



Guildford Nursery School

www.guildfordnscs.surrey.sch.uk

Handbook for families

Dear families,

Welcome to Guildford Nursery School! We're so pleased you've chosen our nursery school for your child, and look forward to getting to know your family.

We're a Surrey County Council maintained nursery school with qualified teachers who lead your child's development and learning every step of the way.

We're incredibly proud of our large, open and inspiring learning spaces, where babies and children can investigate, learn and discover through exciting experiences – both indoors and outdoors.

We have a Froebelian ethos, which means our teaching is based on the ideas of Friedrich Froebel – an educational pioneer who believed in learning through play, creativity and hands-on experiences. This approach puts your child at the heart of everything we do, helping them to develop naturally through exploration and discovery.

At our nursery school, we believe every child deserves the very best start in life.

Our approach to learning

Freedom to explore

Your child can choose to play indoors or outdoors whenever they wish, spending as much time as they like in either space.

Hands-on experiences

We offer rich, meaningful activities including gardening, cooking, woodwork, sewing, climbing trees, fire lighting, and working with clay – all designed to spark curiosity and develop new skills.

Learning through choice

Children have the freedom to make their own choices, with caring adults nearby to guide and support them when needed.

Celebrating every child

We welcome and value each child exactly as they are, building on their unique strengths and providing the right support at just the right time.

Thoughtfully chosen resources

The materials we offer are carefully selected to encourage deep thinking and imagination. Many are reusable, recycled, and always beautifully presented to inspire wonder and creativity.



Time and space to grow

We give children plenty of time and space to play, communicate, and develop at their own pace.

Seeing the best in every child

Our staff always look for the positive intentions behind children's actions, helping them learn and grow with kindness and understanding.

Responsive teaching

Adults carefully observe each child to understand their interests, then teach the skills and knowledge they need to flourish.

Warm, respectful relationships

The relationships between our staff and children are always warm and respectful. Together, we share in the joy and delight of discovery and learning.

Partnership with you

We work closely with families to help each child grow into a confident, independent learner who's ready for the next stage in their education.

Building confidence and identity

We help children grow up feeling confident about who they are, in a spirit of friendship and respect for everyone.

Our values

We promote the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to give your child the very best start.



Sally Cave
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A message from the Chair of Governors

On behalf of the Governing Body, please can I welcome you, your child, and your family into our family at Guildford Nursery School. We're delighted to have you here.

Both my boys were part of Guildford Nursery School in their early years, and I hope your experience will be the same as ours. We discovered a unique school, providing a warm and welcoming community, valuing every child and family, and offering excellent development and learning opportunities. Now as a Governor, I'm incredibly proud of the environment that Sally, the teaching staff, and support staff create. With the added bonus of exceptional facilities and wonderful outdoor spaces at both our Hazel Avenue and York Road sites, I'm confident that Guildford Nursery School will help provide your child with the best start in life.

Whether your family will be with us for a few years, or just a few months, you are very welcome, and we look forward to creating special long-lasting memories together.

Andy Bagwell

Settling your child into nursery

Starting nursery is a big step, which is why the settling process is tailored to suit individual children as no child, or family, is the same. We start children gradually so they can get lots of support and attention. We want their first experience of school to be a positive one.

Each child is assigned to a Key Person who is either a teacher or an Early Years Educator. They will remain the first point of contact should you have any questions or concerns about your child.

The Key Person will contact you before your child starts nursery to arrange a home visit and to find out about your child. The purpose of the home visit is for your child and the Key Person to start getting to know each other in the place where your child feels most secure. It also means that your child will have a familiar face on their first day at nursery. The Key Person will bring a few toys to play with and will be with you for about 20 minutes.

When the time comes for you to leave your baby or child at nursery, please make sure they know you are leaving and don't worry if they get upset or sad, this is quite normal. If they see that you are upset they will be too! If your child cannot be comforted by their Key Person, we will ask you to come back to nursery.

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions or worries then please talk to your child's Key Person.

We look forward to getting to know you and your child.



My day at nursery

When children arrive at nursery, they wait with their family for the gate or door to open. Sometimes they feel a bit nervous, but once the adults have said hello to them and their family, they feel happy and safe.

A familiar grown-up takes the babies from their parent or carer, and the older children say goodbye to their family, knowing they will see them later. If they cry, they are distracted by lovely toys once inside, and the grown-ups register them. The older children find their name card which they add to their key group photograph, and put their bag and coat on the peg with their photo.

Friends arrive so they can all play together, either inside or in the garden. They have lots to do including waterplay and other sensory activities. The grown-ups always support the babies and, if they are crawling, cruising or walking, they make sure they are doing these things as safely as possible, giving them time to explore on their own too.

