



# Vallis First School Brochure





*'Vallis First School continues to be a good school. The Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, middle leaders and governors have... maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection... Staff and pupil morale is high... Pupils are at the heart of decision making ... and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school... Pupils feel safe... they say this is a happy school... they trust staff.'*

*'A range of effective strategies are used to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' different needs... as a result of high quality interventions pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and maths... A notable strength is the extent to which pupils are involved in evaluating their own learning. This enables them to... develop good habits and attitudes to learning.'*

**OFSTED Report April 2018**

**Vallis First School**

**Milk Street**

**Frome**

**Somerset**

**BA11 3DB**

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**[www.vallisfirstschool.org](http://www.vallisfirstschool.org)**

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**Headteacher: Mr Nick Firkins**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs Alex Kershaw-Moore**







**Vice Chair of Governors: Mr James Loughlin**

# VALLIS FIRST SCHOOL

Vallis First School caters for children aged between 4 and 9 years.

Our school motto is 'A safe and happy school where we can be the best we can be'.

## AT VALLIS FIRST SCHOOL WE AIM:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To inspire children in their learning through making it fun and relevant</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To meet the needs of families and involve them in their children's learning</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To value children as individuals but to encourage them to recognise the needs of others</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To help children to feel safe and to be happy and healthy</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To give children access to the skills they need to enjoy life and achieve personal fulfillment</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To involve children with the wider community</li></ul>



## AT OUR SCHOOL

We are very fortunate to be based in a very attractive and extensive old building which provides a fascinating learning environment for all our children. We have very good facilities including a field, three play areas, a large hall, a nurture room, a library, a nature area, trolleys of laptop computers and tablets and large bright airy classrooms. The school is well resourced with good quality equipment and a very experienced, hard working and committed staff. We also have a Community Room which is used by a number of services, including a Toy Library, to provide facilities for our children, parents and the wider community. We also use this space for our Before School club which meets every morning and our After School care provision. This room is available for private hire, along with our hall.

We seek to foster a love of learning in an exciting and friendly environment. We aim to help all our children feel safe and happy and part of our school family. Children are recognised as individuals and we seek to cater for their needs whatever their ability. We want them to develop at their pace and achieve the very best they can!

Children are provided with a rich, creative and fun curriculum, which promotes a love of learning and has opportunities to develop team working and independent learning skills. Our Vallis Powerful Learner characters of: 'Tough Tortoise', 'Team Ant', 'Sensible Squirrel' and 'Wise Owl' help the children to learn about resilience, being a team player, using resources and reflecting on and celebrating learning.



In each Key Stage and sometimes across the whole school we have a number of special Family Learning Events when parents are invited into school to work with their children and teachers. Our grandparents also sometimes join in the fun with a 'Read with your grandchild' morning.



Art and music are key interests in our local community and our children are able to take advantage of the many opportunities on offer through local community projects and facilities as well as those offered through our creative arts curriculum. Whole school singing is a particular pleasure in Vallis. We usually take part in at least one community music project a year. Our Year 3 and Year 4 children currently access violin lessons through the Wider Opportunities whole class music scheme.



Every year, our Year 4 children have a wonderful opportunity to go on a three day residential trip. They have a geography focus for their visit but they also take part in lots of team building and fitness activities.



To build children's sense of responsibility, our older children are reading buddies and ambassadors and anti-bullying ambassadors. We give our children a voice through regular consultations about subject areas and activities in the school.

The school environment provides many opportunities for learning both inside and outside the classroom and your child will be encouraged to make full use of these facilities. We work with other schools, organisations and groups in our local community including; our local art galleries, museum, churches, middle schools/academies and Frome College, in order to increase the experiences available to all the children and to build their sense of citizenship. In the past we have performed in schools' concerts at the Cheese and Grain and Jackdaws and displayed art work locally at Rook Lane, the Black Swan and the Library.



We hold a Silver Eco School award and have an ongoing commitment to reducing the impact our school has on the environment. We are committed to encouraging physical health and activity and healthy lifestyles and in the past have been part of the Active Mark and National Healthy Schools Plus Awards. We book the locally sponsored Lifebus to visit the school every two years to teach our children about healthy and safe choices in their lives.



To support this further, we have signed up for the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme which gives each Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 child a free piece of fruit or vegetable each day. We also encourage our older children to bring fruit for their snack time. Children are encouraged to bring in and use water bottles and daily milk is free to our Under 5's and free school meals children and is also available for parents to order.

As part of our commitment to health and well-being we run an on-site Forest School in our Nature area, which all our children have an opportunity to access and small groups from across the school may also access. We have staff trained as part of the 'Attachment Aware schools' programme and have a commitment to providing nurture activities both in our Nurture room, at our allotment or in our Nature area.



As part of a school commitment to ensuring all children are given the opportunity to learn to swim our Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children are taken to structured swimming lessons at the local swimming pool at Frome Leisure Centre.

