



MINCHINHAMPTON C of E PRIMARY ACADEMY
PARENT/CARER INFORMATION BOOKLET 2023-24

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WELCOME

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

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/>

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

'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.'

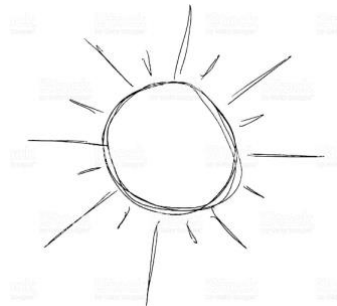
***'To love ourselves and support each other in the process of becoming real is perhaps the greatest single act.'* (Brené Brown)**

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

Children can arrive from 8:35am – 8:50am. The gates are closed at 8:50am, please report to the school office after this time.

Morning Session	8.50am - 12.15pm
Morning Break	10.50am - 11.05am
(Reception/Year 1 has a separate play time at the beginning of the school year.)	
Lunch Break	12.15pm - 1.30pm
Reception Lunch	12.15pm
KS1 Lunch	12.30pm
KS2 Lunch	1.00pm
Afternoon Session	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.

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. You can email the class teacher on the class email in the first instance or you can contact the school office admin@minchschoo.net. Please email /phone the office if there is a pick up change on the day.

TERM DATES 2023-24

Autumn Term 1

Tuesday 5th September – Thursday 26th October 2023

Autumn Half Term: w/c Mon 30th Oct 2023

Autumn Term 2

Mon 6th November – Fri 22nd Dec 2023

Inset Days: Friday 27th October 2023

Spring Term 1

Tues 9th Jan – Fri 9th Feb 2024

Spring Half Term: w/c Mon 12th Feb 2024

Spring Term 2

Tues 20th February – Fri 22nd March 2024

Inset Days: Monday 19th February 2024

Summer Term 1

Mon 8th Apr – Fri 24th May 2024*

*(No school on Early May Bank Holiday Monday 6th May 2024)

Summer Half Term: w/c Mon 28th May 2024

Summer Term 2

Mon 3rd June – Friday 19th July 2024

Children attend school for 190 days in the 2023-24 Academic Year

STAFF

Mr Nick Moss* - Head Teacher

Miss Kerry Tonner* - Deputy Head

Miss Emily Miles - Assistant Head

Mrs Amy Kingscote* - Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

** Designated Safeguarding Lead*

FOUNDATION STAGE

Midnight Class (Reception)

midnight@minchscool.net

Class Teachers - Mrs Saeed (FS lead),
Miss Thompson

Teal Class (Reception)

teal@minchscool.net

Class Teacher – Mrs F Jankowska,
Mrs A Shepherd

Nursery Class

nursery@minchscool.net

Nursery Manager – Mrs Watt*
Assistant Manager – Mrs Hobbs
TA – Miss Purnell

KEY STAGE 1

indigo Class (Year 1/2)

Indigo@minchscool.net

Class Teacher – Miss Dymond
TA – Mrs P Bailey

Aqua Class (Year 1/Year 2)

aqua@minchscool.net

Class Teacher – Mrs Wilcox
TA – Miss Stokes

Azure Class (Year 1/2)

azure@minchscool.net

KS1 Coordinator &
Class Teacher – Miss Miles
Class Teacher – Mrs Jackson
TA – Mrs L Owen

OFFICE STAFF:

Mrs Holbrow - Business Manager

Mrs Sheen – Admin/Admissions

Mrs L Errington – Admin Assistant

SPORTS COACH:

Mr Tovey

LIBRARIAN: Mrs Webb

PASTORAL: Mrs A Kingscote and Mr Moss

KEY STAGE 2

Cyan Class (Year 3/4)

cyan@minchscool.net

Class Teacher – Mrs Witt
TA – Mrs R Smith

Sapphire Class (Year 3/4)

sapphire@minchscool.net

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

Royal Class (Year 3/4)

royal@minchscool.net

Class Teacher – Mr Ricketts
TA – Mrs Playne

Turquoise Class (Year 5/6)

turquoise@minchscool.net

Class Teacher – Mr Weinberger
TA – Miss Dangerfield/Mr Pizzy

Sky Class (Year 5/6)

sky@minchshcool.net

Class Teacher – Miss Niblett
TA- Mrs Bainbridge

Cobalt Class (Year 5/6)

cobalt@minchscool.net

Class Teachers – Mrs Aldridge/Miss Smith
TA – Mrs Dawks

Mr N Moss

SITE MANAGER:

Mr Bennett

MIDDAY SUPERVISORS:

Mrs Lawrence, Miss Ellis, Miss C Richings, Miss
T Richings, Miss Evans, Miss Ritchings and Miss
J.Biddle

ATTENDANCE

PUNCTUALITY

Pupils should try to be in the playground by 8.35 am. The school gates will be closed and locked at 8:50am. The register will be taken by 8.50am. If your child arrives after 8:50am, 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.