The older children like to decide what to do by themselves, but if they do not know what to do, the adults will always help them. If they are really interested in something, adults will let them explore it so that they can learn more about it.

During the morning, snack is prepared for the babies and they sit and eat socially. Food is cut up so that they can eat safely and they are always observed by a grown-up. When the snack bar is open, the older children wash their hands and an adult supports them to choose what to have. They can have milk or water and a snack of fruit and vegetables.

The babies' nappies are changed or checked during the morning session. Some of the younger children may need a morning sleep and are taken to a calm space where their cots are. Sheets and blankets are changed regularly and classical music is played quietly to help them relax. Sleep checks are recorded every 10 minutes.





At some point in the morning the children gather for group time with their friends and sing songs, read a story or play a game with their Key Person. Their Key Person knows the things that they like to do, the way they like to do them and how best to support them. At the end of the morning, the children help to put away the things they have been playing with. They always know where to find the things they need.

At lunchtime some children go home, but the older children who stay go to the toilet and wash their hands while the babies have their hands washed for them. Every table has an adult sitting with them supporting the babies with their feeding and chatting with all the children as they eat.

After lunch, the babies have their face washed before having their nappy changed or checked, ready for the afternoon. More friends arrive after lunch and again children can choose where to play. If they need extra help with anything, an adult may help them in a smaller group.

For some of the babies and younger children, it may be time for sleep. A familiar grown-up settles children into their cot or onto their mattress and supports them to fall asleep. Calm music is played and the lights are lowered. Voices are kept low. Children may have a bottle before their sleep. If not sleeping, they join the other children and play all afternoon with lots of lovely things, either inside or outside.

Before going home, the children help to put things back and then they may have group time again where they talk about what they have been doing in nursery and what they have learnt.

After group time, the older children collect any letters and pictures that they need to take home along with their coat and bag. They like to be able to do these things themselves. They put things in their Learning Journey that they want to keep at nursery. They can look at it anytime and like to show it to the person who picks them up from nursery. The children all say goodbye to their friends and Key Person and go outside, ready to go home.

The grown-ups hand the babies' carer their coat and bag and pass on any messages. Some children might stay for tea club.

How the children learn in our nursery

We follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** which sets the statutory standards for learning, development and care for every child from birth to 5 years old. It is based on four principles:

- Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual need and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.
- Children develop and learn at different rates.

We use a guidance document called Birth to 5 Matters to support our curriculum and knowledge of child development. www.birthto5matters.org.uk

Prime areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Understanding the World
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design



The EYFS stresses the importance of how children learn as well as what they learn.

Playing and exploring – engagement	Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know, being willing to ‘have a go’
Active learning – motivation	Being involved and concentrating, keep trying, enjoying, achieving what they set out to do
Creating and thinking critically – thinking	Having their own ideas, making links, choosing ways to do things

Our aim is to develop your child’s skills, knowledge and understanding in all of these areas throughout the year. We realise that each individual child has different abilities and believe that by providing a variety of structured and stimulating learning activities we can enhance their potential. We use our garden as an extension to our classrooms so the children can experience physical activities such as nature kindergarten, gardening, building with blocks on a large scale, sand and water play and wheeled toys. We provide wet weather clothes for the children as we feel it is important they are allowed to play outside to experience all types of weather.

To find out more about our curriculum, please visit our website.

Supporting every child's learning journey

We are an inclusive nursery that celebrates the unique ways children learn and grow. We are committed to creating a nurturing environment where every child can flourish, with their individual strengths, interests, and ways of being fully valued and supported.

Our SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) works collaboratively with families and staff to ensure each child receives the support that honours their individual needs. If your child has identified support needs, we will work in partnership with you to integrate any existing plans and strategies, ensuring their transition to nursery feels positive and empowering.

We warmly welcome open and ongoing conversations about your child's development. As your child settles in, we observe their play and progress, keeping in close contact with you. If additional support or referrals would be helpful, we will guide you through each step with care and respect for your family's unique journey.

What support do we provide?

Our approach is rooted in celebrating each child as a unique individual, in line with Froebelian principles of seeing children as whole, capable learners. We focus on understanding where every child is in their developmental journey and meeting them with respect, curiosity, and genuine appreciation for their individual strengths.

Through careful observation, we build a rich picture of each child's interests, abilities, and any areas where they may benefit from additional support. We recognise that children communicate, connect, and engage with the world in wonderfully diverse ways. Some children may have particular communication styles, seek different pathways for social connections, or have specific needs related to a diagnosis or neurotype.

