

# Starting Pre-School

September 2025

## Information for Parents and Carers



# Welcome!

On behalf of the staff and governors of Orchard Primary and Pre-school I am delighted to welcome you and your family to our setting; we hope that you will enjoy your time with us.

We will encourage your child to learn through play and gain valuable experience in the time they spend with us. We want them to develop a high self-esteem and a sense of independence, to prepare for school later.

This handbook has been written to help parents new to the pre-school and also for existing parents to use as a reference point. We hope that it provides you with all the information you need to help you settle in as a parent or carer. We will update this handbook regularly, so please let us know if you have any other questions!

Best Wishes

*Sarah Bitcon*

Sarah Bitcon  
Head Teacher

# School Organisation

## **Governing Body**

The Governing Body of Orchard Primary School has overall responsibility for our pre-school.

## **Staff**

All our staff have been subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check. They have an excellent knowledge of the EYFS and have undertaken paediatric first aid training.

## **Key Worker**

You will often hear the phrase "Key Person" or "Key Worker" in pre-school. Whilst children are looked after in groups, it is important that we meet the individual needs of your child and ensure your child has the opportunity to bond with a special member of staff. It is also important that you have a specific person whom you get to know and are comfortable to share information with.

A Key Person will be assigned to your child at the settling-in stage; it is their role to share information with you about your child and to ensure your child's individual needs are being met. They observe your child in order to be able to plan for your child's learning and development and to make assessments on their progress.

## **Adult:Child Ratio**

We maintain, and often exceed, the ratio of adults to children that is required by the statutory guidance. This is currently 1:8 for 3 and 4 year olds and 1:5 for 2-year-olds. This enables us to give time and attention to each child, helping the children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide.

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding**

Mrs Bitcon is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Orchard Primary and Pre-school. If you are at all worried that any child is being abused or neglected, please do not hesitate to come in and speak to her; she will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

If there are any concerns about your child's safety or wellbeing, you will be closely involved in the process, unless it is deemed unsafe to do so.

# How Parents/Carers take part in Pre-school

We value highly the partnership between home and school and encourage all parents to take an active part in the education of their children.

There are many ways in which parents take part in making pre-school a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, for example:

- Exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with staff.
- Helping on local visits.

- Sharing their own special interests with the children.
- Supporting/attending fundraising events.
- Taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the Pre-school.
- Joining in community activities in which the setting takes part.
- Building friendships with other parents in the setting.

## How do we communicate with Parents?

Working together with parents and carers is a key factor in the success of the school. We aim to keep you informed of what is happening in school by using the following methods:

- Letters/Newsletters
- MarvellousMe
- Website
- Noticeboard outside Pre-school
- Pre-school Facebook and Instagram pages
- Annual Questionnaire - to gather opinions on different aspects of the school. Please make every effort to complete this as your feedback is very important to us. The responses are often used to review school policy.

## Health and Wellbeing

### **Dietary Needs**

On the initial registration document, there is a question with regard to your child's dietary requirements. If, however, during your time at the pre-school these requirements change, please tell us so that we can accommodate any change in need without any problems.

### **What if my child needs medicine?**

Pre-school staff are only allowed to give children medicine if it has been prescribed by a doctor and the child's name and dosage instructions are clearly printed on the container. Please ask a member of staff for a consent form to enable us to administer the medication. Under normal circumstances this will only apply if medicine has to be given more than three times per day. Parents are welcome to come to school to administer the medicines themselves.

If your child uses an asthma inhaler or epi-pen, please speak to your child's Key Worker; a School Asthma Card/Allergy Card must be completed by the parent/carer before we are able to administer the medication.

It is very important that you inform the school of any allergies or illnesses your child has.

### **Hot Weather/Sun Protection**

Parents are asked to provide children with sunhats on warm summer days. If it is likely to be sunny, please make sure sun cream is applied before your child comes to pre-school. Staff are only able to re-apply sun cream if your child is at pre-school for the whole day. Please speak to a member of staff for the relevant form to sign.

### **Illness and Accidents**

We will ring you straight away if your child becomes ill during the day. Please make sure we have your up-to-date contact details to avoid any delay in informing you.

