

# St Michael's Nursery Handbook



*When we make play the foundation of  
learning, we teach the whole child.*

**Vincent Gowman**



Prolonging  
childhood...



# School's Values and Ethos

We aim to create an environment that inspires children, enabling them to discover and develop the best versions of themselves. Childhood is a precious time, and we believe all children should have ample opportunities for play, fun, and laughter. Since our children stay with us until age 14, they can continue to enjoy the joys of childhood in a nurturing, child-centred environment well into their early teenage years.

Throughout the school we promote and celebrate our core values:

## CONSIDERATION

We strive to demonstrate care, courtesy and kindness. We respect the feelings and differences of others, actively listen to diverse viewpoints, and show understanding and compassion.

## CURIOSITY

We possess a strong desire and drive to explore, learn and understand the world. We ask questions, seek new knowledge and embrace creativity.

## CHALLENGE

We relish tackling difficult tasks, learning perseverance, developing problem-solving skills and building confidence and resilience.

## COMMUNITY

We build a sense of belonging and collaboration in a cohesive environment where everyone feels valued and included.



# THE BEST VERSION OF OURSELVES



# Introduction





The Nursery staff at St Michael's School would like to offer a warm welcome to you and your child. We look forward to working with you in true partnership. Joining St Michael's Nursery is the first vital step in becoming part of our learning community as your child moves through the school.

St Michael's Nursery is looking forward to offering your children the best start on their exciting journey within education. We aim to do this by providing them with a high quality education, run by highly qualified, motivated, and caring staff, whose primary concern is the well-being and development of your child. Throughout their time in the Nursery great care will be taken to ensure that your child has the opportunity to be engaged in stimulating, motivating and appropriate experiences that will allow them to develop at a pace suited to their individual needs and interests. The ethos at St Michael's Nursery is to provide a child centred learning environment where learning is moved forward through the children's individual interests and passions.

### Settling into Nursery

Beginning Nursery can sometimes be an anxious time for both parents and children. The staff at St Michael's Nursery are here to support you with this transition and make this move as smooth as possible. It is imperative that we work in partnership to make this transition relaxed for your child, but also for you. Time spent talking to you as a parent prior to your child joining helps to make sure the needs of each and every individual child is met. This is vital as some children will settle immediately and some might need longer with different settling times needed until they feel fully secure and are ready.

Prior to your child starting at St Michael's the Head of Nursery will arrange a home visit with you to come and meet you and your child to spend time getting to know them. This visit will take place in term prior to your child joining. An 'All About Me booklet' will be completed during this time with important information about your child's routines, likes, dislikes, favourite toys, family members. It is also time for you to ask any questions you may have about life at St Michael's Nursery.

Before joining the Nursery children must be as independent as possible with regards to their toilet needs, though we do offer guidance and support in this area to support individual needs. Please do let us know if you feel your child needs more support in this area so a plan can be put in place to support them correctly from the onset.





The Nursery is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit based in a property adjacent to the main school.

Within the main Nursery room we provide a home corner where the children are free to access resources themselves. This is a fundamental part of the Nursery provision and the children use this area a great deal. It offers them the ability to use role play in their learning from the most familiar part of their lives – their home. We try to use as many real resources as possible to give the children a home from home experience. For example, real cutlery and crockery will be used to enable children to develop an understanding of real life equipment and that it must be used carefully and safely.

An area of the provision is designated to creative play where the children can discover art and freely explore different materials and mediums. Creative activities in the Nursery are a large part of the curriculum. The children are free to design and create whatever they please or are interested in. There are also times when skills will be learnt such as colour mixing, observational drawing/painting, building and construction using junk modelling resources. The rest of the provision is divided into activity areas such as small world, messy play, construction, reading/quiet area, literacy and numeracy areas that are used for small groups work and also challenges linked to learning. There is also a relaxation area for children who may need a little time away for others to relax and enjoy a quieter moment.



The outdoor learning environment consists of a large paved patio for gross motor skills equipment and outside learning opportunities. The enclosed garden has a quiet area for reading/storytelling, mud kitchen, fixed apparatus, construction area and other learning opportunities focussed around child led learning. The environment provides opportunities for writing, drawing, painting as well as physical, social and imaginative development. Scientific exploration is encouraged through the growing of fruit and vegetables. The children have a compost bin to show the children the importance of reusing and recycling. Bugs and insects are observed and investigated throughout the year and the bird box is a firm favourite.





