



Where Children live what they learn



**Question & Answer Booklet
for New Parents**

What uniform do the children wear, and where can I buy it?

Baby Unit children wear blue & white checked smocks. The rest of the school from Pre-Class to Pre-Prep wears blue & white striped tops (either short or long sleeved versions). These are all available to purchase from the school office, along with coats and hats suitable for the older children.

Does my child need any special 'Outdoor Clothes'?

At South Hills we like the children to spend lots of time enjoying the great outdoors, and taking advantage of the limitless outdoor space we are lucky enough to have. We therefore ask that your child bring in a pair of Wellington boots and suitable clothing appropriate for the time of year (e.g., warm coat, hat & gloves in the winter). Also, a spare set of clothes is useful (particularly for the younger children). But please no precious clothes - we cannot guarantee your child will stay clean!!

Does my child need any 'PE' kit?

Children in the Barn and Pre-Prep classes need a separate set of kit for physical exercise. This comprises a white t-shirt, navy shorts and/or a navy tracksuit, white trainers or black plimsols. For swimming, children should have a swimsuit and towel. All items need to be clearly labelled with your child's name.

What time does the School day start?

Unless booked in otherwise, the day begins promptly at 9am throughout the whole school, and you should aim to drop your child off as close as possible to this time. We are able to offer before and after school care between the hours of 8am and 6pm **provided it is booked in advance**. This is charged by the $\frac{1}{2}$ hour and the price for this can be seen on our separate tariff sheet.

What if I need to alter my child's hours/days?

Should you wish to make amendments to your child's attendance, we will endeavour to accommodate your request as far as is possible. If there is no space, you will be placed on a waiting list. We do prefer as much notice as possible, and in the case of a reduction in hours a full terms

Does the school offer holiday facilities for older children?

We offer Holiday Fun activities for children 4-10 years throughout the summer holidays and these are open to children from other schools. These can be booked on a daily basis.

Does the school organise joint activities for parents and children?

Each year have a summer barbeque and a sports day which are family events. We have also started a parent-with-child camping night, which we hope to continue. All our Celebration Assemblies are also family activities.

Does the school offer a 'pick up' facility?

We have not set this up to date, but if there is sufficient interest this could be offered to the 4+ years age group.

Is there a school transport plan?

The school is developing such a plan: the office will collate details of parents willing to share transport and put parents who live in the same area in touch with each other.

Does the school support a nominated charity?

As part of our commitment to the local community we organise a number of fun fund-raising events with the children (and sometimes parents) for a wide range of charities.

Do you have an up-to-date staff list?

If you consult our website at <http://www.southhillsschool.com/staff-list.htm> you will find the latest staff list.

notice (or 12 weeks if attending all year round) is required.

Unfortunately, should a change mean having to re-issue a current invoice then an administration fee will be charged.

How much notice is required to leave South Hills?

A full terms notice (or 12 weeks if attending all year round) must be given in writing to the Principal, Mrs. A Proctor, should you wish to leave.

My child attends all year round. Do I have any holiday entitlements?

For those children attending all year round (51 weeks) a rebate of 50% will be given for up to 4 weeks holiday, provided it is booked **1 month in advance**. The school is closed between Christmas & New Year and no charge is made for this period.

And what if my child attends 'term time only' - can I still get a refund for holiday taken during the term?

No - unfortunately in these circumstances there is no rebate made for holidays taken outside of the main school holidays.

When the Pre-Prep is closed during the school holidays do you provide any child care facility?

Yes, the School operates for 51 weeks of the year and for those children in the Pre-Prep a Holiday Fun club is available. Timetables are issued several weeks in advance of each holiday and sessions can be booked as required.

Does the School ever have to close in the winter due to bad weather?

We hope that it will never happen but should the School ever have to close during the Winter months because of adverse conditions an announcement will be made on Spire FM (102.00 FM).

How safe and secure is South Hills School?

We know how precious your child and whilst in our care we take every precaution to safeguard their welfare. The School is fortunate in its location but there is always a need to take every precaution to ensure their safety. We therefore ask parents to use the car park when

dropping off children and to ensure they close all gates and doors behind them. On those doors that do not enter directly into a classroom there are key pad security locks in operation to which parents are given the code.

Parents are also asked not to leave young children in parked cars or valuables on display.

We are an 'army' family and may be given short notice of a posting.

