



# Layston First School Guide for Parents



## About this Guide

This *Guide* is intended to help parents of children at Layston by offering information about the practicalities of school life.

We will issue all new parents with a copy of the *Guide* but, as many details will be regularly updated, parents are advised to check the reference copy at the office or visit the school website.

At the back of the *Guide* is an index to help you find what you are looking for, a set of appendices and a list of policies that are available in the school office.



Layston Church of England First  
School



## Our School Vision

At Layston we believe in the reality of God in our lives and the Christian Values that guide and inspire us. We are bold in our application of Christianity to transform relationships and take the Gospel intent of "Love one another" as a blue print for making active choices in our day-to-day lives together. We foster awe and wonder through a creative curriculum that underpins and promotes our love for learning. We are inclusive and nurture each person as a child of God with every chance to shine.

Matthew 5:14-16

<sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

**Loving to Learn, Learning to  
Love.**

**For every child a chance to  
shine.**



## Values

Our Christian values follow a two year cycle as follows:

Term	Half Term Value: Year A	Half Term Value: Year B	SEAL Units
Autumn	Koinonia-Community	Creation & Stewardship	New beginnings
	Friendship & Self Sacrifice	Peace & Justice	Say no to bullying/ Getting on and falling out.
Spring	Courage, Endurance & Resilience	Wisdom	Going for goals
	Thankfulness & Humility	Reverence	Good to be me
Summer	Agape-Love	Compassion & Forgiveness	Relationships
	Trust	Hope	Changes

## Welcome to Layston!

We hope you will enjoy being part of the happy and caring community that makes our school so special.

## Our Aims at Layston School

We aim to be a community which warmly welcomes all and which creates a stimulating environment for learning through a lively, creative curriculum - a place where every child will have the support they need. We aim to:

- Develop an understanding of the Christian faith, and to foster spiritual growth.
- Provide all our children with a safe and happy school in which learning is valued as an enjoyable experience.
- Encourage children to be curious and creative, to think for themselves and to develop enquiring, questioning minds which thrive on challenge and which aim high.
- Develop a love of learning and a determination to try their best, and to become life-long learners.
- Give children the confidence to embrace change and to engage with technological advances.
- Promote good health through a rich and varied programme of sporting activities and through a commitment to healthy eating.
- Provide an environment where children feel good about themselves and optimistic about the future. A place where caring for and supporting others is second nature and where good manners are a given
- Encourage children to value everyone and show respect for all members of the community whatever their race, gender or creed.
- Provide an ethos where children feel that their voice can be heard and that by making a contribution they can make a difference and make changes for the better.
- Foster concern about the world they live in: to take pride in their school and their local environment and care about the world that they will leave for future generations.
- Work in partnership with parents in the education of their children and encourage their involvement & support.

## Communication between School and Families

Our experience tells us that good communication between school and home is vital. Please let us know if you think we could improve how we communicate with you.

The School's contact details are as follows:

**Office Staff:** Christine Rose  
Samantha Woolford  
Aly Price

**Telephone:** 01763 271235

**Email:** [admin@layston.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@layston.herts.sch.uk)

**Tapestry:** We use the online Learning Journey Tapestry to record children's achievements over the year. You will be asked to fill in a form, and will then be sent an email to activate your account. You will be able to log in and see your child's learning journey, add comments and add your own observations. We love to see what children have been learning at home as well!

**Newsletters:** We update parents regularly on upcoming events via newsletters. These are also displayed on our web site: [www.layston.herts.sch.uk](http://www.layston.herts.sch.uk).

**Calendar dates** for the year are published on our website.

**Parents' evenings:** You can discuss your child's progress, usually in October and learning conferences in March. If you need to talk to us about your child please make an appointment to see your child's class teacher after school, or you can ring the office to make an appointment to see the Head teacher.

**Written progress reports** are issued in July and you will be given the option of seeing your child's teacher to discuss these.

