

# Welcome to St Mary's C of E Primary School Hedgehogs Nursery



Starting nursery is a major event in the lives of both you and your child and it won't be long before we will have the pleasure of getting to know you both. There will be lots of new things to learn and experiences to be had, and of course you will want to ensure that both you and your child are well prepared for this important event.

We look forward to working with you to give your child a safe, happy and enriching start to their learning journey. Always remember, we are here to work with you both. We hope you find this booklet reassuring and that it provides some useful information that will help you both settle quickly into life at Hedgehogs and St Mary's School.

## Partnership and Working Together

At Hedgehogs we are always available if you need to speak to us about your child's needs. Before and after school is always a good time for a chat but these times can sometimes be a little busy. If you require a more in-depth chat then we can do so by telephone or you can make an appointment with us. Please call the School Office on 01761 470245 who will take a message or you can email [hedgehogs@stmarys.mnsp.org.uk](mailto:hedgehogs@stmarys.mnsp.org.uk) or contact us on Seesaw.

In addition to daily conversations we have parents meetings 3 times a year and we invite parents into our termly 'Parent Workshops'. These take place on different days each term and focus on various areas of the curriculum.

You have been your child's first teacher and will continue to be the greatest influence in their life. We are privileged to have been chosen by you to be part of your child's journey and as such we will work with you to ensure that we provide a secure, happy, caring and inclusive environment where your child will continue to thrive and flourish.



## Settling In

Your child will come for a settling-in visit which is usually during the week before their first full session starts. They will come into Hedgehogs for two hours with a parent or carer, will meet with their key person, be introduced to the nursery environment and meet some new friends. During this session your child's key person will speak with you about your child and discuss any needs or questions you may have. We recommend that once your child settles that you leave them with us for a little bit so they can explore on their own. Some children may require more than one session using this approach to settle but for the majority this will be enough for them before they start their first session.

This time is an ideal opportunity for you to complete any paperwork with the school office and ensure you are signed up to our communication Apps, including Seesaw and Parent Pay.

## Morning arrival routines

The main school gates will be open every morning, with the side gate being opened at 8.35am. We are here to meet the children from 8:50. You will need to enter nursery through the dedicated nursery entrance situated to the right as you enter the school grounds. It is expected that all children will be in Hedgehogs by 9am. If you are late for any reason please report to the school office.

## 12pm pick-up and drop off routine

The main school gates will be closed at these times. We will give you a 4 digit code to be prefixed with an \* this will enable you to enter the gates. If you forget the code, you can ring the buzzer and the school office who will open the gates for you. Please make your way to the nursery entrance. The children will be let out between 11:50 and 12pm. This transition time can get busy so we ask that you are prompt in picking up. Again, if you arrive late please report to the school office.

## Afternoon pick-up routines 3pm

Our collection time is 3pm for all day and afternoon only sessions, you can enter via the main entrance using your code. The children will all be released at 3pm. If you are picking up early for any reason please go to the school office to sign your child out.

It is very busy at this time so we politely ask that you are patient.



## What will my child need to bring to Hedgehogs?

Your child will need to bring a bag containing spare clothes everyday. If your child is toilet training it is advised that you send several sets of spare clothes each day. If your child is in nappies they will need enough nappies and wipes for their session.

Please can you label your child's belongings. Whilst we endeavour to keep your child's things in their bags, inevitably things do sometimes get misplaced and this will help us find the correct homes for them.

Your child will also need a pair of named wellies that will live at Hedgehogs. We go outside in all weathers and jumping in puddles in the rain is a favourite pastime so being prepared is important.

We understand that children often need the security of a special blanket or comfort toy when embarking on a new adventure. Here at Hedgehogs we are happy for your child to bring their 'comforter' to help them settle but after that time it will be placed safely in their bags. Your child will know it is still there but that it lives in their bag whilst they are at nursery.

