

Pontyclun Primary School



Early Years Handbook 2026 - 27

Dear Parents / Carers,

The Governors and staff would like to welcome you, your child and your family to Pontyclun Primary School.

Now that your child has been accepted into the Early Years of our school, you will want to prepare them for the time when they start.

This booklet is designed to answer some of the frequently asked questions and offer guidance for the first few months whilst they settle into their new surroundings within our school.

The Early Years area of learning are the foundations of your child's education. Clear communication, language and literacy, support and promote all areas, particularly personal, social, emotional and creative development. Modelling good listening and speaking are key.

Until these are grasped, a child is not ready to progress to more complex tasks such as reading, writing and in turn working with numbers. Your help in supplementing your child's learning experience is an important part of their education.

If you can support your child in doing as many of the things as possible in this booklet, when they come to school their confidence will grow, working habits will quickly become established and they will be ready to learn to read and write. It is important to note, however, that not every child develops at the same rate and it is crucial that all children are valued for themselves at their current stage of development. In the Early Years your child will work in various groups on tasks designed to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, appropriate to their stage of development.

If you need advice on anything contained in this booklet, please do not hesitate to contact myself or the early year's staff.

I look forward to meeting all new parents in due course.

Best wishes,



Mr Roberts
Head Teacher

A warm welcome

In Pontyclun Primary School we strive to provide a welcoming, happy and safe environment where the children feel secure and enjoy their learning experiences.

We realise how precious your child is, so we aim to make the transition from home to school as smooth as possible. We acknowledge the support that parents give to the school and value the partnership between home and school. If there is anything worrying you or your child, please do not hesitate to share the concern with us.

Contact us

Our address: Pontyclun Primary School
Heol Y Felin
Pontyclun
Rhondda Cynon Taff
CF72 9BE

Our telephone number: (01443) 237833

E-mail address: admin@pontyclunprimary.rctcbc.cymru

Website: <https://www.pontyclunprimary.org.uk/>

Lots of key information including our privacy notice and policies can be found on our website.

Induction

Your child will be admitted to the Nursery at the beginning of the academic year in which they become 4.

Nursery Times

9.00am – 3.15pm

The nursery gates will open at 8.50am and children will be met by the Early Years staff. They close at 9.10am to allow for latecomers, siblings to get around the building. If you arrive after this time, please can you report to the main office to sign your child in, noting reason for lateness and they will be taken to class from there, thank you.

Transition

There will be a 3-week phased transition period allowing staff to settle the children and teach them lunchtime routines.

This information will be sent out before the end of the Summer term.

Personal Password

We use a password system for collection of children in the early years. If a person who is unfamiliar to staff picks up your child, we will ask them for your provided password. Please complete the password form found in the Parental Consent Form booklet.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL and have several children with varying allergies in school including dairy. You will be advised if there are any within the Nursery area, thank you.

School Clothing

All children are expected to wear school uniform:

Winter Uniform: grey skirt/pinafore/trousers/joggers
white polo shirt
red school jumper/cardigan

Summer Uniform: red gingham dress/grey shorts
or as above

P.E kit: No kit required until reception.

White school polo shirts, red jumpers and hoodies with the school logo on, can be purchased from Trustmark in Talbot Green, or if preferred, can be purchased without logo elsewhere.

Please ensure that all items of clothing are labelled with your child's name. Where trousers are worn, elasticated waists or jogging bottoms might be an easier option so that your child can cope with independent toileting.

Due to the nature of the Early Years curriculum, your child is likely to get 'dirty' on occasions. (Thank goodness for washing machines!) Try not to worry, just be assured that your child has enjoyed themselves. As many of the activities are outdoors, please bring named wellies and spare clothes which can be left in school.



Absences from school

Your child is expected to attend school every day during term time, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. All requests for leave must be approved by the head teacher at least one week prior to the absence. As per our school Attendance Policy (which can be found on the school website <https://www.pontyclunprimary.org.uk/>) the school will authorise holidays under the following circumstances:

- Families of serving armed forces personnel
- Parent or child experiencing a life limiting illness
- Families that have suffered an acute trauma
- Attendance at the time of the holiday is above 94% for the year up to the date the holiday starts. (This is the school attendance target and is subject to change year on year.)
- Is not more than 10 days in one academic year
- Is not in first week of the new September term
- There have been no exclusions in the previous three terms

Unforeseen absence, health and illness

The school needs to be notified of ALL absences and associated reasons by 9.30am at the latest. This is a legal requirement and we need to code the child's absence appropriately. Please call the school office (01443) 237833, choosing option 1, and leave a message. Any unexplained absences are followed up by the authority's attendance officer.