# Activity Facilities





The Studio is used during the year, with the children having weekly gym and movement sessions. This will be led by a specialist teacher.

Weekly swimming lessons will take place, though these are subject to the children being settled in Nursery and ready to begin the lessons on a weekly basis. The lessons will be taken by a specialist swimming teacher and supported by the Nursery Officers.



During the year, the children also have access to the playground climbing apparatus and field to develop their gross motor skills and support their vestibular development. Forest School will take place at various times during the school year at our onsite Forest School. The children will enjoy various activities, from planting and growing to woodwork and den building.





# Nursery Timetable

The Nursery day is divided into two sessions:

- **Mornings: 08:30 - 12:20** - we promote preschool aged children to complete five mornings a week for continuity and key learning development.
- **There is an optional supervised lunch (12:30 - 13:30)** at an additional cost. This can either be a school hot lunch or a packed lunch option.
- **Afternoons: 13:30 - 15:30** - the afternoon session is a more play based session as the main learning will have taken part during the morning sessions.
- **The Nest 15:30 - 17:00** - parents are able to sign up to the after-school provision, The Nest, on a termly basis.

We want to make settling into Nursery as smooth and enjoyable as possible, for both you and your child. All sessions are arranged in consultation with the Head of Nursery and will be discussed during your home visit before your child joins. While sessions can gradually increase to a maximum of five full days, this will be decided in partnership with the Head of Nursery to ensure it's the best fit for your child.

Since little ones can tire easily, a gradual increase in hours often helps them to adjust comfortably before starting Reception. Any changes to sessions need to be made before the start of each term.

To help the Nursery day run smoothly, please follow the agreed hours and aim to be on time for both drop-off and pick-up. If you're running late, just give us a call to let us know. At the end of the day, we recommend collecting your youngest child first, as they're usually the most tired by home time.

## **Nursery School Day** - An example of a typical day.

Children move seamlessly between the inside and outside environments throughout the Nursery day.

08:30	Children arrive and are individually greeted by a member of staff. Children choose freely from all the activities available in the Nursery.
09:00	Check-in and registration. Daily calendar and singing time.
09:15	Focused groups where children engage in specific adult-led activities to enhance their skills, followed by Continuous Provision activities.
10:00	Snack café open. Children register in the snack area and learn to make their own snacks, supervised by a member of staff. This will consist of fruit and water with either rice cakes, toast or crackers. This is a time where new foods may be tried throughout the year that link into the learning taking place in the provision. (It is for this reason that it is important that allergies are noted.)
10:45	Continuous Provision, including adult-led activities, continues.
12:00	Tidy-up time. We follow the principle that it is not 'tidying up' but 'putting things back where they belong'. Keeping things tidy and placing things where they belong is an important life skill and something we teach from the onset.
12:10	Story, singing or poetry time.
12:15	Preparation for lunch - and morning children go home.
13:30	The afternoon is more play-based, with plenty of child-led learning. Learning through play is available inside and outside. Occasionally, focused teacher-led activities may also take place, however this will depend on the individuals present, as some children can be fairly tired by this time of the day.
14:45	Afternoon snack - prepared once again by the children.
15:30	Pick up time.
15:30	The Nest (if signed up to).



# Nursery organisation





For many children, joining a Nursery will be their first step outside of home, families and friends. A great deal of learning has already taken place and we hope that the partnership between home and Nursery will continue to support your child's progress. A child's early experiences at Nursery are fundamental to their future attitudes towards school and their own learning. At all times, we value children as individuals and aim to foster self-confidence and a sense of wellbeing as children are faced with new situations and experiences.

On a daily basis, your child will be involved in making decisions about different activities that they would like to take part in. We run a continuous provision where the children are free to choose their own learning with resources that are available to them, both inside and outside the Nursery. He/she will also take part in smaller group work or 1:1 focused activities led by a member of staff at various times in the day. The activities will be designed to nurture and encourage valuable skills and learning to help them on their road to Reception.

