



Castle Wood

Castle Wood

Taking you step-by-step
through starting school at
Castle Wood

Together, children first...



Rebekah Hayes,
Headteacher, says:
It's great news that your son
or daughter is starting at our
wonderful school.

Guide

We have produced this Parent Handbook for you to use as a guide to Castle Wood, to answer any questions you might have, and to give you an overview of the facilities and resources we provide to support your child and your family.

Questions?

If you have any questions that are not answered here, please contact the school office on 024 7670 9060 and we will be happy to help.

Welcome

Welcome to Castle Wood and I look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Key information

School day: settling in

What are our school times?

The school day is usually 9am to 3pm. If there are any changes to these times you will be informed.

Arrivals and departures

Many of the children who attend Castle Wood are eligible for Local Authority transport. For information on how to find out if your child may be eligible for travel assistance from the Local Authority see the link below.

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/travel-assistance/travel-assistance-1>

Please note, Castle Wood have no role in the decision making or allocation of travel assistance. All enquiries must be made through the Travel Bureau. School also cannot contact the travel bureau on parents behalf, or inform transport to cancel or reinstate transport as a result of a child's illness. To contact the Travel Bureau directly, you can call 024 7683 4004.

Food in school

The kitchen team prepare our school food on-site daily. Our menu offers a range of food that provides your child with a balanced diet that meets their nutritional needs, and always includes a vegetarian option. However, if your child requires a specialist diet or has an allergy, please contact the school office and we will aim to cater for their individual needs. Please note we do not offer Halal food.

School meals cost £2.30 per day or £11.50 per week.

Free School Meals

If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 they will be eligible to receive Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) to which all children within these year groups across the country are entitled.

Some families are entitled to receive Free School Meals due to their financial situation regardless of which year group their child is in. This is a statutory benefit but entitles the school to additional funding of £1,320 per annum which is used to provide additional resources to aid your child's teaching and learning. You can still provide a packed lunch if you do not wish to receive the meals but the additional funding is very important for schools.

Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is available to children whose families receive certain benefits. Please contact Coventry City Council's Free School Meals Team on 024 7683 3773 Monday to Friday from 11am – 2pm or email: freeschoolmeals@coventry.gov.uk.

Pupil premium children receive one free school cardigan or jumper when they first receive pupil premium funding.

Uniform

Our school uniform can be purchased from:

- Andy Blair School Wear, 88-90 Barker Butts Lane, Coundon, Coventry, CV6 1DY.
- You can purchase online at <https://coventryschoolwear.co.uk/shop>

In choosing our uniform items we have considered very carefully the differing needs of all of our children and the desire to promote independence. A list of the recommended uniform that is required for each key stage is below:

Reception

- Castle Wood navy V-neck sweatshirt or cardigan (branded only).
- Sky blue polo shirt (branded available).
- Black jogging bottoms / leggings.
- Black shorts or mid-blue gingham summer dress for summer term (optional).
- Footwear that is suitable for physical activities e.g. trainers, pedro boots. Shoes must be closed toe. Velcro rather than lace up or buckle fastening preferred.
- White, grey or black socks.

Key Stages 1 and 2

- Castle Wood navy V-neck sweatshirt or cardigan (branded only).
- Black leggings or jogging bottoms or grey trousers or grey school skirt.
- Mid-blue gingham summer dress or black or grey shorts for summer term (optional).
- Sky blue polo shirt (branded available).
- Black school shoes or trainers (no open toed shoes or sandals).

P.E. Kit (applicable to all children)

- White T-Shirt.
- Black shorts.
- P.E. can be done in bare feet although you may wish to supply your child with suitable black pumps or plimsolls.

Swimming Kit (you will be told if your child requires this)

- One piece swimming costume (no bikinis) or swimming trunks / shorts.
- Swimming towel.
- Swim nappy (if required)

Other items available

- Navy school rucksack*
- Navy swimming bag*
- Navy legionnaire cap*
- Navy school fleece jacket*
- Navy reversible school coat with fleece lining*

Items marked with an asterisk are available with optional school logo.

Any parent or carer who feels they will not be able to ensure their child is dressed appropriately in correct school uniform should discuss this with their child's class teacher.

Items required in school

Things to bring every day:

- Two healthy snacks.
- A packed lunch if required.
- A full change of clothes.
- Spare underwear if required.
- Warm outdoor clothes/sun cream and sun hat.

