

Godinton Primary School

Parent Handbook

Welcome to Godinton Primary School!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Godinton Primary School. We are very pleased that your child will be joining our school community. We try to foster a family feel at Godinton and we have written this guide in an attempt to provide you, as a new parent, with all the information you will need about how our school operates.

If you encounter a situation which we have not covered within the guide, please tell us and we will include it in next year's edition. In the short term, if there is something of which you are unsure, just ask us.

1. Your First Day – Don't be Nervous!

School Times

School playground is open to children	8.40 am
Classroom doors open – the children are able to come into their classrooms.	8.50 am
Classroom doors close – children should be in by this time	9.00 am
Playtime – whole school	10.10 – 10.25 am
Lunchtime:	
Lower School	11.30 – 12.40 pm
Year 2	12.00 – 1.15 pm
Year 3	12.00 – 1.00 pm
Upper School	12.30 - 1.30 pm
Playtime – lower school and year 1	2.00 – 2.15 pm
End of School	3.15 pm

Coming to School

The school's main gates are opened very early in the morning so that staff may come into school and to allow access for the Breakfast Club and for deliveries. However, we ask you not to send or bring your child onto the school site before 8.40am, unless you are accessing the Breakfast Club, as there is no supervision on any part of the school site before this time. At 8.40am, the gates onto the main playground are opened by the Headteacher who is then in attendance to supervise the children. In his absence, another senior member of staff will take his place.

At 8.50am, a bell will sound and the teachers will open the external doors of their class rooms. The children are then free to enter their class rooms until 9am, when a second bell will sound and the class room doors will close. No children will be admitted through the class room doors after 9am, as the teachers will have started their lessons. All pupils arriving after this time should report to the school office where they will be expected to sign the late book, stating the reason for being late. This will be recorded as late on the register.

Parents are welcome to come onto the school site at any time from 8.40-9am. The children are welcome to spend the ten minutes from 8.40-8.50, playing and socialising. Alternatively, you are very welcome to arrive at any time after 8.50 and up to 9am, and to have your child go straight into the classroom. The choice is yours.

Parents are very welcome to stay on the playground with their children of a morning and many often stay and chat even once their children have gone into class. However, the caretaker will begin to lock the site, including the external access gates, after 9 a.m and we would ask you to leave the site before she does so.

Wet Days

If it is wet, the classroom doors will be open at 8.40am and the children can come straight into the school.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will be on duty on the main playground every morning from 8.40am, apart from the occasional days when he is attending meetings off site. When this is the case, his place will be taken by another member of staff.

Should you wish to discuss any minor issue with the Headteacher, please feel free to talk to him on the playground. If you have a more major issue to discuss with either him, or another member of staff, you may make an appointment to see them at the school office.

Gate Supervisors

There are supervisors at our three pedestrian access gates; the main gate at Lockholt Close, the side gate leading to the Chimneys car park and the far gate at

the end of the school field. The supervisors ensure that once a child has walked onto the school site, they do not turn around and leave again for any reason. This has happened very occasionally in the past when children have realised that they have forgotten PE kit, packed lunch, homework etc. Obviously their leaving the school site after you have dropped them off puts the children into potential danger. The supervisors will stop this and direct the children to the school office for assistance if need be.

Coffee Shop

Every Wednesday morning, parents are invited to come into the staff room from 9-10am, for tea and coffee. This is an informal get together when parents can get to know each other. Our Family Liaison Officer, Mrs Tracey Jones, is in attendance but there are no other members of staff in the coffee shop. The morning provides an opportunity for parents to get to know each other and have a friendly informal chat.

Safety!

We do not allow any ball games on the playground before school as it is just too crowded. We have a lot of pre-school aged children on the playground with their mums and dads, and we do not want footballs flying around and hitting them.

The children are not allowed to play on any of the climbing apparatus which is located on the school playgrounds. The pirate ship and the climbing area are only to be used by pupils when there is a member of staff supervising. Please do not allow your child to climb on either piece of equipment, before or after school. We cannot accept any responsibility for any accidents which occur outside of normal school hours.