The school can immediately authorise an absence if:

- your child is too ill to attend school
- they have a dental or medical appointment
- there is a bereavement of a relative
- there is a need for religious observance

Is your child well enough for school?

Not every illness needs to keep your child from school. Is your child well enough to do the activities of the school day or do they have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff?

If you keep your child away from school, we do ask that when leaving your reason for absence that you are specific i.e: stomach bug, headache, sore throat etc. Leaving 'unwell', 'ill' or 'won't be in today or this week' may result in the school calling you to ascertain a reason. This is especially important if several children are off with a similar bug or virus and we can ensure we are able to take the appropriate action if and when needed. Please can we ask you to keep in contact if your child is off for more than 2 days and then daily after that, unless otherwise agreed, thank you.

Please note: Children with sickness/diarrhoea must stay off school for **48hrs** from the last episode of illness.

If your child becomes unwell at school, we shall contact you so that they may be collected from school. Please complete emergency contact numbers in the Parental Consent Forms booklet. **It is then your responsibility to ensure they are kept up to date in case of an emergency.**

Safeguarding

During the school day, the inner gates to the outdoor learning areas are left locked for the safety and security of all our pupils. ***We politely ask that parents / carers leave the school as soon as the bell is rung at 9am.***

The main gates are left closed, but unlocked, unless there are children playing outside in the main plaza.

If you need to report an absence, late or early drop off/collection, please can a message be left on the school answerphone or emailed to the main office via admin@pontyclunprimary.rctcbc.cymru. You can also send a message via the MCAS app.

Please do not send these types of messages via Seesaw, thank you.

Should you need to contact your child's teacher for any other class based reason, please can this be sent via Seesaw. Staff will respond to messages at the earliest time possible during the day and it's at the teacher's discretion if and when they reply in the evenings, thank you.

If you do need to collect your child/ren early e.g. at lunchtime, please can this be before 12.30pm or after 1.30pm otherwise you may have difficulty getting into the school.

Please could we also remind you that when dropping off or collecting your child/ren, you must report to the main school office to sign them in/out. This is not just to safeguard our pupils but in case of an emergency and or fire evacuation, we need to be aware of where everyone is.

Please can you ensure that this information is passed on to all those who may have responsibility for dropping off/collecting from school, thank you.

Additional Support

Should your child require any additional support, our school has several strategies in place and we currently run ELSA/nurture support groups and work with outside agencies where further help and guidance is needed for the pupils. Should you have or develop any concerns regarding your child's development please speak with the Nursery staff in the first instance.

Successful futures

A new curriculum for Wales has been developed for young people aged between 3 -16 years old. Below are the key elements.

4 Core Purposes

The 4 core purposes are at the heart of the new curriculum. They are the starting point for all decisions on the content and experiences developed as part of the curriculum to support all children and young people to be:

- Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives.
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Key Elements

The new curriculum will include:

- 6 Areas of Learning and Experience from 3 to 16.
- 3 cross curricular responsibilities: Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence.
- Progression reference points at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16.
- Achievement outcomes which describe expected achievements at each progression reference point.

The curriculum will be organised into 6 Areas of Learning and Experience:

- Health and Well-being.
- Languages, Literacy and Communication (including Welsh, which should remain compulsory to age 16).
- Mathematics and Numeracy.
- Science and Technology
- Expressive arts.
- Humanities (including RE which should remain compulsory to age 16).

The school's curriculum offers children opportunities to be creatively involved in their own learning which must build on what they already know and can do, their interests and what they understand. Active learning enhances and extends children's development.



How can I help my child?

Encourage them to be independent

Please show your children how to dress and undress themselves, put on their coats and shoes, and fasten them without help
- Velcro is a wonderful invention!

Teach them to use the toilet independently, always reminding them of the rules of hygiene. Whilst we appreciate the occasional accident is inevitable with young children, it is the expectation that all children are fully toilet trained by the time they start school. We as a school staff have always dealt with and will continue to deal with the occasions where a pupil who does not usually wet or soil themselves has an accident but this does result in these members of staff being unable to supervise and ultimately has an impact on teaching time.



Should your child have a toileting accident during the school day, and we are unable to properly clean them, for example where they have soiled themselves, we will need to contact parents/carers to come and collect your child for changing. Often these pupils will need to be bathed to be cleaned fully. Where a child has had a wetting accident, again parents/carers will be informed and advised that their child would benefit from being cleaned fully at home to prevent irritation, infection and odour. Pupils can, of course, then return to school. Where a child has had an accident, nursery staff ensure the child is not left in the soiled or wet clothing whilst waiting for the parent/carer to arrive.

