**WELCOME TO FROME VALLEY PRESCHOOL**

Thank you for choosing Frome Valley Preschool for your child’s preschool experience. We look forward to getting to know you and your child over the coming weeks and months.

**OUR AIM**

1. To provide a happy and positive learning experience where children’s educational, social, physical, spiritual and emotional needs will be met, thereby preparing them for their journey through school.

2. To provide a welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment where parents are valued as partners and can participate in and benefit from being involved in the life of the preschool.

3. To provide equal opportunities for all children and their families.

4. To encourage each individual child in our care to develop at their own pace.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Preschool point of contact: Gemma Newman

Preschool email: g.newman@fromevalley.dorset.sch.uk

Telephone number: 01305 852643 (School Office ask to be transferred to preschool)

Preschool opening/session times: 9am – 12pm & 12pm - 3pm Monday – Friday term time, only

School opening times; 8am - 6pm Monday – Friday, term time only

School email: office@fromevalley.dorset.sch.uk

School URN: 141777

We comply with the staff ratios to children as specified by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the EYFS which are one adult for every five 2 year olds (1:5) and one adult to every eight 3 and 4 year olds (1:8)

 **BEFORE STARTING PRESCHOOL**

Starting preschool can be both exciting and daunting for you and your child but we want your child to be happy and feel secure at Pre School and we want you to feel the same about leaving them with us.  All children are different and there are no set rules when leaving them for the first time. You know your child better than anyone else and we want you both to feel comfortable with any arrangements made when settling them into the group. If your child struggles with the set settle in sessions then we will work closely with you to organise further sessions to make sure your child feels as settled as possible with us.

It is unusual for a child not to settle once a parent has gone; most children settle very quickly. The excitement of new surroundings, gentle reassurances by our staff and playing with other children usually helps to settle them. Your child will be allocated a key person who will help your child settle. If we have any concerns about your child we will always ring and discuss these concerns with you. Between us we can overcome any difficulties. We will never allow a child to be upset for no reason as we want their experience in preschool to be a positive one and we do not believe children should be upset for extended periods of time. We will stay with your child as long as they are upset and co-regulate with them in order for them to feel safe and secure in their time with us.

There are a number of ways in which parents and other key adults can support your child’s transition to preschool during the days leading up to them starting.

* Spend time talking to your child about all the exciting things they will be doing at preschool such as painting, playing in the home corner, riding bikes, making new friends, the list is long. Preschool is about exploring new activities but it is also about the children developing the interests they share home. So be sure to include these in your conversations.
* Fill out your ‘all about me form’ together.
* Always be honest with your child and tell them you will not be staying with them at preschool but you will be picking them up after their play.
* Make buying a bag or a lunchbox to bring to preschool an exciting occasion.
* If your child is not used to being left with other people, you could arrange for them to play at a grandparent or close friend’s house for a short while to get them used to being away from you
* Read books about starting preschool like “Maisy goes to Preschool” by Lucy Cousins. Or “[My First Day at Nursery School](http://www.amazon.com/My-First-Day-Nursery-School/dp/1582349096)” by Becky Edwards. You could visit the Library together where you will find more stories.
* Help your child to be independent. Encourage them to take off or put on their own clothes, especially hats, coats, cardigans, socks and shoes and to go to the toilet (if they are at this stage)

**KEY PERSON**

In order to keep communication and feedback of information to parents regarding their child at a high standard, we have a key person system. The key person has a special responsibility for a small group of children within their care as well as their usual role across all areas in the preschool. Your child’s key person will be able to discuss with you your child’s progress and any ways you can help to support their learning. You will also be given the opportunity twice an academic year to meet formally with your key worker to discuss your child’s learning and development. They will also provide you with two summative assessments and a summary of your child’s learning and development throughout the academic year. At any point you feel you need to discuss any concerns over your child then please approach your child’s key worker who will arrange a meeting with you.

**BEHAVIOUR**

We promote positive and constructive behaviour and support children in developing self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement using. All children are cared for with equal care and concern irrespective of gender, race, ethnic origin or disability. We adopt a co-regulation approach to behavior in the setting and opt to distract the child from an incident rather than ‘shaming’ with a thinking/time out spot. We will distract and once a child is calmer then we will use appropriate language to talk about what has happened and how we could do things differently next time. All information will be shared with the parents upon collection. Our full behavior policy can be found on our website.

