



Parent/Carer Information Booklet

Address

Bathampton Village Hall
Holcombe Lane
Bathampton
BA2 6UL

Email

bathamptonplaygroup@yahoo.co.uk

Website

www.bathamptonplaygroup.org

Telephone number

07716 600269

Our aim is:

- To enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age in a community-based group, closely involving parents/carers.
- To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment.
- To work within a framework which ensures equality of opportunity for all children and families.

We offer your child:

- a specially tailored curriculum (Early Years Foundation Stage) leading to approved learning outcomes in line with the early learning goals set by Ofsted.
- a high level of individual care and attention made possible by favourable ratio of adults to children. We have a ratio of at least one adult to eight children over three years old, and one adult to four children under three years old.
- fun and friendship with other children and adults.
- opportunities for you and your family to be directly involved in the activities of the group and your own child's progress.

Our Playgroup offers education and care for children below statutory school age and over the age of 2 years 6 months.

Fees are £6.00 per hour (from September 2022). These are normally reviewed annually but may be reviewed over the course of the year.

Playgroup sessions are as follows:

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| Mondays | 8.30am to 1pm (lunch at 12noon) |
| Tuesdays | 8.30am to 3pm (lunch at 12noon) |
| Wednesdays | 8.30am to 3pm (lunch at 12noon) |
| Fridays | 8.30am to 12pm |

This includes an optional 'early' session, so drop off can be from 8.30am or from 9am. It will also include an optional 'lunch' session, so pick up can be at 12 noon with no lunch, or 1pm with lunch or 3pm on a Tuesday and Wednesday. Playgroup finishes at 12pm on a Friday.

We require children to attend a minimum of 2 sessions per week on 2 separate days. We find that children get more out of Playgroup when they attend the setting more than once a week and that they settle in more quickly. It also means that staff can get to know your child better and your child will feel more familiar with the staff, children and day to day routine of the Playgroup.

When a child joins the Playgroup, Parent/Carers have a two-week grace period to make any changes to the times they have chosen from above. We require notice for any further changes and this will depend on availability.

A settling in period (which will vary from child to child) is recommended before your child stays with us for a longer school length day (the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon). Once your child has turned 3 increasing the session can then happen after discussion with parents/carers and staff. The session for children not staying for the afternoon would end either at 12 pm without lunch or 1 pm with lunch.

Management and administration

Decision making

The Playgroup is run by an elected committee of parent/carers, this ensures that decision making is in the hands of those who use the group. The committee are responsible for reviewing policies and practice in line with Ofsted and local authority guidance, and for the employment and appraisal of the staff. The committee is elected annually at the AGM, normally held in October and parent/carers are informed of this in good time so that they can attend. The committee's constitution is available to read in the general file underneath the notice board along with the minutes of the meetings.

We encourage all parents to get involved with the committee. Meetings are held once a term and involve fundraising, marketing, finances etc. It is a great way to have your say and be involved in the community, so please do consider joining.

Policies

We have a comprehensive set of Policies and Procedures which outline how our setting is run. These documents are kept in a file at the Village Hall and are also available on our website. We can also email a copy to you.

Our policies are designed to offer the best possible experience and outcomes for our children and their families. They are reviewed on a regular basis and comments and suggestions from parents are always welcome.

Complaints

We aim to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. However, if any parent/carer wishes to make a complaint, then our complaints procedure is fully outlined on our website. A copy of the complaints procedure is also kept in the General Information file at the Village Hall. You can also view the Complaint Form on the notice board and find copies to take in the General Information File. Parent/carers are entitled to see a summary of the complaints record held by Playgroup by request to the Playgroup Leader.

Fees

Fees are payable each term in advance (on a termly basis). Fees are notified via an invoice and should be paid promptly. Fees continue to be payable if a child is absent for a short time. In cases of prolonged absence, parents/carers should consult the committee about fee payment. Each child's attendance at Playgroup is conditional upon continued payment of fees and/or nursery education grant where applicable. Parents/carers are notified when their child becomes eligible for the nursery grant and application for this is made three times a year at the start of the Autumn term, the Spring term and the Summer term. If a child leaves before their statutory school age, a notice period of one full term (7 weeks) is required. Playgroup is not under obligation to transfer any nursery education to another setting that has been claimed for the full term but will look at each case individually.

