

# St Michael's C of E VA Primary School



## Parent's Handbook

Entry September 2017

St Michael's Street

St Albans

Herts

AL3 4SJ



## **New Parent's Information for entry 2017/18**

### Head Teacher's Foreword

Choosing a primary school for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make. As the Head Teacher of St Michael's C of E VA Primary, I should like to welcome you into the school and hopefully give you an insight into the positive learning environment that your child will enjoy. Indeed, our inclusive education ensures that Every Child Matters and our caring Christian ethos supports the high priority we give to each child's personal development, giving them every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

St Michael's is a unique school, split over two sites giving it an individual identity. Both sites are housed in Victorian buildings, set in the heart of historic St Albans. We are a voluntary aided school affiliated to the Church of England which enjoys strong links with St Michael's Church, its parish church.

The staff at St Michael's are totally committed to the development of your children, offering them the very best education; an education that is rich in opportunities and experiences which will influence a lifelong love of learning.

We look forward to developing a strong partnership with you so that we can all work together to give your children the strong foundation they need to achieve.

Alison Rafferty

# **St Michael's C of E VA Primary School Vision and Aims**

## **'We believe we can achieve'**

Our school is a happy, friendly and unified community, based on a firm foundation of Christian and British values, in which children and adults learn, grow and work hard to achieve success.

## **Our Aims**

- To provide a happy, safe and nurturing environment based on Christian values
- To be a school in which every pupil receives an outstanding, wide and balanced education
- To inspire a positive attitude to learning which gives each child the skills and motivation to achieve their very best
- To value the uniqueness of each member of the school community, celebrate diversity and promote inclusion
- To show respect, care and concern for each other, the wider community and the environment of which we are a part

# School Organisation

The school day is divided into two sessions.

## **Lower School**

Morning session: 8.55am-12.00 noon

Morning break: 10.30am-10.45am (KS1 children)

Afternoon session: 1.05pm-3.20pm

Afternoon break: 2.30pm-2.45pm (KS1 children)

## **Top School**

Morning session: 9.00am-12.10pm

Morning break: 10:30am-10:45am

Afternoon session: 1.00pm-3.30pm

*Foundation Stage and KS1 children are provided with a piece of fruit or vegetable under the Government Fruit for School Scheme. KS2 children may bring a healthy snack, eg piece of fruit or vegetable sticks.*

## **Arriving at School**

Children should arrive between 8.45am and 8.55am (9.00am at Top School). The bell will ring at 8.45am when the children should enter the school and go straight into their classroom to get ready for registration. *Children should not play on the playground before this time as this area is unsupervised.*

A teaching assistant will be on the door each morning to welcome the children. Should you have any messages for your child's class teacher, please give these to the teaching assistant who will pass them on for you.

## Finding Your Way Around

The school is housed over two sites in St Michael's Street, Top School and Lower School. The older children are at Top School and the younger children, including our Reception class, are in Lower School.

The children from Lower School walk between the two sites for whole school events, eg lunchtimes, weekly Church service (later in the year) and whole school assemblies. They are taught strict road safety and are escorted by the correct ratio of adults at all times.

The Head Teacher's office is situated at Top School along with the main school office where parents should go to make appointments with staff or the Head Teacher and to deliver messages or correspondence to the office staff. For reasons of security, parents are asked to always use the main school entrance at Top School when coming into the school. The entrance at the side of the school is for the children's use and our disabled parents/visitors only.

**The pupils are taught to only open the door to a member of staff. Please do not ask any pupil, even if you are known to them, to let you into school.**

## **Helping Your Child Make a Successful Start at School**

There are some practical ways that you can help us make the transition to school the best possible experience for your child.

- Talk to your child about what to expect.
- Encourage your child to be independent at mealtimes and be able to use a knife and fork.
- Ensure that your child is familiar and confident with asking to visit the toilet.
- Encourage independence with dressing and undressing.
- Encourage your child to take turns when speaking and listening.
- Encourage your child to listen and follow instructions.
- Have everything ready the night before.
- Ensure all your child's clothes are clearly named.
- Be on time for school.
- Your child may be tired in the first few weeks so avoid planning lots of extra activities after school.
- Don't expect a detailed report of every day!
- Wait for your child in the playground at the end of the day.

It is understandable that you may be anxious but try not to transfer these anxieties to your child.

Please talk to us if you have any concerns.

## **Liaison Between Home And School**

We recognise that your child is special to you and we will do our very best to work with you for his or her benefit.

### **Newsletters and meetings**

We do our best to keep you fully informed about all school events through our fortnightly newsletters. You will also receive termly newsletters from your child's class teacher telling you what they are teaching and how you can support your child at home.