Things to bring and leave in school:

- Pads and wipes if required.
- A cup or water bottle that your child will drink from.
- Wellies.
- P.E. Kit.
- Swimming kit and swim nappies if required - Huggies size 6 or fledglings.org.uk

Please speak to us individually about any medical equipment required.



Transition into Reception

Starting school can be both an exciting and anxious time for parents and children. Our Senior Teacher for EYFS makes contact with every family prior to your child starting and we offer a programme of information and support to help everyone feel confident in the process of starting school. We offer a staggered start to school, beginning with short periods initially and moving to full days and like to move quickly with this to support children in getting used to their new routines. We do make allowances for children who cannot manage this, however, and work closely with families to build the transition in the way which is right for the child.

Forms

There are a number of forms to complete and systems to sign up to and further information on how to do this will be provided.

Transition between year groups

It is important as children move through school that they experience transitions, meeting new people and building new relationships. However, we also know that for many of our children this can cause some anxiety and be something they need extra support with. We structure our transitions in order to allow children to build these relationships slowly, working alongside the adults they already know and trust to develop new bonds and prepare for the new year ahead. In partnership with families we will also send home transition materials for you to view with them to help with the transition process.

Year 5/6 transition

One of the biggest transitions our children will make is that of moving to Secondary school. We know this can be a daunting time for parents too as your children enter into the next chapter in their school career.

Working with secondaries

Our Senior Teacher for Year 5/6 transition works closely with all local secondaries to plan transition carefully, beginning the process early into the final year of school with us and exploring a range of topics with the children to help to support them in understanding the changes that will come. Once we have been given the information on which secondary your child will transition to, we also work with the secondaries to arrange transition visits, where staff will visit us, and we will accompany your child to any transition days arranged by the secondary schools.

Advice

We are not able to offer advice on which secondaries to choose and recommend that parents visit the schools they are considering in order to make an informed decision. The Senior Teacher will also make contact with parents during the transition process to advise of any events or information which may be useful.



Supporting families

At Castle Wood, we strongly believe that working in partnership with parents is essential in securing the best outcomes for children. We want to work with you, developing strategies that support your child at home and in school. We know that sometimes life can be tough, and as well as supporting your child in school there are some ways in which we can support the wider family too.

We are proud to be working towards the Leading Parent Partnership Award and will regularly send out parent surveys to gain the views of parents on a range of topics. These will be sent via email and Class Dojo at various times throughout the year.

Assessment and support

Our 2 Pastoral Support and Learning Mentors support families with a wide range of issues including early help assessment and support packages. They provide a valuable complementary service to that provided by class-based staff in order to address the needs of pupils and families who need help and support to overcome barriers to learning. Their specialised knowledge and experience contribute to raising standards of attainment, improving attendance, reducing exclusions and helping to maintain good standards of behaviour.

Working alongside families

They are available to listen, work alongside families to look at behaviour, signpost to relevant services, liaise with outside agencies where appropriate, and carry out 1:1 or small group work with children to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The Learning Mentors can also help to arrange things such as parenting courses and applications for respite care and are generally a first port of call for parents who have any worries or queries about their child's welfare.

Workshops

We are currently developing a programme of workshops, and details will be issued to families at the beginning of each term.

Home/school liaison

Effective home/school liaison is a vital part of ensuring positive outcomes for our pupils, and the Learning Mentors' role is to maintain close links with families and carers, and with other agencies involved with their child. We believe that a strong relationship between home and school contributes greatly to the children's progress and achievement.



Frequently asked questions

Here are our answers, to what we find, are the most frequently asked questions. If you have any questions that are not answered here, please contact the school office and we will be happy to help.

Attendance

At Castle Wood we place a strong emphasis on good attendance and time keeping to enable pupils to achieve their full potential whilst at school. School starts at 9am and we encourage all pupils to be punctual. School transport is available to assist with getting children to school.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5-16 years old) must receive a suitable full-time education. Once your child is registered at school, you are legally responsible for making sure that they attend regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk getting a penalty notice or being prosecuted. School staff are available to support with individual issues that may be impacting upon attendance. Please speak to a member of the Leadership Team.

Holidays in term time

Holiday request forms are available from the school office. This form must be filled in, otherwise your child's absence will be unauthorised. It is the Headteacher's discretion to authorise holidays. If the holiday request is declined and you still take the holiday in term time, you may be subject to a penalty fine.

When your child may not attend school:

- If your child is ill (including displaying any Covid symptoms) or has been ill within 48 hours (sickness and diarrhoea).

