

Welcome to



Clarendon School
Primary Centre

An introduction to Star's Class

Getting Children Ready for School Information Handbook for Parents and Carers



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Welcome to Star's Class

Starting a new school is an exciting and sometimes daunting milestone. At Clarendon School Primary Centre, we aim to create a feeling of warmth and security within a structured, stimulating environment. We view all students as unique individuals and work in close partnership with parents to provide valuable experiences that lay the foundation for future development.

We hope this is the beginning of a long and happy association with our school family!

About This Booklet

Inside, you will find general information about the school, with a special focus on Star's Class and how it runs, with a focus on a smooth and effective transition. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to speak with a member of staff or visit our website. You can also watch our school film, '*Our Little Dreams*', and listen to our school song on our homepage.

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Starting Together & Partnering with Families

At Clarendon, we proudly operate an open-door policy. We believe that a strong, supportive partnership between home and school is the absolute key to your child's success.

The First Day and Settling In

We are delighted to welcome parents and carers to join their child for their first morning in Star's Class at **8:50 am on Monday 7th September 2026**. Please enter through the Star's Class gate, which leads directly into our outside learning area.

Every child settles into a new school at their own pace, and we are here to support you both. To help your child feel secure, one parent or carer is welcome to stay in the classroom until either breakfast time (**9:15 am**) or when the class goes to assembly (**9:30 am**). Please do not worry if your child takes a little longer to adjust—by working together, we will help them feel right at home.

Star's Class Team

- **Teachers:** Angela Mason & Sinead Allen



- **Nursery Nurse:** Sarah Black



- **Class Support:** Star's Class is supported by our Nursery Nurse alongside a dedicated team of additional Teaching Assistants to care for the children throughout the school day.

Your Child's Key Person

In September, your child will be matched with a dedicated key person who will work closely with them. Alongside the class teachers, they will carefully monitor your child's development and progress throughout the year. Each key person looks after a small group of children within Star's Class, allowing them to build deep connections with their group while ensuring every family feels safe, valued, and supported.

Family & Administrative Support

- **Family Support Workers:** Julie is our Family Engagement Coordinator. She is based at the Primary Centre on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please contact the school office to arrange a chat with her.
- **Queries or Concerns:** Feel free to have a quick chat with your child's key person or class teachers at drop-off or pick-up. For urgent issues, speak directly to any member of the Star's Class team. For longer discussions, we are always happy to arrange a dedicated meeting time.
- **Termly Progress Meetings:** Once a term, you will be invited to a formal meeting to discuss your child's wonderful progress, achievements, and next steps. Dates will be shared via our handy school texting and emailing service.

Meeting Individual Needs & Classroom Routines

Working with Your Child's Current Education Setting

To make your child's transition to Clarendon as seamless as possible, our team works closely with their current setting to share transition notes. With your permission, we also connect with any external specialists—like speech therapists and OTs—to review existing care plans or communication systems (like PECS). This behind-the-scenes teamwork ensures that your child's familiar routines and sensory preferences are ready and waiting for them in September.

Integrated Therapy Teams

We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated clinical team at Clarendon Primary Centre. We have onsite Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists, alongside regular access to an Educational Psychologist. These professionals work directly alongside our classroom teaching teams to provide holistic, tailored, and integrated support for students within their daily school environment.

Tailored Teaching Techniques

Our staff carefully consider each student's individual developmental stage. To help them take their next steps, we integrate a variety of specialized, evidence-based teaching techniques into our daily routine, including:

- **Communication & Visual Support:** Makaton, Communication Aids (AAC), Visual Timetables, and Cued Articulation.
- **Targeted Frameworks:** SCERTS, Attention Autism (bucket activities), Intensive Interaction, and TEACCH.
- **Regulation & Well-being:** Individualized sensory diets and daily access to the sensory room.

Medical & Welfare Support

Heidi is our Welfare Coordinator and will support you with any medication your child needs to take regularly at school. To ensure we have everything safely in place, please make sure you have completed and returned the relevant medical paperwork from your welcome pack before September.

