

# Parents' Information for Year 3



St. Margaret's  
Preparatory School

**Welcome to Y3** and the first year of the Prep Department at St. Margaret's Prep. This booklet is designed to help you understand and prepare your child for the many experiences he/she is about to be introduced to. The children will receive lessons in a range of subjects with many being specialist taught. Each subject is outlined below with the topics to be covered, though staff reserve the right to make alterations without consultation.

### **Uniform:**

The day-to-day uniform for pupils in the Prep Department is the same as for Year 2 (although Y6 have a special tie awarded to them at Speech Day). School caps and boaters are no longer worn, however. Children must have their puffa jackets, school gloves and warm school hats available on cold days. In addition to this, all pupils will require an Art overall (an old shirt from home) and a Science overall (available to buy from our online suppliers Perry Uniform). The Art overalls are kept in the classroom whilst the Science overalls are kept in the Lab so please ensure both are clearly labelled. Overalls are brought home at the end of each term for washing unless they become particularly dirty during the term time. All uniform can be ordered from the School's online supplier.

### **Classroom Kit:**

In Y3 children are asked to ensure that they have the following:

- a school rucksack
- a school book bag
- pencil case
- pencils (HB)
- a long, clear ruler
- sharpener

- rubber
- colouring pencils (not fine-liners or felt tips)
- named water bottle to place in tray in Form Room
- dictionary and Thesaurus (see details later)

All their belongings must be labelled and stored appropriately.

When their handwriting reaches a certain standard, pupils will be awarded a Pen Licence by their Form Teacher, and they may then use a black Berol handwriting pen, or similar. This can be used for writing in all subjects, except in Maths where pencil is always used.

### **Games Kit:**

Children are responsible for their own kit, but please help them by ensuring that everything is clearly labelled. Kit should be stored in a PE bag which is hung on their labelled peg in the Changing Rooms (boys near the Music Pods, girls at the rear of the Hall). Pupils will need:

- blue sports top
- yellow/blue reversible sports top
- blue shorts
- tracksuit
- short blue socks
- outdoor trainers and indoor footwear (second pair of trainers or plimsolls)
- long blue and yellow socks
- shinpads
- gum shield (please speak to your dentist for further advice)
- studded boots (boys only)
- skorts (girls only)
- cricket whites (boys only)

- a royal blue ‘skin’ that can be worn underneath the rugby shirt is very useful in colder weather.
- hair tie for girls (hair or School coloured).

On the first day, pupils will be taken to the changing rooms by the Form Teacher where they hang their bags containing their PE Kit on their peg and place their footwear in the boot box below their peg. Parents are **not** allowed into the changing rooms at any time.

Pupils are required to have their full Games/PE kit (appropriate for the term) at school **every day** from Monday to Friday inclusive as timetables can alter at short notice. All washable kit should be taken home by the children on Friday (collecting after dismissal), so it can be washed, checked and returned on Monday morning. It is essential that all pupils can change quickly, and are adept at tying their laces and ties.

### **Lost Property:**

Children are encouraged to take care of their uniform and Games kit by keeping their possessions neatly in their rucksack or PE bag. If, however, named items are mislaid they will be returned by the PE Staff. If the item is unnamed it will be placed in the Lost Property Basket which is situated at the foot of the spiral staircase. Pupils should search there when items have been lost, and parents can help by checking the labels of their child’s PE kit when they wash it each week-end and contacting each other when ‘lost’ kit is discovered.

### **Registration and Dismissal:**

Registration is at 8:45 but we would like the children to arrive as soon after 8:30 as possible so that we can hear readers on a regular basis, and help with any difficulties that have arisen. Parents are encouraged to leave their children in the cloak-

room and allow them to make their own way to their classroom, unless you need to urgently speak to the Form Teacher. Each morning, pupils need to give their Form Teacher their Homework Diary and Reading Diary, which must be signed by a parent on a daily basis. If you have any messages for the Form Teacher, please use the Homework Diary or email direct. Where directed, fees and Summer Ball bookings, for example, should be placed in the basket in the Gallery.

Dismissal is from 3.55pm and pupils are encouraged to ensure they have all their belongings with them at the point of dismissal. If you have a younger child, they will be held at Sibling Waiters until 3.55pm so that you can collect both children at the same time. Prep pupils who have not been collected by 4pm are escorted to Late Waiters and parents may collect from there. You will be asked to complete a Dismissal Permission Form at the start of the academic year, detailing which adults are allowed to collect your child. Please contact the School Office if you would like to update this during the year. If your child is going home with another adult on a one-off basis, please provide notice of this in writing. If this is not given, we need to contact you by telephone before releasing your child, and this may cause a delay at the end of the school day.

