

# St Edmund's Roman Catholic Preschool **PROSPECTUS & INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS**



St Edmund's Catholic Preschool  
21 Westgate Street  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 1QG  
Tel: 01284 752700

E-mail: [preschool@st-edmunds.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:preschool@st-edmunds.suffolk.sch.uk)

## PARENT/CARER INFORMATION PACK (please retain for your information):

Welcome to St Edmund's Catholic Preschool. We have provided you with some information to help you and your child to settle into our setting easily. Please be aware, that the information contained in this pack, also forms part of our Terms and Conditions. When you sign the registration form, you agree to all of the Terms and Conditions of St Edmund's Catholic Preschool as set out in this information pack and associated Policies and Procedures (which are available on request).



### Teaching and Learning – What we do and why:

At St Edmund's Catholic Preschool, we respect each child's individual learning needs and put them at the centre of our practice. Everything we do starts with the children. We promote children's independence and encourage them to be creative, independent thinkers, who are motivated to explore and learn. We encourage children to choose their preferred learning environment, whether it's indoors or outdoors; we encourage them to decide for themselves when they eat, what they eat and what they will play with. This is so that your child will be confident to make decisions about things that are important to them in the future.

Various educational philosophies inspire us, such as, Reggio Emilia, HighScope, Steiner and Montessori. We take what we consider to be the 'best bits' and use them to create our own approach to early childhood teaching to make sure your child has the best possible experience in our setting.

### The 'Hundred Languages of Children':

Probably the most well-known aspect of the Reggio Emilia Approach, which informs what we do most strongly, is the belief that children use many, many different ways to show their understanding and express their thoughts and creativity. A hundred different ways of thinking, of discovering, of learning. Through drawing and sculpting, through dance and movement, through painting and pretend play, through modelling and music, and that each one of these *Hundred Languages* must be valued and nurtured.

These languages, or ways of learning, are all a part of the child. Learning and play are not separated. Our approach emphasises hands-on discovery learning that allows the child to use all their senses and all their *languages* to learn.

### The adult is a mentor and guide:

Our role as adults is to observe our children, listen to their questions and their stories, find what interests them and then provide them with opportunities to explore these interests further.

The Reggio Emilia Approach takes a child-led project approach. The projects aren't planned in advance, they emerge based on the child's interests.

We have made a conscious decision to limit our use of commercially produced toys, which have limited learning opportunities. Instead, we use 'loose parts', bits and bobs that can be found at home and in the natural environment to enable your child to create and explore. We follow the National Early Years Curriculum, which is the, 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS), and help your child to learn across all of the seven areas of learning. The areas of learning are Physical, Personal, Social and Emotional, Communication and Language, Mathematics, Literacy, Knowledge of the World and Expressive Art and Design.

We reflect on our own practice and adapt to suit children's needs, responding to changes in thinking from Early Childhood experts within and beyond our own setting. We believe it is important that we reflect on what we do so that we do not just do things because we have always done them. Instead, we think about and change our practice; if there is a different way that works better for the children, we are always happy to try it.

We provide you with regular newsletters to update you on what we are learning in the pre-school. In addition, you will receive home learning ideas through our electronic learning journal system called 'Tapestry'. Home learning topics are linked to what we do in the pre-school. They are not compulsory, but they are designed to enable you to be involved in your child's learning at home and share what you know about your child and their current interests.

**Feeling safe:**

We know that children learn best when they feel secure and are happy; forming close attachments with consistent adults is key to this feeling of security. That's why we will do all we can to help you and your child to settle into the pre-school quickly and without tears. We will allocate you and your child two members of staff who will be your 'Play Partners'. The play partners will be your first point of contact and one of them will be available to meet you during your trial visit and will be on duty to greet your child at circle time each morning, helping them to feel safe. Your play partners will liaise with you; carry out regular observations of your child and use these to plan activities that your child will enjoy and help them to move to the next steps in their development.

**The THRIVE approach:**

At preschool we use the Thrive approach to support children with their social and emotional needs.

Some benefits of using thrive in the early years are:

It creates a secure foundation for life and learning.

Focuses on underlying emotional development to promote wellbeing and learning for all children.

Supports transitions, separations and times of emotional stress on a one-to-one basis.

Provides practical strategies to support young children.

Using thrive online allows us to profile emotional and developmental needs and create action plans for individuals.

**Clothing:**

We remind you that your child is here to play, learn and become independent so that they are ready for school. With this in mind, please make sure to dress them in appropriate clothing. You should bring spare clothing, as he/she will very likely get mucky. Remember, the more mess, the more they've experienced and the greater the fun! Bring spare pants, and nappies/pullups, if they are not yet toilet trained: toilet accidents are not uncommon in a new setting, so don't worry if this is not usual for your child, they'll soon be back on track when they've settled in and become more confident.