Cycling to School

Children are encouraged to cycle to school. However, it is forbidden for children to cycle in the school grounds. In the interests of safety, we insist that children dismount before entering the gates.

Covered bicycle racks are available at the main entrance to the school. Children must lock their bicycles up before leaving them. Unfortunately the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage which may occur to the bicycles whilst they are on school property. However, any incident involving a pupil will be dealt with thoroughly.

Parking

There is severe congestion around the school at the beginning and end of the school day. If at all possible, please refrain from using your car to transport your child to school. If that isn't possible, please try to car share, if you can.

If you must use a car to get your children to school we would respectfully ask all parents to park in the public car park adjacent to the Chimneys pub, and to then walk your child down the path and into the school.

The school car park is a staff car park only. There are electronic barriers across the vehicular entrance and exit. Only staff and authorised visitors are allowed to drive on site. No parents, apart from those in current possession of disabled blue badges, or those experiencing exceptional circumstances, such as having a child with a broken leg, are able to drive onto the site. The electronic barriers will prevent any unauthorised visitors from leaving the site once they have driven in and there is a £2 charge for us having to release parents who do drive onto the site, so please do not do this.

We have a regular lollipop lady, who escorts the children across Loudon Path. Please cross the road where they operate.

2. Reception Year

The Reception and Year 1 class rooms are located together, at one end of the school and they effectively operate as their own setting within the school. This is known as our Lower School.

Before children start in the Reception classes, Reception staff complete home visits, calling in at the homes of every child who is joining our school. They will discuss the child's needs with the parents and start the process of getting to know the child and the family.

In order to ease the transition to school, new reception children are invited in for story time and activity sessions in the summer term before they start. There are also information sessions for parents during which you will be advised about key issues connected with your child starting school. Further information about starting school in the reception classes is available on the school website www.godinton.kent.sch.uk.

We form our reception intake into 4 small class groups of 15. They remain in these groups for their entire Reception Year. Our teachers each register and supervise two of these class groups. By the end of the academic year, we have got to know the children fully, and only then do we form them into 2 distinct classes of 30 children, ready for the start of year 1 containing a mix of children from the 4 different reception groups. We want to protect friendship groups as much as we can, whilst also separating children who do not bring out the best in each other, and providing each class with a similar make up regarding gender and ability.

3. School Organisation

Mini Schools

Godinton Primary is not organised in the same way as most primary schools. We have moved away from having 'key stages' as they are known. Most schools have a key stage 1, which includes the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes; and a key stage 2, which includes Years 3-6. However at Godinton, we have organised our children into three mini schools. We have a Lower School which comprises the Reception and Year 1 classes; a Middle School which includes Years 2 and 3; and an Upper School of Years 4-6.

Each mini school has a teacher who leads it, forming our middle management team. Whilst the school has regular whole staff meetings, which allow us to focus on the larger issues we face, we also have regular mini school meetings, which allow the staff to focus specifically on the issues which are pertinent to their children. We believe that this system allows us to focus our efforts more effectively on developing the school at every level.

We offer a rich curriculum for our children. At the core of the weekly timetable are lessons which develop the children's skills in reading (phonics), writing and maths. However, this is supplemented by science and computing, a range of arts activities including visual art, drama and music, as well as sporting opportunities. We want our children to be well-rounded learners and to explore the world around them with curiosity, interest and enthusiasm. Further information about the curriculum for each year group can be found on the school website.

Setting

As of September 2016, we put the children into ability sets across the two year group classes for maths from Year 2 onwards. This can involve the children moving between class rooms and possibly being taught by the other teacher in that year group. This gently introduces them to the type of things they will experience when move to secondary school and enables the staff to differentiate tasks more specifically to the children's needs.

4. Information About Pupil Progress

We don't have a one to one meeting between parents and teachers at the very start of the academic year, as there is comparatively little to discuss when the school year has only just begun. The teachers are still getting to know your children at this stage.

Therefore we begin each academic year with a 'Meet the Teacher Evening' instead. All parents are invited to come into their child's new class and meet the class teacher. This is an informal drop in session when parents can come and talk to their child's new teacher about areas such as what topics are being studied and more specific arrangements such as how spellings are taught, when homework will be set, on which days the children will need their PE kit etc. They will also answer any

questions which you may have. Teachers also provide a hand out to parents which contains all the key information relating to the year group.

