Dear Parents,

Welcome to Mount Nod Primary School. Starting school can be an anxious time for children and parents alike. Some things can seem worrying and some quite exciting. This guide is to help you to feel as prepared as possible and to help your child make a confident and enjoyable start to school. Be positive about this new and exciting step and enjoy it with your child.

Staff

The reception teachers are Mrs Savage and Miss Godfrey.

Questions your child might ask

1. **Will they know who I am?**
   Explain that the teacher is expecting them. They will have their name written down on a special list called the register. The teacher will call out their name and they will answer to let her know they are there. They will have their own coat peg and drawer with their name and a picture on it. *It would be helpful if your child could recognise their own name.*

2. **Where will you be?**
   Let your child know what you will be doing while they are at school. Reassure your child that you will be coming back to collect them at the agreed time. Show them where you will wait, it may help to tell them what you are going to wear so they can spot you easily. Reassure them that school know where you are and can phone you if necessary.

3. **What happens if I need the toilet?**
   Explain that the Reception classroom has their own special toilets and the teacher will show them where they are. Let them know that if they need to use the toilet they will need to ask the teacher first so that she knows where they are. *It would help if your child can manage their own personal hygiene.* Remind them that if they get into difficulties, have an accident or feel unwell they can ask a teacher for help.
   Each child will be issued with a numbered drawstring bag. We ask that you fill this with spare uniform. A list of the required items will be placed inside the rucksack. This rucksack will stay on your child's peg until it is needed. If your child is changed, their wet clothes will be placed in their drawstring bag and this will be sent home. We ask that the rucksack, along with the clean items are returned ASAP.

4. **Can you come to school too?**
   Well wouldn't that be fun! This where you need to be firm and explain that school is just for children. Tell them you will hand them over to the teacher and will be back at home time. Hand them over in a positive way and make this a quick parting. Some children find this difficult but we have found that the longer parents stay, the more upset the child becomes when the parent inevitably has to leave. They also learn that the longer they cry, the longer they believe their parent will stay. Teachers are experienced in dealing with children who struggle with separation and have ways of helping your child overcome this. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

5. **What will I have for lunch?**
   All reception children are entitled to a free school meal. School lunch menus are available on the school website, it may help to look at this with your child and talk through the options that will be available that week. Reassure your child that the teachers will be there to help them. There are also lunchtime assistants who will be there to help. Examples of our current menus are available on the school website www.mountnod.coventry.sch.uk

It is normal for parents to feel some anxiety on their child's first day at school. Communication is the key to a successful start to your child's schooling. Please speak to your child's teacher if you are unsure of anything so that we can ensure a smooth start for your child.

Some questions you might have

1. **What if my child doesn't want to come to school and gets upset?**
   The actual 'leaving' of the parent is probably the most anxious time for you as a parent and you may feel you should wait. Please be reassured that your child will probably settle very quickly after you have gone. If your child is very distressed then the teacher or teaching assistant may take them and divert their attention while you go. We will inform you if your child has not settled so if you do not hear anything then you can assume they are not as distressed as you may be imagining. Don't be surprised if the same thing happens the following day, eventually your child will become confident in the systems and routines. Be enthusiastic about school. If you are excited and confident, your child will be too.

2. **What if my child doesn't eat?**
   Parents often worry about lunch and eating. The lunch hour may seem like a very long time but the time goes quickly as lunches take a long time to eat in the early days. Lunchtime assistants will be looking out for your child throughout lunchtime ensuring that they are eating enough and informing the teacher, who will inform you about any worries they have about your child's eating.

3. **What if my child is shy or doesn't make friends easily?**
   This is a common worry for children and parents alike. Children in their first years are changing from being the centre of their own universe to being part of a social group. It may be that your child makes lots of friends on their first day or it may take some time. Some of the things your child's teacher will do with the class will be carefully planned to help them to make friends and be a good member of a group. The reception staff are very good at looking out for those children who may struggle socially and have lots of ways of encouraging them to integrate into the class.

4. **What if my child can't read or write?**
   This is often the main concern for parents. Lots of parents think it is important for their child to be able to read and write but it isn't necessary. It would be helpful if your child could recognise their name, and maybe even write it, as this will help them to identify their coat peg, drawer and belongings. The children will soon begin to learn letters, numbers and words in line with the national Early Years Framework. If your child can read and write before they start school, then great, but don't panic if they can't!

Top Tips!

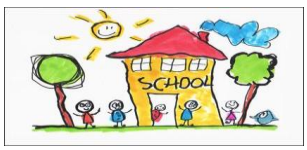
Label everything! Your child will inevitably lose something at some point, if it has their name in it then it is much more likely to be returned. Our lost property is full of unnamed clothing!

We cannot stress enough the importance of a good night's sleep. Children at this stage should have 11.5 hours sleep per night. Lack of sleep will leave children irritable and reduce their learning ability. Ensuring you have a bedtime routine will help your child settle. Ideas for a bedtime routine are:

- Agreeing a bedtime and sticking to it
- Wind down time – an hour before bedtime
- A warm bath
- A bedtime story

Get everything ready the night before to reduce rushing and stress in the morning. Children can help with this.

Ensure your child has a good breakfast.

Let your child practise putting on their uniform, becoming familiar with how they go on and fasten up. If they have a new coat, help them get used to what it looks like.

When you ask your child what they've been doing at school and whether he has had fun, don't be surprised if the response is "can't remember" or "nothing!" Please be assured that your child has been busy all day learning, socialising and practising new skills.