

Love Respect



Courage

Saint James Church of England
Primary School

Starting School
September 2026

Hello,

On behalf of the EYFS team, I would like to offer you a very warm welcome to Saint James Year R. We are delighted that your child will be joining us in September. Starting school is a very special milestone for both you and your child and while it can feel a little daunting, please be reassured that we are here to support you every step of the way throughout this exciting transition.

Over the coming months, you may have lots of questions, and this booklet has been created to help guide you through the process of starting school. On this page you will find a QR code which links to our school website, where you will find a wealth of further helpful information.

As you read through this guide, we recommend noting the key dates and adding them to your diary. In the coming months, we will be holding a Parents' Induction Meeting, along with a range of Stay and Play sessions for your child. These sessions provide valuable opportunities for you and your child to meet the Year R team, explore the environment and begin to feel confident and excited about starting school.

If you have any questions before we meet, please do not hesitate to contact the school office on 02380 900995 or email me h.elder@st-james-westend.hants.sch.uk.

Warmest wishes,

Helen Elder, Year R Lead and the Year R Team



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Year R at Saint James C of E Primary

Year R marks the beginning of your child's learning journey at Saint James. In our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we are committed to providing a warm, nurturing and purposeful environment where every child feels safe, valued and excited to learn.



Our EYFS environment is made up of **three classes**, England, Scotland and Wales and your child will join one of these and this will be their dedicated home base.

Throughout the day, children enjoy the freedom to move between all three rooms and the shared outdoor areas, enabling them to access a rich variety of learning experiences and to build relationships across the whole year group. This approach supports their independence, confidence and sense of belonging.



Learning in Year R is carefully planned to build on each child's interests and stage of development. Our classrooms and outdoor environment are designed to inspire exploration, independence and creativity, with skilled adults on hand to extend learning and thinking at just the right moments. Outdoor learning plays an important part in our curriculum, and all children take part in **weekly Forest School sessions** in our woodland area. These sessions support physical development, wellbeing, imaginative play and a strong connection to the natural world.



The children continue to follow the EYFS curriculum which they started in their pre-school or nursery and this supports children's development across seven areas of learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. Alongside these areas, we nurture the Characteristics of Effective Learning—Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Creating and Thinking Critically—which help children to develop curiosity, motivation and resilience as learners.



We place great importance on working in genuine partnership with parents, as you know your child best. Throughout the year, we will share your child's achievements, communicate regularly, and provide meaningful opportunities for you to be involved in their learning journey. By working together—celebrating successes, navigating challenges and supporting your child as a team—we can ensure that their first year at school is happy, confident and filled with opportunities to thrive.

Dates for Your Diary

Over the coming months, we will be holding a meeting for parents and a range of Stay and Play sessions for your child. We encourage you to attend as many of these events as possible. When your child sees you feeling confident and positive about them starting school, it helps them feel the same — making their first day in September much easier and happier.

If your child has any specific needs, or if there is anything you would like to discuss in more detail, please don't hesitate to contact the Year R team. We are always here to support you and your family.

Parent's Induction Meeting

Thursday 4th June
Time 5-6pm

Come along to find out more about your child starting school. During this meeting, you will learn which class your child will be joining and have the opportunity to meet the Year R team.

This meeting takes place in the school hall and is for **parents only**. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask — we are always happy to help.



Children's Stay and Play Sessions

Wednesday 17th June 2026 – for children born between September – February

**Thursday 18th June 2026 – for children born between March and August
3.45pm – 4.45pm**

This year we have split the first stay and play – to allow your child to have a quieter first visit to school.

Please check the dates to ensure you attend the correct session for your child.

The children will have the opportunity to meet all our class teacher's. They will spend time exploring and playing within our exciting and engaging classrooms as well as discovering their home base.

For this Stay and Play session, please bring your child into the classroom and spend a short time playing with them before saying goodbye and leaving. This helps children begin to build confidence and independence in a gentle and supportive way.

**Thursday 25th June 2026
9.15am – 11.00am**

All new year R children are invited to come along and join us for a Forest School morning in our woodland.

Please can all children wear long trousers or leggings and trainers for this event.

We will provide a fruit snack and water to drink.

**Wednesday 1st July 2026
3.45pm – 4.45pm**

For our final stay and play, the children will spend time exploring our 3 classrooms and the outdoor environment, they can choose whether to build, paint, play in our sand pit or explore our water investigation centre. Before taking part in a story and song time before going home.

