



## MINCHINHAMPTON C of E PRIMARY ACADEMY

### PARENT/CARER INFORMATION BOOKLET 2020-21

1. Contents
2. Welcome
3. School Vision
4. Church School

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5. The School Day
6. Term Dates 2020-21
7. Staff
8. Attendance
9. School Meals
10. Uniform
11. Medical
12. Before & After School Care
13. The Charter
15. Communications
16. Pastoral
17. Safeguarding & Special Educational Needs

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18. Learning
19. Curriculum
20. Wellbeing
23. Pupil Voice
24. Clubs & Extra-Curricular Activities

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27. Academies Trust
28. Parent Teacher Association

# WELCOME

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I love working in this school. Something really quite special exists in the ether in and around this village and the school can't help but be swept up in it. We are all passionate about learning, strongly committed to the school's vision and the place is run through with positivity, creativity and kindness.

*"I think Minch is different because we are all so close as a community"*

*(Year 6 Leaver)*

Our pupils bring as much to this equation as the adults. I think they are remarkable and deserve the best and I am proud that during their time here, they grow into confident, well-rounded individuals.

*"I enjoy being in my class because I like to learn in a happy environment"*

*(Year 3 Student)*

We believe education should be about self-empowerment for people, self-empowerment now and for a lifetime. As an institution, we would define a school's excellence as much by its fierce determination to keep trying as by its humble acceptance that it is not there yet; as much by its individuality as by its commitment to all the individuals within it.

Nick Moss

NICK MOSS  
HEADTEACHER



*"We feel equal in class. Other people don't come across as better than me.*

*They may know more about something but the teachers want us to share our learning"*

*(Year 6 Student)*

# SCHOOL VISION

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We cherish all the people in our school.

Our aim for them:

**'Life in all its fullness'**

For us, this means people who are flourishing:

- people who have the wherewithal to shape their own life well;
- people who take a delight in learning;
- people who are compassionate, who appreciate the value and preciousness of each and every person and all life on earth;

hence people who help to make the world a better place.

<https://www.minchacademy.net/our-vision-and-values/>

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At the heart of this school's vision is a commitment to all the people in it; to helping provide them with what they need in order to thrive, to search for meaning, to engage bravely and have hope, to dream big, live life well and smile plenty. To achieve our vision, we need to trust each other; to find connection; to actively listen to each other; to be kind; to be an ethical community.



We want our young people to develop a reverence for learning and to recognise they are part of something bigger than themselves. We look to avoid a culture of comparison; instead we look to nurture courage and humility; to recognise strength and appreciate variety, appreciate differences; to be fascinated by other people.

**We look to find what is great inside all of our children:**

**we want to dig it out and share it with the world.**

# CHURCH SCHOOL

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*'Life in all its fullness' (John 10.10)*

At the heart of our project there must be 'love'; our school needs to be 'a place where the future is bursting with possibility. A place where they are loved and can learn to love' (Debra Kidd, 2014). We look to follow Jesus's command to

**'Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'**

*'To love ourselves and support each other in the process of becoming real is perhaps the greatest single act.'* (Brené Brown)

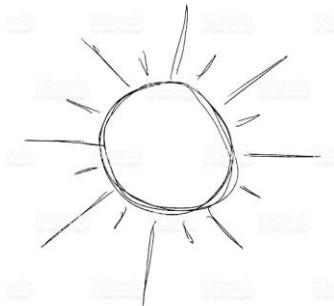
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We are inspired by many great leaders, like Jesus, who have always taught us to be radically humane; to celebrate the worth of everyone; to make space for hope, to avoid condemnation and to look beyond existing rules and conventional wisdom to do what is right and good. Jesus's teachings require us to teach from the heart; to maintain a sense of awe and of limitless possibilities; to persevere in humility.

This school is inspired to extend its remit beyond the narrow confines of academic attainment to sponsor the thriving of every member of the school community in their broadest sense. We see it as our responsibility to guide children with the teachings of Jesus, to commit to a life of love and grace and to offer opportunities for our pupils, families, staff and volunteers to experience a life fully lived. In this way we look to build a thriving community of shining lights, as instructed in Matthew 5:16:

*'...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'*

We believe that Jesus taught us to *'...be an example...with your words, your actions, your love, your faith and your pure life' (1 Timothy 12:4)*. We look to live out these instructions in all that we do. We are guided by his radical hand to follow his lead and support our community to contribute positively to creation each and every day, to truly **'live'** our core values.



We recognise that not all members of our school community are Christian and follow the model of Jesus in embracing and including all members of our community, celebrating the message he gave both in his life and his parable of 'The Good Samaritan'; that all people are our neighbours. In doing so, we aim to encourage a community who are articulate advocates of justice, equality and change, towards a world where every person is valued as unique.

# THE SCHOOL DAY

When the school bell rings at 8.45am, the children will enter through the outside door of their classroom. Please bring your child to the following playground before school:



**Reception & Year 1**      **Rec/Year 1 Playground**  
**Year 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6**      **Bottom Playground**

Morning break is for the whole school and can, for some children, be a worry. So, to alleviate this, for the first few weeks, Reception children will have their break in the Reception playground with two members of staff.

<b>Morning Session</b>	8.45am - 12.15pm
<b>Morning Break</b>	10.50am - 11.05am
<b>Lunch Break</b>	12.15pm - 1.30pm
<b>Reception Lunch</b>	12.15pm
<b>KS1 Lunch</b>	12.30pm
<b>KS2 Lunch</b>	1.00pm
<b>Afternoon Session</b>	1.30pm - 3.10pm (Rec & Yr 1) 1.30pm - 3.15pm (Yr 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6)

**In Reception/KS1 we have a healthy eating policy at break time.** Children up to and including Year 2 receive a free piece of fruit from the government each day. Fruit and milk are provided during the morning session, before the children go out for morning break.

Free milk is available until your child is 5. Please sign up for **Cool Milk** via the link on the school website under **Parents > New Pupil Forms**. From the age of 5, milk is available but must be paid for by the parent or carer.