We believe that every child is important and should feel free and confident to make a contribution to the Nursery by following their own interests. Collaboration and cooperation with others will be fostered without the child's individuality being lost. Children have different skills and experiences that they learn at home and in the community before starting Nursery. We value what each child brings to the Nursery and aim to build on their experiences with these principles in mind.

# The Four Principles of the Early Years

## 1. A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

## 2. Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

## 3. Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

## 4. Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.



# The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum





The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a period of learning in which a range of skills are developed within both Nursery and Reception classes. During this stage, your child's learning is divided into 7 different areas (3 Prime areas and 4 Specific areas). When your child is in the Nursery year, the main and fundamental parts of learning are focussed strongly on the 3 Prime Areas of Learning. Until these areas are fully embedded, movement into the Specific Areas can be more difficult, so it is important they are fully embedded in the early years.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Prime area)**

Within the Nursery Provision we support children to help them to learn how to get on with others and make friends, understand and talk about feelings, learn about 'right' and 'wrong', develop independence and ultimately feel good about themselves. Children's early personal, social and emotional development has a huge impact on their later well-being and learning achievement, therefore this is a key area of learning at this young age.

### **Communication and Language (Prime area)**

The development and use of communication and language is at the heart of young children's learning. The provision will provide high quality interactions between adults and children in order to develop their communication and language skills. Children's communication skills develop as they express their needs and feelings, interact with others and establish their own identities and personalities. The ability to communicate gives children the capacity to participate more fully as confident, sociable individuals, building relationships with other children and adults.

### **Physical Development (Prime area)**

Physical development in the Early Years is about improving skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. We aim to develop the children's confidence in what they can do and this enables them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active. Effective physical development (both fine and gross motor) helps the children develop a positive sense of well-being.

### **Literacy (Specific area)**

Within the Nursery we aim to create a stimulating environment that reflects literacy in different contexts such as signs, labels, lists, notices and promotes enjoyment in a range of stories and non-fiction books. In these early stages, children will be encouraged to experiment with writing by making their own marks in sand, painting on paper, using different pens and pencils. Mark making is a very important part of the writing process and will later lead onto letter formation activities, writing their own names and the formation of simple sentences in Reception. We follow the Read Write Inc programme which is broken down in 7 aspects of learning;

- Aspect 1 – General sound discrimination – environmental
- Aspect 2 – General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- Aspect 3 – General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Aspect 4 – Rhythm and rhyme
- Aspect 5 – Alliteration
- Aspect 6 – Voice sounds
- Aspect 7 – Oral blending and Segmenting

During the Summer Term, we focus on the initial sounds and oral blending and segmenting at a higher level to get the children ready for the move to Reception.



### Mathematics (Specific area)

Mathematical development is based on your child becoming confident and competent in learning and using key skills. These include subitizing, counting, sorting, matching, exploring patterns, numbers, space, shapes and measures. The development of mathematical language is crucial and we involve the children in a range of practical activities including stories, songs, games and imaginative play, so that children can experiment with numbers in different contexts.

### Understanding of the World (Specific area)

In this area of learning, your child is developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world around them in various ways. Play opportunities will encourage children to be curious, enthusiastic and to investigate and question their activities. Children will be given positive encouragement and support to try out their ideas and learn from their findings. They will be involved in a range of activities including looking at different living things, materials, buildings, celebrations and how things work.

### Expressive Art and Design (Specific area)

We aim to help your child develop an understanding and enjoyment of art and design through a variety of practical activities which involve both two dimensional (e.g. drawing, painting) and three-dimensional work (e.g. collage, modelling, clay). Children are encouraged to experiment with different techniques and a variety of materials such as pencils, paint, clay, paper and textiles. These help them to develop their skills in observation and imagination. The children's work is celebrated in displays around the Nursery providing a stimulating working environment.

Music forms an enjoyable and active part of daily life in the Nursery. Your child will experience a range of musical activities with an emphasis on enjoyment and participation in many different types of music making.

### Information Technology

The Nursery has an interactive whiteboard that is used for focused group work and also independent work, as and when the children become more confident. Opportunities to use iPads for set times during the year are given, though we do limit screen time as children learn best by being with others.

