



Forest Lodge Academy

Early Years Welcome Pack



Forest Lodge Academy
A L.E.A.D. Academy

www.forestlodge.leicester.sch.uk



Welcome to the Early Years at Forest Lodge Academy

We shall do our utmost to ensure that your child's stay here is both happy and productive.

Starting school brings about a big and exciting change in your child's life. Perhaps this is your first child starting school and you are feeling a little apprehensive as to what school is going to be like for him/her and you are dreading having to say goodbye on that first morning. Perhaps you have experienced this all before and you can't wait for that first morning when you'll have peace! However, whatever your experience, rest assured that as the vast majority of children have already attended settings or playgroups, the transition is normally trouble-free.

It is called the Early Years because it gives children secure foundations for later learning. Childhood is important in itself and we want children to have enjoyable and satisfying childhood experiences. Early experiences also affect children's attitudes to learning. They create the basis for later learning, in school and beyond. Through this booklet we hope to provide you with some answers to questions you may have. We see education as a partnership between home and school and seek to foster mutual trust and respect. A successful partnership between

home and school will ensure that your child is happy, develops personally and receives a rich and varied education.

We are happy to help in any way we can so please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any worries about your child.



What your child will need to start school



Your child will feel more confident and will settle much quicker into the school if he/she can:

- dress and undress himself/herself
- have easy shoes to take off and on (Velcro fastenings are good)
- use the toilet properly and flush it after use, then wash his/her hands
- tidy clear away his/her toys
- share toys and be prepared to take turns with the classroom games
- use a knife and fork
- hang up his/her own coat and bag

School Uniform:

The school uniform has been chosen to be smart, practical and to enable a sense of belonging. The school uniform is outlined below.

Girls	Boys
Red sweatshirt/cardigan	Red sweatshirt
White blouse/polo shirt	White shirt/polo shirt
Grey skirt/pinafore	Grey or black trousers
White socks	White or grey socks
Black shoes	Black shoes
Dress in the summer (preferably red)	
Black or grey trousers in colder weather (optional)	

Uniform can be purchased from Uniform Direct®

www.uniform-direct.com

P.E Clothing (Reception children only):

Black shorts and a white t-shirt are required for 'Physical Development' sessions. All indoor P.E needs to be done in plimsolls or trainers and these will be needed for outdoor P.E as well. Your child will need a P.E bag for their kit which can be kept on their peg. Your class teacher will inform you of your child's P.E day once they have started in August.

The curriculum in Nursery and Reception

Your child's initial learning will be based on the objectives for the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum document.

Children who have attended the nursery or other settings will have already been working to the objectives set out in this document. This provides and ensures continuity between Nursery and Reception. Your child's teacher will use information recorded by Nursery practitioners, to develop your child's learning.



"I love coming to school as there are lots of fun things to learn about"

Reception child

At school your child will be involved in numerous activities in an environment which aims to motivate and develop his/her social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

A great deal of time will be spent on discovering, experimenting and exploring using a wide range of materials. In the Nursery and Reception class many activities carried out are practical. Play will be an important part of your child's education.

Play activities will be structured by the class teacher to develop an area of learning. For example in the role play area a teacher may set up a shop to encourage the development of specific vocabulary and provide opportunities for the development of reading and writing skills through making shopping lists, posters, receipts etc.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is divided into 7 areas of learning. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

These areas of learning are:

Mathematics



Understanding
the World

Physical
Development

Communication
& Language

Literacy

Expressive
Arts & Design

Personal,
Social &
Emotional
Development

Communication and Language Development:

Involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.



Understanding the World:

Involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.



Physical Development:

Involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.



Literacy:

Involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.



Expressive Arts & Design:

Involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

Involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviours in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.



Mathematics:

Involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculation, simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

In the Early Years, we have adopted the mastery approach to teaching mathematics. The children are separated into three smaller groups and will learn each number to 10 thoroughly over two weeks. Learning to count with understanding is a crucial number skill, but other skills, such as perceiving subgroups, need to develop alongside counting to provide a firm foundation for number sense. When children have daily, long-term opportunities to work (and play) with numbers it supports future growth in their mathematical thinking, confidence, and enthusiasm about mathematics.



