case considered, then you are required to complete a request for leave of absence form which can be requested from the school office. The school has a policy around attendance where full details of the requirements and penalties can be found.

Health and Well-Being

What do I do if my child requires medicine?

If your child needs to have medication at school, you must complete a form at the school office. We ask that medication at school is kept to a minimum and if antibiotics are prescribed for less than four times a day, we suggest this can be organised out of school time. All medication held on school premises is kept locked and secure. Staff will not administer any form of medication without it being prescribed by a doctor. Please read the [Medical Policy](#) for more in-depth information.

Who deals with first aid?

If a child sustains a minor injury in school, then it will be treated by our support staff and parents will be given a first aid note at the end of school. If a child has a head bump, then the parent will be informed by a phone call. If a child has a serious injury or is unwell then the parent/carer will be contacted, and the situation discussed. If it is a very serious injury the school office would contact the parent. If we were unable to contact a parent or if the child needed immediate medical care, we would arrange for the child to be taken to hospital. It is absolutely vital that we have accurate emergency contact details for all of our parents/carers.

What happens if my child has a medical/dental appointment?

Please try to arrange medical appointments outside of school time. If this is unavoidable, we ask that you bring the appointment letter to the school office so it can be recorded on the register.

What will happen if my child is not fully toilet trained or still has accidents?

Children may go to the toilet at any point during the day, we just require them to ask a teacher first - this is something you can remind your child in the weeks before starting school. Many Reception children still need prompting to go to the toilet when they are engaged in play, and even children who've been toilet trained for years can have accidents. We ask that you provide your child with a spare change of clothing, including extra underwear, that is kept in school. In the event of an accident, we will take your child to a toilet and provide wipes for them to clean themselves. We will not help to clean or change a child (unless in exceptional circumstances) for reasons of cross contamination, personal dignity or the child and possible child protection considerations. You can find more information in the Intimate Care policy. If your child is not fully toilet trained, still wearing nappies or pull-ups (this could be at night) or has a specific toileting requirement/issue (nervous of hand driers, constipation etc.), please let a member of staff know during your home visit/home phone call.
Food and Mealtimes
What happens at lunch time?
Lapal has one lunch hall and playground that all children, from Reception to Year 6 share. Reception children have 70 minutes for lunch, and it begins ten minutes ahead of the rest of school. Reception class teachers take their class to the hall and assist children with collecting utensils and choosing food. It is useful to share the school menu with your child each morning to prepare them for this choice. If your child has specific dietary requirements, please share this on your induction forms. Children who bring packed lunches eat their meal in the same hall. Please note, we are a nut free school. Children are then supervised by a team of lunch time staff who will support children in cutting food and encourage them to eat their meals. Children can then play in the playground where they can choose to join sports coach led activities or use playground toys. At the beginning of the school year, a designated part of the shared playground is reserved solely for the Reception children to spend time in, if they so choose. It is encouraged that children of all ages mix and play freely together. Class teachers collect children from the playground at the end of lunchtime. Lunch time procedures are shared with the children in our first sessions in September, so they understand and become familiar with the routine.
Do I have to pay for my child's school lunch?
As part of the Government's Universal Free School Meals in England, children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free meal at lunch time. This consists of a hot meal or a cold 'grab bag'. If you receive any of the qualifying benefits our school will also receive additional funding to use towards educational provision.
How much is the contribution to the Reception snack cafe and cooking?
We ask that parents pay a voluntary contribution of £1 per week towards our Snack Café and cooking. This entitles your child to a range of healthy snacks including yogurts, cheese, crackers, dips. Reception children are entitled to a free snack of milk and a piece of fruit/vegetable each day; however, they will not have access to the other foods on offer.
School Uniform
Does my child need to wear a uniform?
All pupils are expected to wear school uniform. We believe this helps promote a positive school identity, supports and sets high standards of behaviour and actively encourages children to take a personal pride in their appearance. School branded sweatshirts, cardigans and school ties can be purchased from Dancers in Halesowen.
Can my child wear jewellery in school?
Children should only wear stud earrings to school and must not wear any earrings during P.E/games or swimming lessons. It is important, therefore, that if they are worn on P.E. days the children themselves can take out and replace their earrings. If your child is unable to do this, please remove earrings before the start of the school day. It should also be noted that the practice of taping up the earrings is now considered an unacceptable alternative. We recommend that if children are having their ears pierced that it should be done during longer summer holidays.
What do I do if my child has lost an item of clothing?
There are two lost property boxes, one for EYFS & Key Stage One and another for Key Stage Two, both are located by each Key Stage's cloakroom. All unclaimed items will be displayed before final disposal. Please ensure that all belongings have your child's name in them, this includes P.E. clothes and shoes.
Parental Communication
How do you communicate with parents?

