



Welcome to St Mark's CE Primary School



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Welcome

Welcome to the Sussex Spires Federation!

As the Executive Headteacher, I oversee the strategic leadership of our three wonderful schools: Herstmonceux, All Saints' and St Richard's, and St Mark's. While our brilliant Heads of School manage the day-to-day running of each school, I work closely with them to ensure all of our schools thrive.

By bringing our schools together in a federation, we get the best of both worlds. We share resources, ideas, and brilliant opportunities that small schools couldn't manage alone keeping the unique personality and heart of each school.

Starting Reception is a huge, exciting milestone. The children in our school bring so much joy to my work; they truly make me smile every single day. Alongside our dedicated staff and governors, my priority is to create an environment where your child feels safe, happy, and inspired to learn.

Every decision I make comes down to one simple question: "What is best for the children?" Thank you for trusting us with your child's education. I am so excited to work with you to watch them flourish, grow, and learn during their time with us.

Catherine Cottingham

Catherine Cottingham
Executive Head

Sussex Spires Federation



Welcome to St Mark's CE Primary School.

At St Mark's, every child is valued as a unique individual. We are committed to helping children flourish academically, socially and spiritually, and we feel privileged to support them during these important primary years.

We recognise the responsibility this brings and place great importance on working in partnership with parents and carers, so that every child has the best possible start in life.

Our school is at the heart of the local community. Children, parents, carers, governors and staff work together to uphold the high standards of learning and behaviour that make us proud of St Mark's.

As part of the Sussex Spires Federation, St Mark's benefits from working closely with two other schools. This partnership enables staff to share best practice, draw on a wider range of expertise and resources, and work together to continually improve teaching and learning. For our children, this means access to high-quality provision, consistent support and wider opportunities, while still enjoying the nurturing, individual care of a small school community.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, then please don't hesitate to contact the school office.



Karen Evans
Head of School



Reminder of Key Dates

Parent/Carers meeting

TUESDAY 23rd June from 6pm – 7pm

We warmly invite all new parents and carers to a meeting on **Tuesday 23rd June**. This will be a chance to meet Mrs Karen Evans, Head of School, and Mrs Sarah Walsh, our Reception teacher. We will talk through the transition into Reception, including recent changes to our provision, and answer any questions you may have.

Taster Sessions for Children

THURSDAY 2nd JULY 9.15 – 10.15am & TUESDAY 7th JULY 2pm – 3pm

We are pleased to invite children to attend taster sessions on **Thursday 2nd July** and **Tuesday 7th July**. Each session will last for one hour and will give the children time to explore their new classroom, meet staff and begin to feel familiar with their new school environment. Tea and coffee will be available for parents and carers in the ICT suite. If your child is settled and happy to explore, please feel free to enjoy a cuppa and chat with other new families.

Home Visits

THURSDAY 3rd and FRIDAY 4th SEPTEMBER

Home visits have proved invaluable in previous years, as they give us the opportunity to begin building a strong home-school partnership from your child's very first days with us. Mrs Walsh would be delighted to meet you and your child at home, where your child is likely to feel most comfortable and secure. At the new parent meeting, there will be a sign-up sheet with suggested dates and times, which helps us to plan our visits and travel routes. Home visits will take place on **Thursday 3rd** and **Friday 4th September**.

Starting Sessions

From **Monday 7th September**, children will begin with two part-time days to help them settle gradually into school life and become familiar with the setting. Please see the timetable below for the times your child should attend.

Monday 7 th September	9.00am – 12.00
Tuesday 8 th September	9.00am – 1:00pm (stay for lunch)
Wednesday 9 th September	8:30am – 3:20pm (Stay all day)

Full time attendance

From **Wednesday 9th September**, children will attend school for the full day, unless alternative transition arrangements have been discussed and agreed with Mrs Evans, our Head of School.

How to contact us

Our address:

St Mark's Church of England Primary School
School Lane
Hadlow Down
East Sussex
TN22 4HY

Our website: <https://st-marks-hadlowdown.co.uk/>

Search online for St Mark's CEP School Hadlow Down

Our phone number:

01825 830375

Our email address: office@st-marks.e-sussex.sch.uk

Our senior leadership team:

Catherine Cottingham - Executive Headteacher
Karen Evans - Head of School
Kally Livingston - Federation SENDCo
Lauren Robinson - Federation School Business Manager

Our office team:

Karen Fraser and Sally Hand - School Secretaries

Time keeping

A typical day at St Mark's CEP School

8:35	Playground gate opens
8:40	The bell rings and children make their way into school
8:50	The gate is closed. Registration
9:00	Collective worship
9:20	Morning lesson
10:45	Break
11:00	Mid-morning lesson
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Registration and afternoon lessons
15:15	Playground gate is unlocked.
15:20	End of day. Children are collected from the playground

Looking smart

Uniform

We believe that school uniform is practical and helps children feel part of the St Mark's community. We ask parents and carers to support us by ensuring that children wear the correct school uniform each day.