You should provide your child with a spare pair of wellies to wear all year round as we encourage children to wear them when they're playing in the mud kitchen in the garden so that they don't spoil their shoes.

Please remember to label all of your child's clothing, including coats, socks and shoes. It's really hard for us to help your child to find their clothes, bags etc if they're not labelled. We have an ever growing 'lost property' box, which is full of children's clothing items that we're unable to return because they're not labelled.

**Forest School:**

Outdoor learning in the forest school meadow class is part of our school DNA; preschool children are able to benefit from the opportunities offered by 'outdoor learning in the forest school area sessions' each week. Research clearly shows the benefits to children of learning through the natural outdoor environment. We cover all areas of the EYFS during our sessions through child led and child centered activities, led by our Trainee Forest School leader. All children attending preschool on Monday mornings will be participating in these sessions. As the school year progresses and children become more capable risk-takers, all children attending Monday sessions will be able to spend longer periods in the Meadow Classroom, allowing them to develop new skills and knowledge.

Children will be expected to participate in our outdoor learning sessions, regardless of the weather, unless the trainee Forest School Leader decides it is unsafe for the session to take place. If your child is not well enough to take part in these sessions, they will need to stay at home that day.

Waterproof trousers are available in preschool. However, you will be expected to provide warm, waterproof clothing (layers are best in the winter) and strong, waterproof footwear for your own child. Please speak to the FS Leader if you need help/advice with this.



### How parents take part in the setting:

We believe that parents are the first and most important educators of their children. Play-partners see themselves as collaborators with parents in providing care and education that is tailored to suit each child's individual learning needs. There are many ways that parents can take part in our setting, to make it a welcoming and stimulating place for children such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with play-partners
- helping out at sessions in the setting (please speak to your play partners for details);
- 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 school 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.

### A Typical Preschool Day:

- A typical day begins with 'Meet and Greet' Circle Time. We sing songs, use our 'listening ears' and plan what we're going to do during the day.
- Children move from their own self-chosen activities throughout the session, taking time out to have a drink and a snack at around 10am – 10:30am. Teachers provide activities that have been designed with children's interests and learning needs in mind. Children choose from The Builders' Yard, The Learning Lounge, Explorers' Corner, Art Area, Story Centre and more.
- 11:30am sees the children back at Circle Time, where we do some Letters and Sounds or Mathematics activities together as a group before getting ready for lunch or home time.
- The afternoon session continues in the same way as the morning session, with free-flow play, where teachers will tailor the activities to suit your child's learning needs and interests. Snack is provided between 1:30pm and 2pm for children to access if they wish.
- The session ends after a review of our learning at Circle Time, a story and favourite songs and rhymes.



### Preschool Story Book:

We have created a special 'story book' for you to use to help your child get ready for Preschool. We hope you enjoy it and it soon becomes your child's favourite book to read. Please let us know if you can suggest any improvements, we can make to help children to settle easily into our Preschool in the future.

**Staff who work in our setting:**

|                  |  |   |
|------------------|--|---|
| Suzy Abbott      | Early Years Practitioner Room<br>Lead<br>Artillerist (Art Specialist)<br>First Aider | Early Childhood Education (Level 3)<br>Montessori (Level 2) |
| Paula Appleton   | Early Years Practitioner<br>First Aider  | BA Early Years (Level 6)                                    |
| Sadie Jones      | Early Years Practitioner<br>First Aider  | BA Hons Early Childhood Education (Level 6)                 |
| Kayleigh Fordham | Trainee Early Years Practitioner   | Health & Social Care (Level 3)                              |
| Clare Ritmeyer   | Early Years Practitioner   | BTEC National Diploma in Childhood<br>Studies               |
| Antonia Pope     | Administrator  | BA Hons Philosophy & Modern Languages<br>(Russian, Spanish) |

**OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION****Equal Opportunities:**

St Edmund's Catholic Preschool has an equal opportunities policy. All staff will value and respect the different racial origins, religions, additional needs, cultures, languages and gender, so that each child is valued as an individual. Please see our full policy for details.

The setting acknowledges the individual needs of all children and their families. However, sometimes we simply have to admit that we cannot provide the right kind of care or learning opportunities for some children/families. We would only take this decision after careful consideration, based on all the information about a child/family's need, in consultation with the family and after taking specialist advice from other professionals as necessary.

