

# RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL



**WILLOWS INCLUSION BASE**  
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS 2022-2023



# Welcome to Willows

Education is about transforming lives. Our aim in Willows is to provide children with an engaging, challenging and rewarding education. We understand that not all children will follow a conventional path in their education, and so we operate like a mini-school – one that is more bespoke to your child. We are attached to – and at the heart of – Riverside Primary School, of course. We provide the same breadth of opportunities in and out of the classroom while also offering something extra to help meet your child's additional needs.

Willows is a local authority-funded SEMH base, supporting children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. We work with families from across the Wirral. Places are determined by the local authority, following an assessment of each child by a panel of specialists. Willows is a short-term placement, lasting four terms. Children are dual registered, thus maintaining the link with their mainstream school.

## PUTTING YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS FIRST

At the heart of our approach is a focus on the individual. We will always keep in mind what is in the best interests of your child. This means:



### **Offering a broad curriculum**

*A mix of academic and practical learning, enhanced by off-site trips and visits and support from external agencies*



### **Working in partnership**

*Encouraging families to be active partners in their child's education through regular communication and involvement*



### **Keeping class sizes small**

*Keeping classes below 10, with two members of staff, allows us to concentrate on small-group learning*



### **Nurturing life skills**

*Focusing on developing confidence and self-esteem as well as the ability to co-operate, listen and interact positively with others*



### **Creating individualised plans**

*Bespoke plans for each child so that any gaps in their education can be addressed*



### **Boosting literacy skills**

*Ensuring that literacy levels are in line with national expectations*



# Our values at Riverside

Willows is a local authority-funded SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) base at the heart of Riverside Primary School in Seacombe. Here at Riverside we think of ourselves as a school of sanctuary, making sure that everyone feels included and safe. Our core values and our curriculum ensure that children work and play harmoniously.

...These life-enhancing activities, too many to list, are a key reason why pupils leave Riverside as mature, empathetic and tolerant youngsters who have a love of learning. Consequently, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

**Ofsted, 2016**

This quote, from our most recent Ofsted inspection, gives you an idea of what makes Riverside such a unique and special school.

Our school motto – *I Am Still Learning* – was said by the great Michelangelo, who achieved so much in his life, at the age of 87. It captures the sense that we are all on an exciting lifelong learning journey.

Our curriculum focuses on the wellbeing and progress of every child. We believe that all members of our community are of equal worth.

Our school is well resourced, with talented and committed staff and a passionate governing body. We also actively encourage parents to become involved in their child's education.

Working together as a school family, we make sure that children are happy and successful at Riverside.

## Year group heroes

One of the ways that we encourage pupils to reflect on our core values is by studying the lives of people who have made a significant and positive impact on the world.

We look at the values and virtues that these people have demonstrated in the way they have led their lives. We also think about what it means to act as a 'hero' does, despite the weaknesses and flaws that, as human beings, we all share.

The heroes that we are focusing on this year are:

- Benjamin Zephaniah
- Bear Grylls
- Dame Sarah Storey
- LS Lowry
- Marcus Rashford
- Julia Donaldson
- Professor Dame Sarah Gilbert
- Captain Tom Plake
- Sir David Attenborough

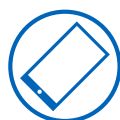
Bear Grylls is the hero that Willows pupils focus on.



Email Mrs Charles, Mrs Airoso or Miss Gordon for more information  
[willows@riverside.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:willows@riverside.wirral.sch.uk)



Visit the school website  
[riverside.wirral.sch.uk](http://riverside.wirral.sch.uk)



You can also phone us  
 0151 639 9787

# Our focus in Willows

A key focus in Willows is on developing children's emotional literacy. By enhancing children's self-esteem, self-confidence and social and emotional development we aim to improve their mental health and overall physical and mental wellbeing. We are preparing them to return to – and be happy and successful in – mainstream education.

We use a wide range of strategies in Willows to help develop emotional literacy.

We work with the children to help them to control and overcome their impulsive reactions and to understand and articulate their feelings.

We aim to break down barriers to learning by providing the children with the tools they need to express themselves appropriately, and to act in a

calm and controlled way to what they might perceive as threatening situations. We constantly remind them that these new behavioural strategies they are learning will enable them to make a successful return to mainstream education.

We also focus on restorative justice. This approach promotes reflective learning and helps to embed the new behaviour management skills that the children develop during their time with us.

## EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES WE USE

- A clear and consistent approach from adults at all times
- A 'Good Morning' song that focuses on feelings
- Daily Circle Time, helping the children to talk about their feelings
- My Happy Mind, a scheme that aims to help children build confidence and resilience
- Mindfulness and yoga
- Makaton, a unique language programme that uses a combination of symbols, signs and speech to help children communicate
- Encouraging cooperation and building self-esteem
- Helping the children interact positively with others
- Modelling appropriate behaviour
- Creating imaginary social situations where the children can discuss feelings in a non-threatening way
- Use of the Boxall Profile assessment tool
- Lots of opportunities for building and maintaining relationships





# Routines and expectations

Unless they are beginning the process of reintegration, children remain with Willows staff during playtime and lunchtime until they are able to cope in social situations with a larger group of children. This includes eating breakfast together. It is an important part of our day, baking, growing, preparing and cooking our own vegetables and fruit.

<b>Our School Day</b>	<b>8.50am–9am</b>	<b>Arrival to School</b>
	<b>9am</b>	<b>Morning Song</b>
	<b>9.10am</b>	<b>Phonics</b>
	<b>10.10am</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Playtime</b>
	<b>10.45am</b>	<b>English / Maths / PSE Games</b>
	<b>12pm</b>	<b>Lunchtime</b>
	<b>1pm</b>	<b>Circle Time</b>
	<b>1.30pm</b>	<b>Topic / Baking / Yoga / PE</b>
	<b>2.40pm</b>	<b>Mindfulness / Star of the Day</b>
	<b>3pm* or 3.15pm</b>	<b>End of School (*children brought to school on transport)</b>

## REWARDS

We focus on immediate rewards so that the children quickly see benefits from behaving well.

Examples of rewards we use are:

- tokens and stickers
- verbal praise and recognition
- an 'Above and Beyond' board
- postcards and phone calls home
- Star of the Day
- 5 Star celebration assemblies
- Hot Chocolate Friday
- a weekly call to feed back on the last five days
- Golden Time\*\* twice a week

## SANCTIONS

When a child makes wrong choices, we use reflection time. This is when an adult has a restorative conversation with the child, discussing with them how they might have acted or behaved differently, who has been affected and how the child might make things better.

If a child hurts another child physically, they will have reflection time during Golden Time.

### \*\*Golden Time

Golden Time involves fun activities chosen by the children as a reward for positive behaviour

# Turning behaviour around

We work in Willows with children whose behaviour is a cause for concern and who may be at risk of permanent exclusion. We believe that no child should be held back by previous poor choices. We work on modifying unacceptable behaviour at the same time as offering a curriculum tailored to each child's needs.

**1 Supporting vulnerable children** who consistently display distressed behaviours, getting them back on track.

**2 Re-establishing respectful relationships in a safe environment,** helping the children re-engage with learning and build positive relationships with adults who they feel safe and secure with.

**3 Providing the children with skills and attitudes** to help them build their self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of self-worth.

**4 Reviewing each child's targets with them** so that they see progress in all aspects of their learning and wellbeing.

## Build and Repair

Focus on positive relationships rather than on sanctions

## Kindness

We trust and care for every child; our first response is kindness

## Praise

Calm and consistent, focusing on catching a child being good

## Dignity

Ensuring that we praise in public and reprimand in private





# The length of a child's stay

A child attend Willows for a maximum of four terms. Although we offer a broad and balanced curriculum, our main aim is for the children to reintegrate back into their mainstream school at the end of their time with us. We have strategies in place at Willows to support this gradual process of reintegration.

