

WELCOME TO ST PAUL'S BECKENHAM PRE-SCHOOL

In this Handbook and on the website we aim to give you the main information you will need. We aim to ensure each child is:

- In a safe and stimulating environment;
- Supported as an individual;
- Included and able to take part in pre-school life;
- Having an enjoyable and rewarding time as we play, learn and grow together.

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1. Admissions

- Siblings are given priority when applying.
- Parents/carers are welcome to visit the pre-school with their child before starting.
- Places are offered in line with our admissions arrangements and the availability of sessions.
- We welcome children from the age of two and work with families to ensure the provision is suitable for each child's needs.

Information about funded places, available sessions and current fees will be provided separately and may be updated from time to time.

2. Settling In

Some children settle almost immediately, whilst others take several weeks. It is important that your child feels comfortable in the pre-school surroundings before they are left. When the time comes, explain that you are going and will be coming back, say goodbye to your child and go. Staff will offer comfort and reassurance.

The length of time your child stays during the settling-in period will depend on their individual needs. Staff will discuss this with parents/carers and agree an approach that supports the child.

- Talk positively about starting pre-school.
- Read stories about starting pre-school or nursery.
- Allow plenty of time in the morning to reduce unnecessary stress.
- Remain contactable and available to return during the settling-in period if your child becomes distressed.
- Attend other child-friendly environments to help your child become used to larger groups of children and different adults.

3. Your Child's Key Person

We use a key person approach. Each child has a member of staff who takes particular responsibility for supporting their wellbeing, development and sense of belonging. Your child's key person will help them settle, get to know their interests and needs, and work in partnership with you throughout their time at pre-school.

4. Learning & Development

Children are given an initial six-week period to settle into pre-school. This gives staff time to get to know your child, their interests, strengths and individual needs.

After the six-week settling-in period, observations of your child's learning and development are recorded on Tapestry. Staff use these observations, alongside their knowledge of your child and everyday interactions, to support their learning and development in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Parents/carers are an important part of this process and we encourage you to share information about your child's interests, achievements and experiences at home.

5. Tapestry

Parents/carers will be provided with a personal login to our Tapestry online system. After your child's initial six-week settling-in period, observations of their learning and development will be recorded on Tapestry and shared with you.

Tapestry is also used to share important information including invoices and updates. Accident and incident records are recorded on Tapestry and can be viewed by parents/carers.

We encourage parents/carers to contribute to their child's learning journey by uploading observations, photographs and information about achievements and experiences from home. This helps us build a fuller picture of your child's interests, learning and development.

6. Supporting Positive Behaviour

We aim to provide a warm, secure and consistent environment in which children learn how to express their feelings, understand boundaries, manage emotions and develop positive relationships with others.

Staff use age-appropriate strategies including modelling, praise, clear expectations, distraction and redirection, emotional support and helping children understand the effect of their actions. We focus on the behaviour or choice rather than labelling the child.

Where a child needs additional support with behaviour or emotional regulation, we will work with parents/carers to understand the reasons behind the behaviour and agree consistent strategies. Where appropriate this may form part of an individual support plan.

7. Parents/Carers Taking Part

Parent/carer involvement is an important part of pre-school life. We value the knowledge families have about their children and encourage regular communication between home and pre-school.

- Talk with your child's key person and share information about their needs, interests and achievements.
- Attend parent meetings and reviews where appropriate.
- Take part in special occasions, outings, celebrations and fundraising activities.
- Share skills, experiences or activities that may enrich the children's learning.

Any regular volunteering within the setting will be managed in accordance with our safeguarding procedures and appropriate checks.

- Attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

8. Arrivals and Departures

Children should arrive at the agreed start time for their session. A member of staff will welcome children into pre-school. If your child is upset, staff will support them to settle and will contact you if they remain distressed for a significant period.

Please be punctual when collecting your child. If you are going to be late, contact pre-school as soon as possible.

It is very important that you tell staff if somebody different will be collecting your child. We will not allow a child to leave with someone we have not been informed about or whose details do not meet our collection procedures.

Emergency Contacts

For safeguarding purposes, parents/carers are asked to provide details of two additional emergency contacts, other than themselves, who can be contacted if we are unable to reach a parent/carer. Please ensure that these contacts are aware that their details have been provided to St Paul's Pre-School.

It is essential that all telephone numbers and emergency contact details are kept up to date. Please inform pre-school immediately if any contact details change.

9. Absence & Attendance

Regular attendance helps children benefit fully from their time at pre-school and supports their learning, development, wellbeing and relationships.

Parents/carers should inform St Paul's Pre-School of planned holidays or appointments with a minimum of one week's notice where possible. If your child is absent because of illness, please notify pre-school within the hour before their session is due to start.