**NB: We are a NUT & EGG FREE school. We have some children and staff with allergies so please do not send any nuts, eggs, nut products or egg products into school. Please see pg. 9 for more information.**

**Please arrive in time to pick up your child from:**

<b>Reception &amp; Year 1</b>	<b>Rec/Year 1 Playground (3.10pm)</b>
<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Bottom Playground (3.15pm)</b>
<b>Year 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6</b>	<b>Middle Playground (3.15pm)</b>

By establishing a routine, you can help your child to be confident about their day. We ask you to be punctual at both ends of the day and maintain good attendance for your child. Please inform your child's teacher if you are giving permission for someone else to collect your child from school, in writing. Please try to avoid changing arrangements during the day but if you do, please let the school office know.

Children must be collected from their class teacher at pick-up. They are not allowed to leave the school premises unless they are with an authorised adult. Children in Reception, Year 1, 2 & 3 must be collected by an adult. Children in Year 4 may walk home with a sibling or alone, but only if the school office have a letter to advise of this. Year 5 & 6 children may walk home.



Teachers will be available to deal with any queries or problems after pick-up time, or you can make an appointment to see your child's class teacher with the school office. The phones in the school office will be answered at the following times: 8.30am – 9.30am and 2.30 pm – 4.30pm. Before school and at all other times you can leave a message. These will be listened to regularly.

# TERM DATES 2020-21

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## Autumn Term 1

Weds 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept – Weds 21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2020

*Autumn Half Term: w/c Mon 26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020*

## Autumn Term 2

Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov – Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020

**Inset Days: Tues 1<sup>st</sup> Sept, Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct & Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2020**

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## Spring Term 1

Tues 5<sup>th</sup> Jan – Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021

*Spring Half Term: w/c Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021*

## Spring Term 2

Tues 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb – Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2021\*

\*(No school on Bank Holiday Good Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr 2021)

**Inset Days: Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Jan & Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2021**

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## Summer Term 1

Mon 19<sup>th</sup> Apr – Fri 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021\*

\*(No school on Early May Bank Holiday Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021)

*Summer Half Term: w/c Mon 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021*

## Summer Term 2

Mon 7<sup>th</sup> June – Weds 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

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***Children attend school for 190 days in the 2020-21 Academic Year***

# STAFF

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Mr Nick Moss\* - Head Teacher  
Miss Kerry Tonner\* - Deputy Head  
Miss Emily Miles - Assistant Head  
Mrs Carol Wilson\* - Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

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## NURSERY:

Mrs Watt\* - Nursery Manager  
Mrs Hobbs - Assistant Manager

\* Designated Safeguarding Lead

## KEY STAGE 1

### Aqua Class (Rec/Year 1)

Class Teacher - Mrs Saeed  
TA - Mr Jansen  
LSA - Mrs Chard

### Midnight Class (Rec/Year 1)

Foundation Stage Coordinator &  
Class Teacher - Mrs Bugg  
TA - Mrs Young  
LSA - Miss Dangerfield

### Teal Class (Rec/Year 1)

Class Teacher - Mrs Jackson  
TA - Ms Morgan

### Indigo Class (Year 2)

Class Teacher - Miss Gittins  
TA's - Mrs Langston  
LSA - Mrs Hoppner

### Azure Class (Year 2)

KS1 Coordinator &  
Class Teacher - Mrs Hugginson  
TA - Mrs Dawks

## KEY STAGE 2

### Cyan Class (Year 3/4)

Class Teacher - Ms McCarron  
TA - Mrs Bays

### Sapphire Class (Year 3/4)

KS2 Coordinator, Deputy Head  
& Class Teacher - Miss Tonner  
TA – Mrs Shipton

### Royal Class (Year 3/4)

Class Teacher - Miss Griffiths  
TA - Mrs Payne

### Turquoise Class (Year 5/6)

Class Teacher - Mr Weinberger  
TA - Mrs Bainbridge

### Sky Class (Year 5/6)

Class Teacher - Mr Ricketts  
TA - Mrs Bailey

### Cobalt Class (Year 5/6)

Class Teachers - Mrs Aldridge & Miss Smith  
TA - Mrs McLaughlin

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## OFFICE STAFF:

Mrs Bennett - Office/Pastoral Manager  
Mrs Holbrow - Business Manager  
Miss James - Admin/Appeals &  
Admissions Assistant  
Mrs Said - Admin Assistant

## SPORTS COACH:

Mr Tovey

## LIBRARIAN:

Mrs Webb

## SITE MANAGER:

Mr Bennett

## MIDDAY SUPERVISORS:

Mrs Owen, Mrs Lawrence, Miss Ellis,  
Mrs Morgan, Miss C Richings,  
Miss T Richings, Miss Evans

# ATTENDANCE

## PUNCTUALITY

Pupils should try to be in the playground by 8.45 am. The register will be taken by 8.55am. If your child arrives after the school bell, please ensure your child enters the school via the school office entrance. A member of the office team will sign your child in at the office hatch and book a hot meal if one is required. Your child will then be accompanied through the reception area to their classroom.

## ILLNESS

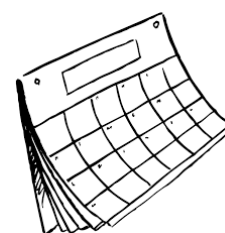
If your child is ill, you should contact the school office on the first day of absence before 09.30 am by leaving a message on the Absence Line: 01453 883273 (Option 1). If your child is off for a number of days, please keep us informed of their progress. We will also require a letter confirming the reason for their absence, upon their return. If you inform the class teacher about an absence in person or in writing, please also inform the school office. If a child has a persistent medical condition then a Medical Action Plan can be set up to support the family.

### SICKNESS & DIARRHOEA: 48 HOUR POLICY

If your child is suffering with sickness or diarrhoea, please ensure they are kept off school for a full 48 hours after the last bout of illness.

### HOLIDAYS

Government regulations do not allow the school to authorise family holidays during term-time because of the significant disruption they represent to the child's education and to the education of others. We will only authorise holidays in truly exceptional circumstances. Parents must put any request for holiday in writing to the head teacher. Please try to book holidays during the many weeks of the school holidays; children are only in school for 190 days of the year and their time in primary school is critical.



