

St Helen's Pre-school Prospectus

At St Helen's Pre-school we aim to provide a friendly, secure and inclusive environment in which all children and their families will feel welcomed and in which all children will be able to develop and achieve.

St Helen's Pre-school is situated in Jubilee Hall, opposite St Helen's school and many children move on to St Helen's school for the second year of the Foundation stage (previously known as the reception year).

The Pre-school is run by an elected committee of parents/carers and a fully qualified manager, assisted by qualified pre-school practitioners and experienced/in training pre-school assistants. Parental involvement is actively encouraged at whatever level individual parents are happy with. A new committee is elected each September at the AGM, all parents/carers are welcome to stand for election to the committee.

St Helen's Pre-school has been assessed by OFSTED and passed for validation under the nursery education funding scheme, whereby children are eligible to receive funding for five sessions of three hours each for 38 weeks a year, from the start of the term following their third birthday. In accordance with the guidelines for the scheme the progress of children is recorded, assessed and shared with parents/carers on a regular basis.

Session Times – September 2012

St Helen's Pre-school is open during school terms, excepting that we close for two weeks during the October half term.

Monday

Morning session 9.00 – 12.00

Afternoon session 12.00 -3.00

Tuesday

Morning session 9.00 – 12.00

Wednesday

Morning session 9.00 – 12.00

Thursday

Morning session 9.00-12.00

Friday

Morning session 9.00 – 12.00

Children who are three years old can attend all day on Monday; this counts as two grant funded sessions. Children attending all day Monday or Monday afternoon need to bring a healthy packed lunch, crisps, sweets and chocolates are not allowed and sugary drinks are discouraged. Drinking water is available for all children

Clothing

Some activities at pre-school are messy (paint, water, clay etc) and therefore we suggest that you dress your child accordingly. Clothes which children can manage themselves help children to develop their independence with, for example, using the toilet. Children have access to the garden all year round and so need wellies to change into. Again, shoes that children can take on and off by themselves will help them to become independent, some children bring slippers to wear indoors. It is helpful if wellies and coats are named and also labelled with something distinctive that your child can recognise. Pre-school t-shirts and sweatshirts are available to buy if you would like your child to wear them but they are not essential. Please speak to a member of staff for price and order information. Pre-school fleeces are available for children to wear in the garden and at Forest school.

Nappies

We recognise that all children progress from nappies at their own pace and work with parents/carers to support this transition when necessary. We do not, however, have facilities for the safe disposal of nappies and, therefore, expect that parents will take nappies away for safe disposal.

Attendance

We are legally obliged to maintain an attendance register for children, staff and parents or other visitors to the pre-school.

Illness

Please let pre-school staff know, as soon as possible, if your child has a contagious illness to enable us to inform other parents. If your child has sickness or diarrhoea they should not attend pre-school for 48 hours in order to reduce the risk of cross infection. Pre-school staff will only administer medication to children where the need for medication is likely to be sudden and unpredictable, for example asthma inhalers, epi-pens, under agreed conditions and maintaining appropriate records. Any other medication requirements must be discussed with the manager and agreements will usually involve parents coming in to pre-school to administer the medication.

Daily Routine

9.00 – Registration and group time

9.15 (approx) – 11.30. Free flow play indoors and outdoors. During this time there are also adult led activities and the children are free to access the snack bar when they are ready. All children will be encouraged to have a drink and a snack during this time.

St Helen's has a healthy pre-school award for our encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. Children have fruit/vegetables with milk or water to drink for their snack and we enable children to participate in a full range of experiences outdoors, encouraging an active lifestyle. We have a developing eco garden, and we aim to ensure that the garden is a welcoming and inviting environment for the children.

11.30 – Everyone helps to tidy away the toys etc that we have used during the morning before coming together again on our group time mat for a planned circle time activity. Children who choose not to participate in this activity can access books and puppets in the library area.

Circle time is followed by story time.

12.00 –end of session

Monday afternoon sessions are Forest school sessions – please see below

Forest School sessions

Following a very successful trial, pre-school sessions on Monday afternoons and Thursday mornings are now running as forest school sessions. We will be using locations in the local area which are easily accessed, on foot, from pre-school.

The children will have opportunities to take part in a wide variety of activities relating to this outdoor environment, such as art and craft activities, story making and telling, constructing temporary shelters and playing adult led and child initiated games. There will also be opportunities for tool use, building on the woodworking sessions that children already take part in at pre-school. Exploring and learning about the natural environment will help the children to understand and value the plants and animals that make up our environment. For example we will be making bug and animal habitats for the garden to provide shelter for animals and insects as winter approaches.