**Governors:** The names of all our governors are included in Appendix 1 at the back of the Guide. You can contact them through the school office.

**Forms to fill in:** During the school year there will be a number of times we need to ask your permission for various activities and we will send forms home for you. However there are 4 key forms that we ask all parents to fill in as soon as your child starts at Layston. These are:

- Home School Agreement - this sets out what you can expect from us and, in turn, what we ask of you. Please return one copy and keep one for your own reference.
- Data sheet to give us information for your child, such as emergency contacts etc. This also includes permission to allow us to take your child on local trips around the town.
- Responsible Internet use.
- Image consent form.

## Starting School.

Starting school is an exciting time for all children. It can also be a nervous time for them and you. Your child will have been on visits to the school and so should be familiar with the routines and buildings. We find most children settle in quickly and happily and are helped by these guidelines:

- Try hard not to let your child know if you are anxious, instead make sure you are enthusiastic about the fun they will have that day.
- Drop your child off but do not take too long to say goodbye. It is much easier for your child that you say goodbye quickly and that you promise to pick them up after they have had fun.
- Show your child you are interested in their school day but remember she/he may come home from school tired, so wait until she/he is ready to share the day with you - perhaps at bedtime or in the bath.

## Learning in Reception Class

Children in Reception follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, which is divided into seven areas of development and learning:



Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development.

The Reception class staff also support children in four *specific areas*, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world;
- Expressive arts and design.

Children will develop their skills and knowledge through a variety of adult led and independent activities. They will have opportunities to work in small groups and will develop early reading, writing and maths skills. The Reception Class is well resourced with exciting toys to play with and things to do. The children will not always know they are learning or working hard - they will see themselves as having fun and playing!



### **Ways to help your child prepare for starting school:**

**Health and Speech:** Be quite sure that your child can see and hear well and that any speech difficulties are not the result of a loss of hearing. If you have any doubts discuss them with your doctor well before the time to start school. Should there be difficulties, do tell the class teacher when your child starts school.

**Talk to your child:** By talking about the interesting things you see, you are helping your child to build up a good vocabulary and good background knowledge. It is important that your child should be able to talk clearly and express him/herself well. Every child has natural curiosity. We can respond to this by answering questions when children seek information and by giving answers at a level the child can understand. Wherever we go there can be interesting things to talk about - even doing the washing involves setting the machine, measuring the soap powder and sorting clothes and timing. Encourage him/her to put away the toys and materials they have been using. You can help by telling him/her stories; stories that are repetitive and where he/she can "Huff and puff and blow the house down".



**Count things around the house:** Count the knives and forks as you lay the table together; the tins and packets when you return from shopping. Let him/her weigh when you weigh, measure when you

measure. Introduce the concepts of big and little, long and short, more and less.

**Reading:** Let your child handle books, turning pages and searching for similar pictures or looking for the next picture in sequence. Teach him/her to respect books and to enjoy them. Remember when you are reading to your child choose books that YOU enjoy; enjoyment is contagious. Your child will then arrive at school enthusiastic to read.



**Recognising their name:** Help them to recognise their name, as it will be written in school i.e. with a capital letter for the initial letter and then lower case letters.

**Clothes:** Let your child practice getting dressed by themselves - doing up their own shoes, buttons, and putting on gloves and outdoor clothes. Please make sure your child's coat, hat and shoes are clearly marked with their name written in this script so they will be able to recognise them when they start school.

**Personal Hygiene:** Children are expected to be able to say clearly when they need to go to the lavatory and to be able to manage there by themselves, including wiping themselves, flushing the toilet, and washing and drying their hands.



**Playing with others:** Above all give them experiences that allow them to learn to play happily with other children of about his/her own age and, most of all, to be happy with other people around.



## Getting to school.

We encourage children to have a healthy journey to school. This is obviously healthier for the children and also aids the congestion outside of school at the beginning and the end of the school day.

