

St. Theresa's  
Catholic Primary School



*"We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God"*

# Parent Handbook

*- written by parents -  
for parents!*



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Welcome Bienvenue Bienvenida Accoglienza Powitanie Bem-vindo καλωσόρισμα  
to  
**ST THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

We are delighted that you have chosen to join our lovely school community and want to make this exciting yet possibly daunting time as easy as possible for you. Therefore, this handbook has been written by the parents for the parents, so that all the 'little' things that happen at the school aren't such a mystery for new parents and they aren't left to work them out for themselves. Thus you will be able to start school equipped with a better understanding of how it all works. As you probably know, St Theresa's is a small, popular Catholic school with only one class per year group, expect our bulge class in Year 4. The school has a close, nurturing feel and creates a caring atmosphere by asking the older children to help the younger ones. All children are encouraged to take on some responsibility appropriate for their age. The school aims to include you in all aspects of your child's schooling, from what they are studying in class to how the school is run, and aims to help you in supporting your child.

The teachers work hard to make the lessons creative, challenging, relevant, and above all, interesting for the children. The school also provides a broad range of culture-based enrichments, such as visits to restaurants or even the houses of parliament, to provide a frame of reference for the children with their learning, which they always really enjoy.

The school has a broad spectrum of people from all different backgrounds, so if you are out-going or shy, new to the area or know it well, we are delighted that you have joined us and wish to welcome you to St Theresa's.

## **School day:**

### **Procedure for the Start of the School Day:**

The school day officially starts at 8.50am and it is procedure that by this time children are in their classrooms ready for registration. The playground access gate is opened at 8.30am and children and parents can access the school playground from 8.30 onwards. Children should never be dropped at school before 8.30am to wait on their own outside the main school gate or in the driveway of the school without adult supervision. Children are only permitted to be left at the school from 8.30am. Parents and carers are welcome onto the school playground at this time if they so wish. From 8.40am children make their way to their classrooms to settle themselves and prepare for an 8.50am start. Parents must leave the playground once children go to their classes. Parents should not seek to speak to a teacher at this time as teachers are required to prioritise this time supervising the safe and secure arrival of pupils in the classroom. Should you need to speak to a teacher regarding an urgent matter for that day, this can be communicated through the school office. The office staff is happy to assist in any way they can. If you would like to discuss a matter with a teacher in more detail, a meeting can be scheduled. Impromptu meetings before school should be avoided.

The playground access gate is locked at 8.50am. If you arrive at school after 8.50am, children should go straight to the office and will access their classrooms through the school office entrance.

For working parents there is a breakfast club and a number of after school clubs. After school care is available, it is at Brooklands School in Hampstead Garden Suburb and St. Theresa's children using this service are collected from school and taken there.

### **Lunch breaks and playtimes:**

Infant morning break - 10:15am - 10:30am

Junior morning break - 10:35am - 10:50am

Infant lunch break - 12:00pm - 1:15pm

Junior lunch break - 12:15pm - 1:15pm

Infants have an additional afternoon break at 2:15pm until 2:30pm.

### **Afternoons:**

School finishes at 3:30pm. Reception, Year 1 & 2 (Infants) are to be collected from their respective classroom gates. Children in Year 3, Year 4 Blue, Year 5 and Year 6 (Juniors) will line up in the playground with their teachers and await collection from a parent. Children in Year 4 Red will line up on the ramp outside their classroom.

If you are late collecting your child, the remaining children will be brought to the hall and supervised by a member of staff until 4.00pm. Although this should bring you peace of mind on those occasions you cannot collect your child on time, it should not be misused. Please approach the school for a more convenient arrangement if you cannot regularly collect your child / children at 3:30pm.



### **Learning**

At the beginning of each academic year there is a curriculum meeting where the class teacher outline the curriculum for the coming year. During the course of the year there is a consultation evening at the end of the first and second terms as well as an open evening and end of year report in the third term. Each Year Group has a class rep who meets regularly with the head and the other class reps. Each Year also has a Link Governor.



### **Sports at St. Theresa's:**

St Theresa's organises both curricular and extra-curricular sports and activity clubs and an up to date list of these is to be found on the school website. Although the school itself only has the playground for use as outdoor space, it has access to the Wilf Slack Field facilities directly across the road from the school]. Presently the school partners up with 'All for Sport' and 'Non Stop Action' as sports provider entities. In school children learn a range of sports including gymnastics, games and athletics and there is a strong emphasis on fun games during PE lessons.

Children are also taught about the links with health during PE. PE in school is taught imaginatively and the children enjoy their lessons. Depending on which of the two days of the week your child is doing PE he or she will either put their PE kit on in the morning at home and remain in it throughout the school day or take their PE kit in and get changed at school

Swimming is taught in Key Stage 2. Years 5 & 6 in the Autumn Term and Year 4 in the Spring Term. The children have weekly swimming lessons at Copthall pool.



