



2025 - 2026  
Pre-Prep  
(Years R-2)  
General Information

## **Pre-Prep**

### **Activities**

Activities for Year 1 and 2 are provided after the last lesson of the day, each day. Activities begin at 3.45 p.m. and finish at 4.30 p.m. The activities are mostly provided by external companies with some activities being undertaken by a member of staff. These activities are optional and further information will be sent to you from the Assistant Head, Co-Curricular.

### **After-School Care**

After-School Care facilities, for the supervision of pupils whose parents are unable to arrange collection at the normal time, are provided from 3.15 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. Pupils are permitted to bring a small, healthy snack (no nuts). An After-School Care Supervisor is specifically employed for this purpose. A register is kept by him/her. If pupils need to attend on an irregular basis, the Pre-Prep Office must be notified on the day. Pupils are collected any time until 6.00 p.m. from the front garden gate on Castlebar Road. There is a charge for this service. Any other pupils found uncollected outside the usual collection times are sent to After-School Care. Pupils are permitted to bring a small, healthy snack for After-School Care.

### **Assembly**

Assembly occurs on Monday morning in either Harvington Hall or Haven Green Hall. All Forms and staff attend. It is conducted by a member of SMT. At times, all parts of the school will attend the same Assembly; at other times different sections of the school will attend discrete Assemblies.

### **Beginning and End of the Day**

Pupils in Pre-Prep arrive at School between 8.10 a.m. – 8.25 a.m. and enter through the Playground gate in Blakesley Avenue. There is a Breakfast Club from 7.30 a.m. – 8.10 a.m. Breakfast Club must be booked in advance. Admission to Breakfast Club is through the gate at no. 24 Castlebar Road, between 7.30 a.m. and 7.45 a.m.

All bags and coats are stored in the classrooms. Pupils meet their Form Teacher for Form Time, where registration is taken. A pupil is marked absent after 8.30 a.m. The first lesson begins at 8.30 a.m. If a pupil arrives after 8.25 a.m., they must report to the Pre-Prep Office to be registered before going to class.

Lessons end at 3.15 p.m. for Reception pupils, except on Wednesdays. On Wednesdays, Reception pupils can be collected at 12.30 p.m. (after lunch) or at 3.15 p.m. Those that stay for the afternoon are supervised by Teaching Assistants.

The day ends at 3.30 p.m. for Year 1 and 3.45 p.m. for Year 2. At the end of each day, pupils are escorted out into the carpark by their Form Teachers to await collection. All pupils leave via the carpark gates. If a pupil is not collected after 10 minutes they go to After-School Care. Parents are asked to pick up pupils promptly and not to park illegally on or near crossings, in the bus stops in Eaton Rise and Castlebar Road, nor across the driveways of local residents.

**Charities** Each year the school supports one or two main charities throughout the year. This charity work is coordinated by the Assistant Head, Co-Curricular, who is responsible for leading the development of pupil awareness and spearheading fundraising work. Durston House considers this charity work as an essential part of pupil participation in the life of the community, necessary for an individual's well-rounded education.

## **Communication**

The school communicates administrative information to parents electronically, by email and text alerts, via the school's messaging system and the Parent Portal. This enables the school to communicate with individuals, classes, year groups or the whole school. It also enables parents to reply and/or give consent online.

In some cases, the school continues to send hard-copy information to parents, by post or with pupils.

Parents are able to follow highlights of school life, the many activities and events that run throughout the year, by visiting our website or following Durston House on Social Media, including Facebook and Instagram.

**@durstonhouse**

## **Curriculum Information**

Parents can access curriculum information on the school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The information consists of a curriculum map for each subject in Year 1 and 2, outlining the topics covered each year. In addition, there are curriculum notes specific to each year group. These give further detail of teaching methodologies, resources, requirements for prep and assessment arrangements.

## **Daily Breaks**

Pupils have breaks in the playgrounds at the rear of Pre-Prep, Castlebar Playing Fields, or the rear of Middle and Upper School. Pupils are supervised by staff members.