**FOOD AND DRINKS**

Mid-morning the children are provided with a drink of milk or water and a choice of healthy snack, provided by you. This can be either a fruit, vegetable or cheese snack. We encourage the children to e=wash and dry hands before and after snack and children will also have the opportunity to pour themselves a drink of milk if they wish. We offer a free milk scheme where children are allocated a set amount daily, if your child cannot drink cow’s milk then please speak to the manager and they will make alternative arrangements for your child.

The birthdays of children and staff are celebrated at preschool on or near the day of their special day. On these occasions we do permit cake, biscuits or sweets to be bought in to share at preschool. We ask to be informed in advance if this is to take place to ensure that all dietary requirements are covered.

LUNCH

If your child is staying for lunch, you are required to send in a packed lunch (in a labelled airtight container). We are unable to keep them refrigerated so we recommend that they contain a small ice pack. Our school has adopted a healthy eating policy and does not permit sweets and chocolates to be consumed during session times so we would ask that these are not included in lunch boxes.

**CAN WE ALSO MAKE YOU AWARE WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL. Please can we ask that you check the ingredients of certain products.**

**STARTING PRESCHOOL**

Arriving and departing

If driving to the school, please park in the school visitor car park (the bottom car park). At 9.00am a member of preschool staff will open the green gate at the back of the preschool, this is where you will also collect your child at the end of the day. This can be found following the path through the wooden gate near the entrance of main reception. This gate will be the area you will collect or drop of your child at 12pm if you are doing half sessions. We ask that you nominate alternative people on your application for emergency use and collection. If these people are stated on the application form then we require no previous knowledge of collection, although it is good practice so we can inform your child to prepare them. If the person is not known to the preschool they must have some form of identification to show staff and a password. If someone turns up to collect your child without prior knowledge and they are not know to us then we will call the Parent or Carer (main responsibility for the child) in order to gain permission.

 Parents/carers that are persistently late in collecting their child at the end of their session will be charged a late collection fee.

What to wear at preschool

Please make sure that your child is dressed in clothing and wearing shoes that are suitable for the various activities at pre-school.  **‘Crocs’ and open toed sandals are not suitable foot wear**. There are always activities where your child is free to explore and experiment with all kinds of materials including messy ones. Therefore, it is best to send children dressed in clothes that are easily washable. Clothing which they can handle themselves will enable them to practice self-help skills and increase their independence. The children will go outside in all weathers to play and explore and their clothes should be appropriate and reflect the season: wellington boots and waterproof coats are essential for play in the rain. Where possible, in the colder and wetter seasons, we ask that a rain coat and wellington boots are left at the preschool in order for your child to access the outdoors area whenever they wish. We also ask, in the warm sunnier seasons, that you please provide a sun hat again to stay at the preschool in order for the children to be able to be sun safe. We also ask that you apply sun-cream to your child before pre-school. Please see our Sun policy on the website for further information on this.

CLOTHES

We ask that **all** children bring a complete change of clothes each day in a soft drawstring, named bag. -**please avoid backpacks as these make your child’s coat peg bulky and restrict their ability to reach their own coat. We also do not have the areas in which to store large bags.**

It isn’t unusual for children to have an ‘accident’ at preschool especially when a child first starts or if they become so engrossed in play they leave it too late to get to the toilet. The change of clothes may also be needed as a result of over exuberance whilst playing with the water or the paint. All clothing should be clearly named as children do not always recognise their own things

If your child has pierced ears, please ensure that they only wear stud style earrings to preschool. The wearing of chains and necklaces are not permitted and these will be removed and placed in the child’s bag to remain safe.