For this final Stay and Play session, please say goodbye to your child outside the classroom door. This is an important step in preparing them for the September start and helps build confidence and independence.

Starting School in September

We will be welcoming in half of the class at a time,

Group A – Children Born in September – February

Group B – Children Born in March – August

We will not be able to change the group your child is in as these have been carefully planned to support a smooth start for everyone.

Thursday 3rd September. Arrive 8.30am – 8.45am, pick up 15.15pm – 15.25pm (Group A)

Friday 4th September. Arrive 8.30am – 8.45am, pick up 15.15pm – 15.25pm (Group B)

Monday 7th September all the children will be full time every day.

Arrive 8.30am – 8.55am, pick up 15.15pm – 15.25pm (The Whole Class)

We know this is a big step, and staff will be on hand to support both children and families during these first days.



In Reception Our School Day

We understand that routines are very important for young children. Below is an outline of a typical school day in Reception at Saint James.

7.30am – 8.30am	Early Birds Our before-school club opens from 7:30am until the beginning of the school day. There is a fee payable for this service and breakfast is available at an additional cost. For more details, please see the separate attachment you have been sent with this email.
8.30am	Our classroom doors open We have a 15 minute drop off time when you can arrive at school. The class teacher is normally on the door and will greet you and your child.
8.45am	Our classroom doors close We complete register and lunch menus. If you arrive after this time, please go to reception.
8.45am – 11.45am	Morning Learning
11.45am – 12.45pm	Lunch Time Year R children go to lunch 15 minutes before the rest of the school, to ensure they have time to eat their lunch and the lunch hall is quieter as they get used to the school.
12.45pm – 3.15pm	Afternoon Learning
3.15pm - 3.25pm	End of the Day We have a 10-minute pick up window at the end of the day. The class teacher will exit the children from their classroom.
3.15pm – 6.00pm	Night Owls Our after-school club runs until 6pm each day. Children will be given fruit and a biscuit during the session, and they're welcome to bring a nut-free snack with them. There is a fee payable for Night Owl and booking will be available via your Arbor account. For more details, please see the separate attachment you have been sent with this email.

What Will My Child Need for school?



We believe that a school uniform is important:

- It looks smart
- Wears well
- Contributes to a sense of belonging and community
- Makes children feel equal to their peers in terms of appearance
- Fosters a feeling of pride
- Is designed with health and safety in mind

Our uniform supplier is School Trends. To place an order follow the link on our school website under the parents' tab or go to www.schooltrends.co.uk then search for Saint James Primary school using the postcode SO30 3EG. Alternatively scan the QR code at the bottom of this page.

When you order online, there are no minimum order quantities and your uniform will be delivered directly to your chosen address. Delivery is usually between 10-14 days but during June-September, please allow up to 21 days.

Further information including sizes, delivery and returns procedure is also available online



Our School Uniform



Jumper or Cardigan	Royal Blue with or without a logo
Trousers / Pinafore Dress/ Knee Length shorts or skirt	Grey
Shirt or Polo shirt with a collar	White
Socks (Plain)	White or Grey
Tights (Plain)	Grey
Summer Dress	Blue Gingham
Shoes	Black Flat, practical school shoes (No trainers or boots)
Coat	A waterproof coat is needed for year R, we will be outside every day.
Hair	Smart, sensible hair. Please tie long hair back with a band, simple hair accessories if they are needed to keep hair tidy.
Jewellery	A pair of small stud earrings may be worn. No other jewellery is permitted – including any jewellery worn for religious reasons. In year R the children do not need to wear a watch.

PE KIT



PE Top	White t-shirt plain or with the school logo.
School Sweatshirt or Cardigan	Royal Blue with or without Logo. (Zipped tops and hoodies are not permitted)
Shorts or jogging Bottoms	Navy Blue or Black (Navy Blue is the school preference)
Socks (no tights)	Plain White or Grey
Trainers	On PE days trainers should be worn as PE lessons can be inside or outside. These should be plain, dark and practical.

In year R each class will have PE once a week and on this day the children come to school dressed in their PE kit, so that they are ready to take part easily.

Forest School Kit (this is kept at school)



As well as playing and learning outside every day our year R children also have forest school lessons each week in our natural woodland areas.

Each child will need to keep in school: -

- A pair of wellington boots.
- A pair of waterproof trousers / dungarees (to be stored in a labelled drawstring bag on their peg).