- For the first 48 hours following prescription of antibiotics.

Medical appointments

If an absence relates to a medical appointment, the school will request sight of the appointment card or letter, but wherever possible these appointments should be arranged outside school hours.

Positive Behaviour Management

It is acknowledged that pupils at Castle Wood have core difficulties in communication, personal social and emotional development, recognising emotions and staying regulated. Therefore, the organisation of the curriculum has a key focus of developing communication, emotional well-being, embedding the practice and principles of EYFS and incorporating the THRIVE approach. All staff have a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and achievement, and to build self-esteem. Any adult encountered by the children at school has an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and each other, as their examples will have an important influence on children.

Through the following of the practice and principles of the EYFS, areas to consider include:

- The Unique Child.
- Positive Relationships.
- Enabling Environments.
- Learning and Development.

Internet safety

Pupils are taught about online safety as part of the curriculum. During lessons pupils will be taught to:

- Use technology safely and respectfully.
- Request help via eye contact, touch or other non-verbal ways.
- Recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Report concerns to an adult and ask for help.
- Recognise the importance of keeping personal information safe.

No child will be allowed access to the internet without constant adult supervision – all staff are advised to be aware of what children are viewing on the internet and to be aware of what links could be made available to the child. No child will be left unattended with a computer/device that can access the internet at any time.

Charging policy

Educational visits

The school does not make a fixed charge for an activity, the majority of which take place within school hours. In some cases the school may request a voluntary contribution from parents.

All requests for voluntary contributions make it clear that the contributions are voluntary, but if the amount of support does not reach a level where the activity is viable, it will be cancelled. A child will not be excluded from an activity because a contribution cannot be paid. Parents can write to the Headteacher to request a reduced donation if their financial situation warrants it.

Optional extras

Extras are those activities which take place mainly or entirely out of school hours and which are provided in addition to the school curriculum. Where the majority of an activity takes place outside school hours, the school is permitted to charge.

Optional extras provided from time to time by the school include for example, additional visits outside of those linked to the curriculum. A charge will be made at actual cost to all participating pupils for optional extras. The actual cost will be made known to parents before they are asked to agree to their child taking part in the activity. Such trips will only take place if the full cost can be met by such voluntary contributions. By participation each child will be subject to parents agreeing to meet the cost.

Board and lodging and residential visits

A charge will be made for board and lodging for pupils taking part in residential visits whether these are part of the curriculum or optional extras (except where remissions apply). The charge will be at actual cost except in the case of authorised visits to Plas Dol-Y-Moch outdoor pursuits centre where the charges will be in accordance with scales set from time to time by Coventry needs City Council.



Where an activity includes a board and lodging element, families receiving Universal Credit (previously known as Income Support, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Working Families Tax Credit or Disabled Person’s Tax Credit) cannot be charged. A statement to the effect that families are in receipt of such an allowance and documentary proof will be required. A similar entitlement applies if a trip takes place outside school hours, but is necessary as part of the National Curriculum.

Jewellery and other valuables

In the interests of safety children should not wear jewellery to school as this can be very dangerous in any play situation. Children with pierced ears are asked in the interest of safety to wear studs at school. Watches may be worn. The school can accept no responsibility for any items of jewellery or other valuables which are lost at school.

Helping to support children’s learning at home

At times, we may make suggestions about ways in which you can support your child’s learning at home. Working in partnership is essential to maintain the progress children make and having a consistent approach between home and school supports this.

We recognise that all children need leisure time and hope that our policy reflects a balance so children can extend and consolidate their learning with parental support while still allowing ‘down time.’

Issues concerning children’s welfare

If you are concerned about any aspect of your child’s schooling the first step is to speak to the Class Teacher. If it is a confidential or complex matter, please do not try to deal with it immediately before or after school, but ask to see the Teacher at a suitable time. This request can be made face to face, via Class Dojo or by contacting the school office.

What to do if you have a concern/complaint

If you or your child ever experience problems with our school, then please contact the class teacher as soon as possible or speak to a member of the leadership team. Most complaints will normally be resolved informally. However, in the event that you may still feel dissatisfied, the Headteacher will be able to provide you with a copy of the school’s formal complaints procedure.



Special educational needs

As a broad spectrum primary special school, it is our intent to provide every child with the best education possible. Our objective in setting out the school’s SEND policy is to make everyone aware that we want all pupils to benefit as fully as possible from the education provided within the school. We cater for pupils who experience difficulties in:

- Communication and interaction.
- Cognition and learning.
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

The school has full provision for pupils who are disabled.

