



Highfields Primary School  
Early Years New Starters

September 2025-2026



# What is Early Years (EY)?



# Areas of Learning



## Prime Areas of Learning

(they underpin everything in Early Years)

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal Social and Emotional Development

## Specific Areas of Learning

(they help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas)

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts & Design

# Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning



A child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are;

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

# Reception Staff

- Mrs. Plant (RP's Class Teacher)
- Miss. Hodgetts (RW's Class Teacher)
- Mr. Kenny
- Mrs. Morton



# Senior Leadership Team

- Mrs. Garratt (Headteacher)
- Mrs. Lewis (Deputy Headteacher)
- Mrs. Evans (Assistant Headteacher)



## Who is my child's teacher?

- Your child will not be allocated a class teacher until October half term.
- This will give children the opportunity to build relationships with all children and staff in the classroom.
- If you see a class on School Gateway before October half term, this is for administration purposes only. Please don't write this class on their belongings, as it may not be the class they are placed in.
- Your child may not stay in the same class during their time at Highfields, as cohorts often change with children leaving and arriving, so they may move into a new class the following year if necessary.



# Uniform



- White polo shirt.
- Grey pinafore/skirt/trousers/shorts.
- Royal blue jumper or cardigan.
- Velcro or slip-on black shoes (please no shoelaces).
- Girls – in Summer blue and white gingham dress.
- No backpacks or rucksacks, children do not need to bring anything to school with them.
- Book bags can be purchased through our uniform provider and will fit in your child's tray.
- P.E – Black shorts or jogging bottoms, white t-shirts and sports trainers (no Converse or Vans).
- Children are not allowed to wear jewellery for school (except plain studs – no hoops).
- Tape earrings or remove them on PE days.



## Gates

Your child will enter and exit through the same gates every morning. Please leave your child at the gate, they settle quickly once in the classroom.

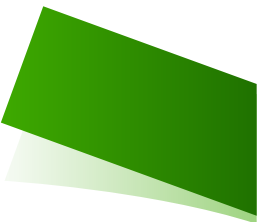
In an afternoon, you will come onto the playground to collect your child. Please wait for them to reach the front of their line.



# Start and End of day



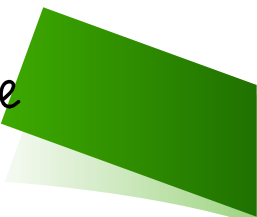
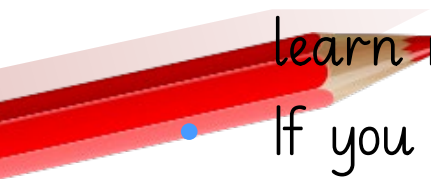
- 8.40am - staff arrive at the large blue gate to welcome the children into school.
- 8.50am - gates close and register is taken, children who are late will need to arrive through the front office.
- Reception Classroom - Reception children will walk across the playground and round the corner into their area. Staff will be at the gate to direct children inside.
- 3.20pm - Finish - Reception children will come out of an area at the rear of the playground (where they enter in a morning) with their teacher.
- Members of SLT will be on the playground to help families



## End of school day

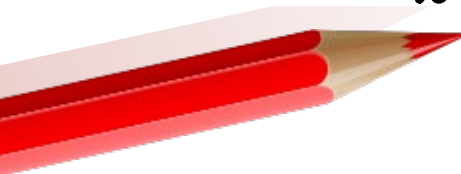



- The children will come out of the same area at the end of the day.
- They will stand in a line and be called forward one at a time.
- It is helpful if you could stand in the same spot every day to make it easier for us and your child to spot you.
- Please do not call your child forward, as we need to see the collecting adult before letting a child leave.
- For the first few weeks it will take us some time to dismiss the children as we get to learn new faces – please be patient with us.
- If you need to speak to your child's teacher, then please wait until they have got all of the children safely to their parents.
- Please try to be on time as children can get upset if they think you might not be picking them up.



## Collecting from school





- If anyone, other than the usual adult, is going to collect your child; please notify your child's teacher verbally, in writing or in case of emergencies, through the school office.
  - We will **not** hand your child over to anyone who we are not authorised to or do not recognise. We will always phone you from the school office to confirm if someone new/unknown comes to pick up.
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## If your child is late?

