

Parent's Handbook

Our Mission Statement

First and foremost, nursery school should be fun!

This is our main priority in everything that we do.

We aim to make learning an enjoyable, exciting and challenging experience, which will give a good foundation to the children for many years ahead. The habits and skills developed in early years will help them concentrate and work efficiently for a lifetime.

A child's first nursery school is an important stepping stone.

Our aim is to make this step as happy and as rewarding an experience as possible helping each child to develop confidence, self-esteem, independence concentration social skills and self-discipline.

We follow the Montessori philosophy of education, which recognises the importance of the early years in forming a child's character and talents in later life. Children learn at their own pace, absorbing new information and concepts naturally.

On The First Day

At the trial session and on the first day, we will talk to you about the best way for you to deal with settling your child into school. This is an individual process as each child, and parent, is different. We do understand that this is big day for your child and for you. The biggest help you can be to your child is to be happy and positive.

On the first day please arrive at the normal time. Try to ensure that whoever normally will bring your child to school is there as well as you. Your child will be greeted at the door by a teacher who will invite your child to shake hands. The teacher then will introduce your child to their group teacher. You are very welcome to accompany your child into school. Go through the normal arrival routine with them e.g. hang up their coat, find their name label and put it in the box. If your child needs you to stay for a while, please do. Find an activity with them, but try not to get too involved. Sit back if possible and let them work independently.

Aim to leave after 30 minutes or sooner if your child looks settled say “Goodbye” and go. Please don’t worry if your child cries when you leave. Many children do, but stop as soon as you are out of sight. A member of staff will comfort your child if they are upset and help them to settle down. We will phone you after 15 minutes to say if they have settled or not. The main thing is – once you have decided to leave ... Do please leave decisively.

We keep sessions shorter for the first few days so please return at 11.00 am (2.00pm if starting afternoon sessions) to collect your child. When you return, focus on how excited you are at that they have started at nursery, rather than how much you have missed them. For the first few days feel free to follow the same routine, unless your child is happy and confident, which case shorten the time before you leave.

Birthdays

Everybody loves to celebrate their birthday and we have a very special way of doing this.

The children sit in a large circle and a candle is lit in the middle. The birthday child carries a globe and walks slowly around the candle, once for each year of their life. This represents the passage of the earth around the sun. As the child walks, one of the teachers tell the story of the child's life showing photographs to illustrate key events. The story ends with the whole school wishing the child a happy birthday.

To help us with this we ask you to write a short description of any relevant events in your child's life i.e. where they were born, their siblings and holidays they have been on. We also ask you to bring in a few photographs on your child's birthday. There should be at least one photograph from each year of their life. If your child's birthday is at the weekend, or falls on a holiday we will perform the Birthday Walk on the nearest school day.

Picking Up

On collection (at 12.00 pm for morning children, 3.30pm for Lunch Bunch and afternoon children), please wait outside the school door or garden. We will say “Goodbye” to your child and direct them to you. A record is kept of who picks up each child.

Please remember your child will become distressed if you are very late, or even regularly late. Children don't like to be the last to leave or to worry that you may not come for them. Obviously if you are delayed by traffic or something totally unavoidable, please contact us by telephone if you can and let us know what is happening.

Late Collection

If you (or your child's carer) does not collect your child at the correct time the following procedure will be followed:

- After 10 minutes the teacher in charge will telephone you at home and / or work
- If no contact has been made with a further 15 minutes, the teacher in charge will telephone the emergency contacts using the numbers in the Emergency Contacts File
- If no-one on the emergency form can be contacted within a further 35 minutes, the teacher in charge will contact the Social Services, the Child Protection Unit or the Police.

We have to follow these procedures as this is in line with current Child Protection legislation. Obviously, every possible effort will be made to contact you before this more drastic action is taken!

Nature Table

Each Week we ask children to bring in something for the Nature Table. This could relate to the topic of the week, something of interest to your child, a bunch of flowers or a plant. A copy of the rota is sent home at the beginning of each term.

Snack Table

There is a snack table in the classroom with milk and water from which the children can help themselves. Parents provide a Lunch box with healthy snacks inside each session.

Dropping Off

Once settled children follow the normal procedure for arriving and leaving school.

The children can attend for 3 different time frames:

- Morning children arrive at 9.00am and leave at 12.00pm
- “Lunch Bunch” children who stay all day, arrive at 9.00am and leave at 3.30pm
- Afternoon children arrive at 12.30pm and leave at 3.30pm

Dropping Off

The main doors are opened at 9.00am (for morning and Lunch Bunch children) and (for afternoon children). They stay open for 10 minutes and are monitored by a teacher. At the entrance to the hall your child will be greeted by a teacher who will mark them present in the register. Any messages or information should be given to this teacher who will note it in the diary. If your child is not going home with their regular carer, you should notify this teacher and ensure they write it in the “Going Home Diary”. If this is not done, we will have to contact you before allowing your child home with anyone else. Your child then finds their name label and pops it in the box.

You either can say “Goodbye” to your child then, or come in with them until 9.10am/12.40. If you stay, encourage your child to hang their coat on their peg and then find their name.

What To Wear, What To Bring

Please ensure anything coming to school is clearly labelled. Also, remember that we use our garden everyday!

Clothing

At school we encourage the children to be independent. Therefore, we ask you to dress your child in clothes which they can fasten/ unfasten on their own. No dungarees, please. We also suggest you avoid their “best clothes” or fancy dress costumes – we use a lot of paint!

What To Bring

There are several things your child may need, particularly depending on the weather. Each child should have a labelled bag where items can be stored, e.g. change of clothes, a sunhat, wellies & raincoat. The bag can be kept on your child’s box.

Toys

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school (other than for Show & Tell). Experience has shown us that these cause arguments or tears by getting lost or broken.