Please inform pre-school if your child is not attending due to illness. Your child must be clear of infection before returning to us; this is also important in the case of diarrhoea and sickness where your child must have been free from symptoms for at least 48 hours before returning to pre-school.

### **Nappy Changing**

If your child is still in nappies, or wearing pull-ups, when they start at pre-school, you must ensure that you provide us with adequate supplies of nappies, nappy sacks, wipes and nappy cream. These will be kept in a named bag on your child's peg. It would really help us if you could ensure that your child is in a clean, dry nappy when they arrive at pre-school. We will of course change their nappy when they become wet or soiled.

### **Settling In**

We will work together to settle your child into Pre-school and appreciate each child has different needs. However, we have found, through experience, that staying only prolongs the difficulty of parting! The best policy is usually to say goodbye and leave! We will always contact you if your child is struggling to settle in.

### **Smoking/Vaping**

In accordance with current legislation on smoking in public places, Orchard Primary and Pre-school will not permit smoking or vaping on any part of the school site at any time. This includes all school buildings and the outside areas of the school including playgrounds, sports field or car parks.

Parents are discouraged from smoking or vaping at entrances and exits to the school site whilst delivering or collecting their child to avoid portraying smoking as acceptable to children and young people.

### **Toilet Training**

When you decide your child is ready to start toilet training, we will be happy to support you with this and work with you. Please make sure you send in sufficient spare clothing (pants, socks, tights, trousers) in case of accidents.

## **The Pre-school Session**

Please remember to bring the following every session ...

- A water bottle

- A warm coat during the colder months
- Wellies
- Lunch (if applicable)
- Spare clothes in case your child gets wet/dirty
- A changing bag if your child is in nappies/pull ups

**Please make sure all items are clearly labelled with your child's name.**

### **On Arrival**

On arrival, please encourage your child to hang up his/her coat on their named hook.

A member of staff will let your child into Pre-school and sign your child in on the register sheets near the entrance. Please don't worry, our staff will make sure all the children are settled in!

Once all the children are in the Pre-school, the front door will be locked. If you arrive late, please take your child to the main Reception office.

### **Mornings**

The doors to Pre-school are opened at **8.45am**. The children are encouraged to choose from a range of activities on offer including craft resources, sand or water play, construction play, imaginative play, both inside and outside whenever possible, with a quiet area available inside.

We have snack at 10.00am where the children are able to choose from a selection of fruit, vegetables and other healthy snacks, along with a choice of either milk or water.

### **Lunchtime**

At 11.45am, all the children who are staying for lunch will sit down together to eat their packed lunch.

### **Afternoons**

The afternoon session starts at **11.45am**. Pre-school finishes at **2.45pm**; to accommodate parents who also need to pick up children from school, we also offer an extra 30-minute session which children can be booked in for at an additional cost.

### **End of Session**

It is important that you arrive promptly to collect your child. A late collection charge will be incurred for collection after the designated finish time.

Staff will only release your child to adults who have permission to collect them. On your child's registration form you must provide a list of people who are authorised to collect your child. If someone unknown to the staff is collecting your child, please make sure staff are aware of this in advance.

Parents are asked to wait outside the front door and your child will be handed over to you. This handover is supervised by a member of staff to ensure it is done safely and securely.

Please wait for the staff to hand your child over to you, for it is from this point that you take full responsibility for your child again.

### **What if I am going to be late to collect my child?**

If you are unavoidably late, your child will be kept inside the pre-school building to wait for you. Please make sure you ring to let us know you are on your way. Please try not to be late; staff often have meetings, training activities or activities to set up for the next session.

If we have not heard from you within 15 minutes of your normal collection, we will try to contact you. We will also attempt to contact the emergency numbers provided. If we are unable to make contact with anyone, we will inform the Access Centre and follow their advice. Depending on the circumstances, we may issue a late pick up fee.

## Curriculum / Activities

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our Pre-school helps children to continue to do this by providing all the children with interesting activities appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Our curriculum is based on the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development. Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development. Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- Communication and language;
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are those most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**. These are:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design.

