**The Willows Pre-School Handbook**

The staff and committee would like to welcome you and your child to The Willows Pre-School. We hope the time you spend with us will be very enjoyable and rewarding.

The Willows pre-school aims to:

* provide high quality care and education for children who are primarily below statutory school age
* provide a safe, secure, stimulating and friendly environment
* work in partnership with parents to help children learn and develop
* add to the life and well-being of the local community
* to value and respect each individual, ensuring equality for all children and families

We can offer your child:

* a safe and stimulating environment
* generous care and attention, with a ratio of adults to children - 1:8 (1:4 at age 2)
* a chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
* the support needed to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
* their own key person who makes sure that initially she/he settles in well and then that they make satisfying progress throughout their time at The Willows
* a pre-school in which parents help to shape the service it offers

The intention of this handbook is to give you all the information you need to ensure that your child's transition into pre-school life is as much fun and as problem-free as possible.

The Willows has adopted a number of policies that have been devised to ensure that every child's experience of pre-school is as safe, stimulating, healthy and fair as it can be. A copy of all the policies can be found at the back of the handbook. Please take the time to read through them as they will answer a lot of the questions you may have and also assure you that we take the care and education of your child very seriously. If at any time you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to speak to a member of staff.

We are open for the following sessions:

Monday 8.30am – 3.00pm

Tuesday 8.30am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 8.30am – 3.00pm

Thursday 8.30am – 3.00pm

Friday 8.30am – 3.00pm

**The pre-school is open during school term time only**

**Fees and Funding**

**Unfunded hours - £4.60**

Fees are the responsibility of the parents/carers until the beginning of the term after their child reaches 3. You may be eligible for funding for your two year old. Wiltshire Council can give you further details.

From this point the Government will fund a maximum of 15 hours per week per child, each session being a minimum of 2.5 hours long.

Pre-schools deal directly with Wiltshire County Council and apply for funding on your behalf. You do not need to contact them.

Children can attend more than 15 hours per week at different settings but parents/carers must fund any additional hours. If you are entitled to the extended hours then you must apply directly and pass the code to the manager.

The 15 hours do not have to be at the same setting, and can be divided between two settings.

The pre-school must be kept informed of any other setting that you decide to use and how many hours are to be claimed on your behalf by The Willows Pre-School. Our records must be correct or you could face a fine.

Late Collection of Children

The Willows Pre-School is insured to look after your children during the allotted session times. If you arrive too early at the beginning of the session or too late at the end of the session, your child/children will not be insured and this leaves our staff in a difficult position.

The Committee would therefore ask that you adhere to the allotted session times and if for any reason you are going to be late collecting your child, we would ask you to ring the play leader on 01225 769489.

Parents/Carers who are late in collecting their children without phoning will be charged £10.00 to cover the extra costs.

**The Curriculum provided by The Willows Pre-School**

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

At The Willows Preschool we follow the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

This is broken down into three Prime Areas of Learning:

* Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
* Physical Development (PD)
* Communication and Language (CL)

There are four Specific Areas of Learning:

* Literacy (L)
* Mathematics (M)
* Understanding of the World (UW)
* Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Within each of these areas there are additional categories and these are then affiliated into phases of development. When staff record observations about the children they link these to the EYFS and the individual categories that they fall into. The observations are colour coded for reference. Staff summarise the children’s development three times a year, using these observations, and share these through the Learning Journeys and parents’ evening. Further Information can be found at <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/early-years-foundation-stage-2012/>

This curriculum is followed until the end of reception class when the children enter Key Stage 1.

Most of our time is spent playing; there are a variety of activities and resources offered each day, all of which are selected for a particular purpose. Sometimes it is something that the children have shown an interest in, or they have requested that we have out. At other times it is a recommended next step to enable the children to progress and develop. Often we have spontaneous activities based on a current fascination or something that we have seen. Much of our time is spent outdoors.

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others an adult takes the lead in helping the children take part in the activity.

**Staff Working together for your children**

The Willows operates with a 1:8 (3 years +) or a 1:4 (2 years) ratio of adults to children in the setting. 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
* Help children to explore and be adventurous in safety

**4.3 Staffing and qualifications**

Listed below are the qualifications already gained by our staff.

