



Horizon School

مدرسة الآفاق

Parents' Handbook

THE IMPORTANCE OF SENSORY LEARNING

Experiences and sensations *are* learning. Sensations form the base understanding from which concepts and thinking develop. Sensory enriched environments are imperative to learning, as neuroanatomist Marian Diamond discovered in her work with rats. These enriched environments included playgroups of ten to twelve rats in large multi-level cages filled with a variety of bridges, ladders, swings and slides, assorted toys, and changing stimuli. Diamond discovered that compared with rats whose mobility and stimuli were restricted, rats in enriched environments actually developed structural changes in their brains, and exhibited behaviour, which could be interpreted as demonstrating improved intelligence.

In the New York Longitudinal Study, 133 subjects were followed from infancy into adulthood. It was discovered that competency in adulthood stemmed from three major factors in the early learning environment:

- 1) rich sensory environments, both outdoors and indoors,
- 2) freedom to employ the environment with few restrictions, and
- 3) available parents that acted as consultants when the child asked questions.

The importance and need for rich sensory and hands-on learning continues throughout our lives. However, many of our educational practices derive from the unexamined assumption that people will learn best if given lots of information in either lecture or two-dimensional written form. And in order to learn they must sit still, keep their eyes forward and take notes. We have only to look at the glazed eyes and vacant stares of students in a lecture hall or classroom to know that this is a belief that needs to be abandoned.

In general, our system of formal education relies too much on language as the medium of instruction. What's wrong with that? To answer that question I would like to refer back to **Einstein's** maxim,

'Learning is experience. Everything else is just information'.

Words though important, are only bits of information. They are not experiential and only poorly substitute for the directness and freshness of hands-on learning.

Words can only be understood when they provoke some kind of image in the mind of the learner. If students cannot access the underlying images, the words are not comprehensible. A lot of confusion is introduced when students miss the meaning of the teacher's words. Experiences, on the other hand, are direct and real. They involve senses, emotions and movements, and engage the learner fully. Real things happen when we experience with our senses, and in the experiencing we observe, relate to past experiences and notice patterns. Words are useful in this process, they help us to organise our thoughts about the sensations. But they are no substitute for the force and vividness of actual experience.

Learning first comes in through our senses. As we explore and experience our material world, initial sensory patterns are laid down on elaborate nerve networks. These initial sensory patterns become the core of our free-form information system that is updated and becomes more elegant with each new, novel experience. These initial sensory patterns become our reference points and give us the context for all learning, thought and creativity. From this sensory base we will add emotions and movement in our life-long learning dance.

Extract from Smart Moves - Why Learning is Not All in Your Head
by Carla Hannaford, PhD



Vision Statement

The independent learner with skills and attributes to manage oneself, relationships with others and to contribute to the community both local and global.

Mission Statement

Horizon School is a learning community with a shared vision where everyone can thrive.

We nurture independent learners.

We value our community's opinions.

We are all accountable.

We recognise that we all learn in different ways and learning should be fun.

We believe play is the essence of being a child.

Ethos

At Horizon School we recognise the importance of parents and the community as contributors to the child's education and aim to work together with parents and the community to ensure that children's needs are met. Regular communication between school and home is encouraged and is recognised as essential to the well being of the child.



AIM OF HORIZON SCHOOL

The Curriculum is not simply a collection of subjects or experiences. This one word is used to describe everything that goes on in a school, which results in pupils learning about the world around them. In the words of the Educational Reform Act, the curriculum means all those activities which are designed to promote the “spiritual, moral, special, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and which prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of adult life”.