Staff do regularly employ a range of strategies to remind pupils of the need to go to the toilet and they are vigilant to pupils who may need additional support.

Where a child has a medical need, the school is happy to liaise and work with the parents/carers along with appropriate medical professionals to provide the necessary support and advice as needed.

- Please help them to use a knife and fork correctly as well as a cup.
- Please encourage your children to use their toys purposefully and respectfully, reminding them to put away their toys when they have finished with playing with them.
- This is an integral part of school life and needs to be undertaken by all children.

All this helps to save time and allows staff to maximize on the pupils' learning time as well as fostering good habits and expectations.



Play with a purpose

All children benefit from play. It is through play that they learn about themselves and the world in which they live. Play is about children learning through perseverance, attention to detail and concentration - characteristics usually associated with work. Play is not only crucial to how children become self-aware and the way in which they learn the rules of social behaviour; it is also fundamental to intellectual development.

Through play children learn the skills of:

- Listening
- Talking
- Co-operating
- Sharing
- Investigating
- Imagining
- Creating

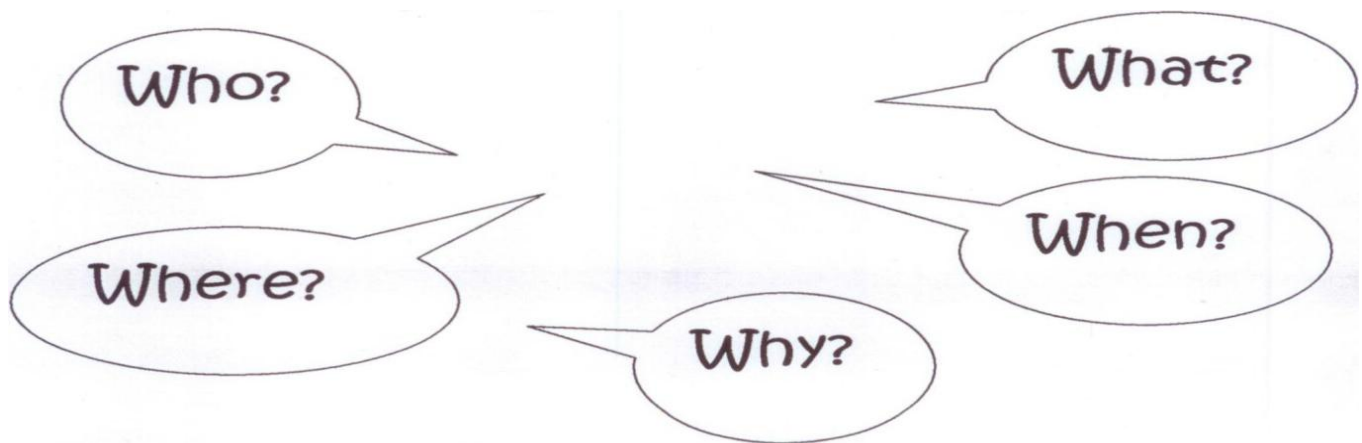


Communication and listening skills

As mentioned in the head teacher's message, the Early Years area of learning are the foundations of your child's education. Clear communication, language and literacy, support and promote all areas. Modelling good listening and speaking are key.

It is important that children are immersed in a range of language experiences and activities. This will encourage attentive listeners, enlarge their vocabulary and help with their communication and oracy skills.

- Help your child acquire **good listening skills** – encourage them to talk and listen without frequent interruption, give them the chance to think about what has been said and give an answer. Make eye contact, ask questions about and comment on what they have said.
- Talk about different things with your child.
- Relate the events of the day.
- Daily routines - getting up, having breakfast etc.
- What you see when you go out e.g. shops, people, countryside etc.
- Ask them questions to encourage them to think.
- Discuss stories read, programs watched, or CD's/stories listened to.
- Listen to and carry out simple instructions.
- Learn nursery rhymes off by heart. Nursery rhymes are so valuable, they help children identify rhyming words which are helpful when learning to read, encourage memory skills and develop imagination and vocabulary.
- Help your child to speak in sentences. This will help them to read more fluently and think more clearly.