The Outdoors

"I love going outside. I search for mini-beasts and bugs all the time"

Nursery child



We take pride in our outdoor learning environment, we are extremely lucky to have such a large area for our Nursery and Reception children to explore. We have a large area called 'the woods' that offers fantastic opportunities for children to explore nature and the natural changes that occur throughout the year.

We have established different focus areas for the children so they can access all areas of the EYFS whilst engaging outdoors. We have a sand area, a mud kitchen, a construction area, a stage with instruments, a water station area, a climbing frame and a 'dip' full of physical play equipment. Writing, phonics and maths are planned for across all areas.

Children have free flow access to outdoors.



How we assess your child

Baseline assessments:

From Autumn 2019 a new Reception Baseline assessment is being trialled in Reception, which will assess children's language, communication, literacy and maths skills.

This assessment is nothing for the children to worry about and staff will ensure that your children will not even realise that they are doing it. It is very practical and children will use a variety of resources to show off their skills.

The results of this short assessment will allow staff to focus on specific areas that each child needs to develop.



Learning Journey Observations:

Throughout the Reception year your child's teacher and Nursery Nurse will be making photographic and written observations of their progress on a program called '2build a profile'.

At the beginning of the year we will ask you for your email address. Observations are taken of your children using the 2simple app, this enables us to send you email copies of your child at play and learning, with a photo, so you can see their progression throughout the year. A reply option is also available for you to share news from home too.

Parent's Evening:

There will be a parent's evening during your child's first term at school. The purpose of these meetings is to give you an opportunity to discuss, how your child is settling into school, what particular reading, writing and number skills your child is learning and specific areas that you can support at home.

However, you can see your child's teacher at any time during the year if you have a particular concern you wish to discuss.

Snacks & food at school

Snack Time:

As part of a UK initiative Nursery, Reception and KS 1 children receive a free fruit/vegetable snack each day. Your child will also receive milk each day and this will be provided free until your child's 5th birthday.

Lunchtime - Reception children only:

All children are now entitled to a free school dinner until the end of Year 2. School dinners are an excellent way of introducing a varied menu and encouraging your child to develop a good appetite. Meals are prepared and served on the premises. Adults are around to help children cut up their food. However, children are always encouraged to have a try and should be attempting to use a knife and fork.



School can also receive extra funding but only if you register to say you would have been entitled to Free School Meals. You may qualify if:

- You receive Child Tax Credits
- You receive Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- You receive income support
- You receive the Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- You receive Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- You are an Asylum Seeker

The extra funding received by schools can be used to fund extremely valuable extra support for pupils to help raise their educational achievement. If you qualify and apply your child will also receive free school milk until the end of Year 2 and will continue to receive a free school meal during their school life (unless your circumstances change).

Should you wish your child to have a packed lunch this will still be accommodated. Please ensure you provide a 'healthy' lunchbox for your child and ensure it is nut free.

Other useful information for Nursery & Reception

Medical Issues:

If your child does need medicine at school, then please inform the class teacher and also fill out a medical form at the school office. However, if your child is very unwell we strongly recommend that you keep them at home until they are better.

If your child has a medical condition could you please inform your child's class teacher as soon as possible.

Attendance:

It is very important that your child is in school every day. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored by the office. If your child is really not well enough to be in school please can you call the office to inform them as to why your child will be off. Each week the class with the highest attendance will win the 'attendance trophy' we are aiming for our attendance to be at least 96%. If you have any worries or concerns about your child and their attendance, please come and see the class teacher as soon as possible. We might be able to help.



The Walking Bus:

Forest Lodge provides a Walking Bus service for those parents who may have difficulties with getting their children to school on time, or need to be at work earlier than the school start time.

One Walking Bus will pick up your child from Aikman Avenue and another will pick up from Keightley Road or Musson Road.

The cost of this service is £1 a day. A free breakfast is provided when your child gets to school. More information is available at reception, or from either the Assistant Head teacher Mrs Meer, or the Behaviour Mentor Ms Smith.

How you can help at home

There are many ways to help your child before he/she starts in Nursery or Reception Class.