Well-being and Belonging

'This Is Me' Booklets & One-Page Profiles

To help us understand what makes your child unique and to ensure they feel safe from their very first day, we use two lovely, low-pressure tools during our autumn transition: the **'This Is Me' Book** and a **One-Page Profile**.

No one knows your child better than you do. Instead of just asking for standard medical and developmental history, we invite you to share the things that truly

capture who they are. These insights directly support our *Best Start in Life* approach, which focuses on minimizing transitional stress and prioritizing your child's emotional safety.

The 'This Is Me' Book

We ask each family to send in 5 to 10 photographs of familiar people, pets, and favorite activities. We will use these comfort photos to create a personalized booklet your child can hold, look at, and share whenever they need a little extra reassurance during the school day.

Your Child's One-Page Profile

This is your space to tell us everything you want us to know about your child so we can support them best. We invite you to share:

- **What people love most about them:** Their strengths, joys, and what makes them smile.
- **How they communicate:** The specific words, gestures, or symbols they use to express themselves.
- **Their unique sensory needs:** What overstimulates them, what calms them down, and their favorite ways to self-regulate.

Your insights ensure we can set up the classroom to be a safe, predictable, and deeply welcoming space for your child right from the start.

Co-Regulation and Familiar Storytelling at Home

Processing a major transition can cause a rise in anxiety and sensory overload. Over the summer holidays, you can use highly visual tools to help your child process the upcoming change:

- **Visual Stories:** Sharing simple picture books about school or talking about the pictures in this handbook is a wonderful, zero-pressure way to help your child feel curious and secure about their new adventure.
- **Emotional Check-ins:** Use simple visual emotion charts (like a Zones of Regulation layout or smiley-face charts) at home to help your child identify and communicate how they are feeling about school, ensuring they feel heard and understood.

Meet Jack, Our School Therapy Dog!



Jack is our incredibly friendly Cocker Spaniel. While based in Comets Class, he regularly visits Star's Class to see the children. Jack is training as an official school therapy dog and supports our pupils' well-being by:

- **Providing Emotional Support:** Aiding with sensory regulation, calming, and soothing anxiety.
- **Encouraging Personal Growth:** Boosting self-esteem, developing empathy, and building emotional literacy.
- **Developing Life Skills:** Helping children overcome dog phobias and teaching them how to interact safely and confidently with animals in the community.

Celebrating Diversity & Milestones

- **Birthdays:** We love making our students feel special on their big day! If you would like to send in a birthday treat for the class to share, please ensure any items strictly contain no nuts.
- **Festivals & Cultures:** Throughout the year, we celebrate a wide variety of festivals and special days to help our children understand the diverse cultures and religions in our community. You are always welcome to share your own traditions!

Developing Independence and Self-Care

Curriculum & Daily Routines

In Star's Class, we follow the EYFS Framework through a balance of adult-directed activities and child-led learning.

- **The Morning Routine:** Children begin at 8:50 am with active learning inside and outside, followed by breakfast and assembly.
- **Focused & Free-Choice Learning:** Throughout the day, students participate in early reading, maths, music, and storytime, alongside free-choice activities like mark-making, construction, art, role play, and sand/water play.

School Readiness: Summer Home Activities

School readiness is about everyday confidence rather than academic ability. Over the summer months, you can beautifully support your child's independence through simple, daily routines at home:

- **Growing Independence:** Practice putting on coats and doing up zips, pulling up underwear and trousers after using the bathroom and putting footwear on and off.
- **Listening & Engaging:** Enjoy regular storytelling sessions where your child practices listening to a short story or following simple, one-step or two-step instructions through playful games like 'Simon Says', pairing your words with natural gestures or signs (e.g., "Shoes on, then coat").
- **Healthy Routines:** Ahead of September, help your child adjust to school timings by establishing consistent bedtimes and morning routines. For extra practical advice on independent self-care, we highly recommend visiting the national network at www.startingreception.co.uk.
- **Toilet Training (if ready):** If your child is showing signs of readiness for toilet training, the summer holidays can be a wonderful, relaxed time to introduce a routine. However, please do not worry if they are not there yet—we meet every child at their individual stage of personal care and will fully support them. For fantastic, SEND-friendly visual schedules and toilet training guides, we highly recommend the national charity ERIC (www.eric.org.uk).