In the Nursery we follow the 'Letters and Sounds' scheme, phase 1 and 2, developed by the Department for Education and Skills. This scheme begins by focusing on a variety of listening activities, concentrating on general sound discrimination. For example, listening to environmental, instrumental and body percussion sounds. Rhythm and rhyme and alliteration. Again, you can help your child by

- Tuning into the sounds around you, at home or when you are out and about - going on a listening walk
- Listening and remembering sounds – can they tell you if a sound was loud or quiet
- Talking about sounds they have heard – can they match sounds to where they have come from
- Singing songs and clapping, tapping their hands or stamping feet to the rhythm
- Show your child how they can make sounds with their voices – make your voice go down a slide – wheee! – make animal noises – ssssss like a snake, zzzzzzz like a bee for example

Reading - How you can help?

Share a book with your child whenever you can.

- Make it a friendly and enjoyable time for both you and your child.
- Sit in a comfy chair or by the bed.
- Encourage them to handle books with care and respect.
- Let them find the beginning and end of the story so they can learn to handle books correctly.
- Talk about the pictures in the book.
- Tell them the story.
- Point to the words as you read.
- Let them tell the bits they enjoyed from the story.
- Encourage them to join in with repetitive parts to the story.
- Let them choose their own books.
- Re-read favourite stories.
- Read and learn nursery rhymes and songs together.
- When reading ask them to look for letters that they might recognise in the words or letters that are in their own names.



How can I help my child to write?

Activities involving play dough, clay, plasticine and pastry help little fingers to pull, push, squeeze and grip. Games which use small beads and counters help to develop well trained muscles in the hand, which are essential when learning to write.

- Encourage your child to make patterns and shapes using whole hand and fingers in materials such as washing up liquid, foam, sugar or salt. Action songs and rhymes that involve using arm, hand and wrist actions also help children to become fluent comfortable and legible writers.
- Painting with large and small brushes helps to train the eye and hand to work together and, of course, develops creative skills and imagination. Children often prefer to paint/draw standing rather than sitting so allow your child different opportunities to explore painting/drawing seated or stood.
- Colouring, tracing and drawing help a child to make a pencil go where they want it to and as such, they will soon develop a comfortable and natural pencil grip.
- If your child shows any interest in writing, please encourage this using lower case letter formation. The only time they need to use a capital letter at this stage, is for the first letter at the beginning of their name.



- Help your child to use scissors correctly!
- Please encourage your child to hold scissors with their thumb on the top.
- Ensure that the scissors are not blunt, and round ended scissors are safer than pointed ones. Left-handed children need opportunities to use left-handed scissors which are always at hand within the classroom.



Catalogues, newspapers and magazines are ideal for cutting up. Cut outs can be sorted into shapes, colours, similar items etc. and pasted onto a sheet of paper.

Maths - How you can help?

- Help your child by playing games such as sorting objects:

Put the cows, horses, chickens together

Sort the red crayons from the blue crayons

- Recognise and name the different colours
- Recite and sing number rhymes and songs
- Help them recall a simple sequence of events in their day
- Numbers are everywhere around our homes and in the local environment – help your child identify them.
- At home or out and about, look at the surface of shapes and ask your child what shape is this plate, mirror, bath mat, window, door, traffic light etc.
- Other activities such as:

How many letters came through the door today?

Can you put a spoon by each bowl?

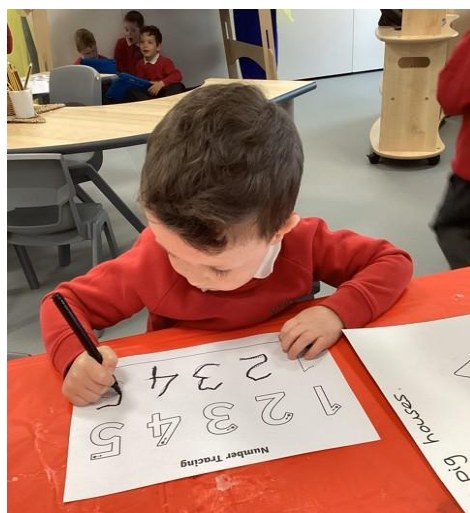
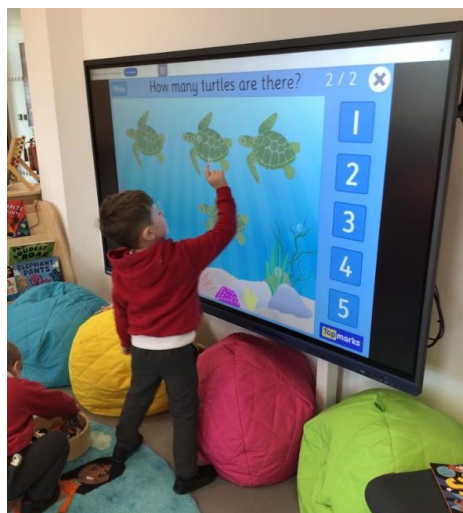
How many chairs are in this room?

