



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Parent Handbook

2025

**Together we grow in God's love,
learning to be the best we can be.**

The purpose of St Joseph's School is to live, love and learn in a Catholic Christian environment where we:

- Respect and accept each other;
 - Strive for excellence and delight in effort;
- Build a community based on tolerance and peace;
 - Support each individual to fulfil their potential;
 - Are open to the diversity of the wider world;
- Have high expectations of ourselves and others.

Welcome to St Joseph' School.

THE SCHOOL DAY

MORNING SESSION	Soft Start 8.50am to 9am 9am – 12.00 noon KS1 9am – 12.10pm KS2
AFTERNOON SESSION	1.10pm – 3.15pm
MORNING BREAK	10.45am – 11.00am
LUNCH BREAK	12.00 noon – 1.10pm EYFS/KS1 12.10 noon – 1.10pm KS2

The school's pedestrian gates open at 8.45am, however children should not arrived unaccompanied before 8.50am at which time the classroom doors are opened. We do not provide supervision during arrival.

Children including pre-school children should not climb on Tree Top Towers or climbing frames before or after school because staff are not on duty in the playground to supervise. There should be no football in playgrounds before or after school. Dogs are not allowed on school premises.

ATTENDANCE

All children are required to attend school regularly. Regular attendance is considered to be 97% or above. The school must be informed in writing if a child is to be absent or needs to leave the school premises before the end of the School day due to medical appointments. If your child is absent for any reason please telephone the school to let us know before 9.30am. A letter or email is also needed for our records. Emails should be sent to diary@stjosephs255.herts.sch.uk

It is an expectation that parents will arrange holidays to coincide with school holidays. School term dates are provided in advance to help you to plan early. Holidays taken in term time will not be authorised. Should you need to request a leave of absence during term time please fill in a 'Leave of absence' form that is available from the school office or on the school website. Parents should also arrange for routine medical and dental appointments and for music or dance examinations etc. to take place outside of school hours.

Any absences that have not been explained are considered 'unauthorised' by the Local Authority, who collect and publish attendance data for each School. High levels of absence will attract the attention of the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

CELEBRATION ASSEMBLY

Each Friday at 9:05am the children participate in the Celebration Assembly. One child from each class is chosen to put work on the WOW board and to go in the Gold Book for exceptional learning. This assembly is also a chance for children to share certificates, medals or awards that they have received that week outside school. We celebrate school sporting and academic achievements as well as birthdays. Parents are welcome at this assembly.

COMPLAINTS

A parent who has a complaint about any aspect of the school should first talk with the class teacher who will be happy to discuss the matter. If you need further support, please make an appointment with the headteacher.

If a parent feels the issues raised have not been resolved then there are procedures in place to make a formal complaint to the governors' of St Joseph's Catholic School. Details of the procedure can be obtained from the office.

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities including swimming, trips and school journeys can make towards pupils' personal and social education.

The Governing Body asks that families make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of each activity. If insufficient contributions are received, then the activity may not go ahead.

BUDDIES

When children start in Reception they are assigned a buddy from Year 4. During the school year, the children will have opportunity to take part in a range of activities with their buddies. They will stay with the buddy through Year 1 and 2. In Year 4 they will be assigned their own buddy.

BEHAVIOUR

We have a behaviour policy, which outlines expected behaviour. The aims of this policy are:

- To follow a moral framework, based on Catholic teaching.
- To create an environment which encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviours.
- To promote self-esteem, self-discipline and positive relationships.
- To ensure that our expectations and strategies are known and understood by staff, governors and parents.
- To encourage the close liaison of home and school to support positive behaviour.

All the behaviour management at St Josephs is founded in our faith and in our Catholic ethos.

The foundation of our behaviour policy is embodied in four words:

<p style="text-align: center;">Ready</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We are ready to learn, to help and to do our best.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Safe</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We will stay safe and keep others safe.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Responsible</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We are responsible for our own actions and behaviour.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Respectful</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We are respectful to others, to the environment and to ourselves.</p>

BUGGIES

Please do not bring buggies into the school. They can be left in the bike sheds during the school day.

