



Oakley Pre-School

Parents Handbook

Summer 2022

Please keep for reference

**Pre-school Manager : Sally Martiello
Chair : Rhiannon Washford**

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Ofsted Registration No. 219186 Registered Charity: 1030651

INTRODUCTION

Oakley Pre-school is registered as an educational charity (Charity number: 1030651) and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (www.preschool.org.uk). We take children from the term after they turn two until they go to primary school. On January 23rd 2014, an unannounced Ofsted inspection found that the quality and standards of our Early Years education and care standards are "outstanding". A copy of the full report will be available on the Ofsted web-site www.ofsted.gov.uk.

We are registered under the Children's Act 1989 and on the Bedfordshire Early Year's register and therefore entitled to claim funding for up to 15 hours of early years provision.

The Pre-school is owned and run by the parents/carers of the children attending the group. At the Annual General Meeting, every September, a committee is elected to administer and be responsible for the policies of the group. We rely on **all** of our parents/carers to be involved, and we value your ideas and help, in whatever way you can give it.

Pre-school's stated aims are:

- To enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age, in a parent participating, community based group.
- To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment.
- To work within a framework that ensures equality of opportunity for all children and families.

Oakley Pre-school believes in learning through play. We promote child-led learning and adults in the setting support children when they first show curiosity, by seizing the moment and supporting their next steps immediately. Planning in the Moment with Young Children maintains a strong link to practice providing rich adult-child interactions in everyday practice.

The children are happy, engaged and truly involved. They gain independence, resilience and show an excitement for learning safe in the knowledge that the adults will follow their lead.

Each day throughout the play session we operate 'free flow play' between the inside and outside environment. Children become most deeply engaged when they have autonomy as they are pursuing their own interests in an environment that allows them to be creative, take risks and challenge themselves in their endeavours.

THE RUNNING OF PRE-SCHOOL

STAFF

Pre-school employs a manager, a deputy manager, a qualified teacher, pre-school practitioners, a pre-school assistant and an administrator. The manager is responsible for the day to day running of pre-school, but is herself answerable to the parent's committee.

COMMITTEE

The committee consists of a Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer and up to 9 other committee members deployed on various responsibilities including, fund-raising and social events for children and families. The committee is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting, which we hope you will attend. Please consider standing as a committee member during your child's years at pre-school.

The minutes of the latest AGM including a list of the current committee members is available on the notice board inside pre-school.

ALLOCATION OF SESSIONS

Each child usually starts with two play sessions. This enables them to settle in and to become familiar with the staff and surroundings and to make friends. We will try to accommodate the specific session requirements of each individual if at all possible. Extra sessions may be available depending on the number of children on roll.

Once your child is eligible for Early Years funding (the term after their 3rd birthday) every term you will be asked to choose your sessions for the following term. Unless you advise otherwise your sessions from the current term will be reserved for you for the following term. Every eligible three year old child receives Universal Funding for 15 hours a week at pre-school. This can be used to pay for sessions or lunch clubs in whatever combination you chose. Funding can also be split between registered providers. From September 2017 there is Extended Funding, where parents/carers are able to apply for an additional 15 hours of funding per week. More information will be available in the term before your child becomes eligible.

Additional Two Year Old Funding

Certain criteria may mean that some families are entitled to Two Year Old Funding. To find out if you are eligible go to www.bedford.gov.uk/2yearfunding or call Bedford Borough Family Information Service on 0800 023 2057.

NEWSLETTER

You will receive a termly newsletter to keep you up to date with fund-raising and other activities.

We have a Facebook page. Please 'like' us on Facebook to receive news and updates, look for our tree logo to identify us. We also have an Oakley Pre-school parents/carers closed group. Please 'request to join this group'.

PIGEON HOLES

We have individual pigeon holes for every child located in the office. Please check these at least every week when you are dropping your child off.

We also contact parents/carers via email if this is convenient for you. Please confirm on the "contacts sheet" whether you check your emails regularly.

CAR PARK

Please note that, for safety reasons, the car park at the back of the Methodist Church is designated for staff and parent helpers only.

FUND-RAISING

The Committee arrange and participate in, many fund-raising events throughout the year. Please support us at these events and any help is most welcome.