Every child will have a reading record book, to keep a record of your child's reading. The help that you can give by hearing your child practise his/her reading is invaluable. The day book should be taken to and from school every day.

Messages regarding changes to school collection arrangements can be given to the member of the staff on the door in the morning or by email to the office at [admin@stmichaels.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmichaels.herts.sch.uk).

### **Consultation Evenings**

Formal parent consultation evenings are held twice a year, in the Autumn and Spring terms and you will receive a written report about your child in July.

Teachers are also happy to meet with you after school to discuss any aspect of your child's education or welfare or any other concerns that you may have. Should you wish to discuss a matter in any length, then please request an appointment via the school office.

### **Home-School Agreement**

Having chosen St Michael's as the school for your child, we ask for your support. We invite you to read and sign the Home-School Agreement with your child and return it to school.

## **Pastoral Care and Behaviour**

As adults, we share responsibility for all the children in school but each teacher has particular responsibility for one group or class of children.

### **Pupils' Behaviour**

All members of staff are responsible for promoting the highest possible standards of behaviour at St Michael's. This allows school to be an orderly place where everyone can focus on teaching and learning within a happy and caring environment.

We encourage the children to care for themselves and each other and to respect other people's property and their own. The emphasis within the school is on self-discipline and rules are kept to the minimum required for the orderly running of the school.

Children are encouraged to behave well and keep the Golden Rules and receive praise for doing so. Praise and encouragement for good behaviour play a major part in our work with the children.

Unacceptable behaviour is discouraged, sometimes through sanctions such as withdrawal of privileges or playtimes. If a member of staff has concerns about the behaviour of a pupil, we will meet with parents. The support of parents is very important to maintain high standards of behaviour.

In cases of extreme or continuous misconduct the Head Teacher has the authority to exclude a child from the school.

For further information regarding our Behaviour Policy, please visit the school website: [www.stmichaels.herts.sch.uk](http://www.stmichaels.herts.sch.uk)



## **Golden Rules**

Pupils and staff have agreed the following Golden Rules which everyone at school is expected to follow to promote high standards of learning, behaviour and consideration for others.

**We are gentle**  
**We are kind and helpful**  
**We listen**  
**We are honest**  
**We work hard**  
**We look after property**

The Golden Rules are on display in every classroom and around the school. They are referred to on a regular basis.

It is helpful if parents discuss these expectations with their child.

## **School Council and Houses**

### **School Council**

Elected representatives from each class make up our school council which meets each half term to discuss current issues of concern to the pupils.

They also work hard to lead and support whole school projects including raising money for national incentives, eg Red Nose Day.

### **House Captains**

Every child in the school is allocated a house; Verulam, Michael, Kingsbury or Alban. Each house is led by two nominated house captains from Upper Key Stage 2.

## School Uniform

Uniform is available from Stevensons, 133 Victoria Street, St Albans, Tel: 853262. You can also order uniform on-line by following the link on our school website. Non logo uniform in school colours (eg: skirts, trousers, polo shirts, etc) can often be purchased in local leading stores.

- Navy blue pinafore dress/skirt/trousers (not corduroys or tracksuit bottoms)
- Plain blue blouse or polo shirt
- School sweatshirt – navy blue with the School badge
- School cardigan - navy blue with the School badge
- School fleece - navy blue with the School badge
- Summer dress – small blue and white check
- White socks or navy tights
- Black shoes, NOT BOOTS
- Grey shorts or trousers (not corduroys or tracksuit bottoms)
- Plain blue shirt or polo shirt
- School sweatshirt – navy blue with the School badge
- School fleece - navy blue with the School badge
- Grey or navy socks
- Black shoes, NOT BOOTS

### PE

- Navy School T-shirt and blue shorts, white or black plimsolls

### Games

- Navy School T-shirt and sweatshirt (not the ones worn to school), navy blue shorts, navy blue football socks and trainers, (tracksuit as an optional extra)

Please note: Children will need a protective overall for art and craft – a shirt suitably adapted is ideal. (This does not apply to Ants Class as they are supplied). It is very important that all coats have strong hooks so that they may be hung securely on pegs.

**Any hair accessories should be blue** (scrunchies, hair ties) or plain (hair slides, grips etc). No coloured hair accessories should be worn.