### ATTENDANCE & ACHIEVEMENT

If attendance drops below 95%, then absence begins to have a significant impact on achievement. Catching up after absence can be difficult - this period can last as long as the absence itself. 95% attendance means around 10 days out of school in a year. 90% attendance means:

- ½ day absent each week
- 4 weeks absent each year
- ½ year absent over 5 school years



# SCHOOL MEALS

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Since 2014, every child in Reception, Year 1 & 2 is entitled to a free hot school meal.



Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 children may order a hot school meal at a daily cost of £2.32 (or £11.60pw if they have a school meal every day)

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Cooked school meals are available at lunchtimes. A menu is provided to enable your child to make a choice each day. We encourage all children to have a hot school meal and arrangements for ordering these will be clarified before the children start saying for lunch.

Menus are offered on a termly basis, sent to you via e-mail and displayed on the school website.

Should your child not like the choices on a certain day, you are able to send in a packed lunch.

All dietary requirements are catered for; please ensure you have filled in and returned a Caterlink Allergies / Special Dietary Requirements Form, if required for your child(ren). These are available from the school office.



## NUT FREE & EGG FREE SCHOOL

If you are providing a packed lunch and/or snacks, please note that we are a NUT & EGG FREE school; we have some children and staff with allergies, so please do not send any nuts, eggs, nut products or egg products into school including peanut butter, nutella, nut bars, egg sandwiches or scotch eggs. We also ask you not to include mayonnaise in packed lunches. Thank you.



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## PARENT PAY

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We encourage parents and carers to use our Parent Pay system to make online payments for school lunches. Please contact the school office and they will send you an activation letter.

# UNIFORM

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School Uniform can be purchased from:

**BATEMANS SPORTS**  
2 Kendrick St, Stroud, GL5 1AB  
Tel: 01453 764320

<https://www.batemanssports.co.uk/schools-colleges/primary-schools/minchinhampton>

The PTA hold second-hand uniform sales in the second week of every term and the summer holidays



## GIRLS

- Grey trousers or skirt
- Yellow Polo Shirt
- Blue School Jumper
- Black or Navy Shoes
- Grey or white tights

### Summer Uniform (optional)

- Blue-white checked/striped dress
- Navy, black or brown sandals

## BOYS

- Grey Trousers
- Yellow Polo Shirt
- Blue School Jumper
- Black or Navy Shoes

### Summer Uniform (optional)

- Grey shorts/trousers
- Yellow Polo Shirt
- Black or Navy shoes

## PE Kit

**Navy or Black shorts, Plain white t-shirt & Black pumps or trainers**

*Please also provide a bag with an elasticated or drawstring opening which makes it easy for your child to take out their kit, and with a sturdy strap that will withstand hanging on a hook. Please make sure your child's PE kit is taken home at the end of term, washed and returned for the first day of the new term.*

## Bookbag & Water Bottle

Provided by the PTA for new Reception pupils; available thereafter to buy from the school office

**Please ensure that all belongings, uniform, coats, hats and gloves are clearly named. Please also make sure that your child's coat has a large loop so they can hang it easily on a hook.**

# MEDICAL

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## FIRST AID

We have a designated First Aider and all staff receive training in First Aid by St John Ambulance, as do our Year 5 pupils. Accident reports are filled out and filed in an Accident Report Log. If necessary, parents will be contacted. We will always inform parents if their child has had a bump to the head. The school has a defibrillator on site.

## ALLERGIES

Please inform the school office of any allergies their child has. An allergies log is held by the school. All allergies can be catered for by the school kitchen. Please ask the school office for a Caterlink Allergies / Special Dietary Requirements Form to fill out and return. The school has a NUT FREE, EGG FREE policy (see pg. 9 for further details).



## MEDICATION

Medications may only be administered by teachers or the school office, when specifically authorised in writing by the parents in exceptional circumstances. Medication cannot be given without the correct forms being completed by the parent/carer.

## ASTHMA

Pupils with asthma keep an inhaler in school. Parents are asked to take the inhalers and spacers home at the end of term to wash them. Please also check your child's inhaler is in date.

# BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Breakfast Club and Fun Club, our school provision for before and after school care, aim to make an intrinsic contribution to the childrens' all-round wellbeing through an exciting range of activities and opportunities. The club is run in the familiar environment of the school and the children have access to many of the resources and the grounds.

As with so much that goes on in a school, success is wrapped up with the who rather than the what. We are really lucky that our Fun Club is run by such passionate, capable people, headed up by the inimitable Mrs Bailey, who herself is also involved in so much of the pastoral work across the school.

Each club has a dedicated e-mail address for bookings and queries, and a site contact number if ever you need to call in an emergency or if you are running late. Please be aware any lateness past the advertised closing time will be chargeable at £8 per fifteen minutes or part thereof, to cover staff and other costs.

A wholesome breakfast is provided for children attending Breakfast Club. A drink and a biscuit is available for children in Fun Club. For those staying beyond 5.00pm, a healthy snack is provided such as a wrap or sandwiches with cheese or meat, vegetables, fruit and yoghurt. A snack will also be available for children who arrive later eg. after attending an after-school club.



### Minchinhampton Before School Breakfast Club



Supporting busy parents & providing fun opportunities for their children

You can count on our **experienced pastoral team** to run a very **caring service**. They aim to make an intrinsic contribution to the children's **all-round wellbeing** through an exciting range of activities and opportunities.

The club will be run in the **familiar environment of the school** and the children will have access to many of the resources and the grounds. A wholesome breakfast will be provided for the children.

It is a term-time only club, and does not include INSET days.

The club will run Monday to Friday:  
7:45 - 8:45 am  
£4.50 per session

all enquiries email: [breakfastclub@minchscool.net](mailto:breakfastclub@minchscool.net)

Pupils will need to be enrolled and paid for in advance each half term (in the same way as we do for school clubs).

Please can we have at least 48 hours' notice if you would like your child to attend Breakfast Club.



### Minchinhampton After School Fun Club



Supporting busy parents & providing fun opportunities for their children

You can count on our **experienced pastoral team** to run a very **caring service**. They aim to make an intrinsic contribution to the children's **all-round wellbeing** through an exciting range of activities and opportunities.