When a child would benefit from individualised support, our SENCo collaborates closely with the child's family and Key Person to nurture their growth through warm, trusting relationships and thoughtfully designed experiences. This might include:

- Creating opportunities for meaningful play that honours the child's interests and preferred ways of engaging.
- Supporting communication through activities that build on the child's strengths.
- Providing sensory and physical exploration opportunities that respect individual sensory preferences and needs.



We continually reflect on and adapt our approach to ensure that every child feels valued, understood, and supported in their progress. When additional specialist input would be beneficial – such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, or comprehensive support through an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) – we work closely with families to ensure the process is collaborative, empowering, and centred on the child's wellbeing.

Our support approaches

Support can take place one-to-one or in groups, and may include:

Intensive Interaction – where adults attune to and mirror what a child is doing, creating opportunities to share attention and connection around the child's interests and preferred activities.

Froebelian Occupations – such as cooking, clay work, nature kindergarten, sewing, woodwork, and gardening. These rich, hands-on experiences support development across all areas of learning and provide meaningful, authentic experiences that honour children's natural ways of learning.

Makaton – to support and enhance communication in ways that work for each child.

Visual supports – including visual timetables, now-and-next boards, Aided Language Display boards, and symbols to support children's understanding and expression in ways that complement their communication preferences.

Three things you can do to help your child's learning

There are lots of things that you can do to help your child's learning; here are three that are especially important:

- Share a book, a story or a song with your child every day.
- Make time to listen and talk to your child. When you are in nursery, please keep your mobile out of sight so that you can talk together.
- Make time for your child to play every day, inside and outside. Join in if you like or help brothers and sisters to play together or arrange for other children to come round.



Developmental records

Every child has their own Learning Journey book in which staff put photos, pieces of work, observations and learning stories showing your child's learning and development. We encourage parents to add to this too.

Learning Journeys are stored in each Key Person's group area for you and the children to read at any time. They are given to you when your child leaves nursery.

Behaviour

Children's behaviour includes everything they do, their approach to work and play, the ways they relate to other people and their responses to all the experiences they encounter at nursery, at home and the wider community.

Our aim is to create an environment in which each child feels confident, secure and happy and is able to reach their full learning potential.



Our aims are:

- To encourage children to form positive relationships with each other and with staff as part of a group beyond their immediate family experience.
- To encourage children to do the “right” thing, not for reward or through fear of punishment but because they know it is right.
- To act as role models of appropriate behaviour ourselves, demonstrating a calm demeanour, well managed emotions, open body language and positive tone of voice and language.
- To ensure that behaviour boundaries and expectations are clear to children, parents and staff.
- To work as a team, supporting and valuing each other and using a solution focused approach when challenges arise.
- When unwanted behaviour or conflict is displayed, we will describe to the children very clearly and simply that this behaviour is unacceptable and simultaneously:
 - Explain clearly and simply what we do want to see and hear
 - Make changes in behaviour in small steps, praising and encouraging even slightest progress in the right direction all the time.

We seek to understand, not just manage, behaviour.

When conflict is involved:

- We approach the children calmly, stopping any hurtful actions and acknowledging the children's feelings.
- Ask the children what happened from their perspective and restate the problem to them, as children need to hear this verbalised in order to process the information.
- Ask for their support and include them in finding the right solution. We do not necessarily make children say the word ‘sorry’, but rather help them to show they are sorry.

We believe the most effective way for reinforcing best behaviour is to recognise and notice it with verbal approval, smiles and our time.

Please ask at reception if you would like a copy of our nurture and relationships (behaviour) policy or visit our website.

Attendance and absence

It is important that your child attends all their nursery sessions, unless they are unwell. **When children come to nursery regularly and on time, they benefit by making more friends, feeling more settled and learning more.**

If your child is not well and unable to attend nursery then please contact us each day your child is ill via the Studybugs app by 8.45am for the morning session, or 12.15pm for the afternoon session.

The Studybugs app can be found at <https://studybugs.com> and is also available to download from the Apple App Store, Google Play and Microsoft. A leaflet is available from reception and our receptionists are happy to help with any queries.

If your child has diarrhoea or has been vomiting, they must be free of symptoms for 48 hours before returning to nursery. This helps to prevent the bug from spreading to other children in the nursery. If your child has a medical or other urgent appointment then please fill out an Absence Request form, available from reception.

Your child is not authorised to miss nursery for any other reason. In exceptional circumstances you can request time out from nursery. Please complete a form available from reception. This will be considered by the Headteacher.