Show & Tell

Each Wednesday we have a show and tell session in groups. The children can bring in a favourite toy, a ticket from an outing, a book or some other interesting object which they can talk about. Please discuss it with them beforehand, so they know what they want to say.

If you need to bring your child in late (i.e. due to doctor’s appointment), please ring the door bell.

Lunch Bunch

Children aged 1 and older are welcome to stay all day from 9.00am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday. This allows for their involvement in more specialised projects and formal group work in preparation for their next school. The number of days may sometimes be restricted depending on demand.

Please provide your child with a healthy lunch brought in a bag/ box with an ice pack to keep the food chilled. If you would like ideas for packed lunches, please speak to a member of staff. Please ensure **NO NUT products** are brought to school.

Toilet Training

The aim is your child should arrive at school happy to use the toilet with support. However, there is flexibility on this goal and we will work with you and your child to help them with this process. In our settling questionnaire we ask parents to provide us with any relevant details regarding their child's toileting habits. If your child is still wearing nappies we will liaise with you to make a plan when your child will be changed.

"Help me to help myself". To help your child help themselves, please send them in clothes that they can manage to undo themselves e.g. track suit bottoms, leggings, etc.

Dungarees and body vests with poppers cause frustration for the children and are fiddly and awkward for teachers especially during the toilet training stages.

All children are asked to bring a labelled bag with labelled clothes which is kept on their box in case they need changing. If the child is still wearing nappies it is the parent's responsibility to provide enough spare nappies.

Only staff at school will change children. They will be trained on the correct procedures during their induction. This excludes students doing their teaching practice and parents/ carer assisting in the class.

Daily Routine

The children arrive at school at 9.00am. After greeting the teacher sitting by the door the children are encouraged to hang up their coats and bags on their pegs. In the classroom the children put their name card in the registration box and go straight into the free work cycle. On Mondays we start the week with a Circle Time. This is an opportunity to discuss projects and activities for the week, and to do some singing.

The work cycle continues for around 2-2 ½ hours. The children choose their own activities from our carefully prepared environment. During this time, we have at least one art activity set up. There is a snack table available to all the children at all times, where fresh water and milk are provided.

We have different activities during the week: gymnastic, music and singing, dancing, yoga, cooking, art projects.

At 12.00pm the morning children go home. The children are brought to the door when their parent/ carer arrives. Children who are staying until 3.30 wash their hands and sit at a table to have lunch with a teacher. After that they have play time, one-to-one teaching sessions, music and art activities.

Keeping You Informed

We will keep you informed about your child's progress in a number of ways:

- We send home regular newsletters outlining the term's projects and forthcoming events.
- There is a large notice board in the hallway. On this you will find useful information about activities and elsewhere, as well as articles we think you may find interesting.
- The teacher on the door at the beginning of each session will pass on any general information and hand out letters etc.
- Your child's group teacher will keep records of their daily activities and progress in relation to the government's Early Learning Goals. You are welcome to consult the group teacher regarding your child's progress at any time by making an early morning (8.40am) or afternoon (12.20pm or 3.35pm) appointment.
- We hold at least 2 parents evening at year. This is an informal occasion and is an opportunity for you to speak to your child's group teacher, see some of the work the children have been doing and meet other parents.
- We also hold a more formal parents meeting. These are individual appointments during which particular aspects of your child's progress can be discussed.

Illnesses

For many illnesses there are specific incubation periods during which children must not come to school. In line with the Health Protection Agency Guidelines Perfect Start Operates the following exclusion procedures:

Chicken pox: exclusion from school until 5 days from the onset of the rash.

Conjunctivitis: child may return after successful treatment.

Diarrhoea and vomiting: exclusion from school until 48 hours after the last episode.

Flu: child must not return to school until recovered.

German measles: exclusion from school until 5 days from the onset of the rash.

Head lice/nits: child may return after successful treatment.

Impetigo: exclusion from school until the lesions are crusted or healed.

Measles: exclusion from school until 5 days from the onset of the rash.

Molluscum contagiosum: no period of exclusion necessary.

Mumps: exclusion for 5 days from onset of swollen glands.

Ringworm: exclusion from school until treatment has commenced.

Scabies: child may return to school after first treatment.

Scarlet fever: child may return 5 days after commencing antibiotics.

Slap cheek (Fifth Disease): no period of exclusion necessary.

Additional Information

Parking

Parents are allowed to park for 5 minutes picking up/ dropping off children.

Outdoors

The outdoor arear is open for the children to go to everyday. Please ensure that the children always have boots (to be kept on the boot shelf), waterproofs and suitable clothing for outdoors at all times.

Notice Board

The notice board is situated in the hallway. On it you will find updates on themes, projects, special events and general information. Please check it regularly.

Complaints

If a parent has a concern about the school or a particular member of staff, they should speak to the manager Larissa de Saude who will investigate the issue in complete confidence and act upon it if she considers it justified. A written record of this matter will be kept by the school in its Complaints File. After a complain has been resolved the final outcome will be written in the Complaints File. Any recommendations for changes in procedure will be made and noted against the complaints policy. If the parent feels that they have not received a satisfactory response to their complaint they are invited to contact Ofsted directly at the following address:

Ofsted,
Early Years,
Northern Regional Office
Royal Exchange Building
St. Anne's Square
Manchester
M2 7AL

Complaints and enforcement telephone number: 0300 123 4666.

Useful Contact Details

Location of School:

St Michael's Church Hall
The Riding, Golders Green, London, NW11 8HL

Post Address:

Perfect Start Montessori School Ltd

Telephone:

07956 408 118

Email:

larissa@perfectstartmontessori.com

If we have any concerns regarding the health of your child, we will have no hesitation in calling you.

Parent's Notes