



utopia

Parent and Carer
Induction and
Information Pack
2024-25





Utopia Independent Special School
The Vikes
40 Thorsway
Rock Ferry, CH42 1NW

Tel: 07719084493

Times of the Day

09:00 - 15:00

Senior Leadership Team



Chris Black



Danny Cooke



Phil Murray



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“IF A CHILD CAN'T LEARN THE WAY WE TEACH, MAYBE WE SHOULD TEACH THE WAY THEY LEARN”

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Introduction



Welcome!

We have prepared this pack to provide key information that will help you to understand the different procedures, school values and plans we have to support your child's education.

Additional information can be found on our website, www.utopiaschools.co.uk, here you can view our policies, read in more detail what we offer our learners and follow many useful links for both parents and young people.

It is important to us that we answer as many of your questions that you may have prior to your child starting with us or returning following the school holidays. If you cannot find the information you need in this pack or on our website then please do not hesitate to contact us by email at, office@utopiaschools.co.uk.

As part of our induction and annual processes there will be some additional basic information that we will require from you but these will be emailed over to you in due course to be completed online.

Utopia Ethos

Accessible – removing barriers to learning by identifying them from the outset and addressing the needs of individuals on a case by case basis.

Approachable - placing the relationship between staff and learners at the centre of everything we do.

Aspirational – setting high expectations and a curriculum that provides a platform and environment in which learners can develop, grow and reach their full potential both socially and academically.



Attendance



Utopia set high standards in order to support our learners to achieve to their potential as part of this we work hard to help learners achieve excellent attendance.

If your child is absent, please inform the school on the morning of every absence

School Office - 07719084493 (please leave a message if there is no answer clearly stating the learner's name and reason for absence)

Absence

If your child has persistent absences then you will be invited to attend a school meeting to see how we can work together to improve this.

Holidays in term time

We recognise the importance making every day count and therefore holidays in term time are generally not authorised. Please contact the Head of Centre to discuss any holiday requirements in more specific detail.

Medical appointments in School time

Where possible please try and make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. We are required to ask for evidence to authorise any medical absences.

Utopia Values

Relationships - developing the skills needed to make meaningful connections with others.

Resilience - learning to overcome difficulties and challenges that life throw at us.

Respect - knowing what it means to flourish within a diverse modern Britain.



Absence Advice



We understand that it can sometime be difficult to know when it is appropriate to keep your child at home. To support with this the Health Protection Agency have issued guidelines regarding when young people need to be kept off school on medical grounds.

A summary is given below:-

- **Headache, earache or stomach ache** — give Paracetamol and plenty of fluids, inform school of medication given and send child to school.
- **High temperature** — give Paracetamol and plenty of fluids, inform school of medication given and send child to school.
- **Coughs and colds** — give Paracetamol and plenty of fluids, inform school of medication given and send child to school.
- **Flu/swine flu** — child can return to school when recovered, usually about 5 days.
- **Sore throat, tonsillitis or glandular fever** — give Paracetamol and plenty of fluids, inform school of medication given and send child to school.
- **Diarrhoea and vomiting** — child can return to school 48 hours after last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.
- **Head lice** — send child to school after first treatment. Treat all others at home.
- **Threadworm** — send child to school after first treatment. Treat all others at home.
- **Warts, verrucae or athlete's foot** — send child to school. Cover verrucae in swimming pool areas.
- **Conjunctivitis** — send child to school, get treatment from pharmacy.
- **Impetigo** — send child to school when lesions are crusted over.
- **Measles, chicken pox or German measles** — send child to school 5 days after rash starts.
- **Mumps** — send child back to school 5 days after start of swollen glands.
- **Whooping cough** — send child back to school 5 days after starting antibiotics.

Remember each school day is 2 sessions. If your child is ill on waking up but feels better during the morning they should be sent in to school for the afternoon session.



We at Utopia are a data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act. We collect personal information from you and may receive information about you from the previous school and the Learning Records Service. We ensure we are compliant with the GDPR.

Why do we collect and use learner information?