### **Clubs:**

We offer a range of clubs, both before school (starting at 8am and usually free) and after school (for which there is a charge), details of which are published in the termly calendar. Generally, clubs begin on the second week of term, and end on the Friday of the penultimate week, but further details are available online. In addition, there are a number of activities held at lunchtime that children may join in, usually when they

have reached a sufficient standard in an appropriate musical instrument.

Attendance at early morning sports and music activities (such as rugby training and choir) is not compulsory but we would encourage our pupils to attend to improve their skills in these areas. Once a pupil has expressed an interest in attending one of these clubs, we require them to attend promptly every week for the term as it is important that all develop their skills and repertoire together. If poor weather demands that a morning sports club is cancelled, parents will be informed via ParentMail, otherwise sessions will be held.

### **Homework:**

Homework has an important role in consolidating learning. In the first half of the Autumn Term homework will consist of two twenty minute English tasks and two twenty minute Mathematics tasks. Weekly spellings and daily reading and Multiplication Tables will also be set. In the second half of the Autumn term (until the end of the academic year), homework will increase to include one twenty minute Science task and twenty minutes spent on History or Geography.

We encourage parents to support their children when they are undertaking homework, but if you feel that your child has found the work particularly inaccessible, then please write a note in the Homework Diary or email the member of staff. All homework is due in the following day, unless instructed otherwise, and it is the pupil's responsibility to remember to hand their homework in to the Form Teacher. In addition to written homework, pupils are required to read every night (and record this in their Reading Diary), practise their Spellings and revise their times tables ready for the weekly tests.

Holiday homework is issued and this must be completed in addition to practising tables, spelling and undertaking significant amounts of reading.

## **Reading:**

We feel that reading is essential for the development of vocabulary, a broadening of experience and also for pure pleasure.

In Year 3, many pupils are still on the School Reading Scheme, which has been developed to introduce them to a wide range of genres. It is, however, important that your child sees reading as an active pursuit, and develops the skill to read out loud successfully and to understand the text. To assist with this, we ask you to:

- listen to your child read each night
- children to complete the Reading Diary
- children list unfamiliar words
- ask questions about the plot and characters
- make predictions about the developing plot
- discuss why the author has used certain words
- take your child to a local Library and help them to select a range of suitable and interesting books.

Although children love reading a large number of books in the same series, it is important that their reading skills are stretched. To assist with this, a copy of the Y3/4 Recommended Reading List is available on the school website and we feel strongly that children should select books from a range of genres. You can log on online to browse our catalogue at <https://u020502.microlibrarian.net/>

## **English:**

At this stage the children are expected to read fluently from a variety of texts, taking into account the grammar and punctua-

tion. They should read every night and parents are asked to listen to them and record all reading in their Reading Diaries. The focus of reading is the understanding of the text and children should write difficult or unfamiliar words at the back of their Reading Diary. Children need to read through our reading scheme to ensure different vocabulary and story ideas are experienced. The reading book should be in the child's desk at all times during school and children are responsible for changing their books in the morning.

Regular visits to the school library are timetabled where there is a wonderful collection of fiction and non-fiction books for all reading abilities. Handwriting lessons continue and children are encouraged to sit up, tilt their book and use the correct grip and letter formation. We follow the Nelson style of handwriting. Joined writing is encouraged at this stage to develop fluency, and ink is usually introduced gradually as children are ready. Berol handwriting pens with black ink are to be used.

Written work is set out in accordance with school policy for all subjects, i.e. the date on the top line, a title on the third line, both being underlined with a ruler. Formal lessons in grammar, comprehension and punctuation are taught with creative work developing alongside. Spellings are set and tested weekly and your help is needed to ensure that they are familiar with these words. The spelling lists are given to the children each week, and copies are also available on the school website for you to print off if the spelling list becomes lost. Children are taught to learn by using the look, say, cover, write and check method. More formal exams in English are taken in May as part of Exam Week.

Verbal Reasoning and Non VR will continue to be taught and new techniques learnt from a variety of resources. Towards the second half of the year, pupils will take test papers independently to assess their strengths in this area, and determine

which areas require more practice.

For English, and other subjects, we encourage the children to use a dictionary and a thesaurus from the beginning of the year and recommend the Oxford (Colour English Dictionary) ISBN 978-0-19-960791-4 and Thesaurus ISBN 978-0-19-960792-1. Please ensure that your child has a copy of each.

