



9.1a About our Early Years Education and childcare

Welcome to Acorn Pre-School & The Mighty Oaks and thank you for registering your child with us.

We know how important your child is and aim to deliver the highest quality of care and education to help them to achieve the best learning and development opportunities possible.

This document aims to provide you with an introduction to Acorn Pre-School & The Mighty Oaks, our routines, our approach to supporting your child's learning and development and how we aim to work together with you to best meet your child's individual needs. This should be read alongside our Childcare Terms and Conditions for a full description of our services.

Our setting aims to:

- provide high quality care and education for children
- work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop
- add to the life and well-being of the local community
- offer children and their parents/carers a service that promotes equality and values diversity

Parents & Working in Partnership You are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected
- kept informed
- consulted
- involved
- included at all levels

Children's development and learning We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment
- is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as volunteer helpers
- has the chance to join in with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
- has 2 key people who make sure each child makes progress in the curriculum
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers

The Early Years Foundation Stage Provision for the development and learning of children from birth to five years is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our provision reflects the four overarching principles of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE 2021):

- *A Unique Child*
Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- *Positive Relationships*
Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- *Enabling Environments*
Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and/or carers.
- *Learning and Development*
Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

How we provide for learning and development Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The Areas of Learning and Development comprise:

- *Prime Areas*
 - Personal, social and emotional development.
 - Physical development.
 - Communication and language.
- *Specific Areas*
 - Literacy.
 - Mathematics.
 - Understanding the world.
 - Expressive arts and design.

For each area, the level of progress that children are expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know, and be able to do, by the end of the reception year of their education.

We refer to non-statutory curriculum guidance to support our professional judgment as we assess each child's progress and level of development as they progress towards the Early Learning Goals. We have regard to these when we assess children and plan for their learning by creating a curriculum that is ambitious and meets the needs of every child. Our educational programmes support children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

Personal, social and emotional development

- self-regulation
- managing self
- building relationships

Physical development

- gross motor skills
- fine motor skills

Communication and language

- listening, attention and understanding
- speaking

Literacy

- comprehension
- word reading
- writing

Mathematics

- number
- numerical patterns

Understanding the world

- past and present
- people, culture and communities
- the natural world

Expressive arts and design

- creating with materials
- being imaginative and expressive

Our Curriculum Our Curriculum is ambitious and designed to cover all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), as well as providing our children with the stepping stones to build a lifelong love of learning, giving them the roots to grow and wings to fly.

Our approach to learning and development and assessment

Learning through play

Being active and playing supports young children's learning and development through doing and talking. This is how children learn to think about and understand the world around them. We use the EYFS statutory education programmes to plan and provide opportunities which will help children to make progress in all areas of learning. This programme is made up of a mixture of activities that children led and organise for themselves, and activities planned and led by Early Years Educators.

Characteristics of effective learning

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Early Years Foundation Stage as:

- playing and exploring – engagement and enjoyment
- active learning – motivation and participation
- creating and thinking critically – thinking and problem solving

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child engages with learning and being clear about what we can do and provide to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them. We use information that we gain from observations of the children, to understand their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we will ask you to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what your child likes to do at home and how you, as parents, are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our on-going observations. These help us to build a picture of a child's progress during their time with us and form part of children's records of achievement/learning journeys. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals, as well as at times of transition, such as when a child moves onto a different setting or when they start school.

Baseline reviews

In the first 2 weeks of children starting we complete a baseline review, this is also completed at the start of each term. These are then published via Tapestry for parents / carers to review and comment on, along with pictures. These reviews highlight the areas of development their keyworkers and staff have seen in school and will also identify possible lines of development.

The progress check at age two

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that we supply parents and carers with a short-written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas of learning and development - personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language - when a child is aged between 24 - 36 months. Your child's key persons are responsible for completing the check using information from on-going observations carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

Records of achievement/learning journeys We keep a record of achievement/learning journey for each child. Your child's record of achievement/learning journey helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work in partnership with you to keep this record. To do this you and she/he will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's progress. Together, we will then decide on how to further support your child's learning and development.

Working together for your children We maintain the ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set by the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. This helps us to:

- give time and attention to each child
- talk with the children about their interests, activities and reflect on our learning
- help children to experience and benefit from activities provided, challenging and encouraging them to achieve
- allowing children to explore, be adventurous and take calculated risks in a safe environment.

More information if at any time you would like more information about what your children is learning, please speak to your child's key worker, or a member of staff. This can be done at pick up or drop off, or via telephone or email or a message on Tapestry.

