



St Mary's Playgroup & Toddlers



Welcome and Information Pack



"Encouraging children to feel safe, secure and strive for their best."

www.stmarysplaygrouptetbury.co.uk

St Mary's Pre-school, Playgroup & Toddlers, Christchurch Hall, The Chipping, Tetbury GL8 8EU

01666 503777

Registered Charity No 1038904

Welcome to St Mary's Playgroup!

The information in this pack will tell you all you need to know about your child starting playgroup. We would like to make this step as smooth and friendly as we possibly can.

If you have any questions at all at any time please contact Heidi who deals with Admissions via email stmarysplaygroupadmissions@hotmail.com or any of the playgroup staff 01666 503777



About St Mary's Playgroup

St Mary's Playgroup is a registered charity, which is run as a non-profit making organisation by a committee of parents and members of our community. The staff are a highly qualified, experienced and passionate team that look to provide the highest quality care for our children by following their interests and offering them a wide variety of exciting experiences. Many of our staff are also trained as Forest School leaders, meaning we can provide weekly Forest School sessions. This is a fantastic experience and helps them to learn and grow in so many ways. We also use an online system called Tapestry to observe and assess our children – this allows parents to have 24/7 online access to their learning journals with up to date email notifications when observations are added. You get to see photos and videos of what they're doing at any time!

When will my child start?

We currently accept children from 2 years (subject to availability) on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday morning extending to longer sessions from 2 years 9 months and a preschool session on a Tuesday. Prior to your child starting we will offer a home visit as well as sessions to visit where your child can stay and play for a short time. At the home visit we will run through all forms and confirm a start date.

What do I do on my child's first day?

We will go through all of these things at your home visit but we ask parents to wait at the top of the alley in the morning at 8.30/9.00am with the other parents where staff will then call you from when the door is open. At your home visit we will discuss how best to transition your child in but will likely begin with you staying for a short while before leaving for some of the session and returning early so they can have a really positive first day!

What if my child is upset – can I stay?

Of course! We will discuss this with you beforehand but we can offer you a settling session before they begin where you can come in and stay with them to get used to the environment before leaving them for the first time. We also suggest a slightly shorter session for the first week or two to make sure these are positive experiences – we want them to want to come back!

Meet the Team

All our staff are qualified and have up to date training in Paediatric First Aid. They are also continually attending training to stay up to date with new initiatives and in line with government and OFSTED guidelines.

Heidi Bailey – Play Leader and Safeguard Lead

Heidi is our Playgroup Leader and also a qualified Primary Teacher and is also trained as a Forest School Leader. She has two children who have also attended the Playgroup and as a mum and previous member of the committee has a great knowledge of the children and our values.

Kelly Price – Deputy, SENDCo and Key Person

Kelly is our Playgroup Deputy and is highly qualified in Early Years and management and Paediatric First Aid. Kelly has worked in nurseries and nursery management for over 10 years with 2 young children of her own. Kelly is also our SEND Coordinator.

Marie Ware – Key Person

Marie has been with us for 18 years where both of her 2 children enjoyed attending before she joined the team in 2004. She has a NVQ Level 3 in Childcare and is our SEND coordinator. Marie has a wealth of knowledge and experience from being a long-standing member of staff and is passionate about providing high quality care for the children.

Jenn Galligan – Key Person

Jenn has years of experience as a Montessori directress and is now our forest school leader. Jenn is enthusiastic in her role as a playgroup assistant and is passionate about helping to lead the children toward independence.

Jessica Poole – Key Person

Jess has a wealth of experience working in Early Years and previously worked at a Nursery for 11 years. She prides herself in forming good relationships with children and parents and is herself a mother of 2 young children.

Faye Rogers – Key Person

Faye has two children and has a wealth of experience working with young children and their families. She joined playgroup in 2020 and is fantastic at supporting children to learn through play.

Charlie Alley – Key Person

Charlie recently joined us (in 2022), however has seen her 2 children through playgroup and been part of our committee over the years. She has a wealth of experience looking after children and effortlessly became part of the team.