## **Maths:**

Regular mental and oral work is regarded as important at this stage with a range of resources being used including Galore Park. There are weekly tables tests and by the end of Y3 children are expected to be confident with speedy recall in all tables from 2-12. Your help is required to ensure that they are familiar with all of these, and we recommend fast testing of tables on a daily basis; travelling in the car is a useful time in which this can be done.

Children study a variety of topics in number, shape, measuring and data through the year and it would be helpful if you could provide opportunities at home for them to experience Maths in a practical nature, e.g. counting money and giving change, measuring and weighing objects, estimating and generally discussing number whenever the chance arises.

Telling the time continues to be an important skill, so please ensure you have an analogue clock visible, say in your kitchen, and regularly ask your child to tell you the time. They also need to build a solid awareness of what time common activities occur at, say, going to school or eating lunch and you can help in this. A calendar on the wall will also help the children to learn the months of the year, and have a concept of the passage of time. Pupils are tested weekly in Maths, with formal exams taken in May as part of Exam Week.

## Science:

Science takes place twice a week with emphasis on practical activities and corresponding written work. Homework aims to prepare for, consolidate or extend work carried out during lessons. The first few lessons ensure that the children become familiar with the laboratory and understand the essential safety rules. All children must bring a labelled science overall in to School and they will be sent home for washing at the end of term (or earlier if necessary).

Topics studied in Year 3 include the characteristics of materials, eating, rocks and soil, helping plants grow well, light and shadow and friction. We use textbooks to supplement and consolidate forces. We aim for lessons to have a heavy emphasis on practical work, in order for pupils to fully utilise the wonderful facilities we have. Written work may need to be completed at home, and the writing up of science practicals have a very specific format. Your child will be introduced to this in lessons and supplied with a sheet showing the layout and content of each section. It is helpful if you can remind them to refer to this template if they have to write up an experiment for homework.

We also thoroughly recommend you signing up for the free Planet Science Under-11 online newsletter (<http://www.planet-science.com/categories/under-11s.aspx>) for your child and allowing them (under supervision) to explore the site and undertake some of the experiments it suggests. Many pupils also enjoy the monthly National Geographic Kids magazine (<http://www.nationalgeographic-kids.co.uk>) to which you can subscribe as this contains a wealth of interesting facts about our planet. If weather permits in the Autumn Term, we will explore Gosfield to undertake investigations into the effects of weathering.

In May, Year 3 pupils take a written exam in Science as part of Exam Week. We recommend that you purchase a copy of the CGP KS2 Science Study either directly from CGP Books or from a good bookshop. The school website will contain a list of all the pages from the book that your child will need to know before taking the exam.

## **Computing:**

Computing lessons take place in our Computer Suite which is well equipped with computers, a colour printer and scanner. As well as a timetabled lesson each week, staff may take classes into the room for research, word processing or work in other subjects. Staff will also have additional timetabled lessons each week with access to the class set of laptops, should the Computer Suite not be available.

Children will continue to develop their touch-typing skills for 10-15 minutes in each Computing lesson. Throughout the year, children will gain a basic understanding of Microsoft Office software and will also be encouraged to develop their independent research skills. E-safety will form an important part of many of the topics and will be discussed on a regular basis. Children will also be taught programming skills, which will include Inputs, Outputs, Forever loops as well as learning how networks work, both at home and at school.

In the Prep Department, children are encouraged to use the internet to research information. As always, we encourage parents to be vigilant whilst their children are using a computer at home. Should you require any information about staying safe online, please visit the E-Safety section on our website, which can be found in the Parents' Area.

## **History:**

Our main topics will be a short study of Archaeology and how it helps us to find out about the past, a brief look at periods of time and the chronological order of these, and the early Invaders of Britain. The pupils thoroughly enjoy our study of the Celts and Romans, and often wish to develop an extensive knowledge of this era. History is evaluated through continual assessment—tests, class participation, discussion and independent research projects.

We plan to visit Colchester Castle in the Spring Term which will assist the children with their understanding and it brings further colour and interest to our lessons. In addition, History often forms the focus of our class assemblies where dressing up is an integral part of the morning!

## **Geography:**

One of our first topics in Geography is that of the Counties, Cities and the main islands of the UK. We begin by looking at the geographical regions of the UK – hills, mountains, coasts and rivers. We then look at the Human and Physical geography of a particular region within the UK. We will also conduct a similar study of Europe. We then look at latitude and longitude and the related important Geographical names (such as the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn) and follow this with studies of climate zones, types of settlement and land use. We will also be working on basic Geographical Skills such as map work, Grid References and the Compass points to build knowledge of the UK and the wider world.