The club will be run in the **familiar environment of the school** and the children will have access to many of the resources and the grounds.

It is a term-time only club, and does not include INSET days.

The club will run Monday to Friday:  
Straight after school / after school club  
until 5pm or 6pm  
If your child stays until 5pm the cost is £6.00  
If your child stays until 6pm the cost is £10.00

all enquiries email: [funclub@minchscool.net](mailto:funclub@minchscool.net)

Pupils will need to be enrolled and paid for in advance each half term (in the same way as we do for school clubs).

Please can we have at least 48 hours' notice if you would like your child to attend Fun Club.

# THE CHARTER

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**Relationships are a strength at Minchinhampton Academy;  
we would like them to be even better.**

**The charter aims to support all relationships within the school community,  
including adult/adult, child/child and adult/child.**

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**At the heart of relationships within our school there must be TRUST.** With this trust in place, the school knows that all parents want the best for their children and that they are the experts on their children. Likewise, parents know that the staff take their role very seriously, that they have expertise in educating children and want the best for every child in the school.

Minchinhampton Academy is a very busy school. The community is creative, proactive and outward looking and the school reflects this. There are more clubs, pastoral interventions, PTA events, governor meetings and there is more change than in the average school. Staff aim to work as efficiently as possible but **TIME is at a premium.** Class teachers do not have 'free periods' and many run clubs and attend meetings after school. Some staff are often in school as late as 7.00pm and will work upward of a sixty seventy hour week during term time. The community and parents are highly supportive of the school and, despite very busy lives of their own, many devote precious time to supporting in many different ways. All of the adults involved in our community want to prioritise the needs of our children above all else, and there is never enough time.

As a school **we look to ensure all DECISIONS are made with the best interests of the pupils in mind - this above all else.** In a school environment, we must constantly consider what is good for the individual and simultaneously what is good for all. We look to celebrate individuality but we must also be fair to all individuals.

**Staff receive training in assertiveness and restorative practice (see pg. 20) to try to ensure they uphold their part of the charter. Year 6 pupils receive training in peer mediation.**

**The Charter is displayed around school and on the website. Its impact is monitored by the head teacher and governing body in regular consultation with pupils, parents and staff, and feedback is evaluated on an ongoing basis.**



# Interactions

## 'HOW WE TALK TO EACH OTHER'

<b>PUPILS</b> WE TRY TO:	Be polite	Look to sort out the problem	Tell the truth	Be kind	Listen carefully and give others time to speak their mind	Understand others	Value our differences	Have sensible expectations	Accept that mistakes happen	Come half way	Agree on what to do next
<b>ADULTS</b> WE TRY TO:	Be respectful towards each other	Be intent on finding a resolution to an issue	Say what is honest, kind and necessary	Stay positive and build on strengths	Listen actively to each other and give each other time to speak	Put ourselves in the other person's shoes	Trust and value each other's perspectives on and roles in the children's lives	Have 'reasonable' expectations and make 'reasonable' requests	Acknowledge openly when we have made a mistake and forgive others their mistakes when they are willing to learn from them	Compromise when it is not possible to agree	Be clear about what has been said and what has been agreed as a next step
<b>ADULTS</b> WE TRY NOT TO:	To become personal or use an aggressive or rude tone, including online	Not talk about others in a derogatory way in public, including online	Be unkind in any way	Become negative and dwell on weaknesses	Think badly of others	Pre-judge a situation	Explicitly or implicitly demonstrate a lack of trust	Have expectations and make requests that disregard the time and resources available to the other person	Be judgemental towards one another when a mistake has been made	Be uncompromising	Be unclear about next steps

# Communication

## 'WHAT WE COMMUNICATE TO EACH OTHER AND WHEN'

<b>PUPILS</b>	To know when it is important to listen	To listen actively to instructions	To follow instructions	To have realistic expectations of school recognise you are one of many	To express your point of view & to listen actively to other points of view and ideas	To know there is someone you can speak to if you are worried about something
<b>ADULTS</b> GIVER/Asker	To be consistent regards how and where information is provided	To provide information that is clear, accurate and timely	When making a request, to provide the receiver with a realistic time frame in which to respond	To ensure style and content of communication is tailored to the audience and to take into account the context eg. time available to read or access the information	To give of our views and ideas freely but without expectation, in an ongoing dialogue around school improvement	To be familiar with the process for raising concerns or compliments, and that this starts with the individual teacher or parent
<b>ADULTS</b> RECEIVER/Replier	To know of the regular channels for communication and stay abreast of information provided	To take responsibility for accessing and storing information provided	To respond to a request in an organised and timely fashion; no more than 24 hours for most things & asap if urgent	To have realistic expectations regarding quantity of communication, taking into account the context of the communicator and time available	To consider all views and ideas with an open mind	To respond to any concern in a timely and constructive fashion

Please always look to contact your class teacher first, regarding any concerns you may have. Your child's teacher will then liaise with other members of staff as required. Please also be mindful at all times of the aims laid out for interactions in the charter.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT WHEN YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH SCHOOL

### IN PERSON

Class teachers will be out on the playground at the beginning of the day from 8.40am and at the end of the day. If you need to let teachers know anything about your child regarding the day ahead, please try to catch them before 8.45am. Teachers find it helpful if you can provide a note. At the end of the day, unless they have clubs or meetings, teachers can be more available to meet parents. Please always let them know straight away if you know it is a conversation best had in private. If the school day has started, please pass on any information or concerns to the school office team who will relay the information onto the class teacher.

### PHONE CALLS

The school number is **01453 883273**. Phone calls to the school office will go to answerphone from 9.30am until 2.30pm. The office will pick up immediately if it is clear from the message being left that it is a matter of urgency.

### E-MAILS

When sending emails, please be mindful of the aims laid out in our Relationships Charter. Each class has its own email address; please use this for any communications regarding learning and your child as a learner. If you need to email for any other reason, including any concerns, please email **admin@minchschoo.net**. The office will then forward emails to the appropriate member of staff. If you need to share something of a confidential nature, you may prefer to put this in an attachment and ask for the email to be forwarded on to the relevant member of staff.

