

# Durston House Reception – Frequently Asked Questions

## What are the school day hours?

Pupils should arrive at school between 8:10am and 8:25am; they leave at 3:15pm, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Pupils should be dropped off by the back entrance and collected from the same place. Please try not to be late as some find it distressing if their parent is not there at the same time as everyone else.

On Wednesdays, the formal school day finishes at 12:30pm. You can collect your child at 12:30pm (after lunch), or 3:15pm. From 12:30pm-3:15pm pupils will be supervised by Teaching Assistants, and will engage in play-based activities. We recommend that pupils leave school at 12:30pm, if possible, in the first half-term, for two main reasons:

- They get very tired, and having Wednesday afternoons away from school helps them to re-energise.
- It's a great opportunity to organise lunch and play dates, which help develop the children's relationships and social skills.

## Can I drop my child off before 8:15am?

Yes, we run a Breakfast Club for working parents. This is a chargeable service. Fees information can be found on the Website. You can drop your child off between 7:30am and 7:45am at Breakfast Club, and they will be supervised until they go to class at 8:10am. You must inform the office in advance if you wish to use this service.

## What if I cannot collect my child at 3:15pm?

We run an After-School Care service, for those pupils who cannot be collected at 3:15pm, up until 6:00pm. This is a chargeable service. Fees information can be found on the website. Pupils are housed at Pre-Prep and are supervised by an After-School Care supervisor and Assistants.

## Before Joining Durston House

### Do you help pupils to use the toilet?

No. Your child should be toilet trained before they start school. Please teach them how to undo and do up their school trousers and tights, how to use the toilet, including wiping their own bottom, to flush the toilet and wash their hands with liquid soap. The children's toilets have child-sized toilets in the cubicles. The toilets also have air hand dryers.

We do help children in the toilet where they are unwell, or have an accident. We will provide those who need it with spare clothes, which you should wash and return to school as soon as possible.

### **What should I do to prepare my child for school?**

There are a few things you can do to help ensure your child is as happy and comfortable as possible on their first day.

- Talk to them about the school and what it might be like
- Let them wear their uniform (and games kit) around the house – including shoes, so that they aren't uncomfortable on day one.
- Look at the section 'Using the Toilet' and make sure your child is confident using the toilet alone (and talk to them about letting the teacher know when they need to go)
- Ensure that your child has had a hearing and eye test before starting school
- Help them to practice putting on and taking off their own coat and shoes
- (shoes will be removed for gymnastics lessons)
- Put a name label on everything – drinks bottles, clothes, shoes, coats, hats, scarves, mittens.
- Help them to recognise their own item by using the same type of label on everything – you can buy labels with specific fonts or designs, or you can add something to their items e.g. a specific bit of ribbon tied through the loop on coats and bags, so they can easily find it. A sticker cut in half helps with shoes, including knowing left from right (e.g. [stikets.co.uk/namelabels/shoe-labels/left-right-shoe-labels-uk.html](http://stikets.co.uk/namelabels/shoe-labels/left-right-shoe-labels-uk.html))
- Ensure they know what their drinks bottle look like. Let your child help to pack their schoolbag before school starts, and then again each evening. Pupils are asked to unpack their bag and put their own things away in the correct places each morning, and this will make it easier.
- Teach your child to recognise their own name – so that they can find their peg and tray, and their own items, easily. This will be written in lower case, with a capital at the beginning.
- Try to organise some playdates with other children from your child's class before school starts in September. The Durston House Parents Association (DHPA) will help you get in contact with each other.

### **The Durston House Parents' Association (DHPA)**

#### **Do you have a parents' association I can join?**

Yes. The DHPA are actively involved in the school and all new parents automatically become members when their child joins the school. How involved you get is up to you. They will be in

touch with you soon with more information about the events and activities they organise throughout the year and how you can contact them. The DHPA can be contacted via email at: [thedhpa@gmail.com](mailto:thedhpa@gmail.com)

## **Communication with the School**

### **How do I get in touch with my child's teacher?**

Your child will be given a message book on the first day of school. Teachers will use this to send messages to you, and you can communicate directly with them via the book. Teachers read the message books every day. You can also email the school office, and the email will be forwarded to the relevant teacher, or to the Head of Pre-Prep. We will respond back as soon we can. You can also set up a meeting with your child's teacher via the Pre- Prep Office.