Some benefits of forest school

Forest school enables children to access and experience outdoor learning, to take risks, challenge other's perceptions of themselves, solve problems, work together, understand and help others and themselves, within a play based environment that is child led and frequently child initiated.

At Forest school children develop the ability to tune into their inbuilt understanding of, and empathy with, the natural environment, watching the seasons changing, thinking about how to protect the plants and animals in the forest and learning some of the ways in which natural resources can be safely accessed and used. Early experiences have powerful influences on the rest of children's lives. Forest school experiences help children to develop the resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem that they will need throughout their lives.

We aim to make all our forest school activities accessible for every child in the group and welcome any information from parents/carers that will enable us to do this.

Please make sure that your child has a pair of wellies in pre-school, clearly labelled with their name. Wellies are not very warm and so it would be a good idea to put an extra pair of, warm, socks in their wellies for use during forest school sessions. A warm hat is also a good idea. Children attending forest school also need spare clothes in case they need to change when we return to the hall. We provide waterproof trousers and jackets for the children to use during forest school sessions.

Admissions

Allocation of places and official registration is dealt with by Tricia Pillay the pre-school manager. After completing a registration form parents will be notified by letter of sessions allocated and will receive a Welcome pack, which contains forms to complete and return on the child's first day at pre-school.

Pre-school sessions are available to children of 2.5 years and older. Children under the age of three usually attend for two sessions a week to begin with. Monday afternoon sessions are only available to children who are three years old.

Admission to any session is subject to the availability of spaces.

Fees

Invoices for fees are sent out towards the start of each term, payment can be made by cash or cheque. Please speak to the manager, Tricia Pillay, or the treasurer if you would like to make an arrangement to pay fees in instalments. If children are entitled to the nursery grant, this can be used towards the fees, the nursery grant is administered in the pre-school by the manager and the treasurer. For those sessions not covered by the nursery grant the fee is £10.44 per three hour session.

Settling in

We aim to make the transition to pre-school as easy as possible for you and your child. Please feel free to arrange a visit to the pre-school when you register your child, to enable you and your child to become familiar with the pre-school and the staff who will be caring for your child. This will also give you the opportunity to ask questions and to see how your child responds to pre-school.

When children begin pre-school we work with the parents to establish a settling in routine which both parents and children are happy with. Each child has a staff member who is their keyworker and parents should feel free to approach the keyworker, manager or deputy if there are any issues to discuss.

Parental Involvement

Parents are the most important carers and educators of their children and we welcome your input and experience into your child's care and education while they are at pre-school. Parents are welcome to book a session to come in as a parent helper but we also welcome parents coming in for shorter lengths of time to share interesting aspects of their lives with the children – perhaps to talk about a job or hobby, to play a musical instrument for the children or to read a favourite story.

St Helen's pre-school is a committee run pre-school and all parents are welcome to become involved in the work of the committee.

St Helen's pre-school is a registered charity, parental ideas for and involvement in, fundraising are always welcome.

Record Keeping

Children's personal records are kept in secure filing system.

Each child also has a Diary to record their time at pre-school. This contains observations by the staff, photographs and WOW stars, which are used to record progress both in pre-school and at home.

Curriculum

St Helen's pre-school works with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, pre-school staff will be happy to discuss this with you or you can access full information on the curriculum at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk. A copy of the curriculum can be found in the EYFS folder on the table in the entrance hall.

Your child's keyworker will work closely with the Manager to ensure that our curriculum provision is meeting your child's needs and enabling your child to reach their full potential.

Additional Needs

Staff at the pre-school have experience of working with multi-agency professionals to ensure that we meet the individual and additional needs of all children. Parents are welcome to discuss their child's individual requirements with the Manager, Tricia Pillay, and the setting special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), Hannah Meade, prior to your child joining us and on an ongoing basis throughout your child's time at pre-school, with appropriate support from other agencies as needed.

Staff Training

Staff qualifications are shown in the pre-school information folder on the table in the entrance hall. The staff training file gives details of training undertaken and can be viewed on request. Staff are committed to reflective practice and acknowledge the role that ongoing training plays in continually developing our provision.

Pre-school Policies

The day to day running of the pre-school is governed by our policies and procedures. These are available for parents to view in the policies file on the table in the entrance hall. A full copy of all policies is available to parents who request it; we charge a fee for this to cover the cost of printing. The policies are reviewed and updated on a continually rolling programme.

Data Protection Act

The pre-school has registered under the Data Protection act 1984.

The pre-school holds on computer a list of children's names, dates of birth addresses and telephone numbers, for administration purposes. This information is not disclosed to anyone outside of the pre-school.

Written records of each child's progress are confidential and are accessible only to the child's parents/legal guardians, pre-school staff. These records may be shared with outside professionals with parents consent.

Updated 17.07.12