

Layston Church of England First School

A Guide to New Parents



This guide is to help parents by offering information about the practicalities of school life. Please use the contents to find what you are looking for:

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Welcome to Layston!

We hope you will enjoy being part of our supportive and nurturing community. At Layston School, we warmly welcome all and create a safe, stimulating environment for learning through a lively, creative, and carefully sequenced curriculum.

We aim to:

- Work in partnership with parents in the education of their children and encourage their involvement and support.
- Help pupils develop an understanding of the Christian faith and to foster spiritual growth.
- Provide all our children with a safe and happy school in which learning is valued and enjoyable and their unique qualities are valued and recognised.
- Develop a love of learning and a determination to try their best, and to become life-long learners.
- Encourage children to be curious and creative, to think for themselves and to develop enquiring, questioning minds that thrive on challenge and aim high.
- Give children the confidence to embrace change and to engage with technological advances.
- Promote good health through a rich and varied programme of sporting activities and through a commitment to healthy eating, and physical and mental well-being.
- Provide an environment where children feel good about themselves and optimistic about the future. A place where caring for and supporting others is second nature and where good manners are a given.
- Encourage children to value everyone and show respect for all members of the community, celebrating diversity.
- Provide a climate where we listen to and value children's voices and they know that by making a contribution they can make a difference.
- Foster an ecological concern about the world they live in, taking pride in their school and their local environment and caring about the world that they will leave for future generations.



**Loving to Learn, Learning to Love.
For every child a chance to shine.**

At Layston, we believe in the reality of God in our lives and the Christian Values that guide and inspire us. We are bold in our application of Christianity to transform relationships and take the Gospel intent of **"Love one another"** as a blue print for making active choices in our day-to-day lives together. We foster awe and wonder through a creative curriculum that underpins and promotes our love for learning. We are **inclusive** and **nurture** each person as a child of God with every chance to shine.

Matthew 5:14-16

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Communication between school and home

Good communication between school and home is vital. We have developed a Parental Engagement policy that focuses on quality relationships and communication. This is available on the school website (Useful information - Parental Engagement).

Website: Parents can download the school website app onto phones and it is easy to navigate from a mobile device. All the information you need is on here so please take time to explore and get to know what is available to parents. Class teachers will post information on the school website (Education - Class pages) and Tapestry for YR. We also publish calendar dates for the year and weekly diary dates on our website.

Head's letters: We send these weekly letters to parents as a link and they are available on the school website. They will keep you up-to-date on upcoming events and the weekly life of school.

Newsletters: These are half-termly celebrations of all that has been going on in school as well as reminders. Again, we send these to parents as a link and they are available on the school website.

Parents' evenings: You can discuss your child's progress in October and at our child-led learning conferences in March. If you need to talk to us about your child please make an appointment to see your child's class teacher after school, or you can ring/email the office to make an appointment to see the head teacher if you are still not satisfied. We issue written progress reports to parents in July and we give parents the option of seeing their child's teacher to discuss these.

Forms to complete: we ask all parents to complete five key forms when their child starts at Layston. These are:

Home School Agreement: This sets out what you can expect from us and, in turn, what we ask of you. Please return one copy and keep one for your own reference.

Data sheet: This gives us essential information about your child, such as emergency contacts, allergies and medical needs etc. This also includes permission to allow us to take your child on local trips around the town.

Responsible Internet use & Image consent form.

Tapestry registration: This is for YR parents only.

Starting school is an exciting time for all children. It can also be a nervous time for them and you. Your child will have been on visits to the school and so should be familiar with the routines and buildings. We find most children settle in quickly and happily.

Please let us know if you think we could improve how we communicate with you.

The School's contact details are as follows:

Office Staff: Christine Rose & Toria Pavett

Telephone: 01763 271235

Email: admin@layston.herts.sch.uk

Early Years Foundation Stage

Tapestry: We use the online learning journal Tapestry to document children's learning, progress and achievements over the year that parents can view directly on a daily basis. We send new YR parents an email to activate their account once they have completed the registration form. YR parents will be able to log in and see their child's learning journey, and add comments as well as their own observations. We love to see what children have been learning at home as well!

Learning in Reception Class: Children in Reception follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum that includes seven areas of development and learning.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The other four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design.

Children will develop their skills and knowledge through a variety of adult led and independent activities. They will have opportunities to work in small groups and will develop early reading, writing and maths skills.

