

# Information Guide

Telephone: 01223 862323

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5. has a personal key person who makes sure that their child makes satisfying progress;
6. is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop; and
7. is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill their potential. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework became mandatory in September 2008 for all schools and early years providers in OFSTED registered settings attended by young children from birth to the age of five.

The new EYFS guidelines require that children must be offered and allowed to engage in exciting and challenging activities which support and extend their learning and development. They must be provided with a rich stimulating environment full of contexts for play, exploration, and talk where they can choose, create, investigate, explore, initiate and persist with activities.

Our practitioners are aware of the importance of not impacting on a child's ability to engage in sustained thinking. Therefore the children in our setting will be able to access free-flow play both indoors and outdoors for the majority of their session at pre-school. This enables our practitioners to observe, listen and interact with our children whilst they enjoy their individual child led activities, interests and explorations.

Children are active learners from birth and if they are provided with the right equipment, support and environment this will encourage their curiosity imagination and creativity.

The EYFS helps young children achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. The principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four complementary themes which guide effective practice in the EYFS:

A Unique Child recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.

Positive Relationships describe how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. Enabling Environments explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

### Children's Learning and Development

There are six areas covered by the early learning goals which form part of children's learning and development. The six areas are all equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. The educational programme we provide at Cygnets is as follows:-

#### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children should be provided with experiences and support which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn. We continually ensure support for our children's emotional well-being to help them to know themselves and what they can do.

#### Communication, Language and Literacy

Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening, being read to and beginning to read and write must be supported and extended. We continually provide them with opportunity and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes. We support them to develop the confidence and disposition to use their skills to enhance their Communication, Language and Literacy development.

#### Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

Children must be supported in developing their understanding of Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. We provide them with opportunities to practice and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use.

#### Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Children must be supported in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that helps them make sense of the world. Their learning must be supported through offering opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations; undertake practical 'experiments'; and work with a range of materials.

#### Physical Development

The Physical development of young children must be encouraged through the provision of opportunities for them to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. At Cygnets we support our children in using all of their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. We also support them in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food.

#### Creative Development

Children's creativity must be extended by the provision of support for their curiosity, exploration and play. We provide them with opportunities to explore their thoughts,

ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities, mathematics, and design and technology.

In **2009/2010** the staff who are working at our setting are:

Name	Job Title	Qualifications and Experience
Sarah Levesley	Pre-School Manager Designated Child Protection Officer	NVQ 3 in Children's Care Learning and Development
Lillian Guyler	Supervisor - am	CPP - Level 2 Working towards DPP Level 3
Sarah Branch	Supervisor – pm Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator	NNEB - Level 3 Certificate in Nursery Nursing Working towards DPP Level 3
Susan Gray	Pre-School Practitioner S.E.N.C.O.	DPP - Level 3
Setareh Rafieepoor	Pre-School Practitioner	Working towards NVQ 2 in C.C.L.D.
Marilene Estoppey-von Negelein	Pre-School Practitioner	Cambridge Steiner School Kindergarten Teacher Working towards NVQ Level 3 C.C.L.D.
Shirley Wells	Pre-School Practitioner	Working towards NVQ Level 2 C.C.L.D.
Kerry O'Dell	Pre-School Practitioner	
Stacey Griffiths	Pre-School Practitioner	

All staff follow a basic Pre-School training scheme and we also aim to keep all staff up-to-date with their first aid training. We actively encourage staff to follow courses in good practice, particularly the Diploma in Pre-School Practice (DPP) and Certificate in Pre-School Practice (CPP). All staff are police-checked.

### **How parents take part in the setting**

As a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, our setting recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as partners with you in providing care and education for your child.

There are many ways in which parents take part in making the setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

1. exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
2. helping at sessions of the setting;
3. sharing their own special interests with the children;
4. helping to provide, make and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities;
5. being part of the management of the setting;
6. taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;
7. joining in community activities in which the setting takes part; and
8. building friendships with other parents in the setting.

### **Parents as Helpers**

Helping at the session enables parents to see what the day-to-day life of the setting is like and to join in helping the children to get the best out of their activities.

Please speak to a staff member if you would like to come in and help at any time. It is great fun and the children really enjoy having a member of their family in the setting with them. Even if you can only spare an hour, we look forward to seeing parents or grandparents at our settling, enjoying time with their child.

Feel free to bring along any younger children in your care when you help, but please note that they are your responsibility

### **Joining in**

Helping at pre-school is not the only means of taking part in the life of the setting. Parents can offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. Parents have visited the setting to play the clarinet for the children, show pictures of the local carnival held in their neighbourhood, and to talk to the children about their work.

We welcome parents to drop into the setting at any time to speak with the staff.

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

Our setting has a key person system. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is 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 setting, she/he will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the setting, she/he will help your child to benefit from the setting's activities.

Parents are welcome to come into the setting at any time to speak to any of the staff and to discuss their child's progress. We also hold an annual parents evening and provide an end of year report for each child.

