

Dear Parents

I fully understand that making a choice about primary schools is one of the most important decisions that you will make for your family. With this in mind, I would like to introduce you to what is distinctive about our school. We hope that our welcome pack will give you a flavour of our children, our environment and our ethos. Having talked to parents past and present, I have found three factors that are consistently considered the most important facets of life at The Vineyard: care, challenge and creativity. As a school, we are passionate about meeting every child's needs, ensuring their happiness and making the most of their individual talents.

Our children thrive in a learning environment that is designed to engage and excite. The focus on developing a lifelong love of learning is underpinned by rigorous attention to the development of essential skills and tools. This focus and attention, combined with continual assessment of progress, ensures that each child is thoroughly prepared for the next stage of learning and has the opportunity to maximise his or her potential.

As we live in a constantly changing, multi-cultural world and global economy, we endeavour to provide our children with the skills that are essential for success in the twenty-first century. Our focus on collaboration and team-building ensures that all children are equipped to face the challenges ahead. We want our pupils to leave The Vineyard having developed a love of learning, gained a desire to extend their understanding throughout their lives without fear of acquiring new skills and knowledge as the world around us changes. Our children are able to recognise that individually they can make a difference to their own future and to that of our planet.

All of this is achieved through providing a creative and imaginative curriculum that opens windows into an inviting world, rich in opportunities for the children to enjoy. Our focus on the creative arts ensures that our children are confident to participate in and have the language to express their appreciation of a range of art forms. Similarly, we aim to encourage every child to participate in an active and healthy lifestyle, making the most of opportunities to involve themselves in the huge range of sporting activities provided by the school.

Hidden away on the crest of Richmond Hill, a short distance from the river and Richmond Park, The Vineyard benefits from an unusually secluded and rural environment. Our extensive and beautiful grounds provide a safe and tranquil setting – a breath of fresh air in a busy world.

I am so proud of our children, our vibrant community and our school.

Ruth Whymark

Headteacher

School Times and Arrangements for Bringing and Collecting Children who are Full Time

We have a soft start to the day, classrooms are open from 8.45am, allowing the children to come in to put their coats and bags away, to read or to catch up on any work while being supervised by their class teacher. **Classroom doors are shut and the register is taken at 8.55am.** The teaching day starts at 9am.

No children should be unaccompanied on site before 8.45 when teachers are on duty to supervise them.

Please be punctual. Children find arriving late very worrying and can often become quite upset. Children arriving after 8.55am will need to enter through the main school entrance and be signed in at the school office.

Teachers start lessons punctually at 9am, so children who are late will be missing important learning points and instructions, as well as disrupting others. Children arriving late – after 8.55am and before 9.30am will receive a Late mark. Children arriving after 9.30am will receive an Unauthorised Absence mark.

Reception children finish their school day at 3.10pm; Y1, Y2 and Y3 children finish at 3.20pm and Y4, Y5 and Y6 children finish at 3.25pm.

Our school gates are automatically locked between **8.40am and 9.10am**, and then between **3.10pm and 3.40pm**. We do not have vehicle access for parents at any point during the school day, except in an emergency.

Children in YR to Y3 are released to their parents/carers by the teacher or teaching assistant who is with the class at the end of the school day. The children are handed over from the classroom door. Parents/carers who wish to arrange for someone else to pick up their child on a regular basis should advise the class teacher of these arrangements, preferably in writing. In YR to Y3, one-off arrangements should be entered into the 'Going Home Book' hung outside the classroom. Those parents who do not come into school can telephone the school office by 3.00 p.m. All YR to Y4 children should be collected by an adult. Parents who wish older siblings (over sixteen years) to collect children should advise the class teacher in writing.

Children in Y4, Y5 and Y6 are released from their classrooms at the end of the day. The children make their own way around to the chestnut tree where they meet their parents. Class teachers gather outside the school entrance to ensure that all children are collected and to be available for any quick questions or queries from parents. Children who have not been picked up know that they should re-enter the school office and let the office know that they are waiting. Parents who are late collecting their children will need to sign them out at the school office.

Pupils attending clubs after school should be collected at the designated exit which is recorded on the Extra-curricular activity sheet.

We allow Y6 pupils to travel home independently. To do so, parents must complete the permission form. This arrangement is extended to Y5 pupils in the summer term.

If for any reason there is a problem with the arrangements, please let a teacher or member of staff know so that we can resolve any difficulties for you.