We have a well-resourced EYFS environment with two outdoor areas as well as indoor learning zones including role-play area, sensory corner, construction, art and craft, malleable, sand and water.

At the beginning of the year, the EYFS lead assesses the children for their Reception Baseline. We assess children throughout the year through observation and discussion to inform planning and interventions. At the end of the year, we complete the EYFS Profile. This informs parents whether their child has achieved Good Levels of Development in the seven areas.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children at Layston School, and it is our first priority. We expect all staff, visitors, and volunteers to share this commitment - please see our 'Safeguarding for visitors and volunteers' leaflet. We manage any disclosure from a child to a member of staff in strict accordance to our child protection policy. Please see the website for these documents.

Safeguarding is what we do to keep all children safe, from morning site walks to fire drills, listening and observing children to keeping medicines safe but accessible. Child protection is what we do when we know or suspect that a child is at risk of harm. Everyone has the responsibility to report concerns about the welfare of any child. The school's DSLs are Adele McMurrrough (head teacher & Prevent

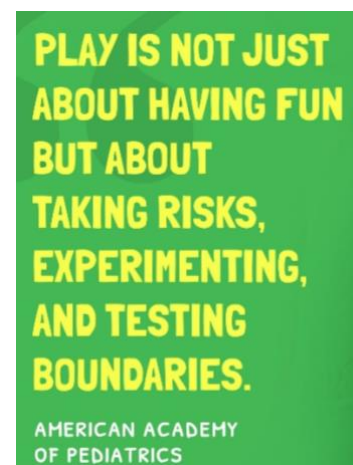
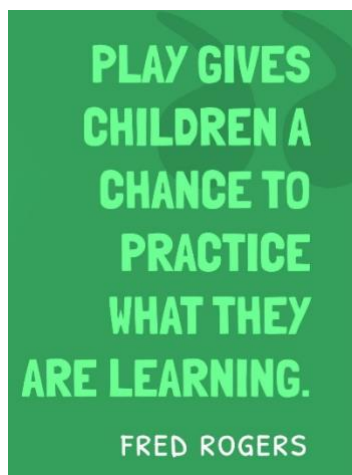
Lead), Susie Betley (deputy, SENDCo & Mental Health Lead) and Helen Wilcox (Y2 teacher). Please direct any concerns straight to them.

We encourage all children to respect other children's choice to opt out or say no/stop and to respect differences and value inclusion. We teach children about personal space and asking before hugging. Staff model this as adults in line with our policy on healthy and safe physical intervention (see Behaviour policy - physical intervention). We demonstrate respect as staff between staff as well as towards the children, modelling healthy relationships. We teach children that if anyone makes them feel scared or unsafe they are to tell a trusted adult.

We have several policies in place that contribute to our safeguarding commitment; please find them on our policies page. Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will ensure that we discuss our concerns about a pupil with their parents/carers first, unless we have reason to believe that such a move would be contrary to the child's welfare.

The school works in partnership with parents to support children in every way possible. The Children's Act 1989 places a clear responsibility on schools to ensure that they work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. When a concern is raised within the school or a child/parent reports a situation involving possible abuse, we would not be able to guarantee confidentiality; the school would have to consult the Social Services without prior consultation with parents.

Learning through play



Pastoral Care



We are a nurturing school and safeguarding and well-being are at the heart of everything we do. We provide a nurturing environment and a curriculum that builds in time to provide guidance, support and opportunities to talk or listen. We plan circle times, small assemblies, mindfulness activities in our 'quiet zone', and we link many ideas through stories. Emotional literacy is extremely important and we teach children to recognise and name a range of emotions. We believe that our close partnership

with parents enables us to ensure that the pupils in our care are safe, secure and happy.

Class teachers are generally responsible for the pastoral care of children in their class. However, it is the responsibility of the whole school to ensure that children are happy and secure. If you are experiencing bereavement, illness or conflict, and you feel it might affect your child, we would ask that you share that information with us so that we can give your child every support, consideration and understanding. Children learn most effectively when they feel safe, secure and happy. We hope that you feel that you can come and share your concerns with us so that we can discuss ways in which we can help your child. We seek to establish a strong partnership with our parents. Our aim is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and collective responsibility.

Behaviour



At Layston, we pride ourselves in valuing each child as an individual and nurturing the whole person, not just academically but socially, morally, emotionally, spiritually, and culturally too. We embed our Christian values of forgiveness, compassion, friendship, and love throughout the curriculum and promote the six principles of nurture.