Parents are then provided with 3 reports spaced over the course of the academic year. These provide you with information about your child's level of achievement, their progress and the effort they are putting into their studies. You receive a simple target report in November; the main written report is given to you in March and you receive a simple concluding report in July.

We prefer to provide you with the main report in March and not at the end of the academic year as is traditional. By doing this, we are able to make you fully aware of any issues which need to be addressed, such as a problem with learning or progress, or the need for a child to improve their attitude, whilst there is still time to do so. There is little point in telling you in July, that your child isn't working hard enough, as it is too late to address the problem.

By highlighting issues in March, we still have half the academic year to work towards an improvement. Similarly, it is a boost to children to be praised for their hard work and progress then, and not make them wait until the end of the academic year to share this news with you.

After receiving each of the written reports, parents are able to come into school to view their child's work and to look around their classroom.

You then have the opportunity to meet the class teacher on a one to one basis, to discuss any issues which have been identified. We run parents' evenings in the school hall to facilitate these meetings. However, if *all* parents require such a meeting, the teacher can only offer a ten minute consultation to each parent. Consequently, we strongly request that parents do not ask for a one to one meeting with the teacher, unless they have a specific concern which they wish to discuss. If both you and the teacher are happy with your child's progress and attitude, and you have consequently received a written report to that effect, and you are happy with the work you have seen in your child's books, please do not request a meeting. This will free time and allow the class teacher to offer longer consultations to the parents of children whose progress or attitude is not as it should be.

However, please understand that you are free to make an appointment to see your child's teacher **whenever the need arises** - you do not have to wait for a scheduled consultation evening if you wish to discuss a concern. You can speak to your teacher directly at the end of each day. Teachers in years R-3 will either be on the playground after school finishes, or at the doors of their classrooms. Teachers in years 4-6 will be in their classrooms. They may not be free to discuss an issue straight away, as many of the teachers run after school clubs. However, they will always arrange a time when they can speak to you.

Alternatively, you can make an appointment to see your child's teacher by contacting the school office on 01233 621616. The office is staffed from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday during term time.

November 2016

5. Additional Educational Needs, Disability and Emotional Wellbeing

Mrs Stein is our Assistant Head for Inclusion and arranges any provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability. She manages the work of our Teaching Assistants (TAs), who work alongside the teachers to provide additional support to our pupils. She will be involved with you, should your child have a specific issue affecting their progress within school. This may include special educational needs, medical difficulties, social or emotional concerns, or English as an additional language.

Mrs McGoldrick and Mrs Paggett are our Enrichment Co-ordinators and work on our provision for more academically more able pupils.

Miss Talbot, Deputy Head is The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Child Protection Co-ordinator) and any concerns regarding pupil welfare should be brought to her.

Our school has a Family Liaison Officer, Mrs Tracey Jones, who is available to help parents in supporting the well-being of their children and family. Mrs Jones may offer help and advice with issues such as behaviour, separation, bereavement or anxiety. Support may be offered on a 1 to 1 basis or through some of the parenting classes available. Mrs Jones is also able to signpost parents to other agencies who may also be able to assist. Mrs Jones is supported by Mrs Corinna Stapleton who works at supporting the children with their emotional well-being. All our children are encouraged to discuss their feelings in school and to let staff know of any concerns or worries that they might have.

6. The Extended School

After School Club

Should you require after school care for your child we have an after-school club run on the Godinton site by Kent Play Clubs. The club operates from 3.20pm – 5.45pm and currently costs £8.50 per session per child. Enrolment forms are available from the school office.

Breakfast Club

We also offer a breakfast club for those parents who require supervision for their children before school opens in the morning. The club is run by members of the school staff. Sessions currently cost £3.00 and the club is open from 7.50 in the morning. The children receive a comprehensive breakfast, including toast, cereal, fruit and yoghurt and have the chance to participate in a range of activities, before being escorted to their class rooms for the start of school.