We use the learner data to:

- support learning
- monitor and report on learner progress
- provide appropriate pastoral care
- assess the quality of our services
- comply with the law regarding data sharing
- safeguard learners

Personal information will only be collected and used with your consent or where it is needed by the school or the local authority to comply with a legal obligation. For example, the Education Act 1999, requires the collection of learner data for school census purposes.

Who do we share learner information with?

We routinely share pupil information with:

- schools that the pupil's attend after leaving us
- our local authority
- other local authorities if they have responsibility for a child who has SEN or is looked after
- the Department for Education (DfE)
- School Nurses
- Educational Psychologists

Data collection requirements:

To find out more about the data collection requirements placed on us by the Department for Education (for example; via the school census) go to <https://www.gov.uk/education/data-collection-and-censuses-for-schools> .



Complaints



Utopia prides ourselves on our quality of teaching, pastoral and wider wellbeing care of all young people attending our service. However, if a parent of a learner has a complaint related to Utopia then they can expect to be treated seriously, fairly and confidentially in line with the complaints procedure. Utopia will also maintain a non-judgemental approach ensuring that Parents and their child will not be penalised or treated unfairly as a result of a complaint that Parents (or their child) raises in good faith.

We hope that you never feel the need to make a complaint but if a situation arises whereby you feel this is necessary then our Complaints Policy can be found on our website or is available upon request where more information is outlined on:

- What constitutes a complaint
- Our 3 stage complaint procedure
 - ➔ Stage 1 - Informal Resolution
 - ➔ Stage 2 - Formal Resolution
 - ➔ Stage 3 - Panel Hearing
- Timeframes for dealing with complaints
- How complaints are recorded
- Additional advice and support available
- Learner complaints procedure

Informal Resolution

At Utopia we feel that any concerns can be best dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity and this maximises the chance of a resolution that all parties are satisfied with. With this in mind parents are advised to first talk to the teacher most closely concerned to clarify the facts and resolve through discussion. In many cases the matter will be resolved to parents satisfaction at this point however, a request for discussion with the Operations Manager member may also be desirable before making a formal complaint.



Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility as a parent or family member, a concerned friend or neighbour, an employer, staff member or volunteer. Utopia is committed to ensuring that the health, safety, well-being (including mental health) and development of all children who attend is our paramount concern.

Our approach is child-centred, meaning that we consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Utopia will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, supported, valued, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to and know that their wishes and feelings will be taken into account.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the school's curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from; abuse, bullying, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour, child criminal exploitation, teen relationship abuse, the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour (for example 'sexting' and accessing pornography), peer-on-peer abuse, gender based violence, drug and alcohol misuse and when using the internet and social media (making clear risk assessment and responding consistently to protect learners while enabling children to take age appropriate and reasonable risks as part of their growth and development).
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and co-operating as required with child protection matters including attendance at case conferences. Ensuring that the right child has the right support at the right time, to ensure they achieve good outcomes.
- Challenge any discriminatory behaviour, derogatory language or radical and extremist views and provide help and support to children about how to treat others with respect.
- Maintain a culture of vigilance and an attitude of; 'it could happen here', where safeguarding is concerned and always act in the interests of the child.



Safeguarding



Operation Encompass

Our school is part of Operation Encompass which is a national scheme that operates jointly between schools and police forces.

Operation Encompass is the reporting to schools, prior to the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has experienced domestic abuse.

As a school we have ensured that a member of our staff, (Designated Safeguarding Lead) known as a Key Adult, has been trained in the Operation Encompass procedures allowing us to then use the information that has been shared, in confidence, to support the children in our care.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 identifies children who experience domestic abuse as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. We are keen to offer the best support possible to all our pupils and we believe this will be extremely beneficial for all those involved.

If you have any concerns or would like to report anything to us then please contact the Safeguarding team below.

Safeguarding Team

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Danny
Cooke dcooke@utopiaschools.co.uk
07719084493



Deputy Safeguarding Lead - Phil Murray
pmurray@utopiaschools.co.uk
07719084493



Relationships, Sex and Health (RSHE) Education

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. Utopia will include a range of teaching and learning opportunities to cover these areas throughout the academic year. For further information on school requirements for RSE you can use the below link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf

Responsible Internet Use

The school computer system provides internet access to learners and staff.

