



Darlinghurst

ACADEMY

Achieving Excellence Together

Settling into Darlinghurst Academy Early Years

This parent handbook is designed to offer some reassurance. To answer frequently asked questions and to help you and your child with their transition into the Academy. You will find important information about the Academy for your own future reference.

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Starting 'Big' school

Starting 'Big' school involves a big change for your child. Those first few weeks can be quite unsettling for both children and parents. Getting used to the new surroundings, making new friends and learning new routines may have it's ups and downs, but we are here to support and nurture you all. It is normal for children to have feelings as they start to think about these changes, such as excitement about the prospect of going to school as well as nervousness about what lies ahead. Some common feelings children have during transition to school can include: excitement – exploring new activities, sadness – about leaving old friends and anticipation – about what lies ahead. Whilst parents and other members of the family may feel similar emotions, these are understandable feelings.



At times young children often have difficulty explaining in words how they feel. Instead they may show their feelings through their behaviour. Some behaviours may be easier to spot, like tantrums and crying, while others may be more difficult to notice, like being quieter than usual. During the transition to school you may notice the following behaviours emerge or increase in frequency: clinging behaviour, restlessness, avoidance strategies.

These behaviours are examples of different ways children respond to new situations. They are very typical for children within this age group and you have probably already noticed some of these behaviours during other times of change. However, if the behaviours continue, or are interfering with your child's daily life it is a good idea to come in and speak to us.

As parents and carers, you are in the best position to help work out how your child may be feeling. It can be useful to do this in collaboration with your child's teacher or any member of staff the child feels comfortable talking to, they will also have a good insight into your child.



When you notice these changes in behaviour, you will still need to reinforce or set clear limits and boundaries for your child, whilst thinking carefully about what it might be telling you.

Remember the children will be experiencing some new changes, and therefore open communication between parents and the early year's staff is important. Our staff at Darlington Academy have a vast amount of experience in helping children settle into a new school setting.

Your child has trust in you, but it is important to develop trust and confidence in new people and new surroundings. Starting school is an adventure and we will support all of the family to feel stronger and empowered. Although you may be feeling emotional, try to stay cheery and confident as your child may pick up on your feelings. To help put your mind at rest we will update you by email throughout the day on class activities when they first join us.

We encourage you to try to maintain a well-structured home routine. Stick to a bedtime, which is the same for each night. Before bed make sure your children's minds are resting so no screen time at least one hour before its lights out. A simple bath and resting in bed with a glass of milk and biscuit can really make your child feel content. Don't forget to enjoy a nice bedtime story.



School readiness

School readiness is about the child's social and emotional wellbeing.

The following are all important:

- Being able to dress themselves and put on their shoes
- Using a knife and fork and drinking out of an open cup
- Sitting at a table, or sitting nicely during appropriate activities
- Begin to understand expected levels of behaviour
- To take turns and share with others
- Listen to others in conversation
- To begin to communicate their needs such as needing the toilet

These are things that we will be working on in the first few months. We will also begin to look at letters and numbers. We like to make all activities fun so that the children enjoy them.



Communication and language

Communication and language is very important for all children. There are many ways in which children can build up their knowledge and understanding of communication. A very effective way is by using songs and rhymes. There is a wide variety of songs and rhymes that you can sing with your children. To help enhance song time there are some things that you can do. A fun thing to do would be to add musical instruments so that the children can begin to hear different sounds to different songs. You could also add some props such as puppets e.g. a sheep for Baa Baa Black Sheep and small toys such as a bus for Wheels on the Bus. By using songs and rhymes you will be introducing simple vocabulary to your children.



When communicating with children keep it simple, ask simple open ended questions that children are free to answer. Always give children time to answer – it can take at least 10 seconds for children to process and answer questions. Do not rush children or repeat the question too soon as the child will be thinking about how to answer it. Try to avoid answering for your child as whoever has asked the question will wait for the answer. Also, when the child asks you a question ask them what they think the answer could be, for example, if a child asks “what noise does a dog make?” instead of just saying that the dog barks, you could say “what noise do you think they make?”

Stories are another good way to communicate. You could read stories from a book, you could tell a fairy tale from your head or you could make up a simple story. Whichever you choose, try to get your child involved. You could read or tell the same story so that they will be able to join in.

Just remember, whichever way you help your child to communicate, have lots of fun and enjoy communicating with your child.

Early writing skills

Children need to learn how to hold a pencil before they are able to write. They also need to build up the necessary muscles in their hands and wrists. It has also been shown that building up core muscles helps children in their writing development. There are different ways to build up all of these muscles.



Building up hand / wrist muscles –

1. Playdough – you can use with or without tools. If using without tools its good for squeezing and squashing.
2. Different sized tools – such as thick and thin pencils and paintbrushes. It's also fun to use things such as old cutlery, sticks and leaves to mark make with.
3. Scissors – the children could cut up scrap paper, old bills, playdough, sellotape.
4. Nuts and bolts – These are good for finger control. They can be big and small nuts and bolts.
5. Geo boards – Geo boards can be made using wood and nails they are used with elastic bands and elastic bands are good for hand strength.
6. Sensory balloons – Fill an empty balloon with rice, flour or water beads for children to squeeze.
7. Clothes pegs and tweezers – have a set-up, where children can pick up small things using the two items. You can also use the pegs with craft sticks to create things.
8. Spray bottles – use them in the garden for watering plants or having a water fight on a hot day.
9. Bubble wrap – this is always fun and parents can join in. Have races to see who can pop the most bubbles, this can be done by individual popping of bubbles or squeezing them in your hand.

