



Lower School

Parent Handbook

A guide to Lower School for
Parents/Carers

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A huge welcome! My name is Keily Tomlin, and I am Head of Lower School here at Harlow Fields School and College. If you are reading this from September 2024 I am currently on a secondment for five terms and my post is being covered by Michelle Sparks who is a seconded Deputy Head Teacher.

The purpose of this handbook is to give parents/carers an overview of the Lower School department, to help them understand the structure of the department, who everyone is and an idea of what we do.

Our motto is ‘Working together to Succeed’ and that includes parents too. Whilst as a school we have a range of expertise and experience working with lots of pupils, as parents/carers you are the experts on your child, so we will always work with parents, considering their ideas and views.

How is Harlow Fields School and College organised?

The current classes within each department are as follows:

<u>Lower School (EYFS/KS1/KS2)</u>	<u>Upper School (KS3/KS4)</u>	<u>Sixth Form (KS5)</u>	<u>PMLD</u>
Oak Rowan Hazel Willow Beech Maple Mulberry Sycamore	Lea Stort Avon Orwell Chelmer Thames	Kestrel Hawk Eagle	Blake Morris
		<u>1:1 Provision (KS3-5)</u> Dahl	

Who is who?

Leadership Team

Kathleen Faherty- Headteacher	
Tracey Kiddell- Deputy Head	Michelle Sparks-Deputy and Head of Lower School
Annie Thompson – Assistant head and head of sixth form	Craig Bailey-Whyte – Head of Upper School

Lower School Teachers

Sandra – Oak Class	Kerry - Maple
Adam - Hazel Class	Megan Beech
Mira - Rowan Class	Chrissi - Mulberry
Caroline - Willow Class	Emily - Sycamore

Lower School Grouping and Pathways

There are eight classes in Lower School, to ensure that teaching is pitched correctly, classes are divided into three pathways: Sensory Engagement, Structured Engagement and Subject Specific. Pathways are fluid as the needs of the children change, and end of year assessments are used to inform future groupings. Currently Lower School class groupings fall into two pathways.

<u>Sensory Engagement</u>	<u>Subject Specific</u>
Oak	Sycamore
Hazel	Maple
Rowan	Mulberry
Willow	
Beech	
Mulberry	

On both pathways, the teachers at Harlow Fields School and College acknowledge through their planning that to help learners embed their learning they may need to repeat certain elements to ensure that learning is retained. We know through cognitive load theory that to ensure skills and knowledge are retained in the long-term working memory, teaching will need to be repeated and revisited.

For a more detailed overview of the pathways please see page7. All pathways follow the same curriculum topics which can be seen on page8. Topics are used a way of hooking and engaging learners.

What does a school day look like for my child?

Below is a guide as to what a typical day for a pupil in lower school may look like. Each class will have slightly different timings or may have things in different orders and that is to take into consideration lunch hall or playtime slots. Toileting may also happen throughout the day as well as set times.

Time	Activity	Additional info
8:50-9:10	Registration- Pupils arrive into school	8:50- Transport 9:00- Walkers
9:10-9:30	Literacy, interaction and communication focus	Focus on interaction and communication. Personalised time given to pupils to settle in school.
9:30-10:30	Lesson 1	First lesson of the day as per timetable- teachers personalise and structure learning to individual and class needs.
10:30-10:50	Playtime	
10:50-11:15	Snack and Toileting	Children to have their morning snack and routine toilet break.
11:15-12:00	Lesson 2	Second lesson of the day per timetable.
12:00-1:30	Lunch/Play/Social & Independence Skills	Depending on when classes are scheduled to access the dining hall, each class will have roughly 30minutes to eat lunch, 30minutes for playtime and then 30minutes for independence and social skills.
1:30-2:50	Lesson 3	This may be broken into two smaller sessions or broken down to include tasks such as an afternoon snack, playtime and story time.
2:50-3:00	Home time	2:50- Transport 3:00- Walkers/parent pick up

How do I communicate with school?

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school please call the school office on 01279 423670 as soon as possible and before the start of the school day.

All children have a home-school communication book where you can share important daily information. You can also always call the school office who will pass on any important information. If you are dropping and collecting your child from the gate, we will always try our best to communicate but we must keep these interactions short as it is a busy time of the day.