ILLNESS

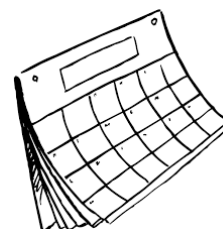
If your child is ill, you should contact the school office on the first day of absence before 09.30 am by calling the school office (option 1), or emailing admin@minchschoo.net. If your child is off for a number of days, please keep us informed of their progress. If you inform the class teacher about 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

We are currently using the Great Plate as the providers for our school lunches. Since 2014, every child in Reception, Year 1 & 2 is entitled to a Universal Infant Free hot school meal (UIFSM), regardless of family income. If you think your child may be eligible for free school meals please let us know as this attracts additional funding for the school.



Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 children may order a hot school meal. The current cost is £2.40 (or £11.70pw if they have a school meal every day). This is likely to be increasing from September 2023.

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. Your child will be able to order a hot dinner on a daily basis and this will be done when the register is taken in class.

Menus are offered on a termly basis 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 an 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.



UNIFORM



School Uniform can be purchased from:

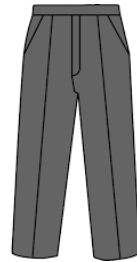
BATEMANS SPORTS

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 on a regular basis.



All year round uniform

- Grey Trousers or Skirt
- Yellow Polo Shirt
- Blue School Jumper (with logo preferred but not essential)
- Black or Navy Shoes
-

Summer Uniform (optional)

- Grey shorts
- Blue-White Checked/Striped Dress
- Navy, Black or Brown sandals

Please note, our school uniform does not need to be branded.

Batemans Sports in Stroud are our stockist for branded polo shirts and jumpers.

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.

Outdoor Learning Uniform

Rec/Yr 1 - Black/Navy joggers or leggings (to be worn to school on outdoor learning day).

Bookbag

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 make sure that your child's coat has a large loop so they can hang it easily on a hook.

MEDICAL

FIRST AID

We have a designated First Aider and all staff receives training in First Aid by St John Ambulance. 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 an 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 is our school provision for before and after school care. It aims to make an intrinsic contribution to the children's' 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 your booked in session times will be chargeable to cover staff and other costs.

A breakfast consisting of cereal will be provided for children attending Breakfast Club. It is required that children bring their own drinks bottles and a biscuit will be provided at Fun Club.

Breakfast Club

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

The club runs Monday – Friday:
7:45am – 8:45pm
£5.00 per session

All enquiries please email:
breakfastclub@minchschoo.net

Pupils will need to be enrolled and paid for in advance each half term. Please inform breakfast club if your child will not be attending a session.

Refunds will only be made in exceptional circumstance.

After School Club

After school club is a term time club and does not include INSET days.

The club will run Monday - Thursday:
Straight after school until 5:30pm
Friday the club will run till 5pm

If your child stays until 5pm the cost will be £7.50
If you child stay until 5:30pm the cost will be £9.50

All enquiries please email:
funclub@minchschoo.net

Pupils will need to be enrolled and paid for in advance each half term. Please inform funclub if your child will not be attending a session. Refunds will only be made in exceptional circumstance

THE CHARTER

**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.**

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'

PUPILS 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
ADULTS 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
ADULTS 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'

PUPILS	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
ADULTS 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
ADULTS 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 at the school gates at the beginning of the day from 8.35am 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 8.50am. 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**. Please contact the school office and speak to a member of the team. The office is open 8:30-4:30pm.

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. Please email pick up/collections changes to admin@minchscool.net as teachers do not monitor these emails throughout the day. If you need to email for any other reason, including any concerns, please email admin@minchscool.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 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 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 hold the first Parents' Evenings of the year. 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 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.

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.

HOW WE CAN HELP

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 Amy Kingscote .

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/>

**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

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

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 Amy Kingscote.

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

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

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)

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

'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 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.

SCHOOL LIFE



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 tunnelling 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

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.



DGAT VISION

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.

DGAT VALUES

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