

Reception Handbook 2026-27



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School,
68 Georges Road,
Holloway,
London,
N7 8JN.

Tel 020 7607 3407

Fax 020 7607 4906

e-mail admin@sacredheart.islington.sch.uk



Mission statement

To go forward together in Christ.

To respect our neighbour.

And to always give of our best.



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Introduction

The Reception in Sacred Heart consists of two rooms (St. Peter and St. Jude) but is one Reception. Your child will be allocated a room to self register in the morning and be picked up from at home time. Children have free access throughout the day to the whole Reception and outside area. There are four full-time members and one part-time member of staff who will all deal with your child at some point.

Reception Teachers

Miss Barker	St. Peter Reception Teacher & Early Phase Leader <i>(Nursery, Reception & Year 1)</i>
Miss Cormican	St. Jude Reception Teacher

Reception Hours

Children have a soft start in Reception from 8.45am-9am and finish at 3.30pm. It is **very** important that children arrive and are collected on time. If your child is going to be late please ring and inform the school.

Going Home

Your child will *only be allowed* to be picked up by people who you have nominated in writing. This information will be taken during the first week at school. We understand that circumstances change so these details can be amended by informing the staff. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the children.

Attendance

It is very important that children attend school every day as frequent absences can seriously affect their learning. If your child is sick and unable to attend school please ring and inform us. Holidays in term time will not be authorised.

Settling In

A settling in period is crucial for children to make sure their first experiences of Reception are not stressful or traumatic but positive and happy. All children are individuals; they have different nursery experiences and different personalities. Although some children settle very quickly into Reception others may find being separated from their main carer difficult. It is not unusual for some children to take a few weeks to settle into Reception until they become more familiar with the environment, routines and build up relationships with the staff and children.

After a week or two, we promote their independence in the morning by saying goodbye to their parents, self-registering, putting their coats on their pegs and placing their reading record in the box.

Lunchtimes

We are very lucky to have excellent catering at Sacred Heart. At the moment school dinners are free for all the children in our school. You must register with the office otherwise you will have to pay. Of course, your child may have a packed lunch if you prefer. As part of our approach to healthy eating, packed lunches should not contain crisps or sweets. Also, there is no need to provide a drink as water is available. No other drinks are allowed.

We encourage the children to be independent, i.e. use a knife and fork and try to cut their food. Children are also encouraged to try new foods.

There is a wide range of food for the children to choose from. Everyday a hot main, a vegetarian main, vegetables, salad, jacket potatoes, sandwiches, dessert and fruit are provided for the children to choose from. Menus are available from the office and the kitchen staff often provide themed meals, for example, Christmas dinner or a special St Patrick's day menu.

Our school lunches are very popular and children often have second helpings. However, please do not be alarmed if your child is hungry when they finish school. This is simply a sign that your child has been working hard. The children also have access to fruit, plain biscuits and water throughout the day.

School Uniform

It is compulsory for children to wear uniform in Reception. Branded school uniform can be purchased in store at **Rough Cut Casuals, 16 Chapel Market, NI 9EZ** and via their website: <https://www.roughcutcasuals.co.uk/home/>

In Reception we are working towards independence so shoes with velcro are a practical alternative to laces. A coat that children can fasten for themselves is also a good idea.

School winter and summer hats are part of the school uniform and can also be purchased at the school office.

Your child's name **MUST** be put on all their clothing and hats because on occasion garments can be mislaid and it is very difficult to identify unnamed articles of uniform. This is the responsibility of parents and guardians so if your child loses an article of clothing and their name is not on it we may not be able to find it.

YOUR CHILD DOES NOT NEED A P.E KIT IN RECEPTION.

Spare Clothes

Please provide a change of clothes including underwear for your child in a bag with your child's name on. This does not have to be school uniform.

Jewellery

For health and safety reasons children are **not allowed** to wear jewellery. If they must wear earrings these should be studs or very small "sleepers".

Home/School Books

In Reception we aim to encourage enjoyment of books. We visit our school library once a fortnight and enjoy a daily story-time.

Children begin bringing reading homework home in mid-September. Every day your child will bring home a Sound Book and a reading book with a Reading Record which we expect you to sign. This will be checked every day. It is very important that you read with your child every day.

In addition, children will have regular 1:1 reading sessions with the Teacher or Learning Support Assistant.

Your child will be introduced to new sounds during the first and second term. The Sound Book will consist of letters for your child to practise sounding out. This links to the daily phonics sessions in class. It is really important to practise the sound-of-the-day in the sound books in order that your child will keep up with the class phonics. It is also important to keep books in good condition and children **must** have a **Sacred Heart book bag** to keep their book in.

Homework

Reading: 5 times a week: Pages to read in their home-school reading book.

Phonics: 4 times a week (Mon-Thurs): New sound in the Sound Book to practice.

Maths: Monthly activity guides will be posted on our online learning platform SeeSaw to give you ideas for practical Maths activities you can engage in with your child.

These ideas will be directly linked to your child's learning in class.

School Newsletter

Our school newsletter is available on our website and is emailed home every Friday to parents. This keeps parents up to date with important information and events occurring in the school. Reception staff will also from time-to-time send announcements via SeeSaw about matters which relate solely to Reception. Please check your child's SeeSaw regularly and sign up to alerts on the app.

Friends of Sacred Heart (FOSH)

FOSH is a very active group which organises events and fundraises for the school. Information on FOSH meetings is detailed in the school's weekly newsletter and new parents are encouraged to become involved. There are also FOSH class representatives. Please ask the reception staff for more details.

