



'the unhurried school'

**Freshford Church of England Voluntary
Controlled Primary School**

PARENTS' HANDBOOK

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Headteacher: Anne Forrest



LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Welcome to Freshford School.

The pace of change in schools is currently accelerating faster than at any other period in history and the attributes which will be required of your children, as they progress through primary towards secondary and tertiary education and the world of work, are radically different to those previously demanded.

At Freshford we have already embraced this change and are committed to fostering invaluable skills such as creativity, adaptability, problem solving and team working in an atmosphere of collaborative learning where academic and social skills can freely flourish.

During their time at Freshford School your child may follow one of a number of routes up through the school dependent upon their age, maturity, personal needs and styles of learning at any one time. Although not all children follow the same route, each year group will remain together for four of their six years at school.

If you have any concerns or problems please do not hesitate to come and see me. As I have a very full diary it would be most helpful if you could initially speak with Helen Lorraine in order to find a mutually convenient time for a meeting.

This handbook is aimed at giving you a flavour of how our school operates. If you think we could have added something please let us know. We are constantly updating our handbook and prospectus and welcome feedback as to changes which could be made.

Our induction programme extends to the autumn term, with further information about our approach to literacy and numeracy.

We hope to work closely with you in achieving the best possible progress for your child throughout their time at Freshford.

ANNE FORREST

The Curriculum

Early Years' Goals for the Foundation Stage (3 – 6 years old)

The curriculum in the Reception Class follows the Early Years' curriculum as determined by the Department for Education & Skills (DfES).

We believe that the early years learning is a crucial foundation for all later education and is in itself an essential stage in each child's development. The Under-6 curriculum is planned to achieve readiness for statutory schooling in six areas of learning :

- Personal & Social development
- Language & Literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge and Understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

Children learn how to work, play and co-operate with others and to function in a group beyond the family. This helps them with important aspects of personal and social development. They also learn about the concepts of fair play, develop an ability to share and work co-operatively and an understanding that some children may be different and have special needs.

Communication, Language & Literacy

All children are encouraged to speak and listen. The foundation of the spoken word is an essential pre-requisite of writing and a child's general development. There are opportunities for free and structured writing.

Parents are encouraged to 'share' many forms of literature with their children. We work together to develop within the child a thirst for and love of books.

Problem Solving, Reasoning & Numeracy

Through practical activities children start to develop a foundation for numeracy. The work is focused on practical activities and on using and understanding language which leads to simple mathematical ideas. Simple written maths may be undertaken if the child is ready and confident. Numikon apparatus is used to support learning and understanding numbers.

Knowledge & Understanding of the world

Talking about plants, animals and the many other fascinating things in their environment, leads to a child's interest in and understanding of all the features of the natural world. This exploration is the foundation for later historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.

Physical development

Activities in play, both indoors and out, are directed to the development of physical control, mobility, manipulative skills and spatial awareness. Children handle appropriate tools, objects and constructions and experience malleable materials. The fact that these activities are enjoyable establishes positive attitudes towards a healthy and active way of life.

Creative development

This focuses on the development of the children's imagination and their ability to communicate and express ideas and feelings in creative ways. They do this through working with varied media – paint, brushes, plaster, clay and through role play in drama and responding to music.

Play

All parents know how vital play is- 'play is the work of the child' – and it is an indispensable teaching & learning strategy.

Whether it is structured or freestyle, it is essential for developing social relationships, language and all areas of the curriculum. The social play areas within the classroom are often linked to the topic for the term or half-term and have become Italian cafés, desert islands, seaside shops, post offices, and hospitals. Each class has a dedicated session of play in the 'Play Project'. Play equipment also includes large hollow building blocks and sand & water play.

As an intrinsic part of our school's ethos the Play Project is experienced by all children. This project has evolved over a period of time and is used successfully not only to develop interpersonal skills and raise self-esteem but to enhance opportunities for imagination and creativity to flourish.

Access to the curriculum for the disabled

Full access to the curriculum for these children is provided by

- deployment of internal staff who are constantly updating their professional training
- dedicated outside support ensuring the provision of specially adapted ICT hardware and software and specialist resources, eg books for the visually impaired
- careful planning by teachers of the curriculum in order to meet all needs

Withdrawal from collective worship

Our weekly collective worship is generally non-denominational and festivals and stories from all cultures are respected. As a Church of England School however many of our assemblies will relate to Christian beliefs. We also celebrate various Christian festivals throughout the year at St. Peter's Church in Freshford.

If you do not wish your child to take part in these activities please inform the headteacher.