Our full SEND policy can be found on our website under the Policies tab.

Emergency arrangements

We will always endeavour to open the school, but in cases of severe bad weather that may affect access to our essential services, closure may then be unavoidable. The decision to close is not taken lightly and is influenced by the decisions of the Local Authority Travel Bureau. During severe weather we will advise you via email and where possible also by Class Dojo. Information will also be shared with local radio stations.

Collecting your child

If school closure is announced during the day due to severe weather conditions, every effort must be taken to collect your child as soon as possible. If you personally cannot get to school, or you work out of the local area, please have a contingency plan i.e. please nominate an adult to collect your child in your absence and organise this beforehand as the weather forecast is likely to have alerted us to the fact that the weather may become hazardous during the day. Please make sure that we have at least two current contact numbers, in case we need to contact you urgently.

Medicines

Medicines will only be administered at school when it would be detrimental to a child’s health or school attendance not to do so. Parents will be required to complete the appropriate authorisation form which is available from our website or the school office.

The school will only accept prescribed medicines that are in date, labelled, provided in the original container as dispensed by a pharmacist and include instructions for administration, dosage and storage. Medicines will only be administered if prescribed by a doctor as needing to be given 4 times a day or at a set time which falls within the school day.

Illness at school, accidents and first aid

Parents are contacted when children are unwell or have seriously hurt themselves, especially if they have bumped their head. Please make sure that contact numbers are kept up to date. Teaching and support staff have received Emergency Aid Training in line with policy guidelines. If your child is ill we will look after him/her until you are able to get to school. We cannot arrange transport home.

Facilities

Accommodating diverse needs

At Castle Wood we have a wide range of excellent facilities to accommodate the needs of our pupils, and our learning environments are created with a play-based approach to learning in mind. These include specially designed play areas which are fully accessible for children with physical disabilities, a therapy pool, bright and airy classrooms, extensive outdoor areas with hard and soft play equipment, and a sensory garden and sensory room.



Carefully thought out

Every area is carefully thought out to address the various requirements of pupils with a greater or lesser degree of profound and multiple learning difficulties, and in order to promote and develop physical and mental health.



Annual review process

Dates and invitations

You, your child and all relevant individuals will be invited to the meeting. You will be given at least 2 weeks' notice. You will be sent information on how you make your views known as part of the annual review process. Other professionals working with your child may be asked to provide an up-to-date report.

Two weeks before the meeting

Any reports which are relevant for your child will be shared with you and any other professionals who have been invited to attend the annual review meeting.

On the day

Everyone present is invited to discuss the progress being made by your child and how the provision in their plan is supporting them. You will then talk about any changes which might need to be made to the plan. A member of school staff will make notes to be added to the record of the meeting.

2 weeks after the meeting

After the meeting, the school will make sure that the minutes are typed up and any additional changes to the plan are made as agreed in the meeting. The notes will then be sent to the Local Authority within 2 weeks of the meeting date.

The final plan

The Local Authority review the meeting notes and any changes to the EHC plan, as well as any other reports provided. They will write to you with their decision on making changes within 4 weeks of the review meeting. You then have 15 days to respond. After those 15 days, an amended final plan must be shared with you within 8 weeks.



Communication with parents

At Castle Wood, we want to work WITH you to support your child and your family.

Communication with parents is mainly via the Class Dojo app. You will receive messages about your child's day and be able to send messages or questions to.

For URGENT messages, including reporting absence, always contact the school office on 02476 709060.

Tapestry

We observe children learning through play in school. Written observations, photographs, videos and samples of work are documented in a learning journal using Tapestry as evidence of attainment and achievement, demonstrating progress.

You will be sent a log-in for the Tapestry app so you can see what learning your child has been involved in and share and learning from home with staff too.



Sharing information

Children have individual 'passport' documents which contain information about their:

- Diagnoses.
- Communication methods.
- Personal care.
- Likes and dislikes.
- Triggers and calming strategies.
- Dietary requirement.

Some children have behaviour plans written together by staff and parents. We share this information with staff in school, escorts and drivers, health professionals and therapists.

Passports are updated regularly throughout the year.

Parental involvement

We believe that school is successful when it works in partnership with people and organisations that can enhance the quality of education it provides. The most important partnership is with parents. Children make maximum progress when home and school work closely together.

School reports

We provide all parents with an annual written report from the Class Teacher at the end of the Summer Term which provides information about their progress across all areas of development as well as a brief comment from your child's teacher.