**Parent consultations:**

In Reception, parents are invited to two parent planning meetings throughout the year and these meetings are used to help the teacher plan for each child individually. In Year 1 - 6 there are two parent consultation evenings per year, one in the Autumn Term and one in the Spring Term, followed by an end of year report in the Summer Term.

**Extra-curricular sports and clubs:**

There are lots of clubs which run in-school (or on the Wilf Slack Fields) at the end of the school day. These include various sports and other physical games such as football, tri-golf and dodgeball by way of example. They change on a regular basis. Some of these are free whilst others are charged, usually on a termly basis. At the time of writing those after school sports/games clubs that are free are ordinarily on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The sports/clubs are listed on the school website or you can pick up a list from the school office. Letters are regularly sent home about these clubs and activities and you can apply for your child to join. Some of them are oversubscribed however so you need to be relatively quick or your child may have to join a waiting list for a short time. Usually children must commit, and parents pay for, a minimum of half a term at a club. Sports and clubs finish at around 4.30pm.

As with most schools there is an annual sports day and all parents are of course invited to this to cheer on their children. Some children may also be asked to participate in the cross-schools Barnet sports day.



Instrumental lessons are available at school. Instruments taught are: violin, recorder and flute (NB. flute lessons are only available from Yr3). Letters inviting new pupils and those wishing to continue are sent out in June but there is only a limited number of slots available so book quickly to avoid disappointment.



### **Trips and Outings**

Being within close proximity to London and having excellent transport links the school is able to, and does, offer a variety of trips and visits to various institutions. There are at least two trips per year and these trips include museum and art gallery visits, as you would expect, but also more unusual excursions, such as to the Roald Dahl museum in Buckinghamshire for example. Usually your child will arrive home with a sheet of paper in his or her book bag which relates to the excursion and you will find a 'tear off' slip at the bottom which will ask you to give your consent and if there is a charge for the trip you shall be informed. You can return this, with payment, via your child or directly to the school office. Costs of such trips are reasonable and will usually involve the child travelling by coach or tube. Sometimes if trips or excursions are local - such as a sports competition at the Saracens rugby stadium - parents may be asked if they can volunteer to share lifts and/or take other children. So if you have a 7-seater car for example you may find yourself in demand from time to time! Any



assistance in this regard is always appreciated and it can be both enjoyable and informative seeing your child's natural interactions in their school environment. There is a residential trip in both year 5 and year 6 and the children traditionally love these. Direct contact during the trips is limited but the school keeps parents updated by text throughout the time that the child is away. The trips are often to PGL establishments ([www.pgl.co.uk](http://www.pgl.co.uk)) which are excellent and are in lovely locations such as in Wiltshire and on the Isle of Wight. The year 6 trip in particular - along with the end of year 6 party - is used to mark the transition of those children to secondary school and has a wonderful atmosphere. The children return really enthused and somehow seem to have increased in maturity.



### **School access and procedures:**

#### **Arriving At School in the Morning**

Many families walk to school, but some families do need to drive. In this case it is always encouraged that families should aim to 'park and stride'. Residential roads such as Litchfield Grove and Briarfield Ave are close to the school and generally provide parking opportunities a short walk from the school gates. One can also walk through the cricket grounds between Briarfield Ave and East End road to school. East End Road and Manor View are both very busy and tricky for parking and using the car park of PureGym is not advised.

The slip road at the school gate entrance is a residential road and all efforts should be made to respect the local residents and our school neighbours.