- If you arrive after the start of the school day, you should take your child into the school office. You will need to sign them in and a member of office staff will take them to their classroom.

What do I do if my child is going to be absent?

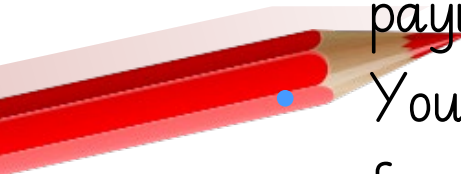

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- Please phone the school (0121 559 1037 option 1) if your child is going to be absent and leave a message on the absence line explaining the specific reason for their absence.
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# Illness

- Sickness and Diarrhoea – children must stay off school for 48 hours following their last episode of sickness or diarrhoea.
- Chicken Pox – children must stay off school until all spots have scabbed over and they are well.
- Viral Rashes – as long as children are well, they can come into school with a viral rash.
- Conjunctivitis – if conjunctivitis is suspected, children must stay off school until they have started treatment. Once treatment has begun, children can come back to school.
- Head Lice – please inform us if your child has head lice.
- Antibiotics – school can administer antibiotics. Please take any prescribed medication to the school office.

# Snacktime

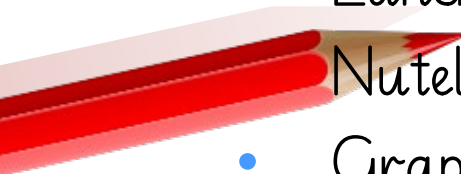


- We provide a piece of fruit and a carton of milk each day in Reception.
  - No snacks from home please.
  - The fruit and vegetables are provided under the 'School Fruit and Vegetables' scheme which provides a piece of fruit or vegetable for each child in Reception and KSI free of charge.
  - Milk is free until your child turns five years old, You will then need to begin paying for it through 'Cool Milk'.
  - You can also send your child with a small drinks bottle of water or sugar free squash. No sparkling drinks or milk-based drinks.
  - Sports cap or lift up straw lid bottles please – no screw lid bottles or large/novelty bottles (we do not have the space to store them).
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# What happens at lunchtime?



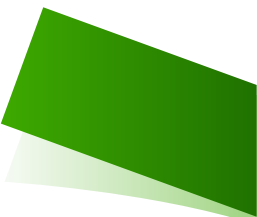
- All children are entitled to Universal Free School Meals in YR, Y1 & Y2.
- It is parent's responsibility to order your child's school dinner via the school gateway app every day.
- You can order up to a term in advance and view the full menu on the app.
- If there is nothing on the menu that your child wants on a particular day, you can pack them a lunchbox.
- Lunchboxes (no sweets, fizzy drinks or nuts, including nut products such as Nutella or other chocolate spreads).
- Grapes must be cut in half length ways.
- No hot food, or food that has already been heated and gone cold.



# Term time holidays?



- No holidays will be authorised by the Headteacher.
- Any holidays that are taken will be shown on your child's absence reports as 'unauthorised' absences.
- Overlapping holidays with the beginning or end of a term also has a negative impact on children. They miss out on the introduction of new topics and special events.
- Continuous sporadic absence also seriously affects children's ability to make and keep friends as they are often not around to play with. They may also fall behind with their education, due to missing important lessons in Phonics, Literacy, Maths and Topic.
- Please keep the school dates handy when booking holidays.



# Term Dates 2025-2026

Training days will be decided on and sent to parents at the start of the Autumn term, but we have the following days planned so far;

- Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September
- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September
- Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July

On these days, school will be closed to all children.