Telling and reading stories; singing rhymes and songs; playing word games such as 'I Spy'; making scrap books of interesting items; taking trips to interesting places and allowing him/her to do "messy activities" such as painting, cutting and sticking, modelling with play dough as well as 'tidier activities' such as building lego and using jigsaws etc.



Other ways to help:

- talk with him/her and discuss his/her questions
- encourage him/her to share and join in activities with other children
- read and share books with him/her and encourage him/her to look at books by himself/herself
- give him/her plenty of opportunities to use pencils and crayons and make lots of different marks on the paper, and encourage a good grip of the pencil
- look at signs and posters when you are out and about, encourage them to spot letters, especially letters from their names
- help him/her to count and use numbers in everyday situations (e.g. what numbers can they spot on doors, buses etc.)
- encourage your child to build their independence skills, such as trying to dress or undress and going to the toilet and washing their hands independently

In general:

- take a keen interest in your child's time at school but don't insist on a full account
- make sure that we can contact you at any time while your child is at school - if there are any changes to home details (address, phone number, etc.) please inform the school office as soon as possible
- check your child's hair regularly and make sure that the teacher knows of any medical problems
- please inform us of any changes in your child's behaviour after starting nursery e.g. bedwetting, reluctance to come to nursery etc.

Information for children starting Nursery only

Home Visits:

We will be arranging 'home visits' at the start of the new term. Two or three members of staff will visit your home and chat to yourselves and your child. We feel that this is an important part of starting Nursery as we are able to introduce ourselves to yourself and your child in their natural environment. We will also be providing your child with some resources that they can use and practise with at home.

Nursery Visits:

Following the visit to your home, we operate a system where children visit for a couple of sessions before they start coming into Nursery everyday. This is so that they can become familiar with staff and the room in a smaller group and so we can start to get to know them.

You will be asked to stay with your child on their first visit.

A timetable of these visits will be given to you at the induction event along with your home visit time. These preliminary visits will only be for 1 hour at a time and will not be for the whole session.



Something to read to make you feel better about your child starting school

Dear Teacher,

I know you're rather busy, first day back, there's just no time, a whole new class of little ones and this one here is mine.

I'm sure you have things covered and have done this lots before, but my boy is very little, he hasn't long turned three.

In his uniform this morning, he looked so tall and steady, but now beside your great big school I'm not quite sure he's ready.

Do you help them eat their lunch? Are you quick to soothe their fears? And if he falls and hurts his knee will someone dry his tears?

And what if no-one plays with him? What if someone's mean? What if two kids have a fight and he's caught in between?

You're right, I have to leave now, it's time for him to go, I'm sure he'll learn so much from you, things that I don't know.

Yes, I'm sure they settle quickly, that he's fine now without me, I know he has to go to school it's just so fast.

You see it seems like just a blink ago I first held him in my arms, it's been my job to love, to teach, to keep him safe from harm.

So, when I wave goodbye in a moment and he turns to walk inside, forgive me if I crumple into tears of loss and pride.

I know as I give him one more kiss and watch him walk away, that he'll never again be wholly mine as he was before today.

Dear Parent,

I understand that you are scared to wave your child goodbye and leave him in a teacher's hands - don't worry if you cry!

I'm used to weeping parents, it's hard to leave I know. But it's time to share him (just a bit) to help him learn and grow.

Let me reassure you that I'll give your child my best, I'll wipe his tears, soothe his fears and change his dirty vest!

If your darling child is full of cold I'll blow their nose all day, just like you, I'll care for them in a special way.

I'll treat him like I would my own I'll catch him from a fall and if there is ANY problem I'll be sure to tell you all.

It's true he'll grow to love us, they'll talk of school a lot, it doesn't mean they hate you and that you should lose the plot!

I'll tell you a secret... That when your child is here, they talk to me as much of you of this please have no fear.

You'll always be their mother, whilst teachers come and go, to them you are their number one, this I truly know.

Soon you'll see some changes, in your little girl or boy, they'll become more independent and to see this, it's a joy!

I'll teach them all I have to give, to share, climb and to write, but to you they safely will return to tuck them in at night.

With love from your child's teacher..



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