**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Safeguarding**

At St Benedict’s, safeguarding is our highest priority. The full policy can be viewed [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/serve_file/8611862).

If you have safeguarding concerns please contact Hannah McGuire (Head) in the first instance or Catherine McBride (Deputy Head). We are here to help with any difficulties you are having and can point you in the right direction for support, if we are unable to do it ourselves.

**Special Educational Needs:**

If you have concerns about your child, please discuss them with the class teacher in the first instance. They will communicate with the SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator) Tamsin Vernon. If your child has already been receiving support in nursery or has been given a diagnosis, please send an email to headteacher@stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk and Mrs Vernon will call you to discuss the provision needed for September.

The SEND policy can be viewed [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/serve_file/10591070) and the Equality policy and plan [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/page/equality-information/126929) :

**School Lunches**

The Government give us funding to provide all children in Reception and Years 1&2 with a free school lunch every day.

We use a company called Dolce for our meals. You and your child can choose the meal that they want each day, in advance. There is a varied menu to choose from. You will be set up with an account before starting in September and you will be able to choose meals for each half term in advance.

Although Universal Infant Free School Meals are available to all children in Reception and Years 1&2 **it is important that**, if you think you may qualify for Free School Meals, you still apply. The school receives additional funding for children who qualify. It makes a huge difference to our budget and enables us to provide extra resources for pupils.

Cheshire East Council award free school meals to families that receive the qualifying incomes as outlined below, and whose children attend a Cheshire East Council school.

* [Income support (IS)](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport/On_a_low_income/DG_10018708)
* [Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)](http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/%40dg/%40en/documents/digitalasset/dg_200090.html)
* [Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA(IR)](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport/Illorinjured/DG_171894))
* support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
* [Child Tax Credit](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/TaxCreditsandChildBenefit/TaxCredits/index.htm), provided you are not entitled to [Working Tax Credit](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/TaxCreditsandChildBenefit/TaxCredits/index.htm) and have an annual income (as assessed by Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed **£16,190**.
* [The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/PensionCredit/DG_10018692).
* Children who receive Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to receive free school meals.
* If you have recently become unemployed or have reduced your working hours and have been granted the four week working tax credits run on, then you may be entitled to free school meals.

**Please call the Cheshire East Council Schools Team on 0300 123 5012 for advice or click this link** [**here**](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-meals/free_school_meals.aspx)

**School Uniform:**

We are very proud of our uniform and expect all pupils to wear the uniform at all times. Please click [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/page/school-uniform/126896) to find out more about the uniform. If you have any difficulties paying for uniform, please contact the school office so that we can support you. The PTA run a facebook page for Pre-loved uniform which is a great way to save money and help the environment. It is called ‘St Benedict’s Pre Loved Uniform’.

Please make sure that **all items are named** including shoes, trainers, ties, PE kit etc. Even if you write the initials with a pen, it is really helpful. Although you are able to buy a St Benedict’s school coat, it is not compulsory.

**PE**

Children MUST have a PE kit – if you need help buying a kit, please contact school. Pupils take part in PE twice a week. Children should have a school PE kit - T shirt, shorts or skort and trainers (see uniform link above) and should leave it in school. It will be sent home at the end of every half term (unless it is very muddy!)

**Resources**:

Children will need a book bag. In reception we ask that book bags are the standard school ones so that they fit in the trays. Children do not need their own pens or pencils- all resources are provided. Please avoid back packs where possible.

**Parking**

At drop off and pick up time, please park at the church at the top of the hill. It is safer for all pupils and parents this way. For the safety of all children, you will not be able to enter the car park at key times (unless pre-arranged with the office or site manager because of mobility issues).

**Start of the Day:**

At the start of the day, the school gates are opened at 8.40am. Children should go immediately into the classrooms. Reception children should make their way to the playground at the far end of school and in through the door from their playground. There will be staff to support you with this on the first day.

**We respectfully insist that you do not accompany your child into the school building.**

In order for us to safeguard all pupils, we do not allow parents into the building in the mornings. Please warn your child that you will say goodbye to them at the door with their teacher. We are very strict about this from the first day because we have found that it makes it harder in the long run if the child gets used to the parent coming in with them. Staff will be there to help them find their way and hang up their coats. You can watch a video [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/page/reception-starter-info/126955) to show your child what the first day will be like. We know that some children will be upset for the first few weeks at leaving their parents but the staff are all very experienced and will support them to settle into the routine. Please be assured that if your child continues to be upset, school will ring you – but this is very unlikely.