These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. Staff teaching and supporting your child will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. This is a little bit like a curriculum in primary and secondary schools, but it's suitable for very young children, and it's designed to be really flexible so that staff can follow your child's unique needs and interests. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

*For more information about the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage, please see our school website.*

## Snack Time and Lunchtime

Although this is a social time where children can relax and chatter amongst themselves, we also use this time to reinforce good manners and healthy eating.

### **What happens at snack time?**

During the morning session each child will be provided with a healthy snack consisting mainly of fruit and vegetables. A drink of water or milk will also be provided.

### **What happens at lunchtime?**

If your child is staying for Lunch Club, please provide your child with a healthy packed lunch and a drink (please **do not** send in nuts, sweets, chocolate or fizzy drinks). Grapes or other small fruits should be cut up at home into manageable pieces. Any food left uneaten will be placed back in their lunchbox so that you can see what they have eaten.

Please ensure all lunch boxes are labelled and include an ice pack as we are unable to refrigerate the lunchboxes.

### **What if my child is a slow eater?**

Children can eat at their own pace and are always given time to finish their food.

### **Who looks after the children at lunchtime?**

Pre-school staff supervise the children during lunch.

### **Drinks**

Children will be provided with a drink of water but can bring a bottle of water with them if they wish.

## Other things you may like to know!

### **Assessments and the EYFS Profile**

Throughout the pre-school sessions, staff will make observations about the children enabling them to assess the progress that your child is making, and be able to plan appropriate play and learning experiences based on individual children's interests and needs. The EYFS profile is a record of each child's development; this is where staff put in their observations of your child's achievement and learning. We use the information we gain from these observations, as well as photographs of the children, to document their progress.

### **2-Year-Old Progress Check**

When a child is aged between two and three, the EYFS requires that we review their progress and supply parents and carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS; personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language. The purpose of the check is to support the ongoing development and learning of the child, identify any emerging concerns or needs and any other professionals that may need to be involved to support the child and family.

## **Behaviour**

At Orchard Pre-school we believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

We aim to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs and rights of others. We aim to provide an environment in which there is acceptable behaviour and where children learn to respect themselves, other people and their environment.

We will work with parents/carers to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

## **Changes of Address or Telephone Numbers**

Please ensure that you notify us of any changes in address or telephone numbers.

## **Clothing**

Each child will have a peg where they can store their belongings in a named bag. Please ensure everything is labelled with your child's name (including shoes!).

Your child will be taking part in activities which may be messy and may involve water play! We do provide protective clothing for the children and waterproofs for Woodland Explorers, however, as we cannot guarantee that your child will not get dirty, we ask that you send in spare clothing just in case! We also suggest the following:

- Practicable, comfortable play clothes. Please send your child with clothes that are easy for him/her to take up and down when using the toilet (please avoid dungarees and belts).
- Please send your child in shoes which are easy for them to put on and take off. Although we appreciate that sometimes this is difficult, we would be very grateful if you could avoid ankle boots/lace up shoes. For health and safety reasons, please do not send them in flip flops or "cros".

## **Fees**

Please visit the government website Childcare Choices <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> to see the support available for Pre-school fees.

Fees are payable every half-term in advance by invoice and can be paid using cash, cheques, or by bank transfer (account details will be provided on your invoice). Cheques should be made payable to **Avonreach Academy Trust**.

If for any reason your child is unable to attend pre-school (eg illness, holidays), normal fees will continue to apply.

A four week notice period is needed to change bookings although it may be possible to make additional bookings at times with less notice.

Early Years Funding is available for children from the term after they turn three years old. Full details will be given to you once your child is eligible and you will be asked to complete a declaration form. This funding entitles your child to attend up to 15 hours per week for up to 38 weeks per year. Funding is also available for some 2 year olds. More information is available on our school website.

If you are entitled to 30 hours funding, please make sure you send your valid code to the school office. These codes must be reviewed every 3 months; unfortunately, we will have to charge you if we do not receive the codes.

If the funding forms are not completed and returned to the school office, parents/carers will be liable for any fees incurred.

If fees remain unpaid and you go into arrears, we reserve the right to deny the child a place at Pre School for any hours above their funded hours.

