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Hello. My name is Mrs Smith and I'm the Lead teacher in Foundation Stage. I'd like to start by saying how much we are looking forward to welcoming you and your child to West Kirby Primary.

Usually at this time of year we would be inviting you to join us in the school hall to present all this information and give you an opportunity to ask any questions that might be on your mind. Unfortunately, this is not possible at the moment, but I hope that this presentation might provide you with a bit of an overview and we would be more than happy to answer any further questions you might have either over the phone or via e mail.

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This time last year we asked our Foundation children what messages they would like to send to the children due to start school the following year. These are some of the things they said.

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The most important thing for us when children start school is to ensure that they feel happy and secure and there are a number of things that we have put in place over the years to make the experience of starting school a positive one. At this time of year we would usually be in the process of visiting your children in their pre-school settings and inviting them to come into school for visits to help them become familiar with our setting and staff. Sadly, we are not able to offer this at the moment, but are looking forward to the time when this will be possible and will keep you informed as we have more certainty. While we wait for this time to arrive, we have included some photographs of our school for you to share and talk about with your child at home.

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Before your child's first day at school we offer parents the opportunity to have 1:1 meetings with Foundation Stage staff. This is a chance for you to share any information with us that will help us get to know your child, their likes and dislikes, what makes them happy, what upsets them and anything else you can think of that

will us settle them in quickly and happily. You can bring your child along to these meetings or come on your own, whichever is best for you.

These meetings usually take place in the first couple of days of term in September. Sometimes it is the little things that make the difference. For example, we always ask the children what picture they would like on their coat peg label and on their first day at school, this is something personal that they can go and look for and we often find that this provides a link into a conversation with them about their favourite things and helps them to feel welcome.

For many children parting from parents can be very difficult when they first start school and we completely understand this. Many years of experience has taught us that in most cases, saying goodbye as quickly as possible is usually the best way in these situations, upsetting as this can be for all concerned.

Once in the classroom, we are in most cases, able to comfort them and distract them, and this is where the information gained from the getting to know you meetings is particularly helpful. If your child does not calm down and settle quickly, we will give you a call. We will also give you a call if they do settle down quickly, so that you can relax and get on with your day, without worrying about how they are.

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As I said earlier on, our number 1 priority is to ensure that your child feels happy and secure and we know that this is what needs to happen in order for children to learn successfully.

Our Learning Environment is planned to give a wide range of learning opportunities across all the 7 areas of learning. You can see what these 7 areas are on the next slide and more information about them can be found by following the link.

One of the pleasures of working in early years is having the opportunity to observe and become involved in children's learning through play. This gives us such a lot of information about how they learn and what their next steps need to be. We can then plan our activities based on our observations adapt them to suit the learning needs, interests and ages and stages of the children.

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As a parent, you have already been involved in supporting your child's learning from the very start and we know that it is by working in partnership with you, the people

who know the children best, that we can help them to achieve their potential in school. We therefore offer a number of different ways for you to become involved. At West Kirby Primary we use Tapestry to record evidence of children's learning throughout their time in Foundation. This is an online learning Journal and is something that you are able to access at home and also contribute to yourself by uploading messages, photos and videos. This has been particularly beneficial during the period of school closure and one of the things that has kept my spirits up at this time is being able to see pictures of the children in my class and hear all about what they have been doing at home. Tapestry is also fantastic during those first few days at school, particularly if your child has been upset coming through the door, as we are able to take a picture of them playing happily and send it to you straight away, giving you instant reassurance. You will find the consent form for Tapestry in your information packs, and if we receive them before your child starts school, we can begin using it from their first day.

Our website is a great source of information and is always a good first port of call for information. It is also where we put our home learning, with suggestions of activities to support your child's learning outside of school. On the curriculum tab, you can find our topic webs and learning mats so that you can see the planned learning for each half term.

F2 children will bring home a reading bag containing books to share and sounds and words to learn and we will share more information about these with you at a later date.

Throughout the year we also run a number of workshops for parents which cover reading, phonics, maths, handwriting & fine motor skills, science. These start with a short presentation and then there are lots of activities set up in the classroom for you to try out with your child. These are fun sessions and a great way for you to see some of the ways your child is learning in school.

Share a story sessions offer another opportunity to come into school. We try to hold them every half term for 10-15 minutes and it is a chance to find a cosy space in the classroom and look at a variety of books with your child.

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School meals are often the highlight of the day for some of our F2 children and this is not surprising as our kitchen produces delicious homemade food. There is always a hot meal choice and a deli bar offering rolls and wraps and a choice of fillings.

There is also always a wide variety of fruit to choose from. You can see our current menu by following the link to our website.

We would usually be offering parents an opportunity to sample some of the food from our kitchen when children come for the initial visit and we will look at ways that we can enable you to do this when it becomes possible. School meals are free for all children in F2 Y1 & Y2.

We recognise that for some children, their first experience of the dinner hall can be a bit daunting. We therefore go up to the hall earlier than the other children in the school, so that the hall is quiet. A member of the Foundation stage staff stays with them initially, helping them to choose their lunch and find a place to sit with their friends. Some of the older children then come into the hall to help the children put their trays and cups away and find their way out to the playground.

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Waves provides fun and flexible before and after school provision and more details can be found by clicking the link to our website.

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If you are able to become involved in our Parent Teacher Association, please do. As well as providing invaluable additional funds to enhance the learning opportunities for the children at our school, it is also a great way to meet other parents and become involved in the school community. All involvement is appreciated, however small it might seem. More information can be found by clicking the link to our school website.

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Parents often ask what they can be doing during the summer to prepare their child for starting school. This will obviously depend on what each individual child is ready to do, but here are a few suggestions.

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Uniform is not compulsory for F1 children, but many choose to wear a West Kirby Primary sweatshirt and this helps to create a feeling of belonging. More detail on

the uniform for F2 and how to order it can be found by clicking the link to our website.

I can't emphasise enough the importance of labelling uniform. If all the children take their sweatshirts off on a hot day it can be quite a challenge trying to match them all up with the right children at the end of the day without any names in them! Naming also means that if your child leaves their sweatshirt outside at playtime, it can be quickly reunited with them.

I am also making a plea for uniform that is easy to take on and off. Imagine a class full of children changing for PE in lace up shoes or a child desperate for the toilet who has a button on their trousers which they can't undo! Elastic and Velcro are amazing inventions, particularly when it comes to clothing for Foundation Stage children!

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We are looking forward to the time when we are able to welcome you and your child into our school.

Until that time comes, keep well and stay safe.