PTFA

The PTFA raise a phenomenal amount of money each year and these funds have supported a wide range of projects within the school. The financial support afforded by the PTFA is crucial to the development of the school.

However, the PTFA isn't just a vehicle for fundraising. The Headteacher or a member of the Senior Management Team attends every PTFA meeting and reports on what is happening within the school. Parents are then able to ask questions and raise other points for discussion. The PTFA serves as another vehicle for communication between parents and the school.

We would welcome your involvement in the PTFA. It is a very friendly group and meetings are held regularly. If you would like to become a member please contact the present Chair, Mrs Sam Ellis, through the school office.

7. Rewards and Sanctions

School House System

At Godinton we operate a very successful School House system where the children throughout the school are divided into four House teams.

Children receive individual house points for good work and good behaviour and these contribute to overall House Totals. They work towards earning house point badges which are awarded throughout the year. Each house is lead by House Captains who are elected from Year 6.

Inter-house competitions, such as our annual sports days in the summer are run throughout the year.

Celebration Assembly and Tea Parties

Celebrating children's success is important to us. Every Monday, we have a celebration assembly. Teachers select children from their class who deserve to be recognised for either good work or good behaviour. These children are recognised during our celebration assembly as 'citizens of the week'. All of the citizens then join the Head in the Headteacher's office, for a tea party involving biscuits and juice.

Gold Cards

Children will also have their efforts and achievements recognised by the class teachers, who will award them a gold card. When they receive a gold card, the children visit the Head and/or Deputy Headteacher, who praise their work and award them a gold sticker.

Friday Assembly

Every Friday, the whole school meet for assembly. Sometimes different classes will lead the assembly by showing the school what they have been working on in class. Any child, who has received a medal, certificate, or who has achieved anything of note, in any activity inside *or outside* of school, is able to discuss what they have done in front of the school.

Whilst we would love to have you join us for the assembly, this just isn't possible. The school hall is quite small and we can only just fit all of the children in at the same time. Consequently, we are not able to accommodate parents as well.

Red Cards

Should your child misbehave, they will receive a warning from a member of staff. If the poor behaviour persists, or if the child is verbally or physically aggressive towards another child, they will receive a red card. They will then be sent to either the Head of their school, or the Deputy or Headteacher if the offence is sufficiently serious.

You will receive a letter home detailing what your child has done. They will serve a playtime detention. If the poor behaviour persists, there are a range of increasing sanctions, culminating in a fixed term exclusion or, ultimately, expulsion from the school. These are set out in our discipline policy, which you may collect from the office if you so wish.

8. The Wider Curriculum

Clubs

We believe that it is extremely important for children to have every opportunity possible to participate in extra-curricular activities. Hence, the staff at Godinton Primary give up a great deal of their time to run a wide range of activities.

You can collect a list of the current club activities from the office or via the school website. However, the activities generally include a range of seasonal sports, including high five (netball), athletics, hockey, volleyball, cricket and rugby. Additional clubs include cheerleading, textile, art, papercraft club for the younger children, photography, cooking, homework and choir. These are augmented by activities run by external providers. Parents have to pay for these activities.

The activities are invariably over subscribed and are often more available for those children in the middle and upper schools. However, we are endeavouring to provide the lower school children with more activities. If you feel that you have either the time to support a member of staff in running a club, or have a specialist skill yourself, which you would like to offer to the children, please contact the school. Your help is always appreciated.

Educational Visits

We supplement our usual lessons with numerous offsite visits, as well as having visitors to our school. It is important that children gain first hand experience of what they are studying. This can include trips to castles and museums, dressing up days, visits from dancers, actors and bands of all nationalities.

Residential visits

We run an annual residential trip for those children in the Upper School. This alternates between a week at the KCC centre in Hardelot France and a week at a JCA adventure centre in the UK.

The Hardelot residential offers our children the opportunity to visit France, to practice their French and to experience the French culture. In doing so, they become more confident and rounded people. The trip involves 30 children and includes visits to a sweet factory, chocolate factory, a snail farm (some are brave enough to try the produce), Etaples' market, the beach at Wissant and a goat farm.