We are a communication friendly school using Somerset Total Communication signing and symbols to support spoken and written communication.

We work closely with the local Frome schools and academies to provide additional opportunities for all our children and parents including a Children and Family Support team and Forest School. With our Sports Grant funding we also buy into a shared partnership to provide access to opportunities to take part in additional sporting activities with children from other schools including learning how to play competitive team games, orienteering and from time to time activities for children who show particular talent.



We also work closely with our two middle schools/academies and nurseries to ensure smooth transitions as a child moves from one school to another.

As part of our commitment to encouraging healthy eating we have a finishing kitchen on site to provide children with a healthy hot meal at lunchtime. These are free to all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Parents can pay for meals for Key Stage 2 children.



There is a meat/fish course or vegetarian option available each day with a pudding. Children are able to bring a packed lunch from home if preferred.

Our school staff has considerable expertise which allows us to provide additional activities within the curriculum time for children identified as more able in various areas of the curriculum.

Our children and staff enjoy art and music and other creative opportunities and as a school we sing together twice a week as well as enjoying music and dance as part of our topic work. Our Year 3 and Year 4 children access Wider

Opportunities whole class music which is currently violin.



External providers currently offer after school opportunities for KS1 & KS2 children such as sports clubs.

We actively encourage parents to form a partnership with us to support their child's progress in school. We offer many opportunities for parents to take part in school life. There are invitations to attend family learning events or to help out in class or on school trips, as well as parents' evenings to discuss children's progress. We try to ensure parents can speak to a member of staff as quickly as possible if there is a problem or if they wish to make suggestions. We hold Parents' Forum meetings for all parents to attend to discuss any changes to our organisation or policies. We also have a very active



Vallis School Association which parents run to organise social and fundraising events. They are currently fundraising to further develop our Forest School area.



In the past we were part of a Play & Participation project to explore opportunities for children to be involved in active, imaginative and creative play. As a result we have written a Play Policy which offers encourages this kind of

We were very pleased that our last OFSTED inspection (April2018) judged our school as a 'Good' school.

We feel our school is a happy and successful place and look forward to working with you and your child!



## TIMES OF OPENING

The School is open for pupils for 190 days a year. Details of holidays and closures due to In-Service Training are given as far in advance as possible.

Before School Club starts at 7.45am and currently costs £3.50 per session

Children are allowed into their classrooms from 8.45 a.m. onwards

8.55 a.m registration for morning session

Lunchtimes vary according to the age of child

1.00 p.m. registration for afternoon session

School ends at 3.00pm

Our after school provision runs until 6.00pm



## PROVISION FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Our school assemblies and Religious Education lessons cover a range of themes including religions and life issues. Under the provisions of the Education Reform Act 1988 all parents have the right to withdraw their children from the School's daily act of Collective Worship which has a mainly Christian content. Any parent wishing to withdraw his/her child from the religious elements of the curriculum should make a written request through the Headteacher.



## **ADMISSION TO SCHOOL**

In accordance with the County Admissions Policy, children who are 5 within the qualifying year (which starts on the 1st September and finishes on the 31<sup>st</sup> August) are entitled to start school from the first day of the academic term that starts in September. Somerset County Council is responsible for arranging all admissions to our school and parents may obtain the current admissions criteria and forms directly from them. If you need any help please contact a member of our School Office, who will be pleased to help.

### **SEPTEMBER ENTRY ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOUNDATION STAGE**

Details of dates, times and arrangements are given at the meeting of new parents which is held in June. Our Foundation Stage teachers use the first week of the academic year for parent and child meetings to collect information from parents about their child; so our Foundation Stage children usually start school the second week of the academic year. We offer parents the opportunity to send their children to school for full days right from the first day. Please let us have any information which may help us settle your child into school life with ease. If you have any anxieties, do not hesitate to see the class teacher. We are a friendly and very approachable team!

## ORGANISATION OF CLASSES

Our classes are organised as such:

- 2 Foundation Stage classes (ages 4-5)
- 2 Year 1 classes (ages 5-6)
- 2 Year 2 classes (ages 6-7)
- 3 Year 3/4 classes (ages 7-9)



All classes have a teacher and in the morning at least one additional teaching assistant, sometimes two, according to the age and needs of the children. This high ratio of adults to children ensures a high level of support for all aspects of learning. Parent helpers are always welcome and we ensure all volunteers undergo vetting via the Disclosure and Barring Service procedure. If you wish to volunteer please have a chat with the Headteacher.

Our staff use a variety of methods to deliver the curriculum in a way that recognises the needs of the individual. The aims of the lessons and the age group involved are taken into consideration and appropriate teaching strategies are applied. These methods include individual, group and whole class teaching.