**Manager: Rachael Hill**

* NVQ4 CCLD
* Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)
* BTec Forest Schools Leadership
* Designated Safeguarding Lead
* First Aid
* Food Hygiene
* Safeguarding L3
* Safer Recruitment
* Every Child a Talker (ECaT)
* Prevent Duty
* On line Channel training

**Temp Deputy Manager: Julie Raymond**

* L3 diploma
* First Aid trained.
* Food Hygiene.
* Health and Safety
* On line safeguarding awareness
* On line Channel training

**Senior Early Years Practitioners:**

**Lydia Brewer**

SENCO

Higher National Diploma in Early Childhood Studies

First Aid

Safeguarding Level 3

Food Hygiene

**Early Years Practitioners:**

**Louise Feltham**

* NVQ 3 CCLD
* Safeguarding L3,
* Health and Safety,
* First Aid trained.
* Makaton.
* Every Child a Talker (ECaT)
* On line Channel training

**Sam Delaney**

Early Years Practitioner one to one

NNEB

Paediatric First Aid

**Amberley Smith**

Early Years Practitioner

Level two award in children and young people

Prevent Radicalisation

Prevent FGM training

**Jess Fisher**

Early Years Practitioner

L2 diploma in children’s care, learning and development

Emergency First Aid

**Chloe Mould**

* Early Years Apprentice L3
* First Aid

All staff attend annual safeguarding training – this may be on line, in house or external. There is always a food hygiene trained member of staff in session. There is always a paediatric first aid trained member of staff in session.

**Key persons**

The pre-school has a key person system. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that what the pre-school provides is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts pre-school their key person will help them to settle in and throughout your child's time with us their key person will help them to benefit from the pre-school activities.

**Records of development**

The pre-school keeps records of development for each child. Staff and parents working together on these is one of the ways in which pre-school and parents work in partnership. Your child's record of development helps us to celebrate together the progress they have made and identifies what can be done to increase their well-being, confidence and knowledge.

Your child's key person will work with you to keep this record. To do this you and he/she will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of development. You and the key person will then decide on how to help your child move on to the next stage.

You will be kept informed of your child's progress through the Learning Journeys. This is via the Interactive Learning Diary (ILD). Parents receive a log in and are able to view the observations made on their child. They are also able to upload their own observations from the home environment.

If at any time there is something you would like to discuss with your child's key person or another member of staff they will make time to see you. There will also be opportunities to discuss your child's progress at parent’s evenings and a written report will be given to you in the summer term.

**Working in Partnership**

The pre-school and staff are managed by a committee made up of parents who work in a voluntary capacity to ensure that everything is run according to Ofsted standards and within budget. This year the committee members are:

Chairperson - Gemma Orzechowski

Treasurer - Scott Collings

Secretary - Gemma Tucker

We are always looking for new members and any parent is very welcome to come along to one of our meetings to find out more about work. If you are interested please mention it to a member of staff or anyone on the committee.

Each year the committee organises a number of events, some to raise money for the pre-school and some just so that the children can enjoy themselves. Events in the past have included jumble sales, Easter and Autumn fayres, plant sales, Christmas and end of school year parties and lambing excursions. Last year our summer term outing was a day at Hope Nature Centre. We also put on a Nativity Play at Christmas which was enjoyed by both parents and children.

**Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement and co-operation is vitally important to the smooth running of the pre-school and the staff and committee can't emphasise enough how much we value your help.

Parents can help the pre-school by:

* Exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff
* Helping at sessions of the pre-school
* Sharing their own special interests 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 pre-school
* Taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the pre-school
* Joining in community activities in which the pre-school takes part

**The Daily Pre-School Routine**

The primary school have asked us to adhere to the one way system and parking restrictions that they ask their parents to follow.

For safety reasons we ask that you only enter the school grounds through the gateway and along the path – not through the school car park or school grounds.

Your child will be able to find their name label and then choose a peg in the room. Lunchboxes go on the trolley as you leave.

The children each have a drawer with their name on which we would ask you to check every day, as there could be notes from either the staff or committee to keep you informed about events or activities. The children also use their drawers to keep their pictures in.

When the session begins the children sit on the red carpet, ready for group registration, the weather board and language groups.

**What to bring**

Your child will get messy! Please don’t dress them in their best clothes as they will explore a variety of activities such as water, paint and soil. Whilst we encourage them to wear aprons, they do get messy. Please bring a change of clothes for your child, in a bag which they can leave on their peg.

Your child also needs a coat if it is cold/wet as the doors are open for them all day long. Wellies can be left in the preschool if they are named. In the warmer weather we ask that you apply sun cream before they enter preschool and then leave it in their bags for further applications. This should be named. Your child also needs a sun hat (named) which can be left in their drawer or bag.

