WOODPECKER HALL ACADEMY RECEPTION

September 2027



Woodpecker Hall ACADEMY

Member of North Star Community Trust

NORTH STAR COMMUNITY TRUST



Dear families,

We would like to welcome you to Woodpecker Hall Academy and hope that your child will enjoy their time with us.

We are excited that you have chosen our school and are looking forward to getting to know you in the coming months and years.

At Woodpecker Hall Academy we strongly believe in creating a positive partnership with our families. Please ask us about any worries you or your child may have, however small they may seem.

You can let us know if you have any queries or questions at any time.

In this booklet we have included some important information about starting in Reception, which you might like to keep for reference. Please read it carefully before your child starts with us in September.

We expect that by the end of their year in Reception, the children will be confident, developing their independence, capable and ready to continue their learning. We look forward to working with you and your child to make the time spent in the Reception year both happy and rewarding.

You will also find more information about the school on our website.

Thank you

Nicky Ross

Headteacher & North Star Community Trust, Leader of Primary Education

Starting School

You should have received a letter via email inviting you to a meeting in July where you will have the opportunity to meet your child's teacher, teaching assistants and senior leadership team. If your child is new to our school, you will also receive a letter inviting you and your child to a 'Stay and Play' session. This will be a great opportunity for children to meet each other and to explore their new setting.

Our 'Working in partnership' booklet

During the 'Stay and Play' session, we will go through our 'Working in partnership' booklet with parents/carers of the children who are new to our school. This gives us the opportunity to discuss strengths, concerns, hopes and expectations about your child.

We value any information that you have which can help complete a successful transition from your home environment into school life.

School day drop off and pick-up

Please keep to the dropping off and collecting times. Children arriving late or being collected late can become distressed. We ask that you always phone us if you are running late so that we are able to reassure your child that you are on your way.

Children must be collected by a known adult or senior school aged child, not a primary aged child. If for any reason a different person is collecting your child, please let the class teacher or a member of the office staff know in advance.

Gates open: 8:45am
School Day starts: 8:55am
School Day finishes: 3.25pm

Uniform

All children are expected to wear school uniform and to come to school smartly dressed. Our uniform is available from Uniform for Kids and Smiths Schoolwear. We keep items with logos to a minimum to help with the cost. This enables our families to get many of the uniform items from supermarkets and high street outlets. There is also a hardship fund which families can apply to if they need help and qualify for support. The school also runs a nearly-new, second-hand uniform shop, every Wednesday. You can buy good quality clothing at a fraction of the price.


woodpecker
PRIMARY ACADE

Our school uniform







White shirt *(long or short sleeved)*
School tie
V-neck purple jumper or cardigan *(school logo)*
Grey trousers
Grey skirt
Grey pinafore
White, grey, black socks or tights
Purple gingham dress *(Summer)*
Black shoes *(*preferably shoes with no laces for Reception children)*

PE Kits	
Indoor PE kit	**Outdoor PE kit**
Navy shorts	**Navy jogging bottoms**
White T-shirt	**Navy zip up jumper**
Black plimsolls	**White T-shirt**
White socks	**Trainers**
	White, grey or black socks

Name on clothing

It is important that your child's clothes are clearly marked with their name. Children's clothes may not only look the same but may also be the same size. It is very upsetting for a child if they come home wearing someone else's clothes. Labelling pens and woven labels may be purchased locally.

Eating breakfast every day

Children need a good breakfast before they come into school.

Research has shown that children who skip breakfast perform less well academically, socially and emotionally, whereas eating breakfast improves children's problem solving abilities, their memory, concentration levels, visual perception and creative thinking.

A hungry child is a sleepy child. Sometimes low blood sugar levels can make a child irritable. Give your child time to eat well in the morning.

After School Care and Breakfast Club

There is After School Care and Breakfast Club for parents who work or are studying. There is information and a form on the school website or you can pop into the office to collect a copy.

Fruit snacks and lunch

Children are provided with a piece of fruit or vegetable every morning as part of the National Fruit Scheme, to support healthy eating. Children can bring their own named water bottle to school.

Your child has the option to have either a school dinner or bring in a packed lunch. Currently, all children in Reception to Year 6 are entitled to a Universal Free School Meal and no payment is required.