Required Everyday

- Book Bag (no rucksacks)
- Waterproof Coat
- Small drinks bottle filled with water (with a spout – not an open lidded bottle)



Food and Drink at School

Snack

All our children in year R, 1 and 2 receive a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable each day as part of 'The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme', we always have a range of different fruits for the children and these can include apples, bananas, tangerines, carrots and peas. There is no need to provide a snack for your child, if you are concerned that your child might not eat this, please speak to your class teacher in September.

Milk

All children under the age of 5 are entitled to free school milk each day and we serve this in the morning as part of our snack time.

If you would like your child to receive milk after their 5th birthday you can register at: -



School Lunch

In Year R, 1 and 2 every child is entitled to a free school lunch. In September we are excited to announce that we have a new caterer providing our lunches and having tasted them they are sure to be delicious. Information on how to book these will be provided nearer the time, but we recommend that you encourage your child to try the school lunches.

Saint James is a nut free school and no food containing nuts is allowed on site. This includes chocolate spreads and snack bars.

Please can you check all ingredients before sending food into school.

Thank you

Pupil Premium and Free School Meals

A child is eligible for free school meals beyond year R and KS1 if their parent or carer receives one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit, and have an annual gross income, of no more than £16,190 as assessed by His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (Parents who are made redundant or start working less than 16 hours per week, may find their children are entitled to free meals for a limited period.)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (before September 2026 provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods, from September 2026 all pupils from families claiming universal credit)

No other benefits qualify for free school meals from Key Stage 2 (years 3, 4, 5, 6) or for the pupil premium for Reception Year and Key Stage 1 (years 1, 2).

To check your eligibility please click on the following link:-

[Online FSM Application](#)

Special Educational Needs and Medical Information

As your child joins us in Year R, we work closely with their preschool or nursery to ensure a smooth transition. Settings share key information with us about your child's learning, development, strengths and any identified needs, which helps us prepare the right support from the very start. However, we know that you know your child best. If you have **any concerns about your child's development, communication, learning or behaviour**, or if you feel there is something important, we should be aware of, please contact us at any time — you do not need to wait for September.

It is equally important that we are aware of **any medical needs**, allergies or health conditions your child has. Preschools will pass on health information where appropriate, but please also tell us directly if your child has asthma, allergies, dietary needs, ongoing medical conditions or requires medication during the school day. This allows us to create an appropriate care plan and ensure staff are fully informed.

Working together from the beginning helps us provide the best possible start for your child, ensuring they feel safe, understood and ready to thrive in Year R.

Who to Contact: -

Mrs Helen Elder

Year R Leader

Email address: - h.elder@st-james-westend.hants.sch.uk

School Senco

Mrs Lisa Griffiths

email address: - senco@st-james-westend.hants.sch.uk

Admin – Medical Information

Office Team

Email address: - admin@st-james-westend.hants.sch.uk

How can I help prepare my child for school?

Here is our top 10 ways to help children prepare for school.

1. ☐ Practise independent dressing (coats, zips, shoes and jumpers).
2. ☐ Label everything clearly and help your child recognise their name.
3. ☐ Encourage toileting independence (wiping, flushing, handwashing).
4. ☐ Build eating independence—opening packets and using cutlery.
5. ☐ Establish calm routines with predictable mornings and early bedtimes.
6. ☐ Talk and listen together to build confidence with communication.
7. ☐ Practise turn-taking and sharing through simple games.
8. ☐ Enjoy play that sparks curiosity—building, drawing, exploring.
9. ☐ Build stamina with longer playtimes or outings.
10. ☐ Talk positively about school—friends, fun and Forest School.



What do I need to do now?

Here is a checklist to help you: -

- ☐ Accept your child's year R place for Saint James
 - On-line or
 - Call into the school office
- ☐ Complete Tapestry Form online
- ☐ Complete Safeguarding Form online
- ☐ Complete Data Collection Form online
- ☐ Check if eligible for Pupil Premium and register.
- ☐ Place Dates in diary: -
 - Parents meeting
 - Stay and Plays
 - September start dates

Top Tips:-

Don't buy your child's first school uniform too early – they will grow lots by September.

Name everything! – shoes, jumpers, bags, coats – if it can be taken off, please name it!

Lastly - Enjoy your final few months at your pre-school or Nurseries, I know they will have lots of exciting activities planned.