The **uniform** consists of:

- Blue branded jumper or cardigan
- Light blue polo t-shirt
- Grey trousers, jogging bottoms or shorts
- Grey skirt or skort
- Trainers or shoes (Black only – coloured trainers are not permitted)
- Blue and white checked school summer dress (Summer term only)

Uniform with logos should be ordered online from [Brigade](#) or [School Trends](#) all other uniform can be purchased from supermarkets or stores.

****IMPORTANT SUMMER HOLIDAY ORDER INFORMATION****

Place your order before 18th July for delivery to home before the start of term.

For **P.E:**

- St Mark's, or unbranded, light blue t-shirt
- Navy blue shorts or jogging bottoms
- Plimsolls or trainers (for indoor and outdoor PE)

Please note:

- For safety reasons, children should not wear jewellery to school, apart from a watch. If your child wears earrings, only one pair of small studs is permitted. Stud earrings must be removed or covered for PE, and this must be done by the child.
- Nail polish and children's temporary tattoos should not be worn at school.
- Long hair, including hair longer than shoulder length, should be tied back to help children take part safely and comfortably in learning, play and PE, and to support good hygiene throughout the school day.
- Headscarves should be plain navy blue or plain white and free from embellishments.

Our PTA also has a large supply of pre-loved uniform.

Email: office@st-marks.e-sussex.sch.uk

Please make sure that all items of uniform, as well as drinks bottles, lunch boxes and bags, are **clearly labelled with your child's name**. Labelling items helps us return lost property quickly and easily. If you need any support with uniform, please contact the school office and we will be happy to help.

Drinks bottles should contain water only.

School Clothes

If your child needs to have their clothes changed at school for any reason, please wash and return the borrowed clothes to school as soon as possible.

Behaviour

We want every child to feel happy, safe and ready to learn at St Mark's. To help create a positive and respectful school community, we ask everyone to follow our School Rules and live out our school values each day.

Our School Rules

Ready, Respectful and Safe

Our School Values

Community, Peace, Gratitude, Respect, Perseverance and Friendship

Responsibilities

Children are encouraged to:

- Follow our school rules of being ready, respectful and safe.
- Treat adults and other children with kindness, respect and politeness.
- Help to keep our school tidy, welcoming and a pleasant place for everyone.
- Listen carefully and follow instructions from adults in school.
- Take growing responsibility for their learning, choices and behaviour.

Staff are committed to:

- Treating every child fairly, kindly and respectfully.

- Creating a safe, welcoming and positive environment where children feel secure and ready to learn.
- Providing a broad, engaging and appropriately challenging curriculum.
- Recognising each child as an individual, with their own strengths, needs and interests.
- Supporting and encouraging every child to do their best and take pride in their achievements.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Ensure children arrive at school on time, ready and prepared for the day ahead.
- Encourage children to show respect, kindness and consideration towards others.
- Support children in understanding the importance of learning, and celebrate their effort, progress and achievements.
- Work in partnership with the school and support our shared aims through the Home/School Agreement.

Our Behaviour Policy promotes restorative practice, self-regulation and the recognition of positive behaviour. We help children understand what good behaviour looks like and how their choices contribute to a calm, safe and positive learning environment. Our approach is rooted in our Christian values, including forgiveness and compassion, and is supported by clear rules and consistent routines across the school.

Where a child needs additional help to meet expectations, individual support may be put in place. Positive behaviour is encouraged by all staff, with visual reminders in each classroom to reinforce our school rules, recognitions and consequences.

We use a staged approach to help children reflect on their choices and make positive changes to their behaviour. Children are given clear reminders, support to self-regulate and the opportunity to restore relationships before any further action is taken. If behaviour continues, appropriate consequences are used consistently and fairly. Please refer to the behaviour policies on our website for full information or contact us if you have any questions.

Bullying

Bullying is persistent, targeted and often involves an imbalance of power. It can be carried out by an individual, or a group, and causes serious distress to the victim or victims.

Everyone at St Mark's has the right to feel welcome, safe, respected and included. When children feel secure and valued, they are better able to learn, build positive relationships and reach their full potential. Bullying of any kind undermines this and is not accepted in our school community.

The school may respond to bullying or inappropriate behaviour that happens away from the school site if it is witnessed by a member of staff, reported to the school, affects the safe and orderly running of the school, poses a risk to another pupil or member of the public, or could affect the reputation of the school. Any concerns will be considered in line with our behaviour and anti-bullying approaches. This may include incidents that happen when pupils are:

- Taking part in a school-organised or school-related activity;
- Travelling to or from school;
- Wearing school uniform or otherwise identifiable as a St Mark's pupil;
- Behaving inappropriately online;
- Or involved in any situation where their behaviour has an impact on the school community.

