St Andrew's
Church of England (VA) Primary School & Nursery

Benslow Lane, Hitchin,
Hertfordshire, SG4 9RD
Tel: 01462 459160
email: admin@standrews.herts.sch.uk
www.standrews.herts.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mr R Varnam

September 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to St Andrew's C of E (V.A.) Nursery and Primary School. I am really looking forward to getting to know all the children in Nursery this year, welcoming them into class and helping them to learn our new routines and have fun exploring their new environment.

Alongside myself (**Mrs Etchie**), I will be working with two Early Years Practitioners, **Mrs Howard** and **Mrs Denooijer** in the nursery class. **Mrs Undrell** (Reception teacher) will come in on Wednesday mornings during my planning time out of class.

Nursery School Times: 8.45am - 3.15pm
To deliver your children in the mornings, please access the Nursery by the EYFS double gates in the car park. To safeguard children on site, the gates are kept closed in line with all school gates closing at the start of St Andrew's. Please wait along the gates on the pathway when gates are closed. When opened, please wait in the EYFS outdoor area for the classroom door to open. Children are encouraged to enter Nursery independently. Thank you for your support in this.

Pick-up 3.15pm
To pick-up your children, please wait in the EYFS outdoor area, once gates have opened, children will be sent out to you. Outside these times, you can access the Nursery via the main office entrance.

Leaving School
Thank you for completing the Authorised Person and Collection Arrangements form found in your information pack. I am sure you understand that safeguarding is our top priority, and children will not be sent home with an alternative person unless I am informed beforehand. As it is early in September, please do introduce me to new family members on the pickup list, if possible. Alternatively, please send a unique code (specific word) that only can be used by the members listed on our pickup arrangements
Should normal collection arrangements change for your child, please email the school by 9.30am on the day with a code for the adult picking up.

Communication and Language
I am sure you would agree that reading for pleasure is so important. When the children have had some time to settle into the daily routine, we will introduce a weekly Library Day. On this day each week, children who bring a book bag to Nursery will be able to choose a book from our library box/reading area and take it home with them for one week to encourage language development and early reading skills. We would urge you to become involved in reading to, and with, your child.

In the coming weeks, we will be introducing a class friend – our Everywhere Bear. Everywhere Bear will be coming home with one child each Friday to spend the weekend with you. They arrive equipped with a diary. We would love you to use this diary to note all the adventures which the Everywhere Bear has been

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with you – you could even include a photo or two, if you wish! It would be great to see the children writing (mark making) or drawing in the diary but of course, parents can scribe for their children as well. Our Everywhere Bear will be sent home on a Friday and is due back to class on the following Monday. Your support with this would be greatly appreciated.

Throughout the year, children are welcome to bring in an item to discuss that either celebrates an achievement, special festival or family day out. This not only develops their communication and language by helping them to build confidence to speak in a small group but also fosters positive self-esteem. For example, this could be a certificate/badge, a photo showing them learning a new skill or ticket/brochure from a family day out/visit or something interesting they found whilst out and about (e.g. leaf/shell/pebble etc). It would also be appropriate to bring in an artefact that is connected to our current learning theme. However, **please do not bring in children's toys**. Please could each child also bring a **baby photo** and a **family photo** in the first week of school for our 'All About Me' display, which the children can share and reflect on throughout the year. We do have a few family photos from our July introductions… but missing quite a lot.

Clothing

Clothing should be comfortable, practical, suitable for the weather and easy for the children to manage independently. There is no requirement for children to wear a school uniform; however, they are welcome to do so if they wish. It is vital that all daily clothing is ***clearly labelled***, as children often remove items if feeling warm whilst learning and playing inside. This would include their coat, hat, scarf, gloves, shoes/trainers and any jumpers/cardigans/sweatshirts that they wear to school that day. It aso includes packed lunch boxes and water bottles.

Children will need to bring in to school every day:

- a hooded raincoat, as we go outside in all weathers and enjoy getting messy!
- a ***named water bottle*** (freshly refilled with water each day).