BIKE/SCOOTER SHEDS

Children's bicycles can be locked in the school bike sheds during the school day. Please ensure bikes are locked. Bikes are left at owners risk, the school cannot accept responsibility for loss or theft. Helmet lockers are also available and locks are available from the school office for use.

COMMUNICATION

Dates are notified in our school newsletters and school bulletins, which are sent via email, and are also available on the website.

We use **SchoolGateway** for our school emails, messages and payments. Please ensure you download the app onto your phone.

Please provide your email address to receive our weekly newsletters as dates may change. Our Website is www.stjosephs255.herts.sch.uk

Tapestry is used in the Foundation stage to communicate to parents and to share information about what your child is doing at school.

Purple Mash is used by teachers to communicate information about learning with the children.

EXTENDED SCHOOL

The after School club is run by an external company called Little Blue Van (LBV) from 3.15pm to 6.00pm. The school cannot book children on to the club, so please contact LBV directly on 07770 963701/07790444704 or by email, martin@littlebluevan.co.uk

The Breakfast Club runs from 7.45am.

The clubs are run by staff with relevant experience and qualifications.

Bookings are made on SchoolGateway app or website. For further information regarding prices see our website or contact kidzone@stjosephs255.herts.sch.uk

Bookings must be made at least a week in advance and we need at least a week's notice for any cancellations.

FOREST SCHOOL

Every class visits the Forest School at least once a week to take part in activities linked with our curriculum.

FRIENDS OF ST. JOSEPH'S

All parents are automatic members of the Friends of St Joseph's. The committee, which includes both parents and governors, works in conjunction with the staff of the school to raise funds for many projects throughout the year. Not only do they raise money for educational equipment but also for projects to enhance the environment of the School to enable pupils to enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities.

During the year, events are organised for both adults and children to enjoy. The Friends of St. Joseph's also organise two main fund raising events – a Winter Warmer and a Summer Sizzler, both of which are very popular with parents, staff and children alike.

Whilst the committee is flourishing and is supported at all events, new members and new ideas are warmly welcomed, and what better way to make new friends yourself than to join in the activities organised by the 'Friends' Association when your child starts at St. Joseph's School.

Each class has a 'Friends' class representative. We encourage you to get involved in whichever way you can.

GOVERNORS' FUND

Our school was built by the community of The Immaculate Conception & St Joseph, Hertford, in conjunction with the Diocese of Westminster, so that the Catholic children of Hertford could have the opportunity of an education firmly based within a Catholic ethos. We are a Voluntary Aided school and this means that the governors are financially responsible for aspects of the school's maintenance. The funding for this has to be received from the parents of children attending the school by means of the Governors' Fund. The monies collected help with small repair bills as well as contributing to major works.

The governors hope and expect that parents will, except in cases of real financial hardship, accept the obligation to contribute to the fund on a regular basis. We ask you to contribute at the rate of £50 per year per child or £75 per year per family. Cheques should be made payable to 'St. Joseph's School Governors' Fund'.

If you are a taxpayer the school could receive an additional percentage of your contribution if you agree to make your payments by Gift Aid (incorporating payments made under a Deed of Covenant) and ideally by means of a bankers order under which quarterly payments can be made. If it is possible for you to join the covenant scheme the appropriate forms will be made available from the school office.

HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

We believe education is firmly rooted in the partnerships between home and school. Regular communication between home and school is essential.

You will be asked to complete an 'After-school collection of children' form at the beginning of the year so that you can inform us of who has permission to pick up your child.

Please email diary@stjosephs255.herts.sch.uk us to notify us of any changes to this.

On visiting the school, parents must report to the office in the first instance. If you wish to see a particular member of staff, please arrange a mutually convenient appointment through the office so that the matter can be properly discussed.

Celebration Assemblies are held on Fridays and are an opportunity for parents to see the children's achievements celebrated.

Liturgies: Parents are invited to their child's class liturgies. The liturgies are a wonderful time of prayer and reflection and a chance for parents to worship and pray alongside their child. They start at 9.05am on **Wednesdays** and usually last for about 20 minutes (check newsletter for days/times).