It is everyone's responsibility to stop bullying and the Anti-Bullying policy on our website contains guidelines to support this.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important for every child's learning, friendships and sense of routine. We also understand that there will be times when a child is too unwell to attend school.

If your child is absent due to illness, please let the school office know before **9.00am** on the morning of the absence. You can do this by emailing the office or telephoning the school.

If you call before the office opens, please leave a message on the answerphone. If your child remains absent, you must continue to inform us each morning. If we do not hear from you, a member of the office team will contact you. If we are unable to reach you, we will try the other emergency contacts you have provided. If we are still unable to confirm your child's whereabouts, we have a duty of care to contact the local authority.

Wherever possible, please do not bring unwell children into the school or playground at drop-off. If this is unavoidable, please keep them close to you and away from other children and adults to help reduce the risk of infection spreading.

Lateness

Children may arrive during our staggered drop-off time between **8.35am and 8.50am**. The bell will ring at 8:40am and all children should make their way to their classrooms via the playground entrance. Any child arriving after **8.50am** will need to enter via the school office and be signed in by the parent or carer. A reason for their late arrival will be required.

Registers close at **9.20am**; children arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence. Please let us know in advance, where possible, if your child has an appointment, such as medical or dental and provide evidence of appointments where possible.

Good attendance is **96% or above**. We are required to monitor attendance that falls below this level and to follow the local authority process where necessary. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's attendance, please speak to Mrs Evans, our Head of School, so that we can offer support as early as possible.

Appointments

Wherever possible, routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours. If an appointment must take place during the school day, please bring your child to school before or after the appointment so that they miss as little learning time as possible. A whole day's absence cannot be authorised for a routine appointment. For example, if your child has a dental appointment at **11.00am** and does not attend school at all that day, the morning session may be recorded as authorised, but the afternoon session would be unauthorised. Please provide evidence of the appointment, such as an appointment card, letter or email, so that this can be recorded by the office.

Requests for Withdrawal from Learning

If you need to request for your child to be absent from school during term time for a reason other than illness or a medical appointment, please complete a withdrawal from learning request form, available from the school office. Requests should be submitted at least **14 days in advance**. In line with government policy, term-time absence can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Family holidays and other trips are not considered exceptional circumstances and are therefore unlikely to be authorised. Unauthorised absence can affect your child's learning and attendance record and may result in a local authority fine of **£80**, issued per parent, per child.

School Life

School Lunch

School lunches are cooked on site each day by Chartwells staff. Children can choose from a three-week rotating menu, offering a variety of hot meals and options.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a Universal Free School Meal, which means they can have a school lunch free of charge each day.

For children in Key Stage 2, school lunches only cost £3.06 per meal.

Please book your child's lunch in advance using ParentPay. All lunches must be booked by **8.30am** on the day the meal is required. You will receive an activation code once your child has started school. If you

need any help with booking lunches, please contact the school office and we will be happy to support you.

Did you know?

- All the chicken and milk Chartwells use are Red Tractor approved;
- 95% of the seasonal vegetables are brought from British growers;
- All the beef is from the UK or Ireland;
- All bananas are Fairtrade;
- The kitchen staff bake bread every day, so it's fresh.

Catering for all Medical Diets

We want every child to feel safe, included and able to enjoy eating lunch with their friends. For parents and carers of children with food allergies, intolerances or specific medical dietary needs, we understand how important it is to feel confident that the right arrangements are in place. Chartwells has a clear medical diet process, supported by robust policies and procedures. A range of medical diet menus are available and, wherever possible, these reflect the main school menu so that children with allergies or intolerances can eat safely while still feeling part of the lunchtime experience.

For a copy of the Chartwells Medical Diet Policy please contact **chartwells.medicaldiets@compass-group.co.uk**.

Ensuring Safety with Dedicated Medical Diet menus

For pupils with health-based diets, allergies or intolerances, we'll start by asking parents or guardians to complete a Medical Diet Request Form. Please request a copy from the school office.

This form is then reviewed by one of our nutritionists or special diet coordinators, who checks for discrepancies and then decides which of our medical diet menus will suit the pupil.

We offer two medical diet menus – Allergen Aware and Bespoke. Our Allergen Aware menu is free from the majority of the 14 legal allergens and is aligned closely with the school's main menu, so the pupil doesn't feel isolated at mealtimes. If a pupil has allergies that sit outside the 14 legal allergens, we'll offer our Bespoke menu that's tailored to their individual needs.