Teachers and teaching assistants take children from their classes over to the dining hall at 11.30am and then the teaching assistants supervise their play in the playground after they have eaten.

Please note that fizzy drinks and sweets/chocolates are not allowed to be brought in children's lunch boxes. Woodpecker Hall Academy is also a NUT and FISH FREE school. Please do not include any items in lunch boxes that contain nuts, such as 'Nutella', peanut butter sandwiches or other nut items. We are also fish free due to allergies. Please do not include any items that contain fish, e.g. tuna sandwiches, fish fingers.

Children are encouraged to eat as much as they can. If your child experiences problems at lunchtime, we will let you know.

Health issues – let us know

If your child has a medical problem or allergies which might affect them in school, we need to know. It will help us ensure, for example, that any cooking ingredients used are suitable for all the children.

If your child uses an inhaler, we can supervise its use during the school day. Inhalers are kept in an area in the classroom and children use them under the supervision of an adult. We must have a letter from a GP/ doctor giving precise instructions of dosage. Please note that medication is not administered by staff unless it is part of an emergency care plan which has been agreed by the headteacher.

The school nurse, dentist and audiometrician visit children during their primary school years. We will inform you when your child is due to be seen.

Playtimes

The Reception children have a separate play area to the rest of the school as we want them to feel safe and secure. Many aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum are delivered outside and the children will spend time outside every day. Children are able to develop skills across all areas in both the indoor and outdoor environment.



Behaviour and Safety

In order to minimize the likelihood of children hurting themselves or each other, each teacher will discuss ways of making school a safe, secure and happy environment. At Woodpecker Hall Academy we believe in using positive reinforcement and setting good examples as a tool to support good behaviour and behaviours for learning. Teachers will talk to you frequently if there are any concerns regarding behaviour. For further information on the school's behaviour policy, please refer to the school's website.

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is play-orientated and based on the premise that children learn from the first-hand experience. Learning is further enhanced through 'Focus Group' work with class teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs).

THREE PRIME AREAS OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT:	FOUR SPECIFIC AREAS OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT:
Communication & Language - Listening, Attention & Understanding - Speaking	**Literacy** - Comprehension - Word Reading - Writing
Physical Development - Gross Motor Skills - Fine Motor Skills	**Mathematics** - Number - Numerical patterns
Personal, Social & Emotional Development - Self-Regulation - Managing Self - Building Relationships	**Understanding of the World** - Past and Present - People, Culture and Communities - The Natural World
	Expressive Arts & Design - Creating with Materials - Being Imaginative and Expressive

Forest (school) garden

All Reception classes use our wonderful Forest Garden on a weekly basis to have their additional outdoor sessions which offers the children an insight into what is known as the 'Forest School' ethos. Children have access to natural resources and learning opportunities in the fresh air. As they explore trees and plants, leaves, sticks, insects, mud and activity games, they become more comfortable in a natural setting where they learn a range of new practical skills, becoming more independent, using their imagination, and initiating learning for themselves.

Our Forest Garden follows the Forest School ethos that offers a unique way of building confidence, boosting self-esteem, learning new life skills and promoting independence through hands on learning experiences outdoors.

We kindly ask that your child has a pair of wellies and a hooded jacket at school on days they attend Forest Garden (the class teachers will inform you of dates).

Phonics Read Write Inc.

Woodpecker Hall Academy follows the Read Write Inc. scheme of work to develop new phonics. Children will work in matched level learning groups after the first half term to develop their phonic knowledge, which will help them to read and write.

Children are introduced to the set 1 phonics sounds. A new sound is introduced in each lesson. The lessons focus on hearing the sound, reading the sound, writing it and also blending words with the focus sound, in it.

Once the children have a secure knowledge of the 31 set 1 sounds, they are introduced to a 'bridging the gap unit' encouraging them to apply their phonic knowledge to read short sentences and short stories by blending the sounds they hear. Once children can confidently read these sentences, they will move to the higher stage reading books.

Comprehension of a text is key to developing children's understanding. Finally, fluency and pace is important to ensure your child is a fluent reader. Your child will be encouraged to read clearly and with ease in order to progress within the programme.