### **Can I arrange a meeting with my child's teacher?**

Yes. You can do this via the message book or by emailing the Pre-Prep office. You should briefly explain why you would like to meet so that the teacher can be prepared.

### **How do I get in touch with the school if I have a concern or question?**

In the first instance you should always contact the Pre-Prep School Office by email or telephone, and your query will be passed to the relevant member of staff.

## **Prep (Homework)**

### **Will my child be expected to do Prep during the Reception year? What will this involve?**

Yes. All children are expected to do English and Maths prep (homework) every week. In Reception, Prep is set on a Friday, on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). You will be given information on how to access this at the beginning of the term. Activities are usually practical, and will involve an adult sitting down with your child for short spells throughout the week to watch a video, play a game or do an activity. These activities will reinforce the learning they have been doing in the classroom that week, and will also give you an insight into the curriculum as it is being followed.

## **Food & Drink**

**Durstun House is a NO NUTS school, owing to pupil allergies. Please check ingredients and do not send in anything containing nuts.**

## **Do you provide lunch or snacks?**

School lunches are provided. You will be sent further information about these separately, and the menu will be available to view on the school website. Snacks are also provided by the school kitchen for mid-morning break.

## **What should I send to drink?**

Water, in a bottle with a sports top, which children have access to throughout the day, including at snack and lunch time. Squash, fruit juice and fizzy drinks are not allowed.

## **Will you help my child with their drink, snack and lunch?**

We will help them by refilling water bottles as needed. We encourage children to eat but we do not feed them. We will help them with cutlery as required, but please do ensure they are able to manage using a formal fork and knife before they start school.

## **My child is a slow eater. How long do pupils have to eat lunch?**

Pupils have around 35 minutes in the dining room at lunchtime.

## **Illness**

### **What will you do if my child is unwell?**

If your child tells a member of staff they feel unwell or are hurt, a first aider will talk to them, take their temperature if necessary, and make a judgement on whether they should stay in school or not. If they are clearly unwell, or if your child vomits or has an upset tummy, they will stay with an adult in a different room waiting for you to collect them, while the School Office contacts you. Spare clothes will be put on your child if they need to change; an adult will help them to change. The School Office will advise you on how long your child should remain away from school. If your child has an accident or a first aider is particularly concerned about how ill they are, an ambulance will be called and you will be informed by telephone. If your child falls or bumps themselves, first aid will be administered and you will be informed by email, or a phone call where necessary.

## **Allergies & Medication**

### **My child has allergies. How will you cater for their needs?**

You must complete the medical form before your child starts school. They should then bring the medication they need to school on the first day of school. In Reception, staff will carry their medication in a bumbag during the school day whenever the class leave the Pre-Prep building. You should provide the bumbag on the first day, and the medication and bumbag will go home each evening. It will need to be returned the following day. We do not allow children with severe allergies to be in school without their medication, or to go to the hall, field or on school trips without it. Staff are trained in administering Epi-pens and Asthma medications, and there are always first aiders on site.

## **Will the school administer medicine to my child?**

We will administer prescribed medicine to your child with written permission from you. You will need to send in a written note, or email the School Office, with clear instructions of when and how much medicine to give them. We can refrigerate medicine where necessary. We will also assist your child in applying cream, for example for eczema, again with written instruction from you. Where your child needs non-prescription medication, such as Calpol, again, written permission will be required. If your child has a temperature and is waiting for you to collect them, the office may ask your permission to give them Calpol, in which case you would need to send an email confirming this.

## **School Uniform & Other School Items**

### **What should my child wear to school? Will they have to change their clothes at school?**

You have been sent the uniform list by email. You will be advised by the end of the first week of school which days are 'Games days'. On these days your child should wear the Games kit, on other days they should wear the grey school uniform, with the correct House tie (boys only). Your child will not have to change for Games at school. They will need to be able to take off and put on their shoes for gymnastics.

### **What should my child wear if I am unable to get items of uniform on time from the supplier?**

Occasionally, items are out of stock from our supplier. If this occurs, until you are able to get the correct items, your child should wear black joggers and a black or green plain t-shirt, polo shirt or sweatshirt for games; grey trousers or skirt, a grey shirt and sweater and a plain black coat. If your child was in our Pre-School they may wear this uniform until you are able to purchase the correct school items.

