Aldrington CE Primary School
STARTING SCHOOL

Starting school should be an exciting and enjoyable experience for every child. Through working together with you, our parents and carers, we trust that children will begin their time at Aldrington with confidence, a willingness to 'have a go' at a wide range of activities and the ability to listen to and share with those around them. We hope that the following information will help your child to settle quickly and happily into our school. A national website has also been launched to support parents whose children are beginning Reception, full of information and advice. Please see https://startingreception.co.uk and https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/preparing-for-school/

IDEAS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD TO PREPARE FOR SCHOOL

- ***Does your child enjoy listening to stories and poems? Are you teaching your child nursery rhymes, rhythms and simple action songs?***
  Try to find time regularly to sit and share books together. Talk about the pictures and the story and encourage your child to predict what is going to happen, fill in a rhyming word, retell the ending etc. You can find ideas for nursery rhymes at https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/curations/nursery-rhymes Walks and car journeys can give good opportunities to practise them together!

- ***Are you helping your child to develop the ability to express themselves clearly and develop a wide vocabulary?***
  Encourage them to talk about and describe activities, toys, places and people. Talk about the colour, shape and size of things, extending vocabulary using adjectives, adverbs and correct names.

- ***Do you play games with your child?***
  Ideas might include jigsaws, odd man out puzzles, joining the dots pictures, finding hidden objects in pictures, what is missing puzzles, playing snap, pairs, lotto, dice games such as snakes and ladders, dominoes, finding and matching similar articles, e.g. gloves, socks, shoes, and playing 'I spy'.

- ***Can your child listen carefully to others?***
  Once children start at school, they have to learn to become a member of a large group and to share and wait their turn. Encourage them to listen carefully to and carry out simple instructions in the months before they start, so that this comes easily to them in September.

- ***Do you give your child the opportunity to develop the skills of using pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and scissors?***
  Encourage them to draw and make things and write simple lists using their own marks, encouraging a tripod grip from the start – see information below.

- ***Do you encourage an interest in numbers?***
  Practise counting the fruit in the bowl – 'How many apples? How many oranges? How many pieces of fruit altogether?' Count as you climb stairs and spot numbers on buses and doors. Sing traditional number rhymes such as those found at https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zn67kmn

During the day, the children will be using the toilet regularly as well as changing into and out of outdoor clothing. They will also be eating lunch in the company of other children, sitting at a table and using cutlery. Although we recognise that the developmental stage of children varies in a Reception class, we expect that the majority of children will be independent with these skills by the time they start school, only needing minimal assistance (e.g. with a tricky zip). The following sections include questions to help you assess your child's independence, so that you know which areas need focus in the next few months.

PERSONAL CARE AND CLOTHING

- Is your child able to go to the toilet alone, wipe themselves with toilet paper and flush afterwards?
- Can they pull their own clothes up and down before and after going to the toilet, including tights?
- Does your child know how important it is to wash their hands with soap after using the toilet?
- Can they recognise their own clothing? (**Please name all your child's clothing clearly.** Permanent marker pens can be borrowed from the School Office. Writing on labels works well.)
- Can they get dressed and undressed (jumper, trousers, socks etc.), turning clothes the right way from inside out?
- Can they put on a hat, coat and gloves/mittens at playtimes?
- Can they put on and do up shoes? (NB Buckles and Velcro are easier than laces).
- Can your child blow their nose?

If your child still has an occasional 'accident', **please provide a spare pair of pants, trousers and socks.** Please note that we do expect all children to be fully independent with toileting in the vast majority of cases.

LUNCHTIME AND SNACKS

When children stay for lunch, they are eligible for a free school meal or may bring a packed lunch from home. The children eat lunch with their classmates in the school hall. If your child has particular dietary requirements, these can be catered for (see Caterlink form on the school website: https://aldrington.org/New-to-Aldrington).

Please note: Aldrington is a nut-free school as some children have allergies**.** Please do **not** give your child nuts in their lunchbox.

