



Hook Norton Pre-School Playgroup

Registered Charity no: 1032151
Registered Voucher 11234677
Provider no:

The Old School, off Osney Close
Queen Street, Hook Norton
OXON. OX15 5NW
Tel: 01608 730560

WELCOME TO THE HOOK NORTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP

Our aim is to provide a safe, friendly environment for 2 to 8 year-olds to enjoy play and learn through various activities.

Introduction

The staff and committee would like to welcome you and your child to Hook Norton Pre-School Playgroup. We have a wide catchment area attracting children from Great Rollright, Swerford, Wigginton, Milcombe and Bloxham as well as from Hook Norton itself. We are proud that our Playgroup received very good OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) reports when it was inspected in November 1997, March 2000 and May 2004. We are registered with both the Oxfordshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The Committee

A Committee of parents runs the Playgroup. The Committee is responsible for the management and smooth running of the playgroup, the lease, maintenance of the building and staff management.

The Staff

We are fortunate to have a qualified and experienced staff at Hook Norton Pre-School Playgroup. They are responsible for the term, weekly and daily planning that takes place and together ensure that all areas of the pre-school curriculum are provided through a wide variety of activities. Individual children's progress is observed and recorded on a regular basis by the child's Keyworker, assigned to your child when they start at Playgroup.

Role of Keyworker

A Keyworker is assigned to every child in Playgroup. They co-ordinate information about a child's needs and development and share this information with parents/carers and other workers to maintain consistency and continuity of care. They provide a vital link with parents/carers and are often crucial in settling children into the setting. Their role also includes co-ordinating the planning and record keeping for individual children.

The Keyworker is the person who:

- will be responsible for helping a child settle in
- will inform parents of procedures and policies of the Playgroup
- parents/carers should talk to if they have any concerns
- will inform parents/carers of any accidents etc
- will discuss with parents/carers any issues they have arising from Playgroup
- will provide parents/carers with information about the main events in their child's day
- will arrange regular meetings to discuss children's progress
- will update information and records on children where required
- will administer medicine if required with the authorisation of the parent/carer
- will help prepare children to move to new settings such as school

If your keyworker is not on duty on a specific day please see the Supervisor if your issue requires immediate attention.

As a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance we aim to:

- ease the transition of young children from home to school
- safeguard play as essential for the growth and development of children
- provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment
- provide individual care and attention made possible by a high ratio of adults to children
- provide fun and friendship with children and other adults
- strengthen positive ties between parent/carer and child through shared play
- promote the status of parents/carers
- recognise that parents/carers are the main educators of their children
- offer learning opportunities for parent/carers and others working with under five's
- enable parents/carers to develop skills and confidence through sharing full responsibility for their group and to play an active part in the community
- integrate families and children with special needs into the group and the community
- work within a framework which ensures equality of opportunity for all children and families

We hope that Playgroup caters for the needs of children between 2 and 8 years of age and that they have a lot of fun learning together.

Admissions Policy

The Hook Norton Pre-school Playgroup is open to every family in the community. We believe that no child or family should be excluded from Playgroup activities on the grounds of sex, disability, race, religion or cultural belief. As long as there is no waiting list your child is welcome to attend Playgroup sessions. If a waiting list is in operation, places will be allocated in the following priority:

1. Age of child. Preference will be given to children over 2 years
2. Children within catchment area of Hook Norton Primary School
3. Children with siblings at Playgroup

We try to be flexible about attendance patterns so as to accommodate the needs of individual children and families. We are registered to supervise up to 26 children per session. If we have more than this number on our books we may have to limit the number of Playgroup sessions each child may attend. We also reserve the right to exclude a child if we consider Playgroup is not suitable, at that time, for him or her.

Whilst the number of sessions taken is at the parents/carers discretion, we recommend a minimum of two sessions per week to enable a child to settle in quickly and to benefit from the routine that Playgroup offers.

Fees

Fees are payable during the first two weeks of the term as a lump sum for the half term in advance, or by prior arrangement on a weekly basis. Lunch club, walks to and from Hook Norton Primary School and ad hoc sessions are invoiced in arrears. There is also an initial registration fee of £5.00 payable with the first term's fees. Fees are reviewed on a regular basis. Playgroup regrets that fees cannot be refunded if your child is absent, except in exceptional circumstances such as hospitalisation.