PARENT/CARER HELPER SESSIONS

We encourage parents/carers to help out where possible, as it is felt to be very beneficial for pre-school, the children and you as parents/carers yourselves. You have the opportunity to meet and get to know the staff better, including your child's key person, and to review your child's development records during the term. There is the chance to meet your child's friends, observe who and what they play with at pre-school and it enables you to become more familiar with the daily activities and routines, allowing you to discuss aspects of this with your child day by day. Please let the manager know if you would like to help out.

We encourage parents/carers to bring their younger children to play sessions at pre-school as we feel the familiarity is beneficial when these children start pre-school in their own right.

Younger children at pre-school remain the responsibility of their carer and not that of the staff.

PLAY SESSIONS

All sessions are held at the Methodist Church hall and a maximum of 24 children attends each session. Each child, on starting pre-school is entitled to two play sessions per week. During the autumn and spring terms extra sessions may be available (see section above). However, these extra sessions are not usually available for new starters in the summer term when pre-school is full.

In the morning, the front door (church entrance) is open between 9:15 and 9:30am please arrive between these times. Anyone arriving after 9:30am should use the back entrance from the car park and they will need to ring the bell. In the afternoon the front door is open at 1pm. Anyone arriving after this time should use the back door entrance. Collection at the end of normal session/lunch club times should be from the front door entrance. Collection mid-session should be from the back door.

Play sessions run until 11.45 a.m. Afternoon play sessions are 1pm to 3:30pm. The session begins with approximately an hour and half of 'free play', when the children can choose their own activities. We have an adult led focused activity, maths and science areas, writing table painting, mark making, malleable, water play, sand play, home corner, woodwork area, plus other apparatus. Each day, the children can choose to play inside or outside during the free play session. The outside provision reflects that of inside, so whatever the children choose to play, they will be progressing towards their personal targets and all aspects of the Foundation Stage Curriculum will be covered. During this time children will have the opportunity to have a healthy snack and a drink. Water is always available throughout the session and the children are regularly encouraged to drink from their water bottle.

'Free play' is followed by circle time when the children come together inside or outside, for rhymes, singing or musical games, the session concludes with a story in small groups.

Within our sessions we aim to nurture the younger children and support their transition from home to pre-school. The older children, we aim to extend their learning, encourage independence and prepare them for school in the year before they are due to move up. We aim to develop all children's confidence, self-esteem and well-being through encouragement and help in the use of basic skills.

We end the school year with a leaver's celebration and towards the end of the summer term we will visit Oakley Primary Academy and we also have a sports afternoon for the older children, which the children thoroughly enjoy and all parents/carers are welcome to attend.

We work closely with Oakley Primary Academy and our curriculum is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage which continues when the children move on to the Reception class at the Primary School.

Long term planning details are on the parents/carers noticeboard. Our daily planning is now 'In the Moment' and we will have focussed children each week, as well as a group focus sheet. Children's 'next steps' will be met immediately i.e. 'In the Moment'. Please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff if you require further information or have any queries.

LUNCH CLUB

We offer the facility of a lunch club operating every day from 11.45am to 1.00pm i.e. immediately after the morning session or immediately before the afternoon session. Please use the front door when you arrive at 11:45am. (Full day care is available on the days children attend afternoon sessions). The cost is for 1.25 hours at the normal hourly rate, payable in advance.

There are a maximum of 24 places each day and priority will be given to those people who book termly blocks in advance. We highly recommend that you do book in advance if you want to be sure of a place. However, it is worth checking with the manager on the day, if you would like your child to stay to see if there are any spaces available. Children will not be able to stay for lunch until payment has been received.

Please provide a packed lunch and we ask that you bring this in a box rather than a bag (we have a sample of the size of box we recommend.) This enables us to store packed lunches in the fridge during the morning session. Water is provided so there is no need to include a flask.

Please ensure that any grapes, cherry tomatoes or mini sausages are cut in half lengthways, as these can prove to be a choking hazard for young children. Please do not bring in 'leftovers' that contain protein, as we do not know how these have been prepared or stored previously. In-line with Environmental Health advice please note that we are unable to re-heat any foods containing protein (eg. meat, cheese, fish etc).

COSTS

A non-returnable registration fee of £50 is payable on agreement of sessions. We will offer a discounted sibling cost of £25.

At present the cost of a session is £16 (£6.40 per hour). The full term's fees are payable at the beginning of each term unless a payment plan is agreed beforehand.