As Mapwork continues to form an important part of the syllabus you can help by encouraging your child to look at maps before travelling on trips, examine locations using resources such as Google Earth and to read maps during your travels. Again, the BBC website for Key Stage 2 offers interesting

activities and information for the children. Geography is evaluated through continual assessment—tests, class participation, discussion and independent research projects.

### **RE:**

The Religious Education in Y3 will focus on Christianity and includes elements of other religions starting with Buddhism. In addition to weekly RE lessons, pupils attend two assemblies per week. Each day, a prayer is said at the end of lunch and the School Prayer is recited at the end of the day.

### **French:**

Children are kept busy and active during lessons with short but varied activities which are mainly oral. We use plenty of colours, stories, finger rhymes, movements, songs and lots of props. Topics include classroom routine and instructions, the alphabet, myself, dates and festivals, the weather, our house, the family, animals, transport, numbers 0-59.

Please encourage your child to tell you the new words, songs or rhymes they are learning and to speak French whenever they have the opportunity. A vocabulary sheet will be sent home at the beginning of each term with lists of words which will be used in lessons.

### **Music:**

Music is an important part of life at St. Margaret's. In Year 3, recorder classes take place once a week to reinforce the reading and writing of music notation and to enhance the understanding of relevant terminology. It is helpful if pupils practise their recorder pieces during the week to increase the speed of progress. All pupils perform their recorder pieces in

class on an individual and group basis and are also encouraged to perform on other instruments that they take up.

Music lessons focus on listening skills with children listening to a variety of musical styles in order to recognise ‘moods’ in music and describe these accurately. A range of un-tuned and tuned percussion instruments and keyboards are used on which rhythmic patterns can be placed as accompaniment to songs. Vocal work is strengthened by encouraging children to use their voices with more control and extend their sol-fa knowledge and range.

Instrumentalists are encouraged to become more involved in the school’s musical life, although this is not compulsory. Mrs Morgan runs a Prep. Choir and a Year 3/4 Chamber Choir which each meet once a week at 8am and will be happy to discuss with your child which of these would suit them. Mrs Morgan requires the children to take part in a simple audition if they would like to join the Chamber Choir, and if accepted into this, are required to additionally attend the Prep. Choir. In addition, when pupils have reached an appropriate level of competence on their musical instruments, they are invited to join before-school and lunchtime ensemble groups to further develop their skills and enjoy playing with friends. We ask that all pupils involved in extra-curricular music lessons commit to attending each week, learning words and playing a significant role in the school concerts.

There are annual Christmas and Easter matinee and evening concerts that all pupils in the Prep Department are involved in and these usually occur on the penultimate Friday of term. All pupils are expected to attend in full school uniform, arriving at the specified time depending on whether they are instrumentalists or choir members. Everyone is expected to remain until the end of the concert. Parents are very welcome

to attend the evening concerts, with Grandparents and very young siblings encouraged to come to the matinee performance held on the Friday afternoon. In addition to the school concerts, musical pupils are regularly invited to perform at charity concerts or attend specialist development days.

Pupils who wish to develop their skills in an instrument are encouraged to attend our Music Taster Evening, held in September. If accepted for lessons, these are mostly held on a rotating timetable with the appropriate peripatetic teacher, and invoicing for these is between the music teacher and the parent. It should be noted that individual peripatetic teachers have different fee structures and further details are available on request.

When pupils have reached the required standard, music teachers may recommend that pupils sit the appropriate ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal School of Music) examination, sessions for which are usually held on the last two Saturdays of term, at school. If the pupil requires an accompanist for this exam, details can be obtained from Mrs Morgan. Parents are invoiced separately for ABRSM exams, and it is a condition of entry that the pupil will continue to work on their exam repertoire, including the supporting tasks, until the exam, to ensure that they represent themselves and the Music Department to the highest standard. The ABRSM Board devises the timetable and length of exam day for these sessions, however, Mrs Morgan will take any written requests from parents for certain times into account, and will adjust the given timetable accordingly if he can. Pupils will be supplied with full written details of their exam in sufficient time but it is worth noting that pupils are representing St. Margaret's and full school uniform is required, even at a weekend

exam. We have an enviable record of success in music exams and we're sure this will continue for years to come.

## **Art & DT**

Art has close links with the topics taught in other subjects in Y3 wherever possible and much of the work produced can be seen proudly displayed around the school. Children will be taught to develop their techniques, including their control and their use of materials, with creativity, experimentation and an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft and design. They will be taught how to create sketch books to record their observations and use them to review and revisit ideas. They will improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials (for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay). They will be taught about great artists, architects and designers in history.