### Swimming

Children in Dolphins and Eagles classes will have swimming lessons over a term and a half at St Albans Boys School. Rules and Regulations from the Boys School state that, for this activity, the children will need:

- Swimming costume or trunks (not swimming shorts)
- Towel
- Swimming hat (all girls and boys with long hair)

## **Jewellery**

For health and safety reasons children are not allowed to wear jewellery, other than a watch to school. (Children with pierced ears may wear stud earrings although the child must be able to remove these or cover them with plasters him/herself before PE lessons.)

Children should not wear nail varnish and body transfers to school. Please keep them for weekends.

## **All items of uniform should be named to make it easier to return them to their owner.**

A named, sports-capped water bottle should be brought into school every day. These can be refilled from the drinking stations around school during break times only.

***We recommend that children do not bring expensive belongings to school.***

## School Meals

At lunchtime, you may arrange for your child to have a school dinner (either a hot meal or a packed lunch) or bring a packed lunch from home.

### School Meals

Hertfordshire Catering provides our school meals in line with current Government guidelines. School meals are a good opportunity for the children to develop their social skills and can play a major part in broadening children's attitudes to what foods they will and will not eat! For all these reasons, we like as many children as possible to use the school meals service.

As we do not have the facilities to make meals at St Michael's they are provided and brought into school each day by St Adrian's Primary School. Pupils make their meal choices each day.

School meals are free for children in Key Stage 1, ie Reception, Years 1 and 2. For children in Key Stage 2 the price is £2.35 per day. You will be billed half a term in advance taking into account any credits from the previous term.

If for some reason you wish to change your child's meal arrangements, please give us two week's notice, in writing.

Our menu is available at [www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/schlfe/meals/food](http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/schlfe/meals/food)

### Packed Lunches

In order to promote a healthy lifestyle we ask that parents avoid sweets and fizzy drinks when sending packed lunches into school. Many children bring carrot sticks and pieces of fruit or raisins as healthy extras in their lunch boxes. **Nuts and nut products are not allowed in school because of the number of pupils with serious food allergies.**

### Milk

Milk is available for children under seven years of age. Although it is subsidised by the EEC there is still a charge for children over 5 years old that is payable one term in advance. The cost varies according to the number of days in the term and details are available from the Office.

## **Getting Involved**

If you are interested in getting more involved with the work of the school there are a ways in which you may wish to help.

### **Parent Helpers**

Parents are a valuable support to the teacher, both in and out of the classroom. Currently, parents help accompany children on school trips, help out with themed days and occasionally offer their help with more administrative tasks.

If you feel you would like to get involved please let your child's class teacher or the school office know. Regular parent helpers will require a DBS check and need to maintain confidentiality at all times both in and out of school.

### **Our PTA**

The St Michael's PTA has a very active committee that organises social and fund raising events. Every St Michael's parent gets automatic membership of the PTA and is eligible to serve on the committee. An Annual General Meeting is held to report on their work and to seek new members for the committee.

Recently, the PTA has provided many extras for the children, such as the outdoor play equipment, new laptops and many other resources which benefit all the children.

We hope new parents will be interested in serving on the committee or lending their support to fundraising events.

## **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body meets regularly to plan the strategic development of the school. In addition, a number of committees meet on a regular basis to review every aspect of the work of the school. The Governing Body is responsible for formulating many of the school's policies.

### **The School's Development Plan**

Each year the school produces a review and development plan. Through this, we review all areas of school life and target our resources and efforts to those areas we identify as being priorities.

If you are interested in knowing more about being a School Governor, speak to the Head Teacher or another member of the Governing Body.

## Other Information

### Registration Guidelines

I am sure you will agree the importance of your child arriving at school on time and would like to lay out the procedure which should be followed throughout the school:

#### **Top School**

- Bell rings at 8.45am (rainy days 8.40am). Any notes or messages may be left with the TA on the door who will pass them to the relevant member of staff. Children enter through the side door which closes at 9.00am.
- If a child arrives after the door is closed the parent should complete the late form at the office detailing the time of arrival and the reason for being late. If a child has more than 5 late marks in a half term, the Head Teacher will contact the parents to discuss.

#### **Lower School**

- Ants and Bees classes are dropped off at Top School on a Wednesday and Friday.
- Ants and Bees classes are dropped off at Lower School on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.
- Any variation to these arrangements will be communicated to parents via parentmail and notices on the school/parent board at Lower School.
- Lower School bell rings at 8.40am and doors open. Any notes or messages left with the teaching assistant or teacher on the door will be passed to the relevant member of staff. If a child arrives after the door is closed, the parent should complete the late form, detailing the time of arrival and the reason for being late. If a child has more than 5 late marks in a half term, the Head Teacher will contact the parents to discuss.