A useful phonics website for parents: **www.ruthmiskin.com**

Home learning

Please look at our website (under Policies) to read our Home learning policy and find out about the type of tasks Reception children receive as part of their home learning.
Go to **www.woodpeckerhallacademy.org.uk/Policies** and then '**Home Learning Policy**'.

Please ensure you are reading a bed time story to your child every night to support their understanding of different stories.



TAPESTRY Learning Journal

You will have been given a consent form for Tapestry.

Tapestry is an important Online Learning Journal system where staff record your child's progress and activities using tablet devices (iPads) and PCs. Parents and carers can view their child's journal on mobile devices and on their home computers, and can make observations of their own using a secure login.

This creates two-way communication between us (the EYFS team), and you (the parents and carers).

All children also have Maths and Literacy books in school and you will be able to see their progress in these during parent consultations.

Equal opportunities

We work hard to ensure that every child, regardless of race, religion, culture or class has an equal chance to develop fully. We value a child's home language and encourage the use of it in spoken and written forms in our school. All the children are equal in our esteem and affection. We are totally opposed to racism or discrimination in any form. We avoid sexual or racial stereotyping and encourage every child to have a positive image of themselves and respect for others. Children may only call each other by their given names.

We see the rich variety of cultures in our community as a positive asset to your child's education. We celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year, including Diwali, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Eid and Hanukkah.

How can I help my child prepare for school?

Talking and Listening

- Do you talk with your child? If you do, you are already giving them the best help there is.
- Your child will need oral skills – speaking, listening, asking questions – to get the best out of learning.
- Listen to your child with interest.
- Answer your child with care.
- Consider his or her opinions.
- Make time to enjoy talking together.
- Get into a routine of asking them about their day: "Tell me two good parts of your day. Tell me one thing you are going to do differently tomorrow."

Practise basic phonics in everyday settings

Play Alphablocks on CBeebies to encourage phonics: practise using sounds, segmenting words and blending them with your child.

Recognise sounds and words in the environment around you to help your child hear the initial sound in words – e.g. look at that t-ree, first sound 't'.

Segment sounds in words orally while doing your usual daily routine – e.g. get your c-oa-t on, where is your b-a-g.

Play I spy but sound out the word and see if your child can blend it – e.g. I spy with my little eye a d-o-g.

Explore rhyming words and continue singing or listening to nursery rhymes.

Numeracy

If you want to get started on basic numeracy skills, CBeebies has similar resources called Numberblocks.

Other things you can do

- Encourage your child to tidy up their toys and doing simple household chores – giving them responsibilities will help them to become more independent.
- Help them to recognise their name in writing and to consistently respond to it verbally.
- Encourage them to clean well after using the toilet and wash their hands thoroughly.
- Can your child get dressed by themselves?



Practise getting dressed and undressed independently at home as they will be happier if they are independent.

Help your child by practising:

• JUMPERS • ZIPS • BUCKLES • BUTTONS • SHOES

- Remember to put a label on all clothing to prevent distress if clothes are mislaid.
- Do turn-taking activities, such as playing with a toy – this helps them to get used to taking turns and also to understand the concept of sharing.
- Lots of the learning in Reception happens through play. Get down onto the carpet so you're at their level and enjoy some play with your child. Follow their lead with what they're doing or how they're playing. Then, try to get them to follow your lead and also create games together. This will help them to get used to playing and engaging with other children.
- Encourage them to ask the right questions to ask for help: "Where can I find the tissues please?" "Can you help me put my apron on please?"
- Encourage them to eat with a real knife and fork; scrape food off their plate after meals and tidy up after themselves.
- Give them a space in the home where their book bag goes so they can remember to bring it to school.
- Take them to the library so that they have the experience of choosing their own books.
- Have a bed time routine e.g. bath and reading before they go to bed. Read Aloud is one of our reading initiatives. We want parents to read to their children every day for 15 minutes.
- If you put them to bed early they will be able to get up early and be in a positive mood for school. If they go to bed late, they may be too tired to learn properly.
- Nurture curiosity in your child through showing them how to ask questions and how to be interested in everyday and peculiar topics.
- Limit screen time for your children after 6pm so that they are calm and ready for bed.
- Make a visual calendar of their week, so they know the school days from the weekend and the days they have after-school activities or PE.
- Praise your child for trying rather than achieving something. This is how resilience is built, where children build their confidence even if they haven't achieved their end goal.