The JCA trip is more activity based and aimed at developing the confidence and social skills of our children. It involves abseiling, rock climbing, raft building, fencing, team games, orienteering and no doubt many nights of the children staying up chatting long after they are supposed to be asleep.

A two night residential visit also operates for children in Year 5 to the Kingswood Residential Activity Centre in Ashford.

9. General Information

Absence

It is the parents / carers responsibility to contact the school whenever their child is absent stating the reason for the child's absence. Parents should inform the school of their child's absence on each day thereafter. This should be followed up with a letter upon a child's return to school.

In September 2013, the government introduced a new policy regarding term time absences, which means that parents may be fined if they take their children out of school during term time. Term time absences are only granted for what are classed as exceptional circumstances. The full details of the government's measures are outlined in our school absence policy, which can be found on our website.

Academy

Godinton Primary School is an Academy School. Further details about the Governing Body of the school can be found on the school website.

Administering of Medicine / Medical Needs

In the event that your child requires medication during the day we would, in the first instance, suggest that dosages be taken before or after school. In the event that this is unworkable, we would ask that parents complete a form available at the school office, in order for school staff to administer medicines to your child. However, please note that only prescription medicines can be administered by school staff. Parents are asked to complete a medical needs form for their child. This is a confidential form which asks for information about existing medical conditions and allergies, allowing us to ensure that any needs for your child are accommodated.

Assemblies

Assemblies form our daily act of collective worship. During assemblies, children may listen to stories with moral themes, some from different world religions including Christianity, or find out about world events such as an environmental issue. Visitors are also often invited into assemblies. Singing also forms part of assembly time and children may sing hymns or other songs with a meaning. Assemblies finish with a short period of reflection.

Parents may have particular religious or social reasons for wanting their child to be withdrawn from all or part of assembly. If this is the case, please arrange to discuss this with our Deputy Headteacher Miss Talbot.

Change of Address

Please keep us informed of any change to your address, telephone numbers, work place or the details of your 'emergency contact'.

Communication

Communicating with parents is an important part of what we do. At Godinton we use the electronic ParentMail system to communicate to parents. Details regarding ParentMail and how to verify your account are contained within your information pack.

The school also produces a monthly newsletter, in which we endeavour to provide parents with as much information as possible about what is happening within the school.

The school has its own web site. The address is www.godinton.kent.sch.uk. All newsletters are posted on the web site. In addition, it also contains a school diary, to keep you abreast of forthcoming events.

The school website is also an excellent source of information about many other areas of school life. Here parents can find key school policies, new lunch menus and find out how they can help their children at home.

However, a copy of all recent correspondence is kept in the wall files, outside the office. Please feel free to browse through this, whenever you are in school, in order to check that you haven't missed any important information.

Equipment

We encourage children in the Upper School to bring their own equipment to school in addition to that which we provide. Useful items are pens, pencils and coloured pencils in a pencil case which should all be named.

Healthy Schools Policy

Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school with them. They are allowed to keep the bottle on their desks, during lessons, to drink from as they wish. *(These bottles are supplied by the school, first free of charge and £1.50 per bottle thereafter or 30p for a replacement lid).*

They are also allowed to bring healthy snacks for morning break times. Chocolate and crisps are not allowed. On Monday – Thursday this should be a piece of fruit or vegetables. On Friday children may bring an alternative healthy snack such as a cereal bar or yogurt snack. We participate in the 'Fruit and Vegetables for Infants' scheme, in which every child from Reception to Year 2 is provided with a free piece of fruit or vegetable daily.

Due to the number of children in school with nut based allergies, we would ask that parents refrain from sending children to school with any nut products e.g. nut bars or peanut butter sandwiches.

Helping in School

We welcome parents into the school. We are happy to have you come in and help. Parents fulfil a variety of roles from helping in class, to listening to readers, to helping with displays. Some parents help run clubs. If you feel that you have a special skill, or you just feel that you could help generally, please contact the school office who will explain the application process for volunteer helpers. Please note that this process will include a criminal records check.

Homework

The school's homework policy is available on the school website. It outlines the expectations for homework in each year group.