**A Day at The Willows**

A typical day begins with the group being split into two or three for the register to be taken and a discussion about the date and the weather. During the session there will also be time to talk about the current topic. The children are also encouraged to tell the others about things they’ve done, places they’ve visited etc.

This is followed by a language group: the children are split into broad age groups (toddlers, younger three year olds and pre-schoolers) and an adult role models the language focus. This may be through stories and songs, games, picnic play etc. The pre-schoolers follow the Letters and Sounds programme which prepares them for phonics when they attend reception class.

After registration the children are able to choose from a variety of activities which are out on the tables or the floor. These incorporate the areas of learning and can include: painting, play dough, water/sand play, puzzles, cars and the home corner. There is also free choice from a large number of resources which the children are free to access when they like.

Throughout the session, children are able to access the outdoor play area. We have some outdoor equipment and children are free to take activities outside. Please bring wellies and suitable coats for your child.

Toileting at this age is very important so we have a routine to ensure that all the children wearing nappies have them checked and changed, if necessary during the session. Children not in nappies are asked regularly if they need the toilet.

Please can you provide a bag with nappies, wet wipes and clothes in case of accidents?

**Snack-Time**

Snack time is usually about 10.00am and we operate with a canteen style, whereby children can select their own food and drink, and choose when to access this. The children are offered milk or water to drink and there is usually a choice of fruit, crackers, toast and salad. Festivals are acknowledged through snack time with noodles and stir fry for the Chinese New Year, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and party food at party time!

The morning usually ends with the group being split in three again and having stories and song time. We have a music sessions during the week when children can make lots of noise!

You can wait in the foyer at the end of the morning and a member of staff will let you in.

**Lunch-Time**

Lunch starts at 12pm and the children all sit together with the staff. We request that children bring a healthy lunch and drink in their lunch box. We encourage the children to eat the lunch you have provided and put leftover food back in. After lunch they have chance to read some books. The afternoon session is similar to the morning but has varied activities and resources. We have a drink at 2.30pm before the end of the day.

We pride ourselves on being a very friendly and approachable pre-school so if you have any questions please feel free to ask either a member of staff or the committee.

Please remember to read through the policies that follow.

We hope this handbook has given you a good idea of what The Willows Pre-School has to offer your child and that your experience here is a very happy one.

A (very) brief guide to The Willows

Welcome to The Willows… This provides an overview of what we do, and why we do it! Please feel free to ask questions.

Staffing:

Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead – Rachael Hill

Deputy (temp) – Julie Raymond

Senior Early Years Practitioners – Lydia Brewer

Early Years Practitioners – Louise Feltham, Amberley Smith, Jess Fisher, Sam Delaney

Apprentice – Chloe Mould

Staff are all DBS checked and receive safeguarding training both in house and externally. Staff are first aid trained.

Committee:

We are a charity and therefore have a committee who are made up of mainly parents. The three roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary lead the remaining members. The committee welcome new members and meet termly, usually at the preschool. They are responsible for fundraising, as well as providing a supportive role to the manager and staff. Please see appendix for more info.

How to contact us:

Telephone – 01225 769489 – the office is unmanned but there is an answer machine so leave a message.

Facebook – we cannot guarantee that we will see posts on the preschool wall every day but generally we will at some point!

Email – [staffwillows@googlemail.com](mailto:staffwillows@googlemail.com) – this is checked every other day as a minimum.

Face to face – if you require a longer chat, or some privacy, please ask to come in early or later. If you are requesting changes to anything, please put it in writing! We have a website: [www.thewillowspreschool.org.uk](http://www.thewillowspreschool.org.uk) and two Facebook pages to keep you updated.

Children’s learning and development:

The Willows use the ILD (interactive Learning Diary) app to observe, link and plan your child’s learning. You will receive a letter detailing your log in and showing you how to set this up. This is all tracked through the Early Learning Goals which children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year. Further information can be found at: <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs-statutory-framework/>

And this link: <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/what-to-expect-when/>

Has an at-a-glance style reference for parents, split into age bands.

Staff are always happy to explain further.

We offer a parents’ evening three times a year; this allows keypersons to share your child’s development with you in the form of a summative report. You are then able to ask questions, share concerns and celebrate your child’s progress.

Each child has their own drawer. You will find letters, invoices, paintings and allsorts in them! Please empty (and read letters) regularly.

