

Cypress Primary School – a guide for new parents

September 2024



Welcome to Cypress Primary School. This guide has been produced by Cypress Parents to complement the school prospectus and website, and provide helpful information and top tips about the school to help your child to settle in. Pegasus Academy Trust, the staff at the school and the wider Cypress community are looking forward to welcoming all new children, parents and carers.

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1. Overview

About the Pegasus Academy Trust

Cypress Primary School is part of the Pegasus Academy Trust (PAT), a local Multi Academy Trust. Cypress joined the Trust in 2017. PAT has two Executive Headteachers, **Lynne Sampson and Jolyon Roberts**.

- Further information about the PAT can be accessed via its website at <http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/>
- There is also lots of useful information about Cypress, its ways of working, weekly news updates and its curriculum (including long term curriculum plans) on <http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/cypress-primary-school> and in the school prospectus (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/cypress-primary-school/information/prospectus>).

About Cypress Primary School

Cypress is split into an Upper and Lower School on two sites, either side of Cypress Road.

Lower School:

- Little Cypress – a nursery for 2-4 year olds;
- Reception to Year 2;
- 3 classes per year – named after colours;
- Acting Head of School: **Ms Claire Binks**

Upper School:

- Years 3-6;
- 3 classes per year group – named after trees;
- Deputy Head of School: **Mrs Nicola Carpenter**

The term dates for the academic year are on the school website (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/term-dates>), as well as a calendar of events for the year ahead, including parents evening, school performances, sports days, INSET days and PTFA events (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/events-calendar?school=CYP>).

Cypress Primary School does not close for polling days.

2. Who's who at Cypress?

There is a full list of staff members on the school website:

<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/cypress-primary-school/information/staff>

You will see the Heads of School and Deputy Heads of School on the school gates most mornings and afternoons. If you wish to contact someone directly and cannot see them face to face, then please contact the school office for further contact details or to arrange an appointment. The staff at both school offices are very helpful and should be able to point you in the right direction for most enquiries!

E-mail: cypadmin@pegasusacademytrust.org

Phone: 020 8653 2618

In addition to the staff, there is a wider community that supports Cypress:

- The school governors are known as Members of the Academy Council (MACs). They meet five times a year. The Parent MACs at Cypress are **Gavin Lambert, Rochelle Fryer, Sarah Waddingham** and **Stuart Reid** and the chair of the academy council is **Marsha Douglas**. Further details can be found on the website at (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/cypress-primary-school/information/academy-council-information>).
- The Parent Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) run activities each term including a Christmas, Spring and Summer Fayre, and a garden party. Anyone can get involved with the PTFA, further details are below (How can I get involved and support the school? page 7).

3. Finding your way around lower school

As you come up the main driveway into lower school, you pass Little Cypress on your right, and can see the school office, well signposted on the right. The main playground gate is between Little Cypress and the playground; on the right just inside the playground gate is the community room (next to Little Cypress).

Reception classrooms are on the left, up the steps, just through the playground gate. Next come the Year 1 classrooms and then the Year 2 classrooms are behind them, at the far end of the playground. The Saplings library is in the corridor between the Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms. The Lower School hall is at the top of the school, accessed via the new school office. There is another entrance to the playground via the diagonal path up from the lower

school entrance gate, passing the Little Cypress garden. This is known as the 'Woodland Walk'.

Lost property for lower school children is in the corridor outside the Reception classrooms, near the Saplings library.

4. What methods of communication are there with and amongst parents?

In addition to regular website updates, newsletters and emails, the other official and unofficial forms of communication are:

- Messages are sent via the Studybugs App or emails. This is used to report a child's absence from school and for most other communication.
- Updates on the website news pages (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/news/cypress-primary-school>), which take place on at least a weekly basis.
- A year group Facebook page for parents is set up for most years where information is shared between members. These groups are run on an 'unofficial' basis by parents and carers. Many classes also have class 'WhatsApp' groups set up by parents once each class has settled in. Please note the school leaders and staff do not have access to WhatsApp groups so always speak to staff if you need any clarification or help as this is not the forum for raising your complaints or concerns.
- There is an open dialogue with teachers, teaching assistants and the school. If you have any specific concerns, email your Head of School via the contact details online or speak to them at the gates. They will always be happy to meet parents.
- There are also regular social events for parents through the PTFA. If these are not taking place in your class or year, feel free to talk to other parents and organise events amongst yourselves.
- Each class also has a parent representative who liaises with parents and the PTFA.