Claire Josselyn - Chair of the Committee

Claire has previously been a member of our committee and now our Committee Chair. She has two young children and a passion to see our playgroup thrive as we move into the future.

What happens during the session?

8.30am Early drop off available

9.00am The session begins! Children come in and register themselves before having free play to give a chance for everyone to arrive and parents to chat to staff

Children then free play for the whole morning without being stopped so they are able to become engrossed and engaged. Doors to the outside open so there is free-flow throughout

9.30am From around 9.30 there is snack at children's choosing. This gives them independence to access when they are hungry and without having to stop their play until they are ready

11.40am Tidy Up time (quietly children are asked to help put resources away)

11.50am Circle time - this can be a story, songs or time to reflect quietly on our morning

12.00pm Staff take children out who are going home / Children are asked to wash hands ready to share their lunch with their friends

1-2.30pm Children have a very relaxed session in the afternoon, often going out on walks or visits around the town.

2.30-3/3.30 Tidy up/snack/home time

However, the session structure is flexible and sometimes will depend on the children on the day – we have to be adaptable to how they are too! We are also trying to spend much more time in the outdoor environment and enjoy making the most of going for walks around the town, visiting the library or spending time at the local park.

Is there a uniform?

Yes! There is opportunity for you to purchase a polo shirt and jumper when your child starts as we feel it is a good idea to protect 'home clothes' from any paint and glue! Uniform can easily be ordered from myclothing.com by searching 'Tetbury' or using our postcode 'GL8 8ET'.

We also ask that they bring a pair of wellies to every session as we regularly have messy and wet play in and out. We also ask that they wear warm socks (ideally with rubber non-slip grips) or alternatively slippers whilst they are inside – studies have shown children behave and learn better without shoes so we are encouraging them to be warm and cosy!

We would ask that all children's uniforms (both sweatshirt and polo shirt) are **clearly named** and that they have some spare clothes in a bag with them too. We suggest purchasing name labels from stikins.co.uk which are tried and tested (and so easy to use!) with free P&P and if you use our **code 35612** they will donate to the playgroup too!

Our sessions

Set out below is the timetable for starting playgroup. We welcome children from 2 years on Wednesday mornings and introduce them gradually into further sessions as required so the children become used to routines. We can arrange additional sessions upon discussion with your child's key worker and our admissions secretary.

Day of the week	Playgroup	Forest School
Monday	2 years 9.00-12.00pm 2 years and 9 months + 8.30/9- 12/ 3.00/3.30pm	
Tuesday	Preschool only 8:30/9:00-3/3:30pm	
Wednesday	Non- Preschool only (2+) 9.00-12.00pm	3 years + 9.00-12.00/1.00pm
Thursday	2 years 9.00-12.00pm 2 years and 9 months + 8.30/9- 12/ 3.00/3.30pm	3 years + 9.00-12.00/1.00pm
Friday	2 years 9.00-12.00pm 2 years and 9 months + 8.30/9- 12/1.00pm	

How much are the sessions?

The current charge (from September 2022) is £6.00 per hour plus a £1 per session snack charge. Government funding for up to 15 hours of childcare can also contribute to your child the term after they turn 2 (if eligible) and is also available to all children the term after they turn 3. For some working parents there is also an additional government funded 15 hours available to children from the term after children turn 3.

You do not need to apply for the 15 hours after a child turns 3 however if you think you are eligible for the 30 hours childcare funding you must apply yourself before they turn 3.

If you think you are eligible for any of the government funding, please use the eligibility calculator online by visiting the website <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

How often are invoices sent out?

Invoices are sent from our Financial Administrator Louise Shute via our platform Family, at the end of each half term for the following half terms sessions. Payment for these are then due the day children return back after the holiday.

How are pre-school sessions different?

We offer a 'pre-school only' session on a Tuesday. These sessions are tailored more to preparing the children for starting school. The activities are more advanced and include visits from their future teachers and visits to the local school.

Forest School

What is Forest School?

“Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.”

(From Forestschoolassociation.org)



When and where do we offer these sessions?