We promote and teach pro-social behaviours (those behaviours which are helpful to the individual and others) and offer opportunities for restitution and forgiveness after episodes of anti-social behaviour (those behaviours which are not helpful to the individual and others).

Our 'Three Golden Rules' support this:

1. I am ready to learn and allow others to learn.
2. I am thoughtful, kind, and polite to everyone.
3. I look after our school and everything in it.

All our responses to behaviour are therapeutic in line with our 'Therapeutic Thinking' training and we understand nurture as essential to promoting positive mental health and well-being in all members of our school community. For further information, please see our behaviour policy.

Preparing your child for starting school

Health and Speech: Be sure that your child can see and hear well and that any speech difficulties are not the result of a hearing loss. If you are in doubt, discuss this with your doctor. Should there be difficulties, do tell the class teacher when your child starts school.

Talk to your child: By talking about the interesting things you see, you are helping your child to build up a good vocabulary and good general knowledge. It is important that they are able to talk and express themselves clearly. Every child has natural curiosity; we respond to this by answering questions when children seek information and by giving answers the child can understand. Wherever we go there can be interesting things to talk about - even doing the washing involves setting the machine, measuring the soap powder and sorting clothes. Encourage them to put away the toys and

materials they have been using. You can also help by telling them stories; stories that are repetitive and where they can "Huff and puff and blow the house down".

Count things around the house: Count the knives and forks as you lay the table together, the tins and packets when you return from shopping. Let them weigh when you weigh, sort when you sort.

Introduce the concepts of big and little, long and short, more and less.

Reading: Let your child handle books, turn pages and search for similar pictures. Teach them to respect books and to enjoy them. Remember when you are reading to your child choose books that YOU enjoy too; enjoyment is contagious. Your child will then arrive at school enthusiastic to read.

Recognising their name: Help them to recognise their name i.e. with a capital letter for the initial letter and then lower case letters.

Clothes: Let your child practise dressing by themselves - doing up their own shoes, buttons, and putting on gloves and outdoor clothes. Please make sure your child's coat, hat and shoes are clearly marked with their name written in this script so they will be able to recognise them when they start school.

Personal Hygiene: Children are expected to be able to say clearly, when they need to go to the toilet and to be able to manage by themselves, including wiping themselves, flushing the toilet, and washing and drying their hands. If your child struggles with this, we would need to meet to discuss an Intimate Care Plan.

Playing with others: Give them experiences that allow them to learn to play happily with other children of about their own age and to be confident around other people.

- Try hard not to let your child know if you are anxious, instead make sure you are enthusiastic about the fun they will have that day.
- Drop your child off but do not take too long to say goodbye. It is much easier for your child that you say goodbye quickly and that you promise to pick them up after they have had fun.
- Show your child you are interested in their school day but remember they may come home from school tired, so wait until they are ready to share the day with you - perhaps at bedtime or in the bath. Tapestry is a useful way of starting these conversations as you can show them the pictures.

Getting to school

We encourage children to have a healthy start to the day by walking, scooting or cycling to school. This is healthier for the children but also aids the congestion outside of school at the beginning and the end of the school day. Bikes and scooters can be stored during the day in our bike shelter situated at the bottom of the lower playground. Please do not ride your bike or scooter in the playground. If you do need to come to school by car, please be considerate of our neighbours and do not park in front of their gates or on the path. Also, please do not park in the school car park as this has limited space and is for staff. Parents who have not accepted the offer of a place for their child at a suitable primary school within two miles and who have chosen a school further away will have to meet the costs of transport. For more information, please go to www.hertsdirect.org

School Day

08.45 - Gates open - Children and parents are asked to wait in the bottom playground until the 08.45 when children walk up to their classrooms.

09.00 - Registration closes

12.00 - 13.00 - Lunchtime EYFS and KS1 12.15- 13.15 - Lunchtime KS2

15.15 - End of School - Parents are asked to collect Reception children from the same place that they drop off in the morning. When we dismiss children to parents, we ask parents to wait in the allocated zone on the bottom playground. If you are delayed or are unable to make arrangements for the collection of your child please make sure the school office is informed before 3.15pm.

Attendance

Every single day of your child's learning counts at Layston. The staff and governors have high expectations that your child will not miss school other than for illness or unavoidable medical appointments. This is particularly the case for holidays. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the Head teacher will not authorise family holidays in school time, and you may be fined. We work closely with our Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Officer to monitor persistent absentees. We recognise and celebrate attendance at Layston; all children achieving an attendance of 96% or higher each term will get a Certificate of Attendance.