Please consider:

- Can your child use a knife and fork, as well as a spoon, and cut food into bite-sized pieces?
- Are they able to open each lunchbox/food container?
- Are they used to sitting at a table when eating and remaining seated?
- Are they used to trying a range of foods? (see menu for details of what is on offer)
- Are they aware of the importance of good table manners?

Children are provided every day with a fruit or vegetable snack via a scheme for schools. Until they are five, children are also eligible for free milk. (After a child's fifth birthday, milk can be purchased – see Cool Milk information). Please do not send in snacks other than fruit or vegetables. Grapes should be halved vertically to minimise the risk of choking.

ILLNESS

If your child is feeling unwell, they will be far happier at home where it is comfortable and quiet.

If your child is absent, please let us know by telephone first thing in the morning. If we have not heard from you, we will contact you to seek a reason for absence.

Exclusion periods for some infectious diseases

DISEASE	**EXCLUSION PERIOD (subject to doctor's instructions)**
Vomiting and diarrhoea	48 hours after last bout of sickness/diarrhoea
Chicken pox	Until all spots have formed a scab (usually 5 days after spots appear)
Measles	4 days from onset of rash
Mumps	5 days from onset of swelling
German Measles	6 days after onset of rash

Medication

At Aldrington, staff will only administer medication prescribed by a doctor or dentist. Some children require an inhaler or epipen to be available for their use during the school day for medical conditions or allergies, whilst others may occasionally require a dose of a prescription medicine during the course of the school day. If either is the case for your child, please pick up a form at the School Office.

Medicines should be handed in to the School Office and will only be accepted in the original container as dispensed by a pharmacist (with the child's name included) and should include the prescriber's instruction for administration. N.B. NO MEDICATION SHOULD BE LEFT IN A CHILD'S BAG.

ATTENDANCE

At Aldrington, we are committed to working with families to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Our aim is for children to feel happy and secure in school and meet their full potential. This is difficult to achieve if they are frequently absent from, or late for school. Children with poor attendance and punctuality not only miss learning opportunities but also miss out on the social side of school life, which can affect their ability to make and keep friendships.

As detailed on the **gov.uk website**, parents and carers are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education that meets their needs. They are responsible for ensuring that their children attend during the specified school hours and stay unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. It is also the responsibility of the parent or carer to inform the school of any absence.

Children are only allowed to miss school if either:

- they're too ill to go in
- their parents or carers have got advance permission from the school

Please note, therefore, that you need to get permission from the Headteacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time, making an application in advance (forms available from the School Office). The Headteacher will only authorise absence from school for exceptional circumstances.

BEFORE SCHOOL

The children should be dropped off between 8.40 am – 8.50 am. Please note that Aldrington is part of the School Streets scheme. This means that Eridge Road is closed to vehicles in the morning between 8.15am and 9.15am (except for disabled badge holders and local residents. We have an arrangement with Waitrose and Corals whereby parents can use this car park (which is extensive) and walk the last few metres to school. The same arrangement applies in the afternoon between 2.45pm and 3.45pm.

Please line up at the Reception gate (to the left of the entrance to the School Office as you approach the school) where you will be greeted by a member of the Reception team. We do ask for your co-operation in the following ways:

1. Please do not bring dogs into the school playground or onto the pavement outside the school.
2. Please do not engage the class teacher in long conversations, as they need to attend to the class. The staff welcome discussions but it is helpful to make a prior appointment.
3. If you are late, please enter the school via the school's main entrance and speak to the office team.
4. Please allow children to come into the classroom by themselves. This encourages them to be independent and allows the teacher to begin the day with as little disruption as possible. Children quickly become used to hanging up their own coats and bags.

EARLY WRITING EXPERIENCES

Please encourage your child to hold the pencil or crayon correctly from the start (tripod grip – please see the picture). As writing requires delicate control of hand and eye muscles, give your child as many opportunities as possible for scribble and pattern-making on large pieces of paper.

Please be positive about all your child's attempts at writing. This is important, especially when children are willing to have a go by themselves. This helps them to regard themselves as writers right from the start and prevents the feeling of 'I can't do it'. It is very important that they enjoy 'have a go' writing – at this stage, spelling is not important.