Core muscle exercises –

1. Bridging – Have your child lay on their back with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Have the child push hard through their heels to raise bottom up off the floor. Be sure they are keeping their head and shoulders on the ground. Can they hold it? Change it up; have your child lower and lift with control, can they hold it for 3 seconds. Maybe have some cars or animals go under the bridge and count how many go under before the child needs to relax.
2. Superman – have your child fly like a superhero and strengthen their back. Have your child lay on their stomach on the floor and try to lift their arms up off the floor so that the upper chest comes up too. Change it up; can they lift up their legs, can they lift arms and legs together. Whilst in this position can the child pass you a small toy?
3. Planking is a good way to build up core muscles.

These are just a few activities that will help your child in their pre-writing skills. Parents you can also have a lot of fun joining in with the activities as well.

Attendance

Your child should not be kept away from school unless they are ill. You are legally responsible for ensuring your child receives an education and has regular attendance at school.

When your child is absent:

On the first day of your child's absence please call the school by 9am on 01702 509205. It is our duty of care to make contact with you, should we not hear from you.

On your child's return to school please ensure evidence of absence is provided.



Guidance on infection control in schools

RASHES AND SKIN INFECTIONS	PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM SCHOOL	COMMENTS
Chicken pox	Until the last spot to come out forms a scab	
German measles *	6 days from the onset of the rash	
Hand, foot and mouth	None	Remind children of good hygiene practice
Impetigo	48 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment	If lesions are weeping keep the child at home
Measles *	4 days from the onset of rash	
Ringworm	None	Medication is required
Scabies	24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment	All family members should be treated
Scarlet fever *	24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment	
Slapped cheek	None	
Verruca	None	Plimsolls must be worn for indoor PE
DIARRHOEA AND VOMITING	PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM SCHOOL	COMMENTS
Diarrhoea	48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	
Vomiting	48 hours from the last episode of vomiting	
RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS	PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM SCHOOL	COMMENTS
Flu	Until recovered	
Whooping cough *	5 days from beginning antibiotic treatment or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment is given	After treatment non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. Children may return to school.

OTHER INFECTIONS	PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM SCHOOL	COMMENTS
Conjunctivitis	None	Remind children of good hygiene practice
Glandular fever	None	
Head lice	None	Treatment is required
Threadworms	24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment	All members of the family should be treated
Tonsillitis	None	Most cases are viruses



Darlinghurst Academy Uniform

Girls

Blue polo shirt - £7.50
V-neck knitted jumper - £13.50
Knitted cardigan - £14.50
Available from supermarkets
Black box pleat skirt
Light blue summer dress
(no playsuits)
White ankle socks
Black knee high socks

Boys

Blue polo shirt - £7.50
V-neck knitted jumper - £13.50
Available from supermarkets
Black trousers
Black shorts
Black ankle socks



PE T-shirt - £4.00
PE Shorts - £5.50
PE Jogging bottoms - £9.50
PE Sweatshirt - £9.00

Book bags - £5.50
PE bags - £4.50



It is recommended that your child wears a velcro fastening shoe to help with their independence.

Please ensure your child has a pair of wellington boots and an old coat for our Outdoor Learning sessions.

Please ensure your child has some spare underwear in their PE kit in case of any accidents.



Working together in partnership

At Darlington Academy, we recognise each child as an individual, and aim to give all children every opportunity to realise their full potential. We believe that a close partnership between the Academy, parents and the child is essential for us to achieve this aim.

Supporting your child with reading, hand writing, maths activities and talk tasks will have a huge impact on your child's development and the amount of progress they make in the Academy, as every child learns at different speeds. We run several parent workshops throughout the year, to show you practical ways to support your child at home on how we teach in Early Years.



We have an open door policy and you are always welcome to come and see us if you have any questions or queries. If you require more than a few minutes then please make an appointment through the office.

How Darlington Academy communicates with you

SIMS Parent App is a convenient way to communicate with you, share key dates and timetabled events, whilst allowing you to access, review and request changes to the data held on you and your child direct from your phone.

You are able to access our new parent app and website at your own convenience via smartphone, tablet or PC – anytime, anywhere.

What will you find in SIMS Parent:

- Messages
- School term dates, inclusive of your child's PE/Drama/Art/Outdoor Learning sessions
- Access to update your contact details, ensuring we have the most up-to-date information in case of an emergency

It is imperative you register, during the first week you will receive an email with further details for registration.



The School Day

Breakfast club

Our breakfast club is open to all children who attend the school. It opens at 7.30am and costs £3.00 per child per morning. Parents must apply for a breakfast club place via the office.

A range of breakfast cereals are available along with toast and fruit juice.

Lunch time

School Meals

- All meals are cooked from scratch in our kitchen with fresh ingredients
- The current cost of school lunches is £2.20 per child
- Payment should be made in advance via [ParentPay](#)



ROAST LOIN OF PORK, STUFFING, ROAST POTATOES AND GRAVY



CHEESE AND POTATO PIE



RASPBERRY AND APPLE CAKE WITH CUSTARD



FRESH FRUIT SALAD



Acorns afterschool club

Our Acorns afterschool club is open to all children who attend the school. The club runs from the end of the school day until 6.00pm during term time and aims to provide fun activities. The club costs £7.00 per day.

Payments

At Darlington Academy we are a cashless school. Payments for clubs and trips should all be made via ParentPay. You will be contacted by our finance department shortly after your child joins the Academy with registration details.



**We are looking forward to
making memories together**