**Bikes and scooters** can be stored during the day in our bike shelter situated at the bottom of the lower playground. Please do not ride your bike or scooter in the playground.

**Driving:** If you do need to come to school by car please be considerate of our neighbours and do not park in front of their gates or on the path. Also please do not park in the school car park as this is for staff.

Parents who have not accepted the offer of a place for their child at a suitable primary school within two miles and who have chosen a school further away will have to meet the costs of transport. For more information please go to [www.hertsdirect.org](http://www.hertsdirect.org)

## The School Day.

**08.45 - Doors open** - Children and parents are asked to wait in the bottom playground until the whistle is blown at 8.45. Children should then begin to go to their classes.

**09.00 - Registration closes**

**12.00 - 1.00 - Lunchtime** EYFS and KS1

**12.15- 1.15pm - Lunchtime** KS2

**3.15 - End of School** - Parents are asked to collect Reception children in their own play area. Other parents are asked to wait in the bottom playground for children where they will be dismissed to parents/carers individually. If you are delayed and are unable to make other arrangements for the collection of your child please make sure the school office is informed before 3.15pm.

## **Attendance**

Every single day of your child's learning counts at Layston. The staff and Governors have high expectations that your child will not miss any school other than for illness or unavoidable medical appointments or external examinations. This is particularly the case for holidays. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the Head teacher will not authorise family holidays in school time. We work closely with our Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Officer to monitor persistent absentees.

We recognise and celebrate attendance at Layston; all children achieving an attendance of 96% or higher each term will get a certificate of Attendance.

### **Absence from school**

If your child is ill, we ask that parents inform the school office by 8.30 and follow this with a short note giving the dates of and reason for the absence. Our 'First Day Call' policy means that we will ring you after this time if your child is absent without explanation. (Please see Appendix 2 which outlines the number of days children should be kept at home for various infectious diseases and Appendix 3 which explains our policy on medicines in school, and the role of the school nurse).

In the case of planned absence (e.g. medical appointments, approved external examinations such as ballet etc.) please let us know either verbally or in writing in advance. You should provide us with a copy of any medical appointment letter.

If you need to take your child out of school during the school day please sign them out with one of the office staff.



### **Lateness**

We expect that children will arrive on time each day, ready to learn with the right equipment for school each day. In the event that your child does arrive late you must accompany them to the office so you can sign them in.

## Eating and drinking at School

Layston is a healthy school and has been recognised through our 'Healthy School Status' and our arrangements are made to support this.

**Milk** - All children can order milk for the subsidised price of approximately £27 per term. You will be sent a form each term to say whether you wish your child to have milk. Reception children do not pay for milk until the term in which they are five.



**Fruit & Vegetable Scheme** - During the afternoon the children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are given a free piece of fruit or vegetable each day under the Government's School Fruit & Vegetable Scheme. This is part of an initiative to encourage the eating of at least five portions of fruit or vegetable every day. The fruit/vegetables supplied are fresh, of good quality and delivered three times a week. Children in Year 3 and 4 can also order fruit at the cost of 12p per day.



**We are a nut free school and kindly ask you to refrain from bringing nuts or nut based products into school during school session.**

**Lunch** - Children may choose between school lunches or packed lunch.

- School lunches are prepared on the premises by Herts Catering Ltd. A free school meal is available for *all* children in Reception, Year 1 and 2. We have a pre-order meal system: the children can choose a main meal - meat or vegetarian or a school packed lunch each day.
- Year 3 and 4 meals will cost £2.85 per day from September and can be paid for daily, weekly, half-termly or termly. **All meals must be paid for in advance.** In our attempt to become a cash free school we encourage parents to pay via "School Gateway" which can be accessed on line or via smart phone app. Free school meals are available for children of any family receiving benefits.



