



## Information for Parents & Carers

*“Fun when learning”*

We are a voluntary Pre-school serving the village of Ascott under Wychwood and surrounding communities. We meet in a modern village hall – known as Tiddy Hall. As well as this superb in-door area, we have a well equipped outside play area and garden. We make full use of the surrounding countryside. We work in close partnership with the Primary Schools in the Wychwoods and Leafield. Ofsted has rated us as an Outstanding Pre-school.

### **We commit ourselves to:**

- working in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop
- enriching the life and well-being of the local community
- treating everyone equally and celebrating diversity
- providing high quality care and education.

### **Parents**

Parents are members of our Pre-school and we hope they will play a full part in our life and work.

Parents are:

- valued and respected
- kept informed – through regular newsletters and children’s learning journals
- consulted – on anything that involves their children
- included in everything we do –parents are welcomed to join the management committee

We make every effort to see that every child:

- is in a safe, stimulating and healthy environment
- receives love, care and individual attention. We have a high ratio of staff to children
- can join with other children and adults - living, playing, working and learning together
- learns - building on what she or he already knows and can do
- has a personal key person they can trust, who supports them to learn, develop and achieve their full potential.
- sees their parents as partners in the school, working with staff to help them develop as happy, independent and confident young people
- understands that parents help run their school.

## Working together for your children

In our Pre-school we maintain a high ratio of adults to children. This is usually higher than set through the Welfare Requirements. This helps us to:

- give time and attention to each child
- talk with the children about their interests and activities.
- find and help talents to flower
- help children to experience and benefit from all the activities we provide; and
- allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.

## The staff who work at our Pre-school are:

Name	Job Title	Qualifications
Pauline Plant	Supervisor SEN co-ordinator Safeguarding Officer Language Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead	Primary teacher & NVQ Tutor Assessor.
Sharon Light	Deputy Supervisor Health and Safety Officer Designated Safeguarding Lead	NVQ Level 3
Lisa Munro	Assistant Teacher Maths Co-ordinator	NNEB & Forest School Leader Award
Sally Walker	Assistant Teacher Equality and Diversity Officer	NVQ Level 3
Aleesha Barrington-Cramp	Assistant Teacher Forest School Leader	NVQ Level 3 & Forest School Leader Award
Caroline Newbury	Preschool Assistant	WellComm Co-ordinator
Sally Pitcher	Bank cover	NVQ Level 3

All staff members hold up to date first aid certificates and DBS checks and are fully trained in Safeguarding & Prevent.

## Learning opportunities for adults

All staff are highly experienced in early years care and education. Even so, they take part in further training to help them to keep up-to-date with thinking and current early years practice.

The Pre-school also keeps itself up-to-date with best practice. We are members of the Early Years Alliance, and gain from the Under 5 magazine and publications produced by the Alliance and other organisations.

### **Key persons and your child**

Our Pre-school uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom they are particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that what we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the pre-school, they will help your child to settle. Throughout your child's time at the pre-school, they will help your child to benefit from the pre-school's activities by working with you to plan for their learning and development both at home and preschool.

There are two groups of staff members. Within the two groups each staff member acts as a deputy key person when the other is away. This means that each child has their main key person and a link with another member of staff. Each member of staff is the main key person for around four to six children. All children get to mix with each other throughout the day, this enables everyone to get to know each other.

### **Assessment**

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children like to do at home. We use an online learning journal (Tapestry) to record children's learning and parents are also encouraged to comment and have their own input in their child's journal.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school. There are opportunities to discuss these records with your child's keyperson.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Alliance sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy & safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

There are seven areas of learning:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Please click for further information <https://www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage>

### **Our approach to learning and development and assessment**

Learning through play – making learning fun

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking. Research shows this is how young children learn to think. Our Pre-school uses the practice guidance Early Years Foundation Stage to plan and provide a range of play activities. These help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. We use the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance to plan appropriate activities and to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

### **Phonics**

Before children can start to read they need to learn to say the sound that is represented by each letter or group of letters and later to 'sound out' words. At the very earliest stages it is important to keep it very simple. We introduce the children in their final year of Pre-school to Read Write Inc phonics, the phonics scheme used at local primary schools.

