



# Handbook for Families

# Dear parents and carers



Welcome to Huntingdon Nursery School,

Early years education is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. We will be working together, as partners to ensure that your child's early years experiences are happy, active, exciting, fun and secure. Together we will support their development, care and learning needs at home and in school. Throughout the year we will be arranging 'parent conversation' meetings. These meetings run through the year and are an opportunity for us to check in with each other; sharing your child's experiences both at school and at home. Together we will capture progress they are making and how your child feels about their learning.

These conversations will usually be with your child's "key person". Although your child is supported by a team of professionals; this is the person who:

- is your main point of contact within the setting
- helps your child to become settled, happy and safe
- is responsible for your child's care, development and learning
- takes 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.

At Huntingdon Nursery School our children learn by playing and exploring, being active, developing creative and critical thinking, this takes place both indoors and outside, so we ask that you provide a change of clothes and clothing to support children to play outside whatever the weather! (Some parents like to give their child slippers to wear inside as wellies can be uncomfortable to wear all day).

In September our Children will be based in classes supported by an experienced team of Teachers, Early Years practitioners and Teaching Assistants supporting their learning and development every day.

If you have any questions after reading this pack you can email the office: [office@huntingdon-nur.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@huntingdon-nur.cambs.sch.uk) Email me directly: [Head@huntingdon-nur.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:Head@huntingdon-nur.cambs.sch.uk) or text the office on: 07860 095995 and we will respond as soon as possible.

Looking forward to seeing you at Huntingdon Nursery School

Claire Palmer (Head teacher)

# Our Vision Statement

To give every person in every family opportunities to become the best that they can be.

The principles that underpin this statement are:

- That we will endeavour to provide the best possible nursery care and education for children on role
- That learning will take place through play
- That we aim to develop children's confidence, independence and positive attitudes towards life
- That we build trusting relationships with families so that we are best placed to recognise and meet need
- We celebrate success, make learning fun and enable children to achieve their potential
- We work as part of a wider team – a partnership that strengthens our community



# Session Timings and Funding

We have children at the nursery from the age of 2 up to 5 years old.

**Yellow Room:** Many of our 2 year olds are eligible for the government funded 15 hours and the 15 hour working 2's whilst the rest of our 2 year olds pay for sessions. We offer 15 hours a week for our 2's in Yellow Room. This will either be **all mornings** or **all afternoons**. We feel this routine is beneficial for the younger children.

**Main Room:** All 3 year olds in the UK benefit from 15 hours of government funded childcare per week from the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. We can offer all mornings or all afternoons to our 3 year olds. However we may be able to accommodate these 15 hours over 2 and a half days in one of these 2 patterns (there will be a charge for the 2 lunchtime sessions for the full days).:

**All Day Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday AM** or

**Wednesday PM and All day Thursday and Friday.**

Working parents of 3 and 4 year olds may be eligible for an **additional 15 hours** funded on top of this, to see if you are eligible please visit the website at the bottom of the page. If your child is not eligible for the additional funding, there is also the opportunity to pay for the additional sessions, if space is available at the nursery (there will be a charge for the 2 lunchtime sessions for the full days).

**Prices per hour: 2 year olds £8.00 per hour**

**3 and 4 year olds £6.50 per hour**

**Session timings: Early Start (Payable): 08:30 – 09:00**

**Mornings: 09:00 – 12:00**

**Lunch (Payable): 12:00 – 12:30**

**Afternoon: 12:30 – 15:30**

**All Day 09:00 – 15:30**

The school day is 9 am – 3.30 pm which is 32.5 hours a week. Children accessing 30 hours funding will be expected to pay for the lunch session, an additional 2.5 hours per week in accordance with our charging policy. Total cost of £16.25 per week.

**Funding Websites:**

Funded 2's: [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/free2s](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/free2s)

15/30 Hours for working parents: [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

# Settling in and Key Persons

It's important that your child gets the best possible start to their time in the nursery. That is why we are so careful about settling in.

We need to work closely with you:

- We have lots of professional knowledge about children and their development.
- You know your own child best. We need you to help us learn about your unique child.

During the settling in process:

- Your key person will hold a parent conversation with you at home or at nursery prior to your child's first day.
- Your key person will take the lead on greeting your child every day and helping them to feel safe and secure.
- Children start doing short sessions and build up gradually to their full sessions (half days or full days)
- You and your key person will decide together when your child is ready to do their full session hours.

Children at this age are very varied. Some will quickly feel confident whilst other children will need more support. Every child needs us to be comforting, caring and calm. It's natural for some children to feel sad, or angry. Your key person will care for your child and comfort them. On the very rare occasion that a child is very distressed, we ask parents to come in and support them with their settling in period. We don't want children to get so anxious that they don't want to come to nursery.



Children can be unsure and upset when being dropped off at nursery. To help them with this we encourage you to stay calm and positive about nursery. Also, saying 'goodbye' clearly when you leave, so your child knows what's happening.