Playgroup Hours

Sessions are held as follows:

	Days	Times	Costs
Morning Playgroup	Monday-Friday	9am-12noon	£5.75
Pick Up from Nursery	Monday-Friday	11.30am	£1.25
Lunch Club	Monday-Friday	12noon-12.30pm	£1.25
Take to Nursery	Monday-Friday	12.30pm	£1.25
Afternoon Playgroup	Monday-Friday	12.30pm-3.30pm	£5.75
Pick Up from School	Monday-Friday	3:15pm	£1.00
After School Club	Monday-Friday	3pm-6pm	£2.50 per hour

Please ensure that you collect your child promptly at the end of the session. For those Playgroup children who also attend the Hook Norton Nursery afternoon sessions, which begin at 12.30pm, parents/carers may collect their children at 11.30am.

For those children attending Lunch Club a cold packed lunch is to be provided by parents/carers. Please do not put drinks in lunch boxes, as we provide them. Spoons for yoghurts etc. will also be provided by us. Please provide a healthy lunch. We request that no lunch boxes include nuts (due to allergy risks) lollipops or sweets.

For those children being walked between Playgroup and the Hook Norton School Nursery, could parents please send their children to Playgroup with wellies and suitable waterproof clothing on rainy or potential rainy days.

Pre-School Playgroup Activities

Children learn through play in a safe stimulating environment. At Playgroup children can experience play with water, sand, play-dough and different methods of painting, together with the use of jigsaws and learning puzzles, construction pieces, cars, small world, toy farm, group games, and a wide range of books. We have a well-equipped play-house and children are encouraged to use our selection of dressing-up clothes. For their more active times, we have outdoor equipment for when the weather permits, plus climbing frames and rocking toys.

The toys and equipment in Playgroup provide opportunities for children, with adult support, to develop new skills and concepts in the course of their play and exploration. The equipment we provide is appropriate for the ages and stages of the children, and offers challenges to developing physical, social, personal and intellectual skills. The range of equipment will enable children to develop individual potential and move towards required learning goals.

Your child may get messy, so please dress your child so that (s)he feels comfortable, in easily washed clothes. A range of sweatshirts and t-shirts are available, bearing the playgroup logo. These not only protect your child's clothing but give children a sense of belonging. Please ask staff for details of cost and sizes.

In addition we arrange social trips, a summer day out, sports day, Christmas party and other family events during the year. A regular Newsletter is produced to help keep parents/carers informed of current events, but it is advisable to keep an eye on the notice board, as that is the first place we notify parents/carers about what is happening.

Mid-Morning Break

We provide a choice of milk, squash or water to drink. We ask that your child brings a piece of fruit for our fruit bowl, which is shared between the children. At story time the children are also offered a plain biscuit or alternative. Please let us know if your child has any special dietary needs or allergies and whether you have any specific preferences for drinks.

A Happy Start to Playgroup

For many children attending Playgroup is the first major move away from their home environment, so a settling-in period is important for both child and parent/carer. Whilst we understand all children's needs are different, we feel it is important to gain the trust and confidence of your child before they are left on their own in a strange environment. The staff will help you decide when your child is ready to be left. Once settled, it would help if the parents left by 9.30am. Initially parents/carers and the child are introduced to their assigned Keyworker who will take responsibility for helping that child settle in. They will ask for an initial meeting to be set up to discuss specific issues and requirements.

Children's Wellbeing and Health

We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents/carers, to recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship and afterwards to be able to share with parents/carers the new experiences enjoyed at Playgroup. In order to accomplish this we will encourage parents/carers to visit Playgroup with their children during the weeks before an admission has been planned. We will reassure parents/carers whose children seem to be taking a long time to settle. We will encourage parents/carers where appropriate to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences. Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious or unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents/carers to help their children feel comfortable in Playgroup, to benefit from what is on offer, and to be confident that their parents/carers will return at the end of the session.

Please let the staff know of any allergies of which we should be aware and any medical conditions, e.g. diabetes, asthma, epilepsy. Hook Norton Pre-School Playgroup observes hygiene precautions aimed at the prevention and control of all infectious illnesses. A trained first-aider is available at every session to deal with emergencies, in which case the parents/carers will be contacted immediately.

Please do not send your child to Playgroup if (s)he is feeling generally unwell or has

- a temperature
- a streaming cold/flu
- conjunctivitis
- had diarrhoea or sickness within the last 24 hours
- chickenpox (until the last spots have dried up completely)
- any other infectious childhood illness (e.g. mumps, German measles, etc.)
- food poisoning
- head lice (until treated)

Please ensure that any cuts or open sores are suitably dressed (for example with sticking plaster).