### **Forest School**

Forest school is co-ordinated by Aleesha Barrington-Cramp and runs on Mondays for children in their final year of Pre-school. We use 'the Villager' minibus, driven by Volunteers to access our Forest School site in Bruern. We go out in all weathers unless it is considered unsafe. We ask that the children have suitable clothing for all weathers. The children always need to have their arms and legs covered even in the warmer weather due to brambles, nettles & insects and in the winter it is especially important to wear many layers on clothes including extra layers of socks. We provide waterproof trousers for all the children. The cost of attending is £6.50 per session. Unfortunately, if your child is unable to attend Forest School one week, we will not be able to accommodate them in the hall due to staff ratios.

### **Little Dancers**

Sally Elderfield, assisted by staff, runs an after-school dance club on a Wednesday from 3.30pm – 4.00pm, for 3 to 5 year olds. Our aim is to enable the children to discover a variety of music and dance styles and have some fun. The cost of attending Little Dancers is £4.00 per session and children can join from the term they turn 3.

Updated August 2024

## **Our opening times are**

Mornings from 8.45 am or 9.00 am to 1pm Monday to Friday.

Afternoon sessions run until 2:30pm or 3:30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

There is no afternoon session on Fridays

Little Dancers runs on Wednesdays from 3.30pm to 4.00pm.

Forest School runs on Mondays.

## **The Pre-school's timetable and routines**

Our Pre-school gives equal priority to care and education. The routines and activities that make up the day in the Pre-school make certain that:

- each child feels loved, valued and cared for
- learns how to be healthy and safe
- gains from the social experience of being part of a group; and
- learns to love and value learning.

## **The session**

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities. They build up their ability to choose, concentrate and finish a task. We encourage children to take part in small (adult-led) and large group activities. This introduces them to new experiences, new skills and to work with others.

Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. We encourage the children to take part in outdoor child-initiated and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom.

## **Arriving at Pre-school**

A member of staff will collect your child from you and mark their attendance on a register. If someone other than yourself or the usual carer is collecting your child we ask that you notify the staff member taking the register so that they can log this information, ensuring the best standard of safety for your child.

## **Settling in at our Pre-school**

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the Pre-school. We have a policy about helping children to settle. Children settle in different ways and some may take longer than others, please do not worry if it takes a while for your child to settle. Please speak to us if you have any concerns.

## **Clothing**

Please can you provide at least one full set of clothing in your child's red bag.

Updated August 2024

We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.

In summer we ask that you provide your child with a hat and apply sunscreen prior to arriving at pre-school. In winter a coat will be necessary for any outdoor play as well as wellies, hat and gloves on colder / wet days.

Please ensure that all items of clothing are labelled with your child's name. Suitable labels can be purchased online through <https://www.easy2name.com>

### **Snacks**

The Pre-school makes snack time a social time at which children and adults eat together. Please provide your child with a snack pot of fruit and/or vegetables. We will provide milk or water to drink. The mid-morning snack is an important part of each session. If your child does not drink milk or has a milk alternative please let the staff know.

On your child's birthday, please feel welcome to bring in a cake or some small cakes or biscuits to share.

### **Sickness & Absence**

If your child is unwell or not attending Pre-school you must phone us by 9am (01993 832671). If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea please do not bring them into pre-school until 48 hours after the last bout.

If your child is unwell during a session we will call you and ask you to take your child home.

### **Snow and circumstances beyond our control**

If we are unable to open due to adverse weather conditions, or other circumstances beyond our control, we are unable to refund fees as we still have to pay our staff in the short term. Any fees paid for clubs that may be cancelled due to the above will be credited against the next term's invoice.