5. How can I get involved and support the school?

There are many ways to get involved if you'd like to support the school.

Cypress has a very active PTFA. They run activities each term including a Christmas, Spring and Summer Fayre, the Cypress Quiz, year group discos, a garden party and other adult and children socials. Once a year each class will hold a cake sale and parents/carers are invited to contribute baked or bought cakes for the sale. The cake sales happen on a Friday and a

message will be sent out to all parents/carers at the school to let them know it's on. Last year the funds helped pay towards the Upper School outdoor classroom, subsidised school trips and workshops, Book Week and school equipment. The PTFA are always looking for volunteers to help with raising money for the school; further details are on the website (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/cypress-ptfa>) or there is a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/cypressprimaryschoolptfa/>).

In addition to the PTFA, the school is also always looking for parent / carer volunteers and time contributions to support in other ways.

- Attendance on school trips - speak to your child's teachers when school trips are coming up to see if they require any parental support. If there are too many volunteers to help then we will pick names 'out of a hat';
- Volunteer at the Saplings Library – the library is run entirely by volunteers and each class is provided with a day to visit the library and exchange books (contact Miss Cheeseman, school English lead, via the lower school office);
- Become a MAC (either co-opted by the existing members, or voted in by parents as parent MAC positions become vacant – contact the chair of the academy council, **Marsha Douglas**, via cypadmin@pegasusacademytrust.org for further information);
- Volunteer as a 'Reading auntie/ uncle' to support reading in class;
- Help at the Cypress Cycling Club which often meets on Sundays (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1117177465066839/> or search 'Cypress Cycling Club' on Facebook);
- Come along to school performances and assemblies: classes usually have at least one assembly a year where parents are invited to attend;
- Come into school for the thematic events in Museum Week and Arts Week, where the children can show off their work to parents and carers;
- Offer your services to the school if you think the teachers or pupils may benefit from any skills you have;
- Attend scheduled parent workshops (e.g. on topics like phonics, maths calculations and curriculum);
- Attend parents' evenings;
- There are also regular non-uniform days (usually held on the last Friday of each half term) where a small contribution (£1 or more) is requested for school funds;
- Donate quality resources.

The school is always looking for additional physical resources to support the children's learning and development. At times letters are sent out with specific donation requests to the school community, to enhance the types of activities that the school undertakes, but don't let this stop you asking whether something may be useful.

The types of materials the school are often looking for include:

- Recycled materials for junk modelling such as kitchen roll tubes, egg boxes, shoes boxes, corks and milk bottle tops
- Building materials such as pallets, bricks and cable drums
- Spare writing materials including pens and coloured paper
- Brand new/as new books for the Saplings or Woodlands Libraries
- Spare wellington boots or raincoats
- Spare uniform/underwear is also very useful for Little Cypress and Reception!

6. The school day and general organisation

What happens at drop off?

There is a 'rolling start' for parents / carers to take their children to the classroom between 8.45am and 9.00am on both the upper and lower school sites. The gates are usually opened at 8.40am. The school gates will be closed at 9.00am exactly and you will be asked to go to the school office to sign the late register after this.

At the Lower School, Parents/Carers take their child to their classroom doors, where they will be greeted by staff. The school promotes independence by asking children to hang up their own coats and say 'goodbye' at the door.

Parents are expected to wait with their children in the Upper School playground until 8.45am when the children go straight into school. Year 3 and Rowan Class are dropped off and collected in the top playground (near the school office) and Years 5, 6, and Hawthorn and Lime Class are dropped off and collected in the bottom playground.