The staff who work at our setting are:

Name	Job Title	Qualifications/ Additional Roles
Lyndsey Black	Manager Designated Safeguarding Lead	Level 5 Leadership in Early Education Level 4 Advanced Early Years Workforce Level 4 Special Education Needs Level 1 Forest School Paediatric First Aid Mental Health First Aid Domestic Abuse Responder
Maureen James	Deputy Manager, SEN Co-ordinator,	Level 3 Early Years Workforce Level 3 Early Years Special Educational Needs
Chloe	Session Leader Early Years Educator Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Level 4 Advanced Early Years Workforce Wellbeing Champion Paediatric First Aid Mental Health First Aid
Natalie	Session Leader, Early Years Educator,	Level 4 Advanced Early Years Workforce Health & Safety Co-ordinator Communications Champion Paediatric First Aid
Hayley	Session Leader, Early Years Educator, Looked After Child Co-ordinator, Physical Activity and Nutrition Co-ordinator	Level 4 Early Years Workforce Looked After Child Co-ordinator Physical Activity and Nutrition Co-ordinator Paediatric First Aid Mental Health First Aid
Harleigh	Early Years Educator Lift off to Language Lead	Level 4 Advanced Early Years Workforce Paediatric First Aid Lift off to Language Lead
Jamie-Lee	Early Years Educator, Oral Health Co-ordinator	Level 3 Early Years Workforce Oral Health Champion
Emily	Early Years Educator	Level 3 Early Years Workforce Paediatric First Aid
Sobia	Midday supervisor	Paediatric First Aid
Nicole	Midday supervisor	Paediatric First Aid
Becki	Midday supervisor	Paediatric First Aid
Ellie	Wrap Around Care Assistant	Paediatric First Aid

We are open for 38 weeks each year. This is divided into 3 terms. Central Bedfordshire Council determine the number of funded weeks are in each term. Autumn term 14 weeks, Spring term 12 weeks, Summer term 12 weeks.

We are open for 5 days each week. The opening times we are open are 7:30am – 6pm

We provide care and education for young children between the ages of 2 and 12 years

How parents take part in the setting Our setting recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All our staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for their children. There are many ways in which parents take part in making our setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with our staff
- contributing to the progress check at age two
- helping at sessions of the setting (When restrictions permit this)
- sharing their own special interests with the children
- helping to provide and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities
- being part of the management of the setting, where appropriate
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting
- joining in community activities, in which the setting takes part
- building friendships with other parents in the setting
- helping to fundraise to enhance our provision and opportunities for the children

Key persons and your child Our setting uses a key person's approach. Operating a keyworker buddy system means all our educators are jointly responsible for a group of children for whom they are particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that the childcare that we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts, they will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at Acorn Pre-School & The Mighty Oaks, they will help your child to benefit from our activities and educational programs.

Learning opportunities for adults As well as gaining childcare qualifications, our staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to date with thinking about early years care and education. We also keep up to date with best practice, as a member of the Early Years Alliance, through *Under 5* magazine Alliance training on EYA Central and other publications produced by the Alliance.

The setting's timetable and routines Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in our setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting
- ensure the safety of each child
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning
- adhere to the rules and values promoted by us
- increasing wellbeing

The sessions: At the start of each session, the children will self register with their name card, we all join together for circle time, we sing our welcome song, go through our golden rules, practise our Makaton signs and talk about what we can do that day / session. We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others increasing their confidence amongst their peers. Outdoor activities contribute to all areas of learning and development, including their health, physical development and understanding the world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child-led and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor space.

We cater for children's individual needs and their style of learning. We have facilities for nap times and quiet areas for some down time.

Snacks and meals We make snacks and meals a social time at which children eat together. Snacks, milk and water are provided every morning and afternoon. Water is available throughout the day. Milk is also served at lunchtime. We plan the menus for snacks so that they provide the children with healthy and nutritious food. Please tell us about your child's dietary needs, particularly any known allergies or food intolerance and we will plan accordingly. Our sustainability fee, charged per funded hours covers the provision of snack. Self funded sessions include the provision of snack.

Clothing / Uniform We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities, which the children are encouraged to use. Children will not be prevented from taking part in a messy activity if they refuse to wear protective clothing, unless there is a health and safety risk. We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this. Branded uniform is available to purchase directly from our office, this is not compulsory. Please name all items and provide spare clothes in a clearly named bag, in case of accidents. We go outside whatever the weather, the children need to have the correct clothing for the weather.

To protect children's feet, we request children do not wear opened toed shoes, flip flops or croc style shoes as these are not suitable for running and climbing. During warm weather, please ensure your child attended wearing clothes covering their shoulders, such as a T-shirt, suncream is applied before school and a wide brimmed hat, such as a bucket hat or legionnaires style hat. We do not recommend basketball style caps as they do not provide enough protection.