- ♦ To provide a planned stimulating environment in which each child will be encouraged to develop his/her full potential through a curriculum that matches his/her needs.
- ♦ To develop a pattern of behaviour which is socially and morally acceptable and to value qualities such as honesty, co-operation, responsibility and mutual respect.
- ♦ To provide a wide variety of experiences in which the children can be active participants in order to harness their natural curiosity and interest in their environment; to encourage full use of all the senses as a means to make connections on the brain and enhance learning.
- ♦ To develop a friendly relationship between teachers, parents and community so that both may work together for the good of the child and the good of the school, and to see the school as an integral part of the wider community to the mutual benefit of both.
- ♦ To provide a broad curriculum, ensuring breadth, balance, progression and continuity encompassing the Programmes of Study, Attainment Targets as laid down in the National Curriculum, with regular built in focused assessment to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Key Stage	United Kingdom	American/ International
	Foundation 1 <i>3 Years by 1st September</i>	
KEY STAGE 1	Foundation 2 <i>4 Years by 1st September</i> Year 1 <i>5 Years by 1st September</i> Year 2 <i>6 Years + completed Year 1</i>	<i>KG1</i> <i>KG2</i> <i>Grade 1</i>
KEY STAGE 2	Year 3 <i>7 Years + completed Year 2</i> Year 4 <i>8 Years + completed Year 3</i> Year 5 <i>9 Years + completed Year 4</i> Year 6 <i>10 Years + completed Year 5</i>	<i>Grade 2</i> <i>Grade 3</i> <i>Grade 4</i> <i>Grade 5</i>

Please be aware that children entering school in Dubai are subject not only to the school's regulations but also those of the Ministry of Education.

SCHOOL HOURS

Children should be in class by 7.45am at the latest. The playground is supervised by a teacher from 7.30 – 7.45am. The whistle is blown during that time to indicate that children may then enter class. Children who arrive after 7.45am will be marked as late on the register.

Preschool and Reception children may be collected from their classrooms at 1.10pm. Other children are collected from their classrooms, at 2.10pm. Sunday—Wednesday and 1.10pm on Thursday. Parents are asked not to enter the classroom area until the allotted time as children may still be using the central area.

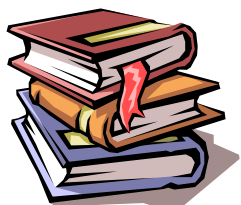
After school activities which are held in school finish at 3.15pm Sunday—Wednesday and 2.15pm on Thursday. Activity times for out of school activities will vary.

SCHOOL TESTS



All children from Year 2 to Year 6 will sit formal exams mid year and end of year. These year end tests are the standardised tests (SATs) drawn up by the UK government. The 'Key Stage' tests are statutory in English government schools and optional in independent schools. Year 2 and Year 6 sit the 'End of Key Stage' tests and Years 3, 4 and 5 sit the 'Optional Year End Tests'. Results are presented as a level ie 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6.

CURRICULUM



Horizon School follows the National Curriculum of England in all subject areas.

Music, PE and Arabic are taught by Specialist teachers, who work closely with class teachers to ensure that their programmes relate to the children's classwork.

Numeracy and science are taught according to National Curriculum guidelines and all other subjects and skills such as literacy, art, design and technology, history and geography are learnt through theme-based class teaching with a strong emphasis on a sensory related, experiential approach. Role-play and drama are encouraged at all stages of learning.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Children completing Year Six at Horizon School are offered advice about applications to various colleges in Dubai. All colleges organise Open Days and set their own entry tests. Some colleges arrange for representatives and ex-pupils to come and talk to our Year 6 children about their schools.

We have a close relationship with many colleges and provide them with detailed profiles about any Year 6 child who applies to them.

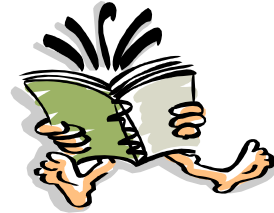


HOMEWORK

Homework for Reception to Year 2 is at the discretion of the teacher but will not exceed 20 minutes. Reading at home is expected and children should have at least one story read to them each day. If the child is ready to have a reading book they may take their book home each evening to share with parents. Children may also take home a chosen library book either to read or to be read to them. We cannot emphasise strongly enough the importance and benefits of reading to your children throughout their primary school years.

Time allocation for homework

Reception	10 minutes reading
Years 1 and 2	30 - 35 minutes
Years 3 and 4	45 - 50 minutes
Years 5 and 6	1 - 1½ hours



All times include reading time.

Teachers will draw up a homework timetable for the class. Please be aware that this will often be subject to change. A copy of this timetable is attached to the cover of the SOS books.