Older children may get FREE school meals (FSM) if their parents or carers get any of these benefits:

- Universal Credit - GOV.UK

- Income Support - GOV.UK
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) - GOV.UK
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) - GOV.UK
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 - GOV.UK
- The Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit - GOV.UK
- Child Tax Credit - GOV.UK (your yearly income must be below £16,190.)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit). Eligibility for free school meals does not extend to individuals who receive Working Tax Credit on its own.

You should be aware that the FSM entitlement can bring additional funding to the school in the form of Pupil Premium – it is this funding which allows the school to provide many of the extras that may be offered to your child: small group interventions, Speech and Language resource, Clubs and trips plus much more. Pupil Premium is available from Reception year.

Breakfast Club

Our Breakfast Club runs every morning and begins promptly at 8:00am. Children should enter the school through the main entrance. Please ring the white bell, and a member of staff will welcome you into the building.

To ensure children have enough time to enjoy their breakfast and prepare for the start of the school day, please arrive promptly.

Children will be supervised by a member of staff throughout the session until 8:40am, when the children make their way to their classrooms.

Booking and Payment

To ensure we have the right number of staff available you must book your child a place on the Arbor Parent app. Breakfast Club is charged at £4 per child.

1. You can book and pay for any 'available' sessions you require. The session will not appear at all on the app if unavailable.
2. You must BOOK and PAY through the app.

3. You cannot AMEND or CANCEL – please call the office to arrange this.
4. Breakfast Club can be booked online up to 8:00am on the day of the club.
5. Refunds can only be made back to your bank account and cost the school a fee, therefore they will only be available in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. only if a child leaves the school).

After school clubs

We offer a range of after-school clubs throughout the year, with activities varying from term to term. Information about the clubs available for the following term will be sent to parents by the school office at the end of each term.

Places can be booked either through Arbor or directly with the external provider, depending on the club.

Toys or items of value

Toys and other valuable items should not be brought into school, as they can be distracting and we cannot guarantee their safekeeping or accept responsibility for any loss or damage. Toy weapons must never be brought onto the school premises.

Lost property

Lost property is kept in the wooden box located just outside the school office. If your child has misplaced an item, please check the box regularly. Any unclaimed items remaining at the end of each term will be disposed of or donated.

To help us return lost belongings quickly, please ensure that all items of clothing, water bottles, lunchboxes and other personal belongings are clearly labelled with your child's name. This enables staff to identify and return items to their owner whenever possible.

First Aid

We have fully trained first aiders on site who are available to care for children who sustain an injury while at school.

If your child receives treatment for a head injury, we will send you an electronic first aid report. In some cases, we may also contact you by

telephone to inform you of an injury, particularly if we feel that further medical assessment or treatment should be sought promptly.

Medication

If your child requires medication during the school day, please inform the school office. A **medication consent form** must be completed before any medicine can be administered, and all medication should be handed directly to a member of the office staff.

Children should not bring medication into school to keep with them during the day unless this has been specifically agreed with the school.

All medication must be **clearly labelled with the child's name** and accompanied by an appropriate measuring spoon or syringe where required. Please note that we are unable to administer prescription-only medication unless it is provided in its **original packaging** with a **pharmacy dispensing label** clearly showing the child's name and dosage instructions.

Health and Safety

We know this isn't the most exciting of subjects, but we have the following policies in place to protect the children. Please read carefully.

After school

Children are your responsibility once the teacher has handed them over at the end of the day (or for independent walkers once they have left the classroom).

Parking

- Please do not park on the pavements or across driveways when dropping off or picking up children.
- Please only park in the disabled bay if you have a valid Blue Badge.

Arriving at School

Children should enter the school through the playground gate. A member of staff will be on duty at the gate each morning from 8:35am until 8:50am to welcome the children into school.

If you have any messages for your child's class teacher, please pass them on to the member of staff at the gate, who will ensure they are relayed accordingly.

Leaving at the end of the day

The playground gate will open at 3:15pm. Parents and carers are asked to wait on the playground for collection.

At 3:20pm, teachers will bring their classes onto the playground and dismiss the children directly to their parent or designated collector.

Conduct on the Playground Before and After School

If you become aware of a disagreement or conflict involving a child, please do not attempt to resolve the matter yourself. Instead, bring it to the attention of a member of staff on duty. School staff know the children well and are best placed to manage any concerns appropriately. Direct intervention by adults can sometimes cause confusion or upset for the children involved.

Please ensure that you supervise your child(ren) at drop-off and collection times. Once children have been dismissed to their parent or carer at the end of the school day, responsibility for their supervision rests with the parent or carer.

For health and safety reasons, children must not use or play on any playground equipment before or after school.

We also ask all members of our school community to be mindful of their language and conversations while on the playground, as children are present and may overhear discussions.

Dogs or Pets

Dogs or pets are not allowed in the playground beyond the gates (even if carried). An exception of assistance dogs may be made with prior arrangement with the Head of School.