For children on prescribed medication, we follow the guidelines laid down by the Pre-School Learning Alliance regarding the administration of medication during Playgroup hours.

Special Needs Policy

Our Playgroup aims to follow the DofEE code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs and to provide welcome and appropriate learning opportunities for all children. Children with special needs, like all other children, are admitted to the Playgroup after consultation with the parents/carers and Pre-School Playgroup Supervisor. Wherever possible, our staff attend in-service training on special needs, arranged by the Pre-School Learning Alliance and other professional bodies. If it is felt that a child's needs cannot be met in the Playgroup without the support of a one-to-one worker, funding will be sought to employ one. We will endeavour to work in liaison with staff outside the group, including health visitors and social workers, to meet children's specific needs.

Registration

When first registering your child at Playgroup you will be asked to fill in a simple registration form giving contact addresses, doctor's name, emergency phone numbers etc.

Parents/Carers involvement at Playgroup

Parents/carers are the first educators of their young children. The aim of the Hook Norton Pre-School Playgroup is to support their essential work, not to substitute them. The Playgroup will encourage parents/carers on an individual basis to play an active part in the management of the group and ensure that all parents/carers have the opportunity to contribute from their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the group. We welcome the contribution of parents/carers, in whatever form, and will make all parents/carers aware of the Playgroup's systems and policies.

Parent Helper Rota

We would like parents/carers to commit themselves to help at Playgroup for one session every half term. There is a rota form above the table in the cloakroom.

There are a number of ways to help during your session at Playgroup:

- be aware of how the children are playing, join in and encourage them with their activities
- help to wash up and tidy the kitchen
- have a general awareness of the needs of the children
- encourage the children to be independent, e.g. make choices about their play activities, hang up paint aprons after use, general tidying up of toys
- help tidy up toys before the break and at the end of the session.

If you find yourself with no specific task to do, please ask for guidance. We want you to enjoy your time here and be involved.

Please allow staff to carry out discipline and to use their experience in judging what needs to be discussed with parents/carers after the sessions. Privacy and confidentiality are paramount.

Fund-raising

The Playgroup is subsidised considerably by fund-raising activities. Please support these events. Whenever possible, we try to make them fun, social events. We also apply to other charities and businesses for donations. If you can help in any way please let the Committee know.

The Committee

Another way that you can help Playgroup is to join the Committee, which is responsible for purchasing supplies, setting fees and having some say in the way Playgroup is run. Posts on the Committee are voluntary and very rewarding. Without a Committee the Playgroup cannot open, so it is very important that people come forward to fulfil these tasks.

An AGM is held in January when the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer are filled, together with a minimum of four other Committee members.

Child Protection

The partnership between parents/carers, Playgroup and the Local Authority is an important part of protecting your child and promoting his/her welfare. We have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any significant concerns regarding children in our care. Staff must be informed in writing if someone other than the normal parent/carer is going to collect your child. A name and description will be required if they are unknown to the staff and a password system is in place. A visitors book system has been introduced so that every parent/carer must sign the book when bringing a child into Playgroup and sign out when leaving with their child. In all matters of child protection we follow the recognised guidelines as set out by the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy.

Complaints

Any parent/carer who is uneasy about any aspect of the Playgroup's provision should talk over any worries and anxieties with their Keyworker or a member of the Committee. If the matter is still not sorted out to the parent/carer's satisfaction, we follow the complaints procedure recognised by the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Copies are available. Parents/carers can also contact OFSTED at the following address:

OFSTED Early Years
Dukes Court
Duke Street
Woking
Surrey GU21 5EP

Rules of the Playgroup

We must have guidelines for the safety and smooth running of the group.

1. No running inside the classroom, unless it is an organised game or activity
2. Shouting, swearing and discriminatory behaviour or remarks are unacceptable
3. No smacking is allowed. This also means parents/carers not smacking their children in Playgroup
4. No smoking on the premises
5. All accidents, however minor, must be recorded in the accident book and related to the parents/carers to sign
6. Gate and front door to be kept shut at all times for safety reasons
7. A signing-in book is provided which must be signed whenever a child is brought to/leaves Playgroup
8. Please do not let your child bring food or drink into Playgroup (other than a piece of fruit for the fruit bowl).

Last updated November 2005

Fire Procedure attached