## Autumn term 2025

- Term starts: Monday 1 September 2025
- Half-term holiday: Monday 27 October to Friday 31 October 2025
- Term ends: Friday 19 December 2025
- Christmas holiday: Monday 22 December 2025 to Friday 2 January 2026

## Spring term 2026

- Term starts: Monday 5 January 2026
- Half-term holiday: Monday 16 February to Friday 20 February 2026
- Term ends: Friday 27 March 2026
- Easter Holiday: Monday 30 March to Friday 10 April 2026

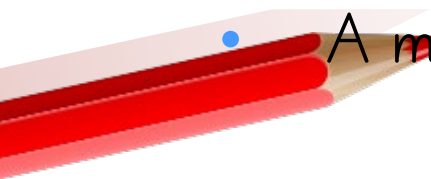
## Summer term 2026

- Term starts: Monday 13 April 2026
  - Half-term holiday: Monday 25 May to Friday 29 May 2026 (there is also a Bank Holiday on Monday 4 May 2026)
  - Term ends: Monday 20 July 2026
  - Summer holiday starts: Tuesday 21 July 2026
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## Any concerns?



- It is always better to sort out any problems sooner rather than later.
- In the first instance, we ask that parents arrange to speak to their child's teacher.
- If you feel that your issue has not been resolved, then please speak to a member of the leadership team, this can be done by phoning school (0121 559 1037) or emailing [leadershipteam@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:leadershipteam@highfields.sandwell.sch.uk).
- A member of the leadership team will attempt to contact you as soon as possible.