Visiting the School

When visiting the school at any time other than drop off or collection, please call at the office where you will be asked to sign in.

Adverse Weather

We will always aim to keep the school open during periods of extreme weather. However, in the event that the school must close due to adverse conditions, please check the East Sussex County Council website for the latest information on school closures. You can also

register for email or RSS alerts by visiting the homepage, searching for “School Closures,” and selecting “Get alerts about school closures,” then following the step-by-step instructions.

Information about closures may also be broadcast on local radio stations, including BBC Radio Sussex, Arrow FM, Sovereign Radio, Bright FM, Seahaven Radio, Uckfield FM, and Heart FM, which are all linked to the East Sussex County Council closure system.

If the school is required to close, we will also update parents and carers via Arbor and our school website.

Winter Coats & clothing

Please ensure your child comes to school with a suitable coat and appropriately named winter clothing during colder weather. Outdoor learning continues throughout the winter months, so it is important that children are dressed warmly.

Sun Safety

Please apply sun protection to your child before they come to school each day during warmer weather. Long-lasting “all-day” sun creams are recommended where possible.

Children should bring a named water bottle to school each day, as staying well hydrated is especially important in warm weather. Bottles of frozen water are not permitted due to condensation and the resulting wetness.

All children must also have a named sun hat in school during sunny weather.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility. All adults who come into contact with children and families have a role to play in keeping children safe.

The welfare of our pupils is our highest priority. The Governing Board ensures that the school has effective arrangements in place to safeguard and promote pupil welfare. We work closely with other agencies to identify, assess and support children who may be suffering, or are at risk of suffering, harm.

Our school is a community in which staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils all have an important role in creating a safe and secure environment.

We are committed to providing a caring, positive, safe and stimulating setting that supports the social, physical and moral development of every child.

We also recognise the importance of creating an environment where children feel safe, respected and confident to speak openly, knowing they will be listened to.

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is **Karen Evans** and deputy safeguarding leads are **Olivia Lynch** and **Catherine Cottingham**. If you have a concern about a child, please contact them immediately, or alternatively contact Children's Services directly on 01323 464222 or visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/worried-about-a-child/

Let's talk

Communications

We aim to keep parents and carers well informed, and we welcome your feedback to help us understand what is working well and where improvements can be made.

Personal Details

If you change address, telephone number or email address, please inform the school office as soon as possible so that our records can be updated. You may also update your details via Arbor; however, any changes will require school approval. It is essential that we hold accurate contact information in case of emergency. Where possible, we also use Arbor to send instant messages to reduce paper use and improve communication speed.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones should not be brought into school unless a child is walking to and from school independently. In such cases, this must be agreed in advance with the Head of School. The phone must be handed in to the school office at the start of the day for safe storage and collected at the end of the day.

Policies

A full list of school policies is available on our website. Printed copies can be requested from the school office.

Social Media

St Mark's uses the following official communication channels: Facebook and our school website. These are updated regularly with news and information. However, if you have any concerns, we encourage you to speak to us directly so that we can address them promptly.

We ask that all members of our school community are mindful when posting online about St Mark's, its staff or families. Any queries or concerns about the school should be raised with us in the first instance.

In the unlikely event that any parent or carer associated with the school posts defamatory or inappropriate comments on Facebook or other social networking sites, this may be reported to the relevant platform using their reporting procedures.

Social networking sites have clear rules regarding acceptable content and provide mechanisms for reporting content that breaches these standards. In serious cases, the school will also consider appropriate legal action in response to misuse of social media.

Parental Feedback

Complaints Procedure

We strive to maintain a caring and supportive school community and are committed to working with parents and carers to resolve any concerns.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of school life and feel that concerns raised with the class teacher or a member of the school leadership team have not been resolved, our full Complaints Procedure is available on the school website or as a paper copy from the school office.

In the first instance, complaints should be directed to the Executive Headteacher, Catherine Cottingham, or, where appropriate, to the Chair of Governors. Both can be contacted via the school office.

We value feedback from parents and carers as an important part of our school improvement process. We provide a range of opportunities for feedback, including:

- Contacting the school office by email at office@st-marks.e-sussex.sch.uk or by telephone on 01825 830375
- Annual parent questionnaires and resulting action plans

- Parent consultation meetings held throughout the year

Conduct of Parents and Carers

The Governing Board of Sussex Spires Federation values strong relationships between home, school and the wider community and believes that pupils benefit greatly from positive partnerships with parents and carers.

The vast majority of parents, carers and visitors work with us in a supportive and respectful manner. We greatly appreciate the positive feedback, encouragement and thanks that are regularly shared with our staff, which makes a significant difference to their work.