## STAFF LIST

Headteacher: Mr Nick Firkins

Assistant Headteacher: Miss Tracy Massey

School Business Manager: Miss Jacky Ankerman

Attendance Officer: Mrs Lynette Latchem

Administration Assistant: Mrs Sue Cobb

### Teaching Staff

Foundation Stage:	Mrs Joanna Higgins	Mrs Bridget Kerton/Miss Steph Rainford
Key Stage One:	Miss Alison Plumridge Mrs Kirsten Molloy Mrs Zoey Powrie	Mrs Rikki Holmes Mrs Sara Edwards Mrs Marianne Baker
Key Stage Two:	Miss Tracy Massey Mr Adam Smith	Mr Adam Summers Mrs Naomi Frost
SENCo:	Miss Tracy Massey	

### Support Staff

Mrs Claire Ashfield	Mrs Sarah Banbury	Mrs Sandra Blagdon
Mrs Hilary Boorer	Miss Elaine Breach	Mrs Katie Bristow
Mrs Verity Clayson	Mrs Wisaruta Costello	Miss Catherine Cox
Miss Tamsin Davis	Miss Katie Dredge	Mrs Gail Freeman
Mrs Lin Graves	Mrs Sarah Howard	Miss Karen McDermott
Mrs Holly McGruther	Mrs Rachel McPherson	Mrs Gwyn Merritt
Mrs Rachel Rumming	Mrs Michelle Seviour	Mrs Wendy Smith
Miss Alison Sturgess	Miss Rosalyn Thomas	Mrs Michele Williams
Miss Daisy Wilson	Mrs Lissa Young	
Caretaker:	Mr Marcus Williams	
Crossing patrol:	Miss Elaine Breach	

## **GOVERNORS' STATEMENT OF CURRICULAR INTENT**

**March 2021**

The Curriculum we offer to children at Vallis First School is intended to develop the whole child - socially, emotionally, morally, culturally, physically, spiritually and intellectually and to provide the basic skills needed for life and work. We aim to develop enquiring minds, a spirit of curiosity and the skills to work independently but also as part of a team.

In particular the curriculum seeks:

- to teach children a sense of responsibility for themselves and their community, our nation, the environment and value and respect for each other.
- to encourage children's awareness of how to value and care for themselves and live a healthy lifestyle.
- to help pupils gain respect for moral and religious values as well as developing an acceptance and understanding of other races, religions and ways of life.
- to encourage the children to widen their use of language, both written and spoken.
- to help pupils to develop their mathematical skills and to apply those effectively.
- to develop an interest in science, technology and the natural world.
- to encourage children to express themselves through music, drama, a variety of arts and crafts and develop the necessary skills in these areas.
- to impart to children an understanding of history and geography and of the environment in which they live.
- to help children develop physical co-ordination and confidence.

### **THE CURRICULUM INTENT**

We aim to provide an exciting, stimulating curriculum, making links across subjects and adding in creative opportunities wherever we can. We want learning to be fun! We will use the National Curriculum which ensures that children in Key Stage 1 and 2 experience a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The National Curriculum is available online and policies can be requested. It is important to note that the requirements of the National Curriculum do not apply to those children who are not of statutory school age. Foundation Stage classes have a special curriculum which works towards 'Early Learning Goals'. The emphasis in the Foundation Stage is to provide stimulating learning activities appropriate for young children which will prepare them for their later years in school.



The school curriculum for children in Key Stage 1 and 2 includes English, Mathematics, Science, Design and Technology, Computing, History, Geography, Music, Art and Design, Physical Education and a number of cross-curricular areas. These include subjects such as Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education, Environmental Studies and other areas which are relevant to the children's learning e.g. swimming. Religious Education follows the agreed County syllabus. Our Key Stage 2 children learn French as a Modern Foreign Language.

'Powerful Learners' is a key part of our curriculum. Throughout everything we do, we strive to teach them important aspects and skills of being a learner for life such as Resilience (Tough Tortoise), Reflectiveness (Wise Owl), Resourcefulness (Sensible Squirrel) and Reciprocity - being able to work as a team - (Team Ant). These skills help learners to improve their learning and performance in education, work and life.



## MATHEMATICS



We aim to develop a sound understanding of the number system and of mental calculation skills. Many activities are of a practical nature involving using equipment and resources to help the children develop their understanding. The curriculum content includes number, shape, space and measures, problem solving, reasoning, statistics and applying their skills to a range of problems. Wherever possible these are covered in fun activities which relate to everyday contexts. We encourage parents to practise maths skills at home with their children - particularly learning their number bonds and times tables.



