St. Mark's Pre-school



General Information

A Parent's Handbook

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday morning(Monday & Tuesday afternoons for 2 - 3 year olds)

9.15 am – 12.15 pm

12.15pm - 3.15pm (Monday & Tuesday)(Term Time Only)

*CHILD’S PLAY*

Oh, what a busy morning!

I’ve been playing with the dough,

And, with a little help,

Upon a card I learned to sew.

I helped ‘Nurse Sarah’

To perform an operation,

Then fixed the track together

For my train and built the station.

I popped inside the Wendy House

To make a cup of tea,

And stood beside the cooker

Making lunch for twenty-three!

I completed three whole jigsaws

And played a new board game.

And had a turn on all the bikes,

The slide and climbing frame.

I handed round the biscuits

At milk and biscuit time.

Then I listened to the story

And sang a Nursery Rhyme.

But now the morning’s over

And Mummies are all waiting,

I hope my Mummy doesn’t say

I wish you’d done a painting!

St Mark’s Pre-school is part of the Youth and Children’s work of St Mark’s Church. We are registered and approved by OFSTED in accordance with the 1989 Children’s Act. We are also affiliated to the Preschool Learning Alliance. The staff are supported by a Management Committee, which is made up of members nominated by St Mark’s Church and by parent representatives who are elected annually, at a meeting of the parents.

# Our Aims and Objectives

At St Mark’s Pre-school we aim to:

* Provide high quality care and education for children primarily below statutory school age;
* Work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop;
* Add to the life and well-being of the local community;
* Offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity.

We aim to provide a happy, loving and safe home from home environment for children and their families. As a pre-school we aim to provide a starting ground for children from the age of two until they enter primary school and to foster the development of early skills through a broad, balanced and relevant programme of pre-school activities and experiences. St Mark’s Pre-school is a Christian based pre-school and we aim to provide a loving, caring and happy environment where each child is valued as a unique individual, regardless of gender, race, colour, ability, religion, ethnic or national origin. Christian values provide the key to the group ethos and we seek to nurture a simple understanding of the Christian faith and a respect of other world religions. We wish to help children to become aware of Jesus in their lives. We welcome children from all ethnic and religious backgrounds. Children with additional needs are welcome. Please talk to us about your child’s particular needs.

As a pre-school we aim to provide a starting ground for children from the age of two until they enter primary school and to foster the development of early skills through a broad, balanced and relevant programme of pre-school activities and experiences.

For the families of our children we provide a friendly listening ear whenever needed and we desire to share with parents the way Jesus works in our lives



**We aim to ensure that each child:**

* Is in a safe and stimulating environment;
* Is given generous care and attention, because of our high ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as volunteer’s/parent helpers;
* Has the chance to join with other children and adults to play, work and learn together;
* Is helped to take forward their learning and development by being helped to build on what they already know and can do;
* Has a personal key person who makes sure each child makes satisfying progress;
* Is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop;
* Is in a setting where parents help to shape the service it offers.

The provision for children’s development and learning is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (2017). As a provider of early year’s care and education it is our duty to ensure that we comply with the guidelines.

In St. Mark’s Pre-school all children are supported in developing their potential at their own pace. Our planned curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of each child. We offer developmentally appropriate play activities and experiences.

We keep records of each child’s progress and development. These records are the property of the child and are readily available to individual parents on request.

St Mark’s Pre-school is regularly inspected by OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) for the quality of care and education that we offer your child. We always receive a good report.

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| --- |
| “Children have good relationships with staff. This is because the staff, particularly their key person, support them as they play and are always nearby to offer help when needed. Therefore, children feel emotionally secure at the setting”. |

Ofsted Report June 2015



Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments. Each parent/carer will be given a leaflet explaining the following in more detail on their child’s induction day.

* **A Unique Child recognises** that every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
* **Positive Relationships** describes how children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
* **Enabling Environments** explains that children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.
* **Learning and Development** describes how children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year’s provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

This approach ensures that the EYFS meets the overarching aim of improving outcomes for children and reflects that children have the right to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender.

*Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2012*



###### **Parents**

Family is what is most important to a child of pre-school age. Parents are always welcome in our playgroup and we value all contributions that parents feel able to offer. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

* Exchanging knowledge about the children;
* Helping at sessions of the setting;
* Sharing their own special interest with the children;
* Helping to provide, make and look after the equipment and materials used in the children’s play activities;
* Being part of the management of the setting;
* Taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;
* Joining in community activities in which the setting takes part; and
* Building friendships with other parents in the setting.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to provide tailored and personal pre-school care. Two way communications between home and staff is essential for children to get the most from their pre-school experience and out staff work hard to build a trusting relationship with the children in their care. Our aim is for St. Mark’s Pre-school to be an extension of a happy, fun-loving home environment. All our staff see themselves as partners with the parents in providing care and education for your child.

**The parent’s rota**

Research shows that children learn better when their parents are involved. Our rota system involves parents in helping in the group on a regular basis. It also gives parents the opportunity to take an active part in the group, to see what happens there and to talk about it afterwards with their child. In addition, the rota system provides a valuable opportunity for all children to see their own parents/carer in a new role.

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**Joining In**

Joining the rota 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 demonstrate their creative talents and their cooking skills. We welcome parents to drop into the setting to see it at work or to speak with the staff.

**Community**



We believe that our pre-school should serve the needs of children and parents from the local community and also be a flexible part of that changing community. We have excellent links with local groups and organisations thereby enabling us to form bridges between home-life and the wider community. We plan activities that positively promote a world view and help children to value each other and respect differences between each other.

**Working together for your children**

Our pre-school is run by paid staff working with a Management Committee. Our committed staff team have experience of working with young children and most are working towards further qualifications. We try and maintain a high ratio of adult staff to children (more than the statutory requirements). This enables us to:

* Give time and attention to each child;
* Talk with the children about their interests and activities;
* Help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide; and
* Allow the children to safely explore and take risks.We regularly take students as part of their training or work experience. These students are never included in the adult-child ratio and they are always supervised.

**Staffing and Employment**

We provide a staffing ratio in line with the welfare requirements of the EYFS to ensure that children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality.  Our staff are appropriately qualified and we carry out checks for criminal and other records through the D.B.S in accordance with statutory requirements.

Ratios:

A high adult: child ratio is essential in providing good quality playgroup care.

To ensure we provide this we use the following ratios of adult to child:

Children aged 2 years:   1 adult: 4 children

Children aged 3 years:   1 adult: 8 children

Our key-person system ensures each child and family has one particular staff member who takes a special interest in them, and who plans with the parents for the child's wellbeing and development at St. Mark’s.

Regular staff meetings provide opportunities for staff to undertake curriculum planning and to discuss the children's progress and any difficulties.

Vetting and staff selection:

We work towards an equal opportunities employment policy, seeking to offer job opportunities on the basis of the individual's suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

All staff have a job description which sets out staff roles and responsibilities

We use OFSTED guidance on obtaining references and enhanced criminal record checks through the DBS for staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for the vetting and barring scheme.

We keep all records relating to employment of staff and volunteers, in particular those demonstrating the checks have been done, including the date and number of the enhanced DBS check.

Changes to staff: We inform OFSTED of any changes in the person responsible for

**The staff who work at our setting are:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Job Title | Qualifications |
| Julie Hanning | Manager  First Aider  Child Protection Co-ordinator  2Year Old Co-ordinator  Key person Co-ordinator  Health and Safety Co-ordinator  Early Years Co-ordinator | BA(Hons) Degree with EYPS |
| Sharon Church | Leader of Practice for Learning  First Aider  Behaviour Co-ordinator | NVQ Level 3 |
| Carol Pynn | Practitioner  First Aider  Fire drill Co-ordinator  Minutes Recorder | CPP |
| Paula Crust | Practitioner  First Aider  SENCo | NVQ Level 3 |
| Andrea Benford | Support Worker for Healthy Eating |  |
| Jo Tilley | Practitioner  First Aider | NVQ Level 3 |
| Sue Hedley | Relief Practitioner | NVQ Level 3 |
| Zoe Pritchard | Practitioner | NVQ Level 2 |

CPP – Certificate in Pre-School Practice

SENCO – Special Educational Needs

NVQ – National Vocational Qualification

EYPS – Early Years Professional Status

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**STARTING AT PRE-SCHOOL**

Before your child starts at Pre-school they will be assigned a member of staff as a key person. During the enrolment session you will have the opportunity to discuss the settling in process with your child's key person, and together decide what will be best for your child, to ensure that they feel comfortable being left in our care.