As parents you are valued as the first and most enduring educators of your child, as practitioners we can learn a lot from you. As relationships are formed between your child, the key person, and with the constant two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise will create a positive impact on our children's development and learning.

### **Learning opportunities for adults**

As well as gaining qualifications in early years care and education, the setting staff take part in further training to help them to keep up to date with thinking about early years care and education.

The setting also keeps itself up to date with best practice in early years care and education through the Pre-school Learning Alliance's magazine Under Five and publications produced by the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The current copy of Under Five is available for you to read.

From time to time the setting holds learning events for parents. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years. Courses on similar topics are held locally by the Pre-school Learning Alliance: watch out for information about these.

### **The setting's timetable and routines**

Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the session/day in the setting are provided in ways that:

1. help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting;
2. ensure the safety of each child;

3. help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and
4. provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

### **The session**

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from - and work at - a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others.

Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity - and are encouraged - to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom/s.

### **Milk Bar and Snacks**

At the morning and afternoon sessions the children are encouraged to help themselves to milk or water, with supervision. A table is set up with these drinks available. Our younger children in the afternoon sessions all have their snacks together with the staff. The children are encouraged to bring a labelled snack box containing a healthy snack, (fruit or vegetables only please) which they eat with their chosen drink.

### **Lunch Club**

The lunch club runs between 11.45 and 12.15 pm. This is totally optional and there will be a charge (please see Pre-School Fees section below). Please see the table on the notice board in the foyer for the current fee. The lunch club is primarily for morning children. However the lunch club will only run on the days when we have sufficient numbers to make it viable. If you wish your child to attend please contact the Allocations Secretary or Pre-School Manager.

### **Independence at Toilet Time**

Staff encourage the children to be independent at toilet time and refrain from wiping children's bottoms. If you would prefer the staff to help your child with this task, could you please supply us with written permission?

### **Nappy Changing**

If your child attends the setting in nappies please would parents bring nappies and wipes to each session their child attends. Staff will only change a child's nappy if it is soiled. Should your child require more frequent changing please speak to the Manager and put your request in writing.

### **Policies and Complaints Procedure**

All policies underpin the organisation of our group. The following is a list of our policies:

- 1) Admission Policy
- 2) Behaviour Management Policy
- 3) Child Protection Policy
- 4) Complaints Procedure Policy
- 5) Confidentiality Procedure Policy
- 6) English as an Additional Language Policy

- 7) Equality and Diversity Policy
- 8) Equipment and Resources Policy
- 9) Food and Drink Policy
- 10) Health and Safety Policy
- 11) Management of Allegations of Abuse Policy
- 12) Non Collection on Children Policy
- 13) Parental Involvement Policy
- 14) Payment of Fees Policy
- 15) Settling-in Policy
- 16) Special Education Needs/Disability Policy
- 17) Staffing and Employment Policy
- 18) Student Placement Policy
- 19) Toilet/Nappy Changing Policy
- 20) Use of Images Policy
- 21) Whistleblowing Policy

Copies of the setting's policies are always available for parents to read.

The setting's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the setting is a high quality one and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents.

The staff and parents of the setting work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling the setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

Any complaints should be discussed initially with the Pre-School Manager. The full complaints procedure is described in our policy document, but should you wish to speak to OFSTED their help line number is 0207 421 6800.

The Pre-School's work with children will sometimes bring us into contact with confidential information. Confidentiality will be respected at all times. Please ask to see our Policy Document for more detailed information.

Please note that child protection is given high priority at our setting to ensure safety for all. If we, or you have any concerns, they must be raised immediately. We have strict procedures supported by the County Council guidance, which we follow. A copy of our Child Protection Policy is pinned on our notice board at all times.

### **Special needs**

As part of the setting's policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have.

The setting works to the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2000).

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is: Susan Gray

### **The Management of our Setting**

A parent management committee - whose members are elected by the parents of the children who attend the setting - manages the setting. The elections take place at our Annual General Meeting. The committee is responsible for:

1. managing the setting's finances;
2. employing and managing the staff;
3. making sure that the setting has - and works to - policies that help it to provide a high quality service; and
4. making sure that the setting works in partnership with the children's parents.

It is essential for the legal operation of the Pre-School that committee members are elected annually. **NO COMMITTEE MEANS NO PRE-SCHOOL**

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

### **Committee 2008-2009**

Chair:	Michelle Peters
Vice Chair:	Nicola Plumb
Secretary:	Helen Walker
Treasurer:	Katy Speake
Allocations:	Lucy Blatch
Newsletters:	Fay O'Neill
T-Shirts:	Rodalyn Clark
Fundraisers:	Jane Purnell

### **Pre-School Hours**

Morning session:	9.15	- 11.45
Lunch Club:	11.45	- 12.15
Afternoon session:	12.15	- 14.45 *

\*Afternoon children are invited to bring a packed lunch to have at the beginning of the session.