# A Typical Day

The children will come into nursery and find their peg to put their coat and bag on to and then be greeted by their key person before joining the other children on the carpet. **If your child will not be in for their session please do let the office know ASAP – either by text or phone.** If you do not let us know before the start of the session, expect a text message from us asking why your child is not in nursery. Nursery is not compulsory, however we have a safeguarding duty to know the reason why your child is not at their usual session.



We operate a flexible start time so that you don't all arrive at the same time! You are welcome to arrive at Nursery from 9am to 9:10am.

At 9:10am the gate will be locked. If you arrive after 9:10am please come into Nursery via the office as by then the class register will have been completed.

We encourage children to say Good bye to parents/carers at the gate and come into Nursery to find their own peg themselves. They place their coat and bag on their peg and then join everyone in the classroom to begin their session. Children are encouraged to choose where they would like to play and are able to access a range of quality resources.

Huntingdon Nursery School adopts a 'continuous provision' approach where children can access various resources that are always available and plan projects for themselves with these. The environment is resourced and organised to support active, varied, independent, play-based learning. We ensure that the environment supports the staff's pedagogy and understanding of how children learn.



A mixture of child-led and adult-led experiences are provided. The majority of time is given to active, free-flow indoor/outdoor play activity, following children's leads. Adults provide enhancements to the environment based on observations of children's interests and needs, designed to support emotional well-being, learning across the curriculum and engagement.

At different times in the session the children join their keyworker group for opportunities to sing songs / rhymes or engage in more focussed learning.

The staff at Huntingdon Nursery School have a great love of the outdoors and believe that being outside, and physically active, in these early years is vital for setting patterns for life. We encourage all children to enjoy being outside daily but at times we also operate a free-flow approach to the

indoor and outdoor spaces. This gives children variety, freedom, and choice over the activities and environments they wish to learn and play in.

We have sand, water and paint activities out every day, so please do not dress your children in their best clothes for Nursery. Also could you pack a **spare outfit in their bag** just in case we need extra clothes.

### Outside play

We provide the children with waterproof trousers to wear outside if it is wet or cold. We do ask that you send the children to school in warm clothes, sensible shoes, well-fitting shoes (**No open toe shoes or sandals**) and a coat. We also ask that in the summer you bring a summer hat and sun cream for your child.

### Snack time

The nursery provides the children with a healthy snack of fruit, vegetables and crackers, with the option of milk or water to drink. We ask for a contribution of **£5 per term** per child towards the cost of these snacks as well as any cooking ingredients needed.

### Lunch

The children that are at nursery over the lunch session will need to bring their own healthy packed lunch from home. We ask that you **do not bring nuts** in to nursery. We are able to provide water as a drink with their packed lunch. The children sit up to tables in small groups supervised in ratio by a nursery worker.



### Local Walks

We like to take the children out for local walks a few times each half term. This enables the children to notice the changes in nature during each season, as well as the local transport and shops. We ask our governors as well as **parents to volunteer** on these walks to enable us to be safe and secure on these local expeditions. This is also an opportunity to spend some time talking to your child about everything you can see around you as you walk! We will let you know when your child is scheduled to enjoy a local walk in plenty of time so you can arrange to come too.

# Early Years Curriculum

We follow the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework as our key document to support children's learning whilst at Huntingdon Nursery School. Alongside this we also use the non-statutory guidance Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters. Please see links to all three of these documents below to learn more about them.

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Development Matters

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2>

Birth to Five

<https://www.birthto5matters.org.uk>

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework covers seven areas of learning.

Prime areas

- Communication and Language
- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development.

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design.



In reality these different areas overlap.

We focus not only on what children are learning but how they are learning and developing.

This involves a focus on what are known as The Characteristics of Effective Learning.

These characteristics focus on how children learn through playing and exploring, become active learners by following their own interests and making their own choices, and how they also become critical thinkers setting themselves their own challenges and solving the problems that they meet along the way.

# Our Curriculum

Big ideas that collectively encompass all areas of the EYFS



## Our Priorities

Share	Share a thought or idea
Belong	Look after my friends and my classroom without being asked
Move	Cross the gorilla frame
Create	Build and create a 3D model
Tell us	Make up and share (or adapt) a story
Using numbers	To be a snack helper
Find out more	Investigate a topic of personal interest

# Assessment

We are developing a model of effective, meaningful and principled assessment of young children's learning through the implementation of the **OPAL Approach – Observation, Play and learning.**

**By effective**, we mean a method of assessment that ensures that all children are supported in reaching significant milestones.

**By meaningful**, we mean that the observations made inform our everyday practice and curriculum. By gaining an insight into children's thinking, feeling and needs we can plan our environment and actions to provide future possibilities for learning.

**By principled**, we mean that our focus is on observing to understand children. We will not test children or seek unnecessary knowledge. Children are recognised as individuals, not as a percentage in a pie chart. We will not spend unnecessary amounts of time writing observations or gathering evidence of children's learning.

We believe that if we are capturing the moment, we cannot be part of the moment. Instead we have structures in place that enable us to regularly discuss each child as a team.

**By October your child will have been be a focus of observation. Following this 'spotlight assessment' we will meet with you to share our observations. This is an opportunity for you to share your own observations and thoughts so that we all move forward together.**

After this initial meeting we begin a cycle of focussed conversations + observation followed by a parent conversation. We will share our observations of your child's learning including your child's thoughts, through photos and notes so that we can support your child's learning as partners.

