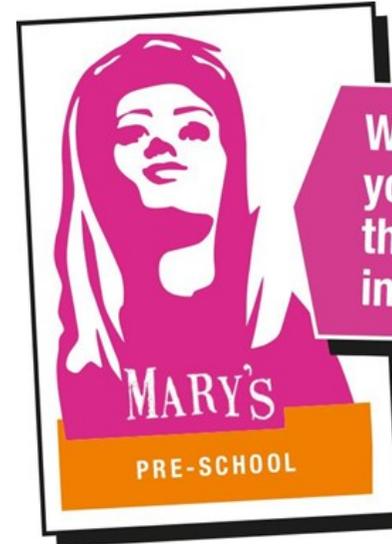


MARY'S



We help give
young children
the best start
in life.

**WELCOME
INFORMATION FOR
PARENTS**

Welcome

Thank you for choosing Mary's Pre-school.

The Pre-school is run by Mary's, which is an independent charity created by St Mary's Church to serve the local community. We would like to welcome you on board and share with you some important information before you start.

It is our aim at Mary's Pre-school to provide a secure and happy environment where all children can develop to their full potential.

The Pre-school:

- provides a bridge between home and school
- encourages independence
- enables each child to develop vital pre-school skills
- encourages social interaction, creativity and curiosity in a happy, safe and stimulating environment

We aim to provide an inclusive environment that equally values children and adults and does not discriminate against anyone in any way. Respect for all staff and children is given and expected.

We have high expectations for all children attending Mary's Pre-school and aim to offer the education best suited to their individual needs from our broad and balanced curriculum.

Sessions run five days a week between 9:00am and 4:00pm during term time. Holidays coincide with the borough's school holidays.

We hope to encourage all parents/guardians to work with us to foster the children's wellbeing and progress.



Important contacts:

When calling, please leave your name and contact details. If you are unable to get through and we shall get back to you as soon as we can

Alison Cuff (Administrator)

Tel: 0207 704 1895

Email: bookings@marys.org.uk Administration queries

Sharon Ellis (Childcare Services Manager)

Tel: 020 7 704 2873

Email: Pre-school@marys.org.uk Day to day running of the preschool

We value our relationship with you, and aim to establish a partnership for the caring and educating of your children. For that partnership to flourish, it is vital that we maintain an open communication channel with each other - it is something we put a lot of effort into.

Remember, we are here to help with any query. Our door is always open. Please visit our website and give us your feedback so we can ensure you are getting a quality service from us.

We look forward to a productive time together!

Mary's Pre-school Staff

environment for all children and your co-operation on all aspects is important. For further information, you can access our safeguarding policies on www.marys.org.uk along with all our other policies. Islington Safeguarding Children's Board produces a range of leaflets advising parents and carers about safety issues. To download view or print these leaflets, go to the Islington Safeguarding Children Board website www.islingtonscb.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx.

Children's rights and entitlements including English as an Additional Language (EAL)

We promote children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our Pre-school that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

We designate a member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) within the Pre-school. We believe all children have the right to learn together and so our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity. We understand all children are unique and should have the opportunity to celebrate and value their own and others' endeavour. Therefore all our children will be given equal access to resources. We use a graduated response system to assess and respond to children's special educational needs. We ensure that you as parents are informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review and will liaise with other professionals involved with your child, including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools. If you have any concerns regarding your child's development, please speak to your key person.

Complaints

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the Mary's Pre-school service then, in the first instance, please raise this with the manager or a member of staff. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found then the complaint should be made in writing to the manager of the Pre-school. Please ask for a copy of Mary's Complaints Policy which can also be found on the parents' notice board in the pre-school or on the pre-school page of the Mary's website—marys.org.uk.

Partnership with parents

To provide the best for your children, we need to work in partnership with you. We can achieve this through a number of routes:

Making use of your skills and gifts. We are always keen for you to be an active part of the Pre-school and to put your talents to use within sessions. Please let the Pre-school Leader know what you would like to do whether helping within a session, DIY, baking cakes for the monthly cake sale, fund-raising, accompanying us on an outing, whatever.

Your support contributes greatly to the shared life of the Pre-school, and builds great practical links with the staff team.

Communication with parents

For us at Mary's Pre-school, communication is our highest priority in order to best support and meet the needs of your child.

This is how we go about it...

Key person system - We nominate a key person as your contact for you. This person makes sure that, within the day-to-day routine, each child for whom they have special responsibility feels individual, cherished and thought about by someone in particular while they are away from home. You, as a parent, will exchange information about your child with your key person. It is easier and much more organised to work as a one-stop shop, only having to speak to one person about your child. However, your child is part of a group, cared for and looked after by all members of staff. Therefore, if your key person isn't available on those rare occasions, please be assured that your child will be looked after and cared for by all other members of staff, who are all very familiar to them. In case of a key person's absence, a co-key person will share vital information with you.

In the first couple of weeks, we will allocate a key person for your child. We believe that the children should choose their favourite member of staff, whom they feel the closest to; therefore, we may exchange the key person within a month from the starting date. There may be rare occasions when you or your child may feel the need to change key persons once more within the year - this is absolutely fine! We will do our best to ensure

you and your child feel secure.

Each day you will receive brief information from your key person about your child's day. This exchange of information with you is very important as we work together to support your child. If there are concerns, we will discuss them with you in a designated meeting or to the side, away from your child at drop-off or pick-up time.