- Children can opt to have school lunches on any set day or days. Special meals, such as Christmas lunch, are also offered at times throughout the year - you will receive a note home about these.
- Packed lunches should be brought in a lunchbox marked with your child's name. Please do not give your child any foods containing nuts as we have some children with nut allergies. Please also support us as a Healthy School by packing a 'healthy lunch'. No sweets or chocolate bars please.

**Snacks for playtime** - children can bring a snack for example, fruit or vegetables or savoury crackers and cheese - We encourage our children to make healthy choices to further support our 'Healthy School' status. Please no nuts, crisps, chocolate or sweets.

**Water bottles:** Water aids concentration and we encourage all children to bring a bottle of water (with a sports lid to prevent spillages) to school every day. Please make sure the bottle is named.

## Uniform and Equipment

School uniform is an important aspect of our school because it gives a sense of shared identity with the school community.

It is also practical for activities in school.

<b>Pupils (Cold and Warm weather options)</b>
White shirt with a collar or white polo shirt with collar
Fleece, sweatshirt, cardigan or V-neck jumper in bottle green. NO hoods.
Grey smart trousers, smart grey skirt or smart grey pinafore dress.
Socks: grey, black or white. Tights: green or grey
Black or brown shoes with a low heel - NOT boots or trainers.
Check green school dress or smart grey shorts (summer term)

PE Kit	Outdoor games kit	Swimming kit
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Apple green shorts (from school office) Bottle green school PE t-shirt Socks Black or white trainers	Bottle green school PE t-shirt Bottle green jogging bottoms Bottle green sweatshirt Black or white trainers Socks	Swimming costume (one piece for girls and swimming trunks for boys- not shorts that flap around the legs) Towel Swim hat if hair can be put into a pony tail Bag that the child can carry Water proof coat
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### Forest School

<u>Cold weather</u>	<u>Warm weather</u>
School green jogging bottoms	PLAIN Long sleeved T shirt ( long sleeved grey t -shirts with school logo available)
Green sweatshirt	PLAIN DARK leggings or lightweight trousers ( no jeans)
Stout trainers	Stout Trainers
Wellies (to be left in school)	Wellies (to be left in school)

### Please Note

Legs and arms need to be covered in the forest even in warm weather due the presence of thorns, brambles and nettles and so on.

In exceptionally hot weather the children will be directed to wear PE kits and take part in modified forest school activities avoiding the above.

Waterproofs are provided by school and expected to be worn when Forest School leaders decide it is appropriate i.e. wet, cold, muddy conditions.

Parents to provide an application of sunscreen before school and provide sunhats as necessary in hot weather as well as appropriate layering in cold.

**Uniform is available from:**

[www.mapac.com/education/parents/uniform/laystonchurchofenglandfirstschool](http://www.mapac.com/education/parents/uniform/laystonchurchofenglandfirstschool)

This link can be found on the school website.

**No Heels** - children do need to have sensible shoes, not boots or high heels as they will wear their shoes in the classroom all day.

**No Jewellery** - for safety reasons children must not wear earrings on the days they have Forest School, swimming or PE. Staff are not permitted to remove the earrings so they should not be worn to school on these days. Children may wear sensible watches, these will be the child's own responsibility at all times.

**Long hair** - should be tied back. Green or green and white hair bands only please.

**No nail varnish.**

**Coats.** Children will be asked to play outside in most weathers, please ensure they have a suitable coat with them.

**Hats.** On the days your child is swimming please ensure they have either a hooded coat or hat to protect them on the walk to Freman College. During very hot weather, please ensure your child has a sun hat and has had sun cream applied before coming to school. Sun cream should not be brought to school. Please contact the office if your child has a sun-related medical condition.

**No personal items please!** We would be grateful if you would not allow your child to bring any other equipment such as pens and pencils or toys into school in case they get lost or damaged.

### **Homework.**

Children will have homework that reinforces work carried out in class. The total time for this home work should not be more than

- $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour a week for Reception,
- 1 hour a week for years 1 and 2
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours a week for years 3 and 4.