What happens then?

Due to our location, we are sympathetic to the needs of army families. Please come and speak to us in the office if you have any forthcoming problems.

Why do I have to pay a Deposit and Registration fee?

A deposit is payable when reserving a place for your child, and is offset against your final invoice providing all fees have been paid promptly. Should you not take up the place, or leave South Hills before completion of the Baby Unit or the Nursery then the deposit will not be refunded. A Registration Fee is charged 3 months in advance, or on application if later. This is non-refundable and covers all normal administration setup costs when your child joins South Hills.

When are Invoices issued?

Invoices are issued monthly in advance and payable on the 1st of the month. Invoices are emailed (where possible) and bills are collected by direct debit (where possible).

My employer offers a Childcare Voucher Scheme as a concession.

Can I use these to pay for my fees?

Yes, we are very happy to accept vouchers from employers and are currently registered with most of the main schemes. Please contact the school office for further details.

What is the 'Nursery Education Grant' and when is my child eligible to receive it?

This is a Government run scheme which entitles all children to a grant, from the term following their 3rd birthday through to the term that they turn 5. You do not need to take any action to receive the grant.

parents together at enjoyable social gatherings, along with raising funds for the School (enough money has been raised historically to purchase a fantastic new wooden climbing frame and build a sensory garden). Keep an eye out in the newsletter for details of forthcoming events and meeting dates.

Any parents interested in getting involved, either to join the committee or just to lend a pair of hands, should contact the school office or come along to the regular HSA coffee morning on **Tuesdays at 09:00** - we would be delighted to hear from you!

How long can my child stay at South Hills?

The Nursery part of the School caters for children from 3 months to 4 years. Should you wish to continue your child's education at South Hills, children then move through to our Pre-Prep department which caters for children from Reception through to Year 2. We take great pride in our Pre-Prep department, which benefits from small classes and excellent teaching, resulting in confident and well educated children. Our unique setting also offers lots that other schools may not be able to provide. If you would like to know more, please let us know.

Will my child automatically be granted a place in the Pre-Prep?

You must notify the School as early as possible if you wish to reserve a place in the Pre-Prep. We would hope to be able to satisfy all requests made in good time but our classes are purposely kept small and places are allocated on a first-come first-served basis. You are always welcome to speak with Mrs. Proctor about this transition and to visit the classroom.

Where do children go when they leave South Hills?

Those children that choose not to move on to our Pre-Prep go on to attend a variety of local schools. The majority of children who leave the school at the end of Year 2 have historically moved on to Salisbury Cathedral School where we have some strong links.

concerns or issues that you may have. Sometimes it may be more appropriate or convenient to make an appointment to meet with your class teacher at a specific time (dropping-off and picking-up times can be a little hectic!) which you are always most welcome to do.

And what if I wish to make a complaint?

We work really hard to create a strong and honest relationship between parents and the school and hope that you will never have cause for complaint. However, should you ever have any worries or problems we ask you to let us know as soon as they arise in order that they can be resolved quickly. We have a Complaints Procedure which we follow, a full copy of which is displayed on our Parents Notice board.

How does the School communicate news to parents?

Parentmail, an email application, is used to communicate the latest school news, often in the form of a newsletter. All parents are encouraged to provide us with an email address for this purpose. Hard copies of any communication are provided to parents who do not have access to email. There is also a Parents' Notice board located on the outside wall near to the main School entrance where relevant information is posted, along with a copy of our latest newsletter. You will also notice each individual classroom has its own notice board, which contains information relevant to that class.

Do the children have much involvement with the animals?

Absolutely! We consider ourselves extremely lucky to be in such a lovely countryside setting and we pride ourselves on our animals. The children are given many opportunities to interact with the animals, from grooming & riding our pony and donkeys, to feeding the pigs and watching baby lambs being born!

The animals take a lot of looking after and we always welcome any help from parents. If you at all interested just let us know!

Does the School have a PTA or HSA (Home School Association)?

We run an active Home & School Association (HSA) who organise several events throughout the year, including a very popular Quiz Night, Summer Barbeque and Christmas Fair. The aim of the HSA is to bring

We will ask you on a termly basis to sign a form confirming your child's date of birth, postcode and the number of sessions that will be funded. The grant is deducted from your invoices.