A fee of £5.00 (per half hour) will be charged to any parent(s)/carer(s) who collect their child more than 10 minutes late of their session time. This will be collected by the Playgroup Leader on the day or invoiced and payment required within 1 week.

This is to cover the cost of two members of staff who are required to stay with the child.

Voluntary Contribution

Playgroup is a charity and the level of funding that we receive for 3- and 4-year-old children is no longer sufficient to cover our running costs for staff salaries, village hall hire, insurance and supplies such as craft materials and printer ink, outdoor equipment and other important

learning resources. In order to maintain the high level of care and learning that playgroup provides for your children we are asking parents who are in receipt of funding, to make a donation of £1 per funded hour, for example if your child attends 3 fully funded sessions per week on a Monday (9-1), Tuesday (9-3) and Wednesday (9-3) then we are asking for a donation of £16.00 per week during term time. This is a voluntary donation and we will not be chasing payment.

We strongly believe that the Playgroup is an important asset to Bathampton and to the wider community, in preparing children for school and laying strong foundations for learning. Making a financial contribution to the playgroup will help us to continue to serve the community now and into the future.

Other pre schools and playgroups in the area are already asking for similar contributions and indeed, if your child attends another setting then you may already be familiar with the practice. We feel this has become a necessary step for Bathampton Playgroup to take.

Special needs

The number of adults present in the playgroup enables us to provide a high level of individual attention for each child. Each child is able to progress at his/her own rate in all areas of development, and this is true of children with or without disabilities or learning difficulties. We can work in close liaison with professionals across the range of special needs. Parents can discuss the playgroup's ability to meet their child's special needs with the playgroup leader. Our full special needs policy and Local Offer is contained in the policy document.

Starting Playgroup

The first days

A child who is tense or unhappy will not be able to learn properly, so it is important for the parents/carers and the Playgroup staff to work together to help the child feel settled, confident and secure at playgroup. This takes longer for some children than others, and parents/carers should not feel worried if their child takes a while to settle. Parents/carers are invited to stay with their child until they feel happy with the routine and staff can offer advice and support if there are any problems with settling

It is our aim to make sure that each child's time at Playgroup is a happy and productive one. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the staff or committee if they have any queries or problem at any time.

Home Visits

If you feel your child would benefit from a home visit before their first day at Playgroup then Lisa and Emma are available for home visits. Please speak to Lisa, the Playgroup Leader to arrange a suitable time for this to happen.

What to wear

It is essential that your child wears clothes that are not too restrictive and that they can easily move around in and that are comfortable for them to wear. In order to feel free and experiment with all kinds of materials, including messy ones, it is best to send children dressed in clothes that are easily washable or not too new. We quite often have water play and painting available and it is worthwhile sending your child with a spare set of clothes to hang on the pegs if they need to change.

It is good for children to practise the skills that will help them to become independent. Simple clothing that they can handle themselves will enable them to go to the toilet and dress for outdoors without being dependant on adult help.

Outside play

We feel it is important that the children spend part of the session outside if the weather is suitable. We are lucky to have a paved area and a grassy area that we can use. In cold, wet weather we would like parents/carers to provide children with suitable waterproof, warm clothing, and in the hot weather please supply a sun hat and apply sunscreen to your child before the session.

Security measures

We have in place various security measures to ensure the safety of your children. As you arrive the time you arrive is noted in the register and parents/carers are asked to inform staff if someone different will be collecting them. Each parent/carer needs to complete a child collection consent form and update this on a regular basis to confirm who they will allow to collect their child. Children will not be released to people who are not registered by the parent/carer. Visitors are also asked to sign in, (including names of visiting infants) so that we have a full record of who is in the building for fire evacuation purposes.

We also ask to be informed if your child is absent and the reason for the absence. This can either be via the email, telephone or text message. This is a safeguarding requirement and we will contact you if we have not heard from you and your child is absent

The external doors are kept locked to ensure the safety of the children. We therefore encourage all parents/carers to be punctual when bringing their child to Playgroup and when collecting them.