Nursery and Rainbow classes start slightly later, at 9.00am.

Getting to school

The Senior Leadership encourage all children to walk to school if possible. However, if this is not possible please note that Cypress Road is now part of the designated Croydon school street scheme which means that only cars registered to residents and people with passes can drive up or down the road between the hours of 8.00am – 9.30am and 2.00pm –

4.00pm. There are cameras placed at the end of the roads and you will be issued with a fine if caught on camera. The surrounding roads also get very busy around drop-off and pickup times, so if you need to drive to school, it's usually easiest to park on Auckland Road at the bottom of the hill or on South Norwood Hill at the top. The 410 bus stops near the bottom of Cypress Road, and the 196 and 468 buses stop on South Norwood Hill near the top of the road. If your children come on bikes or scooters, there are bike racks at lower school at the top of the drive near the school office (just past Little Cypress) where you can leave them.

Do I need to collect my child in person every day?

No, you can ask someone else to pick up your child including other parents. However, you must tell either the teacher or the teaching assistant in person. If you need someone else to pick up your child and couldn't tell the teacher at drop off, call the school office to let them know on **020 8653 2618** or send a message via Studybugs.

What time does the school day finish?

The school day finishes at 3.15pm and the gates will be open at this time. As both the Upper and Lower site school days also finish at the same time, there is some flexibility for parents who need to pick up on both sites, but parents are expected to pick up their children by 3:30pm at the latest. After this, children will be taken to the school office and can be picked up from there, where you will have to sign them out in the late collection book.

Every half term, there is a 'stay and play' after school led by the PTFA until 4.30pm. Dates for this are shared on the calendar and via the PTFA Facebook page.

What do I do if I need to keep my child off school?

Pegasus Academy Trust's attendance policy is available online at <https://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/policies-and-forms>. Children are expected to attend school every day, even in Little Cypress. If your child is ill or will be absent, please report their absence on 'Studybugs' or call the main switchboard and leave a message with the school office.

You should keep your child off for 48 hours if they have diarrhoea or a sickness bug. If they have a contagious illness (such as chickenpox) or have a longer term condition, then speak to your GP regarding attendance at school or refer to the Department of Health or Department of Education for guidance (e.g. online at <https://www.gov.uk/education/health-safety-and-wellbeing-in-schools>). The school will also be able to help you should you have any questions.

If your child requires prescription medicine during the day, you can ask the office to administer this in line with doctor's requirements, however you must complete a form specifying clear instructions. This form can be obtained from the school office.

Please bear in mind that holidays and leave in term time cannot be authorised by the school and can lead to parents receiving a fine.

Will school staff apply sunscreen?

School staff do not apply sunscreen for children, so it is suggested that you apply an 8 hour sunscreen on your child before school and include a roll-on in their bag for them to apply during the day. Shady areas are always accessible for children playing outside and staff will be careful of children's exposure on very hot, sunny days, but if you have any concerns please speak to your child's class teacher.

Do the children have to wear branded school uniform?

A description of the school uniform is included in the school prospectus and uniform is sold at Bubblegum in Thornton Heath and in Hewitts in Croydon. Cypress Primary School branded uniform is encouraged, including rucksacks and book bags. Children can however wear plain white polo shirts, white t-shirts, red jumpers and cardigans which are sold at most department stores and supermarkets. Summer dresses are generally worn in the Summer term but can be worn earlier in the year, weather dependent.

Smaller sized uniform is usually available at Marks and Spencer, H&M or the supermarkets.

The school will provide uniform for any family in need, so please ask if you need support.

The PTFA welcomes second hand donations and these are sold at cake sales, Christmas, Spring and Summer Fayres. If you would like to take a look at the second hand uniform, please get in touch with the PTFA via cypressptfa@pegasusacademytrust.org.

What about PE kit?

Children at Cypress wear their PE kit to school on PE/sports days. Children will need a white t-shirt, red or black shorts, black or grey tracksuit bottoms and plimsolls/ trainers; please refer to the school prospectus for further details.