We work very hard to communicate effectively with our parents/carers and we are always looking for new ways to achieve this. Our website always aims to have current and useful information for parents readily available. You will find information in the calendar of dates and events throughout the year. We produce a whole year calendar that has key dates for your diaries, such as sports days, parent's evenings and school productions, enabling you to know about these events in advance so that you can make the necessary arrangements. Our website also has a variety of curriculum information, such as key school policies and reading, writing and maths targets, for you to access easily.

All of our communications to parents/carers are issued via Parentmail. Parentmail is an online communication tool which issues emails and texts to parents. At Lapal all of our letters are emailed to you via Parentmail thus ensuring that they reach their destination rather than lying at the bottom of a school bag. You are automatically registered with Parentmail when your child starts school. Urgent communications are also issued via text message. For more information about Parentmail please contact the school office.

We publish a monthly newsletter, which gives parents/carers a summary of what has been going on and what is coming up. These [newsletters](#) can also be found on the school website, so you can always stay in touch!

All our pupils have an individual pupil planner that is a 'one stop shop' for information and communication. The planners have copies of the children's reading, writing and maths targets and contain information such as useful websites, times tables and maths information and handwriting guidance. There is a weekly diary where staff, pupils and parents/carers can regularly communicate with each other. Reading is also recorded in the weekly diary. We ask parents and staff to sign the planners every week so that we know that they are being well used and any issue are being addressed.

When is the best time to talk to a teacher if I have a question?

A member of the EYFS team will be available at the entrance door to take messages each morning. These will be passed onto your child's class teacher who will be able to discuss this with you at the end of the school day once all children have been dismissed, or in the event of a concern, we may contact you by telephone during the day. Appointments can be made in the school office for parents/carers to see the class teacher or another member of staff. You can also write messages in your child's planner which are checked weekly; if there is an urgent message written in the planner, please indicate this to a member of staff.

Where do I go for help and information about my child's learning?

Our staff will always be happy to discuss your child's learning with you. Curriculum information is sent home regularly to keep you informed about the topics your child will be learning. Evidence is kept in each child's personal learning journal and they also have books that you will be able to look at regularly during our termly parent's/carer's evening. Reports are written and shared half termly along with targets for your child.

We also offer an information meeting about our phonics, early reading and mathematics programmes that we follow in school. This enables parents/carers to support their children at home.

Will there be opportunities to come into school?

We have many opportunities throughout the school year for parents/carers to come in to learn alongside their children, work with their children and enjoy seeing them perform. Throughout the year every class holds an assembly that parents/carers can come along and enjoy. Reception class hold a Christmas and Mother's Day Assembly and have a Graduation event at the end of the school year. EYFS, KS1 and KS2 also enjoy services at St Peters church to which the local community is warmly invited. Throughout the year we organise curriculum related workshops that aim to help you support your child at home. Parents/carers have benefitted from attending workshops on phonics and reading, handwriting and mathematics. We always take feedback from parents following these workshops to see how we can tailor the events to make them even more worthwhile next time. Parents/carers are also invited in to view lessons in action and participate in their child's learning. We very much look forward to welcoming you to join in the fun and learning!

Do you have a home-school association?

Friends of Lapal is made up of parents, carers and teachers dedicated to running events, and funding experiences and resources for the children and community of Lapal Primary School. It relies entirely on the goodwill and energy of the parents, carers and teachers. Through events held throughout the year, funds are raised which are passed onto the school to supplement normal budgets from the Local Education Authority. We organise a variety of events during the academic year. These range from

the school discos which, are just for the children, through to our mini markets and Autumn Fayre which are aimed at the whole community. We are always looking for new ideas too. If you are able to spare any time, whether it is to help out at the occasional disco, or you have some ideas for future events then please feel free to come along to one of our meetings. You do not need to attend every meeting we have, basically you help where you can. You can find out more about Friends of Lapal by contacting the school office, or contacting us at school@lapal.dudley.sch.uk

Education

What phonics scheme do you use?

We follow the Little Wandle Revised Letters and Sounds scheme. We invite parents/carers to a Phonics workshop in the autumn term when you will be provided with information about how we teach phonics at Lapal and how you can support your child at home. You can find out more information about [reading](#) on our website.

When and how are reading books changed?

Children's books are changed weekly. Your child will visit our school library weekly to select a new book; we will provide you with the day of library visits in September through your child's planner. Reading books will be changed week, again, please ensure these are in school each day. You can find out more information about reading books in your Foundation Stage handbook.

How do you teach handwriting? What is Kinetic Letters?