Please ensure that children are escorted off the school site as quickly as possible. Children are not allowed to linger in the playground to play with friends and balls or on the climbing frames at the end of the school day.

The School Gates

The driveway gates will be closed to cars at the following times:

8.40am to 9.10am

3.10am to 3.40pm

Our aim is to ensure that our pupils and their families are safe to arrive and leave school at the beginning and end of the school day and to ensure that only authorised visitors enter the school grounds. We also want to improve the flow of pedestrian traffic at the beginning and end of the school day. One leaf of the vehicular gate will therefore be left open to allow pedestrians in and out at these busy times.

The pedestrian gate and the second leaf of the driveway gate will then close for the day at 9.10am. Parents, children or visitors wishing to enter the school grounds at other times can gain access through contacting the office from the gate. The call box is placed on the ***right hand pillar of the driveway gate***. It is this larger box, ***NOT*** the smaller box near the pedestrian gate. Instructions are near the call box.

Parents of children who are brought to school late or during the school day will need to ensure that their children are escorted safely inside the gates and to the office.

Children being picked up early must be collected from the school office. This is a safety procedure to ensure that we can account for all children by signing them in and out. This is crucial in an emergency procedure, so please give us your co-operation.

Use of the School Phone

Please ensure that children bring all the equipment they need for the day and that they are clear about picking-up and social arrangements after school. Children are not allowed use of the phone.

Bikes, Blades, Boards and Scooters

Adults and children should dismount at the gate. No riding of bikes, roller blades, scooters or skateboards can be allowed on school premises. This applies to adults and children. There are many very young children around in the grounds before and after school and our first priority is to keep everyone safe.

Cloakrooms and Bags

We have a very limited space available in our cloakrooms. Younger children up to Year 4 are asked to bring only their reading bags, PE bags and lunch boxes so that coats can be securely hung on pegs. Older children in Year 5 and 6 are permitted to bring small back packs. Large bags and sports bags are not allowed for safety reasons.

Reading

Reading books are taken home daily. Please ensure that they are returned daily. KS1 children have reading diaries. If you hear your child read please write a comment in the diary.

Extra-Curricular Activities

An up-to-date list of extra-curricular activities is available on the website and is updated on a termly basis. Please note that these are not usually available right at the beginning of the school year; it takes a little time to organise activities.

Parental Involvement

We firmly believe in a positive partnership with parents, as well as children, to achieve our aims. When your child first starts school there will be frequent and informal contact with the class teacher to ensure that your child settles happily and quickly. There are also regular occasions throughout the year when you will be invited to meet with class teachers to discuss your child's progress and ways in which you can support their work. We also provide a written annual report during the summer term. Parents may also wish to consult the class teacher at other times during the year. We ask that parents send an email to the teacher in order to arrange a mutually convenient time for issues which require privacy or will take a little longer to discuss. Parents may also wish to speak to teachers informally at the end of the school day. KS1 teachers can be found in the classroom; KS2 teachers usually gather near the school entrance and horse chestnut tree at the end of the day. We ask parents to avoid speaking with teachers at the beginning of the school day

when they are preparing resources or settling the children. Urgent and more serious issues can be brought to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Parents are kept in touch with school issues and events through the website, regular newsletters and Parentmails.

Parents Helping in Class

Parents support the school by helping in the classroom, the libraries and environmental studies areas. Every year we have mandatory training sessions to support our classroom helpers in understanding and extending their role.

We also welcome parent support in other school activities such as visits, swimming, cookery, transport, sporting events, etc. This parental support enables us to extend the range of opportunities available to our children. All parent helpers are required to undergo a DBS check before they can help in school. DBS forms are available on the website. We do ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the check, which is currently £10. Please be aware that it can take a number of weeks for your DBS form to be processed.

Communication with Parents

The school uses a service called ParentMail© which enables us to send letters and messages direct to parents by email and text message. The result of this is that parents are able to receive information from the school in a more reliable and efficient manner and it also reduces the school's environmental impact by reducing the amount of paper we use. We may also contact you by text message if, for example, an after school activity has been cancelled or your child is unwell. Please note that in emergencies a member of staff will contact you directly.

School Meals

The Vineyard School is a nut-free zone.

We have a number of children who have severe allergies which can be triggered by trace elements of nuts and nut oil. No children are allowed nuts in packed lunches. We are encouraging children to be more aware of a sensible diet and to bring in healthy packed lunches. Sweets and chocolate bars are not allowed, but children can bring a biscuit. No fizzy drinks please!