Lost Property

Please ensure that any items of clothing or equipment brought to school are permanently named. With over 420 children in school there will be times when property goes astray, although measures are taken to avoid these. Lost property boxes are located in the front entrance.

Lunchtimes

We aim to make the lunch break as enjoyable as we can. We don't want the children trying to eat as quickly as possible in order to get back outside to the playground. We want the children to have a suitable period of time to eat their lunch and to sit and talk with their friends whilst they eat. All children eat their lunch in the school hall.

All children in Years R-2 are entitled to a free school meal under the Government's Universal Free School Meals Scheme. Children in Years 3-6 may also be entitled to a free school meal if parents are receiving certain benefits. If you believe that your child may be entitled to free school meals, please contact the school office.

The school kitchen is independent of KCC control. It is run by Independent Catering. They provide a very good meals service with an emphasis on providing fresh food. Pupils are able to choose whether to have a packed lunch or a school dinner on a daily basis. During morning registration, those children who wish a school dinner are able to choose what they wish from the menu. The menu is on our school website, so you are able to look with your child whenever you wish. You pay for the meals through an online payment system only.

Lunch playtimes are supervised by our team of mid-day supervisors.

Medical and Dental Appointments

We would ask where possible that any medical or dental appointments be made out of school hours. We appreciate that this is not always possible but would ask that you accompany your child to the school office after their appointment for them to be signed in. This will then be recorded as an authorised absence in accordance with our attendance register codes.

Online Safety

It is important to us that our children learn how to use modern technologies such as computers and the internet safely. Both parents and children are informed about our e-safety rules and are asked to sign a 'responsible internet use form' a copy of which is enclosed with your information pack.

Our Digital Images Policy outlines the protocol involving the taking and use of pupils' photographs by the school and by parents at school events.

P.E.

The children must wear school P.E. kits for all activities. Earrings must be removed, by the children, before any activities begin. If the children are not able to remove earrings please do it for them on the days that they have P.E., before they come to school. If your child is considering having their ears pierced then please do so at the start of the summer holiday – this will allow sufficient time for ears to heal so that earrings can be removed for PE at the start of the year.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children's well-being is a crucial part of a school's role. Godinton Primary School has produced an information leaflet for parents called 'In Safe Hands' which outlines all aspects of safeguarding in school. This is also available on the school website.

Miss Talbot, our Deputy Headteacher, is also the Child Protection Co-ordinator. Any concerns regarding pupil welfare or potential abuse should be brought to her attention.

Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)

SRE is built into our PSHE (personal, social and health education) curriculum. In Year 5 children are taught about changes at puberty and in Year 6 about how babies are made. Parents are fully informed as to the content of these sessions and how they may withdraw their child from certain aspects of this curriculum.

Smoking

We have a 'smoke free' policy in school. Smoking is not permitted inside the school building or in the school grounds. This includes the use of e-cigarettes. We would kindly ask that all visitors to the site respect this policy.

What to wear and bring to school

- The children must wear school uniform at all times. A list of school uniform is provided separately and can be obtained from the school office.
- The children may not wear coloured trainers in school. They are allowed black training type shoes, provided they are not covered in coloured stripes/markings of any description.
- Please ensure that all clothing is clearly labelled.
- Children may wear stud earrings, but if you are having your child's ears pierced, please do it during the summer break, as children are not permitted to participate in PE activities whilst wearing earrings. In addition, we are not allowed to remove earrings for children, so please don't have their ears pierced until they are of an age when they can remove and replace the jewellery independently.
- Children should wear no other jewellery.
- Children are not allowed to bring toys to school, apart from when joining the Reception year.
- Please do not send your child to school with expensive or sentimental items.
- Children may not bring mobile phones to school.

A full list of uniform expectations is outlined on the school website.

Uniform can be obtained from our school office on the following days and times:

Monday mornings between	8.30 – 9.30
Tuesday mornings between	8.30 – 9.30
Wednesday afternoons between	2.45 – 3.45
Thursday afternoons between	2.45 – 3.45
Friday mornings between	8.30 – 9.30

We hope that your child will be very happy at Godinton Primary and we look forward to working in partnership with you during the course of your child's time at school.

November 2016