If you are concerned that your child will find it particularly difficult, please let me know and we will discuss a way forward with you.

**End of the day:**

Parents collect their children from the classrooms at the end of the day. At the beginning, this takes time because the staff will not recognise faces. Please be patient as this helps us safeguard all children. If you have asked someone else to collect your child, please inform the school office or class teacher in advance. We will not let children go with an unknown adult without prior consent. Gates open at 3.30pm

**Year 6 Buddies**

Each Reception child will be allocated a ‘buddy’. A year 6 pupil will write to your child to introduce themselves and help your child feel at ease. Each Friday they meet up with their buddies and do an activity together. This helps to make the Reception child feel safe and gives the older children some responsibility. We normally give these letters to children on the welcome day in July.

**Communication**

The school office uses the Schoolcomms system to send text messages and emails to parents. You will receive a whole school newsletter every Friday. Once a half term, we invite parents to an assembly and 2 or 3 times a term we hold ‘Thankful Thursdays’. On this day, parents are invited in to look at their child’s work from 8.40am until 9am and it gives pupils chance to show what they are proud of. In October and April we hold parents’ evenings and in July you will receive a written report.

If you would like to discuss something with the class teacher, we ask you to please talk to them at the end of the day. If it is something urgent, please let the school office know or leave a message with the person on the door. The teachers cannot talk in the mornings as they are responsible for ensuring all children are safe in the classroom and that they are ready to start learning. If you leave a message, teachers will try to call you back at lunchtime but this is not always possible as they run clubs and are on duty some lunchtimes. They will call you back as soon as they can. You can send an email to admin@stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk and the message will be passed on.

**Medical conditions:**

It is very important that we know about any medical conditions. If children need medication (including inhalers), please inform the school office and they will give you the necessary forms to complete so that we can administer medicines. Please see our policy [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/serve_file/10600295):

**Attendance:**

Attendance at school is very important. Children who have good attendance achieve better in all subjects. If your child’s attendance falls too low we will contact you via letter and will invite you to discuss any issues. Holidays during term time are not authorised and you will be issued with a fine. If your child is sick, you must call the office before 9.30am to let them know why your child is absent. See the policy [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/serve_file/10554763%20). If you do not call the office, staff will make a home visit to ensure that your child is safe.

**School Term Dates:**

Please click [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/page/school-term-dates/126895)

**Wrap Around Care:**

We offer excellent wrap around provision before and after school. From 7.45am pupils can come into school and have breakfast and play with their friends and take part in a range of activities. After school club runs until 5.30pm. You can find more information [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/page/the-hub-wraparound-care/126902). The costs for these sessions are: £6 foir Breakfast Club and £9 for After school club.

In addition we welcome a range of external providers who run after school clubs including dodgeball, football, clay creators, tennis and more. All clubs are paid for by parents but if you need some support with this, please contact school.

You can find information [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/page/after-school-clubs/126900)

**Baptismal Certificate:**

If your child has been baptised, please provide us with a copy of the certificate for our records.

**Information for separated parents:**

Anyone recognised as a parent under educational law can participate in their child’s education. That means that parents who are separated will be sent a copy of the school report, will be invited to parents’ evenings and will be sent information about attendance etc. Please include information for both parents on the registration form. Please note that if a fine is issued for unauthorised absences, both parents will be fined, regardless of who is taking the child on holiday.

**Privacy Notice:**

Please view the Privacy Notice [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/serve_file/7775199):

**Anything else:**

I hope this information is useful and serves to help you feel ready for September. We know that it is a big first step and we want you to feel comfortable and relaxed. If you have any questions – however silly you think they are – please ask!

Our website is a good source of information and you will find a full list of policies [here](https://www.stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/page/school-policies/126924)

We update the website frequently with photos of the children so keep our eye on the news and events and there is a new starters facebook group too called St Benedict’s Reception new starters 2023 so that you can connect with our friendly parents and ask them questions.

If you need any further support or help, please email headteacher@stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk

We will do all we can to make sure that you and your child feel happy and safe in our school and we look forward to the beginning of an exciting journey in September.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hannah McGuire

Head teacher