**Free Preschool Education Funding:**

All 3 and 4 year-old children are entitled to 15 hours of free preschool education per week. Some families may be entitled to an additional 15 hours, depending upon whether you meet the eligibility criteria set out by the government. To check your eligibility for 30 hours of free preschool education, go to: [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) You must also obtain your 30-hour eligibility code, and enter it onto the Preschool Education Funding Form (PAF) provided by the preschool office.

**Opening hours:**

St Edmund's Catholic Preschool is open for 38 weeks of the year.

Our opening hours are 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday. Term-time only.

8am – 9am Breakfast Club, 9am – 12noon Morning Session, 12noon – 3pm Afternoon Session, 3pm – 6pm Afterschool Club.

Please bring your child to preschool on time for sessions at 9am or 12noon. We would also appreciate it if you could drop and collect children on time as they become upset when they see adults coming and going throughout the sessions and it makes them feel insecure, particularly when they first join us.

**Late collection:**

A fee of £10 will be charged in the event of late collection.

Please let us know before collection time if you are going to be late so that we can arrange for staff to remain with your children.

**Sickness and Emergency Treatment:**

For the health and welfare of the children, we ask that if your child is unwell or has an infectious disease, that you do not bring your child to preschool. We also require you to telephone the preschool to advise us of absences and the nature of your child's illness, so that we can inform other parents where necessary, to avoid cross infection.

**Security:**

No unauthorised persons will be allowed in to the building without a security password to collect a child.

Please ensure that you **do not** let unknown persons into the building on arrival or departure.

**Permission and Information Forms:**

A number of additional forms are available from the preschool office to provide us with permission to administer medication, and provide us with other essential information about your child and their medical, dietary and individual needs. Please complete these and return them to us with the rest of the registration form so that we are well prepared for your child's first day in the setting.

**Medication:**

We ask that if your child needs medication that you bring it to the office on arrival.

You must complete a medicine consent form, giving instructions on times and dosage for each course.

If your child has ongoing treatment you will only need to sign a form once.

**Photographs:**

Please sign appropriate permission forms provided with the registration pack to clarify whether you consent to photographs or videos of your child, alone or in groups with other children, to be used. Please note that if you do not consent, we will not be able to take photos of your child to upload on to Tapestry which is our way of keeping parents updated on the progress of their child. You will still have information on how your child is getting on in Preschool but this will be done in writing without photos.

**Meals:**

Preschool provides breakfast between 8-8:30am which consists of a variety of fresh fruit, choice of cereals, croissants, toast, milk or water.

The children can either bring a packed lunch or they can have a school dinner. If you choose for your child to have a school dinner the cost for this each day is £2.50. You can choose from the school menu for your child on a daily basis. If you choose to send your child with a packed lunch, please remember that we operate a 'Healthy Eating' policy. If you require information about packed lunches that are nutritionally balanced for children under 5, please request a copy of the latest guidance from the preschool office.

Children have free access to drinking water at all times. Please do not send your child to preschool with drinking water bottles. These are a constant source of infection, as children sometimes get theirs confused with others. In addition, sucking on the bottle throughout the day hinders language development and prevents children from developing the muscles in their mouth for clear speech.

For the Afterschool Club we provide a light two course tea. This is served between 3:45pm - 4pm.

Meals consist of sandwiches, beans on toast, wraps, salads, pasta bakes, fresh fruit and yoghurts etc. A menu is available.

Allergen information is available for all meals/snacks provided.

**Conditions of Admission:**

One month's written notice must be given when your child is leaving the preschool and/or Breakfast and Afterschool Club. Invoices are not issued for non-funded sessions or for extra services (lunches, Breakfast and Afterschool Club etc). All fees must be paid for using the school online Scopay Account. Your login details to Scopay will be provided prior to your start date. Please complete the login process and activate your account to enable you to deposit funds and pay fees as they are accrued.

**Child off due to illness:**

If your child is off from preschool or breakfast and after-school club you will still need to pay for your child's sessions.

**Policies and procedures:**

Policies and procedures are in place and are available at all times. They are available to read anytime.

**Safeguarding children:**

St Edmund's Catholic Preschool has the duty to take responsible action to ensure the welfare and safety of its children.

In cases where the preschool staff members have a concern, staff will follow the Suffolk County Council Child Protection procedures (Customer First) and inform social services of their concern.

St Edmund's Catholic Preschool has a safeguarding children's officer in place should you need to speak to them with regard to a safeguarding matter.

**All staff at St Edmund's Catholic Preschool and breakfast and after-school club are checked for suitability prior to being appointed. This includes checking with Criminal Records Bureau for offences under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Volunteers are not allowed unsupervised access to children at any time.**