Additional Costs: Additional termly Consumables charge, charged pro-rata for how many funded sessions your child attends per term. Excludes those fully funded children, those in receipt of 2 year old funding, Early Years Pupil Premium, Disability Access Fund and deprivation. As with all additional costs the payment is optional, but as a small charity, this payment enables us to continue to provide a high standard of resources, activities and experiences for your child, during their time at pre-school.

All costs are reviewed by our committee regularly and any amendments will take place from January each year.

Payment is due in case of illness or absence. **You are required to give half a term's notice of a child's withdrawal from pre-school.**

Bank Details	Account name	:	Oakley Pre-school
	Sort Code	:	60-02-13
	Account no.	:	80927661

If any parent has concerns about making payment for fees for whatever reason, please discuss this with the manager as soon as possible. We are always flexible, understanding and committed to the best interests of the children.

SECURITY

To ensure the security of the children, if you arrive at pre-school after 9.30am or 1pm you will only be able to gain entry at the back door by ringing the bell on the door. If you are collecting your child during the session or lunch time, we ask that you wait outside the gate until a member of staff calls you through.

When collecting at normal session/lunch club end times please wait at the front church door until your children are brought out to you.

SNACK & DRINKS

We provide a snack during each pre-school session. Our Physical and Nutritional Coordinator (PANCO) oversees the snack provision and all snacks are inclusive, healthy and tooth friendly. There is a small cost per term to cover the snack provision this is invoiced at the beginning of each term.

We have a healthy 'rolling snack,' which means that the children can choose when they are hungry and when they want to eat during the 'Free Play' part of the session. This limits interruption to a child's play and enables them to engage in more meaningful play with higher levels of involvement. Snacks include fruit, vegetables, and cheese. Please inform us during the admission process if your child has any allergies, intolerances and/or dietary requirements.

Water is always available throughout the session for every child. We provide small named water bottles that should be brought in filled with water only, at each session that your child attends. Water bottles cost £2.50.

In line with our Oral Health guidelines, for birthdays and special celebrations, we do not encourage sweets or cakes to be brought in to pre-school.

OAKLEY PRE-SCHOOL POLO-SHIRTS

We have preschool polo-shirts and sweat-shirts available to purchase for the children to wear whilst they are at pre-school. This is not compulsory uniform.

The cost of the polo shirt is £7.50 and the sweat shirt is £9.50. They are available at any time from the office.

ART BAGS

All the children are required to have an Art Bag to take work home from pre-school. We provide a canvas bag which they decorate during their first few weeks at pre-school. This is part of being more sustainable and not using plastic carrier bags for art work. There is a small cost of £2 to cover the cost of the bag.

WELLIES

Please bring a pair of **named** wellies with your child to pre-school to leave whilst they are here. Please hand them to a member of staff at the beginning of term. They will be stored on the 'Welly Hog', under the canopy so that the children can easily access them if they want to go outside during the session.

LABELLING

Please ensure that coats, shoes, wellingtons, hats, scarves and gloves and lunchboxes are clearly labelled with your child's name. You will be surprised at the difference it makes to us and the time saved.

PRE-SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

All policies are available to view at pre-school at any time. They are up-dated throughout the year and reviewed annually in the spring term. The policies below are a selection of policies which provide additional information for parents/carers.

Messy Play Policy

We believe that children learn through play and that through exploration and experimentation they will develop in all areas of learning. We will not restrict any of these activities, despite them often being messy, if the child is learning and developing through the media they have chosen to investigate.

Children will be encouraged to explore a variety of different media and materials.

When doing this they will:

- Use powder paint and water to explore what happens when colours are mixed.
- Experiment and create new effects and textures, for example drizzling glue over wool; squirting pools of colour.
- Provide sensory experiences – painting hands and/or feet to make marks.

We provide an optional "uniform" for parents/carers to purchase at cost price which will prevent child's own clothing being damaged.

Outdoor Play Policy

We believe that children learn through play and that through exploration and experimentation they will develop in all areas of learning. During free play the children are able to choose to go outside whatever the weather.