Children in Reception begin to learn to write letters using the Little Wandle Phonics scheme. We also follow the Kinetic Letters handwriting scheme across school. We invite parents/carers to a Phonics workshop in the Autumn term when you will be provided with information about how we teach handwriting at Lapal and how you can support your child at home.

What skills does my child need before starting school?

Before starting school, we ask that parents/carers focus upon practical physical skills, including changing in and out of their new school uniform, coats, shoes and P.E. clothes, using a knife and fork correctly and self-care including blowing their own nose and going to the toilet. We also ask that you develop social and emotional skills such as sharing and taking turns, socialising and communicating with other children and developing their self-confidence.

If your child is genuinely keen to learn, you can build foundation academic skills like recognising their name, encouraging a love of books by reading together and building early numeracy by counting and recognising numbers, however, do not worry if your child is not showing any interest in formal learning: once they start Reception and is genuinely ready to learn, you will be amazed at how quickly children progress.

Do Reception children have homework?

Our [homework policy](#) is outline on a school website. In order to support learning and work we do in class there are weekly home learning activities set via Google Classroom. We encourage parents to share any home learning completed on their child's Tapestry online learning journal account.

What day is P.E.?

This will be shared with you in September through your child's planner. Your child will come to school in their P.E. kit on that day in place of their uniform. Although children do not get changed at school, we recommend that your child practises changing in and out of their school uniform and P.E. clothes: this is important for their own self-confidence and self-care.

Do you offer before and after school care?

We are fortunate that we have childcare options available at the start and the end of the school day for our working parents/carers. Situated in the school hall we have a Breakfast Club and an Afterschool Club. The children have a chance to play outside if weather permitting or choose from a range of activities inside. A snack is also provided. Breakfast Club starts at 8:00am and all the children are provided with a healthy breakfast. The Breakfast Club staff bring the children to their classes at the start of the day. After School Club starts at the end of the school day and closes at 6:00pm. The children are provided with a healthy snack. For application forms please contact the school office.

Do you offer enrichment clubs?

There are a range of clubs taking place either after school or during lunchtimes, ran by both outside agencies and Lapal staff. Information about these are emailed out at the start of each term. We are currently able to offer a variety of different club sessions including small group instrumental tuition, art and craft, board games, choir, dance, football, netball, French and science. Many of our children take part in these enrichment activities, with some children accessing more than one club. Some clubs are open to specific year groups only, however as the children move through school, they will have opportunity to take part in these activities. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in individual music tuition. C Sharp Music School provide a variety of lessons including woodwind, brass, strings, keyboard, guitar and vocal. Please contact the school office for further information and costs.
Do Reception children go on school trips?
Reception take part in out of school visits and educational experiences throughout the academic year. Parents/carers are invited to make a contribution towards the costs of these trips. We may sometimes ask for parent/carer or family volunteers to attend these trips. You can find out more information about this in our Charges and Remissions policy .
My child has special educational needs and/or disabilities, who is my point of contact in school?
Miss Tolley is our Director of Inclusion. You can find out more information about the support provided by reading the SEND information report and our SEND Policy .
Other Questions
What equipment does my child need?
Your child will need to bring their bookbag, planner, reading book and water bottle (provided by school free of charge) to school each day. We discourage toys or collectables (e.g. football cards) being brought to school, unless the class teacher has specifically requested that they do. If your child uses a comforter, we encourage this to remain in your child's book bag and when they feel able, this can be left at home. We also ask that you provide a pair of wellingtons that remain in school; your child will wear these when they are learning outdoors.
Can I park on the school premises?
Unfortunately, we do not have any visitor parking at school. Parents/carers are asked to use the streets around school while avoiding the zig zags.
How can I find out more information about the Trust?
Lapal Primary School is part of the Hales Valley Trust. Our Trust is an all-primary academy trust, based in Dudley, West Midlands. We became in Trust in February 2017 and currently consist of 5 primary schools. All our schools are very different, ensuring that there is an exciting and vibrant mix across our Trust. You can find out more information on our trust website .
Will my child have playtime?
Reception do not have a formal morning and afternoon break. Our daily timetable and the EYFS curriculum allow children to explore and play as they learn with opportunities to choose to be in the indoor, canopy and outdoor environment throughout the day.
What if my child has trouble setting into school life?
Some children may struggle to settle in at school at first, it can take time for even the most confident child to settle: it is a big change in their little world and a whole new adventure. Our EYFS team have a wealth of experience in helping children adapt to a new routine. Some children and parents may find the initial separation difficult, but children always settle quickly once they are inside the classroom. If you have a real concern based on your child's experiences at pre-school, please contact Miss Hopkins via the school office so that we can plan specific ways to support your child. Remember, we are just as keen for your child to feel happy and secure at school as you are so please let us know if you have any concerns.