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK

“Educational progress is more likely to take place where parents are involved in and supportive of their child’s learning in school and at home”.¹

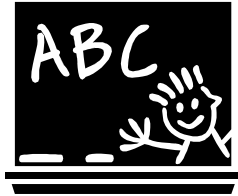
Homework in the Primary School is as important for developing self-discipline and independent work habits as it is for practice and consolidation of class work. To encourage a good work ethic, a child needs a quiet, (away from the TV or other distractions) comfortable place in which to do her/his homework. Most children prefer to have a routine time at which homework is completed but it should not be left until the child is too tired to concentrate.

The amount of help required will depend on the task and on the individual child. Written work should be completed independently once parents are sure that instructions have been understood, while learning tables or spelling words may require more parental involvement. Reading practice in the initial years needs a parent’s full attention, whereas a more confident reader may prefer to read silently and then discuss the story or read part of the story aloud, with an emphasis on expression.

When homework has been satisfactorily completed, parents should sign the SOS/ Homework Diary each day. Homework should be presented punctually, carefully and with pride.

¹ Merttens ‘93

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH SPELLING



Early Strategies

- ☺ Encourage your child to *observe* carefully, using dot-to-dot puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, pairs, spot-the-difference games, mazes etc.
- ☺ Help your child to look closely at words, eg. shop signs, road signs, labels, names.
- ☺ Find the little words inside long words.
- ☺ Use written words at home eg label toy boxes, write shopping lists together, leave each other notes, write to grandparents, play word games.

Spelling Strategies

- ☺ Encourage and praise all efforts at writing.
- ☺ Encourage recognition and underlining of some mistakes, depending on age and confidence level.
- ☺ Help with corrections but let your child write them into his/her own work.
- ☺ More competent readers should use a dictionary for some words.
- ☺ Say aloud each syllable of difficult words as they are being written.
- ☺ Draw attention to the number of words correctly spelt in a piece of work, not just to the errors.

Learning Strategies

- ☺ Learn list words a few at a time. (Ten minutes daily is more effective and less frustrating for you both than a last minute panic on Wednesday evening!)
- ☺ Look carefully for phonic patterns in the list.
- ☺ Break words into syllables.
- ☺ Use the Look, Cover, Write and Check method.
- ☺ Play Hangman using only list words. (More confident spellers can include words from previous lists).
- ☺ Write list words with letters 'jumbled' up and let your child sort them out – eg teromh = mother.
- ☺ List little words inside long words eg. father = fat, at a, he, her.
- ☺ Help your child to write the list in alphabetical order.
- ☺ After the weekly test, praise your child for those they achieved correctly, rather than concentrating on the mistakes.

NB Make it fun, keep it relaxed!



Reading Procedure with your child

Preparation

- ☺ Please don't rush this! Discuss the cover and title with your child: for example, '*Doesn't he look thin and miserable! How do you think he feels?; 'What do you think the story might be about?'; 'Who is the author?'; 'Do you think she did the drawings?'*
- ☺ Talk about the story and let your child make comments. At the same time read some of the text, running your index finger beneath the words. Let your child turn the pages – it helps him to look at the text. It is important that he should hear some of the story first, particularly those parts which he might find difficult when he comes to read. You will have to judge how much he needs to hear: this will not be so necessary where there is a lot of repetition and the text is very predictable.

Listen

- ☺ Sit back and relax while your child reads to you. She starts at the front cover and turns the pages. If she is just making up the text or missing a lot of words, ask her to point to each word with the index finger of her writing hand.

Pause

- ☺ When your child pauses at a word, keep quiet for five seconds. Silently count to yourself '1 elephant, 2 elephants, 3 elephants, 4 elephants, 5 elephants'.

Prompt

If he has not guessed the word after five seconds, prompt him.

- 📖 'Look at the picture'
- 📖 'Try that sentence again', or 'Leave that word out and come back to it'
- 📖 'What's the first sound (not letter) of the word?'

If he still doesn't know the word, tell him.

Please do not ask your child to 'sound out the word'. He might try and do this anyway, but don't emphasise this process as there are too many pitfalls and it interferes with the flow of the reading. He will be getting phonic practice at school and will eventually use this skill when he needs it. At this stage other strategies are more important.

Praise

Praise your child if she:

- 📖 says a word after being prompted
- 📖 corrects herself
- 📖 reads several pages independently

Corrections

If your child misreads a word and it makes sense (eg 'home' for 'house'), don't correct him unless the word is repeated several times.