## A Typical Day in Hedgehogs

- ❖ When your child arrives in Hedgehogs, we encourage them to say their goodbyes to you, come in and hang up their bag and coat.
- ❖ The children then have free access to the continuous provision provided as their friends arrive.
- ❖ At 9am we have our morning '*Circle Time*' where the children sing *Good Morning* to one another, find out which day of the week it is and see what the weather is doing.
- ❖ During the children's morning '*explore time*' there is an opportunity for our older children to take part in '*sounds time*' where we look at a letter of the alphabet and use our listening ears to hear sounds around us.
- ❖ Snacks are available from 10am and the children are able to access their water bottles throughout the morning.
- ❖ Our lunch session starts at 12pm and is eaten in the school dinner hall. Hedgehogs children go into the hall earlier than the rest of the school so a more intimate experience can be created. Once the children have finished their lunch they return to the nursery for their outdoor play.
- ❖ During the afternoon the children have another opportunity to take part in an adult-led activity whilst experiencing '*explore time*'.
- ❖ Snacks are available from 2.00pm.
- ❖ 2.50pm is time to gather our things and get ready for going home at 3pm.

## Extra Activities

- ❖ Hedgehogs children participate in weekly PE sessions. You will be told what day this will be on. If your child attends on that day we ask that they wear comfy clothes and trainers.
- ❖ We are really lucky at St Mary's to have beautiful ground in which we can explore. The children take part in welly walks and forest school sessions throughout the week. Because of this a waterproof, warm coat will need to be in school everyday in the winter and a sun hat in the summer.
- ❖ We also love to cook. The benefits of this for our children are huge. If your child has any allergies please let us know before your child's starter session. **Please note we are a nut free school at all times**



## Snack Time

Research shows that eating patterns developed in early childhood tend to be carried into adulthood. If children are introduced to fruit and vegetables at a young age it is more likely they will enjoy them and eat them more frequently. It is important to make snack time an enjoyable, social and positive experience. With this in mind, Hedgehogs staff sit alongside the children while they enjoy their snack to encourage good table manners and positive interactions with their peers.

We ask that parents provide one fruit or vegetable based snack per session. If they attend Hedgehogs all day they will need 2 snacks for the day. It is important that these snacks are considered healthy.

## Milk and Water

Milk is provided free each day during the morning for children under five. The children are encouraged to pour their own milk into a cup to enjoy. Please provide your child with a drinks bottle which we will keep in the nursery all week.



## Lunchtime

At lunchtime, you have the choice of providing your child with a packed lunch or school dinner. The children are served their main meal at the table and when they have finished, Hedgehog's staff will encourage and help your child to scrape their plate clean and then choose their pudding. The cost of a nursery meal is £2.20 and can be booked on ParentPay. For more information on how to do this please contact the school office.

## Funding

Early years funding can be used for either the morning or afternoon nursery sessions. All 3 year old funded children are entitled to 5 funded sessions across the week. You may be eligible for 30hr funding enabling your child to attend every session, please check your availability by visiting [www.gov.uk/sign-in-childcare-account](http://www.gov.uk/sign-in-childcare-account).

If your family is living on a low income and claiming certain benefits you may be eligible for your child to receive free school meals. Please visit [bathnes.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](http://bathnes.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals) to check if you are eligible and apply online.

## Invoices

Nursery invoices will be issued on a termly basis (6 times per year) normally within the first few weeks of the term. Payments will need to be made by the invoice due date via ParentPay - login details will be issued with your first invoice. We do accept payments through the government Tax Free Childcare scheme or Employment Childcare Voucher Scheme please contact the school office for more details.

## Seesaw

Seesaw is an app which we use to keep you updated with what your child is doing during their day. We send pictures and videos which you can comment on. Seesaw is really useful for keeping in touch, sending messages and communicating directly with the nursery. We also use Seesaw and ParentPay to send any notices, letters, forms and newsletters. All activation codes will be sent home during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of attending nursery. As with ParentPay, if you have an active account this will not change.

## Finally

Your child's journey through their education will hit many milestones, of which starting nursery is the first. If you ever have any questions or concerns please get in touch with us.

