

Starting School

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St. Paul's

Christian

Playgroup

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Starting School

At St Paul's Christian Playgroup, we aim to help make the transition from Playgroup to School a positive one.

There are many things you can do with your child to help prepare them for when the big day comes – activities you can do over the summer holidays in a gentle and fun way that will, hopefully, make the transition to big school that little bit easier for them.

Things that you can do to help prepare your child emotionally:

Talk about school

You don't need to do it in a 'big fuss' kind of way, but instead find times when you are both relaxed, snuggled up together, to talk about their next big adventure. Show enthusiasm as you talk about the exciting new activities they will enjoy. Explain that teachers are there to help them and how there will be lots of other new children too.

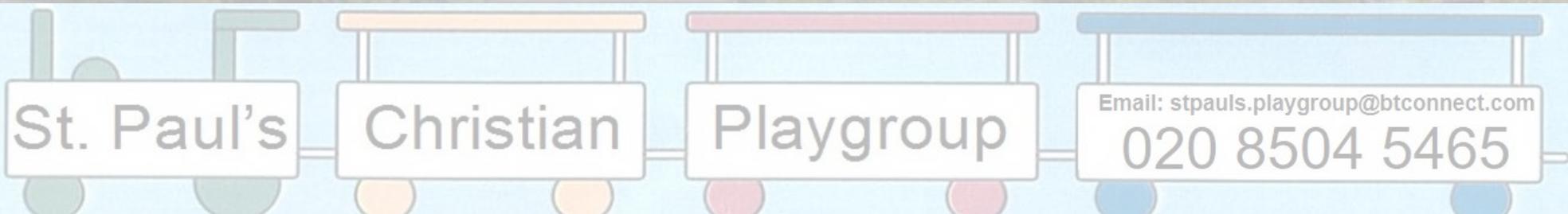
Talk about when you were little at school – the friends you made, games you played and teachers you liked – an old school photo may be helpful to show them. Do reassure them that you will be there at the end of the school day to collect them/take them home.

Become familiar with the school

Try to familiarise your child with the school itself. Do a few practise school runs - drive or walk (whichever you expect to do when the day comes). The school will be locked, but you can still go to the gate, peek in and talk about what you see. Look at the school's Website and/or Prospectus – talk about the building ("I wonder which classroom you will be in"), playground ("I wonder what games you will play"). If there are pictures of the School Head/Teachers – talk about how they are looking forward to meeting the new children. All this will help your child to build a mental picture of school and can help ease any fears they may have.

Read books and watch DVDs

Read your child stories about starting school (such as 'Going to School' by Usbourne First Experiences and 'Starting School' by Allan Ahlberg) and watch DVDs (such as 'My First Day at School'). Also, look through your child's own personalised 'New School Book' that Playgroup put together for them.



Play schools

Remember how you used to play schools when you were little – well, now is a wonderful time to revisit that old favourite (rope Dad or Nanny and Grandad in too – the more the merrier!). Call out the register; praise them for ‘sitting nicely’, ‘listening’ etc. Have a question and answer time – where they have to put their hands up before answering. Remember to swap around – so your child gets a turn to be the teacher too!

Things that you can practise with your child in advance

Toilet habits

Make sure your child knows that they can go to the toilet whenever they need to and don't have to wait to be asked. Encourage them to be independent with managing their own toileting – wiping their bottom, washing their hands etc. They also need to know they can ask for help if they need it. This will help ease anxiety many children feel about using the toilets at big school.

Shoes and clothing

Take your child with you when buying their new school uniform, shoes, bag, lunch box etc. Encourage them to practise getting dressed and undressed into their uniform – explain how their clothes will be labelled with their name. Show them how to tell the left shoe from the right and avoid shoes with laces (velcro straps are much more appropriate – even if they can do up their laces).