Keeping Children Safe (Safeguarding)

It is the responsibility of Guildford Nursery School to ensure that children are safe and secure at all times. We have a clear comprehensive policy for safeguarding and child protection. It is a statutory requirement for all schools, settings and childminders to pass on information to Children's Services if they are concerned about a child's welfare or safety. We will usually discuss these concerns with you first unless a child is at risk of immediate harm.

We understand that all families go through ups and downs. We are here to offer help, support and guidance if things get difficult. Early help can often stop a small problem from becoming a big issue that might negatively impact on your child.

Please ask at reception or look on our website if you would like **a copy of our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.**



Equality

Guildford Nursery School aims to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards.

As an organisation we believe that it is everyone's responsibility to:

- Promote equality, develop good community relationships and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender and gender identity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socioeconomic circumstances.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures can be found on the Policies and Procedures page on our website. Alternatively please ask reception for a copy of the policy you require.

Nature Kindergarten

A forest school – or nature kindergarten as we call it – offers children an opportunity to learn in a setting where they feel comfortable and happy. We encourage investigation and adventure in a safe outdoor environment, and our children love it.

There's nothing quite like spending time outside. Children can enjoy the fresh air and exercise, while learning more about themselves and the world around them. We regularly see children becoming more confident, more talkative and more able to persevere when learning outside.

Our nature kindergarten is part of the fantastic outdoor space at our Hazel Avenue site. Children at York Road have regular opportunities to visit Dapdune Wharf.

All our nursery children attend nature kindergarten sessions during their time with us.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

As providers of education and care for early years children, we are able to claim additional funding for some of the children who come to our school. This is called the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This extra funding is important because it lets us invest in the things that help to give your child a positive start to school life.

Parents/carers might qualify for the Early Years Pupil Premium if they receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' – the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Funding may also be available if your child:

- Is currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales
- Has been adopted from care
- Has left care through special guardianship
- Is subject to a child arrangement order

If you think that your child could be eligible, please ask for an EYPP registration form to complete. Any information you share will be completely confidential and will not affect any benefits that you receive. We use this additional funding to provide extra trips and experiences for eligible children.



Nursery times

Nursery times are as stated on your offer letter. You can book additional sessions if you would like - please ask at reception. Breakfast Club is offered from 8am and Tea Club is offered some days until 4:30pm, dependant on parent interest. Please see our website for up to date information.

Medical needs

All parent/carers are asked to complete a Medical Needs form prior to their child starting nursery.

Prescribed medication will only be administered in exceptional circumstances as per our policy.

Non prescribed medication will not be administered to a child by staff as per our policy.



Please inform the Key Person if your child has had any medication before coming into nursery.

Please ask at reception if you would like a copy of our Medical Needs Policy.

Allergies

We are a nut free nursery. This includes peanut butter and all products containing nuts. If your child has specific allergies, please provide us with the details so that appropriate procedures can be put in place.

Accidents and existing injuries

If your child has an accident at nursery, minor first aid will be given by the staff. We will complete an accident form and ask you to read and sign it. If you would like a copy of this then please let us know. We will always contact you if your child has a serious head injury. Likewise, we ask that you inform us if your child has any bumps and scrapes at home. We realise that this is not unusual for young children.

Please note that staff are not medically trained beyond first aid, so please contact your doctor with any concerns.

Toilet training

If your child is in nappies, please ensure they arrive in a clean, dry nappy. During nursery sessions, staff will change a child's nappy when it becomes soiled or sodden. Nappy cream supplied by parents/carers may be applied and a medication form must be completed. Please label any cream with your child's name and ensure it is given to the Key Person; please do not leave it in your child's bag where other children could access it. We don't advocate the use of pull ups as these do not allow children to realise when they are wet.

Staff will work with you to toilet train your child when they are ready. We do expect children to be using the toilet by the time they are 3 years old unless they have an additional learning and/or medical need. If this is likely to be an issue for you and your child please discuss this with our staff.



Communication

We provide a weekly parent newsletter to keep you up to date with everything that is happening in nursery. You can access this via our Studybugs app. This can be found at <https://studybugs.com> and is also available to download from the Apple App Store, Google Play and Microsoft. You can also find the newsletter on our website under the 'Information' heading. Our receptionists are happy to help if you have any questions. Please do read the newsletter as it contains important information.

We use Tapestry as a secure and convenient way to share your child's learning journey with you. Through Tapestry, we upload observations, photos, and updates that highlight your child's achievements, progress, and experiences. We encourage families to look at and add their own photos from home, helping us build a fuller picture of your child. All information shared on Tapestry is kept private and is accessible only to you.