A child's ability to settle into the setting is influenced by their previous experiences. Therefore, a child who has regularly been cared for outside the home is more likely to settle quicker than a child who has only been cared for by parents or very close family members. A child who has English as an additional language is also more likely to need a longer settling in process, particularly where there is no-one in the setting who speaks their home language.

**We encourage you to stay with your child if they find it difficult to settle at first and when you leave them for the first few times, you come back early, gradually building up to a whole session** Please see our 'settling in' policy for more information

**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 they are 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, they will help your child settle and throughout your child’s time at the setting, they will help your child to benefit from the setting’s activities. The key person will also undertake a short induction period with the parent/carer in order to ascertain various information concerning your child.

**Children’s profiles**

Each key person will keep a record of their key child’s achievements and experiences. In our pre-school we combine the child’s profile, with a record of achievement and the child’s learning story which evolves during their time at pre-school. The key person will collect information about your child’s achievements and experiences. Staff and parents working together on their children’s profiles is one of the ways in which the key person and parents work in partnership. Children are encouraged to take ownership of their profiles and comment and assist in the production. The child’s profile will be shared with the parent/carer on a regular basis. The information will enable the key person to identify your child’s stage of progression and with the parent they can provide what the child needs for their well-being and to make progress.

**The Foundation Stage Curriculum for children from birth to five years**

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

Our setting provides a curriculum published by the Department for Education called the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The guidance divides children’s learning and development into seven areas:

* Personal, Social and Emotional
* Development
* Communication and Language
* Physical Development
* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding the World
* Expressive Arts and Design

For each area, the guidance sets out ‘development matters’, which describe the stages through which children are likely to pass through. It is important to note that children will not necessarily progress sequentially through the stages, since these do not represent age-related goals. Some of the elements may be achieved very quickly while others will take much longer. As children move from one element to another, they take with them what they have already achieved and continue to practice, refine and build on their previous development and learning. Parents are given more detailed information on these stages of development on their child’s induction day.

**STORY SACS**

We run a story sac system at pre-school to allow children to take home a story sac which consists of a book, soft toy and an activity. We will record the story sac you borrow and the date. Story sacs can be kept for a week.

**Learning opportunities for adults**

As well as gaining qualification in early years care and education, the setting’s 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 various magazines and literature.

**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 in the setting are provided in ways that;

* Help each child to feel that they are a valued member of the setting;
* Ensure the safety of each child;
* Help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and 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.

**Policies**

St Mark’s Pre-school has adopted the following policies and procedures which are available to parents upon request.

Policies

* Administering Medicine Policy
* Admissions
* Behaviour Management Policy
* Biting Policy and Procedure
* Child Protection Policy
* Confidentiality Policy
* Equal Opportunities Policy
* EYFS Policy
* Health, Hygiene and Safety Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

* Outdoor Policy
* Partnership with Parents Policy
* Photograph Policy
* Role of the Key Person Policy and Procedure
* Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy
* Settling in Policy
* Sick Child Policy and Procedure
* Special Educational Needs Policy
* Smoking, drugs and alcohol Policy
* Staff Induction Policy
* Student Placement Policy
* Sun Protection Policy and Procedure
* Staffing and Employment Policy
* Time off Policy
* Toilet use and Nappy Changing Policy Whistle-blowing Policy

Procedures

* Discipline Procedure
* When a child is picked up late
* When a child leaves the group unaccompanied
* Complaints Procedure
* In the Event of a Fire or other Emergency
* Operational Procedure for outings
* Nappy Changing Procedure

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 their parents.

The staff and committee 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 continually provide a quality service for its members.

**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 **Paula Crust**

**Discipline**

As a church we believe that your chid is special in the eyes of God and so we will endeavour to treat them as individuals with respect and kindness. However, there are times when children do wrong things. At these times we try to treat all children fairly and will ask them to sit quietly on their own (with an adult in attendance), in order that they may calm down and think about their actions. We are always looking for children to be able to get along with each other. At no time will anyone use physical punishment for any child in preschool

###### **Accidents**

Fortunately, we have very few accidents in pre-school. However, if your child has an accident, however minor, they will be looked after appropriately and the accident recorded in the accident book. The Manager or a member of staff will inform you should your child have had an accident whilst at pre-school and you will need to sign to confirm you have been given this information.