### GETTING BACK TO THE PERSON

The school staff will aim to get back to parents within 24hrs of receiving a communication, or as soon as possible if the matter is urgent. We ask that parents try to apply the same principle when replying to a request or concern from school.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT WHEN YOU HAVE A MEETING WITH A STAFF MEMBER

### MAKING APPOINTMENTS

If you would like, or have been asked, to make an appointment with a member of staff, please note it is very difficult to organise them during the school day. Before or immediately after school are the best times. We recognise that work commitments can make it difficult to attend at the above times; staff will do their very best to accommodate alternatives. In the first instance, please aim to make an appointment with your child's class teacher or the adult best placed to answer your need.

### MEETINGS

At the outset of a meeting, both parties to agree what they aim to get out of the meeting and the time available. Meetings to be held in spaces appropriate to the possible content of the meeting eg. sometimes there is a need for greater confidentiality. Minutes will be held of meetings where necessary.

## WHAT COMMUNICATIONS YOU CAN EXPECT FROM SCHOOL

### WEBSITE

**www.minchacademy.net** is the hub for all information, including upcoming events detailed on the Parent Calendar and letters home uploaded on the Letters page. News is posted by staff and pupils on a news blog.

### NEWSLETTER

The school newsletter is sent by e-mail every Friday afternoon, featuring a range of information, reminders, news stories and notices. Please make sure you have subscribed to receive it.

### E-MAILS & TEXTS: SCHOOL COMMS

The school office will send you e-mails and texts via the School Comms system. Please download the School Gateway App from your app store, or online via **www.schoolgateway.com** in order to receive your PIN to log in. You will receive texts about short term changes, any urgent matters or when your child wants to share some great learning with you in a text worded by them.

### SOCIAL MEDIA & SCHOOL

On Facebook, there is a School page, a PTA group & a Minchinhampton Parents' group. On Twitter, things of interest will be tweeted on an ongoing basis.

## TERMLY COMMUNICATIONS

### PARENT FORUMS

Once a term before a PTA meeting, the Headteacher holds a Parent Forum (all parents are welcome) to discuss upcoming initiatives or any concerns parents may have.

### REPORTS & PARENTS EVENINGS

At the outset of the Autumn term, teachers hold an Information Evening to meet parents, introduce any 'ways of working' for the year ahead and to answer any queries. Half way through the term, we send home a brief Report Card before our first Parents Evenings of the year. The Report Card acts as a conversation starter for the evening itself. In the Spring Term parents receive their child's 'Annual Report'. Key Stage 2 pupils play a significant role in writing this report, working closely with their class teachers. Annual Reports are sent home the week before our second Parents Evenings. In the Summer term, we send home another a brief Report Card. These are followed by an Open Afternoon for parents.

### CURRICULUM EVENINGS

Each year a number of 'Curriculum Evenings' are held for parents where new initiatives, practices and teaching methods are introduced by staff or visiting speakers.

# PASTORAL

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## Support for Families: Our Offer of Early Help

Being a parent is one of the most important jobs there is; it is also one of the hardest. Every family is unique with its own combination of strengths and needs.

Sometimes we can get overwhelmed when it comes to juggling money, school, jobs, health and each other's individual needs. And if that isn't enough, life can sometimes throw other challenges at us, affecting our families, such as a mental or physical illness, long-term addiction, a job loss, or a bereavement. Even 'joyful' events such as a new relationship, a house move or a new job can bring unexpected problems.

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### HOW WE CAN HELP

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**We understand just how complicated family life can be and the different effects this can have on family members. From time to time there may be situations where you or someone in your family need extra help and support.** We can of course, in times of need, turn to family and friends, but sometimes it may be easier to talk to someone impartial; this is where we may be able to help.

**We have what we call an 'offer of early help'.**

We appreciate that when things aren't going well, it can be hard to take those first steps to ask for support; it can leave us feeling 'open and vulnerable'. The good thing is that you don't have to ask for help – the offer of help is already there.

**We suggest that in the first instance you talk to your child's teacher. However, we appreciate that you may find it easier to talk to Mr Moss or a member of our pastoral team, co-ordinated by Kerrie Bennett, our Pastoral Lead.**

We will work with you to find a way forward for you and your family. There are many ways we can do this. It may be within school, for example helping your child to join an after-school club or to become a Play Leader. In other situations we may find that, with your permission, we need to tap into other organisations who have more expertise, for example support with bereavement or counselling. If you prefer, you can contact these agencies yourself and we are happy to signpost you. Two of our pastoral team are trained to run parenting support groups.

**You can find more details on our website, or you may just want to come in for a chat.**

<https://www.minchacademy.net/pastoral-care/>

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**If things aren't right at home, please do come and talk to us.**

**By us working together, you may be able to find a way forward for you and your family.**



# SAFEGUARDING

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The school takes the safety and welfare of the children very seriously.

We have stringent policies and procedures in place to safeguard all our children.

- ✓ All staff, governors and volunteers are DBS checked
- ✓ All staff and named governors undergo regular training
- ✓ There are a team of Designated Safeguarding Leads, including the head teacher
- ✓ There are robust recruitment and selection processes in place

Please see the school website to view our Safeguarding Policy:  
[Information > Key Policies > Safeguarding Policy](#)

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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We believe that all children should thrive with the right support and opportunities. Some children find that they have particular physical, sensory, emotional, behavioural, or general learning difficulties, which can inhibit their ability to thrive without some extra support. These difficulties are termed Special Educational Needs (SEN). If a parent or teacher is concerned that a child has SEN, they should discuss this with the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Mrs Carol Wilson.

Support is dynamic and provided in various ways according to the level of assistance required, with outside agencies being used as necessary. Children with special educational needs may be assisted in the classroom, or given specialist help in small groups working with teachers or teaching assistants. They may be assisted by technology or with outside expertise. We work hard alongside families to help all children reach their full potential.

# LEARNING

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Our school vision defines, and in turn is defined by, the way we teach; by the principles or common threads running through our pedagogy and professional development. We are all about the learning and constant ongoing development.