### Assessment, Recording and Reporting

As each child learns at an individual pace, observing children is at the heart of our Nursery practice and is ongoing. These observations continually aid the development and planning for the future needs of individual children. Parents can access the observations online via a programme called 'Tapestry'. At the start of term, parents will be invited to sign up to 'Tapestry' and a secure login will be given, which can be accessed through a computer, iPhone or android device. You will be given documents regarding this programme before your child begins.

We hold two short parent consultations throughout the year: one being held in the Michaelmas Term to let you know how your child has settled, and one in the Lent Term to discuss targets before the move to Reception. These are optional sign-up consultations, as the Nursery team will be in regular contact with you on a daily basis. A short report will be written on Tapestry prior to the consultations.

At the end of the Nursery year, prior to their move to Reception, each child will receive a written report focusing on the Characters of Effective Learning and an overall Nursery Teacher comment.





# Uniform and General Clothing Requirements





Children in the Nursery are expected to wear the following uniform:

- Nursery plain white polo shirt
- Nursery sweatshirt (logo) \*\*
- Nursery plain black joggers
- Nursery black shorts for summer months (logo)\*\*
- School tracksuit top\*\* - optional
- Trainers (any supplier and colour, but correctly fitted)
- Socks - can be children's own socks and children do not need to wear the school sports socks in Nursery
- Slippers - non-slip (any supplier - to remain in school at all times) - optional
- Wellington boots (any supplier - to remain in school at all times)
- Waterproof all in one for outside play (any supplier - to remain in school at all times)

\*\* These items will be available at Lyndale Sports Uniform Shop

We would like your child to enjoy all the activities on offer in the Nursery and, despite aprons and dungarees being provided to protect clothing, inadvertently children may get wet/dirty and need to change their clothes. Therefore, please provide a full change of spare clothes in a named bag. These do not need to be uniform but should be similar in style (black joggers and white t-shirts). Please remember to include a number of changes of underwear and socks. Accidents can and do happen, and if children have their own change of underwear it does make changing easier for them.



Swimming:

- Swimming costume / trunks
- Swimming hat (fabric swim hats are best as softer to put on)

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Gogokids-Swimming-Children-Protection-Breathable>

- Swimming Goggles (Aqua Sphere goggles are great)
- <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Aqua-Sphere-Seal-Swimming-Goggles/>

Weather Requirements:

- Coat (suitable for wet and / or cold weather) - plus a spare to be left at Nursery
- Hat and gloves (winter months)
- Sun hat (summer months)
- Suncream (SPF 30+) - to be applied at home before school and roll-on stick for Nursery (labelled) for the children to apply themselves (with guidance).

Please label all items of clothing, including underwear and footwear.



# Nursery Food and Behaviour





**Snack:** The children will be offered a snack during the morning and afternoon session. Healthy eating is something that the Nursery promotes and, due to this, fruits and vegetables are a key part of our rolling snack time. The children will learn to be responsible for making their snack each day and learn how to cut their own food. A carbohydrate such as a bread stick, cracker, oat cakes or rice cake will also be provided alongside the fruit and vegetable. Your child will also have access to their own water bottle (purchased by parents) and this will stay in school for the term and be freshly washed each day.

**Cooked lunch:** The children will be provided with a healthy lunch, prepared by our catering team. The Nursery follows the main school menu on a four week rotation. The decision to have a cooked lunch needs to be made prior to the beginning of the academic year and a term's notice is required should your child change to packed lunch (unless the staff feel it is not in the best interests of the child to continue with a cooked lunch).

**Packed Lunch:** We encourage the children to eat as much as they can in their lunch box, so please ensure that you only put in what you feel your child can manage. Please keep packaging to a minimum. We would ask that you do not include anything containing chocolate. We are also a NUT-FREE school as there are children in the school with severe allergies.

## Behaviour

We actively praise and encourage positive behaviour in the Nursery and we are clear and consistent in our expectations. Children will learn good behaviour through correct role models in the home and Nursery environment. Should a pattern of anti-social behaviour occur, parents would be included in supporting a programme of change. 'Thinking time' is given in order to help children understand their behaviour and how to support them as and when needed. 'Thinking time' is a time for the child to sit with a member of staff and talk about the behaviour and ways we can work together to change the behaviour in a positive manner. Stickers, given out readily, and certificates help to promote positive behaviour, and also plenty of positive praise from all staff. We work on praising the positive as children learn best by positive reinforcement.

