

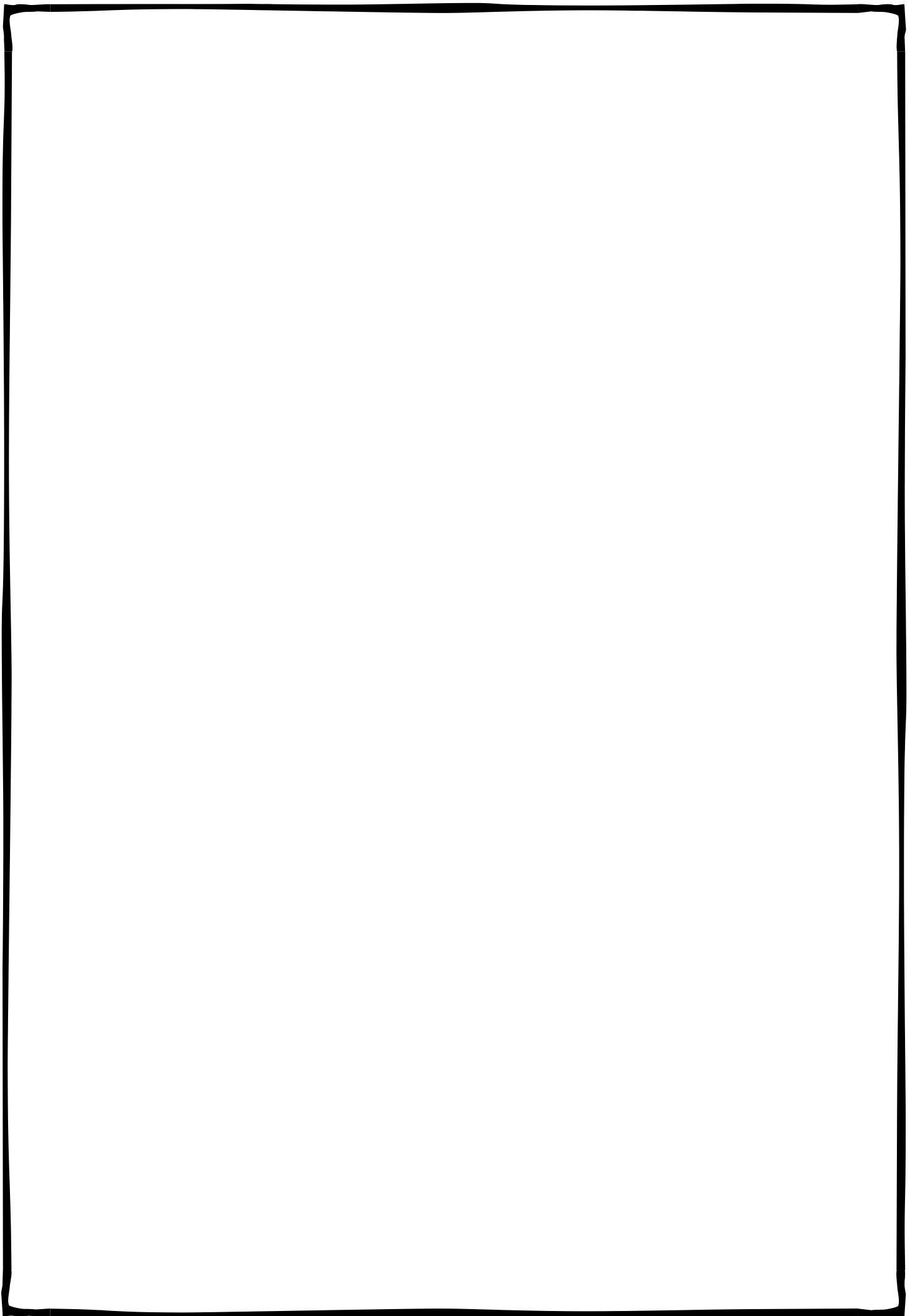


Star of the Sea  
SCHOOL  
*Open Hearts ~ Open Minds*

# Reception Induction Booklet 2020



*How is your child feeling about starting school?*



### *Talk to your child...*

Supporting your child to talk about their thoughts and feelings about starting school will help you to find out and understand how they are feeling, and what they may require. At this age children find it difficult to put their thoughts and feelings into words. Through gentle encouragement and guidance over time they will learn to share what they are thinking and feeling.

It is also important to recognise and accept that there will be times when your child does not want to talk, but may be happy to do so later. By creating opportunities for your child to speak to you about starting school you will also be strengthening your relationship with them and further developing their communication skills.

You can support your child to talk about their feelings by:

### *Using stories to prompt conversation*

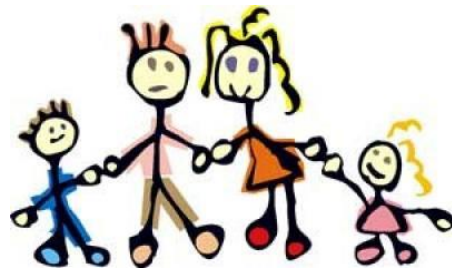
Stories can be a good way to discuss feelings as it may be less confronting for children to explore their feelings through characters in books (e.g. “why do you think the child in the story is feeling like that?”, “I wonder what they could do about...”).