In the outdoor play area children are encouraged to:

- Explore puddles, trees and surfaces such as grass.
- To love outdoors and to show an interest in the world in which we live.
- To comment and ask questions about the natural world.
- To take part in growing vegetables and flowers to develop an understanding of growth and decay and a sense of time
- Make full use of the outdoor area in all weathers to give opportunities for investigation of the natural world
- Put on and take off outdoor clothing to encourage independency and appreciate the need for hygiene.

We encourage all parents/carers to bring wellington boots for their child which they may leave at pre-school on our purpose made welly storage "Welly Hog".

We provide an optional "uniform" for parents/carers to purchase at cost price which will prevent their child's own clothing being damaged.

Admissions Policy

Children of two years old are eligible to join pre-school the term after their 2nd birthday. We have a maximum of six places for two year olds in any one term.

We do not require the children to be dry and out of nappies before they start at pre-school.

1. Children who are resident in Oakley. Preference will be given to children with special needs or those children whose parents/carers have special needs.
2. Children child-minded in Oakley.
3. Children in receipt of two year old funding.
4. All other children applying to pre-school will be considered on their own merits according to vacancies at the time.

Please Note: Any children registered for pre-school that we will not be able to accommodate, will be informed in advance of their proposed admission date, to enable them to make alternative arrangements.

Use and Taking of Photography

At pre-school we take photographs for each child's development records in-line with pre-schools photography policy.

Mobile Phone Policy

- All staff and volunteers must ensure that their mobile phones are left in the office during opening hours. The administrator will monitor phones for calls if requested when phones are placed in the box by the landline phone. Mobile phone calls and texts may only be made or received in the office with the door closed or outside in the alley by the wheelie bins. When on outings mobile phones will be kept by the manager in the outings bag.
- If any staff member has a family emergency and need to keep their mobile close at hand, the Supervisor must be consulted beforehand and give permission for this to happen. In these circumstances the staff member must proceed to the office as quickly as possible after answering the phone, to complete the call.
- Smart watches are not allowed to be worn at the setting, by staff, students or volunteers.
- Under no circumstances must cameras of any kind be taken into the bathrooms without prior consultation with the Manager. If photographs need to be taken in a bathroom (i.e. to photograph the children washing their hands), the manager must be told and staff supervised whilst carrying out this activity. At all times the camera must be in a prominent place where it can be seen.
- All cameras in the pre-school, including those on staff mobile phones, can be subject to scrutiny at any time by the Safeguarding Officer or Manager.

Any staff member, volunteer or student found to be non-compliant with this policy will face disciplinary action.

SETTLING IN AT PRE-SCHOOL – POLICY AND PRACTICE

We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents/carers, to recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship and be able to share with parents/carers afterwards the new learning experiences enjoyed at Oakley Pre-School.

In order to accomplish this, we will:-

- Encourage parents/carers to visit pre-school with their children during the weeks before an admission is planned.
- Arrange for the child's key person to visit the family at home, if possible, in order to gain more insight into the child's background and needs and allow the child to become familiar with pre-school adults.
- Introduce flexible admissions procedures, if appropriate, to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- Make clear to families from the outset that they will be supported in pre-school for as long as it takes to settle their child there.
- Reassure parents/carers whose children seem to take a long time settling into pre-school.
- Encourage parents/carers, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, building up to longer absences.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious and unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents/carers to help their children feel comfortable at pre-school, to benefit from what it has to offer, and to be confident that their parents/carers will return at the end of the session.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At pre-school we aim to provide a friendly, caring environment where each child is welcomed and valued and encouraged to develop his/her personality.

We aim to help the children to understand their responsibilities towards themselves and other people and property, through personal example and positive reinforcement.

Rules are brief and simple and based on shared values, common sense, and safety of the individual. They are positive and reinforce what we will do. Whenever they are broken we will ensure that the child is aware it is the action we disapprove of and not the child him/herself.

Pre-school has 5 'Golden' rules that we encourage the children to follow. These are:

1. We use our kind hands.
2. We use our kind and quiet voices.
3. We use our listening ears.
4. We will look after our toys and books.
5. We use our walking feet indoors

RECORD KEEPING

Each key person must ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to their individual needs. They will use development records and through observations and assessments ensure that they provide experiences, opportunities, resources and a learning environment to support each child's progress. These records are on the Family App, which you will be given a log in invite for, once your child has started at pre-school. We encourage observations from home to add to your child's journey as we work in partnership with you as your child's first teacher.