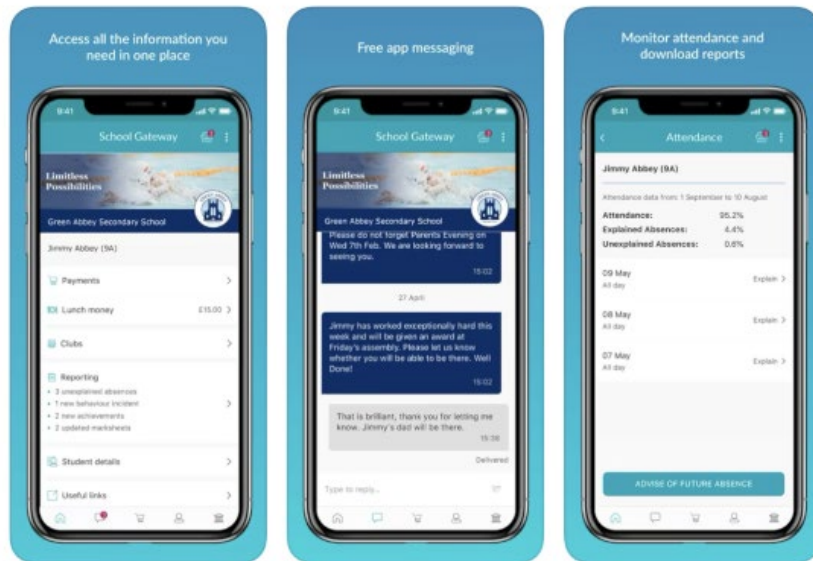
# School Communications



School Gateway

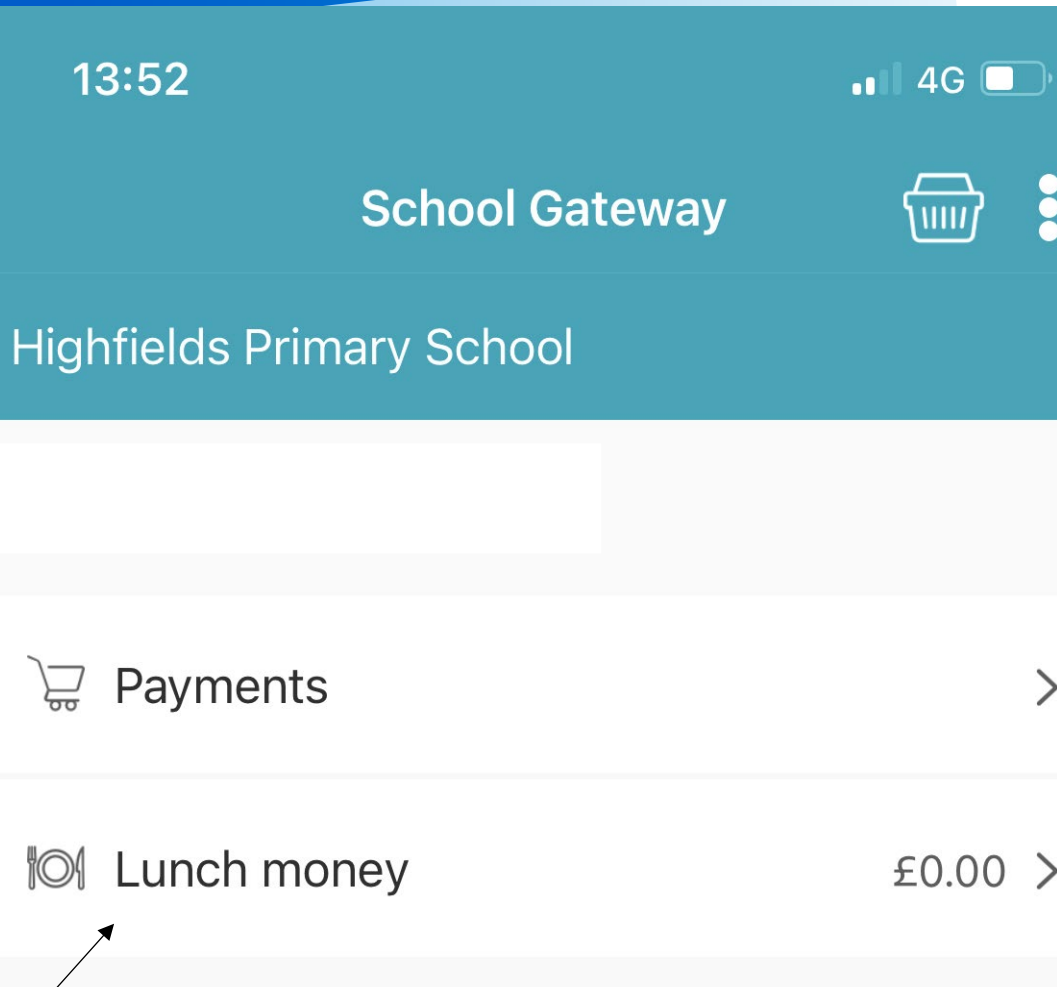
Education

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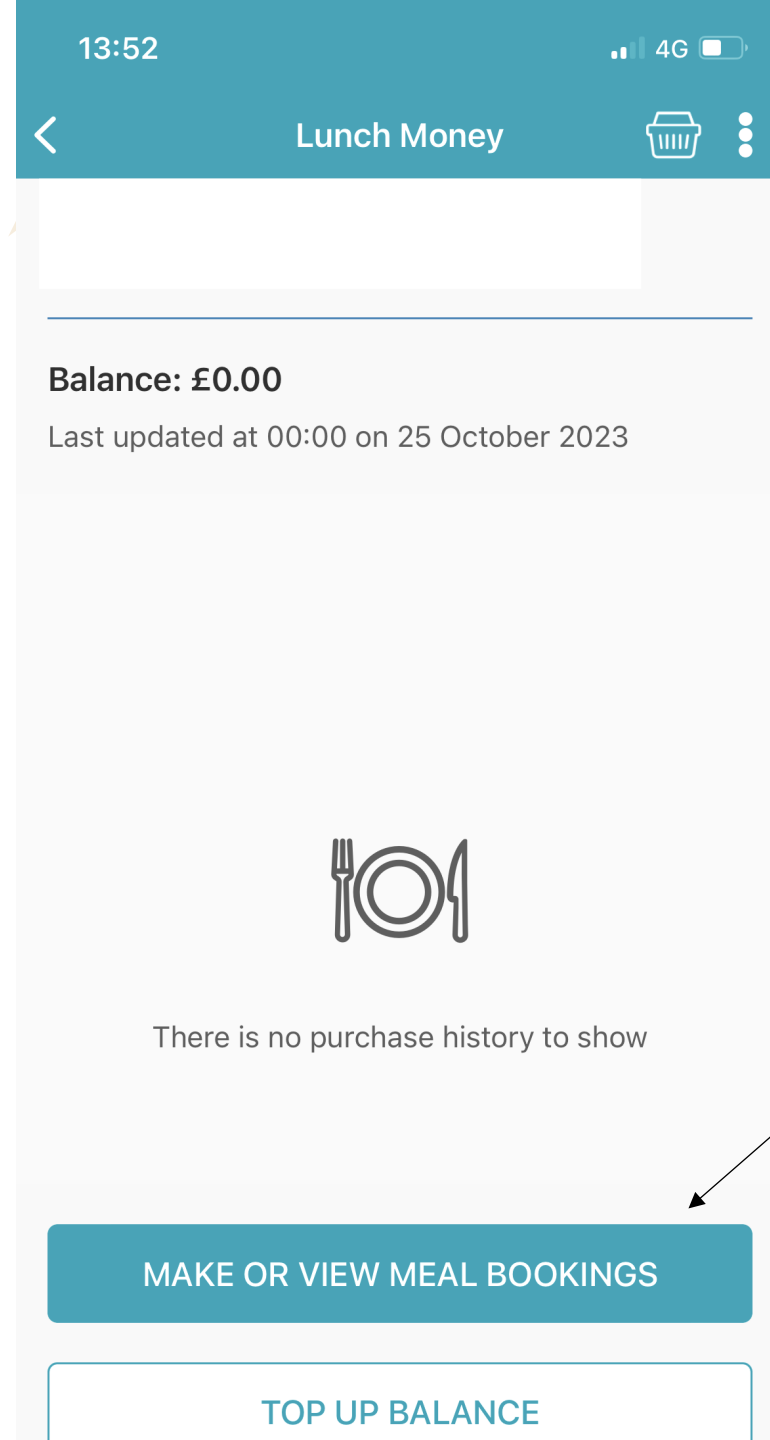