## **Examinations and On-Going Assessment**

Examinations in Year 2 in English and Mathematics take place once a year in Pre-Prep, in the second half of the Summer Term. Throughout the year, on-going assessment in Years R-2 is carried out to aid teaching and learning. This is arranged subject by subject. Pupil progress in the core skills is tracked using assessments at key points in the year.

## **Form Teachers**

Form Teachers are the first point of contact for pupils and parents. They are responsible in the first instance for the general welfare of the pupils in that Form. They are responsible for overseeing the Pastoral Care of a pupil, which includes their academic and personal development that year. The Form Teacher reinforces policies and guidelines, which are designed to create the ordered, calm and safe environment that is Durston House. They liaise with the Head of Pre-Prep, register the Form twice daily and disseminate any information or correspondence. Form Teachers coordinate the school reports for the pupils in that Form and write a general Form Report. The Form Teacher will help the Form to develop a collective spirit of loyalty, trust and support.

## **Formal School Occasions**

Throughout the year, there are several formal school events that staff and pupils attend. The three major occasions are the Carol Service in the Autumn Term and the School Concert in the Spring Term (both for Years 3-8 only), and the Prize Days in the Summer Term. As well, at the end of each term, all staff and pupils attend the Final Assembly on the last day, immediately prior to finishing for the school holidays.

## **Games and PE**

Pupils in Reception have a Games lesson each week. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a PE lesson and a Games lesson each week. Pupils go to Castlebar for Games. Pre-Prep pupils wear their Games Kit to school on these days.

## **Houses**

On entering Pre-Prep each pupil is assigned to one of the four Houses – Arundel, Conway, Warwick or Windsor. Whole House Meetings are held throughout the term. Different activities occur, and inter-House cultural and sporting competitions are held. The Houses comprise pupils from all year groups. One member of staff is the Head of House, and one of the prefects from Year 8 is the House Captain. The Houses are also divided into House Vertical Groups (10 - 12 pupils) which comprise pupils from Reception to Year 8 and are led by a Year 8 pupil. Each pupil will stay in their House throughout their time at Durston House. Each House competes against the others for the House Shield.

## **Instrumental Music Lessons**

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to learn a musical instrument, if a place is available. They are taught by visiting music teachers (VMTs), who enter into a contract directly with parents. Lessons take place in school during school hours. A weekly timetable of lessons taught in school is prepared by the Head of Music. The Head of Music sends out a letter to all parents during the Summer Term, on which requests can be made for pupils to receive lessons in a particular instrument or singing in the new academic year. There are also tasters available for children who wish to try an instrument before signing up. Further information about instrumental tuition can be sought from the Head of Music.

## **Library**

Pupils are able to borrow books from the Pre-Prep Library, during their designated Library Lesson under the supervision of their Form Teacher. All borrowed books must be returned the following week. Year 2 pupils also borrow library books as part of the Accelerated Reader Programme.

## **Lunches & Snacks**

Pupils' lunches and snacks are provided by the school kitchen. There are a variety of choices available each day, and allergies and food intolerances are catered for. At lunchtimes, pupils with allergies wear a lanyard which will indicate their specific allergy to staff. Menus are published on the school website. Parents are sent information about menu choices before each term begins. Throughout the school, nuts, sesame seeds or food containing nuts are banned as there are some pupils who suffer from a serious allergy to them.

## **Message Books**

A daily Message Book is sent home. It is used for communication with your child's teacher. Please check it for messages each evening and date and sign messages when they have been read.

## **Off Games**

A pupil may be excused Games by the Head of Pre-Prep, who must have received a letter (hard copy or via email) from the pupil's parents requesting permission for him not to participate. A justifiable reason is necessary. The school's position is that if a pupil is too unwell to participate in Games, they should not attend school at all, except in the case of physical injury or recuperation after medical treatment. A pupil excused from Games attends the session under supervision, where they can read books or spectate.

## **Office Opening Hours**

The school offices are open from 7.45 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. each day during term time.