### **Holidays**

Please inform a member of staff of any time that your child will not be attending, eg holidays, appointments etc.

### **Parents Association (Friends of Orchard Primary School)**

The Friends' Association aims to raise funds to provide resources which broaden the learning experiences and enhance the school environment for all our children at Orchard Primary.

Many fund raising and social events are organised by the Friends throughout the year. Over recent times these have included children's discos, summer fayre, Christmas fayre, a quiz, entry into Pershore Carnival.

All the children benefit from these successful and enjoyable events. Examples of the resources they have provided are: outdoor play equipment, a sensory garden, school trips, books and Christmas presents for the children.

New members are always welcome. We hope that you will participate in Orchard Primary Friends events and activities by supporting in any way that you can. Committee members are elected annually.

### **Parking**

Parking is a constant problem for the school. If it is essential to bring your children in the car, please consider the consequences of where you park with regard to road safety for everyone. No parking zones are clearly marked on the road, but access for traffic such as the emergency services in particular, or for local residents should be taken into consideration.

### **Photography – Taking photos of your child in school**

We recognise that parents, carers and family members will wish to record events such as plays, sports days etc to celebrate their child's achievements. We are happy to allow this, at the discretion of the Head Teacher, on the understanding that such images/recordings are used for purely personal family use. **Images containing children other than your own should**

**not be put on the internet for any reason, without first gaining permission from the other child's parents/carers.**

### **School Uniform**

This is not compulsory in Pre-school however, if you would like your child to wear our polo shirt and/or sweatshirt, these are available from our school uniform provider – Monkhouse – and can be purchased at the Worcester shop (14 - 16 Pump Street, Cathedral Square, Worcester WR1 2QY) or ordered on-line from [www.monkhouse.com](http://www.monkhouse.com).

### **Sending Money into Pre-school**

Please ensure that all money sent into pre-school is placed in an envelope with your child's name on and clearly state what it is for.

### **Social Media**

Online safety is an important part of keeping children safe at our school. We can only be successful in keeping all of our children safe online if we work with you to ensure that online safety messages are consistent and that all members of the community behave safely and appropriately online.

We request your support in ensuring that our children have responsible online role models when posting and sharing content on social media sites. Whilst we are all entitled to have our own views and opinions, we ask that all members of our school community consider how comments may be misunderstood or misinterpreted when shared online and the possible impact and consequences on others of online actions.

We would be grateful if parents/carers do not use social media to raise complaints or concerns about the school but instead we encourage you to come in and speak with us so that we can understand your concerns and help solve the problem.

As responsible adults it is important that we all consider the potential impact and implications of online behaviour for ourselves and our families, as well as other members of the school community. Our school is keen to work in partnership with parents and carers to promote responsible internet use and acknowledge how important your role is in setting a good example of positive and responsible online behaviour for your child(ren).

### **Suggestions, Questions and Problems**

To discuss any suggestions, questions or problems you may have concerning your child or the pre-school, please do not hesitate to contact a member of Pre-school staff or Mrs Bitcon (Head Teacher).

### **Transition** – Before your child starts School

Pre-school staff work closely with school staff to ensure a smooth transition for your child. During the summer term the children will have the opportunity to visit the main school to visit their new classroom and meet their new teacher. The Reception Class teacher will also visit Pre-school during this time and will become a familiar face to the children.

## What should I do if I am concerned about something about school?

### Key Worker

If there is a problem to do with your child, the first person to speak to is your child's Key Worker. If it is a quick query, you could catch them in the morning before pre-school starts or at the end of the pre-school session. If you feel you need more time or privacy, please ask them to make an appointment.

### Miss Cooper, Pre-school Supervisor

Miss Cooper would much prefer parents to talk to them about any problems, queries or concerns than to brood on them alone. She is usually available at the beginning and end of each day if you need a quick word. If you feel you need more time or privacy, please ask to make an appointment to chat to her.

### Complaints Procedure

If you have tried to resolve a problem in school but still feel unhappy please look on the website for our Complaints Procedure. We hope it doesn't come to this!

### Contact Details

Telephone Number	01386 552515
Email	office@orchardprimary.org.uk
Website	www.orchardprimary.org.uk