Make-up stories or use existing stories in books to talk about starting school. For example, choose a picture of a child in a book and ask questions like “I wonder what things that girl was thinking about on her first day?” Then you might be able to carefully relate the character’s experience back to your own child (e.g. “have you ever felt that way?”).

### *Creating places and routines for sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings*

The best times will be when both you and your child are feeling relaxed. These times will differ for every family so choose a time that most suits you, for example:

- During story times
- While driving
- When cuddled up on the couch
- During bath time
- While out walking



### *Asking open-ended questions*

Asking ‘wondering questions’ (e.g. “I wonder what it will be like to...”) can help children to express their thoughts and feelings.

When children find such open-ended questions difficult, more targeted questions can be helpful. Some examples include, “what are you looking forward to most about starting school?”, “is there anything that makes you feel nervous about starting school?”

## *Understanding your child's feelings and behaviours*

Transition and getting ready for school involves changes that can bring a range of feelings and behaviours for children. It is normal for children to experience a number of different emotions and each child will have their own way of coping with these changes.

During this time your child may experience lots of strong emotions, sometimes conflicting ones like excitement and nervousness as they think about leaving their current setting and moving to primary school. Some of the emotions your child may experience include:

- *Sadness/anger* caused by a sense of loss at leaving the safety of their current setting. Letting go of strong relationships and familiar routines
- *Excitement* about going to 'big school' and learning new things
- *Anticipation* or wondering what it will be like, if the teacher will "be nice"
- *Nervousness* at wondering who will help if needed, what will the other boys and girls be like?
- *Fear/anxiety* that some things might be "too hard"

Understanding and helping your child to handle the feelings associated with the transition to school will lessen the stress they may experience and can provide them with positive ways to deal with different transitions and changes throughout their life.

Using language to describe and label emotions will help children to develop self-awareness skills. This takes time and practice.

*Let your child know that it is okay to be sad, excited, scared or maybe all of these things at once!*



## *Developing Social Skills*

Children learn social skills through talking, laughing, playing and mixing with different people.

They learn by being encouraged to try out new things and being allowed to make mistakes. They benefit from discussing ideas and opinions with adults and older brothers and sisters and from listening to alternative views. They learn and practise these skills at family gatherings, festivals and sporting events, at religious gatherings and when out shopping. They learn from other children, older people, family and the community. They learn 'how we do things' and about their family, their community and their country.

At STAR OF THE SEA we value and teach the following skills:

Organisation

Resilience

Getting Along

Persistence

Confidence

At school, children will need to be able to:

- cooperate with other children
- take turns and join in activities and games
- express their feelings and opinions in ways that don't offend or upset others
- use words to sort out their problems, rather than act aggressively
- know when and how to say sorry if they have done something to hurt or annoy someone
- ask questions and follow instructions
- ask for help when they need it
- follow rules and routines
- know when and how to give answers and opinions
- accept adults correcting their behaviour or learning
- try things they're not sure about yet
- keep going to finish a task

In the first years of school, children will develop these skills with the support of caring adults in the everyday situations that call for their use.



### ***How you can help with developing social skills...***

Families can help children develop social skills in simple ways, for example:

- Have lots of friendly talks with children, so they become good at talking with others
- Talk about looking forward to school and learning
- Talk through what will happen and review what did happen, together solving difficulties that arise
- Talk about the best ways to act in different situations at home, school and in the community
- Help them solve arguments without fighting
- Try to be calm, positive and polite yourself when you are solving a problem or resolving a conflict
- Don't expect them to share favourite toys, food and games too early
- Notice and comment positively when they do take turns, share and show kindness
- Tell them the things they're good at, and why you're proud of them
- Give them support in learning new things - taking risks when you feel safe builds confidence skills
- Give them increasing responsibility for things they can do independently

### ***Other helpful hints to support transition...***

## Encourage Independence

We want our children to grow into confident people who can do things for themselves. It's going to be essential for a happy and fulfilling life. At school, often for the first time, children are expected to be independent in new ways; to look after their clothes and belongings, to follow instructions and to make decisions:

- 'How much of my lunchbox will I eat at recess and how much should I leave for later?'
- 'Which of these books, games, puzzles or activities will I choose?'
- 'What do I do if my best friend is away?'

However, we can't expect children to have the skills and confidence to be independent straightaway. As with other changes, we need to prepare children for what will happen. We can talk to them about what to expect at school and draw parallels with going to preschool, child care or Grandma's; we can give them practice at making choices and decisions at home. Packing and unpacking their school bag (usually a backpack), for example, let children practise some of the skills they'll need to do at school.

## School Toilets

Some children do not use the toilet when they first go to school. This can be because they are afraid to ask, don't know how to ask, are afraid of bigger children, are not sure of managing their clothes or have forgotten where the toilets are. It can lead to discomfort and sometimes wetting their pants.

If your child commences school and is not using the toilet, check that they have the words to ask. Also, make sure that they know where the toilets are.

If you have a boy it may be a good idea to visit a urinal and ensure they know how to use it before they commence school.

## Some quick points...

- Make sure children have sufficient sleep – add an afternoon nap at weekends if your child is overtired
- Put an extra pair of undies in your child's bag in case of an accident
- Use shoes with Velcro fasteners until your child can manage their laces
- Expect that children may be tired in the first weeks of school – provide a cuddle, a drink and some quiet time when they get home
- Label everything, including shoes and socks!

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