Snack time

Parents/carers are asked to provide their child with a snack for mid morning. This must be something your child can easily manage in easy to open containers or boxes.

If you would like your child to stay for lunch then please send your child with a healthy packed lunch. No sweets or chocolate are allowed. This is in addition to their snack which they will eat earlier in the morning. Lunch will be eaten at 12 noon.

Please could you send your child in with a named water bottle as we find this encourages them to drink more throughout the session.

If your child has any food allergies it is important that you inform the staff on your registration form. It is vital that we know of any allergies or intolerances that your child may suffer from. We also occasionally organize cooking activities or may sample different foods as part of our curriculum so we will need to be made aware of any allergies. Please feel free to talk to any member of staff about any concerns that you may have regarding this.

Daily routine

Termly newsletters are usually emailed to parents/carers in advance

Illnesses

Parents/carers are asked to keep their child at home if they have any contagious illness and to inform the Playgroup of the nature of the illness so that other parents can be alerted if necessary. Parents/carers are also asked not to bring a child who has been vomiting or had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours. Where children have been prescribed anti-biotics (both oral and topical), parents are asked to keep them at home for 48 hours after they begin taking them before returning to playgroup. If your child has a temperature and requires medicines such as infant paracetamol or ibuprofen to bring their temperature down you are asked to keep them at home and not to send them back to playgroup until their temperature has passed and they are well enough to return. Your child must be free of a fever for 24 hours before they can return to Playgroup. We do not administer calpol or other infant paracetamol or ibuprofen medicines unless it has been prescribed by a doctor.

If a child becomes ill at Playgroup, parents/carers or emergency contact will be informed immediately so that they can collect their child.

You are asked to keep your child at home if they are showing any signs of illness relating to Covid 19. Please see the Safe Operating Procedures for more guidance on this.

Adult Resources

Our ratio of adults to children in the group ensures a high level of individual attention to the needs and development of each child.

Staff

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| Lisa Nash | Playgroup Leader | CACHE Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. Employed in 2010. |
| Emma McGuinness | Playgroup Deputy | CACHE Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. Forest School level 3 Employed in 2014. |
| Jane Hoe | Early Years Practitioner | QTS |
| Rebecca Sheibani | Early Years Practitioner | Unqualified |
| Doogie Hunter | Early Years Practitioner | Level 3 |

Bank Staff (used to cover staff absence)

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|---------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Sarah Surgey | Early Years Practitioner | Level 3 |
| Cara Petersen | Early Years Practitioner | Level 3 |
| Holly Surgey | Early Years Practitioner | Unqualified |

Key worker

The staff always endeavour to maintain close contact with all parents and a key worker will be allocated to your child when they start. However, you can talk to any member of staff if you do have any concerns or questions.

Parent/carer rota

Research shows that children learn better when their parents/carers are involved. Our rota system involves all parents/carers in helping in the playgroup on a regular basis. This helps to maintain the high ratio of adults to children, guaranteeing some individual care and attention for each child. It also gives parents/carers an opportunity to take an active part in the Playgroup, seeing what happens there and to talk about it afterwards with their child. Volunteering once or twice a term provides a good opportunity to look through your child's learning diary. In addition the rota system provides valuable opportunity for all children to see their own parents/carers in a new role.

The rota is put by the front door for parents/carers to fill in dates that are convenient to them. We do however expect all families to do their share, if a parent/carer is not able to help then perhaps a grandparent could help, or other carer by agreement with the staff. You

may bring siblings with you if you have no childcare available for them but please be aware you will be solely responsible for any siblings that come along. The duties involve playing with the children helping them to learn through their play, helping to tidy up and washing up after snack time. A guideline list is available to read. Parents/carers are not to take children other than their own to the toilet as only staff who have been through a DBS check may do this.

If you or a member of your family have any special skills, interests or celebrate festivals from different cultures we would love to hear about it to include in our sessions.

Record keeping

We implement a record keeping system in which observations, photographs and 'products' made by the children are used as a basis for monitoring progression against the early learning goals in the early years foundation stage. These are also used as a basis for drawing up group and individual curriculum plans and next steps.