## ENGLISH



We use a number of approaches to support English in our School. Reading is enjoyed and celebrated as an important life skill. We have a strongly embedded phonics scheme which helps children with their early reading and spelling skills. This teaches letter sounds, letter names and word building. As the child progresses, early reading material is supported by a wide variety of reading books including 'reading scheme' books at the appropriate levels. As soon as children become more fluent readers,

they have the opportunity to choose the books they want to read at home. Good quality whole class texts are used to support the development of topics and teach key skills. Writing is developed by encouraging children to write in different situations and for a variety of reasons. Writing is modelled by adults and children are supported until they can write independently. Work may sometimes be printed out on the computer or published for other children to read and for parents to come in and see. Handwriting is taught from Foundation Stage and leads towards joined up writing for those children who are ready to master it successfully.

Money from the school budget, fund raising and our successful Book Weeks, is spent each year to replace and build up our resources which support our class and individual reading, and to ensure an up-to-date selection of reading materials are available to all the children within class and in our Library. We make use of the school and town library to encourage a love of reading and to learn library skills. We make full use of information technology to support our literacy programme including phonic games and interactive texts.



## COMPUTING



Computing is a key aspect of the school's curriculum. We have a computer, interactive whiteboard and a visualiser in each classroom and have Wi Fi so that the children can learn using laptop computers. We also have digital cameras in each class. Computing skills (such as coding, word processing, multimedia and handling data) are taught directly and are used throughout the curriculum. We have a number of programmable toys which are used to teach coding skills for our younger children. A particular emphasis is placed on delivering English and Numeracy through technology and we are constantly expanding our online resources. We aim to provide children with the confidence and skills to use computer resources effectively and safely. The School has filtered access to the internet. E-safety is taught as part of the curriculum and each year we take part in Internet Safety day in addition to the termly reminders.



## SCIENCE



Science plays an important part in school life. Emphasis is put on developing the children's natural curiosity as they learn to investigate and discover for themselves. As these skills develop, the children are encouraged to produce theories and ideas from their observations and eventually to devise 'fair tests' to see if what they believe is true.

Crucial to science are investigation skills, with children discovering for themselves. They learn about the natural world and living things, about forces and physical processes and materials and their properties. We ensure that the children have a wide range of practical and first hand experiences and we make good use of our outdoor environment including our field, the local river walks and allotment for bug hunting and looking at habitats or signs of changing seasons and the variety of plant life.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



We follow the Somerset agreed syllabus for R.E. with Christianity as the main focus faith and Judaism, Hinduism and Islam as other focus faiths. While actual knowledge of religion and its significance is taught, Religious Education in a first school is primarily concerned with children developing an awareness of themselves, others and the fostering of positive moral attitudes within a caring and tolerant setting.

Our wider school curriculum also looks at a number of aspects of life such as change, friendships, anti-bullying, setting goals, respect and explores these themes sensitively at an age appropriate level.



## MULTI - CULTURAL AND EQUALITIES EDUCATION



We teach our children about a variety of cultures and about equality and diversity represented in Britain and across the world. We emphasise the aspects of British Values of: Democracy; the Principle of Law; Personal Rights of Freedom and Liberty; Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those of different Faiths and Beliefs. We take every opportunity to raise the children's awareness of the many traditions, cultures and the diversity represented in our school and society, celebrating and valuing our similarities and differences. Our Anti-Racist policy forms part of our Equalities policy and all racist, homophobic and other bullying incidents are taken very seriously and investigated.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)



We aim to provide two sessions per week of high quality PE for each child in our school. Careful planning and close adherence to our scheme of work allows every child to make full use of the space and equipment available and for teachers to monitor development. As part of our school's membership of the local Schools' Sports Partnership, we have access to coaching experts and additional equipment and opportunities to take part in inter school competitions. We use our Sports Grant funding to support these activities as well as using some of this money to support active play at lunchtimes with a games leader. The PE we provide includes gymnastics, dance, games skills, swimming and multi-skills.



## GEOGRAPHY



Geography in the school includes the following areas - geographical skills, knowledge and understanding of places, physical geography, human geography and environmental geography. All work takes into careful consideration the children's developmental stage.

We make use of our local environment as much as possible to give children experience of mapping skills and we often plan a trip to help the children's understanding.



## HISTORY



History is sensitively taught at our school and care is taken to ensure that studies are carried out at the appropriate level for the children. History teaching includes the following areas - knowledge and understanding of history, interpreting the past and using historical sources. We aim to give the children a sense of time, awareness of the difference between fact and fiction and of changes in everyday life. Whenever possible, we try to ensure the children handle real resources and invite visitors in to talk about their personal history or we visit a suitable location.



## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MFL)



This school is committed to giving children a rich and exciting introduction to MFL. We value all languages. Children who speak languages in addition to English, throughout the school, have opportunities to share their home languages when appropriate. MFL is a curriculum requirement from KS2 and in our school our chosen language is French. At an age appropriate level, children are taught speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. We teach French through songs, games, video clips and role play.