### **For items not from the uniform supplier, should I buy specific brands or designs?**

Your child's shoes, scarves, mittens and hats should be plain black. Trainers should be mostly black. Children are not permitted to wear 'light up' trainers. Shoes and trainers should have Velcro fastenings - no laces please.

### **Do I need to use specific bags, stationery etc.?**

Your child should have the school bag from the uniform list. You can use a water bottle of your choice, and your child does not need to bring any stationery, it will be provided by the school.

**Why do different boys have different ties? What is the House system?** Each child is allocated a House when they start at Durston House. There are 4 Houses – Conway (Red), Arundel (Green), Windsor (Blue) and Warwick (Yellow). Children can earn Plus Points for their House for good behaviour and work, and later in the first term, will join their vertical group, made up of children of all ages from within their House, for regular activities.

### **Do I need to put name labels in my child's clothes?**

Yes. Please label every single item clearly, from water bottles to socks to hats. Unlabelled items invariably go missing quickly.

### **Individuality**

#### **My child can already read. Will they have a reading book immediately?**

No. Reading books are sent home from January, at the appropriate level for each individual. If your child is already an able reader, during the first term, they will have regular opportunities to read at school, including reading books, perhaps in a group reading session with other children at the same level. All children are taught to read and write using the Anima Phonics scheme from week one, recognising letters and digraphs/trigraphs and writing these, blending and segmenting for reading and writing words and sentences. If your child is already an able reader or writer, their teacher will quickly assess where they need further input and where they can be given activities more suited to their level.

#### **My child has been referred by their nursery (or we have taken them) to an outside agency, such as a Speech and Language therapist, an Occupational Therapist, or a Psychologist. What will the school do to cater for their needs?**

You should let the school know about this as soon as possible, so that we can read any reports they have, and prepare to cater for their needs. During the first few weeks, your child's teacher will assess how they are coping with the school environment, and then, where necessary, they will meet with you, and include the Pre-Prep Learning Support teacher, to talk about whether they need further support.

#### **My child is particularly shy and I am worried that they won't talk to staff or show what they are capable of. How will you deal with this?**

The Reception staff are all experienced and used to working with children with different personalities and abilities. They will not pre-judge what your child is able or not able to do based on their personality. The first term is used to help children settle in, while beginning their learning at school, and children who find it difficult to talk to others, adults and children, will be gently encouraged, and given time to adjust. It is not uncommon for some children to remain quiet for the first term and then suddenly find their feet in January!

#### **My child is particularly boisterous and I often had calls from their nursery because they were concerned about their behaviour. What will you do if you are concerned about their behaviour?**

You can find the Behaviour Policy on our website. In general, if a child is finding it difficult to follow the rules and instructions, these will be repeated until they do so, if necessary talking to them directly each time. Teachers will take time to talk to pupils and ensure that they understand the reasons why they are being asked to do specific things. Where a child is repeatedly failing to follow instructions, they will be asked to sit away from others, on the

'thinking chair', or will be asked to sit on the 'thinking chair' in another Reception classroom. They may also be sent to the office to sit with the Head of Pre-Prep if they are repeatedly disturbing lessons or other pupils. If the teacher is particularly concerned, either she or the Head of Pre-Prep may contact you, and offer suggestions as to how you can support your child at home to help improve their behaviour at school.

**What will you do if you have any concerns about my child's progress or ability? How will you let me know?**

Your child's teacher will let you know if they have any concerns at all about your child's education. They may ask you to come in for a meeting after school, to discuss how to support your child both at school and at home. If you do not hear from the school, your child's teacher has no concerns, your child has settled without difficulty, and is managing all of the activities and work set for them at an acceptable level.

**My child does not enjoy outdoor games or gets particularly cold in the winter. Do they have to take part?**

Yes. All children take part in all aspects of school life including Games lessons and outdoor play.

**I prefer my child not to take part in Christian celebrations and assemblies. Is this an option?**

No. All children take part in all aspects of school life, including assemblies, services, and Nativity celebrations. From Year 1, all children take part in Religious Education lessons. Festivals from other religions are also acknowledged and celebrated.