Re-reading

Encourage her to re-read stories in order to gain confidence and fluency. Sometimes you could ask her to re-tell stories in her own words. This helps her think of the meaning and not just the words of the story.

Making notes

Use a notebook to record the titles of books read, with comments from both yourself and your child if you wish. Your child can bring home favourites and re-read them if he chooses. Ask your child what he thinks of the stories he reads: if he doesn't like a book, he can return it and get another one.

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH MATHS



Early Strategies

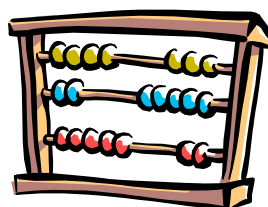
- » Use numbers and counting as part of every day language eg. count the cutlery as it's put on the table, trees en route to school, houses in your street, red cars seen during a journey, sweets in a packet etc.
- » Help your child to make frequent relevant calculations eg. how many months to a family birthday, days to a special treat, plates are needed for dinner, age differences between family members, etc.
- » Help your child to become aware of maths in the kitchen by helping you to weigh ingredients, set the oven temperature, time the cake cooking and so on.
- » Introduce your child to measurement by keeping a family height chart.
- » Teach your child number songs and rhymes from books or tapes.
- » Introduce written numbers with a number chart or counting books.

Numeracy Strategies

- » Play games which involve counting such as, Snakes and Ladders, Ludo or other track games.
- » Bingo or lotto help with number recognition and can be made more complicated for older children by using simple sum cards instead of just calling out the numbers.
- » Move on to games which need simple addition for score-keeping.
- » Invent games which 'play' with numbers eg. making sums with car registrations during a journey, trying to spot the biggest (or smallest) registration number, finding as many ways as possible to make a certain number.
- » Encourage your child to use the calendar to mark special dates and calculate how many days, weeks or months they have to wait.
- » Many card games eg Happy Families, use the idea of 'sets', (the beginning of multiplication and division).
- » Use games such as rubber-tipped darts to encourage doubling and trebling numbers.

Learning Strategies

- » Once your child can count confidently, teach him to count backwards, to count in twos, tens, fives and, later, threes, fours etc.
- » Addition and subtraction facts to 20 and, eventually, multiplication and division tables are essential tools for effective mental arithmetic and need to be learned.
- » Help your child to learn a few facts or tables a day when required, so that she is not overloaded with facts to remember. Brief daily practice is invaluable.
- » Many children learn well from tapes which set tables to music or by chanting them with actions and movement.
- » Some children learn facts quicker if they are written down frequently.
- » When your child has numeracy homework, explain the work if necessary but avoid doing it for him. Encourage and praise all efforts and help your child to make corrections if errors occur, rather than correct them yourself.
- » Be positive and patient. Maths should be fun!
- » The best way to develop mathematical ability is to learn to play a musical instrument. Sounds strange but it's a fact!



UNIFORM and SCHOOL BAGS



The school uniform is compulsory. It is available from Zaks uniform shop, as are the school book bags (Foundation—Year Two) and backpacks (Years 3-6).

Girls: Gold and white striped short-sleeved dress, white ankle or knee length socks and navy shoes.

Boys: Gold and white striped short-sleeved shirt, navy shorts, white ankle socks and navy shoes.

Black regulation shoes may be worn in Years 5 and 6. Long uniform trousers may also be worn in Years 5 and 6.

Regulation school sweaters and uniform tracksuit pants only may be worn in winter. All clothes and possessions must be clearly labelled with your child's name. We cannot be held responsible for un-named articles. A lost property box is kept in the school playground. Any property not claimed after a certain period of time will be sold on our second hand stall.

Hairstyles and jewellery

Children's hair must be clean, neat and tidy. If it is long enough to fall over their faces when they are working, it must be clipped out of their eyes and either held back with a school hair band or tied back in plaits, ponytails or bunches. This policy applies equally to girls and boys. No jewellery of any kind is allowed in school (not even jewellery with religious significance), with the exception of small studs for children with pierced ears. No jewellery at all should be worn on PE/ Swimming days. Please remove children's stud earrings before coming to school. Older children may wear a small watch.

