

# STARTING SCHOOL

***“By law children must start their full-time education in the term following their fifth birthday. In West Sussex your child may start either full or part-time in the September following their fourth birthday.”***

West Sussex County Council Website

This leaflet aims to provide you with an overview of the process of starting school. It will outline how we support your child's transition and some top tips on how you can practically and emotionally support your child at this exciting time!

## Starting School Process

- **September:** At Rascals – Those children starting school the following September begin one to one reading sessions.
- **October:** West Sussex County Council Online Applications open. You can apply for your child's school place at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions)
- **15<sup>th</sup> January:** Closing date for school admissions applications. *If you complete a paper form it is your responsibility to make sure that the form is sent to your local school by the deadline date.*
- **January - March:** School Preference forms are processed and the information is exchanged with schools and other local authorities.
- **April:** Online applicants will be notified which school their child has been offered by email during the day. **No decisions will be issued by telephone.** Other applicants will be sent a letter by second class post, posted during the day.
- **May:** School waiting lists are established and places offered as they become available. *This process only applies to those children who were not allocated a preference school.*
- **May - July:** Appeals are heard by an independent appeals panel. *This process only applies to those children who were not allocated a preference school.*
- **September:** The new intake is admitted to school.

More specific information regarding Starting School in West Sussex can be found at:  
[www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions)

## How Rascals helps to prepare your child for school

**We promote your child's independence from the moment they start at Rascals. Within our supportive environment, your child is encouraged to think and act for themselves.**

- **Toilet independence:** Once your child is fully toilet trained. They are encouraged to use the toilet and maintain their personal hygiene independently.
- **Personal Belongings:** Your child is encouraged to look after their own belongings. They are encouraged to hang up their own coat and bag and to collect them at the end of the morning.

- **Getting Dressed:** Your child is encouraged to dress themselves. Taking off and putting on their own coat and shoes and will practice this through various dressing up and role play opportunities.
- **Free flow:** Your child is encouraged to explore their own interests and are given the opportunity to access a variety of resources to support their learning.
- **1 to 1 reading sessions:** In the academic year before your child starts school they will have regular 1 to 1 reading sessions with their key person. They will have the opportunity to take the books home for the week to share with parents / carers.
- **School Role Play:** We have a school role play area at Rascals throughout the year. This is more frequently set up during the summer term so the children become more familiar with the school uniforms and equipment they will be encountering in their new schools.
- **Lunch Time:** Those children who stay for full day sessions (Mondays and Tuesdays) have the opportunity to eat lunch together in a twice weekly lunch club. This is an opportunity for the children to practice eating practice eating their lunch independently in a social situation.
- **Liaise with local schools:** We maintain close links with local schools and annually review transition arrangements.
- **Teacher Visits:** We invite the local schools to visit Rascals to meet their new intake.

## Top Tips for Starting School

- Read the schools prospectus' to get an idea of the schools ethos.
- Read the schools most recent Ofsted reports.
- Involve your child in the process of buying uniform and other necessities for school.
- Practice getting dressed and putting on shoes and coats.
- Talk about starting school together BUT don't refer to it as starting 'BIG' school as this can prove intimidating. Instead use the schools name or refer to it by the colour of its uniform.
- Read books about starting school together.