The school has a very active X (twitter) page, where you can see all the exciting things we are up to in school. We use Earwig to document and evidence learning which you will also have access to.

Additional, to all of this we have parents' evenings, two times a year as well as your child's annual review. At the end of each term, you will be invited in for a merit celebration and in the summer term a sports event.

Safeguarding

At Harlow Fields School and College, we take safeguarding seriously. With the children at the centre of everything we do, keeping them safe is the most important part. If you have any safeguarding concerns, then please contact us immediately.

Lower School Social and Independence Focus

Personal/Independence

- Extended toileting time or opportunity to develop self-care
- Gathering resources/helping for next session
- Practice washing hands/face (personal hygiene)
- Child initiated play
- Fine motor skills
- 1:1 adult time (personal to child)
- Changing reading books

Emotional

- Check in including feelings
 - Social stories
 - Zones of regulation
- Special/targets stories
- Celebrations of work

Intention

Our aspiration is for our pupils to be as happy, safe and independent as possible. This time either before or after lunch gives specific allocated time for pupils to participate in activities that help make steps towards those aspirations.

Well-being

- Dance and movement
- Sensory box (bubbles etc)
- Quiet time
- Reflexology
- Story time
- TACPAC
- Mindfulness colouring
- Intensive interaction

Social

- Group games
- Group singing and signing
 - Makaton
- Sharing time (adult led)
- Adult led play (modelling prosocial behaviours)
 - Team games
 - Show and tell

Lower School Pathways-

	Engagement		Subject Specific
Learning Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning to develop joint attention • Needs time/space to process stimuli • Early problem-solving skills • Pre-intentional to emerging intentional communication • Emerging Social awareness • Learnt responses to familiar routines/contexts • Sense of self by responses to sensations including hunger, pain, heat etc 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the statements of pre key stage standards • Some levels of independence, social awareness, comprehension skills • Applying some skills and knowledge • Communication skills • Self-evaluative • Maintenance, retention and generalisation of skills evident • Emerging understanding of abstract concepts • Developing confidence
	<p style="text-align: center;">Sensory Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Learning Difficulties • High levels of physical and/or medical needs • Sensory impairments 	<p style="text-align: center;">Structured Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent difficulties with social interaction and communication • Repetitive patterns of behaviours • Restricted interests and activities • Difficulties with sensory processing 	
Approaches to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sensory learning experiences • Familiar routines and repetition • Turn-taking experiences • Visual/tactile/sensory cues (photos, music, smells, textures) • Experiential learning • Extended processing time • Intensive interaction • Active exploration • Personalised communications systems • Physical development and postural management • 1-1, independent paired, and group experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured teaching systems • Familiar routines and repetition • Visual timetables and schedules • Self-regulation strategies • Structured exploration • Turn taking experiences • Personalised behaviour support • Clear physical structure within the environment • Personalised communication systems • Visual supports (photos, PECs) • Self-regulation strategies • 1-1, independent paired, and group working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual supports (symbols, written) • Problem Solving • Some self-regulation strategies • Turn taking activities • Purposeful peer interactions • Using personalised communication systems • Some self-assessment and evaluation • Application and generalisation of skills • 1-1, independent, paired and group working
Assessment Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 areas of EHC Plan • 5 areas of Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 areas of EHC Plan • 5 areas of Engagement • B Squared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 areas of EHC Plan • B Squared

Literacy, Maths and PSHE Skills:

Autumn	Spring	Summer
<p>Literacy: Interactive stories, matching objects to symbols, mark making skills, letter formation, book handling skills.</p> <p>Maths: Number songs, number recognition and order, handling shapes, matching, sorting, exploring money, position and direction.</p> <p>PSHE: Making relationships/Understanding emotions</p>	<p>Literacy: Interactive stories, matching objects to symbols, mark making skills, letter formation, book handling skills.</p> <p>Maths: Number songs, number recognition and order, handling shapes, matching, sorting, early statistics, time.</p> <p>PSHE: Sense of self/Keeping safe</p>	<p>Literacy: Interactive stories Non-fiction texts, matching objects to symbols, mark making skills, letter formation, book handling skills.</p> <p>Maths: Number songs, ordering, shapes, matching, sorting, calculations, patterns, capacity, temperature.</p> <p>PSHE: Relationships/It's my body</p>