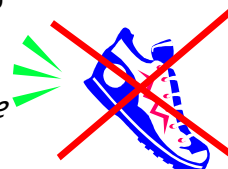


Swimwear

Children are expected to wear the school regulation swimwear. The swimwear is specially designed to protect children from the sun's rays. Swimsuits, swimming trunks, T-shirts and full cover suits are all available. Parents may choose the style they require from the regulation products.

Shoes

When selecting shoes, please choose only from the list provided. No trainers are allowed except for PE.



Hats

We insist that children wear hats during outside breaks. There is evidence of a greater incidence of skin cancer in later life amongst those who are constantly exposed to the sun during childhood.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE



- 9 To administer first aid and treat minor ailments
- 9 To look after children when ill, until the parent or guardian can collect them from the school
- 9 To monitor the growth and development of the children
- 9 To liaise with parents and the Department of Health in order to keep children's immunisations up to date
- 9 To maintain health records for each child

If your child is sick and unable to attend school, the school nurse should be informed. If your child needs to take any medication during school hours the medicines should be brought to the nurse by the parent/guardian with written instructions.

If children are sick and unable to participate in physical education and swimming classes, please do not send them to school at all unless they have a sick note from the doctor excusing them from a particular activity and stating the reason. Children are excused from school if they are suffering from any infectious disease. These include usual childhood infections plus conjunctivitis, impetigo, ringworm and head lice.

Immunisation Programme

The immunisation programme in the UAE may be different from the one in your country. The programme here is based on recommendations for this region from the World Health Organisation. Immunisations are carried out at regular intervals throughout the school year. It is important that records of immunisation given outside the school be made available to the school nurse.

The school nurse is available by appointment during school hours to discuss any of the above, or any aspects of your child's health.

NUTRITIONAL SNACKS



Children eat and drink indoors before playing outside. They need food and drink for two intervals for Pre-school, Reception, Years 1 and 2 and for one interval for Years 3 to 6. Children must bring in a healthy and nutritious snack, eg, sandwiches, rice, vegetables, noodles and fruit. No fruit Roll-ups, nuts, chocolate or sweets are allowed. Children should bring an extra snack on activity days.

Children are not allowed to share snacks, for medical reasons. This is very important as some children have serious food allergies – eg fish, eggs, nuts.

We are a nut-free school and ask that you support this please.

Drinks should be brought in an unbreakable container. No fizzy drinks are permitted. Water coolers can be found both in the playground and within the school building and children must have a water bottle at all times in class.

BIRTHDAYS



While we are happy to acknowledge your child's birthday in school, this must be kept to the distribution of cupcakes or anything *small* and individual which can easily and quickly be given out. These can be brought in by the child in the morning or delivered to the front desk before 10am. This sharing time will not take the form of a major celebration and parents will not attend.

WATER

All current research into the development of the brain agrees that the brain requires a plentiful and frequent supply of water. Therefore, every child keeps a small bottle of water on the table at all times.

Parents will provide each child with a **330ml** size bottle of water with a drinking spout at the beginning of the week and are then free to replace that bottle as frequently as they like. We recommend that this is done at least once a week. Replacement bottles must be the same size as the original as these take up minimum space on the child's desk.

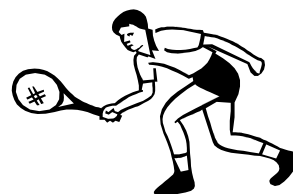
ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

A varied activity programme is offered at Horizon School, Sunday—Wednesday from 2.15 pm—3.15pm. And Thursday 1.15-2.15pm. If any parent is willing to assist with this programme for an hour a week please talk to the School Nurse or Receptionist.

This is a sample of the activities offered:

Drama	Playground Games	Glass Painting
Art & Craft	Painting	Needlework
Music	Chess	Cookery
Board Games	Weaving	Stamp collecting
Netball	Sailing	Rugby
Yoga	Football	Gymnastics
Karate	Computers	Swimming
Golf	Horse Riding	Arabic
Tennis	Ski-ing	Rock Climbing

Children sign up each term for their choice of activities on a 'first come, first served' basis.



PAYMENT OF FEES

Full payment of fees are as follows:

Term 1 (September intake) By the first day of term which is the start of teacher's week normally the end of August one week before the children start school. The dates can be found on our website under Term Dates.