All parents/carers are welcome to look at their child's records or learning journey. The children have named drawers that the Learning Journey books are kept. Staff are always happy to talk to parents/carers about any concerns that they may have, or just to discuss their child's progress. An "All about Me" form will be sent out and we will put this in your child's book and we ask parents/carers to fill this in as your child begins playgroup. This gives us a general overview of your child at the time they are joining us. It tells us about your child's interests and about people in their lives who are important to them. We also welcome any home learning your child has done to add to their learning journeys. It is interesting for us to see how they are developing at home as well as at playgroup.

We give a more formal opportunity to look at the child's file and discuss progress at the end of the summer term each year. As some of our children also attend other settings we share information with those settings and all information is sent via the parent/carer. This is also an Ofsted requirement and we encourage the other settings to share their information too. We also liaise with the teachers from the different primary schools at the time of transition when the children are getting ready to move onto their primary schools. It may be necessary on occasion for staff to take your child's learning journey home to update their progress and their development. This will only be done when absolutely necessary and when there has been no opportunity to do this in session time. If you are not happy about staff doing this please let us know.

Curriculum

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum designed to help each child achieve the early learning goals outlined by Ofsted. Our planning is very much led by the children's interests and topics may change and develop as the weeks go by. In addition to this we have other activities and resources that we use to provide a stimulating environment for your

child to learn through their play. The adult input during their play helps the child to gain maximum learning while they are enjoying their play. An outline of the curriculum is contained in our policy document.

Child Protection

Our prime responsibility is the welfare of the children who attend playgroup. We aim to provide an environment where all children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

In order to keep the children in our care safe we are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies. We feel that this is in the best interests of the children. Information sharing is vital for the protection of children as often it is only when information from a number of sources has been shared that it becomes clear whether a child is at risk or is suffering from significant harm. Therefore we will share information with other agencies when we feel it to be appropriate and necessary.

The welfare and safety of the children at Playgroup is paramount and we have an obligation to follow the child protection procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. We have a detailed Child Protection policy and procedure document which is available on our website and a copy is filed in our Policy & Procedures folder at the Village Hall. We can also email a copy to you upon request.

Staff are trained in child protection and are required to keep records if they have any concern for a child in their care. These notes are kept confidential to staff only and the child's parents are made aware of them too. We also have a duty to report any real concerns to social services, if this is necessary parents/carers are notified of this intention unless it is believed that this might significantly increase the risk to the child. This is a requirement for all childcare settings and is in place to protect your child. We have a Designated Officer responsible for child protection, currently the Playgroup Leader, Lisa Nash, if you have any questions or concerns about this please do not hesitate to talk to her or any member of staff. If Lisa is absent you can talk to Emma McGuinness who is the Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer.

Training

We are members of the Preschool Learning Alliance (PSLA) and this helps us to keep in touch with developments in the field of care and education. In addition, ongoing training is available through local authority and various other sources and through local meetings and conferences.

The role of parents/carers

Playgroup recognises parents/carers as the first and most important educators of their young children. Our Playgroup aims to support parents/carers in this.

Parents/carers are welcome to:

- help in Playgroup with the children

- feedback on their child's progress at home
- assist with fundraising
- take part in the management of the Playgroup
- represent the Playgroup at PLA activities/training/conferences
- attend other related training courses subject to an agreement on funding

Fundraising

As a registered charity we aim to keep our fees as low as possible and thus rely on fundraising to help us do this. It is a major part of keeping the Playgroup going and help from parents/carers is always needed. All parents/carers are welcome to suggest new ideas to help us with this as well as their support for events that are organised.

Moving on to school

We use our time at Playgroup to help introduce children in their final preschool year to the concept of going to school and to prepare them for this. We encourage independence in toileting, putting on outside clothing, identifying their named peg etc. We also prepare the children by introducing routine and communal discipline such as snack time, circle time, lining up and story/song time.

We have a close liaison with the local Schools and the Reception Teachers will make a visit during the final term to meet the children in the setting. We will also forge links with any other school where your child has been allocated a place.