If a child who would normally attend does not arrive and we have not heard from their parent/carer, we will make contact to establish the reason for the absence and make sure the child is safe and well. Unexplained or ongoing absences will be followed up in accordance with our Absence Reporting and Safeguarding procedures.

For guidance about illness and when children should remain at home, please refer to the Health Prospectus provided to parents/carers.

10. Late Collection Fees

If parents/carers contact us to say they will be late, a 15-minute grace period applies after the official collection time. On the first occasion of lateness this period will not be charged.

If parents/carers do not contact us, or do not arrive within the grace period, the pre-school reserves the right to make a reasonable charge. Where late collection continues, a fee of £15 for the first 15 minutes and £5 for every five minutes thereafter may be applied and added to regular fees.

Please refer to our Safeguarding Children - Uncollected Child Policy for full procedures.

11. Removing a Child

Parents/carers wishing to remove their child from St Paul's Pre-School are required to give four weeks' written notice.

12. Food & Drink

We promote healthy eating and provide nutritious foods at snack time. Parents/carers must inform us of all allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements and keep this information up to date.

Packed lunches should provide a healthy, balanced meal. Please do not include sweets, chocolate, fizzy drinks, nuts or nut products. Food requiring heating should not be sent. Drinks should be provided in a suitable named bottle.

Food should be prepared safely to reduce choking risks; for example, grapes and similar small round foods should be cut lengthways. Where a child has a serious allergy, families may be asked not to send particular foods into the setting.

Please refer to our Food and Drink Policy for further information.

13. Toys

Children may occasionally bring an item from home to show staff and other children. It may then be placed safely away until the end of the session. Please avoid sending valuable or irreplaceable items.

14. Books

Children are encouraged to borrow books from pre-school to share at home with their family. Please help your child to look after borrowed books and return them so another book can be chosen. Lost or significantly damaged books may need to be replaced.

15. Toileting & Personal Care

We encourage children to develop independence with toileting and personal care at a pace appropriate to their individual development. Children who wear nappies, pull-ups or training pants will be changed as necessary.

Please provide sufficient nappies/pull-ups, wipes and spare clothing where required, clearly named. We will work sensitively and in partnership with families where a child needs additional support with toileting or personal care.

16. Jewellery

For safety, we ask that children do not wear jewellery to pre-school wherever possible. If earrings are worn, small studs are preferred. Items considered unsafe during play may need to be removed and returned to the parent/carer.

17. Outings

Outings may occasionally be arranged during pre-school hours. Parents/carers will be given relevant information and consent will be obtained where required. Appropriate risk assessments, staffing and safeguarding procedures will be followed.

18. Equality & Inclusion

We are committed to inclusive and anti-discriminatory practice. Every child and family will be treated with dignity, respect and consideration. We value differences in children's backgrounds, cultures, languages, abilities, needs and experiences and challenge discriminatory behaviour or language.

We aim to make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to support children to access and participate in pre-school life.

19. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

St Paul's Pre-School is committed to identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as early as possible. We work in partnership with parents/carers and use a graduated approach to understand a child's strengths, needs and the support that may help them.

Support may include adaptations to the environment or routines, targeted activities, individual strategies or support plans. Where appropriate, and with parents/carers, we may work with outside professionals and local authority services.

Our SENCO oversees SEND provision and is available to discuss any concerns parents/carers may have about their child's development or additional needs. Please refer to our SEND Policy for further information.

20. Safeguarding

The safety and welfare of children is our highest priority. All staff have a responsibility to safeguard children and to act on concerns about a child's welfare.

If we have a safeguarding concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures and, where required, work with the appropriate professionals or agencies. This may include following up unexplained absence.

Parents/carers can ask a member of the management team for information about our safeguarding arrangements or request a copy of the relevant policy.

21. Complaints Procedure

Please raise concerns with one of the Joint Pre-School Managers as soon as possible. Many concerns can be resolved quickly through open discussion.

If you remain dissatisfied, or the complaint concerns a Joint Pre-School Manager, the matter can be escalated in accordance with our Making a Complaint Policy and current trustee responsibility/escalation arrangements.

A full copy of our Making a Complaint Policy is available on request. Current contact details for the appropriate trustee contact will be provided by the pre-school.

22. Policies & Further Information

A full copy of St Paul's Pre-School policies and procedures is available on request. Parents/carers are also provided with separate health information, including guidance on illness, medication, first aid and emergency procedures.

Policies are reviewed and updated as required. Where changes affect families, we will communicate relevant information to parents/carers.

We aim to give all the children in our care a happy and rewarding time and to ensure they leave with fond memories of their time at St Paul's Pre-School.

St Paul's Pre-School Team
September 2026