Daily routine:

We offer an early start option if booked in advance. Please enter via our playground and wait on the decked area for the door to be opened. Children should be encouraged to find their name and they choose a peg once they are inside. Lunchboxes are to be left on the trolley, and the signing in/daily contact sheet to be filled in accordingly.

Our day commences with free play for half an hour before we break into key groups for some focused adult led time. The keyperson plans something which their group will benefit from.

After this session the children are free to play with the resources, or take part in an activity.

Snacktime is around 10am – we operate in a canteen style. Children are offered a choice of fruit/veg, alongside something carby such as crackers, pasta, rice or bread. They are encouraged to serve themselves and to clear away afterwards. Allergies are recognised and catered for.

After this we return to child led play. Staff are on hand to observe, support and guide children as needed. The outside area is open for children who choose. We use the outdoor area most of the day so please could you ensure that your child has weather appropriate clothing. You can leave wellies at preschool in the storage if they are named. Children should also bring a change of clothes with them each day.

PLEASE name everything that your child brings to preschool! You might recognise their coat/lunchbox but staff have 24 children who may all have the same design!

We tidy up around 11.35, ready for a quick language group focus in smaller groups. Lunch is at 12pm and the children choose where to sit, being supported by adults if needed. Again we encourage independence and promote healthy eating.

There is a hot lunch option for children; we can order through the primary school kitchen. Menus are sent out via email and you will need to be added to the list.

Please name all lunchboxes, drinks bottles and pots. We try and encourage healthy lifestyles at The Willows and ask that you consider this when making packed lunches. We would also ask that no sweets are included, or nuts, including peanut butter. Please chop grapes and tomatoes and sausages.

After lunch the children read books or listen to stories until 1pm when some children go home.

The afternoon session is similar in structure; we offer a variety of activities alongside free play. At 2.30 we tidy up and have a drink before story and songtime. We close at 3pm.

Independence: we promote this at every opportunity whilst maintain a caring and nurturing adult presence. Toileting is an example of this – we encourage children to use the loo at particular times and assist them in removal of clothes. We then begin to ask them to have a try. With coats and wellies we ask them to put one arm in, to take off shoes, to undo Velcro, to find their peg etc. this all builds up self-esteem and confidence in their abilities.

We advise parents: don’t do anything regularly for your child that you know they are able to do themselves!

Invoices:

Our hourly rate is £4.60 an hour. This applies if you use unfunded hours. Please remember that invoices should be paid promptly. If you have any problems paying then please see Rachael or the book keeper.

Funding is available for children the term after their third birthday (1st Sep, 1st Jan, 1st April) and some children may be eligible for Better 2Gether funding (age 2) or Early Years Pupil Premium support. Please see Rachael if you think you should be in receipt of either of these.

If you would like information about paying for places using employer childcare vouchers then please see Rachael.

We charge a non refundable reservation fee of £25 to secure your place at the Willows.

Safeguarding guidelines:

During the summer months (or sunny months!) you must apply suncream prior to your child’s sessions. You may then leave the named tube in their drawer for staff to reapply at lunchtime.

We ask parents to fill in a “Pre existing injury” form if you are bringing your child to preschool with marks/injuries. This is to ensure that staff are aware of the marks, and also to safeguard all concerned. These forms are found in the lobby.

If your child hurts themselves whilst they are preschool staff will fill in an accident form and ask you to sign it.

If your child has to be restrained, or is involved in any physical squabbles, staff will fill in an incident form.

We take safeguarding and child protection very seriously. Our “What to do” flowcharts are displayed in the lobby for everyone to be aware of. Staff are well trained in Signs and Symptoms and we have a duty to your child.

Illness: if your child is ill, please do not send them to preschool. Tummy bugs need at least 48 hours to clear up. If your child has been prescribed medicine we are able to administer. But, if they are not quite themselves, please keep them safe and well at home.

Allergies:

We have a section on the registration forms to inform staff of this.

Outings and trips:

we try and go out once a term but do rely on parents to help out. It is imperative that you return the permission slips promptly as we must have a total number to help us to plan trips.

We try and put on different events when possible, and again ask that permission slips are returned promptly to allow us to make necessary provision.

Parking:

Please DO NOT park in the bus bay or over the school driveway, or in the Drop Off Zone.

We also ask you to respect the school one way system, which means you should enter Church Lane from Southwick Road and leave by Westbury Road. This reduces the congestion through Church Lane.