## **PE and Games**

Y3 is where team games begin in earnest. In Games lessons boys will be taught skills for Football, Rugby & Cricket, whilst the girls will learn Netball, Hockey & Rounders. In PE lessons children will have the opportunity to develop skills in Gymnastics, Cross Country, Outdoor Activities and Athletics. Training sessions, pre- and after-school clubs are offered in a wide range of sports. Again, these are not compulsory but will develop the skills of the pupils and are encouraged. If a pupil does choose to attend, they must do so for the whole term, irrespective of the weather.

When Games or PE forms the last lesson of the day, pupils may be permitted to go home wearing their Games kit, including full tracksuit; it is then their responsibility to ensure they collect their school uniform from the Changing Rooms

after dismissal. If Games or PE is the first lesson of the day, pupils are still required to attend school in full school uniform as they will be given an opportunity to change at the start of the lesson. Pupils attending early morning training sessions should arrive at the set time for an 8am start in the appropriate Games kit, but remember to bring all their school uniform with them including, in particular, their shoes. If they forget part, or all of their uniform, parents will be telephoned and asked to deliver the missing items. Cross-country running is held on Friday mornings at 8am, and pupils are permitted to wear non-school running gear if they wish. This prevents them having to wear potentially wet and muddy kit later in the day for a Games lesson. It is useful, for a sporty child, to have a second set of rugby shirt and blue shorts available for wet and muddy days where early morning training is held but the pupil also has Games or PE later in the day. Stock of good quality PE kit is always available from the Second Hand Shop at a reasonable cost.

There are a small number of training matches organised throughout the year to introduce children to the concepts of match play, and these are held on a Thursday for Year 3. Prior to the match, electronic mail will be used to seek permission from parents and giving details of the fixture. Mr Clark will always select the most suitable team given the nature of the fixture. In the event of a match cancellation, parents will be informed by the School Office; you can assume that matches are proceeding unless you hear otherwise, even in poor weather.

Parents are very welcome to support their children at matches, both at home and away games. They are reminded to limit any side-line instructions to their child as these training matches provide an essential opportunity for Mr Clark and

his team to instruct the pupils, developing certain skills that have been practised in lessons. All parents are welcome to attend the match tea, where refreshments are provided. Dismissal from a match depends on the location and timing; Mr Clark and his team hold responsibility for the children until they are handed over to Form Teachers or directly to yourselves, and staff will keep you informed of the arrangements as the afternoon develops.

Children are provided with a peg in the changing rooms, on which they keep their kit bags, and a boot locker where they keep their footwear. There is a kit check at the beginning of each term and parents are asked to check the school kit list for items required and how to label kit. By Year 3, children are expected to be able to change quickly and tidily without assistance.

### **Swimming:**

Swimming takes place throughout the year at Halstead Sports Centre. Lessons are taught by qualified swimming coaches. Groupings are made to ensure that the children are appropriately challenged and that good progress is made. Children will require a swimming costume and towel kept in a suitable sports bag. Children are expected to be able to tie shoe laces and School ties by themselves in order for the time schedule to be followed. If children are unable to swim due to illness they should take a reading book with them.

### **Form / PSHEE:**

This is where we will be discussing various issues which will help the children in their studies and within the classroom. Topics include: how to listen and improve concentration, study skills, being kind to one another, co-operation, being

ready, solving problems and resolving conflict. This time may also be used for children to tidy their desks, collect merits and to organise themselves better, where appropriate.

### **Learning Support:**

All the children are closely monitored, from observation, using their classwork and through regular testing. If any child's progress is beginning to slip and we are concerned, you will be contacted and strategies put into place to help them. Similarly if you have any specific concerns about your child's progress, please feel free to bring this to our attention.

### **General:**

We believe that, for a child to succeed, a close partnership between home and school is essential. We hope that this booklet will help you to get an overview of life in Y3 and know what to expect. Form Teachers are always available if you have any queries and we are happy to see you.

You will receive progress checks at the end of the Autumn Term and a report at the end of the year, as well as invitations to Parents' Evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms. We look forward to seeing you!



Miss Gutteridge is the 3G Form Teacher. This will be her first year teaching at St Margaret's. She started her career in a local school and has spent the last 3 years teaching at a British International School in Dubai. She enjoys travel, adventure sports and is looking forward to joining our team.



Dr Fraser is the 3F Form Teacher. She has been a parent, flute teacher, teaching assistant and trainee (teaching throughout KS1 and 2) at our school. This will be her NQT year. When she is not practising her musical instruments, Dr Fraser enjoys walking with her crazy spaniel.

**Welcome  
to Year 3!**