### **Communication**

Our Pre-school recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents. We try our best to provide information in the best possible way. We send a weekly email with updates of activities and key information for the week ahead and future dates, we have regular blog posts & photographs on our website and we have regular progress meetings with you. If you need to discuss anything in addition, please arrange a meeting with your child's key person.

### **How parents take part in the Pre-school**

Our Pre-school recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as partners with parents. Together we provide care and education for the child. There

are many ways in which parents can take part. Together we make our pre-school a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents. You can help by:

- telling us about your child's needs, activities, interests and progress
- sharing your own special interests with the children;
- being part of the management committee of the Pre-school;
- joining in community activities in which the Pre-school takes part;
- supporting Pre-school with fundraising events/activities
- contributing everyday items to our donation box (tissues, wipes, hand sanitiser etc.)
- making friends with other parents in the Pre-school.

### **Joining in**

Parents can offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. Parents have visited the pre-school to tell us about their job, read stories, played a musical instrument, cooked and have shown the children their pets.

### **The management of our Pre-school**

A management committee manages and steers the Pre-school. You can join at any time but elections also take place at our Annual General Meeting in October each year. The committee is responsible for:

- managing the Pre-school's finances;
- employing and managing the staff;
- making sure that the Pre-school has, and works to, policies that help it to provide a high quality service; and
- making sure that the Pre-school works in partnership with the children's parents and the community.

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all children who attend the Pre-school. It is our shared forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's plan.

### **Current Committee Members are:**

Chair - Miriam Owen to October 2024. Rachel Chapel from November 2024

Treasurer/Administrator - Sally Elderfield

Pre-school Supervisor & Committee Member - Pauline Plant

Pre-school Deputy Supervisor & Committee Member - Sharon Light

Preschool Secretary - René Bloomfield

Committee Member - Jane McCarthy

All roles on the committee are voluntary and very rewarding, sociable & fun. Parental involvement is informal, but it is the lifeblood of our pre-school and critical to its future. Without the committee the Pre-school could not operate so if you are interested in joining, or can offer help in anyway, please let Pauline or one of the Committee members know.

## **Fundraising**

The Pre-school is a registered charity and a non-profit making organisation. Fundraising plays an essential role in maintaining the excellent standard of equipment and toys for the children to play and learn with. Our main fundraising event of the year is the summer sports day and fete. The children also perform in a Christmas concert where families are all welcome to join staff for refreshments afterwards. Other successful events in the past have included a Pancake Café, live music night, curry and cinema evening, craft morning, cake sale, quiz night, frock swap and an Easter bunny hunt. We will be asking for your support with fundraising – and all new ideas and offers of help are very welcome!! We are always looking for parents/carers to join our fundraising team, please speak to one of the Committee if you are willing to do so.

An easy way for you to help support us with fundraising is to use the following website when shopping online. [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk). We can benefit from your purchases with no extra cost to yourself and it would be great if you could encourage family and friends to use the site. There are hundreds of retailers involved including Next, Boden, M&S, John Lewis, Amazon, ELC and Boots.

All you have to do is go onto the website and then follow 3 easy steps:

- ❖ Register Ascott-under-Wychwood Pre-school as the cause that you want to support. Registration is free.
- ❖ Login using your username/password. This is how the system recognises who you are and which cause benefits when you make purchases.
- ❖ Click any of the retailer links provided and then shop just as you would normally.

## **Fees**

Pre-school Fees - £6 per hour.

Clubs:

- Forest School - £6.50 per session
- Little Dancers - £4.00 per session

The fees charged to parents help us to pay for the hall rental and staff wages. Your prompt payment is therefore appreciated in order to aid the smooth running of our Pre-school.

Fees are payable half termly, in advance. Invoices will be issued at the beginning of each half term, via email, and payment must be made by the date given (usually 2 weeks after the invoice is issued). Payment can be made via Bank transfer (our preferred option), childcare voucher, cash or cheque (payable to 'Ascott Preschool').