Every child now receives a copy of 'The Children's Bible' (published by Hudsons) during their first year in school, these being funded by the local 'Younghusband Trust'.

Feeling at home

In order that our Foundation Stage children immediately feel secure when they join Freshford School they are allocated a Yr. 6 'buddy'. Thus they immediately have a friendly, helpful and sympathetic face showing them where everything and everybody lives and guiding them through the break and lunch periods.

It is normal to feel a little lost in new surroundings and whilst the whole community will be keen to make your child feel at home, you can feel secure in the knowledge that a particular Yr. 6 is helping your child adjust to their new surroundings and making sure they feel happy, safe and in the right place at the right time.



Healthy Eating 'Fruit for Schools' Scheme

As a member of the government's 'Fruit for Schools' scheme, we provide a piece of fruit for all infant children at morning break. This ensures that half way through the morning every infant child is offered an apple, pear, banana, orange, mini-cucumber, carrot or strawberries dependent upon the season.

Junior children are encouraged to bring a piece of fruit / vegetable or fruit juice for morning break. We would ask that no crisps, cereal bars, sweets or fizzy drinks are brought to school this mid-morning break. These snacks should be kept in a separately named container and **not** in book bags. These snacks will be kept in the classroom box.

School Milk Scheme

In addition to the above fruit, all infant children are entitled to free milk at morning break until their fifth birthday. Please advise us if your child will **not** require milk.

Healthy Lunches

The school and governors have worked closely with the LA to produce healthy menus for meals prepared by our school kitchen. Processed food has been eliminated, as have colourings and additives, with a greater emphasis being placed on fresh vegetables, meat and fruit. A vegetarian option is always available and should your child have specific dietary requirements, please let us know using the data collection sheet which you will receive.

The current cost of a school meal is currently £1.70 and we would appreciate a commitment for **at least one term** if you opt for your child to partake of these. Payment can be made for weekly or termly, with cheques made payable to 'Freshford Primary School'. Payment should be sent to school on a Monday morning in a clearly labelled envelope detailing your child's name, class and amount enclosed. Your child should hand this to her / his class teacher at morning registration.

Money should **not** be brought directly to the office.

If you prefer, your child may bring a packed lunch. Drinking water and cups are provided and we would ask that breakable flasks and bottles should not be brought to school. It is helpful if changes from packed lunch to school meals are made no less than on a termly basis. Packed lunch boxes will be stored adjacent to the school dining hall.

All children eat together in the dining hall, whether they are having school lunches or packed lunches. If you would like to come and join us for lunch to see our menus in operation you are most welcome. Please advise the office in advance so that we can book you a meal.

Free School Meals

From April 2007 children whose parents receive the following support payments are entitled to receive free school meals :

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £14,495.

If you think you may be eligible for the above please come to the office and we will give you the appropriate forms to complete.

National Healthy Schools Award

We were delighted to receive the 'Schools for Health' Award in recognition of the way in which our school community constantly moves towards adopting a positive attitude to diet, exercise and personal and emotional wellbeing.

Lunchtime supervision

The children are supervised throughout the lunch break by a team of mid-day supervisors (SMSA's), the majority of whom are parents of children at the school. A member of the teaching staff is always on duty at lunchtime.

Attendance

With the aim of improving school attendance in order to help raise attainment, it is now a statutory requirement that attendance targets are set and pupil absences are reported to the DfES on a termly basis.

Holidays

Term dates are included in this handbook. Children should not be taken out of school for holidays during term time, as they risk missing areas of work which are very carefully sequenced. If for any reason it is necessary to arrange a family holiday during term time, permission should be sought from the headteacher for the child to be absent and a yellow 'Request for Holiday' form must be completed . These forms are available in the school office. If, in exceptional circumstances, a two week family holiday needs to be taken during term time then this is considered to constitute the absolute maximum and requires two weeks' notice to headteacher and governors. We are however sympathetic to instances when visits to family overseas may mean that this period is exceeded.

Car parking

With a large proportion of children travelling to school by car parking has been a perennial problem at peak times due to the nature of our location. The Freshford Memorial Hall committee kindly allow parents to use their car park in the morning and afternoon and using this facility has made the school and surrounding roads very much safer. There is an informal and companionable group of children and parents ambling up and down at the beginning and end of the day.