Topic Celebrations are held each term by the class to share with parents what has been learnt during the half term.

Parents/visitors must not visit any part of the school without first reporting to the office.

HOMEWORK

The main focus of our homework policy is for the children to read at home every day.

YR, Y1 and Y2: 10- 15 minutes reading with an adult every day, revise weekly phonics sounds, and 2 sessions of Mathletics a week

Y3,Y4 and Y5: 15-20 minutes reading every day, weekly set work from Mathletics and Times Tables Rock Stars.

Y6: 15-20 minutes reading every day, weekly set work from Maths and Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation books.

JEWELLERY

Jewellery must not be worn, with the exception of plain stud earrings. **Jewelled, looped or dangling earrings are not allowed.** Unsuitable earrings in pierced ears can result in torn ears when caught in clothing and can be dangerous during PE activities and in normal child play. Children wearing studs will be required to remove them during P.E. lessons. They must be **removed** for all swimming activities. Children may wear a watch to school, but no smart watches are allowed.

LOST OR DAMAGED SCHOOL PROPERTY

In the rare event of school property being lost or damaged by a child, it is expected that it will be replaced or paid for. Please note this especially relates to children's reading books, which occasionally get damaged.

LUNCH CLUBS

A variety of lunch clubs are available for pupils to attend. These currently include language, sport and music lessons which are available for children at extra cost. Details are available from the school office. There are also many lunchtime sports activities run by staff and older pupils; these are available to the children at no cost.

LUNCHES

Parents may choose for their child to have a school dinner which is cooked on the premises. The government currently provides free lunches for children in Reception to Year 2 classes. Our cook provides a choice of three meals daily. Water is also available to accompany the meal. Provision is made for eating packed lunches. We encourage the children to have healthy, balanced home packed lunches which are adequate to see a child through a busy day. Packed lunches must not contain nuts, sesame seeds, sweets or fizzy drinks.

Lunch should be packed in a suitable box and labelled clearly with the child's name. Please do not send packed lunches in plastic carrier bags.

School lunches must be paid for in advance directly to Herts Catering. The current price is available from the office.

If you are unemployed or have a low income, your child may qualify for free school meals. Please contact the school office for further information.

MILK

Milk is provided for children on a daily basis. Milk for the Nursery children is provided free of charge and at a reduced rate for KS1 and KS2 children. This is ordered in advance, so it is essential that we know before the beginning of term whether or not your child will be having milk. Payment (if applicable) must be made in advance via SchoolGateway. It is not possible to make a refund for any days that your child is absent.

MEDICINES

Should your child need prescribed medicine during the school day please contact the school office to make the necessary arrangements and to fill in permission form.

Asthma - Older children (KS2) are expected to manage their own inhalers, which should always be in school. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure that the medication is in date.

Adrenaline pens - Staff are trained in the use of the Adrenaline pens (Epipens/Jextpens/Emerades). It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that there is always medication in school that is in date.

NURTURE

We believe that for a child to be successful at school they need to be nurtured and for their wellbeing to be considered. We provide extra support for children when needed. We have a Rainbows group, a Nurture Group and 20:20 lunchtimes. We encourage children to talk about any worries; each class has a worry box and each teacher runs regular circle time sessions. Through PSHE lessons and through our faith we make a commitment to supporting the emotional wellbeing of all children.

PARKING

The school car park is exclusively for the use of staff and visitors on official school business. Access to the school car park is restricted between 8.40am and 9.10am and between 3pm and 3.30pm. This is for the safety of parents and children accessing the school. No parents should use the school carpark before 4:45pm as there are many children using the carpark walking to and from clubs.

Parents must not use the school car park for dropping off or collecting children from school. Please be considerate when you park. **Do not park across residents' driveways.**

There are three entrances to the school, these have been designed to encourage children, where possible, to walk to school. There are two entrances on North Road, one for the EYFS/KS1 children and the other for KS2 children. The third entrance is on the Twitchel Path. To use this path, children can either walk directly onto KS1 playground, or walk around the back of the school to the KS2 playground. Whilst walking through the reception class outdoor area please respect the equipment, which is used for the children's learning.