- Highfields use a system called SchoolComms to communicate important messages via text and email with parents.
- You will need to download the 'School Gateway' app, which is where you will order your child's dinners.
- Payments to school for trips and other activities will also be made via this app. We do not accept cash payments.
- Details of how to log into the app will be emailed to you a couple of days before your child starts school.

# How to order lunches using the app?

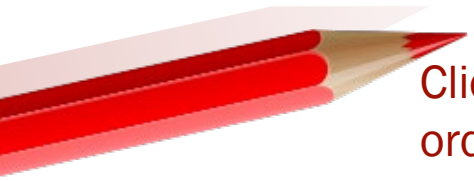


Click school coms and then lunch money



Click make or view meal bookings

# How to order lunches using the app?



Click the day you would like to order dinner for

13:52

Lunch Money

Make or view bookings

Jun Ve 19   Jun Th 20   Jun Fr 21   Jun Mo 24

Monday, 24 June

View Today

Main

- Fish Fingers
- Mac 'n' Cheese & Herby Bread (v)
- Jacket Potato-Plain
- Jacket Potato- Beans

13:53

Lunch Money

Make or view bookings

Jun Fr 21   Jun Mo 24   Jun Tu 25   Jun We 26

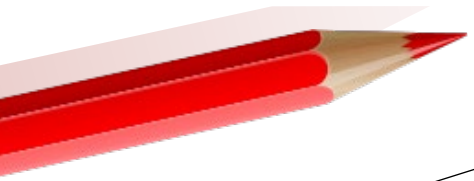
Wednesday, 26 June

View Today

Main

- Pork Sausage
- Veggie Sausage (v)
- Jacket Potato-Plain
- Jacket Potato- Beans
- Jacket Potato- Cheese

# How to order lunches using the app?



Click your choice

Confirm booking

13:53 4G

## Lunch Money

Make or view bookings

**PLEASE NOTE:** You have unconfirmed bookings. When confirming your bookings, any **Payment due** must be paid within 2 hours. Failure to do so will result in unpaid bookings being cancelled.  
If your **Payment due** is zero (£0.00), simply confirm bookings and no further action is required.