With parents' co-operation we have largely eliminated parking on the pavement opposite the school. Just one car parked here forces pedestrians onto the road. Children could so easily be knocked down, so please park thoughtfully. Also, please be aware that parking on the hill coming down into the village from Limpley Stoke causes huge problems for drivers of delivery vehicles, local buses and the Ralph Allen coach. Cars parked on the hill, particularly near the corner, reduce visibility for other car drivers and pedestrians alike.

During Term 6 2007 we have had a very successful Walk on Wednesday initiative, with over 100 of our children joining organised walks to school on Wednesday mornings. This has made a huge impact on the roads surrounding the school and it would be wonderful if we could maintain the impetus in the coming terms.



Walk on Wednesday

Home / School Transport

A school bus, arranged by the Local Authority, may be used by children travelling from Hinton Charterhouse, Midford and Southstoke. Children are picked up from various points in the morning and a member of staff supervises the children on to the bus at the end of the school day. If you are interested in this service you should contact the Schools' Admissions & Transport Section at B&NES.

Should you use this service could you kindly advise us, in writing, of any specific changes in your child's travelling arrangements. We often have to delay the departure of the bus due to not knowing whether a child is travelling or not.

In the interests of health & safety, unless we receive written notice of a daily change in arrangements, children will automatically be placed on the bus. We cannot rely on children's understanding of their travel arrangements if they are constantly changing and are keen to avoid any misunderstandings.

Illness at school

In the unfortunate event of your child becoming unwell at school we will endeavour to contact you. It is therefore essential that you supply us with emergency contact numbers on your data collection sheet. In the event of an emergency - a sudden illness or accident - we would not hesitate to contact the emergency services in order that your child can receive the necessary expert care. Should it prove impossible to make contact with anybody listed on the contact sheet a member of staff will accompany your child to hospital

Prescription medicines

Should it be necessary for your child to receive prescription medicine whilst in our care we would normally be willing to administer this if we receive notice in writing. All prescription medicine should be clearly labelled with the child's name and dosage required. Without written permission we are unable to administer any medication.

Relevant medical information

Could you please ensure that we are advised of any medical conditions from which your child may suffer so that relevant members of staff are fully informed.

Asthma

Should your child suffer from asthma we would ask that an inhaler be kept at school so that this is accessible at all times. Please ensure that all inhalers are clearly marked with the child's name and dosage required and an indication of whether your child is able to self-administer their medication.

Infectious diseases

If your child is suffering from one of the usual childhood infections such as mumps or chickenpox, please ensure that they are kept at home for the recommended period of time in order to minimise potential infection of other children. Similarly, conditions such as conjunctivitis and impetigo, which are highly infectious, should be treated in the same manner.

Headlice

Headlice are a perennial problem, particularly when hair is clean and shiny!! Please let us know if you find any trace of headlice or their eggs so that we can alert other parents in your child's class. It is advisable to check your child's hair on a regular basis and treat if necessary. As well as harsher chemical treatments, there are many alternative remedies now available. A fine toothed comb used daily is as good as anything else to keep this problem at bay, particularly if used in combination with a conditioner after shampooing.

It is essential that should your child be affected by these persistent visitors, all members of the family are treated in order to help eradicate the problem! If not, the cycle continues and others are inevitably infected.

Listening to children

As a school we hold the Children's Society Children's Charter. This is in recognition of the many ways in which we empower children to communicate freely and know that their voice is heard. Children of all ages at Freshford School feel comfortable talking not only to their class teacher but to the many other adults working within the school. Representatives from all junior classes now sit on a School Council and the opinions and ideas of infants and juniors alike are put forward to the Council.

Child Protection

We fully recognise our responsibilities with regard to child protection and strive to provide a secure environment for your children where there is an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance. Through our Personal, Social and Health Education programme we raise awareness of such issues in order to develop assertiveness and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe. We have a designated teacher for Child Protection issues.

Health & Safety

Our comprehensive Health & Safety Policy is aimed at providing a safe environment for all who work within or are visitors to our school. Premises governors carry out regular health and safety inspections in order that any issues can be quickly resolved.

In the interests of the safety of all and B&NES guidelines, dogs are not permitted on the school site and ball games are not allowed before or after the school day. Following damage to the grounds the use of skateboards is not permitted. Whilst recognising that children may use scooters or bicycles to travel to and from school, we would ask that these are **not** ridden in the playground.

Our duty of care to your children extends beyond the limits of a rigid enforcement of health & safety and we encourage children, within a safe environment, to experiment and learn to assess the sorts of calculated risks they will encounter in the wider world.