Children may also need different clothing for other school activities, for example if they are doing sports for their Wednesday enrichment activity (What other enrichment opportunities are there? page 16) which rotates each half term, or if they are attending an after-school

activity club such as forest club or football. Parents will receive a letter or message about any specific clothing required.

What is the best way to label school uniform?

There are countless choices for labelling school uniform, but some that Cypress parents have recommended are MyNameTags (<http://mynametags.com>), Stikins (<https://www.stikins.co.uk/>), Stamptastic (<https://stamptastic.co.uk/>) – much quicker than sewing them in!

What are the school meals like?

The school works with Harrison Catering – the catering partner used by all the other schools in the Trust. Menus are provided by Harrison and these are rotated at the February half term – you can see these online at <http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/lunches-at-pegasus>. Harrison Catering provide occasional opportunities for parents and carers to sample the food on offer and these are communicated in the usual ways.

Children at the school (Reception – Year 6) are entitled to free meals under the Mayor of London scheme but should you choose not to take this up for your child then a packed lunch can be brought into school. There is guidance provided on content in the welcome pack – no food containing nuts, sweets or unhealthy snacks please!

Please note that children in Little Cypress and the Upper School do not receive free school meals (unless you are eligible for them if you are in receipt of universal credit or other benefits). Otherwise you must pay for these **in advance** (currently £2.40 per day, bookable via <http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/bookings>) if you would like your child to have these. Parents and carers who have not booked are contacted by the school office/s if there is no packed lunch provided for children, and letters are sent reminding them to do so. Bookings are easily made and if the child is off for any reason a refund is provided.

Do the children get snacks or a drink throughout the day?

Fruit is provided for children in Little Cypress and Years R – Year 2, and milk is given to under 5s if you register using the form provided in the school welcome pack. If you want your child to continue having milk once they turn 5 then you must register at the website and pay in advance (<http://www.coolmilk.com>).

Each child needs to bring their own named, filled water bottle to school each day. Parents should refill the water bottle before bringing to school each day and wash it at the weekend, as this is not done in school.

Can my child bring possessions into school?

It is recommended that the pupils do not bring any personal possessions (e.g. toys) into school, however if they do, it must be kept in their bag or handed to a teacher. Mobile phones are not allowed with the exception of Year5 and 6 pupils who may be walking home alone (after completion of a phone contract with the school).

School photos

Individual school photos are taken in October and class photos in the Summer term; if you have more than one child at Cypress, they can have photos taken together for the October session (if siblings are on different sites they can attend a session which takes place before the start of the school day). Dates for these will be on the school calendar well in advance.

Dressing up days

There are quite a few opportunities for children to dress up throughout the year. World Book Day is the main one (in March) but there may also be dressing up days linked to thematic topics, or for charity such as Sport Relief. If you don't have a large stock of dressing up costumes, why not ask other parents to see if anyone has some to share? (This is a frequent topic of conversation in parent Facebook and WhatsApp groups coming up to World Book Day...)

7. Payments

How do I pay for activities at the school?

The payment system the school uses is MagicBooking (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/bookings>). All school payments (e.g. for school trips and wraparound care) are made via this system, as the school office is unable to accept cash or cheques. You should receive login details for MagicBooking when your child joins in September. You can transfer across your child care vouchers and tax free finances as required, and the funds will show in your MagicBooking account. For any enquiries regarding these systems either contact Mrs Borg in the school office (cypadmin@pegasusacademytrust.org) or Suzanne Christopher, extended services leader in PAT (schristopher@pegasusacademytrust.org).

Do I have to pay for school activities?

Parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards running extra workshops for the children to support their thematic work - though PTFA funds often go towards these

too. Parents will also be asked for a voluntary contribution towards school trips. Although no child will be excluded if their parents/carers have not made a contribution, activities or trips may not be viable if insufficient contributions are received.

Activities which run outside school hours such as wraparound care (What is the wraparound care at Cypress? page 16) and afterschool activity clubs are chargeable and parents must pay if they wish their child to attend these (some subsidies are available to enable children whose families are in economic hardship to attend activity clubs). Music lessons run by outside providers are also chargeable; these normally run in school hours.