Jun Fr 21   Jun Mo 24   Jun Tu 25   Jun We 26

Wednesday, 26 June [View Today](#)

Main

- Pork Sausage
- Veggie Sausage (v)
- Jacket Potato-Plain
- Jacket Potato- Beans

Home   Chat   Profile   Location

13:53 4G

## Lunch Money

- Jacket Potato- Cheese & Beans
- Jacket Potato with Tuna Mayo
- Turkey Sandwich
- Packed Lunch from Home

Key:

- Contains Pork
- Suitable for Vegetarian
- Suitable for Vegan
- Suitable for Pescatarian

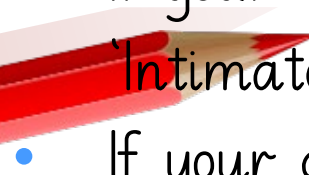

Meat/Fish   Packed lunch (home)   Vegetarian

Amount to pay: **£2.50**

Confirm Bookings

# Medical Needs



- If your child has an allergy or medical condition please complete a red medi-alert letter, which will be sent home on their first day of school.
  - If your child has a care plan in place, please provide school with copies of this.
  - If your child is prescribed an inhaler, it will need to be kept in school at all times. Please bring it to the school office, in the original box with prescription label, along with the spacer.
  - If your child wears a nappy or pull-ups, you will need to read and sign an 'Intimate Care Policy'.
  - If your child needs to be given any medication whilst at school, please complete a medication form at the school office, who will then administer this to your child when required.
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# After School Clubs

These will vary each term;

- Multisports
  - Football
  - Games
  - Crafts
  - Lego
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- Clubs are not available to Reception in the first half-term; Autumn 1.

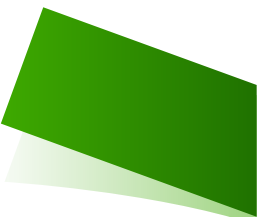
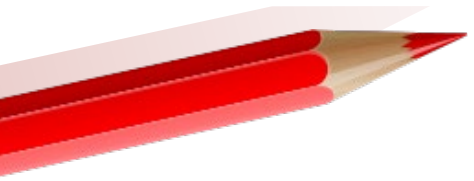


# How do I get involved?

- Stay and Play
- Phonics Workshops
- Reading Workshops
- Reading eBooks
- Contact through 'Evidence Me' App
- Volunteering with Highfields Helpers (PTA)



'Evidence Me' App



# Evidence Me



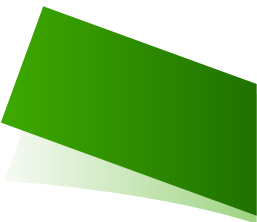
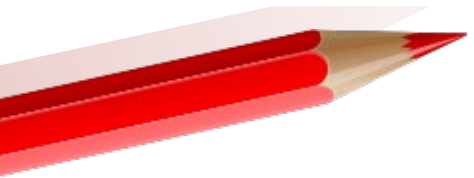
- We will use Evidence Me to share a weekly photo of something your child has enjoyed doing in school.
- Please download the 'Evidence Me' app.
- Parents can view photographs of their child at school and also send in photographs from home.
- You should have received an activation link via email this morning.
- If you are an existing parent, you will need to redownload the app and log in with your previous details.
- If you need any help setting up your account, please speak to Mrs Plant who will be happy to help.



## Home Visits



- If you have not received a home visit, we will be in touch with you to arrange a time to find out more information about your child.
- We may also visit your child in their Nursery setting, to find out more about them.



## Keeping In Touch



- Every fortnight, school produces its own school e-newsletter. Every other Friday, the link for this will be emailed to you and you can view it on any electronic device.
- We have a section on the newsletter called the 'Hall of Fame'. If your child takes part in any activities outside of school and you would like to share it with us, please email it into school.
- We update our school website regularly and Reception have their own class page. You will be able to see important information, our topics and photographs.

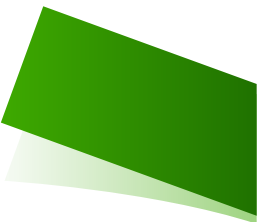
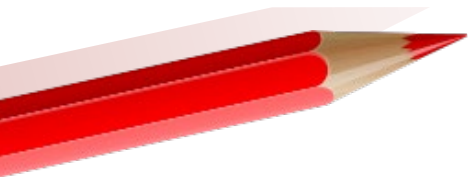




# Important Documents



- Start Date Letters
- Medi-Alerts
- Intimate Care Policies
- PPT Slide Handouts
- School Readiness Checklists
- Breakfast Club Applications
- Child Minder Information
- Lunch Ordering Information
- Speech and Language Referral Forms
- Term Dates



Thank you for listening!

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