## CREATIVE ARTS



**(including Music, Art, Design and Technology, Dance and Drama)**

The school is committed to providing a rich variety of experiences in all areas of the Creative Arts. Local art galleries, theatres and creative organisations and trusts offer workshops and opportunities to our children. Ample opportunity is given for children to participate in musical experimentation and listening activities. Music in the school covers musical composition, performance, listening and appraising skills. The children learn a wide repertoire of songs and use both pitched and un-pitched instruments.

Each Christmas, and at other events including Harvest, the children learn songs and practise their performance skills in front of parents. The school takes every opportunity to perform for the parents and local community at venues such as the Cheese and Grain. We also invite musicians to the school to teach and inspire the children and take part in whole school singing projects.

Children are given opportunities to experiment with a wide range of media - paint, clay, sand, water, sewing, paper and paste - with attention being paid to the development of skills and techniques. Our Arts curriculum also includes the following areas - investigation and making; knowledge and understanding of art and design (including styles used by artists); artistic traditions and techniques.



## SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION



For this subject the Governors will follow National and local guidelines which are under review. At present children explore relationships as part of learning about social skills. We learn about parts of our body through science and our Lifebus healthy lifestyles programme. **Parents are entitled to withdraw children from these lessons.**



## MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

The work undertaken in school is carefully matched to the individual child. Children's individual progress is monitored throughout our school. Each term the teacher will use their collected knowledge of a child's achievements in reading, Writing and Maths against new National Curriculum Age Related Standards (ARS) to make a judgement about whether a child is on track to achieve ARS or is working at greater depth or below. Children's achievements are discussed at termly Pupil Progress Meetings with the child's class teacher and the Senior Leadership Team. If a child is not on track then provision is put in place to try to help them to catch up.

Foundation Stage children are assessed using the Foundation Stage Profile which records their progress towards Early Learning Goals in 17 areas of learning. We use a Baseline in Foundation Stage as children enter school to celebrate all they have achieved so far in their lives and to help the teachers to plan their next steps.

We encourage parents to be involved in their child's progress throughout their time with us and to share in their child's success in reaching a target or achieving a personal goal. We do this in many ways:-

- meeting with the class teacher on a formal basis at Parents' Meetings in Autumn and Spring.
- informal meetings with the child's teacher (at a parent's request)
- a yearly written report for all children giving details of work undertaken and highlights strengths and weaknesses, given to parents in the Summer term.

## HOMWORK



Our homework policy is designed to encourage some self-study skills which are an essential feature of future school and college learning. As a minimum all our children are encouraged to take home a book each night to practise reading at home. Parents are given the lists of high frequency words that children need to learn to spell. These can be practised at home.

Each term children are given topic based tasks for their homework. These are shared with the class as children complete the task.

Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if there are any difficulties on completing this work. Key Stage 2 children can access a homework club to complete their tasks, which is supported by a teacher.

## VALLIS FIRST SCHOOL DATA

Please see our website for the latest available data - [www.vallisfirstschool.org](http://www.vallisfirstschool.org)



## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

All pupils in our school are entitled to:

- be fully included
- be equally valued
- have their educational needs recognised and met
- be treated as individuals
- be given every opportunity to reach their full potential
- be empowered

Special Needs encompasses physical disability, communication, learning problems and social, emotional and mental health difficulties but does not include difficulties arising from the fact that English is not the home language or purely behavioural difficulties.

A child has special needs if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age or has a disability that prevents or hinders access to educational facilities generally provided by the Local Authority for children of the same age.

At Vallis First School we ensure that all teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in providing for the diverse needs of all our children, especially those with additional needs.

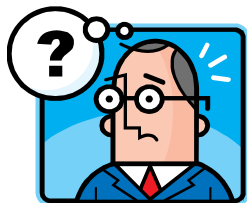
Our SEN Co-ordinator (SENCo) works closely with our teaching assistants, teachers and external specialists to identify and support children with additional needs. A School Entry Plan meeting would be arranged to ensure the correct provision is made for children entering school. Parents and specialist support services would be invited to the meeting to agree the plan.

Children with particularly severe learning needs and/or difficulties may, with their parent's permission, be referred to the Educational Psychologist or Support Services. They are able to provide specialist information and help to enable the school to support the child appropriately.

We aim to give all children, regardless of need, equal access to an appropriate curriculum within the framework of the National Curriculum. We work closely with Pupil Support Services who provide any advice or specialist equipment children may need to enable them to access the curriculum.

We aim to keep parents up to date with methods and progress being made at all times.

Our Governors are constantly reviewing how we might make our school and curriculum more accessible. We have ramp access into our main school building, a Soundfield system in our hall and a disabled toilet. We also have specialist trained staff and resources such as computer software to enable access to the curriculum.



## AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

As a school we ensure you have regular reports about your child's progress including an annual written report. Under the Freedom of Information act parents have a right to access information defined by conditions described in the act. As the rules can be complicated, if you wish to obtain information we hold in school please contact the School Office in the first instance. A charge may be made for providing copies of some information.