[Space for photos: Star's Classroom | Our Outside Area | The Big Playground | The Dining Hall | The Sensory Room]

Hydration, Eating & Independence

- **Hydration:** Fresh drinking water is always available. Please send a named water bottle if your child is not yet using an open cup. If they do drink from an

open cup, let us know and we will provide one to continue developing that independent skill.

- **Snacks:** We ask families to send in healthy snacks at the start of each week to be shared during group snack time (such as raw vegetables, rice cakes, or breadsticks).
- **Mealtimes:** We provide fruit, toast, cereal, water, and milk for breakfast every morning. For lunch, all primary-aged children are entitled to a free school meal with daily vegetarian options. If sending a packed lunch, please note that sweets, glass bottles, fizzy drinks, and cans are prohibited.

Strictly Nut Free

We have students and staff with severe, life-threatening allergies. Please do not send any nut products into school under any circumstances. This includes peanut butter, Nutella, and tree nuts.

Uniform and All-Weather Learning

School Uniform & Sensory Comfort

We expect all students to wear our school uniform, which can be purchased affordably from local supermarkets (items with logos are available at the school office).

- **Sensory Adjustments:** If your child has sensory sensitivities to standard clothing, please speak to their key person or class teacher so we can work together on a comfortable, uniform-based solution.
- **Managing the Mess:** True active learning is messy! Please send your child wearing uniform items that you do not mind getting dirty during daily mud, sand, and paint play.



All-Weather Gear & Personal Care Packing List

Please send your child with a standard book bag or small reusable tote bag rather than a large backpack due to limited cloakroom space. Please ensure every item is clearly labelled with your child's name:

- **All-Weather Gear:** Wellington boots, a fully waterproof coat and trousers (or an all-in-one puddlesuit), and seasonal gear (hats/gloves for winter; sun hat/sun cream for summer).
- **Spare Clothes:** A complete change of spare uniform kept in a small bag to remain at school.
- **Personal Care:** A regular stock of pull-ups and wipes, if your child requires support with changing.
- **Jewellery Policy:** Because our days are so active, no jewellery (including watches) may be worn. Plain ear studs are allowed; hoops are strictly prohibited.

Important Safety Information & Essential Reminders

Documentation

To ensure your child is safe, happy, and fully supported from day one, it is vital that we receive all of your completed paperwork from your information pack before school starts, including:

- Up-to-date contact details and reliable emergency numbers
- Detailed medical information and medication consents
- Photograph permissions
- Daily collection details (confirming family collection or school transport)

Punctuality & Absences

- **Drop-off & Pick-up:** The gate opens at **8:50 am** (please arrive by **9:00 am**) and opens again at **3:00 pm** for home time. Please be prompt for afternoon collection as delays can be distressing for a child.
- **Illness & The 48-Hour Rule:** Please keep your child home if they have a fever, vomiting, or diarrhoea. Children must not return to school until a full **48 hours** have passed since their last bout of illness. Please telephone the school office to report absences. Term-time holidays will not be authorised.

Safeguarding

At Clarendon, the safety and welfare of our pupils are our absolute priorities.

- **Our Policy:** Our Safeguarding Policy outlines the clear, legal steps we take if any concerns arise regarding a child's safety.
- **Raising a Concern:** If you ever have a concern about the welfare or safety of any pupil, please speak directly and immediately to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via the school office.

Welcome to the Clarendon Family!

We believe that parents, children, and staff are true partners, and by working together, we can achieve amazing things. We are so excited to welcome your child to Star's Class at **8:50 am on Monday 7th September 2026**. Thank you for partnering with us to provide the very best care and education for your child!