If you experience difficulties with payment please contact Pauline Plant on receipt of your invoice and she will liaise with our Treasurer to agree a mutually acceptable payment plan where necessary.

Absence due to illness or holiday will still be charged at the normal session rate in order that your child's place is secured.



### **Free Early Education (FEE) funding for two year olds**

Free early education for 2-year-olds is a funded scheme that entitles some children to access a place in a Pre-school, nursery or with a childminder for 15 hours per week, 38 weeks per year. You must be in receipt of certain benefits to qualify:

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds>

15 hours funding per week is also available to eligible working parents of 2-year-olds

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/childcare-expansion/early-years-childcare>

Where funding is not received, then fees apply.

### **Free Early Education (FEE) funding for three and four year olds**

All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free early education for 38 weeks of the year. This applies from the appropriate term after their third birthday until they leave Pre-school to move on to Primary education.

- If your child is born between 1st January and 31st March, you are eligible for funding from April (Term 5).
- If your child is born between 1st April and 31st August, you are eligible from September (Term 1).
- If your child is born between 1st September and 31st December, you are eligible from January (Term 3).

Please note that the funding cannot be used to cover club fees i.e. Forest School or Little Dancers.

Please let us know if you want to share the hours between Ascott Pre-school and another setting.

### **Eligibility for 30 hour funding**

#### **30 hours free childcare for working parents**

You may be able to get up to 30 hours free childcare per week:

To check if you are eligible please follow the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

You'll get a childcare account if your application is successful. You can use it to get your code for 30 hours free childcare which you will need to give to us so that we can claim funding. We will also need your national insurance number to verify the funding

Please let our Treasurer know if you need help with your application.

### **Safeguarding children**

Our Pre-school has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'. We observe children and are aware of any changes in well-being. We are obliged to record all existing injuries and report any concerns.

All staff have enhanced DBS Checks, this is required by law.

We also record reasons for non-attendance.

Our employment practices ensure children are protected against the likelihood of abuse in our setting and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents ensures we are aware of any problems that may emerge. When difficulties arise, we can offer you support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary.

### **Door Locking**

The front door of Tiddy Hall is kept locked during all Pre-school sessions to prevent any unaccompanied children leaving the hall or unknown persons entering.

If the car park gates are closed, please ring the bell on the gate and a member of staff will come and let you in.

### **DBS checks**

All adults working with children are now required by law to have a DBS check. Please be aware that if you are helping out during a Pre-school session and have not been checked, you should not take any child to the toilet other than your own. If a child tells you they need to go to the toilet please inform a member of staff.

### **Special needs**

As part of the Pre-school's policy, we make sure that we meet the needs of each individual child. We take account of any special needs a child may have. The pre-school works to the requirements of The Education Act 2002 and The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014). Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator is Pauline Plant.

### **Policies**

Copies of the Pre-school's policies and procedures are available for you to see at Pre-school and are also on the Pre-school website <https://ascottpreschool.org.uk/policies/>

The Pre-school's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the Pre-school is of high quality and reflects current legislation. In this way we make certain that being a member of the Pre-school is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her or his parents.

The staff and committee of the Pre-school work together to adopt the policies and they have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to improve our service for its members and the local community.

## **Complaints**

We hope that with our open style you will not feel the need to complain. If there is anything that you feel particularly unhappy about, however, please speak to Pauline Plant or Sharon Light. If you find this is inappropriate then the contact numbers for the pre school chairperson and OFSTED are available on our information board.

## **Contact numbers**

In Pre- school hours: 01993 832671

Out of hours: Pauline Plant: 07968 006451 or Sharon Light: 07799 458124

Miriam Owen – Chair of the management committee: 07734 298520 until October 2024

Rachel Chapel – Chair of the management committee: 07778 127287 from November 2024