We ask that you support your child with their homework but do not do it for them. Part of the learning process for your child will be in their explanation

to you about their work and parental interest in a child's work has been shown to improve the progress a child makes in school.

## **Reading Homework**

Every child will bring a reading book home to read with you. Your involvement in reading is essential for your child to progress fully. Please note, we say 'read with you' not 'read to you', as it should be more a case of sharing a book. As you look at the book together, it is important to ensure your child really understands what they are reading, is encouraged to predict what may happen next and to talk about the pictures.

Reading together should be an enjoyable time with a cosy cuddle and lots of talking. If your child struggles with a word, read it for them and praise them as much as possible to develop their confidence. Five or ten minutes a day will really help your child to make progress. Above all, make it fun!

Please note, we actively encourage children to read more than their school reading book. Reading during the long summer break is particularly important. We encourage children to participate in the reading challenge run by local libraries.

The books at Layston are grouped into stages that are given the names of colours. This is to ensure that your child gets experience of a good range of books with a wide vocabulary at each level of their reading development. We use the Read Write Inc Programme to start children off with reading.

For your information, the stages progress as follows: Ditties, Red, Green and Purple, Pink, Orange, Yellow, Blue, Grey

Children are expected to have finished reading Grey level books by the end of Year 2. After this, children move onto book bands: Purple, Gold, White, Lime Green, Brown, Grey, Dark Blue, Dark Red and Free Readers.

Please make sure that the school reading books and reading record books are kept in the zipped wallet we provide. Do not carry books and water bottles together in the same bag. Book bags, available from the school office, are recommended.

## **Other homework**

- Year 1-4 children will bring home a variety of homework, including their learning log with an opened ended question to investigate and answer in any way your child wishes. If your child has spellings to learn, we find the look, say, cover, write and check method works best. i.e. encourage your child to look carefully at a word, say the word, cover it up, try to write it and check the spelling. Of course praise is vital!

### School Trips and extra activities.

**Parental Contributions** - There are times when parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution toward the cost of certain activities (e.g. class visits, swimming tuition etc.). School budgets have been frozen for the last three years placing the school under significant financial pressure. We want to provide enriching and educational opportunities for all but we are only able to do so if parents make contributions. No child will be excluded from participating in such activities for non-payment but, it is hoped that parents will appreciate that, if insufficient funding is raised, the activity may be cancelled. No payment will be sought from families receiving income support.

School trips vary each year as does their cost but, to give you an idea, here is a list of recent and planned trips

Year	Term	Trip to	Cost
Reception	Summer	Animal Experience	TBC
1	Autumn	History of Toys	£18.00
1	Summer	Church Farm Ardley	£15.00
2	Spring	Great Fire Of London Workshop	£15.75
2	Summer	Seaside visit	£33.00
3	Autumn	Celtic Harmony	£36.50
4	Autumn	Anglo Saxon Workshop	£12.50
4	Summer	Residential field trip	£190

**After school clubs.** After school clubs are available on the school site. Last year these clubs included dodge ball, dance,





multi sports and football. Information about which clubs are on offer will come out at the start of each term. A charge is made for attendance at most clubs.



**Fund raising days.** There may be days when the children are invited to participate in a fundraising day either for FOLS funds or a charity. e.g .Non-Uniform Day, Children in Need. This will involve paying a small fee, often £1. Your child does not have to take part if you do not wish them to.

### **Pastoral Care.**

Class teachers are generally responsible for the pastoral care of children in their particular class. However, it is the responsibility of the whole school to ensure that children are happy and secure. If you are experiencing a period of family difficulty - such as bereavement, illness or conflict, which you feel might affect your child, we would ask that you share that information with us so that we can give your child every support, consideration and understanding.

Children learn most effectively when they feel safe, secure and happy. We hope that you feel that you can come and share your concerns with us so that we can discuss ways in which we can help your child.