**When you stop learning, you stop living.**

*“I would say that I am curious. The deeper I go, the more questions I have” (Yr 5 Student)*

**We are committed to:**

- **Clarity** of learning, including clarity of purpose, clarity of instruction and coherence and consistency in the school’s learning journey;
- Fostering people’s (children and adults alike) **agency and autonomy** in their own learning; trusting them by giving them the opportunity to play, take risks, innovate, imagine and question; expecting them to engage in self-reflection;
- Staying **responsive** to needs and interests and research, including teaching which is truly formative - that constantly looks for proof of learning close to the coal face;
- Staying responsive requires **flexible** thinking; the willingness to seek out possibilities, to read nuance in a situation and the openness to spot and make small changes;
- A responsiveness that requires **playfulness** ‘as a state of mind - a mind in which readiness, responsiveness and an ability to recognise the extraordinary in the ordinary’ (Debra Kidd, 2015);
- High quality **relationships** in the classroom, hinging on the adults’ commitment to each and every individual in the classroom. We need to be fascinated by our pupils; we need to give them the space to show us who they are and what they know;
- Stimulating **thinking** including a strong emphasis on talk and on a philosophical approach to learning. We want our children to feel challenged.

**Learning approaches that are explicitly and implicitly devoted to giving every child equal access to the curriculum and an equal opportunity to engage and thrive.**

# CURRICULUM

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The curriculum is critical for delivering our vision 'life in all its fullness'.

We want a curriculum with enough heart and breathing space that it empowers creative, motivated human beings, with an intrinsic and deep-rooted appreciation of learning in all its forms.

*'Sometimes the so-called 'facts of a situation' actually tell us little or nothing about the heart of an experience...If we were to describe our life strictly in terms of its factual truth, most of its interesting, complex and surprising dimensions would remain unmentioned.'* (John O'Donahue, 2003)

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**Our curriculum is defined by the principles running through all of our pedagogy:**

The curriculum aims to be bold and free-thinking. We feel 'agency' is critical for learning to be at its best. Our curriculum needs to whisper to the children that they belong;

*'that they matter now, that they can do something now, that they are not powerless or passive but that they are active agents of their learning.'* (Debra Kidd, 2019)

To ensure **clarity**, our written curriculum is always the starting point; it provides a coherent conceptual journey through a pupils' time in our school. Because of our flexible responsive approach, we expect this 'official' curriculum to be constantly evolving, constantly adjusting for the people it is there for.

We want our pupils to take from their primary education a delight in learning and to see possibilities everywhere. We want our pupils to know for example what it is to be a scientist and to feel enthusiastic at the prospect of science.

We have **seven common threads** running through the curriculum project, all drawn from the contextual features of our community. These are:

- spirituality and core values
- a sense of community
- drawing on strengths and interests
- the appreciation of difference
- environmental activism
- creativity and the appreciation of beauty
- wellbeing

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*'We want our pupils to grow into "Philosopher Kids", who are curious to know and to question; who can lead as well as follow; who like to feel, to think; who are notable for their eloquence and willingness to take part in the big conversation of life. We want them to engage thoughtfully in dialogue and argument; to appreciate and make beautiful things; to be confident grappling with difficult ideas; to appreciate quiet reflection and contemplation. We want them to be caring and compassionate - able to flourish both as individuals and contribute actively to the flourishing of those around them.'* (Martin Robinson, Trivium 21c)

# WELLBEING

## RELATIONSHIPS APPROACH

We have replaced a 'Behaviour Policy' with a 'Relationships policy' because we recognise it is healthier as a community to focus the time and energy we have on positive relationships as opposed to control and compliance; this then also becomes about all relationships, between adults and pupils, between adults and between pupils.

The school approach prioritises reflection and self-evaluation; individual autonomy and building on strengths; democratic representation and collaboration; praise that inspires growth rather than implying judgement and taking responsibility for yourself and others.

## RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

### REFLECT - REPAIR - RECONNECT

**Restorative practice focuses on building, maintaining and restoring relationships and giving people agency in their own lives. Being guided by this creative, fair and humanistic approach helps to make our school even more devoted to fostering happy, healthy people.**

*"It's all about how to re-build relationships when things go wrong; about trying to understand other people's feelings and our own"(Year 6 Student)*

With its roots in the practices of indigenous peoples and through a belief in people and relationships, restorative practice brings attention to many vital aspects of our school culture: how we get along with each other; our differences as an asset; the importance of curiosity rather than judgement and collaboration rather than competition; being responsible for what's yours and allowing others to be responsible for what's theirs; listening to understand; asking more than telling; and kindness. Staff and students are encouraged to use the restorative practice questions, displayed on these posters throughout school.



## ANTI-BULLYING

**Bullying is treated very seriously at this school.** Research has shown that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated and we are therefore well trained, proactive and make no assumptions. We recognise we all have a responsibility to maintain a caring ethos but also to respond quickly, fairly and effectively if bullying occurs. We have an information video about bullying on the school website. Please always talk to your class teacher first regarding any concerns you may have.



## GROWTH MINDSET

**Carol Dweck's 'Growth Mindset' research has had a profound impact on the way we teach at Minchinhampton, as well as how we manage our school.** Dweck and her colleagues are interested in people's beliefs about their ability. They found that that the more a person had a growth mindset (the belief that we can become more capable with time and effort), the more likely they were to be successful in life: in essence they proved the age old maxim 'it's really important to believe in yourself.'

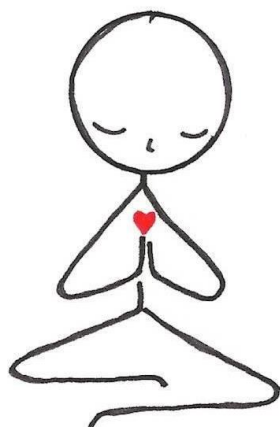
Clearly the ethos of a school can play an important role in nurturing self-belief. The ethos starts from the way we think and the language we use; it must be reflected in the way we teach, in the way we respond to each other, including how we give feedback and praise. Some of our core policies in school, for example our Feedback Policy and our Relationships Policy are heavily influenced by Dweck and a range of associated research, including research from Positive Psychology.