8. Extra-curricular activities/ sports/ after-school clubs

What opportunities are there for my child to get involved with sport at school?

- School sports teams in the Upper School (e.g. football) – details will be provided via letters from the school when places become available and team trials are taking place;
- After school activity and sports clubs are available for Lower and Upper pupils. Examples from previous years include martial arts, ballet, art, magic, football, Lego, forest school and mini sports. Clubs are run on a termly basis and information is provided on how to book them through letters home and on the school website (<http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/extended-services-and-clubs>). Reception children can join these activities from the Summer term. The range of clubs offered regularly changes so these act as taster sessions to give the children chance to experience a variety of new activities;
- Swimming lessons are mandatory for pupils in Year 4;
- A Sports Day is held in the Summer term for the Lower and Upper schools, parents are invited to attend;
- The school and PAT also regularly participate in additional charity events. Over the past few years we have taken part in the Comic Relief, Sports Relief mile as well as 'Jeans for Genes' day amongst other activities. The school also hosts an annual Macmillan Coffee Morning for Parents and Carers.

Do the pupils attend school trips?

Regular and relevant external trips are organised per year group. The trips are scheduled in advance and included in the school calendar. A letter will be sent out beforehand which will include travel and payment details (via MagicBooking). Every school trip is risk assessed and parent/carer volunteers may be invited to accompany pupils on the trip.

What musical activities take place at the school?

There are class assemblies from each year group where music plays a part.

Musical and instrument lessons are available at the school, such as recorder and violin. Details of how to enrol your children are available at school office but are also advertised in newsletters/letters in bags at the beginning of term. Children also do Music for their Enrichment activity on a rotating basis.

Cypress concerts are organised in the Summer term to showcase children who have been learning an instrument; ask your music teacher for more information.

What other enrichment opportunities are there?

Every class at the Lower School takes part in Forest School sessions at some stage during the academic year. Cypress children love exploring our Forest School area and the school currently has a dedicated Forest School Leader who plans exciting, open-ended, outdoor learning for children. The school will inform families when their child's sessions will be and will provide a suggested 'kit list' and further information.

At the Upper School, children take part in gardening in the outdoor classroom as part of their Enrichment activities.

Every Wednesday afternoon is 'Enrichment' for Y1 upwards; children take part in a different activity every half term which includes Spanish, Art, Sports or Music.

Saplings Library in the Lower school was partly funded by the PTFA and staffed by volunteers so that classes can visit on a weekly basis. Woodlands library at the Upper which was also funded by the PTFA is run by a librarian once a week and each class has its own pupil librarian. Your child will be able to borrow one book at a time for up to 3 weeks. Books must be returned to the classroom on their specified library day. Details of loans will be included on Reading Cloud (<https://www.readingcloud.net/>), a website which supports reading in and out of school, and logins will be provided to you by your teachers.

What is the wraparound care at Cypress?

There is a great in-house Breakfast Club and After School Club run by staff members from the school. The after school club is split between Upper and Lower school. It is held in Little Cypress for EYFS and the Lower School Community Room for KS1 and mainly run by staff members from the school. Wraparound care staff are listed on the website. The entrance to the Breakfast and After School Club at the Upper School is in the lower of the two Upper School playgrounds.

The breakfast club is available from 7.30am and after school club is available until 6.00pm. A breakfast or evening meal is provided by the school.

Pupils who attend these sessions undertake lots of different creative activities within the time. Parents are able to choose the days that suit, and this can be booked daily via 'MagicBooking' providing flexibility for parents. You can book as far in advance as you like, but you can also book 'ad hoc' as late as 7am on the morning you'd like your child to attend breakfast club, or up to 12 noon to attend afterschool club. If your child is ill or your plans change and you don't need wraparound care on a particular day, you can also cancel before these cut-off times and you won't be charged.

You can use childcare vouchers or tax free credits to pay for this childcare. You are charged if you are late so do make sure you pick up your children on time.