Medical

All staff are first aid trained and EYFS staff are paediatric first aid trained.

We cannot administer medicines in school without a completed Individual Healthcare Plan. If your child needs a medicine such as Calpol or antibiotics during the day, you are welcome to come and give it yourself. If you are unable to come into school, please ask a friend to do it for you and send in a letter giving them permission. If your child has a medical condition, you must complete an Individual Healthcare Plan for the school and provide any medication that might be needed i.e. auto injectors, inhalers, antihistamine. We expect two inhalers/auto injectors in school, one in the school office and one in their classroom, in case one malfunctions. A member of staff will always take a child's medication when going off site or to Forest School. It is your responsibility to ensure medication is always in date.

Absence from school

If your child is ill, we ask that parents inform the school office by 08.30 and follow this with a short note giving the dates of and reason for the absence. Our 'First Day Call' policy means that we will ring you after this time if your child is absent without explanation. In the case of planned absence (e.g. medical appointments, approved external examinations such as ballet), please let us know either verbally or in writing in advance. You should provide us with a copy of any medical appointment letter. If you need to take your child out of school during the school day, please sign them out with one of the office staff. We expect that children will arrive on time each day, ready to learn with the right equipment. In the event that your child does arrive late, you must accompany them to the office so we can sign them in.



Should I keep my child off school?



Yes

Until...

Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and Flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19.
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping Cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics

No

but make sure you let their school or nursery know about...

Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek



SCAN ME

Advice and guidance

To find out more, search for health protection in schools or scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/minfec>.

Eating and drinking at school

Layston is a healthy school, recognised through our 'Healthy School Status', and our arrangements support this.

MILK - we send you a form each term to identify whether you wish your child to have milk. Reception children do not pay for milk until the term in which they are five.

FRUIT & VEGETABLE SCHEME - during the afternoon, the children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable under the Government's School Fruit & Vegetable Scheme. This is part of an initiative to encourage the eating of at least five portions of fruit or vegetable every day. The fruit/vegetables supplied are fresh, of good quality and delivered three times a week. We are a nut free school and kindly ask you to refrain from bringing nuts or nut based products into school during school session.

LUNCH - children may choose between school lunches or packed lunch. School lunches are prepared on the premises by Herts Catering Ltd. A free school meal is available for all children in Reception, Year 1 and 2. We have a pre-order meal system: the children can choose a main meal - meat or vegetarian, baked potato or a school packed lunch each day. Year 3 and 4 meals will cost £3.30 per day from September and can be paid for daily, weekly, half termly or termly. All meals must be paid for in advance. We are a cash free school and ask parents to pay via School Gateway which can be accessed on line or via smart phone app. Free school meals are available for children of any family receiving benefits.

Children can opt to have school lunches on any set day or days. We offer special meals, such as Christmas lunch, throughout the year - you will receive a message about these. Please bring packed lunches in a lunchbox marked with your child's name. Please do not give your child any foods containing nuts as we have some children with severe nut allergies. Please also support us as a Healthy School by packing a 'healthy lunch'. No sweets or chocolate bars please.

SNACKS for playtime - children can bring a snack for example, fruit or vegetables or savoury crackers and cheese. We encourage our children to make healthy choices to support our 'Healthy School' status. Please no nuts, crisps, chocolate or sweets.

WATER - water aids concentration and we encourage all children to bring a named bottle of water (with a sports lid to prevent spillages) to school every day.

Uniform and Equipment

School uniform is an important aspect of our school because it gives a sense of shared identity with the school community. It is also practical for activities in school.

Pupils:

White shirt with a collar or white polo shirt with collar

Check green school dress or smart grey shorts (warm weather)

Fleece, sweatshirt, cardigan or V-neck jumper in bottle green - no hoodies.

Grey smart trousers, smart grey skirt or smart grey pinafore dress.

Socks: grey, black or white. Tights: green or grey

Black or brown shoes with a low heel - NOT boots or trainers, no heels.

No Jewellery - for safety reasons we prefer children to avoid wearing earrings on the days they have Forest School or PE. We are not allowed to remove earrings so they will be taped over if they are not removed. Children may wear sensible watches. These will be the child's own responsibility at all times. Long hair - should be tied back. Small green or green and white hair bands only please. No nail varnish. Coats - Children will play outside in most weathers, please ensure they have a suitable coat with them.