Children will need to bring in to school in September and leave at school:

- ***a named bag*** with a full change of clothes (jumper, top, t-shirt, trousers, shorts, two pairs of underwear, two pairs of socks), a small pack of wet wipes, and disposable plastic bags in case of any accidents.
- a pair of ***named welly boots***.

Supporting your child's independence

I am sure you would agree that children's independence is crucial to helping them settle well at Nursery. Please support your child to learn fundamental independent skills. It is our expectation at St. Andrew's that all children should be fully toilet-trained and are no longer using nappies or pull-ups, unless there is an underlying medical condition.

Helping children to develop these important independent skills as much as possible not only boosts their self-esteem and self-confidence but also greatly helps towards smooth transitions. Please encourage your

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child to learn how to use the toilet independently and wash their hands and how to put on/take off their own coat and change into/out of shoes and wellies by themselves. It is advisable to send children to school wearing clothes that they can easily manage themselves. For example, elasticated leggings and shoes/trainers with Velcro. **Please do not send children to school wearing shoes with buckles or laces as they cannot manage these themselves.**

Culture Week

Of course, we will be getting to know each other very well through our small group work, Exploration and Piazza times. However, we would like to extend children's knowledge and understanding of each other by learning more about the different cultures, languages, traditions and customs within our Nursery class. Therefore, we will be having a Culture Week starting ***Monday 21st October***. In order for Culture Week to be as successful as possible, we need your support and input too. For example, we would love some family members (parents, grandparents, older brother/sister, aunts/uncles) to come into school during that week to share and talk about their culture, language and traditions with us by bringing in artefacts, traditional clothes, sharing food, telling a story, sharing music etc. If you or a member of your family would like to be involved, please do speak to us as soon as possible so that we can arrange a suitable timetable during this exciting week.

Supporting your Child at Home: A Workshop for Nursery Parents

To help you feel as confident as possible in supporting your child's learning, we will be running a short workshop in the spring Term (date to be confirmed) during school time in the school hall. Hopefully, this will provide a valuable opportunity for you to gain some useful insights into the strategies used to support children in Nursery.

Learning Journeys

We would like to invite you into class to share your child's learning. Our sessions take place at **2.45pm** on the following dates: **Friday 11th December, Friday 19th March,** and **Friday 11th June.** We would welcome your contribution to your child's Learning Journal and your views about your child's progress by completing a Parent Voice slip during each visit. This is a valuable time to celebrate your child's experiences, successes and achievements. Children are always so proud to share their learning and environment with their family. **Please make a note of the dates in your diaries (and set any necessary reminders too!).** We hope to see as many of you as possible.

Parent Representative

If you are interested in the role of parent representative for our class, please await details that will be sent out at a later date in the Autumn term.

Consultation Meetings

Our Parent Consultation meetings will take place during the Autumn term (week of 21st October) and Spring term. More information to follow in due course.

Enrichment

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In Nursery, we look forward to enriching our curriculum even further by arranging regular dedicated time to enjoy and participate in Design and Technology, cooking, gardening, STEM and art projects.

Invitations
Please can I ask that parents give out any party invitations at the beginning or end of the sessions outside and that these are not brought into the classroom – thank you.

Food and Snacks
The school will provide a healthy fruit snack in the afternoon every day. Children have access to their water bottles throughout the day. Milk can be ordered for your child. Please see the milk link from the nursery placement information sent out in the summer term.

Lunch
Children can bring a packed lunch to school or you can order a lunch to be provided from our school kitchen. Packed lunches must not contain nuts and must be a healthy, balanced meal. Chocolate is not allowed. School lunches must be booked via School Gateway and there is a payment required.

Blog
We will soon set up a class blog. Please do follow our class blog via the St Andrew's website and see what we have been learning and exploring in school.

Medication
If your child has prescribed medication, or there are any changes to their medication, please make sure that you inform the office and complete the required forms.

Please refer to the Nursery Parent's Handbook for more information. I am really looking forward to working with you as your children grow in confidence, discover new interests and thrive in our learning environment. Here's to a fantastic school year with the Class of 2026-27!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C. Etchie
Nursery Teacher