Parent evenings

Across the academic year there are 3 opportunities for parents to meet with their child's class teacher; 1 of these will be the EHCP annual review with 2 shorter meetings to discuss progress. The exception to this process are years Reception and Year 5 who will have one transition review meeting, one shorter parents evening and one annual review meeting across the academic year.

News

Our website has lots of useful information including news updates, term dates and information on our activities.

Newsletters

Newsletters are half termly and shared electronically via email and class dojo, they are also available on the school website.



Policies

Why do we need policies?

For a school to offer high quality education and care, it needs policies. Policies help develop and define a set of consistent rules, regulations, procedures and protocols.

Parents need policies

Policies are also useful to parents. For example, a prospective parent might wish to view a school's behaviour policy or special educational needs policy, before deciding whether to apply for their child to attend the school.

High standards

Policies are vitally important, and help us to create standards of quality for learning and safety, as well as expectations and accountability. If you want to know what policies we have you can contact the school office or visit the school website: www.castlewood.coventry.sch.uk/Policies.

Key policies Some of our key policies are:

- Child protection and safeguarding.
- Charging and remissions.
- E-safety.
- Positive behaviour.
- Relationship and Health Education.
- SEND.



Vision and Values

Our vision and values – the possibilities of what we can become...

Together, children first...

Uniqueness – we embrace and accept everyone is an individual with different needs, interests and styles and Castle Wood will effectively engage with the broad spectrum of need.

Collaboration – we will all work together towards improving the life chances of all pupils and Castle Wood will engage with external organisations to ensure this.

Learning – we know that every experience increases our knowledge and skills physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially and Castle Wood will lead the way in specialist education.

OUR VALUES – our beliefs which drive our behaviours...

Our values underpin everything we do at Castle Wood. The values have been chosen by consensus of stakeholders at Castle Wood. They are the key to our decision making and indicate to our stakeholders and external organisations how they can expect to be treated. Our values are non-negotiable and should be second nature, running through all our relationships, activities, and interactions.

- Honesty.
- Integrity.
- Trust.
- Empathy.
- Respect.



Term Dates

Castle Wood Academic Year 2022–2023		
Return to school (adults)	Monday 5 th September 2022	Training Day 1
	Tuesday 6 th September 2022	Training Day 2
Return to school (children)	Wednesday 7 th September 2022	
Break up	Friday 21 st October 2022	
	Monday 24 th October 2022 – Friday 28 th October 2022	Half Term
Return to school (adults)	Monday 31 st October 2022	
Break Up	Friday 16 th December 2022	
	Monday 19 th December 2022 – Tuesday 3 rd January 2023	Christmas Break
Return to school (adults)	Tuesday 3 rd January 2023	Training Day 3
Return to school (children)	Wednesday 4 th January 2023	
Break Up	Friday 17 th February 2023	
	Monday 20 th February 2023 – Friday 24 th February 2023	Half Term
Return to School	Monday 27 th February 2023	
Break Up	Friday 31 st March 2023	
	Monday 3 rd April 2023 – Friday 14 th April 2023	Easter Break
Return to school	Monday 17 th April 2023	
Break Up	Friday 26 th May 2023	
	Monday 29 th May 2023 – Friday 2 nd June 2023	Half Term
Return to school (children)	Monday 5 th June 2023	
Break Up	Friday 21 st July 2023	Summer break
Disaggregated Day	Monday 24 th July 2023	Training Day 4
Disaggregated Day	Tuesday 25 th July 2023	Training Day 5



Checklist for parents

- ☐ Look out for an email from us with information on transition for your child
- ☐ Fill in all the forms online – links will be in the email. If you need help with these let the school office know.
- ☐ Apply for a place with transport or a personal budget to cover travel to and from school if your child is eligible
- ☐ Look out for an email with the link to Class Dojo so that your child's teacher can begin to get to know you and your child
- ☐ Download the Tapestry app so you can be ready to see some of the learning and activities your child will take part in once they start with us
- ☐ Buy your child's uniform ready for their start date
- ☐ Your child's teacher will visit your child at home or at nursery
- ☐ Get ready to become a member of our Castle Wood community – we can't wait to meet you!



Castle Wood

Castle Wood
50 Deedmore Road
Coventry
West Midlands
CV2 1FN

Telephone: 024 7670 9060
Email: admin@castlewood.coventry.sch.uk
Website: www.castlewood.coventry.sch.uk

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