Suzanne Christopher is the point of contact for wraparound care questions; she is the PAT Extended Services Leader and organises after school clubs, holiday activities and special events alongside the administration staff at Cypress. She can be contacted on 020 8684 5704, by text 07504 810956 or by email schristopher@pegasusacademytrust.org.

9. Learning at Cypress

How can I support my child's learning?

When your child starts in Reception, the single most important thing you can do with your child is to read aloud to them. Be very positive when they start to read themselves and don't push it if they are reluctant. There is useful information on how to support your child with learning to read in their reading diary which all students at the school are given. If you have further questions, do ask the class teacher directly.

- The school follows the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' and has a great parent support page so you can help your child at home:
<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>;
- You can help your child by showing an interest and perhaps finding other activities to complement their learning at school. Anything you do with them at home will enhance their learning in school. A great way to do this is to look at the photos from the website news stories together and talk about what they've been doing. If you enjoy these stories you can 'like' them by clicking on the heart icon near the title of each story;

- The school and PAT follow the National Curriculum. Further details about the National Curriculum can be found <https://www.gov.uk/education/primary-curriculum-key-stage-1> and <https://www.gov.uk/education/primary-curriculum-key-stage-2>
- PAT also has lots of home learning ideas on the website on their online learning page.

The PAT website has an overview of the long term curriculum plans for each year group at <http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/curriculum>. As these understandably may change, teachers also provide termly update newsletters on what the topics / focus will be for the upcoming term and half term. Workshops are sometimes held by school staff for parents, to outline how different subjects are taught, and all parents are encouraged to attend if possible.

- In Early Years, learning is split into Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design and Physical Development and Trips / events
- For Key Stage 1 and 2, learning is split into English, Maths, Science, Thematic and Trips / events

What is the homework like?

During Reception, the homework that parents/ carers are asked to do is support their child through daily reading. Teachers will provide specific notes on what is required, and you can also see the Trust's updated homework policy at <https://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/policies-and-forms>.

All pupils, from Reception upwards, in the Lower school have access to 'Bug Club' – an online reading library with fun interactive games and rewards. Another online programme, 'Numbots' is available for children to enable them to practice their Maths at home. Logins for these will be provided in the reading diaries; please ask if you have any questions.

Your child is also encouraged to take in work or activities that they may have done outside of school. There is often an opportunity for 'show and tell', especially in the Early Years. You may also be asked to let your teachers know about 'WOW' moments where your child has achieved something important – but not necessarily academic – it could be riding a bike, learning to swim, or writing a sentence by themselves.

As your child progresses into Year 1, the classroom setting will become more structured, with mornings focused on core learning (maths/phonics/writing) and afternoons for more creative activities, e.g. including outdoor learning or junk modelling.

What happens at parents' evenings?

You can either bring your child or come without them to parents' evenings (depending on childcare availability!) There are two parents' evenings a year, one in autumn and one in spring term. In the summer term, you will be given your child's report and can make an appointment to see your class teacher if you have any concerns.

At the first parents' evening of the year, your child's teacher will go through their targets with you and you will have chance to ask questions and raise any concerns. Before or after your appointment, you will also have chance to look through your child's books to see the work they have been doing. From Year 1, the books are usually laid out in a classroom or the school hall with the teacher meetings taking place in another classroom, so you have time to go through without feeling hurried. The appointment is ten minutes long, and if you have two children at Cypress, you can ask your teacher to make sure to pick an appointment time that doesn't clash (especially if you have children on both sites!) There are usually a number of slots available on multiple days, but if you can't make any of them please speak to your class teacher to try to organise an alternative.

Moving on between year groups

In the summer term children will get the chance to spend some time in next year's class with their new teacher. There is a structured transition programme to support children moving from Year 2 to Year 3 at the Upper School.

Classes are usually confirmed a couple of weeks before the end of the summer term.

We are always looking to improve this guide and our communication, and will be updating this guide on a regular basis. If you have any suggestions for further information to include in the next version then please do email cypadmin@pegasusacademytrust.org.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this guide!