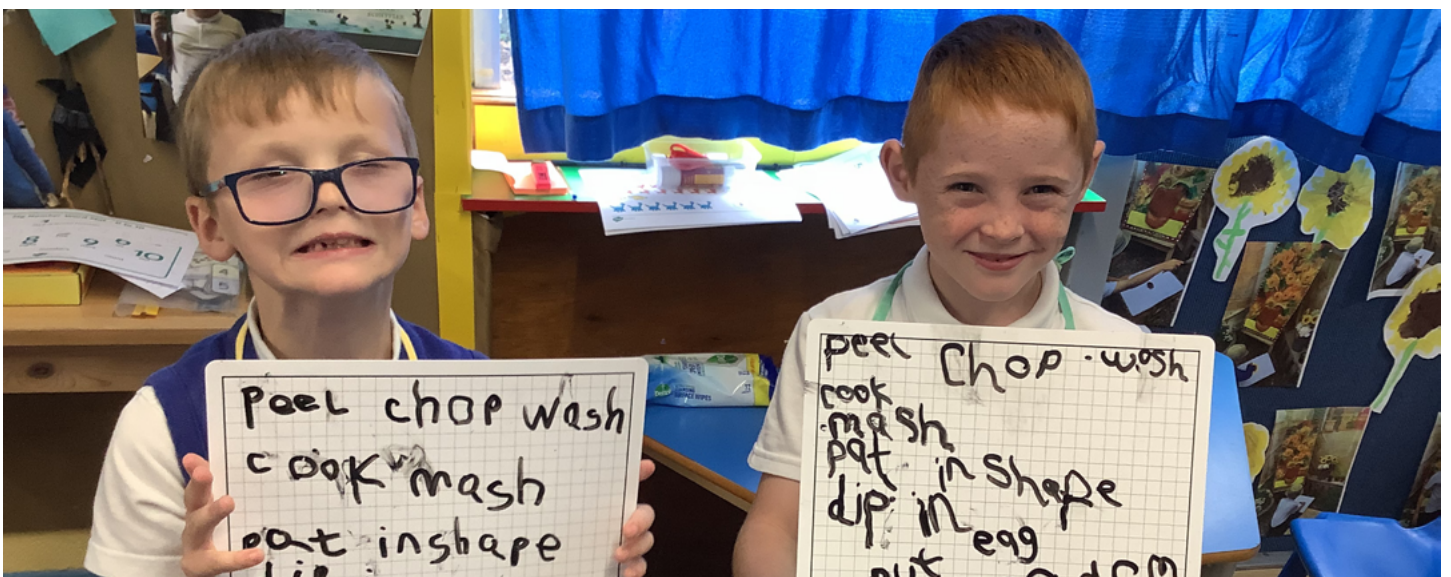
When we are confident that a child is ready to do so, we will begin this process of returning them to mainstream schooling.

We will do this by integrating them into classes at Riverside for subjects that they have a particular interest in or feel confident about. We will gradually increase the number of classes, with the child fully supported by a member of staff from Willows.

We want to see whether the child is managing to cope in a safe and secure environment with an adult they feel comfortable with.

However, during a child's time in Willows it may become apparent that mainstream school is not the most appropriate setting for them. It may be that alternative provision is suggested.

In such cases we would discuss this with the child's parents and the child's main school.





# A partnership with parents

Positive parent-teacher relationships are crucial to a child's success in Willows or indeed in any other school. It is important for a child to see parents and teachers working together to achieve the same goal. When parents and teachers are working in harmony, a child is much more likely to be happy and successful in school.

We have an 'open door' policy at Willows. We want parents to feel listened to and valued. It is parents who have the most knowledge about their child. And in order for us to be able to fully support their child, we need to be in regular dialogue with parents.

It is crucial for a child's success that parents are fully involved in all aspects of their child's learning. We hold regular half-termly review meetings. Staff from the child's main school are invited as well as parents. It is an opportunity to discuss the child's achievements, the progress that they have made and any areas of concern.

We also hold regular coffee mornings. Parents are encouraged to come along and take part in a fun activity with their child. This is a chance for the children to show off their work and achievements and to demonstrate some of the amazing things we do in Willows.

We aim to have a phone conversation with parents at the end of each week to give an update on how the week has gone and to share all the positive things that have happened throughout the week.

We send home reading books for the children to read. It is extremely important that parents support their child with their reading.

We also send home library books for parents to read to their child. When a parent reads to their child, it creates a special bond. It also helps the child to develop their imagination and their speaking and listening skills as well as their ability to understand more complex texts.

**1 Ask your child questions about the story.** 'Wh-' questions are ideal: Who? What? When? Where? Why? For example, 'What do you think Harry is feeling?' 'Why do you think Lyra said that?'

**2 Play word games.** Word games are a great way to help children improve their spelling and confidence with words. Excellent word games include *Scrabble*, *Hangman* and *Cut Up and Rebuild*.

**3 Ask your child to make predictions about what they are reading.** If it is a book, look at the front cover and talk about what they think it might be about. Encourage them to use their imagination.

