



Middleton Handbook

Why have the Middleton Handbook?

Middleton School has a home / school agreement which sets out the relationship between home and school and the responsibilities for Middleton School staff, for parents and carers and for pupils.

In order to explain the relationships between home and school more fully we also have the Middleton Handbook.

Parents and carers play a crucial role in helping their children to learn. Children achieve more if parents and carers and schools work together. Parents and carers can help more effectively if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help.

Friends of Middleton.

There is an active school / parent association called the Friends of Middleton School (F.O.M.S.).

All parents and carers and carers are automatically members and we hope that you will support events and activities arranged by them.

The school newsletter (Middleton News) and other extra flyers will keep you informed of events.

School Aims

Before all else we will do all we can to ensure that the children have a safe and secure environment. We will try to have a happy school where children are valued and are keen to do their best.

The following aims have been approved by the Governing Body.

Middleton School:
Will provide:

- A safe, happy, fun and secure environment in which adults and children learn through their own experiences and develop their individual interests and strengths;
- A supportive partnership with parents/carers which encourages positive involvement in all aspects of their child's development and effective management of their child's particular special needs;
- A full and balanced curriculum appropriate for every child's needs enabling each individual to develop their potential;
- An environment in which each member of the school community feels confident enough to take risks and recognise that making mistakes is implicit in the learning process.

Will develop in the school community:

- Independence, self-confidence, self-esteem and lively, imaginative and enquiring minds;
- Understanding, tolerance, respect and empathy for social, moral, spiritual and cultural diversity, ethnicity, gender and sexuality;
- Self awareness, social skills, a set of moral values, internal discipline, the ability to know

what is right and what is wrong and the understanding that rules and laws protect us and keep us safe;

- The capacity to work, play and socialise to enable each individual to become good citizens, take their place in society in an informed, positive and active way and contribute positively to the lives of those working in the locality of the school and to society more widely;
- Questioning, thinking and problem solving skills;
- The necessary life skills, understanding and knowledge for each key stage within school which will eventually be relevant to transitions, adult life, employment and the wider world.

Will encourage:

- Each child to be independent, confident and able to apply themselves to tasks and physical activities;
- Positive relationships between parents/carers and staff, parents/carers and their children.
- Respect for democracy and for public institutions and services

The Curriculum

At Middleton School we have children with a wide range of learning and emotional difficulties. The curriculum is designed to make the best of each

child's strengths and overcome some of the weaknesses.

Each section of the curriculum is devised in carefully planned steps, each of which can be repeated, extended or modified in a number of different ways before the child moves on.

Great emphasis is placed on the child achieving success, especially in the early stages. Many children will have had the unfortunate experience of failure in their previous school and this needs to be overcome if the child is to be motivated in learning once more.

Curriculum Content

All of our pupils have different educational needs and will need to be taught in different ways. They are all entitled to a full and rich educational experience including all the subjects defined in the Foundation Stage and National Curriculum as appropriate. These are:

English	Maths
Science	Technology
History	Geography
Art	Music
PE	ICT.

In addition children are taught Religious Education (REP and Personal, Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSCHE).

Pupils have the opportunity to take part in many sporting activities. Swimming is part of the curriculum for all pupils at various local pools. Older children may have the opportunity to take part in horse riding.

The school takes part in many sporting fixtures and tournaments in different mainstream and disability sports.

The school also makes the most of the local community to support learning and the development of key skills.

Methods of Teaching

The guiding principle will be that each child shall have access to the full range of learning experiences. Particular attention is given to basic Literacy and Numeracy and these subjects are taught both as individual subjects and as part of topics.

We also recognize that play is central to learning and helps to stimulate and enhance emotional, physical and intellectual development. Copies of the school curriculum are available for parents and carers to borrow.

Homework

The school day is busy, stimulating and relevant to each child's needs. All children will have completed a full day's work by the time they return home and many will have had long journeys to cope with as well.

With this in mind homework is not set for the majority of pupils in the school. We feel that there are many ways a parent can help a child at home without the need for formal homework. Homework or 'finding out' tasks may be set for older pupils on an ad hoc basis.

Helping your Child at Home

You may like to try some of the following suggestions for helping your

child at home, but remember to give them time to play and learn on their own.

Helping with reading.

Even before they begin to learn to read children should be introduced to books and learn that reading is something that is both useful and enjoyable.