## **Outings**

Throughout the year, pupils in Pre-Prep are taken on Outings. These have included museums, galleries, theatres, castles, farms, woodlands, zoo, ancient ruins, as well as places of religious significance. Places seen and information gathered can be integrated into lessons on return to the classroom.

## **Parents Evenings**

In the Autumn Term there is an Informal Parents Evening for each year group when there is an opportunity to meet the Form Teacher and other parents. Pre-Prep parents have Formal Parents Evenings in both the Autumn and Spring Terms. Parents will have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with their Form Teacher. Separate appointments can be made with the teachers or the Head of Pre-Prep at other times if any concerns arise. Parents of pupils who receive Learning Support will have extra meetings with the Learning Support Teacher and Form Teacher.

## **Personal Accident and Dental Accident Insurance**

All pupils are covered under the School's Pupils' Personal Accident (including Dental Accident) insurance scheme. There are no additional charges as the premiums are incorporated within the current fee structure.

## **Prep**

In addition to specific prep, all pupils are expected to read (or for younger pupils, be read to) for at least 15 minutes each evening. Pupils should read aloud to an adult on a regular basis. Prep is usually set weekly on the VLE. Pupils will be informed of a VLE prep.

Prep Allocations:

### **Reception**

- Phonics, tricky words and mathematics
- Daily reading (from the start of the Spring Term)
- Other practical tasks may be set occasionally

### **Year 1**

- Spelling words to be practised weekly
- Optional Prep in English and Mathematics
- Daily Reading and oral comprehension
- Handwriting practice may occasionally be set over the weekend and holidays.

### **Year 2**

- Spelling words to be practised weekly
- Optional Prep in English and Mathematics
- Daily Reading and oral comprehension
- Handwriting practice may occasionally be set over the weekend and holidays.

Other Prep activities may be set on the VLE throughout the year, in a variety of curricular areas. These will be set by Subject Co-ordinators or the Form Teacher. Some of these will be optional, and others will be in preparation for upcoming events. Your child's teacher may advise you that it would benefit your child to complete specific optional tasks, or may set them additional individual tasks in order to consolidate their knowledge of specific topics.

### **Pupil Absence**

If a pupil has an unplanned absence owing to illness or some unforeseen circumstance, parents must telephone or email the Pre-Prep Office with an explanation (PrPOffice@durstonhouse.org), before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence and make a subsequent telephone call for each further day of absence.

Requests for any planned, future absence from school must be made by parents, in writing, to the Head of Pre-Prep, giving the dates and reasons for such absence. The office will send you a form to complete. The Head of Pre-Prep considers the request and takes whatever action necessary. We do not believe that it is in the best interests of your child to miss school and discourage holidays and travel during term time. However, each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Reports**

Reports are sent to parents twice a year, at the end of the Autumn and Summer Terms.

### **Rewards and Sanctions**

Anything that a pupil does that is clearly worth approval and encouragement, be it in their work or behaviour, is rewarded with a "Plus Point". A Golden Sticker, worth 5 Plus Points, may be awarded by the Head of Pre-Prep for behaviour or work that is considered to be outstanding. Plus Point totals are recorded each week and count towards the House Competition. Pupils who receive more than 10 points in any one week will visit the Head of Pre-Prep to be congratulated and will receive a small prize.

For exceptional work or behaviour, pupils may receive a 'Red Letter' reward, or a Commendation from the Headmaster, which will be awarded at Assembly.

Pupils are awarded 'Gems' for using their 'learning powers'. These contribute towards a whole class prize when the gems container is full.

Pupils may be presented with a certificate by their Form Teacher on an irregular basis which celebrates an element of their work or progress, or any other aspect of school life.

Minor misdemeanours are dealt with by the teacher or Form Teacher. Work that is not done, or done badly, is also dealt with by the Form Teacher. If a pupil continues to misbehave or produce poor work, they may lose playtime, be sent to the Head of Pre-Prep, or given a behaviour chart- in consultation with parents. Please see the behaviour policy for further details.