**4 Read a wide range of different things together.** Encourage your child to try different genres. And reading doesn't just mean books. Comics and websites, and even things like recipes, count as well!

**5 Help your child's brain stay active.** Evidence suggests that children's reading levels dip during school holidays. Get your child in the habit of reading every day, even if it's only for 15 minutes.







# A personalised curriculum

We follow a topic-based curriculum, making lots of cross-curricular links but at the same time ensuring that we cover all subjects in appropriate detail. We know that the children in Willows have often not enjoyed or experienced success with their learning. We aim to make sure that their learning experiences in Willows are positive ones.

We want the children to really enjoy and look forward to learning. This will help build their self-confidence and self-esteem. It will also help to eliminate any negative attitudes and behaviours that they may be in the habit of displaying when faced with challenging work.

We focus very much on providing a practical approach to learning. Evidence to support our assessments is largely based on photographs, peer and group discussions and sticky facts, in the main limiting what the children write to supporting their work in English and phonics.

## EXAMPLES OF LEARNING IN WILLOWS

### PHONICS

We follow a phonics scheme of work called Read Write Inc. Phonics is a way of teaching children to read and write. It helps them to hear, identify and use different sounds that distinguish one word from another. We group the children according to their ability in phonics to ensure they all make rapid progress.

### ENGLISH

We use a scheme of work called Talk Through Stories to develop children's English skills, which focuses on a different book each week. We particularly focus on language development, acquisition of new vocabulary and developing the children's storytelling abilities. They use their learning to plan and write their own stories.

### MATHS

We use resources from the educational organisation White Rose Maths as well as the online learning programmes Mathletics and Times Table Rock Stars. These all offer opportunities to solve maths-based problems in practical ways using specialist resources designed to develop a deeper understanding of number.

### A THEMED APPROACH

Each term we focus on a particular theme. Adopting a cross-curricular approach, we explore our chosen theme in detail, ensuring that the children's learning covers all the foundation subjects. We use KS1 history to deliver our history lessons and Developing Experts to deliver science.



# Term dates 2022–2023

<b>Autumn Term 2022</b>	<b>INSET Day</b>	<b>Thursday 1 September</b>
	<b>INSET Day</b>	<b>Friday 2 September</b>
	<b>Open</b>	<b>Monday 5 September</b>
	<b>Close</b>	<b>Thursday 20 October</b>
	<b>INSET Day</b>	<b>Friday 21 October</b>
	<b>Half-Term</b>	<b>Monday 24 October to Friday 28 October</b>
	<b>INSET Day</b>	<b>Monday 31 October</b>
	<b>Open</b>	<b>Tuesday 1 November</b>
	<b>Close</b>	<b>Tuesday 20 December</b>
	<b>Christmas Break</b>	<b>Wednesday 21 December to Tuesday 3 January</b>

<b>Spring Term 2023</b>	<b>INSET Day</b>	<b>Wednesday 4 January</b>
	<b>Open</b>	<b>Thursday 5 January</b>
	<b>Close</b>	<b>Friday 17 February</b>
	<b>Half-Term</b>	<b>Monday 20 February to Friday 24 February</b>
	<b>Open</b>	<b>Monday 27 February</b>
	<b>Close</b>	<b>Friday 31 March</b>
	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>Monday 3 April to Friday 14 April</b>

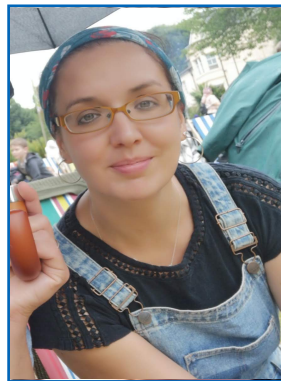
<b>Summer Term 2023</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Monday 17 April</b>
	<b>May Day Bank Holiday</b>	<b>Monday 1 May</b>
	<b>Close</b>	<b>Friday 26 May</b>
	<b>Half-Term</b>	<b>Monday 29 May to Friday 2 June</b>
	<b>Open</b>	<b>Monday 5 June</b>
	<b>Close</b>	<b>Thursday 20 July</b>



## MEET THE WILLOWS STAFF



**Mrs Charles**  
*Teacher*



**Mrs Airoso**  
*Teacher*



**Mrs Gordon**  
*Teaching  
Assistant*

## RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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