Parent Meetings

Please feel free to discuss any issues or concerns with Reception staff at the end of the day.

You will be invited to attend a parent meeting in the Autumn term to meet with staff and discuss how your child is settling in Reception. In the Spring term you will also be invited to a parent meeting to discuss your child's progress and in the Summer term you will receive a yearly report recording your child's achievement.

Special Books

Your child will complete a 'Special Book' whilst at Reception, this consists of photos and their work such as paintings, pieces of writing and collages which documents your child's progress while they are in Reception. Your child will contribute to this with an adult throughout the school year. You will be given an opportunity to look through this at parent meetings and will be able to take all their books home to keep at the end of Reception.

Parent Contributions to Learning

We recognise the importance of home/school links and the role of parents and carers in children's learning. Much of our assessment in Reception is through observation. We focus on a small group of children each week to ascertain and plan for their interests and needs. We would like parents to contribute to these observations and once a term will ask you to provide feedback on SeeSaw about the things your child has been doing or is interested in at home. Information from parents can be used to contribute to planning for the children's interests and needs.

First Aid

As children are involved in active play there are occasions when accidents do happen and children hurt themselves. All accidents are recorded and parents are usually informed at the end of the day. If we feel there is cause for concern, we will ring parents. There are qualified First Aiders in school.

Contact Numbers

Should we need to contact you in an emergency it is very important that school has the correct contact numbers. Please provide at least two contact numbers. Please inform the school immediately if your contact details change.

Reception Curriculum

- For children between the ages of 3-5 years the Reception provides a curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage of Education. This curriculum is set out in a document published by the Department for Education. The Nursery and Reception follow this guidance.
- The guidance sets out Early Learning Goals. These goals are the knowledge, skills and understanding young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five.
- For each Early Learning Goal there are Educational Programmes. These are the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children in order for them to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
- As a Catholic school we teach Religious Education. We use the Composite Model, with guidance provided by Westminster Diocese. Further information is provided on page 14.

Learning and Development

▪ There are seven areas of Learning and Development covered by the Early Learning Goals and Educational Programmes. Three areas are fundamentally important in the Early Years:

- **Communication and Language** (Listening, Attention & Understanding, and Speaking)
- **Physical Development** (Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills) This area is typically known as PE in years 1-6. Physical Development is integrated into all aspects of our curriculum. We provide daily opportunities for children to be active, develop their coordination, control & movement. They practice fine-motor and gross-motor movement everyday. Children begin more formal PE lessons in Year 1.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** (Managing Self, Self-Regulation, Building Relationships)

These three areas (the prime areas) are key in promoting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, supporting children in their capacity to learn and encouraging children to form good relationships.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through activities and experiences in 4 specific areas:

- **Literacy** (Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing)
- **Mathematics** (Number and Numerical Patterns)
- **Understanding the World** (Past & Present, People, Culture and Communities, The Natural World)
- **Expressive Arts and Design** (Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive)

Further information for parents on the Early Years Foundation Stage can be found at www.foundationyears.org.uk

Importance of Play

Research has shown the importance of play in helping children to think, learn and develop. In Reception we offer a rich environment that stimulates and encourages spontaneous play.

The environment promotes the characteristics of Effective Learning through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically by allowing the children to:

- **Play and explore** – find out and explore, play with what they know and be willing to 'have a go'.
- **Actively learn** – be involved and concentrate, keep trying and enjoy achieving what they set out to do.
- **Create and think critically** – have their own ideas, make links and choose ways to do things.

Religious Education

At Sacred Heart, as the foundation of our RE teaching, we follow the Model Curriculum, provided by Westminster Diocese. This scheme is based on the teachings of the Catholic Church and is taught through different themes which offer opportunities for young children to explore and develop spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally. These themes promote caring values and attitudes, help to raise self-esteem and encourage children to make their own moral decisions based on their knowledge of the Catholic Faith and experience.

We supplement the scheme's programme with information texts, artefacts, tapes and other materials. We celebrate Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Children in Reception have the opportunity to visit our parish church, The Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Father Gideon, our parish priest, visits the children in Reception.

School Website

Please visit our class page throughout the year to look at the wonderful work we are doing in Reception. Our school website is www.sacredheart.islington.sch.uk.

Reception Donations

We would be very grateful if you could please donate any of the following for making junk modelling, making play-dough and general play:

- Recycling materials such as bottle tops, newspaper, cereal boxes, kitchen rolls, egg cartons, old phone books, catalogues, string, buttons, etc.
- Flour, cooking oil, salt, cream of tartar, food colouring, baby oil, paper plates.

Snack time

Fruit is provided for the children throughout the day, however, please feel free to bring in a plain snack for the class to share, such as Rich Tea and Digestive biscuits, breadsticks or rice cakes.

Blended Learning: SeeSaw



SeeSaw is our online home-learning platform. SeeSaw is used:

- As a line of communication between parents and school
- WOW Moments – sharing achievements between home and school
- Announcements about upcoming events, important dates for your calendar
- For monthly practical Maths home-learning activities
- Information on how to support your child's learning at home e.g. phonics and math's videos
- In the event of school closures

In September, you will receive instructions on how to download the app and log in with your individual children's QR code log ins.

A video will be uploaded to the EYFS webpage about how to use SeeSaw and its different features.

We hope this booklet has been helpful in answering some of the questions you may have. If you have any more queries, please feel free to ask the staff when you come to visit Reception.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our school and we hope that you and your child enjoy their time here at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School.

Miss Barker (St. Peter Reception Class Teacher & Early Phase Lead)

Miss Cormican (St. Jude Reception Class Teacher)