Arriving in school late means that the class is disrupted, as the teacher may have already given instructions for lessons or events taking place during the school day, which your child may miss. This can be frustrating for the teacher and upsetting for the child – not a good way to start the day!

The Attendance Improvement Officer visits once a term and looks at all aspects of attendance including pupils arriving late and will follow up some persistent cases if she feels it is necessary.



## **Illness and Other Circumstances**

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or any other circumstances, please could you inform the school office before 9.00am, leave a message on the answer phone or send an email to [admin@stmichaels.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmichaels.herts.sch.uk) Similarly, please also make the office aware if you know your child is going to be late (after 9.10am).

If your child is suffering from sickness or diarrhoea, they must not come back to school until they have been clear of symptoms for 48 hours. These are guidelines set by the Beds/Herts Health Protection Agency. These guidelines are put in place to protect your child and prevent the spreading of illness to other children and staff. Even though your child may seem well, it is impossible to know the exact cause of the illness and their situation could change.

We will do our best to deal with any illness or injury that occurs at school but, whilst our staff are trained in emergency and paediatric first aid, we do not have qualified medical staff on site.

## **Medical and Dental Appointments**

Please ensure that whenever possible appointments are made outside of the school day. If essential they should be made at the beginning or end of the day. Children are expected to attend school before or after the appointment where applicable. Parents should give advance warning of the appointment by informing the office in writing.

## **Injury**

If a child is injured in a manner that requires further medical attention or a child is too ill to continue at school, we will attempt to contact you immediately. For this reason, all parents are asked to provide two alternative emergency telephone contacts in case they cannot be contacted in person.

## **Medicines**

Schools are not obliged to accept responsibility for administering medicines to children. If a child requires regular medication, it should be given at home or a parent may attend school to administer it. In very exceptional circumstances, staff will be able to administer medication to a child only with **written parental consent and full instructions**.

The school has a Medical Information book, copies of which are held in both schools. If you have notified the school of any medical condition affecting your child, these details will be held in the Medical Information book and reviewed annually. In the meantime, should anything change regarding the details of your child's condition or related medication, please let the school office know immediately so that up-to-date records can be kept at all times.

## **Holidays and Planned Absences**

The Head Teacher is not permitted to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In cases of absolute necessity, permission should be sought from the Head Teacher by written request who will consider whether she can provide “authorised” approval, for example funeral or family illness. Family holidays are generally recorded as “unauthorised” absence on the school’s registration system.

The local Attendance Officer meets termly with the Head Teacher to discuss attendance and look at the school records.

We strongly discourage parents from withdrawing their children from school or taking their holidays during term time because it causes considerable disruption to their learning. Not only do they miss the work from their time off from school but also when children return, they often have difficulty understanding their tasks because of the teaching they have missed whilst they were away. Children may also find it difficult to settle on their return.

## **Collective Worship**

Collective worship takes place every day and lasts about fifteen minutes. Collective worship is Christian in nature and may be led by the Head Teacher, Deputy Head, a member of the Teaching staff, the children or our vicar.

## **Church**

In addition to the daily whole school assemblies, we also hold a weekly whole school church service in St Michael’s Church every Wednesday at 9.00am. This is led by the vicar and the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

## **Religious Education**

Religious Education is taught according to the Hertfordshire County Council agreed syllabus. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from both Religious Education and Collective Worship. If they wish to exercise this right, they should notify the Head Teacher in writing.

## **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Some children may have a physical, sensory, medical, behavioural or educational need that requires them to have additional support in school. This support may take a variety of forms. We always involve parents in any discussions regarding the needs of their child and his/her progress.

Where a child's needs require more specialist attention the support of outside agencies will be sought. A member of staff has special responsibility for children with SEN.

### **Statutory Tests**

Teachers carry out assessments in accordance with statutory assessment arrangements in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and towards the end of Year 6.

### **Before and After-School Clubs**

We offer a range of extra curricular clubs for children from Reception to Year 6. A termly timetable and application forms for the various clubs can all be found on the school website.

### **Music**

Music is an important and extremely valuable part of school life at St Michael's and much of the atmosphere of the school is dependent on the strength of its musical tradition. Music forms part of the curriculum for every child and children also have the opportunity of taking part in extra curricular activities when they start in Year 3.

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Children**

The school works in partnership with parents to support children in every way possible.

However, the Children's Act 1989 places a responsibility on schools to ensure that they work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. If concerns are raised within the school or a child or parent reports a situation involving possible neglect or abuse, we have a statutory duty to refer the matter to Social Services for investigation.

Should you have a concern, please report it to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher, as they both hold the position of Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding Children.