The school holds copies of the following information:

- Somerset Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, which is followed by the school
- Freedom of Information act policy
- Copies of the school prospectus
- National Curriculum documents
- Curriculum Policies
- Behaviour policy including Anti-bullying and Equalities policies
- The agreed School's complaints procedure

Please look at our website [www.vallisfirstschool.org](http://www.vallisfirstschool.org) for further information.

**Paper policies may be obtained in large print if requested.**



## **SAFEGUARDING, CHILD PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES**



All schools have a legal duty to ensure the safety and well-being of all the children in the school. They are required to appoint a Governor and a member of staff with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection and to have Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures in place.

As a school we work hard to support parents and children whose families are experiencing difficulties and we work closely with support agencies to access help where parents request support. We currently have available a Parent and Family Support Advisor to whom families can be referred, who will offer help.

We will always discuss any concerns we have about a child's well-being and safety with their parents unless doing so would endanger the child. In the latter case we would always follow the advice of Children's Social Care, which is our legal duty.

## VALLIS FIRST SCHOOL RULES

The school prides itself on children's good behaviour!

Any rules imposed are for the smooth running of the school and for the benefit of everyone in the school. They are kept to a minimum and are mainly common sense involving care, safety and consideration for people and property.

- No toys should be brought to school UNLESS they are required for a class activity e.g. 'Show and Tell'.
- Sweets or crisps are not allowed at morning break. We are trying to teach children about healthy lifestyles so children are encouraged to bring fruit as a healthy alternative. An additional piece of free fruit is also available for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children as we are part of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.
- One pair of stud earrings is the only jewellery allowed in school in the interests of health and safety. Children will need to remove these themselves for PE or wear tape over their earrings. Older children are allowed to wear a watch.
- If it is necessary for money to be brought to school, it must be in an envelope with the child's name and the amount enclosed written on it, and it must be handed to the appropriate adult. We cannot be held responsible for money lost on the way to or from school.

The children, staff, parents and Governors have agreed the following Golden Rules together:



1. Do be gentle. Don't hurt anybody.
2. Do be kind and helpful. Don't hurt people's feelings.
3. Do work hard. Don't waste time.
4. Do listen. Don't interrupt.
5. Do look after property. Don't waste or damage things.
6. Do be honest. Don't cover up the truth.

**The School's Behaviour Policy, which is endorsed by the Governors and adopted by all Frome Schools, is available in the school and on our website. As a school we seek to create a supportive environment for all children and staff and we do not tolerate racist, homophobic, cyber, physical or verbal bullying behaviour.**

# Home School Agreement

## The Parents

I/We shall try to:

- ♦ see that my child goes to school regularly, on time and properly equipped, ie. P.E. kit and book bag
- ♦ share any concerns as soon as possible
- ♦ support the school's policies and guidelines for behaviour
- ♦ support my child in reading, spelling, mathematical and any other educational homework
- ♦ attend parents' evening and discussions about my child's progress
- ♦ encourage independence where appropriate
- ♦ name all clothing and belongings

## The Children

Will try to:

- ♦ take good care of the school and all those who work in it
- ♦ walk inside the school buildings, keeping to the left
- ♦ be kind, friendly and helpful to everyone
- ♦ do their best and behave in a sensible manner
- ♦ concentrate on their own work and allow others to do the same

## **The School**

Will make every effort to:

- ♦ encourage children to do their best at all times
- ♦ encourage children to take care of their surroundings and others around them
- ♦ let parents know about any concerns or problems that affect their child's work or behaviour
- ♦ regularly inform parents of their child's progress
- ♦ maintain order and discipline in a fair and positive way
- ♦ provide a happy and stimulating environment
- ♦ maintain high standards in all areas of school life
- ♦ provide a welcome and smile for everyone

## **Together**

We shall try to:

- ♦ be polite to each other
- ♦ listen, whatever the pressures
- ♦ support children's learning to help them achieve their best
- ♦ create a happy atmosphere for everyone connected with our school



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### SCHOOL UNIFORM

All schools in Frome expect children to wear uniform. Our children wear a dark green sweatshirt or cardigan with black or grey skirt, pinafore or trousers or shorts.

Trousers, pinafores, skirts and checked or striped green and white dresses are all easily found locally. School sweatshirts, cardigans, fleeces, book bags, PE bags and hats with the school logo are on sale from the School Office.

Please ensure your child wears sensible school shoes (not trainers), with laces, buckles or velcro straps. For health and safety reasons please do not send your child in open toe sandals or flip flops.

We require children to change for PE for safety and hygiene reasons. Please provide:  
A pair of daps (trainers are not suitable for apparatus work).  
A pair of plain shorts and a plain T-shirt (or, if you prefer, a leotard for girl).

Please name all items of clothing - it helps reduce the pile of unclaimed lost property!