## MINDFULNESS

We are committed as a school to mindfulness. We run courses and groups for both and children as well as working it into the school week.

*“I am proud of my mindfulness sessions because I think carefully about my breathing and it helps me.” (Reception Student)*

Mindfulness involves learning to direct our attention to our experience as it is unfolding, moment by moment, with open-minded curiosity and acceptance. Rather than worrying about what has happened or might happen, mindfulness trains us to respond skilfully to whatever is happening right now, be that good or bad. This includes paying close attention to inner states such as thoughts, emotions and physical sensations, as well as to what is happening in the outside world.



The **Paws b Mindfulness in Schools Project** has been shown to reduce anxiety, distress, reactivity and bad behaviour; to improve sleep and self-esteem, and bring about greater calmness and self-awareness. Mindfulness has also been shown to be capable of contributing directly to the development of cognitive and performance skills in the young. It would appear that when children and young people learn to be more present, they can pay attention better and improve the quality of their performance in the classroom, on the sports field, and in the performing arts, for example. They can become more focused, more able to approach situations from a novel perspective, more able to draw more effectively on previously-learned material, have less anxiety and greater ability to pay attention.

# PUPIL VOICE

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A school obviously runs for the benefit of its pupils: every decision we make puts the needs of the children first. We therefore hold great store by 'pupil voice'; by their opinions and concerns.

## THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council is a democratically elected body of pupils from Year 1 through to Year 6. They run their own class meetings and then report back to the Council, so giving all pupils a voice in the running of the school. Their tenure runs for a year. They have regular meetings with the head teacher, a budget and usually deliver on one key project each year.



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## COMMITTEES

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All children in KS2 are part of a committee. They change their roles each year.

As **ECO-WARRIORS** we try to help the environment, for example we have recently picked up litter in the community and we have put up bird feeders. We have learned about making fire and making tools out of natural things.

The **CHARITY COMMITTEE** raise money for local and national charities, for example we have raised money for Nkokoto by selling cakes and bric-a-brac. Every year we organise Red Nose Day and events for Comic Relief, Children in Need, Save the Children and the Salvation Army.

As the **LINKS COMMITTEE** we learn about different countries. We're planning a World Appreciation Afternoon where we will all learn about different cultures. We have a display showing everyone's links with places around the world.

**PLAYLEADERS** help younger children play and learn new skills. We create our own games in groups and work together to entertain the children.

Our **COMMUNITY GROUP** aim to do whatever we can to help the local community, for example we recently went to the library to help them organise their books. Last year we visited a local residential home to talk to people and read to them.

The **LIBRARIANS** write book reviews to recommend books to other children. We are also trained in how to help children find a book in the library. We sometimes do assemblies, for example on World Book Day, to help everyone see how great books are. We run treasure hunts. We really enjoy it.

As **NEWS REPORTERS** we write for local publications like the school newsletter and Tom Long's Post. We conduct interviews and write articles.

The **WORSHIP COMMITTEE** run their own assemblies for the rest of the school. We plan it ourselves and then the whole team delivers it. We also ask difficult questions afterwards.

# CLUBS & EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We want the children to have a love of learning; we want them to support them to embrace new experiences, new challenges and new interests all the time. We therefore offer them a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities. Over the last couple of years we have had as many as 50 different clubs running before and after school, including:

Philosophy for Children

Cookery

Chess

Country dancing

Netball

Basketball

Tag Rugby

Recorders

Artsparks

Martial Arts

Photography

Multi-sports

Cross Country

Rounders

Athletics

Orchestra

KS1 Choir

Gymnastics

ICT

Outdoor Learning

Lego

Football

Love of Books

Science

Outdoor Hockey

Fashion

Board Games

Dance

Cross Stitch

Cycling

Uni Cycling

Cool club

Debating

Spanish

KS2 Choir

STEM

Debating

Cool Club

Gardening

Yoga

Girls Football

Film Club

Recorders

Hockey

Board Games

Tennis

Poetry

Mindfulness

Drama

Unicycling

Go-karting

Wild Life

Quick Cricket

Mock Trial



Most clubs run from 3.15 - 4.15pm and are a great way for your child to spend time doing activities they enjoy. At the end of each term you will be emailed details of the clubs that will be available for the next term. Places are offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Generally, if clubs are run by a member of staff they are free; if we book outside agencies to run the clubs (eg. Martial Arts, Artsparks etc) there is a charge for each session. Payment is required at the time of booking. After-school clubs should not be used as childcare. We will always try and give notice if we have to cancel a club, but in the event of an emergency or sickness we may have to cancel at short notice.





## SPORT

As a school we aim to inspire all children to have an interest and confidence in some kind of sport. For this reason we have our own full time Sports Coach who introduces the children to a wide range of sports - anything from tag rugby to ultimate frisbee to orienteering as well as running many sports clubs each week. Also, while we get involved in as many as 40 sports competitions each year, we also run our own inclusive sports competitions in school and our own cooperative sports events.

*"I am enjoying sport in school and have gone to basketball, netball and football club this year. I am proud to be picked to represent the school." (Year 6 student)*



## CYCLING

Perhaps because of our spacious grounds and our proximity to the common, opportunities for cycling seem to grow year on year. We have a 'fleet' of our own bikes and take children out on the running track as well as the common. We have 3 cycle racks for those who want to cycle to school and, in Year 5, children have the chance to take part in Bikeability Cycling Proficiency sessions.

*"I have been learning to ride my bike with Mr Jansen every Friday. I enjoy riding my bike now and gradually I'm becoming more skilled. I plan to go out on the Common in the summer with my dad." (Year 3 Student)*



## SWIMMING

For obvious reasons swimming is seen as a critical part of the National Curriculum. At our school children in Years 2 & 3 receive swimming lessons on one afternoon per week. We have a strong track record in the Stroud Schools Swimming Gala: over the past ten years of taking part, Minchinhampton's swimming team have been overall winners of six galas and have been runners-up three times.