When concerns do arise, these are usually raised in a calm and reasonable way, enabling us to work together towards a positive resolution. However, in rare cases, negative attitudes towards the school may result in aggressive or verbally abusive behaviour towards staff or members of the school community.

The Governing Board expects all staff to respond professionally in such situations. Equally, staff have the right to carry out their roles without fear of aggression or abuse. We also expect parents and visitors to always behave respectfully towards all members of staff.

The Parent Conduct Policy sets out the standards of behaviour expected from parents and carers, along with the steps that may be taken if behaviour is considered unacceptable.

GDPR

Under the General Data Protection Regulations, the school requires consent to process personal data.

For full details of all the data processing carried out by the school see the Privacy Notice available on the [website](#).

East Sussex School Term and Holiday Dates 2026-2027



	SEPTEMBER 2026	OCTOBER 2026	NOVEMBER 2026	DECEMBER 2026
Monday	31 7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28
Tuesday	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29
Wednesday	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30
Thursday	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31
Friday	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25
Saturday	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26
Sunday	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27
	JANUARY 2027	FEBRUARY 2027	MARCH 2027	APRIL 2027
Monday	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Tuesday	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Wednesday	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Thursday	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29
Friday	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
Saturday	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24
Sunday	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
	MAY 2027	JUNE 2027	JULY 2027	AUGUST 2027
Monday	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
Tuesday	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31
Wednesday	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
Thursday	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Friday	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Saturday	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Sunday	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29

Key

- Staff training (INSET day)
- Start of term for pupils
- End of term for pupils
- Public holidays
- School holidays
- Transition week

Staff training (INSET) day

- Wednesday 2 September 2026

Schools in East Sussex are allocated five teacher training days (INSET) each year. On these days, the school is closed to pupils. Once the INSET dates have been confirmed, they will be communicated to parents and carers.

Transition week

- 28 June 2027 to 2 July 2027. Transition week is a week identified by secondary schools to support transition from primary to secondary schools

Term Length

Term 1

2 September 2026 to 23 October 2026 (38 days)

School holiday: 26 October 2026 to 30 October 2026

Term 2

2 November 2026 to 18 December 2026 (35 days)

School holiday: 21 December 2026 to 31 December 2026

Term 3

4 January 2027 to 12 February 2027 (30 days)

School holiday: 15 February 2027 to 19 February 2027

Term 4

22 February 2027 to 25 March 2027 (24 days)

School holiday: 30 March 2027 to 9 April 2027

Term 5

12 April 2027 to 28 May 2027 (34 days)

School holiday: 1 June 2027 to 4 June 2027

Term 6

7 June 2027 to 22 July 2027 (34 days)

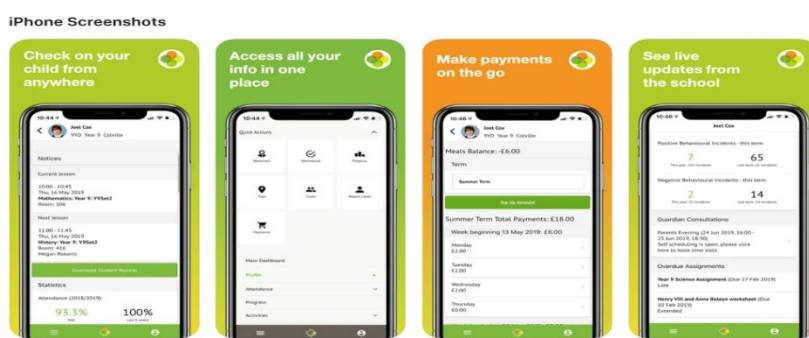
Total

195 days

Arbor Parent and Guardian Portal

As part of a wider programme to streamline our office procedures to make us even more efficient and cost effective, we are using different web-based systems that are available to schools. We know how important it is to have reliable, open and honest communications with you all and with this in mind we are using Arbor for all messaging, bookings, payments and consents.

You will find Arbor in the app store or Google Play store:



Your login details will be generated automatically using the contact information held by St Mark's CEP School, so please ensure that your details are kept up to date. You can check and change these details by sending an email to office@st-marks.e-sussex.sch.uk.

If you already use Arbor for another school, please ensure you use the same email address and mobile phone number as the one already registered.

Our School Milk Scheme

Our school offers a milk scheme that is available to all pupils, and we encourage you to register your child if you wish.

School milk is free for children under the age of five. For children aged five and over, it is available at a subsidised cost of approximately 23p per day.

Each child registered with Cool Milk receives a 189ml portion of semi-skimmed milk every school day, delivered fresh and chilled to the classroom. School milk provides important nutrients and helps to keep children hydrated and energised, bridging the gap between breakfast and lunch to support concentration and learning.

For more information about the benefits of milk for children, please visit www.coolmilk.com/why-milk-is-great.