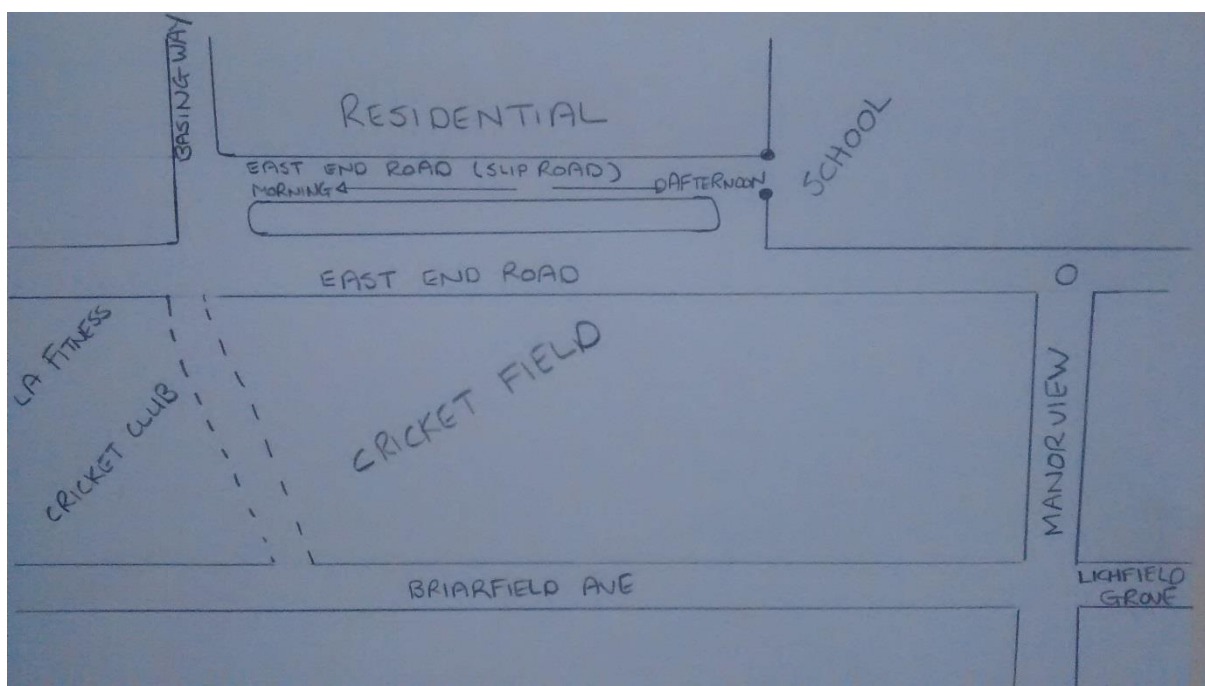
Should you be using the road in the morning then the school and parents have agreed that the road should be accessed from the school end and exited on the far end. The reverse procedure is followed for the end of the school day when parents are asked to access from the far end and exit from the school gate end. This is not an official road procedure, so should a Finchley resident be driving in the opposite direction to you, despite the time of day, it is expected that you are polite at all times and make way if possible. Please do not park across and block any residential driveway. Likewise, please do not park on the pavements or on any jagged lines. This is a health and safety procedure and

parents are warned that random ticketing and fining is common. The school driveway should never be used by parents. If a parent is 'dropping' their child at the school gates via the slip road, extra care should always be taken. The school has a bicycle rack near the school office entrance where bikes can be safely locked for the day and a scooter park at the entrance of the playground access gates where scooters can be safely stored during the school day.

### Collecting Children after School

Safe parking and 'park and stride' are once again advised for the end of the day school pick up procedure. The school day finishes at 3.30pm. Parents and carers are able to access the school playground at 3.30pm. Parents and carers with infant pupils will collect them directly from the classroom gate. Junior pupils are brought onto the school playground at the end of the day and a supervised handover to a parent or carer takes place. If you are little late for pick-up, children are taken to the school hall where they are supervised until they are collected. If your child is not collected by 4pm, the school will contact you. Children in Year 6 are permitted to walk home alone if written consent is provided by the parent. Children are not allowed to walk to the car park gate or wait outside on the street. The child's safety is of huge importance. The school are very committed to the handover of the child.

If you are collecting your child after a school club or activity at 4.30pm, children will be brought to the school office door and a supervised handover to a parent or carer takes place.





### **School Dinners & Packed Lunch:**

Children in Reception up until the end of Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal but can bring in a packed lunch if they would rather. From Year 3, School lunches have to be paid for. If you wish your child to stop having school dinners at any stage you need to inform Mrs Orsi in the office. She will require at least one week's notice in writing before half term to make any amendments to the lunch register and to inform the kitchen of the correct numbers.



### **Home Learning:**

'Homework' is known as Home Learning at St. Theresa's. All classes, are given Home Learning tasks every week.

In Key Stage 1, children will receive one piece of written home learning and one piece of "talk" home learning per week. Further details about your child's home learning will be given at the curriculum meeting at the beginning of the Autumn Term. They will also be given spelling words to learn which will be tested the following week. These spellings will include key words and words including the sounds covered in phonics sessions. Copies of the spelling tests will be sent home so that parents can see their child's progress.

Children in Y3 and Y4 will receive 2 pieces of home learning per week, plus spellings. Children will also have a mental maths topic to practise at home and will complete a mental maths test once a week.

Children in Y5 and Y6 will receive 3 pieces of Home-Learning a week, which must be handed in on the next school day unless the learning takes the form of a short project.

### **Reading books:**

Reading Books are changed once a week. These are selected by the children according to their reading level. Children should also read books from home or the library. Reading books and diaries must be brought to school **every day**. Each year will also be given the opportunity to visit the school library once a week where they can choose an additional book to take home. The book is due back the following week and a new book may not be checked out until the previous one has been returned.