We ask that children do not bring in toys from home as this can cause unnecessary upset for them when others want to play with it or try to take it from them. We allow comforters (muslins, small cuddly toys) for when your child may need these to feel safe and secure, however we will encourage your child to put these in their bags when they feel ready. We do not encourage dummies in the setting as we focus very heavily on language development and these can sometimes hinder children, however when settling if they need dummies then we will allow, however we will always ask children to remove them when trying to communicate. **Frome Valley Preschool cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage that may occur to clothes or any personal belongings.**

NAPPIES

If your child is not yet potty or toilet trained, please ensure they have baby wipes and a good supply of nappies. The preschool will dispose of all wet and soiled nappies they change. Please provide a labelled pack of both wipes and nappies which will remain at the preschool. Staff will inform you when these need to be replenished. When you commence toilet training please talk to your child’s Key person so that the preschool can adopt the same routine as you are doing at home. As a preschool we follow the lead from the parent and child and will not start potty training children in the setting unless this has been discussed and the procedure has begun at home.

ABSENCE AND SICKNESS

Please contact the preschool if your child is going to be absent, using either email or by telephone. Unexplained, irregular or non-attendance will be recorded and monitored for Funding, Safeguarding and Health & safety reasons. As a safeguarding procedure, if your child has not attended two session consistently then we reserve the right to contact you to check that everything is ok.

If your child has an infectious illness please keep them away from the preschool. (A copy of infectious illnesses and their incubation period can be found on our website) If you are unsure or any queries regarding this fact please discuss this with a member of staff. If a child becomes unwell while at preschool, we will contact a parent/carer to come and take them home. If your child is unwell we ask that you keep them at home until they are eating, drinking and sleeping well. We do not keep paracetamol or ibuprofen on site and if your child presents with a temperature whilst at the setting then you will be called to collect them. The preschool is happy to administer medicine both non-prescribed and prescribed when a child has been seen by a doctor and/or an illness confirmed.

Fees are still required if your child does not attend due to illness or holiday.

Curriculum

The aim of our curriculum is to equip children with the skills and knowledge they need to explore and understand the world around them.

The teaching and learning of new skills and knowledge is delivered through both adult and child led opportunities both indoors and outdoors, supporting children in every possible way so that they can make the most of opportunities and fulfil their potential along with promoting their independence.

In planning for the children, we consider the different ways in which the children learn. The three characteristics of effective learning are:

* Playing and exploring
* Active learning
* Creating and thinking critically

The seven areas of learning and development within the Early Years Curriculum we focus on are:

Prime areas.

* Personal, social, and emotional development
* Communication and language development
* Physical development

Solid foundations in these enable us to instil the acquisition and development of key skills in the following Specific areas of learning

* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding the world
* Expressive arts and design

The main focus of the preschool class is on the development of the three prime areas of learning. Establishing key relationships with our children is the first stepping stone to their educational journey and we start this with the focus on attachment play. The key person-child relationships will allow us to learn what interests the children and excites them so we can use this to motivate them and support their learning.

Another key area is on the emphasis on communication and language development. Through books, rhymes, WellComm and songs we work with children to develop their vocabulary, understanding, and listening skills. We use 6 core books for the whole year, two books per term, to focus learning themes, understanding, repetition, story structure and new words. We read 1:1 stories and in larger groups and have introduced and read along bag at home for children to take home. This includes a story, a note pad and a toy, the story is to read with their parents and they can mark make, in the pad provided, about the adventures they have with their toy. This is to encourage parents to read with their children and to encourage children to mark make.

A further key area we will focus on is physical development using both small and large equipment to encourage fine and gross motor skills, with an importance placed on mark making. Children need to be able to experiment with marks from an early age, using a range of resources as well as their body to create marks. There are a range of skills including things like physical skills such as dexterity and co-ordination and cognitive skills like symbolism and the motivation to make marks for a purpose. (Our full Statement of learning can be found on the website.)

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development and have a really long lasting effect on your child’s learning as they progress through school.

 Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas.

It is important that you and the professionals caring for your child work together. You need to feel comfortable about exchanging information and discussing things that will benefit your child. Your child will have been assigned a key person whose role is to:

* Be your main point of contact within the preschool.
* Help your child to become settled, happy and safe.
* Be responsible for your child’s development and learning.
* Take a careful note of your child’s progress, sharing this with you and giving you ideas as to how to help your child at home.
* Create a record of your child’s learning and development that chronicles their progress through the EYFS framework in the setting and share photos half termly of what your child has been learning and exploring in the setting.

**EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE FUNDING**

**2 year old.**

We accept children from the age of 2 years old. You may be eligible for a “golden ticket” which entitles you to 15 hours of funded education and this will be sent to you directly from Dorset County Council. This will be able to be used for the term after they turn two. If you do feel you may be eligible and you meet the criteria you can apply on the Dorset for you website. (Links to this can be found on our website)They will supply you with a code which is then checked by the setting before a final start date is given. The preschool cannot apply for the funding on your behalf.

**3 and 4 year olds**

All children aged 3 and 4 years are entitled to receive 15 hours of free early education funding per week for 38 weeks of each financial year. This starts the term following their third birthday up to and including the term in which they turn five or start at a state maintained school, whichever comes first.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Children born between: | Become eligible for funding from: |
| 1st April -31st August  | 1st September or the start of the Autumn term  |
| 1st September -31st December  | 1st January or the start of the Spring term  |
| 1st January- 31st March  | 1st April or the start of the Summer term  |

 We suggest a minimum of 3 hours and a maximum of 6 hours to be taken in any one day. (6 hour session is the maximum available at Frome Valley) The preschool will distribute the appropriate forms for this at the end of previous term to ensure all form are returned in time to claim funding for your child. It is the responsibility of the parent to return the form by the required date and then the funding will be paid directly to us. If you do not return the form by the required date then you will be liable to pay the sessional charges yourself.

We offer the extended 15 hours for 3-4 year olds in the setting. This will need to be applied for by yourself up to three months before your child turns 3. The code you are allocated must be submitted to the setting via the funding form along with the account holder’s date of birth, name and national insurance number for the eligibility to be checked by the setting. This code will need to be reconfirmed every 3 months in order for your funding to continue. You must apply before the term in which you want to use the funding.

 **FEES**

Parents and Carers must state on their registration form how the sessions will be paid for. If parents are using funding then they must state these in the designated area along with any relevant codes, these codes will then be checked before a place can be offered. Early Education and Childcare funding will be paid directly to the preschool by Dorset County Council.

If you are eligible for the extra 15 hours submitted by the HMRC then you will need to give the code to the manager and this will then be checked on our system. No extra sessions will be allocated until this code has been received. You will also need to disclose your renewal date each time you renew.

Parents not entitled to this funding or who register their child for additional weekly sessions will receive a bill each month via Parentpay app. The bill will be released at the beginning of each month and you have until the following calendar month to clear the balance. If fees are not paid then the preschool reserves the right to withhold your child’s space. You will be sent an email as a reminder in the first week of non-payment if your balance is not cleared within this time frame a charge of £2 will be added daily until cleared. You will then receive a letter and if the balance is not cleared by the date stated then we will withhold your child’s space until cleared.

Fees can be paid weekly/fortnightly if easier and this can be done through the app. If you use government vouchers then please discuss this with the manager at the earliest convenience in order to set this up.

A form can be found on the website if you wish to change your child’s sessions. This must be completed and submitted via email or in person and it will be subject to availability.

One month’s notice in writing will be required prior to a child being withdrawn from the preschool. If a child’s place is fee paying or fully funded by Early Education Funding and a month’s notice is not given, a month’s fee/claim will still be charged.

Fees are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Session | 2-3 year olds | 3-4 year olds |
| Morning (9am-12pm) ***3 hours*** | £16.00 | £12.75 |
| Afternoon (12pm – 3pm) ***3 hours*** | £16.00 | £12.75 |
| All day (9am – 3pm) ***6 hours*** | £30.00 | £23.50 |

**PAYMENTS**

Fees can be paid by cash and through the Parentpay app. Childcare accounts can be used at the discretion of the manager.

**WORKING WITH THE WIDER SCHOOL**

We are an integral part of Frome Valley School with whom we work in close partnership to provide a stimulating and fun learning environment for all children. The sharing of resources, skills and information about the children in our care enables us to provide a smooth transition for them from preschool into the Reception class. Regular meetings are held between the Reception class teacher and the preschool staff to plan the use of the outside environment, joint activities and to monitor learning and achievement.

**Please note: Attendance at the preschool does not guarantee a place in the Reception class of the school. All parents will need to apply for school through the normal school admissions procedures.**