What if…

* You are running late? Call and leave a message. Read our late collection policy for further info.
* You need someone else to collect your child? Fill in a Different Collector form (in the lobby) and pass to staff. If it is last minute then call and leave a message, ensuring you provide details on how we will recognise and identify the adult. Please use a password with other collectors.
* Your child is ill and not attending? Leave us a message, either email, Facebook or phone. Attendance is not compulsory.
* Your child was teary/upset on arrival? If they really do not settle then we will call you. Generally they are fine after 15 mins or so. “No news is good news”! With new starters we presume it will take about three sessions before they are confident in the preschool. This may depend on frequency and regularity of attendance.
* You are going on holiday? Inform us in writing. Again, attendance is not compulsory.
* You have a change of address/personal details/family situation? Inform us in writing, along with the date.
* You would like to alter sessions? Put the request in writing and we will endeavour to help.
* You need a list for a party/cards/event? You can either write names from drawers or ask your keyperson for some assistance.
* Your child wants to bring toys into preschool? We’d rather they didn’t as they get lost, broken, wanted by other children, but do understand that at times they may wish to.
* You have concerns about your child’s development? Speak to your keyperson. They can then either signpost you to external services (Health Visitor, GP, Children’s Centre) or refer you to other staff (SENCo or Manager).
* You need some support/advice with other issues? You are always welcome to come and speak to staff. We will do our very best to offer support/guidance/signpost you to people who can help. We maintain confidentiality at all times.
* You need information re primary school places? You need to apply the autumn term prior to your child’s start date. You can do this on line or through the school that you have selected. You can book visits to schools through their receptionists.

The Committee

We are a registered charity run by an elected committee of volunteers, mostly made up of parents of children attending the Pre-School. The committee work in tandem with the Pre-School staff to ensure the smooth running of the preschool.

The committee is elected every year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is held in September

The committee is responsible for:

• Supporting the senior staff in managing the preschool finances and personnel;

• Making sure that the preschool has – and works to - policies which help it to provide a high quality service;

• Making sure that the preschool works in partnership with the children's parents; and

• Fundraising.

We depend very much on the goodwill of parents and their involvement with the Pre-School.  Without the committee the preschool would not be able to operate and would have to close.

Each volunteer member of the committee will bring different skills which are invaluable to the running of our preschool.  Committee members have worked, or do work, in various industries, such as management, financial, or secretarial. Others may have worked with children before, or in situations dealing directly with the public. Both mums and dads are equally welcome to join us.  The important thing is, you don’t need any direct experience to make a difference.

The committee can consist of no more than 12 elected members, but sub-committees may be formed so tasks may be shared among parents and all the work need not fall on any one person.  There are three main roles required on the committee, the Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary.  These posts have a more defined role, some details of which are set out below together with some of the duties shared amongst committee members:

Chair

Chairs all committee, general and annual meetings including the AGM.  Assists the Secretary with the preparation of the agenda for these meetings.  Co-ordinates the work of the committee.  Acts as the “Nominated Person” for Ofsted purposes.  Line manages the Administrator of the preschool.  Works alongside the Treasurer and may sign cheques jointly with him and supports the rest of the Committee members.

Treasurer

Prepares or assists in preparing in advance an annual budget for the preschool and monitors it regularly.  Monitors the preschool bank accounts, opens new accounts if required and changes signatories when required.  Signs cheques jointly with the Administrator or other nominated committee members.  Keeps accounts of all income and expenditure and keeps the committee aware of the financial position of the preschool by providing a statement of the finances at every meeting.   Arranges to have the accounts audited and presents them at the AGM.  Arranges for accounts to be filed and records updated at the Charities Commission.

Secretary

Organises all meetings including booking venues (if appropriate) and liaising with committee members to ensure they are all informed.  Prepares and circulates agenda’s for each meeting, takes minutes at each meeting and circulates minutes for approval of all committee members.  Supports all Committee members.

Shared responsibilities for all committee members

Act in the best interests of the preschool, promoting its values and working together to achieve its charitable objectives. Working as part of a team, reading committee papers and contributing to the decision making process of the committee. Undertake Ofsted suitability checks as appropriate.  Ensure that the preschool complies with the rules in its constitution, charity law and other regulations that govern the work of the preschool.

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all of the children who attend the preschool.  It is our forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's activities.

If you would like to feel that you are putting something back into our community and volunteer for the committee in any role, no matter how large or small, please speak with our staff

We very much look forward to welcoming all new volunteers.