### **School council:**

The school council is made up of pupil representatives from each class from Year 1 to Y6. A boy and a girl from each class are elected by their peers. The school council meet regularly with staff to discuss ways of improving school life from the perspective of the pupil. Most recently they provided a valuable contribution to the design of the new playground. The school council will refer back to their class and feedback and forth from pupils to staff on points for consideration raised by pupils.

### **Buddy system:**

Starting school and entering the playground is quite a milestone for four year olds. To assist this learning curve and welcome the Reception class to the playground, our school uses a Buddy System. Each Reception child is given a Year 6 child as their 'buddy'. Buddies are essentially an older guardian child on the playground for the new Reception child and it is common for a lovely relationship to develop between the two. The Buddy system is there to ensure Reception children are never lonely and always have an older child to go to for help. It is tradition at Christmas and at the end of the year for the buddies to exchange gifts.

## Friends

The Friends of St. Theresa's School are a very active parents association with the main aim of raising money to buy equipment and resources to help the children in our School. We do this by holding events such as a Summer Fair, Christmas Fair, School Discos, quiz nights, race nights and dances. These are all very fun and enjoyable social occasions when parents and children get together to raise money for the school. When you join the School you will automatically become a member of this association. The Friends of St Theresa's meet regularly to discuss events. We are a friendly bunch and warmly welcome any new members. Please look out for dates of meetings and try to come along if you can. As well as a way of supporting the school, it is a great way of getting to know other parents at the school and make new "Friends". You don't have to make a big commitment - a little help is better than none!

## Reward systems

At St Theresa's effort and kind and compassionate behavior is rewarded.

### Reception

- Each pupil has their own sticker reward chart. They get a sticker for good work. When the chart is full they show it to the Head or Deputy Head and get a special 'Head or Deputy Head Award' sticker.
- Each week the class teacher chooses a 'Star of the week' and whoever is chosen takes home 'Ollie the Owl' and his diary, in which they write about their weekend with Ollie.

### Whole school

- Every week two pupils are chosen, from each class, and awarded a certificate in assembly for work or something special that they have done.
- House points: There are 4 houses; St Andrew's, St David's, St. George's, and St. Patrick's. Pupils earn House Points for effort, good work or behaviour for example. Each week in assembly the points are counted. At the end of the year the pupils in the House with the most points get a reward.



## **Safeguarding**

It is every child's right to be cared for and protected from harm. It is every person's responsibility to make sure that happens.

Each school is required to nominate a senior teacher with responsibility for Child Protection issues. This is currently Mrs Pears and Mrs O'Melia.

If you are worried that a child is being abused or neglected you should share your concerns with Mrs Pears or Mrs O'Melia. They will ensure the correct procedures are followed. This may involve outside agencies such as Barnet's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or social care.

An alternative Designated Child Protection contact is Mr Troy, Miss Johnson or Mrs Holland.

E-safety has an increasingly high profile in society and is a focus for staff and children at St Theresa's school. We teach internet safety and will contact parents/carers if we are made aware of any potentially unsafe behaviour children are engaging in.

Several key policies can be found on the school website [www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk](http://www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk) under the policies tab or obtained from the School Office, including:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- E-safeguarding Policy
- Anti - Bullying Policy
- Personal code of conduct policy
- Educational Visits Policy

## **FAQs**

### **What if my child is ill?**

You should ring the school before 8.30am to let them know that your child is unwell. If you don't ring, the school will send you a text to ask you to get in touch and explain their absence. Please try to make routine doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours. Let the school know in advance if you do have an appointment during school time. (NB You may be asked to provide evidence, such as appointment card.)

### **What if we are late in the morning?**

If you are going to be a few minutes late, then you will need to enter the school building through the office entrance (to the right as you approach the school). Late arrivals are recorded. If you are going to be later than 9.15am, you should ring the school to explain. If your child has a school meal, the school needs to know whether or not your child will be in school by 9.15am.

It really does help your child - and their class and teacher - to be in school on time, as it provides a calm, smooth and productive start to the day, so please try not to be late.

### **What if I am late collecting my child?**

First of all, don't panic, your child will be safe. If you are unavoidably late, the children will be taken into the school hall and will wait for you. If you will be more than a few minutes, you should call the school to let them know you are on your way, especially so they can reassure your child. After 3.40 pm, you may need to enter the school via the office entrance, as the side gate is usually locked.

### **What if someone else is picking up my child?**

You should tell the class teacher in the morning if someone other than a parent/regular carer is collecting your child. If this isn't possible, contact the school during the day to let them know, so they can pass it on to the teacher.

### **What if my child has lost an item of uniform?**

If your child has mislaid part of their uniform, you can check in the lost property basket, which is located in the entrance foyer (outside the literacy/medical room). If you are certain that it isn't there, go to the office as they may be able to help further by texting the class parents and asking them to check their children's bags. It really does help in this situation if you have clearly marked the uniform with your child's name, so that it can be easily identified.