### **School Bags**

Pupils in Pre-Prep should use the backpack, as listed in the Uniform List.

### **School Calendar & SOCS**

A calendar of events is published on the school website, on a termly basis. It is a comprehensive list of events and fixtures for the term, which parents are asked to refer to.

We use SOCS for the School Calendar, Fixtures, and booking of After School Activities. Parents can access SOCS using their Parent Portal logins.

## **Security**

The security of pupils at the school is paramount. The gate at Pre-Prep is shut and locked during the school day. If parents wish to enter the Pre-Prep, they should push the buzzer on the outside of the gate at no. 26 and wait until the Pre-Prep Office has identified them and either come to meet them at the door, or let them in. Once inside school property, it is essential that all visitors report directly to the Pre-Prep Office on the ground floor, from where contact with staff, concerns or issues can be dealt with. If they are visiting the school, parents are asked not to admit other visitors to the school property. Please advise such people to make contact with the Pre-Prep Office in the first instance.

It is vital that the Pre-Prep Office is notified of any changes to drop-off and pick-up arrangements for any pupil, as well as changes to personal and contact details that the school must know. At the beginning of term, it is useful to introduce your child's teacher to the person who will be collecting them at the end of each day; they will not be allowed to go with anyone else without prior arrangement.

There may be times when you wish your child to go home with another family. On these occasions, please let the Pre-Prep Office or their Form Teacher know by email, message or telephone call, as they will not be released to another adult without parental permission.

## **Term Dates**

Term Dates are published well in advance. A copy of the dates are sent to all parents, and can also be found on the school [website](#). Parents are asked to respect the holiday dates and to avoid absence during term time.

## **Themed Weeks**

Throughout the year, pupils in all sections of the school take part in themed weeks. In November, the pupils and staff focus on Anti-Bullying, reflecting on the nature and causes of bullying and how best it can be tackled at Durston House. In the Spring Term, Durston recognises Children's Mental Health Week and celebrates our own Wellbeing Week, as well as our Literature Festival. Later in the year, another themed week occurs: our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Week. During all of these events, workshops and speakers are organised to enhance the pupils' learning in these areas of school life and to encourage them to pursue learning beyond the curriculum.

## **Uniform**

Pupils in the Pre-Prep wear full school uniform, including their House tie, which is supplied by Stevensons. Details about Uniform can be found under the Uniform tab on the school [website](#). All uniform should be clearly named. Lost, unnamed uniform is held in the lost property box in the Pre-Prep office, which will be available to search on request. Pupils are required to come to school wearing their PE/Games kit on days that they have PE or Games. Parents will be notified on which days they should wear their PE/Games kit at the beginning of the Autumn Term.

The use of school uniform is monitored. Any persistent failure of pupils to have the correct school or PE/Games uniform is noted and parents will be contacted by the Head of Pre-Prep.

## **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**

All pupils have access to a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Each has a login to the site, where they can access prep, catch-up or extension work, guidance in their learning and important curriculum information. Work can be sent directly by or to their teacher online. Pupils and parents are encouraged to check the VLE regularly.

**Water**

Pupils should bring one named water bottle from home, which they will store in their classroom and bring home each night. This will be refilled during the day on request. Pupils must only bring water to drink during lessons - no juice, squash or fizzy drinks are permitted.

**Year Groups and Forms**

Pre-Prep comprises Pre-School, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and is situated at 24 - 26 Castlebar Road. Each year has a maximum of 3 forms, with approximately 16 pupils in each form. Each form has a Form Teacher who has day-to-day responsibility for looking after the pupils and is the first point of contact for parents. Reception forms have a full-time Teaching Assistant in each class and Years 1 and 2 share three full-time Teaching Assistants between them. The Form Teacher takes the pupils for the majority of their lessons. Most of these occur in the form room. In Reception, pupils have specialist teachers for Games and Music. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have specialist teachers for Games, PE, Music and TPR.