FRIENDS OF WOODPECKER

PTA – get involved

We encourage parents and carers to become involved as much as possible in order to feel part of the Woodpecker Hall family. The Friends of Woodpecker Parent Teacher Association (PTA) work together to organise and run fundraising events throughout the year including, cake sales and the Winter and Summer fairs. Each class must have a parent rep on the PTA.

Community Outreach team

Our Community Outreach team work with families and outside relevant agencies to support children's learning and help families during their time at the school.

With the help of teachers and staff, the Outreach team can help our families by offering support in parenting skills, and understanding the school curriculum; as well as in learning English or simply providing you with opportunities to meet other parents and carers. They have liaised with major food companies like Tesco, Farmfoods, Greggs, Waitrose and the Felix Project who kindly provide weekly food donations for families.

Arbor – paying for things

Arbor is a simple, safe and secure system that allows you to make payments for trips, clubs and school meals. It also enables you to receive and respond to messages from the school and to update information we hold about you and your child. It has the added advantage of coming with an App that you can download onto your phone for ease of use from the App store or Google Play store. You can also use Arbor from a PC or tablet as well. If you are new to the school, you will receive an email for this once your child starts Reception.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED ON THEIR FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL?

A: Please ensure your child is wearing their school uniform (no lace-up shoes please). They will also need a water bottle. Everything needs to be clearly labelled with your child's name.

Q: WHEN CAN I SPEAK WITH THE TEACHER?

A: You can make an appointment to meet with the class teacher before or after the school day. Please remember that in the mornings and at the end of the day the teacher's priority is to get the children into class safely and then release them to their parent or carer at the end of the day.

Q: HOW DO I LET THE SCHOOL KNOW SOMEONE ELSE IS PICKING UP MY CHILD?

A: If you are running late you can call the school with the details of who will collect your child and the office staff will pass the message on to the teacher. Please provide the password to the person collecting your child.

Q: WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD IS SICK?

A: Please call the school office before 9am and speak to the office staff. Your child may still want to come to school even if they are unwell but please ensure that you keep them at home if you think that they could infect other children. If your child has vomited they must not return to school until 48 hours after their last bout of sickness in order to avoid spreading infection.

Q: WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD HAS A MEDICAL APPOINTMENT?

A: We ask, that wherever possible, medical appointments are arranged outside of the school day. If you do need to take your child to a medical appointment during the day, please bring your letter to the office. Ensure that you sign your child in and out of school.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: CAN MY CHILD WEAR JEWELLERY?

A: For health and safety reasons children are not allowed to wear jewellery to school other than small, stud earrings.

Q: CAN MY CHILD BRING A SNACK FOR MORNING BREAK?

A: The government supplies free fruit for all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils which they are given during the morning break. Children in Year 3 – Year 6 can bring fruit or a healthy snack for break time

Q: CAN MY CHILD BRING THEIR OWN WATER TO SCHOOL?

A: Yes, we encourage children to drink water during the school day. Please clearly label your child's water bottle.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD HURTS THEMSELVES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY?

A: Our staff are trained to attend to the children. If a child has bumped their head you will receive an email or a call from a member of staff to make you aware. The children in Nursery to Year 2 - which will include Reception children - will also wear a green coloured wrist band as a visual reminder that they have been to the medical room.

Q: HOW DO I PAY FOR TRIPS AND EVENTS?

A: You pay for trips and special visitors on Arbor. We do not take any cash or cheques. Arbor is a secure online payment system that every parent/carer will now be using in the school. If you are new to the school, you will receive an email for this once your child starts Reception. The email will have an activation link and instructions on how to set up your Arbor pay account. Please contact the school office if you have any questions.



Who We Are

Our school is part of North Star Community Trust, an educational charity that manages a family of 4 academies in North London, educating some 2,600 pupils from 2-years of age to 18. As partners in our community, our vision is to help as many children as possible to succeed at school and in life.

To summarise our mission, we use three words for everyone to remember on a daily basis: Education, Community and Opportunity (ECO). By being 'Stronger Together' in our educational quality, our parental and community engagement, our investment in our people and our sustainability, we can meet our specific pledges to all of our children, communities and staff.



STAY IN CONTACT

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