Our Parents' Association sell good quality second hand uniform on the first Friday of every month (provided the school is open).



## DIARY DATES

A calendar for the school year will be printed in your child's link book showing school term and holiday dates but not the addition In Service (INSET) closure days. School event diary dates are also listed on our weekly newsletter and on our website. These should be kept for reference. We try not to change these dates unless the circumstances are exceptional and you will be informed well in advance.



## ARRIVAL AND COLLECTION FROM SCHOOL

Please do not leave children unsupervised outside school. Children are allowed into their classrooms from 8.45am, so there is no need to stand around waiting if it is cold or wet. We have Before School club available from 7.45am at a cost of £3.50 per session.

With parents' written permission we allow our oldest children to walk to and from school if they live locally and can make the journey sensibly and safely.

We encourage children to be as independent as possible as soon as they are ready but do feel free to bring them into the class until they are 'grown up' enough to enter by themselves. School finishes at 3pm and each year group has its own arrangements for collection. We also have an after school provision which runs daily until 6.00pm.

## PUNCTUALITY

We ask for your support in bringing your children in on time as children need to be with their classes for the start of the day. Children can feel embarrassed when they are consistently late. Registration is at 8.55 am and children are marked late at 9.00am and unauthorised at 9.15am when the register closes. If you arrive after 9.00am you



must sign in your child on a yellow late slip which are kept outside the School Office, otherwise they will not be on our registers in the event of an emergency.

We do understand that there are times when lateness is unavoidable. However, if punctuality is an issue, the Headteacher will meet with parents to discuss support to improve the situation.



## ABSENCE

Poor attendance is often associated with poor achievement at school as children miss key lessons and struggle to understand further work. As a school we place a very high priority on maximising attendance and we work closely with parents to ensure that any difficulties are addressed.

We have a legal requirement to record and report all absence so it is imperative that parents telephone the school on the dedicated absence line on the first day of absence to tell us why their child is away. We need to keep a record of the reason, so it is helpful if a signed note can be sent to either to the class teacher or directly to the Headteacher or via the School Office. If no explanation is given for absence then it is recorded as unauthorised.

All registers are monitored by the Headteacher. If a child's attendance is poor, the school may make a referral to Somerset Safeguarding who now oversee this process. We may also write to parents when a child's absence is causing concern. Parents are encouraged to come and discuss with the Headteacher any problems they are having getting their child to school.



## HOLIDAYS

The Government and Somerset County Council has tightened the rules on families taking their children out of school as so many children were missing out on vital schooling. Family holidays should be taken during the 13 weeks school holiday period. Absence from school for any reason during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher in **very exceptional circumstances - not for annual family holidays**. A form should be completed stating the exceptional reasons why a parent is taking their child out of school during term time. If the exceptional reasons are not accepted then the child will be marked as absent without authorisation and the parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice or fine.

## NOTES/ INFORMATION

In order to keep you informed we email out a newsletter every Thursday. Other information may be emailed or sent out during the week so do check your child's bag to make sure that you receive all information. Children tend to forget boring details when they see you waiting for them! Copies of the newsletter are put on our noticeboards and are available outside the school office and on our website.

## CONTACT DETAILS



We need to be able to contact you if your child is sick or injured. Please ensure we always have an up-to-date list of contacts with phone numbers which we can reach you or nominated people on, who can collect your child if necessary (or accompany them to casualty if necessary). It is also essential for us to know if end of day collection arrangements are changed because of an emergency - this is for your child's safety.



## MEDICAL

Please inform the school if your child has asthma or any allergies. This will be important for us when caring for your child. Please notify us of any prescribed medicine your child regularly takes for our records. On the rare occasions when it is necessary for prescribed medicines to be administered during school hours we ask that parents sign an indemnity form, available from the School Office. If your child vomits or has diarrhoea, they must stay away from school for a full 24 hours after the last episode. If the school is experiencing a high amount of sickness, ie. an epidemic, this absence time is increased to 48 hours. If your child is asthmatic we need you to provide a named inhaler to be kept in class. Please fill out an inhaler form with details of the dosage and frequency that the inhaler is administered. The inhaler and these details will be kept in your child's class so that it is available if they need it. It will also be taken on school trips and swimming.



## ROUTINE MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Children's height, weight and vision are checked during their time at school. We will ask you to give your consent for the above checks.

From time to time the School Dental Service visits and you will be informed if that affects your child.



## SCHOOL MEALS

Edwards and Ward currently has the contract to provide the hot meals service at our School. These meals are required to meet the national nutritional standards set by the government. The locally sourced ingredients are prepared by Edwards and Ward in the Selwood Academy kitchens and then the food is transported to our finishing kitchen to be served. A rolling menu changes twice a year with main choice and vegetarian option available daily. All children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes are entitled to this meal for free. Key Stage 2 children can order and pay for a meal. The current price is £2.30 per meal. Meals must be ordered and paid for by the Monday morning of each preceding week at the School Office.