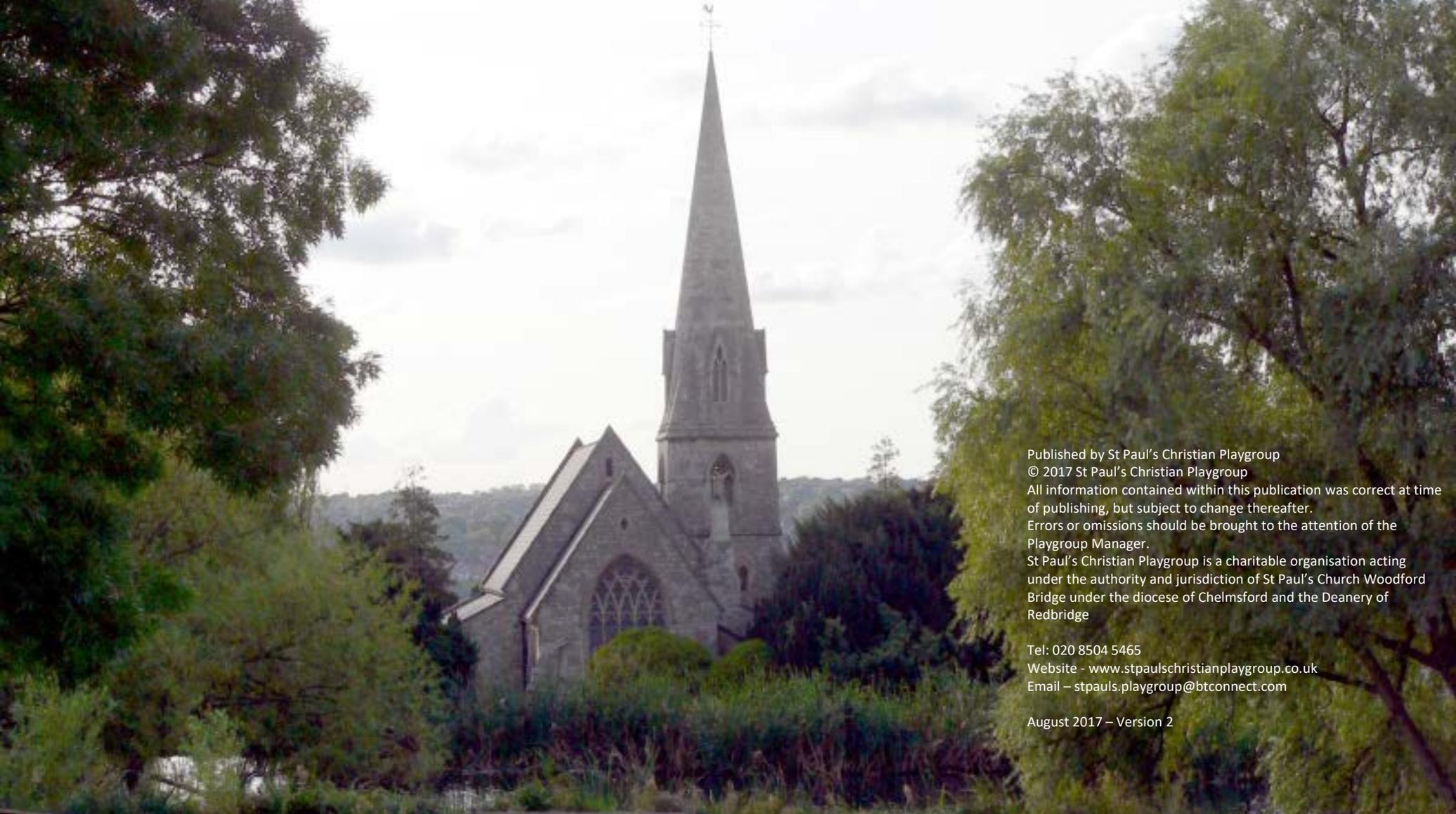
Lunch

Help your child to master using cutlery to prepare them for feeding themselves school dinners. Have a few practise packed lunch days. Pack a lunch box as you will for school – make it more fun by having it in the garden or park. Also, encourage your child to make healthy choices – when shopping ask them to choose what to have for dinner or let them help to prepare dinner - deciding on what to eat.

Learning

Encourage your child to recognise their written name – which will come in useful when finding their coat peg, tray and uniform. There's no need to go overboard but if you both wanted to, and had the time, you could also work with them on mastering skills such as writing their name, counting and recognising some numerals and letters.





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