How to register

If your child is under five:

- Register online at www.coolmilk.com or complete a registration form available from the school office
- Register by a Tuesday at 5pm for your child's free milk to start the following week
- Free milk will continue until the Friday before your child's fifth birthday. You will receive a payment request four weeks before their birthday - if you wish your child to continue to receive school milk, simply make a payment

If your child is five or older:

- Register and pay online at www.coolmilk.com
- Alternatively, fill in a registration form available from the school office – once Cool Milk has processed your form, you will receive a payment request
- You can pay Cool Milk either online, over the phone or at a local PayPoint in half-termly, termly or annual instalments.
- Please pay by a Tuesday at 5pm for your child's milk to start the following week

If you have any questions regarding school milk, please visit www.coolmilk.com or contact Cool Milk directly on 0800 321 3248. More information on milk is also available from the school.

* Milk for under-5s is provided free of charge, fully funded by the Department of Health. Milk for over-5s is subsidised by the Rural Payments Agency and the E.U.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) ethos is centred on recognising that every child is unique and learns best when their interests, curiosity and natural sense of wonder are at the heart of their learning.

We provide a curriculum that balances carefully planned, adult-led teaching with rich, play-based experiences that allow children to explore, investigate and make sense of the world around them. We believe that children thrive when they are actively engaged, motivated and encouraged to think deeply, ask questions and follow their own lines of enquiry.

Through a nurturing and stimulating environment, we support children to develop confidence, independence and a lifelong love of learning.

Our daily timetable

Session 1 (am)	Assembly, Phonics and Literacy based adult-led and child-led activities
Playtime with the rest of the school	
Session 2 (am)	Maths based adult-led and child-led activities
Lunch	
Session 3 (pm)	Focus on understanding the world, creative development, Physical Education or Religious Education
Session 4, (pm)	Reading

What Does Learning Look Like?

Continuous provision takes place both indoors and outdoors throughout the day. This means that carefully planned learning areas and resources are available to children every day. These may include construction, creative activities, reading, maths, role play and small world play. Continuous provision gives children opportunities to revisit ideas, practise skills and follow their own interests independently. It also encourages them to explore, solve problems, develop social skills, work as part of a team and build resilience.

The Early Years Curriculum is organised into the following areas of learning:

Prime Areas	Specific Areas
<u>Communication and Language</u> <i>speaking, listening, attention and understanding</i>	<u>Literacy</u> <i>phonics, reading, comprehension and writing</i>
<u>Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)</u> <i>self-regulation, managing self and building relationships</i>	<u>Mathematics</u> <i>number and numerical patterns, shape and measure)</i>
<u>Physical Development</u> <i>gross and fine motor skills</i>	<u>Understanding the World</u> <i>people and communities, past and present, the natural world</i>
	<u>Expressive Arts and Design</u> <i>music, creating with materials and being expressive and imaginative</i>

Learning is planned around a termly focus and a carefully chosen selection of high-quality books, with key texts changing each week. Topics and texts vary each year to ensure that children enjoy a wide range of experiences throughout their time in Caterpillars Class (Reception and Year 1).

Newsletters and topic information are shared at the beginning of each half term, helping you to support your child's learning at home. We are always keen to find creative ways to involve children in our project work. If you have a particular skill or experience linked to our topic that you would like to share with the children, please do let us know.

Children will have access to a wide range of practical, creative and outdoor activities, including:

- Painting, drawing, cutting, sticking and using modelling materials
- Activities that develop pencil control and hand-eye coordination
- Jigsaw puzzles, games and problem-solving activities
- Gardening and exploring the natural world
- Cooking and practical life-skill activities
- Sand play, water play and playdough
- Role play and imaginative activities
- Construction and building activities

- Bikes, scooters and climbing apparatus
- Mud kitchen play
- Forest School activities

Toileting and Independence

Most children starting Reception can use the toilet independently. If you think this may be challenging for your child, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can support them appropriately. Children are encouraged to tell a member of staff when they need to use the toilet, and staff will also give regular reminders throughout the day. Children will be supervised and supported with handwashing routines as needed.

We also encourage children to become increasingly independent with dressing, including putting on and taking off their coats and shoes. Please support your child's independence by choosing clothes and shoes they can manage themselves, such as jogging bottoms and shoes with Velcro, and by practising these skills at home.

Buddies

Children in Red Admirals Class (Year 5 and 6) act as buddies for the children in Caterpillars Class. Having a buddy helps younger children to feel settled, supported and part of the wider school community. Buddies provide a friendly face during the school day and help children build confidence, develop friendships and feel more secure during playtimes. The children see their buddies regularly and have opportunities to play together during break times.

Baseline Assessment and Language Link Assessment

Since September 2021, all schools in England have been required to complete a statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of children starting school. This short assessment is carried out by the class teacher using an interactive tablet app and includes a series of age-appropriate activities and questions. We will send you further information nearer the time.