If at any time you are concerned about your child's development please speak to your child's keyworker and we can arrange a meeting with Vanessa Allwright – Assistant Headteacher / inclusion support or Claire Palmer Headteacher / SENDCo



# How we support individual needs at Nursery including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

At Huntingdon Nursery School we are committed to helping all our children realise their potential. We seek to meet the needs of all our children, working closely with families to achieve this. We recognise that some children, for part or all of their time at Huntingdon Nursery School need extra help and support to do this and may be identified as having a Special Educational Need or Disability.

We aim to provide children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) with a warm, supportive environment, helping children to be as independent as possible. We encourage children to learn alongside each other through a play-based, child-centred curriculum.

All children have a keyworker who identifies needs, interests, strengths and difficulties, together with Class teachers they plan appropriate learning experiences. Additional support may be provided by general assistants, qualified and experienced Teaching Assistants, who work together with the SENDCo / Inclusion support and keyworkers. This support may be on an individual or shared basis depending on the needs of the child.

Our staff have experience of working with a range of strategies to support children with additional needs. These strategies will be shared with you in your child's individual plan and provision map so that you can use these strategies at home too. Lots of the strategies we use are already part of our provision and support every child – we call this our 'ordinarily available provision' (OAP).

We have a dedicated and experienced team, who have worked for many years supporting children with a range of needs, such as, autism, global delay, hearing impairment, Down's syndrome and physical disabilities. Meeting the teaching and learning needs of all children is a priority for all members of staff. The teacher who has specific responsibility for coordinating the provision special educational needs and disability is:

**Mrs Claire Palmer** - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) supported by  
**Mrs Vanessa Allwright** – Inclusion Support

At Huntingdon Nursery School we recognise the important part that families play in helping others to understand and support the specific needs of their child. We actively promote partnership with parents/carers, through the sharing of information and education plans as well as through visits and informal conversations. There are a number of opportunities for parents to be consulted throughout the year, depending on the particular needs of the family and child.

# Frequently asked questions

## **Will my child need to bring anything with them?**

Yes please – we ask you to bring a bag with a change of clothes every day. We can store nappies, wet wipes, nappy cream and a change of clothes in their individual box or in a bag on their peg. In hot weather children will need a sun hat, sun cream, shoulders covered and sensible closed toed shoes

## **What will my child be given to eat and drink?**

During each session the children will sit to enjoy a drink of water or milk and a healthy fresh fruit snack. We ask for £5 per term for snacks

## **Do you take the children out for trips?**

Yes – we try to get out and about as much as possible. We enjoy trips to the park to feed the ducks and visit the library and other local places of interest.

## **What activities will my child do at Nursery?**

Children are offered a mixture of play based activities through the day. These could include activities to help develop their confidence to communicate, develop their understanding of numbers and story. Our children also enjoy construction and problem-solving, dance and movement. There is also plenty of opportunity for free play to allow children to be inventive and use their imaginations.

## **My child has a dietary requirement, food allergy/intolerance – can you accommodate this?**

Children with identified allergies have their details recorded and staff are made aware of the allergy and the response. A protocol recording the Nursery's response to allergy is written for individual children and shared with staff. You are welcome to provide an alternative food item when needed e.g. dairy free milk.

## **What qualifications do your nursery staff hold?**

Our team is made up of qualified Teachers, Level 3 Early Years Practitioners and experienced Teaching Assistants and General Assistants.

## **How will I know how my child is getting on?**

Your child's key person will keep an up to date record of your child's progress and they will share this information with you regularly. You will be invited in to chat with your child's keyworker to share information about your child's progress. Staff are always available to talk every day.

### **What to do if my child is ill, not going to be at nursery or we are going on holiday?**

If your child is ill or not going to be in nursery please contact the school office on 01480 375216 or text: 07860 095995.

If you have a holiday planned, please fill in a holiday form which you can get from your class teacher

### **Where can I read the nursery policies?**

All our policies and procedures can be found on our website. Please visit

<https://huntingdon-nursery.eschools.co.uk>

### **Why does the nursery have governors and what do they do at Huntingdon Nursery School?**

Huntingdon Nursery is a maintained nursery. A maintained nursery school is a local authority school, and is funded and controlled by the local authority, just like any other local authority school. As it is controlled by the local authority we have to have a set of governors.

The Governing Body at Huntingdon Nursery School plays an important part in helping the school run effectively. We have three main committees as follows:-

- Teaching and Learning – monitoring how the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is taught, evaluated and resourced.
- Property – Health & Safety – Monitoring the building and making sure we have a safe environment for our children and adults alike.
- Finance & Personnel – Overseeing the school budget and staff welfare/issues and recruitment.

Our governor's support the school by:-

- Attending Governing Body Meetings
- Making regular visits to the school
- Attending training to gain knowledge to support our work
- Attending County Governor Meetings

Become a Governor

If you are interested in becoming a parent governor, or would like to know more about what is involved, please contact Claire, our head teacher or the office staff