## MUSIC

As well as being taught as a subject, there are many opportunities for extra-curricular music. We have a music room which doubles as a stage and many children learn brass, woodwind, strings, guitar, percussion or keyboard instruments with one of our peripatetic teachers. We have a school orchestra and a KS1 choir and a KS2 choir, all of whom perform throughout the year, including at the annual Musical Soiree. The choirs make regular visits within our community, to Cecily Court and Horsfall House. Other regular trips include KS2 choir to 'Young Voices' in Birmingham and Rendcomb College where children have enjoyed Orchestra Days, Body Percussion Workshops and English Touring Opera performances.

*"Choir is fun because you get to sing lots of different songs and you get to go to Young Voices. We do performances that give us the chance to show what we're capable of and get to go to care homes sometimes, like at Christmas, which brings joy to other people." (Year 6 Choir members)*

## DRAMA

Drama is an integral part of our curriculum. It is especially useful in English, RE and Topic. Inhabiting a character to make difficult choices in Conscience Alley, freeze framing key moments of a story in RE, giving renditions of Henry V as a full on call to arms and rapping some beautiful poetry are just a few snapshots into how we have embedded drama into our weekly diet. Pupils also have the chance to take part in yearly productions throughout the year:

**Nativity** - Nursery, Reception, Years 1 & 2  
**Spring Production** - Years 3 & 4  
**Summer Production** - Years 5 & 6





## LIBRARY



The Library is a bright, comfortable area situated at the heart of our school, designed to encourage and support a passion for reading for pleasure in all our children. We offer a wide range of quality fiction and nonfiction, as well as comics, magazines, newspapers and audio books, so there is truly always something for every child. Children are encouraged to use the Library during class to find books complementing their learning. It is also open to everyone during lunchtime, when children can be found browsing the shelves for their next adventure, and engaging with books in the reading caves. Our Librarian is on hand to help immerse your child in reading, and to ensure they always find the perfect book. Key Stage 2 children have the opportunity to become Pupil Librarians and help out with the daily functions of the Library, and activities promoting reading take place throughout the year.

## TRIPS

Every year group goes on day trips out and invites exciting visitors in to bring the curriculum alive. Recent trips have included a visit to London to see Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh Exhibition for and a trip to the Living Rainforest Museum near Newbury.

*"At the Cheltenham Literature Festival I liked seeing the author who wrote The Storm Whale. It was good that he showed us how to do the illustrations." (Year 3 Student)*



## RESIDENTIALS



We know that often what makes any residential significant for pupils is the personal challenge (and excitement) of being away from home for several days with their friends. We therefore choose residentials whose activities are also inherently personally challenging, as opposed to curriculum based ones. We take the children away in the Autumn Term so that they can benefit for the rest of the year from the boost to their confidence, and stronger bonds with their classmates that this kind of trip inevitably brings them.

*"The best moment this year so far has been Viney Hill: there were so many new games I found out about. Also, I have a bit of claustrophobia but I challenged myself and still went caving, then, at the end, I even tried the challenging route. I was most proud of that." (Year 6 Student)*

Every year our Year 6 and Year 4 pupils go to Viney Hill Outdoor and Adventure centre in the Forest Of Dean for a residential stay. Here Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to go canoeing, rock climbing, caving and biking with trained instructors as well as enjoying a range of other activities including a night walk, obstacle course, orienteering and campfire. Year 4 activities include challenges such as tunneling and climbing, team building activities such as low ropes and crate stack building and creative learning experiences like bushcraft, geo-caching and rocket science.

## OUTDOOR LEARNING

**There is often nothing better for encouraging a love of learning and an appreciation of our world than learning outside. The benefits of exposure to nature are plenty and well documented, including: enhanced personal and social communication skills; increased physical health; enhanced mental and spiritual health; enhanced spiritual, sensory and aesthetic awareness; self-regulation and resilience. We are lucky to have a variety of different outdoor learning areas within the school grounds, including a wildlife area, with its willow walls, benches, tables and fire pit, a gardening area with raised beds and polytunnel and a thriving pond, with its abundance of minibeasts, frogs, newts and, occasionally, ducks. We are also grateful to have use of some private woodland courtesy of one of our generous neighbours for the sole use of our Reception children.**

## ICT

We promote the use of ICT across the curriculum and beyond. The school is equipped with PCs in classrooms and shared areas, tablets, iPads, laptops, visualisers, scanners and digital cameras. These are used by the children in a variety of different lessons and in sessions learning how to create digital content such as code, games, presentations and multimedia.

# THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER ACADEMIES TRUST

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Minchinhampton C of E Academy is part of DGAT. We chose to be part of the Academies Trust because we could see many potential benefits of working more closely with other schools as a way of continuing to improve our offer.



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## DGAT VISION

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The aim of the Trust is to provide children of all faiths and none with excellent educational provision within a caring and supportive Christian ethos. The principle aim of the Trust is to enable each school within the Diocese to provide the best possible education for every child, helping them to reach their full potential.

We look to support the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development of each child, as well as maximising the progress, achievement and attainment of every child to ensure their intellectual growth.

In order to build strong learning communities, the Trust ensures that its schools are confident and outward-facing in all that they do, building strong, effective links with parents, parishes, local schools, community groups and the wider educational community.

The Trust has adopted a collegiate approach to school improvement, working in partnership with schools and educational partners to design a flexible model of school improvement which fully utilises the expertise which exists within local schools. Ultimately, the aim is to build sufficient capacity within the Trust schools to be self-supporting in order to be fully responsible and accountable for transforming pupil outcomes.

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## DGAT VALUES

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Our relationship with schools is predicated on shared values and principles. As educational attainment is underpinned by successful relationships, school development will be grounded in the integrity of our values. These will inform our shared approach to educational excellence with the needs of the child at the heart of decision-making by:

- ✓ **celebrating** the unique identity of each school within its community;
- ✓ **valuing** all members of the school community equally;
- ✓ **promoting** high expectations matched with nurture, support and challenge;
- ✓ **recognising and sharing** achievements;
- ✓ **ensuring** high moral and ethical standards, coupled with mutual consultation and partnership, being fundamental to any strategy.

**The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust puts high value on its transparency and its not-for-profit status.**

To find out more about DGAT visit their website at [www.dgat.org.uk](http://www.dgat.org.uk)