Collection / Drop off This is done via the gate entrance. Pre-School drop off times are 9am and 12pm, collection times are 12pm and 3pm. For children also attending wrap around care. Entrance is at the same gate, parents / carers can ring the bell.

For any children who are not collected at their appointed time, we will follow our uncollected child policy, which is available on our website.

Tapestry We use Tapestry online learning journal. Staff will add written observations, pictures and video's of what the children have been doing. Staff will also complete assessment which are published here. Parents / carers are also encouraged to add pictures, videos and notes of what the children have been doing at home.

Policies and procedures Our staff can explain our policies and procedures to you. A full list of our policies are available on our website along with copies of key polices, paper versions are available upon request. Our policies and procedures cover things such as Health and Safety, Equality and Inclusion, Safeguarding, our early years education and childcare practice and how we work with parents and other organisations.

Our policies help us to make sure that the service we provide is of high quality and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and their parents/carers.

Our staff and parents work together to adopt and review the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling our setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community as well as being up to date with the latest legislation.

Information we hold about you and your child We have procedures in place for the recording and sharing of information [data] about you and your child that is compliant with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) as follows:

The data is we collect is:

1. processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject [you and your family]
2. collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed for other purposes incompatible with those purposes
3. adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data is processed
4. accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
5. kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects [you and your family] for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed

6. processed in a way that ensures appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures

When you register your child with us, we will provide you with a privacy notice that gives you further details of how we fulfil our obligations regarding your data.

Safeguarding children Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual harm or neglect, whether that be inside or outside our setting. Our employment practices ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role and help to protect children against the likelihood of abuse in our setting and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents/carers ensures that we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies, when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

Our safeguarding policy is available on our website, along with a full list of all our policies and procedures, including how we would deal with a missing child. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, but we have designated staff who have overall responsibility for ensuring Safeguarding is effective, implemented and monitored.

Our Designated Safeguarding lead is: Lyndsey Black
Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead is: Chloe James

Special educational needs To make sure that our provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special educational needs a child may have. We work to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is: Maureen James
Our Communications Champion is: Natalie Wilkinson
Our Lift off to Language Lead is: Harleigh Cobb

The management of our setting Our setting is a charity and as such is managed by a volunteer management committee. The committee make up the registered person with Ofsted and are responsible for:

- managing our finances
- employing and managing our staff
- making sure that we have, and work to, policies that help us to provide a high-quality service
- making sure that we work in partnership with parents

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all the children who attend our setting. It is our shared forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's plan.

Our registered Charity Number is: 1200985
Our Ofsted registration number is 2782674 (Previously EY371758)

Fees and funding The fees are payable monthly in advance. Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, talk to their key worker, office staff or manager, Lyndsey Black. For your child to keep her/his place at our setting, you must pay the fees. We accept of nursery education funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds; where funding is not received, then our fees apply.

We accept Nursery Education Funding (NEF) for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, as well as 30-hour funding. For children not in receipt of NEF our fees are payable monthly in advance. Fees must still be paid if children are absent. For your child to keep her/his place at our setting, you must pay the fees or complete funding forms and providing any funding codes. Parents and Carers are responsible for ensuring codes are renewed and valid for the term they wish to claim them. We accept payment from Tax Free Childcare, Voucher as well as payment by BACS. Where children are in receipt of NEF, children, children must attend regularly, short absences and holidays are permitted. Non regular attendance could result in Central Bedfordshire Council cancelling funding and parents / carers being liable for payment of the fees.

Registration Fee This is charged at the point of being offered a space and provisionally agreeing sessions. An invoice and registration forms will be sent, on completion of registration forms and payment of the invoice, your child's booking

and sessions will be confirmed. This is a nonrefundable fee and covers the registration of your child, home visit, your child's name cards and All About Me forms to be completed.

Sustainability Contribution Charge Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours of high-quality flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover meals, other consumables, additional hours or services. Therefore, we charge a sustainability contribution fee per funded session. This money is spent on consumables such as snack, outside activity groups, malleable materials, cooking ingredients, yoga, wipes, suncream etc and will go towards covering the cost of all other activities and resources we use to support your children in our setting.

Privacy A copy of our Privacy Notice is available on our website. We are required to collect and retain certain personal information. Our Privacy Notice explains what we collect, why we collect it, who we share your data with, how we protect and store your data, and how long we retain the data.

Starting at our setting

The first days

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, our staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the setting. Our policy on the role of the key person and Settling-in is enclosed with this document or is available from Lyndsey Black.

We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of our setting and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. Our staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or to respond to any questions.

We operate an open-door policy and will always have someone available to help, support and answer any questions you may have.