You can receive funding for up to 5 free sessions a week. A session must be for a minimum of 2½ hours. If your child attends a normal school day (9:00-15:30), you can claim 2 sessions on that day.

For further details, and confirmation of the current amounts payable, please contact the School Office.

What Policies does the School have?

South Hills has a comprehensive set of policies including Safeguarding Children, Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Behaviour and Curriculum policies, as well as a Complaints Procedure. All these are available for inspection in the School Office.

What do I do if my child is unwell?

If your child is at all unwell, please do not send them to school! Illness spreads very quickly amongst young children, and we do not have facilities to look after sick children. You should advise the school office by 9.30am if your child will not be coming in, letting us know what is wrong with them - it is important for us to be able to inform other parents should your child be suffering from a contagious illness (such as Chickenpox).

You should not send your child to school for at least 24 hours after they have had sickness or diarrhoea.

If your child has been prescribed a course of antibiotics they should not come to school for 48 hours after their first dose. We will happily administer medicine on your behalf provided we have your written consent.

Do I need to provide my child with a packed lunch?

If your child attends over the lunch time period then you should provide them with a packed lunch (or appropriate food for younger babies). In the warmer months we recommend packing it with an ice pack to keep things cool. Should your child stay at school late into the afternoon then please pack a tea for them, if you wish. We encourage parents to pack healthy food, and should you be stuck for ideas then the office will be pleased to provide you with a suggestion leaflet.

As for snacks at break time we strongly encourage you to bring a variety of fruits - they are good for your child's health and help regulate energy and mood throughout the day.

Please note that under no circumstances should children have nuts in their lunchboxes. Not only are they a choking hazard, but we have several children in the school who are allergic to nuts and contact with them could pose a serious health risk.

My child is in nappies - do I need to bring in any spares?

Yes, if your child wears nappies you should bring in a supply of your own to be kept on your child's peg, along with some baby wipes. The school does hold a small supply in case of need.

I am potty training my child - what do I do whilst they are at school?

We are always pleased to help and encourage any child who is potty training. Please bring them in wearing pants, or pull-ups if they are happier. All we ask is for a plentiful supply of spare clothes in case of any accidents!

Do I need to bring in sun cream for my child during the Summer?

No, during the Summer months the school hold a supply of sun cream which will be applied to your child before they go out in the sun. If, for any reason, your child needs specific cream then please advise your class teacher and bring in a supply to be kept at school. And please don't forget to bring in a named sunhat for your child in the Summer.

Do you have any 'Music' facilities at South Hills?

Music plays a large part in day-to-day life at South Hills. Every Wednesday we have a specialist music teacher, Trisha Thackray, who comes in to run music sessions for each individual class - Trisha has taught music to young children now for many years.

Does the School put on any performances for parents?

With the help of our music teacher, we hold musical 'Celebrations' at the end of each term and sometimes at half term to which all parents are

invited to attend. You will doubtless hear your child practicing the songs at home! At Christmas, all children (apart from the younger babies!) take part in a Nativity Play which is always a very popular event! And the Pre-Prep and Loft Class take part in a drama/music performance towards the end of the Summer Term. Every week we also hold a school assembly to which parents are always welcome to attend. Please refer to our Newsletter for a list of assembly topics and for confirmation of dates and times.

Do you offer any Extra-Curricular activities?

'Little Pumas' takes place on a Thursday afternoon for which there is an extra charge. Horse riding lessons are available on request at an extra charge. Please check with your class teacher for up-to-date information on these activities.

Where can I find a copy of the school's latest OFSTED Report?

We have built a link on the Home page of our website (www.southhillsschool.com) to the school's latest OFSTED report. We also hold a copy on file of this report which is available to read upon request at any time. You are also able to access a copy of the report via OFSTED's website, www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Does the School hold Parents Evenings, and do the children get School Reports?

During the course of the year we hold two Parents Evenings, one formal and one informal. You will receive advance notice of these events and will be invited to make individual appointments with your class teacher on the formal evening.

School reports are sent out once a year towards the end of the Summer Term. You will be invited to make comments on your child's report and sign & return a copy back to us.

Am I able to speak to my child's class teacher or the head teacher other than at Parents Evening?

Yes, of course! At South Hills we operate an 'open door' policy and actively encourage parents to keep in close touch with teachers. You are always welcome to chat to your class teacher and head teacher, Mrs. Proctor, at the beginning and end of your child's sessions about any