St Michael's Nursery class operates an 'Open Door' policy in which parents are free to talk to staff daily at the beginning and end of every day. We would like parents and carers to feel that they can speak to the staff readily, passing on important information as well as sharing news and celebrations in their children's lives. This can also be done via our 'Tapestry' learning platform and we welcome photos and information to share with the children.





# Parental Involvement





We recognise the importance of ensuring we have a strong partnership with parents and we value parental involvement in the life of the Nursery. As their first educators, parents play a fundamental role in a child's development and our aim is to always support their role. A two-way sharing of information is key to this. In order to build a strong partnership with parents, it is important to develop trust and understanding. It is important that we, as practitioners, can support parents in an open and sensitive manner. Please see the Parents as Partners Policy in the School Handbook.

### **Parent Portal**

The School operates a 'paperless' policy and all documentation and information for parents of St Michael's, including the Nursery, are uploaded to the Parent Portal. New parents are given instructions (via email) on how to access this portal the term before their child(ren) enter the School. It is very important to check the portal on a weekly basis. Mailing is sent out every Friday evening. Occasionally urgent information will be posted onto our learning platform 'Tapestry' if there are changes in events during the planned Nursery day.

Term dates and holidays can be found on the school website: [www.stmichaels.je](http://www.stmichaels.je)

A full staff list with contact details can be found on the Parent Portal.



### **Pupil Welfare**

It is important that we have your telephone number or a number at which you can be reached in an emergency. Please remember to notify the school office of any change in contact details (including home address).

The Head of Nursery is trained in the Wellcomm Speech and Language Programme and staff complete simple assessments on the children on entry into the Nursery. This will help identify children who may need additional work in this area and we can begin support as soon as possible in the best interest of your child. The school works closely with a Speech and Language Therapist who visits the school on a regular basis. Where a need is identified, private sessions can take place within the Nursery sessions; alternatively children can be referred to the Health Services through your GP.

Prior to admittance the Head of Nursery will speak to any previous nursery to get a clearer picture of your child's development within a setting environment and also parents with regards to development in the home environment. It is important to have prior knowledge in order to make sure we are ready to help and support your children in the correct way.



# Medical / Illness





## Medical / Illness

Please let us know if your child has any medical problems or allergies and how we can best help to support them. Any medical preparations (together with full written details for administration of the medication) are to be handed directly to Nursery staff. There is a form that must be completed before any medications can be given by staff. Parents will be responsible to sign the form to consent to the medication being given.

St Michael's School has a School Nurse on site and all the Nursery staff are Paediatric First Aid trained and will deal with minor cuts and grazes. However, if your child becomes unwell during the Nursery day, we will contact you and ask you to come to collect him / her.

To guard against cross-infection, please do not bring your child to the Nursery if he / she has any of the following:

A very heavy cold

Diarrhoea or vomiting - strictly 48 hours isolation (from school) after the last bout of either\*

Conjunctivitis

Impetigo

Measles

Mumps

Chicken Pox and other similar diseases

\*Children are unable to swim for 48 hours after their last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea.

Please notify the Nursery of any infectious diseases affecting your child to enable us to inform other parents and staff.



## Equal Opportunities

St Michael's is a Christian school. It is our philosophy that within the Nursery curriculum we provide and encourage children of all races and cultures with the opportunity to understand and respect each other's backgrounds. In this way, we can ensure the children will develop a sense of equality for the future.

## Policy for Admission into the Main School

Children attending the Nursery join the main school (Reception) in the September following their fourth birthday. We require a full term's notice, in writing, of withdrawal from the Nursery. Failure to do so will result in one term's fees in lieu.

Please contact the Main School Office or the Admissions Secretary if you have any queries.



## SCHOOL CONTACTS

**Main School Office (with answerphone) - (01534) 856904**

**Main School Office email address:** [office@stmichaels.je](mailto:office@stmichaels.je)

**Head of EYFS:** [fkj@stmichaels.je](mailto:fkj@stmichaels.je)

**Admissions:** [admissions@stmichaels.je](mailto:admissions@stmichaels.je)

**School website:** [www.stmichaels.je](http://www.stmichaels.je)







[WWW.STMICHAELS.JE](http://WWW.STMICHAELS.JE)