

## WELCOME TO THE HOOK NORTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP

Our aim is to provide a safe, friendly environment for 2 to 11 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 surrounding villages 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, May 2004 and January 2007. (These reports are available on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) We are also registered with the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

### The Committee

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

### The Staff

We are fortunate to have qualified and experienced staff at Hook Norton Pre-School Playgroup. They are responsible for the term 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. We follow the guidelines of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Individual Children's progress is observed and recorded on a regular basis by the child's Key person, assigned to your child when they start at Playgroup.

### Role of Key person

A Key person is assigned to every child in Playgroup. They will do the initial parent/carer interview, which gathers all information we require about the child when they first start. 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.

### **(See notice board for role of the Keyworker)**

If your Key person 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 parents/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 and 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

### **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:

- ❖ Age of child
- ❖ Children within catchment area of Hook Norton Primary School
- ❖ 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 32 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.

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, however we are happy to give an alternative session if available.

### **Lunch Club**

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 Primary School Nursery, could parents please send their children to Playgroup with wellies and suitable waterproof clothing on rainy or potentially rainy days.

### **Mid-Morning Break**

We provide a choice of milk, squash or water to drink. We ask that your child bring 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.

## Playgroup Hours

Sessions are held as follows:

|                      | Days            | Times             | Costs          |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Morning Playgroup    | Monday - Friday | 9am – 12 noon     | £8.50          |
| Pick up from nursery | Monday – Friday | 11:30am – 12:30pm | £1.50          |
| Lunch Club           | Monday – Friday | 12 noon – 12:30pm | £1.50          |
| Take to Nursery      | Monday – Friday | 12:30pm           | £1.50          |
| Afternoon Playgroup  | Monday – Friday | 12:30pm – 3:30pm  | £8.50          |
| Pick up from School  | Monday – Friday | 3:15pm            | £1.00          |
| After School Club    | Monday – Friday | 3:15pm – 6:00pm   | £3.00 per hour |

**Please ensure that you collect your child promptly at the end of the session.**

### Pre-School Playgroup Activities

Children learn through play in a safe stimulating environment. At Playgroup children can experience play with water, sand, play dough, arts and crafts, together with the use of jigsaws, construction toys, small world, group games, and a wide range of books. We have a well-equipped home corner 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, which includes ride on toys, pirate ship, sand pit and activity trail.

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 also give the children a sense of belonging. Please ask staff for details of cost and sizes.

In addition we arrange social events, trips within the village, as 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.

### 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. 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. All staff are trained in First-aid. In an emergency parents/carers will be contacted immediately. See Emergency Policy.

Please do not send your child to Playgroup if (s)he is feeling 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

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. Please ask to see our medication Policy.

### **Special Needs Policy**

Our Playgroup aims to follow the DofEE code of practice on the identification and assessment of special needs and to provide welcome and appropriate learning opportunities for all children. For more information please see our SEN Policy or ask to speak to our SEN co-ordinator (SENCO)

### **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**

Parents are welcome to come into playgroup as they wish to help in a session. The role of Parent Helper and rota form is above the table in the cloakroom.

### **Fund-Raising**

The Playgroup is subsidised considerably by fund-raising activities. Your support for these events is always greatly appreciated, as this enables us to purchase new equipment. We apply to other charities and business for donations. If you can help in any way please let the staff or committee know.

### **Child Protection**

The partnership between parents/carers, Playgroup and the Local Authorities 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.

**All parents/carers must sign their children in and out with the times in the book provided in the cloakroom.**

In all matters of child protection we follow the recognised guidelines as set out by the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Please see our Child Protection Policy, or ask to speak to our Protection Officer.

### **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 Supervisor. If the matter is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, we follow the complaints procedure as set out in our complaints Policy. Parents/carers can also contact Ofsted at the following address:

Ofsted, South Regional Office, Freshford House, Redcliffe Way, Bristol, BS1 6NL

Tel: 0845 40 40 40

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/childcare](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/childcare)

### **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. All accidents, however minor, must be recorded in the accident book and related to the parents/carers to sign
5. Gate and front door to be kept shut at all times for safety reasons
6. A signing-in book is provided which must be signed whenever a child is brought to or leaves Playgroup
7. Please do not let your child bring food or drink into Playgroup (other than a piece of fruit for the fruit bowl)

Last updated September 2008