We have high behaviour standards in school and these are outlined in the Behaviour Policy. We seek to establish a strong partnership with our parents. Our general aim is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and collective responsibility.

**Child Protection.** The school works in partnership with parents to support children in every way possible. The Children's Act 1989 places a clear responsibility on schools to ensure that they work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. As a result, if concerns are raised within the school or a child or parent reports a situation involving possible abuse, we would not be able to guarantee confidentiality; the school would have to consult the Social Services without prior consultation with parents.

**Complaints Procedure.** The school aims to work closely with parents and we hope that parents who have any concerns or anxieties will, in the first instance, raise these with the class teacher or the Headteacher. We find that nearly all concerns or potential complaints can be resolved quickly and

satisfactorily through discussion with the Headteacher or other members of the school. If such attempts to settle the complaint informally have failed, then the formal stage must be administered. Details of the procedure for dealing with formal complaints to the Governing Body are available from the school office.

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## Appendix 1 Layston School Governors 2020-21

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mrs Adele McMurrough	Head Teacher
Mr Colin Wilson	Chair of Governors
Mrs Cat Morris	Vice- Chair Parent Governor
Rev Kirsty Wainwright	Vicar
Mrs Rebecca Beazley	Parent Governor
Mr Bryan Mason	Co-Opted Governor
Ms Camilla Arecco	Parent Governor
Mrs Emma Hampton	Parent Governor
Mrs Sam Woolford	Staff Governor
Mrs Bernadette Owen	Co-Opted Governor

More information about our governors can be found on our website.

## **Appendix 2**

On the advice of the County's Medical Officer, we expect children with infectious diseases to be kept at home, at least, for the following periods.

## DISEASE

Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours
Coronavirus- Covid 19	<p>Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if you or your child have symptoms and either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a high temperature</li> <li>• do not feel well enough to go to work, school, childcare, or do your normal activities</li> </ul> <p>You can go back to your normal activities when you feel better or do not have a high temperature.</p> <p>If your child has mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat or mild cough, and they feel well enough, they can go to school or childcare.</p>
Chicken Pox	When all spots have crusted over.
German Measles (Rubella)	4 days from onset of rash
Measles	4 days from onset of rash
Mumps	5 days from the onset of swollen glands.
Scarlet fever	24 hrs after commencing antibiotics.
Whooping cough	48 hrs from commencing antibiotic treatment.
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted and healed or 48 hrs after commencing antibiotic treatment
Verrucae	Not necessary to exclude from swimming
Ringworm of the scalp	Until treatment commenced
Scabies	Child can return after first treatment
Tonsillitis	Child can attend school if well enough

## Appendix 3

### Medicines

We cannot administer medicines in school. If your child needs a medicine during the day, you are welcome to come and give it yourself. If you are unable to come into school, please ask a friend to do it for you and send in a letter giving them permission.

If your child has a medical condition you must complete a Health Care Plan for the school and provide any medication that might be needed i.e. epi pens, inhalers, antihistamine.

We require two inhalers/epi pens to be kept at school, one in the school office and one in their classroom. If your child is going swimming please also pack an inhaler in their swimming bag. A member of staff will always take a child's epi-pen when going off site or to Forest School.

It is your responsibility to ensure medication is always "in date"

### **School Nurse.**

Our School Nurse organises medicals for your child in their first year of school. Any parents wishing to discuss a health matter with the School Nurse should contact the school office and a member of staff will arrange an appointment for you.

**Policies that may be of interest to parents, available on the website or in the school office:**

Anti-bullying  
Attendance  
Behaviour/Discipline  
Child Protection  
Collective Worship  
Complaints procedure  
Drug Education  
Special Educational Needs

Food Policy  
Health and Safety  
Homework Policy  
Internet Safety  
School Equality Scheme  
Religious Education  
Sex and Relationships  
Uniform Policy