Curriculum Overview

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Year A	<p>Houses and Homes</p> <p>Science: All about me and ourselves/Electricity</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, giving and following instructions.</p> <p>Topic: different types of home, who lives with us.</p> <p>Creative Arts: 3D Modelling of Buildings (houses and homes) towns. Taking photographs or sourcing images using ICT.</p>	<p>Materials</p> <p>Science: Everyday Materials/Magnetism</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, Internet Safety</p> <p>Topic: Exploring properties of materials</p> <p>Creative Arts: Clay and modelling (changing from by heating)</p>	<p>Our World</p> <p>Science: The World Around Us/Earth and Space</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, coding.</p> <p>Topic: Weather, exploring our local environment.</p> <p>Creative Arts: Planets Collage- large collaborative piece of work.</p>
Year B	<p>Ourselves</p> <p>Science: All about me and ourselves/Animals Including Humans</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, giving and following instructions.</p> <p>Topic: Body parts and facial features, self-care.</p> <p>Creative Arts: Self-portraits. Suggested artist Van Gogh or Frida Kahlo.</p>	<p>Living and Growing</p> <p>Science: Plants/Seasonal changes</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, Internet Safety</p> <p>Topic: Planting seeds, life cycles, human body.</p> <p>Creative Arts: Painting and Collage.</p>	<p>On the Move</p> <p>Science: Light/Sound</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, coding.</p> <p>Topic: Light sources, shadows, types of vehicles.</p> <p>Creative Arts: Making forms of transport (models) using recycled objects.</p>
Year C	<p>Toys and Games</p> <p>Science: All about me and ourselves/Forces and Movement</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, giving and following instructions.</p> <p>Topic: toys from the past and present, noisy toys, toys made from different materials.</p> <p>Creative Arts: Making puppets.</p>	<p>People Who Help Us</p> <p>Science: Families, Children and Parents/Living things and habitats</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, Internet Safety</p> <p>Topic: People in our communities who help us: emergency services</p> <p>Creative Arts: Printing- focus on signs and instructions.</p>	<p>Out and About</p> <p>Science: Our Senses/Rocks</p> <p>Computing: control devices, cause and effect activities, coding.</p> <p>Topic: Exploring natural and man-made materials in our local environment.</p> <p>Creative Arts: Painting and printing (collecting items from the outside environment) Taking photos of local community.</p>

Interventions and Strategies

Below is a table that explains some of the interventions, strategies or adaptive teaching that is used across lower school. It gives a brief explanation of what it is, what it looks like and why we do it.

What is it?	What does it look like?	Why do we do it?
Attention Autism	Stage 1- Bucket activities- Focus Stage2- Attention building- sustain. Stage 3- Interactive game- shift Stage4- Table activities- transition	To increase attention skills and encourage communication. This style can also be used as a teaching/lesson structure.
Reflexology	Staff using the functional reflexology rainbow by Lorraine Senior. Different techniques used on the hands and feet.	Can help calm and regulate pupils. Reinforces positive touch and helps build relationships.
Sensory Stories	Stories with interactive elements that show objects of reference, bring stories to life and engage pupil's senses.	Helps reinforce pupils understanding of stories/words and encourages engagement.
Intensive Interaction	Playful interactions led by the pupil. Working on early interaction skills.	To encourage interactions and eventually more intentional communication.
Sensory Circuits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alerting 2. Organising 3. Calming 	Gives pupils sensory input to help them calm and focus.
Sensory/Messy Exploration	Children exploring and playing with sensory items such as food, sand or water.	Helps develop exploration and early play skills. Gives sensory input which helps pupils focus and regulate.
Offering of Sensory Items	Children wearing ear defenders, chewing a chew or eating different textured food.	Helps to filter or provide sensory input to help pupil regulate. Hopes to prevent sensory overload.
Structured Teaching (TEACCH)	Individual teaching timetables, workstations or booths, work packs, red and green trays. Highly structured routine.	By making the environment predictable it makes pupils feel secure. Ensures pupils are continuously moving on to the next activity. Help

		anxious pupils feel more secure.
TACPAC	Music and touch using various pieces of equipment.	TAPPAC creates sensory alignment and helps people of any age who have sensory impairment, for example, visual impairment, developmental delay, complex learning difficulties, sensory processing disorder or limited pre-verbal levels of communication.