On entry to school, all children are also screened using our Infant Language Link and Speech Link programmes. These help us to identify children who may need additional support with their understanding and use of language. The information gathered helps us plan appropriate next steps in learning and provide targeted support where needed.

The Early Learning Goals

The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) set out the expected level of development for children by the end of the Reception year. It is important to remember that children develop and learn at different rates. If your child is still working towards any of the ELGs at the end of Reception, they will continue to be supported as they build on their learning in Year 1. To make these judgements, the class teacher will use observations, examples of work and the child's own voice.

Parents as Partners

Your child's Learning Journal is recorded on the Tapestry app and celebrates their experiences, achievements and progress throughout Reception. Observations are linked to the Characteristics of Effective Learning, helping us to build a clear picture of how your child learns and develops. Over time, the Learning Journal tells the story of your child's learning journey, including their interests, friendships and the experiences they enjoy sharing with others. The Learning Journal may include:

- Photographs
- Observations
- Your child's creations

We greatly value contributions from parents and carers, as they help us to understand and celebrate your child's learning beyond school. At this age, children develop quickly, and we would love to hear about events, activities and achievements that happen at home. You can upload comments, photographs and videos to your child's Learning Journal, which we can then share and celebrate in school.

There will be opportunities throughout the year to meet with us and discuss your child's progress and development. Mrs Walsh is also available at the end of the school day, or you can get in touch through Class Dojo, email or by phone. At the end of the year, you will receive a written report celebrating your child's achievements and progress in relation to the Early Learning Goals.

This tracker helps you and your child prepare for school.

The Road To School

Speaking & literacy

- I like to read stories & look at picture books
- I am able to talk about myself, my needs & feelings
- I am practising recognising my name when it's written down

Listening & understanding

- I am able to sit still and listen for a short while
- I can follow instructions
- I understand the need to follow rules

Writing skills

- I like tracing patterns & colouring in
- I enjoy making marks
- I am practising holding a pencil

Sharing & turn taking

- I can share toys & take turns
- I like playing games with others
- I like interacting with other children

Everyone starts school with different abilities - your teacher will help you progress at your own level.

Going to the toilet

- I can go to the toilet on my own, wipe myself properly & flush
- I can wash and dry my hands without any help

Counting skills

- I enjoy practising counting objects
- I like saying number rhymes & playing counting games
- I can recognise some numbers when they are written down

Interest in the world & new activities

- I enjoy learning about the world around me
- I am interested in exploring new activities or environments
- I like asking questions

Routines

- I have practised putting on my uniform & getting ready to leave on time
- I have a good bedtime routine so I'm not feeling tired for school
- I'm learning to eat at the times I will on school days

What are you looking forward to the most?
Is there anything you're unsure of?

Independence

- I am happy to be away from my mum, daddy or my main carer
- I am happy to tidy my belongings & look after school
- I am happy to tidy my belongings & look after school
- I am happy to tidy my belongings & look after school

Getting dressed & undressed on my own

- I can button & unbutton my shirt & use a zip
- I can put my own shoes & socks on
- I can change into my PE kit & put my coat on

Self-care

- I know when to wash my hands
- I can wipe my nose
- I can ask for help if I don't feel well

Eating

- I can use a knife & fork
- I can open my packed lunch on my own
- I am confident at opening wrappers & packaging

School bus



www.nurseryresources.org

Remember - learning is not a competition; children learn at different rates. For more ideas to help prepare your child for school, talk to your childcare practitioner.

Forest School

In 2009, St Mark's was fortunate to acquire one- and three-quarter acres of land in Waste Wood. This site, which includes meadow, stream and woodland, is just a short walk from the school and is regularly used by all classes as a valuable outdoor learning resource.

The school ran a competition to name the site, and the winning entry was **SMILE Meadow**.

Since then, the land has been used to support cross-curricular learning and has helped to develop skills in science, mathematics, literacy, art, geography and music.

A member of staff is currently training in Forest School leadership, and we are working towards making greater use of this space by developing regular Forest School opportunities for all classes.

Forest School provides children with valuable hands-on learning experiences in a natural environment. It supports well-being by encouraging independence, resilience, confidence and teamwork, while also promoting curiosity, creativity and problem-solving skills. Time spent outdoors has also been shown to have a positive impact on children's mental health, concentration and overall engagement with learning.

If you have particular skills or are interested in supporting our Forest School sessions or other areas of learning within the school, please contact the school office. A DBS check will be required for all volunteers.

May we take this opportunity to say how much we are looking forward to working in partnership with you and your child, to provide the nurturing and stable relationships, which will help each child to settle quickly and to flourish in their primary education.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us either by phone, 01825 830375, or the office@st-marks.e-sussex.sch.uk email address.