How many apples are in the bowl?

How many steps do we have to climb?

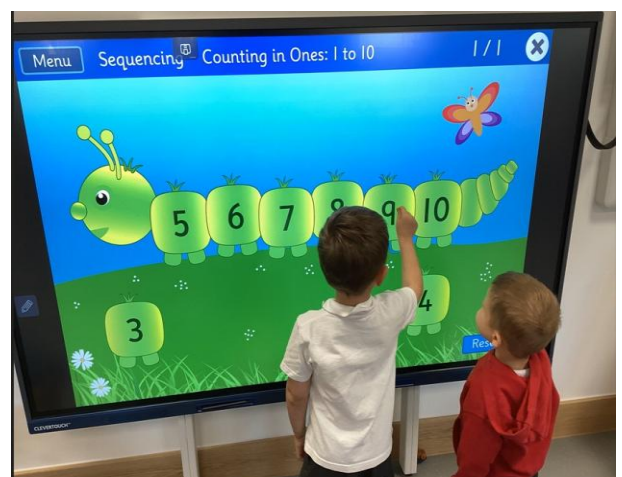
Can you pass me 4 socks?

Remember to count objects of different types and in different arrangements. It is more important that a child knows that 3 can be 3 cows or 3 apples rather than being able to write the number 3 at this stage.



Other helpful activities

- Games involving looking at shapes can help, so look for shapes around them e.g. shapes of furniture, food, on vehicles etc.
- Games such as jigsaws, matching games, lotto, sorting games, board games all foster good memory skills as well as turn taking, communication and co-operating skills.
- Water and sand play will develop understanding of materials, capacity, weight etc. Talk about floating, sinking, pouring, filling, emptying, shaping and forming.
- Play memory games with your child for example - I spy with my little eye – when you play such games remember to use sounds of letters as well as letter names e.g. leg begins with 'l' and not 'ell'
- Children will have access to class computers, a plasma board, an interactive whiteboard and iPad on a daily basis and benefit by using the mouse/ keyboard/touch as well as communicating whilst working together. The Digital Competency Framework (DCF) is followed and pupils are provided with a range of ICT/ Digital activities and resources throughout the curriculum.



Am I ready for school



- I am confident being away from my mummy, daddy or main carer
- I am able to identify how I feel and share it with others
- I am willing to have a go at new activities
- I keep trying when I find things difficult



- I am able to share with others
- I am able to take turns
- I am good at making friends with others
- I enjoy interacting and playing with others



- I am able to use the toilet independently
- I can wash my hands
- I can get dressed and undressed
- I can move around confidently (walk, run, jump)
- I have good muscle control in my arms, hands and fingers
- I have good balance



- I am able to engage for a short while eg listening to a story or at an activity of my choice
- I can follow simple instructions
- I am understood when I talk
- I am able to talk about myself, my thoughts and feelings
- I enjoy interacting with others
- I enjoy sharing stories



- I can open my packed lunch box and eat independently
- I can use a knife and fork
- I can sit at a table when I eat
- I have practised getting my uniform on and being ready to leave on time
- I have a good bedtime routine so I get enough sleep



- I can recognise my own name
- I am aware of numbers and counting
- I join in with counting, number songs and number play
- I experiment with emptying and filling sand/water containers
- I can recognise some numbers (up to 5)

Golden Rules to help the teachers

1. Talk to your child positively about school and how much they will enjoy being in school.
2. Please look in your child's bag everyday as it may contain important letters/information.
3. Please ensure your child's coat and bag, have a loop for hanging on their peg and are named. It is also important that the children can open their bags independently and are large enough for them to carry drinks, lunch box, coat, spare clothes, etc.
4. Clothing - please ensure all clothes are labelled including socks, shoes, jumpers etc. If children can put on/take off their own coats and dress/undress themselves with increasing independence this is also a tremendous help to staff!
5. Please ensure that as well as clothing, any other personal items that your child brings into school has their name clearly marked on it.
6. Please provide a healthy snack of fresh fruit or vegetables for your child each day along with a refillable bottle of water. Every child is also offered a carton of milk daily in school. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL** and have several children with varying allergies including dairy.
7. Outdoor play is an important part of your child's development. Please ensure your child has warm clothes and wellies in the colder months and is well protected from the sun in the summer.



Your Notes