We have a Facebook page: @GuildfordNurserySchool and a separate Family Centre page: @GuildfordFamilyCentre. Please 'like' and 'follow' us so we can send you regular information, examples of the children's activities, and updates on all events associated with the nursery school and family centre. We also have Instagram pages – search 'Guildford Nursery School' and 'Guildford Family Centre' to follow our pages.

If you would like to talk to your child's Key Person, the Assistant Head (SENCO) or the Headteacher, please make an appointment or ring or email us. You will of course be able to talk to staff informally every day when you drop off and pick up your child. Key People each have a work mobile if you prefer to call or text them directly. Please note that these will not be responded to while Key People are with the children.

We value our close partnerships with parents and carers. If you are unsure about anything or have any worries or concerns, please talk to your Key Person who would be happy to discuss this with you, or to answer any questions you may have.

If you would like to get more involved, we have parents on our governing body and volunteering opportunities too. If you are interested please do ask at reception or talk to your Key Person or the Headteacher.

Birthdays and other celebrations

We will celebrate your child's birthday by singing Happy Birthday to them. We use a pretend cake so that they can have the experience of blowing out candles; we usually take a photo of this for their Learning Journey. **We are not able to hand out sweets or cakes.**

We like to recognise and celebrate each and every child and family in our setting. If you have a particular festival that you celebrate do please let us know so that we can share the experience with the nursery. We would love you to come in and show us how, for example, you make particular foods as part of your celebration.

Healthy snacks

We ask that parents/carers bring in each week a few pieces of fresh fruit (not dried) or vegetables that can be eaten raw. We provide milk and water. There is no need to bring any drink for your child.

Clothing

We encourage children to become as independent as possible so that they can manage their clothing for themselves by the time they leave us. Dressing your child in easy to manage clothing really helps your child. Dungarees, belts, onesies, shoelaces and dressing up clothes are to be avoided please!

Please ensure that your child comes to nursery with appropriate clothing for the weather, e.g. a sunhat on hot days and shoulders covered. On hot days sun cream should be applied **before** your child comes to nursery.

The children can go in and out of the garden freely for most of their session. Children will often get messy or dirty in nursery so please dress them in clothes and shoes that they can run around and play in freely.

It is advisable not to send them in their best clothes as the most effective way for them to learn is through play and exploring.

It is helpful if you can provide a spare, named set of clothes for your child to change into if necessary. This can be left on their peg.

Borrowing books to take home

We believe reading and sharing stories together is really important. Families are welcome to borrow books from nursery to enjoy at home together. Please return each book before choosing a new one.

Site security

It is vital that everyone is safety conscious at all times.

Please make sure that all doors and gates are shut behind you. It only takes a few seconds for a child to escape through an open door or gate!



Mobile phones, videoing and photography

We ask that you do not use your mobile phone while dropping off or picking up your child; we think it is important that you are available to listen to your child and talk with them. Please make any calls outside of the nursery buildings.

Please help us by not taking any photos as other families may not want you to photograph their children. If parents wish to photograph or video special events, the following rules apply:

- The Headteacher's permission must be sought.
- Videos and photos are for personal use only and not to be used on the internet or social media sites.

We will seek your written consent in order to use photos or videos. A consent form will be supplied when your child starts school. Please note: consent can be withdrawn at any time in writing.

Car parking

Hazel Avenue: there is a free car park on site for parents, carers, staff and visitors. Please **do not park** in the disabled bays unless you have a blue badge. There is also parking along Hazel Avenue. Please drive slowly and carefully, young children are not aware of the dangers of moving vehicles.

York Road: there is no car park. Waitrose has kindly agreed to let our parents use their car park, free of charge, between 9.00am-9.30am and 3.00pm-3.45pm. Please ask at reception for a permission leaflet to display in your car. Should you wish to stay longer, Waitrose has 90 minute parking available (fee payable), alternatively there are 2 hour free parking bays in the surrounding roads.



The Family Centre team

Our Family Centre team offers support and guidance to help you get the best out of family life. We aim to work in partnership with families to empower each individual to reach their full potential.

We provide a variety of courses and targeted sessions, which include Parenting Puzzle, Family Advice Sessions, Little Chatterboxes, Young Parents Group, Connections and SENDsory Play groups.

Our centre is also used by health colleagues to hold child health clinics, development reviews and Starting First Foods workshops.

For more information about how we can support your family, please visit our website (www.familiesfirstguildford.com) or ask at Reception.

Contact us:

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Tel: 01483 566589

Email: admin@guildfordnscc.surrey.sch.uk

York Road, Guildford Surrey GU1 4DU

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