Screen printing during Industry Week

Preparing your child for school

Starting school is a big event and there are some simple things you can do to help make this a process as seamless as possible. The school day is a tiring one for a small child and it is advisable to keep extra-curricular activities to a minimum for the first few weeks of term in order that your child has sufficient rest, particularly after a long summer holiday. A good bedtime routine with early nights does make a big difference and ensure that your child is alert when they commence school in the morning.

Your child should be able to use the toilet independently when they come to school. It is really helpful during activities such as PE if your child can cope with dressing / undressing with a minimum of assistance. If your child finds laces difficult to manage, then buckled or Velcro fastening shoes make life easier for everybody.

It is helpful to all concerned if you can ensure that your child is brought to school punctually in time for morning registration at 8.55am since children settle much more quickly if they do not have to enter an already established group. Your child should arrive at school no earlier than 8.45am. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings children will go straight to their classroom when the morning bell is rung at 8.55am. On Friday morning however all children line up in the playground to say good morning.

At certain times of the year individual classes hold special assemblies on a Friday morning and you are warmly invited to join us on these occasions. All such assemblies will be noted on the termly diary which you will receive with your regular school newsletters.

Similarly, please endeavour to be at school by 3.15pm so that your child sees a familiar face as soon as the school day is over. If your pick up arrangements should change, please advise the

school office so that we know if your child is going home with somebody else.

George Class

George Class (Foundation & Year 1)

Class teacher : Ms. Samantha Mosley

Teaching Assistant : Mrs. Mandy Moon

A whole school organisation chart will be issued in the first newsletter of Term 1 2007.

Our uniform

With the changing seasons it no longer seems appropriate to refer strictly to uniform worn in the Spring / Summer and Autumn / Winter. However our uniform for the winter months consists of grey shorts/trousers/skirt/pinafore worn with navy or white polo shirt and school sweatshirt and in summer girls may choose to wear a blue and white gingham dress or skirt. Polo, T shirts, sweatshirts and fleeces, all bearing the school logo, are available from the school shop which is run by the PTA. You may also purchase girls' blue gingham summer dresses and skirts, hand-made by one of our parents. All these items may be viewed in the school shop or at one of the Foundation Stage induction days.

Your child will require a school book bag and it would be most helpful if, in addition to being clearly labelled with your child's name, these bags bore some other identifier, such as a coloured ribbon attached to the handle, in order that they are easily identifiable by the children.

No food should be kept with reading books in these bags.

Toys

It is acceptable for your child to bring 'something' small to play with during recreational breaks. However these can get lost or

damaged so please be mindful of your child's choice. We talk in general terms about 'caring and sharing' but can give no assurances that these 'things' will not be damaged or lost. As you can imagine we do not have time to look for mislaid cars/robots/dolls/sticks..... !

Indoor / Outdoor shoes

Children change their shoes when arriving at school and again at other times of the day dependent upon their being inside or outside. Inside shoes may be any soft soled shoes or slippers and outdoor shoes should be sensible footwear other than trainers. Outside shoes, together with children's coats, are stored adjacent to the classrooms.

PE Kit

Your child will require a PE kit comprising shorts, T-shirt and black daps. T-shirts bearing the school logo are available from the uniform shop. This PE kit will be stored in individual PE boxes bearing your child's name and stored in pigeon holes in the PE store adjacent to the school hall. It should remain in school during term time.

Art/D&T/Food technology aprons/shirts

All children should keep in school an apron or old shirt to protect their clothing when using art, design and technology or food materials.

Spare knickers/pants/socks

As we all know, 'accidents' can happen, particularly when young children find themselves in unfamiliar surroundings. When your child first starts school please send in a spare pair of knickers/pants/tights or socks for the first few weeks just in case.....these can be kept in your child's PE box.

Accidents

Any accidents, however small, are recorded in our accident book. In the event of your child receiving a bump to the head, which

may occur as a result of a fall or when two children run into each other, we shall send home a note indicating when and how the incident occurred and exactly where the bump was sustained. The younger children will receive a sticker as well so that you are immediately aware of what has happened. Whilst we have qualified first aiders in school we will always endeavour to contact parents / carers in the event of any accident of a serious nature. We obviously monitor closely any child who receives any form of trauma during the day.

Communication School / Home ... Home / School Helping us to help you / Helping you to help us

The pace of change within schools is enormous, with much happening on a daily basis. We endeavour to keep you updated about what is happening via newsletters and a diary showing important dates. A copy of these is placed in the school notice board adjacent to George Class. Because we try to let you have information well in advance, sometimes our diary is subject to changes beyond our control. Although we try to keep you constantly informed of all that is happening, there are occasions when letters are not received or amendments are unclear. If there are any anomalies please come and tell us in the school office so that we can resolve this immediately.

