



September 2008

Dear Parent/carer

Welcome back and we hope that you all had an enjoyable and safe summer break! As we have many new parents this term, we would like to re-cap on some of our procedures that may be unfamiliar to some.

All the staff would like to welcome new and existing families to Abacus Pre-school and hope that your child enjoys their stay with us. Abacus Pre-school have an 'open door' policy allowing you to visit the pre-school at any time to take part in activities- sorry, no siblings. However, as our priority will be to all the children in our care, a member of staff will not be available to discuss any issues regarding your own child during your visit. An appointment may be made with Nicola at a mutually convenient time. Due to health and Safety, NO buggies in the pre-school room. A manager will be at the entrance upon your daily arrival if you wish to advise anything that may affect your child's time with us. As the children's arrival is a significantly busy and important part of the day, all communication regarding fees, sessions, change of address, holidays ect must be made in writing or may be overlooked. To prevent information going astray, we will have clearly labelled boxes for you to file any comments.

All staff will be required to assist with the settling in of the children and may not be able to take your child to the toilet upon their *immediate* arrival at pre-school. In the event they may need to use the toilet at 9.00am prompt, or 12.30pm, please escort them to the adult toilets opposite the secretary's office. Access to the children's toilet is for CRB checked staff only.

Settling in period

If your child becomes distressed whilst in our care, please be assured that every effort will be made to comfort them until you return. We want your child to be happy and safe during their time in pre-school and welcome parental support. If you have any information that may be useful to us when dealing with your child, or if there are any changes in family circumstance, then please speak to us in confidence on 01454 867285.

An EMERGENCY ONLY mobile is available in Emerson's Green to advise of late collection or change of collector. Any other queries must be made to the office and we will inform Nicola Long who manages Emerson's pre-school.

Arrival Times

AM Session	9am - 12.30pm
Day Session	9am - 3.00pm
PM Session	12.30pm - 3.00pm

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To maintain the safety of all children, ensure your child has entered the Pre-School room prior to your departure and not left in the outside play area. This is not used till 9.15am after a full register of attendance has been taken and a member of staff is able to supervise. To ensure we adhere to the correct staff ratio that maintains the safety of all children, may we request your child is collected **promptly** at the end of each session.

Payments

Please note:- all invoices are issued around the 27th of each month but are not due in full until the 7th day of every month. Hand your payment to either Nicky or Jayne in an envelope clearly marked with your child's name or forward to the address stated on the invoice. ALL payments received after this date will be deemed as LATE and will be invoiced an additional administration fee. In the event that Abacus is closed or the 7th falls on a weekend, please forward fees to the address clearly stated on invoice. We may terminate your child's place after a 2 week period in the event of NON payment.

Key workers

Abacus pre-school has a key person system. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she is particularly responsible. Your child's key worker will be the person who works with you to make sure that what the pre-school provides is right for your child's particular needs and interests. As the children are settling into their new environment, for the first few weeks Nicky and Jayne will be sharing joint responsibility for observing the children and monitoring their development. After the first term each child will be allocated to a qualified member of staff who will be able to share with you your child's progress throughout their observation document if you wish. All observations are held in strict confidence and the parent/carer is able to access the information by making an appointment.

Please note that all staff interact and observe the children regardless of key-worker groups.

Theme

Our theme this term is "Welcome to Pre-school" where planning will allow the children and staff ample opportunity to get to know each other and settle into our new group. We would welcome any family photos you may have for us to display on our family board in the "home corner" or any items for our interest table.

Family BBQ

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Abacus @ Winterbourne and Abacus @ Emerson's Green will be holding a 'Family BBQ' on Saturday 13th September 08 - 11.30am - 1.30pm at St Michael's Primary School, Winterbourne. This is an ideal opportunity for you to meet some of our other parents and informally meet the staff. More details will follow.

Parent Notice board

A Parent Notice board is available either near the entrance, or the hall corridor as well as a 'parent policy file' for parents to read if they wish to become familiar with the every day running of Abacus. If you have any suggestions/comments, then speak to a member of staff or leave a written comment on the slip provided and we will respond as soon as we can.

Clothing

As we encourage the children to be as independent as possible during the session, as well as being actively involved in the mixing of paint/making play dough/preparing snacks, it is advisable to dress them in **old** clothing or to purchase a red Abacus T-shirt - order forms are available upon request.

As we are able to use the outside area every day for physical activity, please ensure your child is wearing comfortable clothing and sensible shoes so they are able to join in and enjoy with the rest of the group. Remember fashionable sandals/ flip flops and crocs are not recommended footwear and are proving to be a tripping hazard.

Healthy Eating

Children staying for either morning or full-day care will need to bring a NAMED packed lunch. Please support us with our healthy eating and do not include any chocolate bars/sweets as it is very difficult to manage in a whole group situation. Although we try to encourage all children to eat the lunch you provide, we cannot enforce it, therefore all packaging/leftover food will be returned to your child's box to enable you to monitor their diet.

We appreciate your continued support in providing fruit to share at snack-time. We request that you bring one/two pieces of fruit each week to share with the group as we believe the children will benefit from learning that fruit and vegetables can be an enjoyable healthy alternative to sugary biscuits at snack time. The children have all benefited from helping to prepare a variety of fruit and vegetables, and enjoy using the juicer to make delicious fruit drinks and milk shakes. This valuable learning experience is only possible with your support! Unfortunately, due to lack of supply, this is not always possible. A fruit bowl is readily available at the entrance for your kind donations. As an alternative, the children also enjoy cereals, bread, vegetable ect. Cakes are also always welcome, but due to health & hygiene must be shop bought.

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If we have sufficient supply, we would like to provide an additional afternoon snack as well for all the children. Please ensure we are aware of any allergies. Drinking water will be easily accessible throughout the day, and milk will also be provided.

Named items

Please clearly label all your child's belongings!! A box of unnamed items will be displayed outside at collection and will be disposed of at the end of each term. Remember to label your child's **lunch box** and **drink**, as well as **coats** and **bags**.

Our planned craft during the first term will be to make a 'treasure box' with each child. This will enable them to bring in any items from home to show the rest of the group during 'Show & Tell', encouraging confidence. As space is very limited in the pre-school room, please limit your child to bringing in items that fit into the treasure box, and not any additional toys. Anything surplus to the box will be stored outside.

Can you please bring a shoebox for your child to decorate!

Welcome to Amber Ragdoll

During the last year we have successfully introduced a rag doll by the name of Amber into our pre-school session, aiming to encourage the children to develop their personal, social, & emotional skills, as well as their communication. We use Ali during circle-time and other pre-school play, to provide a familiar friend that any child may need to feel a little more comfortable when in a group environment.

Every child will be able to take Amber home for a night (or any special occasion!) if they wish, and will be encouraged to record in Amber's diary some of the things that they have done together. This may simply be a brief sentence by the parent, followed by a drawing or some mark-making from the child (a photograph can be added if you wish!) This can give your child a focus during group time when they are able to show the other children what they have done. Please inform us if there is a particular time that you would like to take Amber home and we will try our best to accommodate. i.e. Special occasion/birthday/outing. The diaries that have already been completed by the children are available for you to read and enjoy!

Many Thanks

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N. Pontin

J. Baggott

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