We will plan learning opportunities on safe internet use and the safe use of social media, as well as responding proactively when challenges arise.

Access must only be made via the user's authorised account and password, which must not be given to any other person.

- School computer and internet use must be appropriate to the learners' education
- Copyright and intellectual property rights must be respected.
- The use of public chat rooms is not allowed.
- Irresponsible use may result in the loss of internet access.
- Individual user's internet access may be monitored, including web and e-mail use.

Filtering and Monitoring

Utopia follow DfE and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance to effectively filter and monitor Lerner's internet usage within the building. We also work closely with an external ICT specialist company to ensure the the filtering is appropriate but does not inhibit the educational opportunities each learner receives. More information can be found in our ICT and Internet Usage Policy and Online Safety Policy found on our website.

Current filtering system - Watchguard T25



Utopia Expectations



Utopia staff set high expectations for all participants. We believe in doing this it encourages learners to have respect for themselves and others around them. All elements of our curriculum involve practical activities and placements, which may involve interactions with other members of the community. We therefore require all young people to conduct themselves appropriately. Our expectations are as follows.

- To be respectful towards people, property and places
- To be safe (by never bringing drugs, alcohol or weapons on site)
- To try your best
- To work with the staff to access the support on offer

At the core of our ethos is that we work with all young people to build a sense of

- ‘I have’ an awareness of social resources
- ‘I am’ able to develop a sense of self
- ‘I can’ learn skills to develop my independence

We do this by providing learners with;

- A greater understanding of how to manage their emotions, behaviour and interactions with others
- The opportunity to develop their ability to empathise with others and have a broader outlook on their local community
- A sense of empowerment- it is crucial that all young people feel involved in the process of their education.
- An understanding that all behaviour whether positive or negative has a consequence
- A safe and secure environment that encourages young people to challenge themselves

Smoking and Vaping

We are a No Smoking School and follow Wirral Borough Council Drug and Alcohol Policy. Learners are not permitted to smoke or vape at all during the school day. No-one is permitted to smoke or vape on school Premises.

If you feel this will be in issue in accessing Utopia please speak to us in advance.



Uniform & Lunches



Utopia Uniform

Utopia will be providing a t-shirt and hoody for learners to wear if they wish, we will ask for their size on our basic details form on the link provided.

Please send your child to school in suitable clothing such as tracksuits bottoms, jeans, shorts and comfortable trainers or shoes that are appropriate to take part in activities.

If you require any specific guidance on this then please contact our office on:

Tel: 07719084493

Email: office@utopiaschools.co.uk

School Meals Information

School lunches are provided within the provision at Utopia. As part of our PSHE curriculum we will support learners to understand healthy eating and will promote the use positive choices to maintain their health.

We understand that learners have different preferences and dietary requirements and therefore will work with individual learners and parents to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made. Utopia will also provide opportunity throughout the year for learners to try different foods from different cultures to broaden their horizons and support in social development.

As part of learning independent living skills learners will also be given the opportunity to make their own lunches and be supported to develop a range of skills in the kitchen. Refreshments, bottled water and healthy snacks will be available throughout the day for learners to access in addition to hot drinks.

Packed Lunch

If you would like to provide a packed lunch then please aim for a well balanced diet and ensure there are no energy drinks.



Term Dates



Autumn Term 2024

School Open Wednesday 4th September- Thursday 24th October

Staff Development Day- Friday 25th October

October Half Term 2024

Monday 28th October- Friday 1st November

Autumn Term 2 - 2024

School Open Monday 4th November- Friday 20th December (12pm Finish)

Spring Term - 2025

School Open Monday 6th January to Thursday 13th February

Staff Development Day Friday 14th February

February Half Term - 2025

Monday 17th February- Friday 21st February

Spring Term 2 - 2025

School Open Monday 24th February- Friday 4th April (12pm Finish)

Easter Break - 2025

Monday 7th April- Friday 18th April

Summer Term - 2025

School Open Monday 21st April- Friday 23rd May

Summer Half Term - 2025

Monday 26th May- Friday 30th May

Summer Term 2 - 2025

School Open Monday 2nd June- Friday 18th July (12 pm finish)