Term 2 (January intake) By the first day of term.

Term 3 (April intake) By the first day of term.

- ♦ If your circumstance change or you are facing any difficulties in attending to these days, it is imperative that you contact us in advance so we can either release the placement or support your needs. We can then ensure your child is fully registered in their class before they enter school and the school resource systems are open to them, thus allowing them to take school resources home from the first day and register for their activities.
- ♦ When paying school fees by credit card there is a bank charge: Visa & Mastercard 1.70% - JCB 3.20% - Amex 4.15% - Diners Club 4.25%.
- ♦ A complete academic term's notice must be given if a child is leaving, ie if a child is leaving at the end of term 1 notice should be given at the end of Summer (June) term or if leaving during term 2 parents must give notice by the first day of term 1. If a child is leaving at the end of the school year (June) parents must give notice by the *1st March*.
- ♦ Transfer certificates will be issued when all dues have been paid and the ministry has issued the certificate.

Admission Policy

At Horizon School we accept children from various schooling systems and do not prioritise our intake by nationality. Children entering school are expected to have a degree of spoken and written English language appropriate for their year group.

Children will participate in an assessment of their abilities. Foundation and Year One children are assessed on their language development, in their mother tongue and English, their gross and fine motor development and social skills. The standard of parents' English is also considered. Siblings are given priority if they fulfill the readiness requirements. If a child is unable to attend school for assessment then an offer may be made on the basis of past reports. The school will assess the child during their first few days of school and, should we find that your child requires specialist help to enable them to cope at their year level in the national curriculum, we shall notify you and discuss your child's needs. Children will then be supported by the Learning Enhancement programme. There may be an additional cost for this specialist help. This support programme is reviewed termly.

Should the school find that it is not able to meet the needs of a child, then discussions for alternative schooling will take place.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of any past difficulties encountered in previous schools and of the child's medical history so that we can be aware of each child's particular needs.

Children will participate fully in all subjects including Arabic, Music, Swimming , P.E. and Islamic Studies (if pupils are Muslim). Exemptions cannot be made without written permission from KHDA.

We do understand that sometimes families have no option as to when to take holidays but generally we prefer that children attend school for the whole term. Leaving early before term ends is not only disruptive for the child, but also for other children, teachers and administration. It would be much appreciated that, if possible, children remain in school until the last day of term. As per ministry requirements a formal request should be sent to the Headteacher.

Children in Years 5 and 6 participate in four-day field trips during the school year. Children take part in these camps as part of their social and academic curriculum. Exemptions cannot be made unless due to a medical condition and, in accepting a place at Horizon, parents are committed to supporting these programmes.

The "out of school activities" (eg horse riding, rock climbing etc) are arranged by the school on behalf of the parents with the clubs involved. The school cannot take responsibility for the children taking part in any "out of school activity". However, we would be grateful if you would keep us informed of any situations you felt were unacceptable and this will be investigated.

Parent Undertaking:

I/We have read and understood the Admission Policy (which is contained in the prospectus) and are aware of the details of the term's notice.

✂ _____

I/We the undersigned have read, understood the information and accept the conditions contained in the Registration Policy.

Child's Name: _____ (please print) Class: _____

Parents' Signatures: _____/_____

Dated: _____

TEACHER IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Teachers at Horizon School receive regular formal and informal training in all aspects of the curriculum. Some workshops are held in school while other conferences are run by visiting UK specialists to Dubai at the request of heads of schools. Seminars are held with teaching professionals from other British and International Schools from throughout the Gulf.

Seminars have focused on accelerated learning, brain gym, multiple intelligence and learning styles; literacy and numeracy strategies and the literacy and numeracy hours; information and communication technology; teacher appraisal; middle management in schools; attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity in children and other areas of investigation of children with particular needs including those who are gifted. Science and Art workshops also take place.



THE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

There is an active PTA within the school, which is instrumental in organising fundraising and charity events for the school (such as the Halloween disco, Park picnics, International Fair and quiz/disco evening), assisting in classrooms and helping to supervise children during class excursions. The group also facilitates communication between staff and parents.

Your school needs you!

If you are interested in joining the PTA or wish to help at any events organised by the group, please contact the school to be put in touch with the PTA representatives.



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