We currently offer a Forest School session to our 3+ children on a Wednesday and Thursday morning. Our preschool site is currently located on the grounds at Ilsom House care home just outside of the town. Parents are required to drop off and pick up from the car park at the home.

What are the benefits?

Forest School provides so many benefits that it's hard to list them all. Not only are they getting the extended time outdoors where they can be physical but they demonstrate so many skills when left to play including team building, creative thinking and learning about the world around us. The children are always given small achievable tasks which helps build self-esteem and confidence about themselves and their abilities. There really isn't anything negative about it!

What do we do?

So many things! The children are always allowed 'free play time' where they can choose their own activities alongside other activities which are provided if they want to engage with them. These include minibeast hunting, den building, obstacle courses, following maps, treasure hunts, bird watching and of course building and cooking over the fire!



Other information

We need your help!

As a charity playgroup we rely heavily on fundraising efforts throughout the year. Without these we would not have the ability to offer what we do and provide the vast (and ever-changing) resources we pride ourselves on for our children.

This means we have a 'duty rota' (see below) and various fundraising events through the year such as tombolas, craft fairs, discos and sponsored events. These are all things we need parents help in running and would appreciate your help in signing up to any events you are available for – an hour slot might be all we ask but this is really valuable and something we need parents to partner with us in.

What is the parent 'duty rota'?

In order for the playgroup staff to fully concentrate their attention on the children we employ a duty rota system. For each session a parent helper is needed to assist with preparing snacks, tidying up etc. and helping us when going on walks and outings. It is a great opportunity to see the running of the playgroup, to get involved in your child's learning and see how they are getting on in session. (We don't ask you to help in the first half term of your child starting to aid them settling in).

A rota is put together each half term with a 'two hour slot' you will be allocated to. If you are unable to help with the rota due to work commitments etc, there will be the option of nominating another person such as a grandparent or family friend. We also have a WhatsApp group that can be used to request other parents to swap your time with.

Allergen Information

At St Mary's Playgroup we understand that Food Allergens pose a significant risk to children and adults with allergic conditions, which may even be life threatening. Children can be particularly vulnerable because of their reduced level of control over the foods they eat.

At St Mary's Playgroup and Toddler group we are a 'no peanut setting' and ask that **no peanut products** are packed in lunchboxes.

We only use cereal, eggs and milk allergens. Please speak to a member of staff at any time about alternative arrangements for any specific food allergies as these foods can be provided. If your child has an intolerance or you have a preference over their diet parents are welcome to provide an alternative for snack times (such as gluten-free crackers if they have a gluten intolerance).

Lunch boxes

Please note that as a setting we are very conscious of ensuring our children eat a range of healthy foods during snack time and encourage the same for their packed lunches. We encourage parents to avoid high sugar spreads (such as jam or chocolate spread) in sandwiches with one 'sweet item' packed in their box, such as a small yogurt. Staff may give children the option to choose one item if they have more than one 'sweet treat' with the other being sent home. We would really appreciate your support in ensuring they have a piece of fruit and a well-balanced variety in their boxes for lunch – we all want healthy, happy children!

What do I need to do now?

You now need to fill in and return to us at Playgroup

- GDPR Data protection consent
- Child Record Form
- General Consent
- Media Permission
- Terms and Conditions
- Parent duty rota
- Tapestry form
- Forest school consent and medical form (if attending Forest School sessions)
- £50 non-refundable deposit (BACs, cash or cheque - made to St Mary's Playgroup)

Once we have received your forms back we will input their information on to our system Family and you will receive an invite (via email) to set up an account. You will then be able to see all their information, what they get up to during sessions and receive/pay for invoices each half term.

Our aim is for both you and your child to have a happy and confident beginning to their time at St Mary's Playgroup. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team.



Bank Details

Please find below our bank details for fees payment, 100 Club and any other BACS transactions to St Mary's Playgroup.

Account Name: St Mary's Playgroup

Account Number: 01566073

Sort Code: 30-92-06

Should you have any queries regarding any financial transaction, please do not hesitate to contact Louise Shute our Financial Administrator, st.marysplaygroup-tetbury@eygloucestershire.co.uk