We hold an 'Open Classroom' once a term for parents/carers to pop in after an afternoon session or in the evening to discuss their child's records face to face. This will enable parents/carers to work in partnership with their child's key person to achieve the best outcome for each child.

We also use the Family chat for day to day communications with parents/carers. You are encouraged to write messages to your child's key person whenever you have something you want to make us aware of.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

We would like to draw the attention of all parents/carers to the following list of quarantine periods for infectious diseases as advised by the Public Health Agency. We would therefore ask parents/carers to co-operate by referring to the list before sending children back to Pre-school after having had an infectious disease. The complete list is available at Pre-school. Common childhood illnesses are listed below.

<i>Illness</i>	<i>Children excluded for</i>
Chicken Pox	5 days from onset of rash.
German Measles	6 days from appearance of the rash
Measles	4 days after appearance of rash (longer if the child is still ill)
Mumps	5 days from the on-set of swelling.
Whooping Cough	5 days from the commencement of anti-biotic treatment or 21 days from onset of illness if no anti-biotic treatment.

Please do not send children to pre-school within 48 hrs of an episode of vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

The full list of common childhood illnesses and the recommended exclusion periods is held in the pre-school policies and procedures document and is also displayed on the back of the office door for easy reference (administration of medicines and sick child policy).

For the latest Coronavirus guidance please speak to the pre-school manager.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee and staff of this Pre-school are committed to caring for children without discrimination and want everyone to feel welcome. Therefore, we will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, class, gender, sexuality, disability or age.

It is therefore our policy to challenge discriminatory behaviour or comments, whether it is amongst staff, parents/carers, children or others.

We hope to promote awareness and understanding of other cultures and religions by instigating multicultural activities, books and toys, into all aspects of play.

NO SMOKING

For the benefit of the health of the children and staff and to ensure there is no negative role-play with children copying smoking adults, we operate a no smoking policy.

This means there will be no smoking:

- in any part of the Pre-school building
- in the outside play area
- in the presence of any child

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

As a member of the Early Years Alliance, Oakley Pre-School aims to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. We aim to offer a welcome to each individual child and family and to provide a warm, caring and safe environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play.

We believe children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents/carers and the community generally and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our Pre-school at any time.

Making concerns known

- If a parent is uneasy about any aspect of Pre-school's provision they should first talk over any worries or anxieties with the Pre-school Manager.

Complaint relating to The Statutory Framework

- If the complaint relates to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage then it must be recorded in the complaints file which will require the following information:
 - 1) Complainants name
 - 2) Nature of complaint including to which part of the Statutory Framework the complaint refers, taking care not to mention individual's names.
 - 3) How the complaint was dealt with
 - 4) Details of the outcomes of the investigation with any further actions required.

Other complaints

- If the complaint is un-related to the Statutory Framework and speaking to the manager does not give a satisfactory outcome within a couple of weeks, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing and request a meeting with the Pre-school Manager and the Chair of the Pre-school Committee. Both the parents/carers and the pre-school manager should have another person present if required and an agreed written record of the discussion should be made.

Most complaints should be resolved informally or at this initial stage

- If the matter is still not sorted out to the parent's satisfaction, the parent should again contact the Chair of the Pre-school Committee.

- If the parent and Pre-school cannot reach agreement, it might be helpful to invite an external mediator, one who is acceptable to both parties, to listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to clarify the situation. Staff and volunteers within Pre-School Learning Alliance will be available to act as mediators if both parties wish.

The mediator will help define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

The mediator will keep all discussions confidential. They will meet with Pre-school if requested and will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice given.

If the complaint relates to The Statutory Framework all parents/carers at the setting must be informed of the findings of the investigation and any action taken or intended to take as a result. This must be done within 28 days of the complaint being made.

The role of the registering authority

In some circumstances, it will be necessary to bring in Ofsted Early years directorate who have a duty to ensure laid down requirements are adhered to and with whom the Borough Council works in partnership to encourage high standards. Ofsted would be involved if a child appeared to be at risk or where there seemed to be a possible breach of registration requirements. In these cases both parent and Pre-school would be informed and the Borough Council Development worker would work with the social services department to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interests of Pre-school and parents/carers that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way, which respects confidentiality.

*Parents/carers can contact Ofsted at any time if they choose.
The telephone number is 0300 123 1231.*