



Aine Gale – Principal
The Brow, Haydon Wick, Swindon SN25 1HT
Tel: 01793 706606 **Fax:** 01793 701081
Email: head@haydonwick.swindon.sch.uk

June 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of new reception children 2021,

A very warm welcome to Haydon Wick Primary School part of the White Horse Federation. We are delighted that your child will be joining us in September 2021 at Haydon Wick Primary school.

We were hoping to have a parents meeting at school this year **but** unfortunately, this is not going to be possible due to the current restrictions that are still in place. However, we will do our best to ensure that your child's transition to school is as smooth and happy as possible.

Our induction process also normally includes visits to meet you and your child. We have planned these visits to take place in school on Thursday 2nd September and Friday 3rd September, which you have had your date and time sent previously to you.

We understand that this may well be concerning for you, as starting school is such a significant milestone in your child's life. However, please do not worry.

We will be sending you a short welcome video which will include information about our staff and the school.

We will also send you some little activities to complete with your child and the children can share their summer adventures with their new teacher and class friends when they start school in September.

There is some further information at the end of this letter to help you and your child to get ready for school.

If you would like to please explore our school website <https://haydonwick.swindon.sch.uk/> as this is another way in which we communicate with our parents.

Yours Sincerely

Aine Gale

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Starting reception – Advice for parents and carers summer 2020

Starting school after lockdown

The beginning of school can feel scary for you and your child. Lockdown has been an uncertain and difficult time and we know that you may have more worries about your child starting school than in other years. You might also be worrying that your child won't be ready for reception and be wondering if there is anything you can do to help get ready for transition.

We have listed some things you can do with your child to help make sure they're just as ready to start reception as they would otherwise have been.

Please don't worry if you don't have time to do all the things we have suggested or if your child has special needs that mean they are not ready yet to do some of the activities independently.

To help your child develop independence, get them used to doing the following at home:

- Getting dressed independently every day – practise closing buttons, putting on socks and shoes on the right feet, putting coat on and zipping up
- Going to the toilet and wiping their bottom on their own – simple clothing like elasticated waistbands are easier to get on and off
- Cutting food using a 'real' knife and fork and pouring a drink from a plastic jug
- Tidying up their toys and doing simple household chores – giving them responsibilities will help them to become more independent
- Helping them to recognize their name in writing and to consistently respond to it verbally. Create a coat and shoe peg at home with their name on it to help get them used to having something similar at school – it seems like a simple thing, but it'll help when we ask your child to go and fetch their coat!

You can practise some of the skills your child will develop in early years in your home – this will help your child feel more ready (and clever) when reception starts:

- Talk to your child taking turns to talk and listen as much as you can. Many children do not spend enough time talking to their parents, often because we all use screens much more. Having good communication skills is one of the key things that will help children feel happy and learn more easily at school





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- Talk to your child in your home language. Don't worry about talking in English if this is not what you do normally- If your child can talk well in your home language they will pick up English more quickly at school
- If we are used/using screens more often to stay in touch with family and friends during this time, include children in video calls and activities. Getting them to have conversations with relatives and friends is a good way to combine screen time while helping children to improve their speech
- Carry out turn-taking activities such as playing with a toy – this helps them to get used to taking turns and to understand the concept of sharing
- Get your child used to eating with others even if it's just a snack
- Get your child to listen by sitting still and looking at you while you give some simple instructions or tell a story
- Lots of the learning in reception happens through play. Get down onto the carpet so you're at their level and enjoy some play with your child. Follow their lead with what they're doing or how they're playing. Then, try to get them to follow your lead and create games together. This will help them to get used to playing and engaging with other children
- Do some drawing, painting or mark making together- have fun making marks with everything from mud to gravy!

Get children interested in stories, sounds and numbers

- Read to your child everyday- we get most of our new words from what we read. Research shows that reading stories is one of the best things' parents can do to help children do well at school. A bedtime story helps bedtime routines and gives a great opportunity to snuggle together and feel connected. It's great to get to know some stories well so don't worry if your child asks for one book over and over again- this will help them later in school when they start to learn to write
- When reading turn the pages together and look at the pictures.
- Recognise sounds and words in the environment around you to help your child hear the initial sound in words – e.g. look at that t-ree, first sound 't'
- Segment sounds in words orally while doing your usual daily routine – e.g. get your c-oo-t on, where is your b-a-g
- Play I spy but sound out the word and see if your child can blend it – e.g. I spy with my little eye a d-o-g
- Explore rhyming words and sing songs together- action songs are fun
- Count items out together and talk about numbers you see around you





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Routine and consistency helps children to adapt and this will help ease the transition into reception. About 4 weeks before the start of reception, try to set a morning routine with your child. You can start with small steps and gradually add to the routine:

- Get up at the same time every day and have breakfast if possible, try to have a bed time
- Get dressed up in the school uniform and put on 'school' shoes
- Prepare a 'school lunch box' – you can choose one together if you don't have one yet
- Try to get a bedtime routine- the first few months of school are really exhausting for children and good sleep habits will keep them healthy and benefit their learning in the long term. The NHS website offers good ideas helping your child with sleep <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/healthy-sleep-tips-for-children/>
- Try to limit screen time for some time each day- especially at night. Screen time can be very exciting and engaging for children but can be addictive and stop children being as curious and creative as they are when screens are not around. Children will do best in school when they are used to interacting with other people and are happy and excited by a range of activities

Help your child get to know the school and staff faces

- Many children like to be able to know what their school and teacher look like before they start. We will be sharing photos/videos of the teacher, play area and classroom for you to look at these together
- Look up the route to school and if it's walking distance try it out as your daily walk– point to the school and tell your child they'll be going there soon.
- Show your child that you are excited about school and talk to them positively about starting school. Children look to parents for reassurance, try not to worry out loud to your child about starting school and talk to us about any concerns you have- you will not be the first parent to have concerns and questions and we are here to help.
- Coronavirus may have made you worry about starting you child at school. All Government guidance has been followed and actions taken to ensure that your child is safe in school and manage any risks associated with the virus.