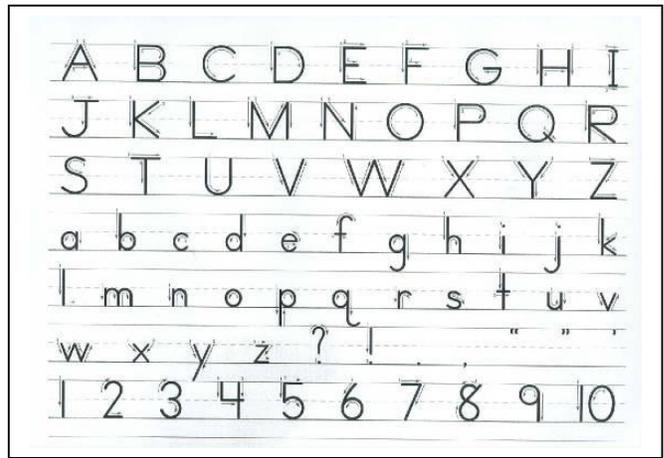
- For children in the early stages of learning to read, it is most helpful if they can be encouraged to hold the book the right way round and how to turn the pages. They can tell you about the pictures and point to each word as you read together. Sharing books is the first step in learning to read.
- When your child begins to recognize some of the words, ask them to point them out as you read.
- Once your child has begun to learn to read you should still encourage them to talk about what has happened in the story so far. They should begin to read aloud with expression, pausing for breath at full stops. Let your child guess unknown words by looking at the first sound in the word and thinking about the meaning of the sentence.
- If your child is struggling over a word tell them what it is. It is important to keep the fluency so that the meaning of the sentence is not lost. Remember that if a child does not understand what is being read it is not a very rewarding experience.

- Do not make learning to read a chore. Make sure your child is having fun, and keep the sessions very short. Give lots of praise. Children who practise at home are getting double the amount of reading.

Helping with writing

Many children already enjoy a variety of activities at home which indirectly help to develop their skills in writing. Here are some further suggestions to try at home.

- Drawing, colouring carefully, cutting and pasting all help children at what ever stage they have reached to improve the control and strength of small muscles in their hands and fingers.
- Play activities where children build or make models with Lego, bricks, Meccano or play dough are also helpful.
- If your child has made a start on learning to write it is important to use the correct formation of letters. This will help your child at a later stage to develop a flowing style of joined writing.
- The examples below show the way we teach children to form letters in school. Capital letters are not generally necessary in the early stages of learning to write, except perhaps for the first letter in names.
- Whenever children are busy with pencils, pens and paper they are practicing the muscle control needed for writing.



Helping your child with maths

Having a good understanding of maths involves much more than just learning how to do sums which is what many of us remember from school.

- Encourage your child to develop mathematical language in a variety of everyday situations using words such as: tall, short, heavy, light, full, empty, large, small, near, far, next to, behind, up, down, more, less, day, night.

Look for patterns in man-made structures – bricks, tiles, windows, wallpaper and in nature – petals, spirals on shells, symmetry etc.

When your child is ready, teach them to count. Count real things such as steps, railings, toys, cars. Children need to understand that numbers are about real things. Let your child sort out things that match and help tidy up.

Let your child handle and spend small amounts of money, count pennies and sort coins.

Talk about things that you use at home for measuring – clocks, tape measures, rulers, kitchen and bathroom scales and thermometers.

Helping your child in other ways.

Children are curious and always want to find out what things mean and how they work. Help them and yourself by doing things together, let them help you with jobs around the house. A child who is occupied is much easier to manage.

- Encourage your child to be as independent as possible – dressing, washing, doing simple tasks in the kitchen, helping to clean and tidy up.
- Let them play with different kinds of construction kits – play with them sometimes.
- Help them to do jig-saws.
- Teach them to be physically active – playing outside, going for walks, going to the park and swimming.
- Help your child take up a hobby, make a collection or a scrap book.
- Make sure that they go to bed at a reasonable time – tired children are irritable and do not learn well.
- Think about clubs such as beavers, cubs or brownies.
- Be selective about what they watch on TV or on DVD. We know from what they say at school that many of our children are watching programmes that are unsuitable for children.
- If they play computer games, choose multi-player games and play along with them talking about what you are doing and encouraging them to talk too.

Pastoral Care

All pupils in the school have a class teacher responsible for monitoring progress and helping to solve minor problems as they occur. When a pupil moves to a new class parents and carers are informed of the name of the new teacher.

There are bound to be minor problems from time to time and parents and carers should keep in close contact with the school so that they do not become major problems. We need to work together as a partnership for the benefit of each child.

Parents who are concerned in any way about their child's progress should contact the teacher in the first instance. The Head of Department will also be available to discuss parents' and carers' particular concerns.

The basic rule of conduct in the school is that all pupils should behave in a respectful and reasonable manner towards staff and to each other. Some allowance is made for the different ages and abilities of the children.

Bullying

Our aim is to provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure and happy. This is when children learn best. We expect everyone to treat each other with kindness and respect.

Some children may however, suffer from being bullied at some time in their school life. In most cases this will be a passing incident which the child will cope with, but in some cases the effects can be very upsetting.

Bullying behaviour has three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over a period of time.
- It is difficult for those children being bullied to defend themselves.