PAYMENTS

These are payments for 'non-essential' items and journeys that arise during the school year. We try to give advance warning so that money can be put aside.

Payments should be made via **SchoolGateway**. Please do not send cash to the school office. Parents can login via the SchoolGateway website or the phone app with the email address used for correspondence when the child starts school.

Should you need to send a cheque via the school office please do so in an envelope marked with your child's name, class, amount enclosed and what the payment is for. All such payments should be sent in with your child to his/her teacher or via the Office letterbox. To help us keep our accounts up to date, please make all payments by the date specified on each individual letter, and return all payment/permission slips, where applicable. We do not accept cash payments.

PHONES/ WATCHES

Phones must not be brought to school.

Exception is made for Year 6 children who may walk to/from school alone. In this instance, phones must be given to the school office for during the school day. School accepts no responsibility for loss or damage.

We request that adults do not use their phones on the school premises.

Watches may be worn, but again the school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage. Watches are to be removed during swimming and P.E. lessons. **No smart watches** should be worn in school.

PARISH/SCHOOL LINKS

The school is an integral part of the parish. The parish priest, Fr. Terry, is chaplain to the school and is a frequent visitor to celebrate Masses, attend liturgies and speak to the children.

Reception children participate in all Masses and assemblies from the 2nd half of the Autumn term.

Our foundation governors are members of the parish representing the diocesan trustees.

Masses are celebrated at school on Holy Days of Obligation which fall in school time. Parents are welcome to attend.

Children attend church for special celebrations at certain times of the year. At Christmas a KS2 carol concert is held in the church and during Lent the children make their Confessions and pray the Stations of the Cross.

PUNCTUALITY

Please remember that punctuality is important as it sets the tone for the day and it is a life skill we try to develop within our children. It is also very disruptive for staff and other pupils when a child arrives late. Similarly we expect parents to collect children promptly at the end of the school day 3.15pm, as the school is not responsible for them after this time.

If you are going to be delayed at the end of the day, please telephone the school to let us know. This will help us to reassure your child that someone is coming. It is important that you keep us informed of your contact numbers for just such occasions.

READING

Reading is a prominent focus throughout St Joseph's. We encourage children to read on a daily basis at home and in school. Children have access to a range of books.

EYFS and KS1 children bring home a reading book from the reading scheme. Books are changed on a weekly basis. Children are expected to read each reading scheme book more than once: with a parent, with support and independently. The reading scheme books are used to practice reading skills taught in class.

SCHOOL SECURITY

The school regularly reviews its security practices. We have a secure entry system on our front and rear entrance doors. We have a signing-in book. All visitors have to report to the office to sign in. They must also wear a distinctive badge whilst in the building. All staff have been asked to challenge any person not wearing a badge seen in the building and the children have been told to report the presence of a stranger to a member of staff as a matter of urgency. The school has a CCTV system in place which operates 24 hours a day.

SNACK

A morning snack of a piece of fruit is provided daily for your KS1 or EYFS child. KS2 children may bring a fruit snack for their morning break. Sweets, biscuits, crisps and sweet or fizzy drinks of any kind are not allowed as break time snacks. We encourage the children to drink water throughout the day.

SPORTS

There is opportunity for your child to participate in a range of sporting activities during their time at St Joseph's. We are a member of the HWSSP (Hertford and Ware Schools Sports Partnership). This organisation organises festivals and competitions throughout the school year. We also have a football squad and netball squad made up from children for Y5 and Y6.

We have a running track which all children use every week to run, both as an organised Daily Mile and more informally at lunchtimes.

Children need to have trainers at school every day.

STAFF AND GOVERNORS

An up to date list of staff and governors is available from the school website www.stjosephs255.herts.sch.uk.

SWIMMING

Swimming lessons are held in our school pool during the summer term. Qualified swimming instructors run the lessons.

TRIPS & VISITS

Visits and adventurous activities are an essential part of a child's development, helping them to learn about assessing and managing risk and to gain skills in leadership and team working. They also build self-esteem and allow children to experience a range of normal social interactions.