Many families purchase school dinners for their children. Parents wishing to commence or finish taking school meals need to give the school two week's written notice. The meals are currently £2.55 a day and are paid for termly in advance. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 automatically qualify for a Universal Free School.

Some families are eligible for free school meals. Families who receive income support, child tax credit (provided they are not entitled to working tax credit), job seekers allowance and asylum seekers should see the school office to make arrangements for free school dinners.

Snacks and Drinking Water

Our KS1 children are provided with fresh fruit as a snack for morning playtimes. Every child should also bring a bottle of water with a sports lid to school for the classroom each day. Teachers regularly encourage the children to sip water throughout the school day in order to support their health, learning and memory.

Absences and Holidays during Term Time

If your child is unwell please notify the office between 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. If your child is sick or has diarrhoea please keep them at home for the following 48 hours after the cessation of symptoms. Children being treated with antibiotics should also remain at home for the first 24 hours of treatment. Please send a written explanation for the absence on his/her return. Please provide evidence of medical and dental appointments.

If you wish to take your child out of school for any other reason during term time, you must first seek authorisation from the Headteacher by completing an absence request form. Forms are available from the school office. Please note that holiday absence is not allowed during term time and is only authorised in exceptional circumstances. Children who are unable to attend the last days or first days of a term due to illness must provide documentary evidence of illness. Without this, their absence will be automatically unauthorised.

Uniform

We firmly believe that our uniform promotes a sense of pride in The Vineyard School and gives the school a strong and positive identity in the local community. School uniform is compulsory at The Vineyard School (full details below).

Uniform is available from the online supplier Mapac. www.mapac.com. This supplier was chosen after a comprehensive process as the company most able to offer good value for money, prompt and reliable delivery and easily accessible customer service for parents. Telephone and postal ordering is available for any parents / carers who do not have access to a computer. Mapac will supply all the logoed items and offers the usual online return and exchange policies. Parents can continue to purchase plain items from the retailer of their choice although Mapac will also have some such items available on their website.

In the interests of your child's safety, please ensure that jewellery is not worn in school other than for religious reasons. Young children are physically active in school and accidents can result from earrings, rings, necklaces, bracelets and braids being caught or pulled. Children may wear wristwatches providing that they take personal responsibility for them. From time-to-time second-hand uniform sales are arranged. These are advertised in the school newsletter.

Extract of the Vineyard School Uniform Guidance

Full guidance is available on the school website

Summer School Uniform	Winter School Uniform
Items with logo only available from Mapac	Items with logo only available from Mapac
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy tailored school shorts (not cargo pants or denim) • White polo shirts with red and white striped collar and sleeve trim and the school logo • Light blue and white checked dresses • Blue, white or red hair bands (optional) • White socks - girls • Navy/grey socks - boys • Black/navy sandals with closed toes and heels • School sweatshirts or school cardigan/jumper • School fleeces (optional) • School rain jackets (optional) / navy blue coats preferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy tailored school trousers (not corduroy, denim or cargo pants) • Navy skirts • Navy pinafores • Red tights (YR – Y4) • Navy / red tights (Y5 – Y6) • Red, white or navy hair bands (optional) • White polo shirts with red and white striped collar and sleeve trim and the school logo • Navy/black school shoes (no trainers) • School sweatshirts or school cardigan/jumper • School fleeces (optional) • School rain jackets (optional) / Navy blue coats preferred
Items without logo available from a variety of retailers	Items without logo available from a variety of retailers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy tailored school shorts (not cargo pants or denim) • Light blue and white checked dresses • White socks - girls • Navy/grey socks – boys • Blue, white or red hair bands (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy tailored school trousers (not corduroy, denim or cargo pants) • Navy skirts • Navy pinafores • Red tights (YR – Y4) • Navy / red tights (Y5 – Y6) • Red, white or navy hair bands

• Black/navy sandals with closed toes and no heels	(optional) • Navy/black school shoes (no trainers)
KS1 PE Uniform	KS2 PE Uniform
Items with logo only available from Mapac	Items with logo only available from Mapac
• Drawstring bag	• Drawstring bag • The colour T-shirt appropriate to their house team • Sweatshirt appropriate to their house team (winter only)
Items without logo available from a variety of retailers	Items without logo available from a variety of retailers
• Plain navy shorts • Plain white T-shirts • Navy track suit trousers (winter only) • Trainers for outdoor PE • Change of socks	• Plain navy shorts • Navy track suit trousers (winter only) • Trainers for outdoor PE • Change of socks

Labelling: It is essential that all items of school clothing, including plimsolls, are clearly labelled with your child's name. This helps your child look after their belongings and prevents them from becoming upset over lost items. We do not have a Lost Property in school. Named items are returned to the child's class. Unnamed items will be donated to the PTA second hand uniform sales.