Children may bully for the following reasons:

They think it is just a bit of fun.

They are copying older brothers or sisters.

They do not know how to play with other children.

They are going through a difficult time themselves, either at home or school.

They have themselves been a victim of bullying or abuse.

If you think your child is being bullied

- Please contact the school as soon as possible, we will do all we can to resolve the situation. Do not leave it in the hope that it will go away. You should:
- Take any incidents of bullying seriously.
- Listen to what your child has to say and take notes if necessary.
- Reassure your child that it is alright to tell adults about the problem.
- Encourage your child to talk to the staff at school – we will listen.
- Let us know at school of your concerns.

- Never approach another parent directly.
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate.

If your child is bullying other children

You can help by:

- Explaining that this sort of behaviour is unacceptable and unkind.
- Discourage other members of your family from using bullying behaviour to get their own way.
- Praise your child for kind and co-operative behaviour.

Bullying at Middleton School is thankfully very rare. The children are well supervised at all times, both in class and at break times.

When incidents do happen it is very likely that we will be able to deal with them to everyone's satisfaction. If you have followed the guidance given above and you think there are still problems you should ask for an appointment with the headteacher.

If you still feel that the school has not responded to your concerns please ask for a copy of our complaints procedure.

Keeping you informed.

The school produces a fortnightly newsletter which aims to keep parents, carers, governors and friends informed of events or items of news. There is always a slot about what the children have been doing in school and it is hoped that it will be a lively and valuable source of information and interest for all parents and carers.

Parents are invited to attend various functions during the school year, the details of which will appear in the newsletter.

There are regular open evenings when parents are able to meet the staff to discuss the progress of their child. There will be a review of each child's special educational needs at least once a year and parents are expected to take a full part in this review. Parents may visit the school at any time to discuss the progress of their child. Quite naturally we would appreciate a telephone call to make an appointment first. On arriving at school all visitors should report to the headteacher before speaking to any members of staff or to children.

If transport problems make visiting school difficult then it may be possible to arrange a home visit.

Parent Support

Our Family Liaison Officer is able to provide emotional support and practical advice to families who are experiencing difficulties. Parents are able to contact her directly to talk through any concerns they may have. The F.L.O. will then plan and deliver the right type and level of support including accessing external agencies and support groups when required.

We are aware that due to pupils arriving at school via arranged transport parents do not get the opportunity to meet and socialise with each other. Our Family Liaison Officer delivers a regular programme of coffee mornings, workshops and other activities to help

you network with other parents and carers.

We have developed a Parents Playgroup which takes place during school holidays. This allows parents and their children to access school facilities and meet up with friends in a familiar and safe environment.

Middleton School has a Parent Council which allows parents and carers the opportunity to represent parent's opinions and become involved with and support their child's learning.

Absences

Parents and carers are responsible in law for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive full time, suitable education. Regular attendance at school is particularly important.

If a child is absent from school please telephone to let us know why. A message can be sent with the escort on the transport but this should be followed up by a note in the home school book. We will send a note home or telephone if no explanations have been received.

If a child is absent without good reason we now have a duty to record this in the school register as an unauthorized absence.

Where there is concern about a child's attendance record an Attendance Officer may carry out a home visit.

If you have to take your annual holiday during the school term you can obtain permission from the headteacher for your child to be absent.

Uniform

We have a school uniform and we hope that parents will co-operate and ensure that pupils are suitably dressed for school. The uniform is very simple and, apart from the sweatshirt, polo shirt and PE kit items may be purchased from any supplier. Details can be found on the website.

Medical Care

School medicals with the School Nurse and Doctor would take place if there were any medical concerns about a pupil. You would be sent an appointment to attend with your child. The School Nurse also runs 'drop in' clinics during the Academic Year to allow parents the opportunity to discuss any medical concerns they may have.

Bringing medicine to School

There are times when it may be necessary for children to bring medicine to school. We do need to be particularly careful and we would ask parents to follow some simple rules:

1. Telephone school to let us know you are sending medicine or tablets.
2. We must have written permission and instructions stating time and dose, we will send home a form for you to complete.
3. The medication should be in its original container with the pharmacist's label on the front.
4. Make sure that the medicine is clearly labeled and packed for the

journey to school and give it to the driver or escort.

We have procedures for administering medicines and full details and a copy of the policy can be obtained from the school if your child is likely to be in this situation.

Finally....

Children will make best progress if there is a partnership between school and home. We are very keen that we work with you to do the best for your child.

Useful contact information

Phone: 01920 485152

Fax: 01992 486738

Email: admin@middleton.herts.sch.uk

In the event of unplanned school closure (eg snow) there will be a message left on our parent line phone [08447 707576](tel:08447707576) and enter the ID number [67354](tel:67354) to access the message.