Children may prefer to bring a packed lunch or to go home for lunch. If your family is entitled to free school meals please inform the School Office. Even if you do not want your child to receive a free school meal please register if you are entitled, as this positively affects the amount of government funding the school receives.

## WALKING TO SCHOOL

We encourage children to walk to school as often as possible to reduce traffic and keep fit. Unfortunately the School car park and entrance has restricted space and must only be used by staff and school transport. The school gate is locked from 8.30am to 9.15am and 2.30pm to 3.15pm. Car parking is available in the local streets but please remember not to trouble our long-suffering neighbours!



## **CROSSING PATROL**

Somerset County Council and Frome Town Council kindly sponsor our Crossing Patrol person. We are not always able to provide cover if illness occurs but we will always try and inform you if the situation arises. For our children to cross safely, our Crossing Patrol person needs to have an unrestricted view of the road. Please do not park in the area immediately around the school. Please make use of the safe crossing place we provide to model good road safety to all our children.

## **DOGS**

In accordance with County regulations and for the health and safety of our children please do not bring dogs on or near the School grounds.

## **NO SMOKING OR SWEARING ZONE**

Please note that for the benefit of your child's health and safety, the whole of the school and its grounds are a **No Smoking Area**. Please be aware that the children are not allowed to use bad language in school so we would appreciate your co-operation outside the school!



## CHARGING POLICY

The Education Reform Act 1988 introduced new provisions on charging for school activities. The issue is exceedingly complex and unfortunately some school activities will only be possible if parents make a voluntary contribution (if you have any difficulties with this please see the Headteacher.) It is our aim to ensure that parents are always fully informed of the conditions relating to requests for any financial outlay. We hope that this will not stop trips which support and back up the all important curriculum work being done in school.

Parents are asked to complete relevant consent forms allowing their child to participate in local outside school activities and visits.

Unfortunately once you have paid for a trip, if your child is unable to attend it is not possible for us to refund your money.

## ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS



Adverse weather conditions such as heavy snowfalls or floods occasionally cause problems. Although we try to keep the school open whenever possible, it may be necessary to close without prior notice. Parents wishing to ascertain the position should check our website or the County Council website or phone their Year Group parent contact. We will also try to send you a text or email to notify you. Should conditions deteriorate while the children are in school, they may be collected early. However, children will NOT be released unaccompanied from school earlier than the normal closing time.

## COMPLAINTS

We hope that any complaints that parents may have can be resolved by the school. Therefore any complaints, in the first instance, should normally be made to the class teacher or Headteacher, and it is hoped that in most cases they will be dealt with at this level either informally or through our formal school procedure. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this level (i.e. with the Headteacher) then the parent should submit his/her complaint, in writing to the Clerk of the Governors, who will acknowledge receipt of it and inform the Governing Body so that they can try to resolve the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved by the Governing Body, the complaint can be referred in writing to the Department of Education.



### VALLIS SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (VSA)

All parents, staff, governors and friends of the School are automatically members of Vallis School Association. The purpose of the Association is to help the children of the School. This can include such things as helping in the classroom, hearing readers, arranging fun days, face painting and baking cakes plus lots of fundraising and social events!

We currently have a very enthusiastic group of VSA Committee members who are busy fundraising. They welcome all parents to come to any of their meetings and help with any of the activities.

### YOUR CHILD'S NEXT SCHOOL

Your child will transfer to a middle school/academy in September after his or her ninth birthday. Children generally transfer to Oakfield Academy or Selwood Academy. We aim to maintain a close liaison with these schools so that your child progresses on to the next stage of his or her education with ease. Details of all the schools available will be sent to you by the Local Authority at the beginning of your child's last year at our School.



## **GOVERNORS**

The Governing Body's role is to maintain an overview of the school standards and plan for improvements. It meets several times a term to receive reports from the Headteacher and to discuss various school matters. The Governors are also responsible for alterations to the curriculum and are required to make statements regarding such matters as the school's Charging Policy, Sex Education, the complaints procedure and discipline in the school. Details are available from the School Office. The Governors are responsible for the financial management of the school and it is their aim to provide the highest standard of education possible with the money available. Minutes of Governors' Meetings are displayed outside the School Office.

### **LIST OF GOVERNORS**

#### **Name and Appointing Authority**

Mrs Alex Kershaw-Moore (Chair/Co-opted)

Mr James Loughlin (Vice Chair/Co-opted)

Mr Nick Firkins (Headteacher)

Mr Iestyn Lewis (LEA)

Mr Martin Wade (Co-opted)

Mr Adam Summers (Staff Governor)

Miss Claire Beale (Parent)

Miss Meredith Russ (Parent)

Miss Io Fox (Co-opted)

Mrs Holly Pullen (Parent)