Remember that all school sweatshirts look the same!

Outdoor Clothes: Our weather often changes throughout the course of the school day and unfortunately summer cannot be relied upon for warm and sunny weather. Please ensure that your child brings a coat and at least a sweatshirt during summer months. Children can be very unhappy if they are cold during break times.

Painting Overalls: These are provided by the school.

P.E. Kit and Arrangements

The school's health and safety policy includes important aspects concerning clothing for PE as follows:

- The wearing of clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity is an essential safety precaution
- All children must have a complete set of PE kit in school in a named PE bag. Reception children do PE in bare feet during autumn and spring terms, but will need trainers for the summer term.
- The children must have a letter from their parent/carer if they cannot participate in a PE lesson because of an injury.
- Children should not wear any of their PE kit before or after PE lessons.
- Children should **never** do PE indoors in stockinged feet because of the danger of slipping.
- In gym and dance lessons, barefoot work is **preferable**.
- Watches, belts and any unnecessary encumbrances should not be worn.
- Children should not wear jewellery, unless for religious reasons (and then it should be taped). If stud earrings are worn, they must be removed before PE, or covered with a plaster or tape.
- Long hair should be tied back or held in place by a soft hair band.
- If a child does not have their PE kit at school, they will do PE in their school t-shirt.

Administration of Medicines

The Vineyard School has adopted the LBRUT Policy on the Administration of Medicines in School with the following amendments:

1. Other than asthma medication, epi-pens, and cystic fibrosis medication, all medication will be kept in the medical room.
2. In the case of insulin and inhalers these will be kept in a secure place in the classroom for KS2 children and in the medical room for KS1 children.
3. Special written procedures may be in-place for individual children by arrangement with the headteacher, medical advisors, school nursing team and the child's parents (e.g. diabetic children).

Medication is not administered in school. Any medication prescribed by a doctor must be given at home or administered by the child's parents/carers in school.

The exceptions to this are:

1. Long term medication for specific medication for chronic illnesses or long term health problems e.g. ADHD, epilepsy, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, etc.
2. Emergency medication, e.g. epipens, inhalers, insulin pumps, asthma pumps.
3. Medication on a school visit or journey, e.g. Calpol, travel sickness tablets.
4. With the agreement of the headteacher, in extenuating circumstances, written agreement will be granted for first aid staff to administer medications.

FRIENDS OF THE VINEYARD SCHOOL

We would like to welcome you to the Vineyard School and introduce you to the Friends of the Vineyard School (the Friends), a registered charity set up some years ago by a group of parents to provide a tax efficient mechanism for receiving donations to the school.

The funding situation for schools over the last two years has changed radically and many of the funding streams that we previously benefitted from have now ceased. Increasingly funding is delegated to school using various deprivation factors; The Vineyard receives one of the smallest amounts of these types of funds due to our low number of children entitled to Free School Meals. However, we still have the same challenges as any other school in maintaining our twenty-first century teaching resources.

The Friends of The Vineyard School trustees allocate those funds to needs specifically identified through the governors Annual Development Plan and its longer three year strategic plan.

In order to maintain our good reputation in the local educational market it is essential that our facilities and resources are up-to-date.

Upgrading ICT equipment is our greatest challenge. We have a team that is well equipped to make funding decisions which provide good value for money within the context of increasingly complex needs. The ICT development plan is overseen by a governor to ensure that this important area of our work is well-researched using up-to date knowledge.

You can help in one of two ways. Some of our parents make regular monthly standing order payments. These vary according to family circumstances; many pay £10, £20, or £50 a month, others can afford more. Some families prefer to make an annual one-off donation. Ideally we would like to aim for an average donation, across every family, of £90 per annum or £7.50 per month by standing order.

Alternatively, some parents have business contacts which enable them to access matched funding for charities. In the past we have been able to purchase a trolley full of laptops through a single donation and a £3,500 media screen for the hall from another. If you think that you may be able to help us in this way email the school or make an appointment to see the headteacher.

We understand that every family's situation is unique and that some families might not be able to contribute at this time. However, in the past we have been made aware of how many families wanted to donate or meant to donate, but just didn't get around to it.

Therefore please give this matter your urgent attention.