PE kit

Emerald green shorts and dark green T-shirt

Green joggers & sweatshirt

Trainers

Forest School

Kit - green/black/grey jogging bottoms or dark leggings, long sleeved grey top, green sweatshirt, stout trainers and wellies (to be left in school).

Please note that legs and arms need to be covered in the Wild Wood even in warm weather due the presence of thorns, brambles and nettles. In exceptionally hot weather, the children may be directed to wear PE kits and take part in modified Forest School activities on the field, though the Wild Wood is shady and cool, and hot weather is fine. We provide waterproofs when Forest School leaders decide it is needed i.e. wet, cold, muddy conditions. In hotter weather, we ask parents to provide an application of sunscreen before school and provide sunhats as necessary. In cold weather, please ensure your child has layers to keep warm.

Uniform is available from

www.mapac.com/education/parents/uniform/laystonchurchofenglandfirstschool

Home learning

Children will have home learning that reinforces learning carried out in class. The total time for this home learning should not be more than $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour a week for Reception, 1 hour a week for years 1 and 2, $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours a week for years 3 and 4. We ask that you support your child with their learning but do not do it for them. Part of the learning process for your child will be in their explanation to you about their task. Increased parental interest in a child's school learning improves the progress a child makes in school.

Reading - Every child will bring a reading book home to read with you. Your involvement in reading is essential for your child to progress fully. Please note, we say 'read *with* you' not 'read *to* you', as it is important to discuss with your child what they are reading. As you look at the schoolbook together, it is important to ensure your child really understands what they are reading, is encouraged to predict what may happen next and to talk about the pictures. Reading together should be an enjoyable time with lots of talking. If your child struggles with a word, read it for them and praise them as much as possible to develop their confidence. Five or ten minutes a day make a huge difference to your child's progress. Above all, make it fun! Please note we actively encourage children to read more than their school reading book.

Reading during the long summer break is particularly important. We encourage children to participate in the reading challenge run by local libraries. The books at Layston sequenced in colours, so that they match a child's phonic knowledge. We want your child to experience of a wide range of books with a varied vocabulary at each level of their reading development. We use the Read Write Inc. programme to start children off with reading.

For your information, the stages progress as follows: Ditties, Red, Green and Purple, Pink, Orange, Yellow, Blue, Grey Children are expected to have finished reading Grey level books by the end of Year 2. After this, children move onto book bands: Purple, Gold, White, Lime Green, Brown, Grey, Dark Blue, Dark Red and Free Readers. Please keep the school reading books and reading record books in their book bag and come in to school daily. Above all, we want children to develop a love of reading for pleasure.

Other home learning - Year 1-4 children will bring home a variety of homework with an opened ended question to investigate for your child to answer in any way they wish. When your child has spellings to learn, we find the look, say, cover, write and check method works best i.e. encourage your child to look carefully at a word, say the word, cover it up, try to write it and check the spelling. You can also use the 'rainbow' spelling technique, writing over the word multiple times in different colours, or you can think of funny rhymes e.g. 'said' = save animals in danger.

Clubs, trips and enrichment activities

Parental Contributions - There are times when we ask parents to make a voluntary contribution toward the cost of certain activities (e.g. class visits, cooking ingredients etc.). School budgets are under significant pressure. We want to provide enriching and educational opportunities for all but we are only able to do so if parents contribute. We will not exclude children from participating in such activities for non-payment. Please see Economic Support section of the school website. We will not expect payment from families receiving income support.

After school clubs - after school clubs are available on the school site. Last year these clubs included dodge ball, gymnastics, football (RTFC), dance (Christina Marks). Parents pay for these clubs. However, staff also provide a range of free after school or lunchtime enrichment clubs such as Times Table Rock Stars, Science, Netball and Choir. Information about which clubs are on offer will come out at the start of each term.

Fund raising days - There may be days when the children are invited to participate in a fundraising day for FOLS funds or a charity e.g. Non-Uniform Day, Children in Need. This will involve paying a small fee, often £1. Your child does not have to take part if you/they do not wish to. They will also be able to take part even if they do not pay.

Complaints

The school aims to work closely with parents and we hope that parents who have any concerns or anxieties will raise these with the class teacher or the headteacher. We find that nearly all concerns or potential complaints can be resolved quickly and satisfactorily through discussion. If such attempts to settle the complaint informally have failed, then we will follow formal procedures. Details of the complaints procedure for dealing with formal complaints to the Governing Body are available from the school office as well as the school website.