The setting adopts the same holidays and closure as Milton Primary School. Any additional closure days will be notified.

### **Pre-School Fees**

For a detailed breakdown of fees please see the table on the notice board in the foyer of the Annexe.

You will be billed termly for non-grant-funded sessions and lunch club sessions. The balance can be paid in full or in two instalments each term. Please return payments promptly to the Treasurer, via the Pre-School staff.

Pre-arranged payment plans are sometimes available to those on low incomes, this will be dealt with confidentially by the Pre-School Chair or Treasurer. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your termly bill, please do not delay in speaking to either the Chair or the Treasurer.

If the Treasurer has not received payment of the current terms fees by half term or if you have not spoken to either the Chair or Treasurer regarding your bill we will issue a first and final reminder. If we have not received the fees within 2 weeks of issue of this letter, we will have no alternative but to ask you to remove your child from the setting. If in future you apply for a sibling to attend the setting, your application will be refused until any outstanding fees are paid.

Parents of children eligible for grant-funded education will be asked to complete a form every term to confirm where you have registered your child and for how many sessions. Once the information has been received the grant transfers automatically to the Pre-School in place of your fees.

### **Funding**

The Pre-School is a registered charity. We run on a small budget with the majority of funds coming from fees and fund-raising. This money is used to pay for rent, staff and the purchase and upkeep of equipment and materials.

If the Pre-School has to close, e.g. owing to a public utilities failure or other emergency, refunding of fees will be at the discretion of the Committee (we would still have to pay rent and staff costs).

### **Fire-Emergency Situations**

In the case of an emergency, the children will be evacuated from the building and parents will be contacted.

### **Illness**

If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea please do not send him/her to Pre-School until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped. Infections spread quickly in a confined area. Please notify us if your child has head lice or threadworm so we can warn other parents to be vigilant.

### **Admission and Session Allocation**

At registration we require a £10 registration fee (non-refundable)

The youngest age that children can begin Pre-School is 2 years. Nappy changing facilities are now available so your child does not need to be toilet trained.

You will be invited to an Open Day, usually in the term before your child is due to start. At the open day you will meet the staff and some of the committee members and be able to see some of the work undertaken by the children.

We aim to offer each child a minimum of three sessions a week and we review each child's sessions every academic year. We keep a waiting list and sessions are allocated according to the following priority criteria:

1. The vicinity of the home to the setting
2. The date of the child's registration
3. Any siblings already at the setting
4. The child's date of birth
5. The discretion of the Committee

### **Starting at our setting**

#### *The first days*

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 setting. The setting has a policy for helping children to settle into the setting.

#### *Clothing*

Although not compulsory, we would like all children at Pre-School to wear Cygnets T-shirts, sweatshirts and sunhats whenever possible, as it gives them a sense of being part of a group. Please see the notice board in the foyer for information on sizes, colours and prices.

Please label all clothes, hats, gloves etc. If you order printed name labels through the Pre-School a percentage of the amount comes to us for our funds. Forms are available from the Pre-School.

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities. 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.

### **Toys**

Children are requested not to bring their own toys to Pre-School as, unfortunately, they could lose them. However, we do hold a 'show and tell time' in the mornings for our Pre-School children, when children can bring one item in to show.

### **Annual Events**

During the year we organise or take part in various events including:

*Sponsored activities*

*Pre-School photographs*

*Clothes sales*

*Dressing-up weeks*

*Sports day and picnic*

*Visitors from the community*

*Christmas Sparkle, play, party, activities*

*Easter Fayre*

*Trip to a farm or zoo*

*Milton Fayre and Family Disco*

If you have any suggestions for fund raising activities we would love to hear from you! **Help and support for these events would be greatly appreciated!**

### **Preparation for Primary School**

We have strong links with Milton Primary School and the manager and supervisor regularly meet with the reception teachers to discuss inter-curricular links.

In preparation for your child's transition into the primary school, we will encourage independence in matters of personal hygiene, dressing themselves and in name recognition. (These are things which the school have recommended that your child should be able to achieve before starting in reception).

In the summer term we forward to you documentation from the school advising you of class lists and parents visits. Our staff will accompany small groups of pre-school children on an afternoon visit to the school and the reception teachers will visit pre-school to see the children at play.

### **Contacting Pre-School**

If you have any concerns about your child, please do not hesitate to talk to us at Pre-School or via phone or email. When phoning, please be patient and leave a message if necessary and someone will get back to you. The phone is checked regularly for messages, as it is also the number for emergencies.

**Our telephone contact number is: 01223 862323**

We hope that you and your child enjoy being a member of our setting and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. The staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or questions.

The Chair of the Committee, Allocations Secretary and the Treasurer can also be contacted by e-mail through the web site ([www.cygnets.org.uk](http://www.cygnets.org.uk)), where you will also find more information about our Pre-School.

Updated 04/06/2009

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