All newsletters, letters, leaflets, slips, etc., are sent home via your child's book bag. Should you have more than one child at school this information will come home via the elder sibling. Staff physically put this correspondence into the book bags of our Infants but as the children mature and move further up the school they have a greater responsibility for ensuring that what is handed to them makes it home! Please check your child's book bag nightly to see if there is any correspondence from school. Should your child be absent from school your copy of all correspondence is kept in the child's class register pending their return.

Similarly, should you send any notes, money, correspondence from home to school, this should be handed by your child at

morning registration **directly to your child's class teacher** and not to the office.

Parent / Teacher Consultations

Parent consultations with teachers are embedded in the school calendar during the week prior to both the October and February holidays. This gives you the opportunity to see how your child has settled in to their new class and how they are progressing during the year. A written report is sent home at the beginning of July and at the same time you are warmly invited to an open morning / afternoon when your child can share their work with you and show you around their school. We look forward to seeing many of you at this time.

Special Weeks

Embedded in the school year we now have Arts, Book and Industry Weeks, about which you can read in our prospectus. The children work off timetable in a very focused and creative way during these exciting and informative weeks, often supported by outside 'consultants'. We welcome parental input and hope you will be able to join us and help with some of the activities taking place.

Swimming

Swimming sessions for junior children are now held in a weekly block for individual classes at Monkton Combe School in Term 1.

Peripatetic Music Lessons

Through B&NES Music Service we offer a variety of instrumental lessons for children at the school, currently clarinet, flute, guitar, harmonica, violin and voice. The majority of children taking these lessons are juniors but we follow Music Service guidance if younger children wish to partake. The cost of lessons is split between the number of children participating but is normally around £30 - £40 per term. If you would like any further details please come and see us in the office.

Clubs

We offer a wide range of lunch / after-school clubs, primarily for junior children. Currently these include :

Art	Chess	Clay
Cricket	Dance	Drama
Football	Gymnastics	Judo
Multi-skills	Orienteering	Singing
Tennis	Triball	Unihoc

The vast majority of these are delivered by outside providers and parents are advised at the beginning of the term exactly which clubs are available and their cost.

Parent Teacher Association

All parents automatically become members of the Parent Teacher Association. We cannot over-stress the vital contribution made by the PTA to enhancing the school's sense of community and providing additional funding for the benefit of the children.

The PTA committee, which is always keen to enlist new members, organises a range of social and fundraising events throughout the year which benefit not only the immediate school but also the wider community.

Your support is crucial to the smooth running of all these events, including a monthly cake stall, discos for the children, fashion shows, jumble sales, annual firework display - to name but a few. Your ideas and enthusiasm will hugely benefit the continued success of this valuable association.

Funds raised have contributed much to enhancing the children's learning through the purchase of books, games and play equipment, audio-visual and computer equipment and other invaluable resources. This year we were delighted that the PTA were able to fund Arts and Industry Week and enable the children to experience a stimulating week of screen printing, patchwork, weaving,

soap modelling, T shirt printing, traditional singing and dancing, canal art and superb week of African dancing, drumming, puppetry and sculpture which was enjoyed by the whole school community.

If you would like to become involved and have time or ideas to offer, then please come and tell us or talk to one of the current PTA committee.

School Governors

We are extremely fortunate in having an enthusiastic Board of Governors who are committed to maintaining and furthering the success of our school. They work hard on our behalf in numerous ways and our parent governors meet informally with parents during the year to hear your views and discuss any burning issues you may wish to raise.

Should you be interested in joining our governing body do keep an eye on our newsletters in case a parent governor vacancy should arise or come to the office and see Helen Lorraine, who is also Clerk to the Governors.



Junior residential camp Summer 2007

‘The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn’ John Lubbock

**SCHOOL TERM DATES
ACADEMIC YEAR 2007 / 2008**

Term 1

Start Monday 3 September 2007
INSET DAYS Monday 3 / Tuesday 4 September 2007
Finish Friday 19 October 2007

Term 2

Start Wednesday 31 October 2007
Finish Wednesday 19 December 2007

Term 3

Start Thursday 3 January 2008
Finish Friday 15 February 2008

Term 4

Start Monday 25 February 2008
Finish Friday 4 April 2008

Term 5

Start Monday 21 April 2008
Finish Friday 25 July 2008

Further INSET days (staff training - school closed):

Friday 19 October 2007
Friday 4 July 2008
Friday 25 July 2008