In order to protect children from harm the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Hertfordshire

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 2004

Education Act (2002), section 175

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) Interagency Child Protection Procedures (2010)

DfES guidance Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2006)

DCSF 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2010)

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2008)

## Supporting the School

We keep our rules to a minimum but they are there for good reason, usually to promote high standards of health and safety. They apply to all parents at all times.

Please do not:

1. Park opposite the school sites or on the jagged yellow lines.
2. Bring dogs onto the school playgrounds, pleasure or paddock.
3. Allow toddlers and other children to play on bikes or scooters in the playgrounds.
4. Allow toddlers and other children to play on school equipment, climb walls or exit the school gates unsupervised.

Please do:

- Always drive carefully and park with consideration for the safety of the children when arriving and leaving school.
- Take advantage of the 10 minute free parking ticket for the Museum car park for use when dropping off and collecting your children. They are available from the school office.
- Remind your child about road safety and ensure that younger children are closely supervised.
- Discourage children from playing on the Snug equipment before or after school hours.
- Talk to your child's class teacher whenever you have concerns or need clarification on any school matter.
- Always enter Top School via the main front door.
- Check your child's clothing regularly to ensure that it is still clearly named.
- Always be on time for school.
- Call before 9.15am if your child is going to be absent from school.
- Check your child's book bag for letters on a regular basis.
- Keep your child at home if he/she has been ill until he/she is fully recovered.
- Look after the School environment.

## **Compliments and Complaints**

The school aims to work closely with parents and we hope you will be extremely pleased with the education, quality of your care and other 'extras' your child receives whilst at St Michael's.

However if you are unhappy with any aspect of your child's education, we need to know. In this case you should first speak to your child's teacher. We find that many concerns or potential complaints can be resolved happily through discussion.

If your concern is of a broader nature, or you have already raised it with the teacher and are not satisfied, please discuss it with the Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher.

The Governors of the School have arrangements for considering complaints and if you are still dissatisfied when you have discussed the matter with the Head Teacher you should ask for a copy of the school's complaints procedure from the school office, download it from the school website or write to the Chair of Governors via the school.

The school aims to work hard to provide a safe, happy and creative environment for the children. We hope you will be extremely pleased with the education and quality of care shown to you and your child(ren). If this is the case, please feel free to express your feelings of satisfaction, either verbally or in writing to a member of staff. We need to know what is appreciated in order to continue it!

## School Staff 2016/2017

Head Teacher – Mrs Alison Rafferty

### Office Staff

- Mrs Tracey Rigby - Office Manager
- Mrs Sarah Frost - Administrative Assistant

### Teaching Staff

- Mrs Lisa Bagley and Mrs Fiona Crooks - Eagles Class (Years 5 and 6)
- Miss Emma Cooper and Mrs Louanna Alcoe - Dolphins Class (Years 4 and 5)
- Mrs Sheena Webb and Miss Lucy McCann (currently on maternity leave) - Cats Class (Years 2 and 3)
- Mrs Amanda Groves - Bees Class (Years 1 and 2)
- Mrs Lorraine Claridge - Ants Class (Reception and Year 1)
- Mrs Wendy Dowling – Class Teacher
- Mrs Fiona Crooks – Deputy Head Teacher and SENCo
- Mrs Lizzy Stone – Teacher

### Support Staff

- Mrs Melanie Hobbs (TA/MSA)
- Mr Bruce King (TA/MSA)
- Miss Lauren Rigby (TA/MSA)
- Mrs Sue Firby (TA/MSA)
- Mrs Jenny Tarvet (TA/MSA)
- Mrs Janet McKay (TA)
- Mrs K Coop (TA/MSA)
- Mrs E Patel (TA/MSA)
- Mrs Jo Fabian (MSA)

TA - Teaching Assistant

MSA - Midday Supervisory Assistant

## Academic Year 2017 – 2018

### Autumn term 2017

Start of term	Half term	End of term
30 August 2017	23 October 2017 - 27 October 2017	19 December 2017

### Spring term 2018

Start of term	Half term	End of term
3 January 2018	12 February 2018 - 16 February 2018	29 March 2018

### Summer term 2018

Start of term	Half term	End of term
16 April 2018	28 May 2018 - 1 June 2018	27 July 2018

We are required to include 190 pupil days, 5 staff training days (INSET days) and 1 occasional day's holiday within the term dates agreed by Hertfordshire. These are yet to be decided at the time of printing.

Dates for future years can be found at [www.hertsdirect.co.uk/scholearn/termdates](http://www.hertsdirect.co.uk/scholearn/termdates)