Guidelines from Hertfordshire Local Authority relating to off-site visits necessitates the following;

- (a) we require a medical form to be completed for day trips as well as overnight stays
- (b) parent volunteers will not be allowed to supervise their own child's group.

For each visit:

- Staff carry out a risk assessment
- Parents are required to complete a consent form

Guidelines are also in place relating to the transportation of extra-curricular activities. We are not able to arrange car transport for extra-curricular activities. This must be arranged between individual parents.

UNIFORM

The Governing Body has determined the school uniform to be worn by children attending St Joseph's School and we expect this dress code to be adhered to.

School uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of our school and setting an appropriate tone. We expect the uniform code to be adhered to as it can instil pride; support positive behaviour and discipline; ensure all pupils feel welcome; protect children from social pressures to dress in a particular way; and nurture cohesion and promote good relations between different groups of pupils.

Summer Uniform	Winter Uniform	PE/Forest school
Royal blue and white check dress (worn with white socks)	White polo shirt	St Joseph's blue polo shirt
White polo shirt	Mid grey school trousers/ /skirt/pinafore	Navy blue shorts or skirt
Mid grey skirt/pinafore/school trousers/knee length shorts (no cargo shorts)	School sweatshirt or cardigan	Plain navy blue tracksuit bottoms
School sweatshirt or cardigan	Grey socks/grey tights	School sweatshirt or cardigan
Grey socks	School hat	White or grey socks
School cap	Sensible plain black shoes	Trainers
Sensible plain black shoes (no sandals)		Wellie boots
Uniform - Nursery Class (all year)		Swimming:
White polo shirt		Swimming trunks (NOT shorts)
Navy joggers or leggings.		One piece swimming costume
School sweatshirt/cardigan		Children with long hair or long fringe must wear a swimming hat.

Children are expected to be clean, smart and well presented: extreme or unorthodox/shaved hair styles are not permitted, including various decorations, ribbons or beads. **Hair bands are expected to match with the school uniform. i.e. white or School blue.**

Uniform - Online Ordering

Parents can order directly on Leonard Hudson's online shop. We still have some stock so please enquire at the office should you need to order. This link is also on our school website:

<https://www.kidsconnection.co.uk/>

VOLUNTEERS

We welcome volunteers to help with a wide range of activities within the school. If any parent would like to help please let the office know. All regular volunteers are required to complete a police check from the Disclosure and Barring Scheme. Please see the school 'Volunteer Helper Policy' available from the school office or school website for further information.

WATER

Children should bring a small bottle of water to school for drinking during the course of the school day. **This must be in a non-spill container.** Water bottles are available from school at a cost of £1.70. Spare caps are available at 30p.

WEBSITE

Please look at our school website for information.

Class pages are updated by teachers each term with information on the children's learning.

Our policies, term dates, admissions information, Sports Reports and much more are available online.

St Joseph's School Song

1. Welcome to St Joseph's, welcome to our school.
We all work together and live by Christian rules.
We respect each other; we always try our best,
With the help of Christ our Lord, we stand out from the rest.

Chorus

We pray for strength to walk your way,
We pray for wisdom in all we say,
We pray for those who are in need,
We pray to you Lord Jesus.

2. Working as a family, working as a team,
We feel really valued, with confidence supreme.
At our heart is Jesus, we talk to Him each day.
He's our greatest teacher and we're very proud to say.

Chorus

We pray for strength to walk your way,
We pray for wisdom in all we say,
We pray for those who are in need,
We pray to you Lord Jesus.

Prayer to St. Joseph

O, Glorious Saint Joseph chosen by God
to be the pure spouse of the Virgin Mary,
head of the Holy Family and foster father of Jesus,
listen to our prayers and strengthen in faith,
hope and love this school dedicated to you.
Watch over the family of the church
and increase our numbers.

Protect our families,
bring back the lapsed,
pray for the sick and
conform the sorrowful.

We make this prayer through Him
who was placed in your tender care,
Jesus Christ,
Our Lord,

AMEN