Parents are asked to inform the Pre-school Manager of any injury incurred by their child outside of preschool. For safety reasons this will then be recorded in the injuries book.

**Car Park Safety**

Please take care when driving into the car park as the high walls at the entrance can obstruct your view. Please park in the car park and keep hold of your children at all time

**Child Protection**

By law we are required to notify Social Services if we are in any way concerned about the well-being of a child. In most instances this will only be done after prior consultation with the parent.

We wish to assure all parents that those who care for your children day by day have been checked at the relevant level with the Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS). All have been passed as safe to look after young children.

The designated child protection co-ordinator is **Julie Hanning** and the deputy child protection co-ordinator is **Sharon Church**

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**Illnesses**

Please notify us if your child develops any of the illnesses listed below. Please keep your child at home until your child has fully recovered.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Chicken Pox | German measles | Meningitis | Head Lice |
| Ringworm | Impetigo | Mumps | Infective Jaundice |
| Threadworm | Measles | Verrucae | Whooping Cough |
| Scarlet Fever | Food Poisoning | Diarrhoea & Vomiting | |

###### **The Management of our setting**

Our Management Committee is made up of members of St Mark’s Church and two parents (who are elected annually at our Annual General Meeting). The Committee is responsible for:

* Managing the setting’s finances;
* Employing and managing the staff;
* Making sure that the setting has, and works to, policies that help it to provide a high quality service; and
* Making sure that the setting works in partnership with the children’s parents.

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all 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.

###### **Fees**

We are a non-profit making pre-school and we run a very tight budget. We try to keep our fees as low as possible. Therefore, fees must be paid at the agreed time. Reminders will be given for any fees more than two weeks’ overdue.

Should you run into difficulty please talk, in confidence, to the Manager as soon as possible and we will try to help.

Funded places: for children aged 3 and over and some 2 year olds. The fees for unfunded children are £12.50 per session payable weekly. For those 3 years’ old who attend afternoons and are not funded the fee for this session is £12.50. Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, talk to **Julie Hanning**, who is the Manager.

While your child is in St Mark’s Preschool all children are supported in developing their potential at their own pace. Our planned curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of each child. We offer developmentally appropriate play activities and experiences.

**ATTENDANCE**

We ask that you let us know if your child will be absent from playgroup. In the case of illness, please telephone on the first morning of absence. Fees are payable even if your child is absent from preschool. **Children who receive government funding are expected to attend all booked sessions**

**COLLECTION OF CHILDREN**

Please do not arrive too early to collect your child.

For your child's safety we must be informed in advance, in writing, of anybody, other than the known persons, who are to collect a child from Preschool. Children will not be allowed to leave the premises unless this has been complied with*.*

**CESSATION**

**If a place is no longer required at our pre-school we require a two-week notification if your child is an unfunded child and a terms notification if your child is funded.**

###### **Snacks and drinks**



The setting operates a snack bar during the morning session. We encourage children to come and choose their own drink and snack. Snack time is a social time at which the children eat together. We plan the menus for snack and drinks so that they provide the children with healthy and nutritious food. Please tell us if your child has any dietary needs or allergies to certain foods and we will make sure that these are met.

###### **Starting at our setting**

The first day

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 about helping children to settle into the setting.

Clothing

We encourage the children to learn by using different media, such as clay, glue, paint, water etc. As this will probably involve them getting messy, we ask that you dress your child in suitable clothing.

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities but we encourage parents not to put their children in their best clothes as accidents can happen, e.g. when using paint, glue, mud etc.

We try to use our garden area as much as possible during the year, so sunhats for the summer and coats and wellies for the colder weather are a good idea

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

**PLEASE NAME ALL ITEMS**

**Notice Board**

Various items of importance and interest are displayed on our notice board so please be sure to check this regularly.

##### **We hope that you and your child enjoy being members 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**.

**Manager:**

## Julie Hanning

Mobile: 0780 757783

### Chairman of Management Committee

**Lance Hanning**

Mobile: 07841332933

**Pre-School Treasure**

**Alistair Wiliams**

Mobile: 07817348703

**Church Office:**

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