Settling In - We have a settling-in policy which is available on our website. We will give you a copy of this before your child is due to start at the pre-school. This gives more detail about why we settle children in over a gradual period, how you can prepare your child and how we do this together in the Pre-school. Please do ask if you'd like to know more.

Diary/Register - We keep a register of children on site, but additionally, at the door on entry, there is a register to note the time when children are being dropped off/picked up on the day. Please write your time of arrival. We will ensure children are marked out at the end of their session.

Observations – each day, the key person will be observing and collecting information on your child's development and interests. However, once in each term, your child will be a 'focused child' for a week, where all members of staff in the group will be observing him/her. You will be notified when your child is due to be a 'focus child.' If you feel you wish to speak to us about your child's development at any point during the year, we can allocate times for individual meetings. All these observations will be available for you to look at in your child's portfolio which will be given to you to keep at the end of your child's time with us at Mary's.

Newsletter – We create a newsletter twice a term, which updates you on all the fun and creative activities we do, as well as reminds you of upcoming events etc. Please take time to read the valuable information in it. We also have a newsletter for the whole of Mary's that goes out once a month. You can receive this regular update of all that Mary's does by becoming a 'FRIEND' through our website www.marys.org.uk

Photos – Photos that are taken daily are displayed or put in children's individual folders. So that you can see your children in action, you are most welcome to take your child's folder home, but please do take care of it. This folder will be yours when your child leaves the setting. You are more than welcome to bring in family holiday photos to add to their 'all about me' booklets. Please note: as parents you are not permitted for safeguarding reasons to take pictures of any of the children

Pre-school sessions

In everything we do within the session, our aim is to provide the best possible inclusive experience for your child and also for you. We try to see things with the eyes and ears of our children and to work sensitively with both you and your child to enable them to settle quickly into the routines and enjoy their sessions. There is an individual coat hook and name badge for each child and draw for personal items made or brought in.

We are keen to learn of anything that will help in the care of your child and to get children engaged in the session's activities. If there is something you would like to discuss, please speak to your child's key person or the Childcare service manager after a session. Each session contains a balance of group activities, such as "show and tell" or music; free play, where children choose from a varied range of focused activities and in and outdoor play. There is also some individual and large group work. We differentiate some activities by age and ability, which is particularly important for children preparing to enter Reception classes.

Every morning, the room is set up with a range of activities to encourage the children to explore either individually or in a group with their friends. Our environment is as accessible as possible for all children. If access to the setting is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of those individuals.

The plan of activities for each week is posted on the noticeboard in the Pre-school room. Through the session planning, we ensure that Early Learning Goals are covered as part of the Early Years Foundation stage — a government curriculum document. There is more information about this in a letter to you on the noticeboard outside the Johnston room in the corridor. Please take a look or visit the website on http://www.devon.gov.uk/text/eyfs_parents_guide-2.pdf

Safeguarding children

We keep an accident/incident book to record all accidents/incidents on site. Please tell a member of staff about any bruising or injury your child may have which has happened outside of the Pre-school. It is in your child's best interest that we are aware of these matters. If information is shared in an open and honest way between parents and staff, then many concerns can be quickly resolved. If we feel further information is needed, we are required to report it to Children's Social Care. This is not as an accusation, but for further clarification. We aim to provide a safe

labelled bag.

Messy play – We have lots of messy activities! We use bibs/aprons for such activities. However, clothes do tend to get dirty on occasion. As a precautionary measure, please send your children in comfortable clothes which you don't mind their getting a little dirty and/or stained. Also, please make sure we have a sufficient amount of spare clothes at all times for activities such as water play (see checklist of things to bring).

Recycle – We like to recycle - it's good for Planet Earth! This is one of our ongoing projects. We love to reuse empty plastic containers or cardboard/paper containers. Feel free to bring with you items that you think we can build and design with (i.e. milk lids, all kind of lids, buttons, shells, empty kitchen rolls etc.). Also, please feel free to bring old purses, empty washed-out cream bottles, boxes, bags, etc. Thank you!

Policies and procedures - Staff are asked as part of their induction and ongoing training to read and understand a number of policies on sight. These policies are available for you to read. Please request a copy to read on site or visit our website where they are available.

Security on site – Since our room is used for several different community activities, we have to set up and pack away each day. With this mixed use, we are careful about who enters our building. Please be mindful of opening the doors to other people. We will not allow your child to leave with anyone not known to a member of the Pre-school staff. Additional consent forms are therefore available if you have not given consent for someone to pick your child up.



within the setting, including your own. Please do not be offended if you are asked to remove photographic equipment.

Birthdays – You are welcome to bring in a small cake for your child's birthday but please do ensure it is nut free and brought to the kitchen on entry. Children will be able to share this as a snack with their friends and choose some favourite songs to sing together.

Fruit – This is a very important tool for communicating and linking home and Pre-school. In allowing your child to choose a fruit from home each morning to bring to preschool, your child will then share the fruit with their peers, talk about why they have chosen it, its shape, taste, smell and occasionally help staff to cut fruits before eating them together. It is also a great educational tool in encouraging children to eat healthy food.



Packed lunches – Please ensure all packed lunches are packed in a cool bag. We are able to warm food for children, but please understand food must be stored correctly in containers if left overnight and must be put in the fridge. We cannot take responsibility for children being ill from foods brought in from home

Library books – Each week we will provide your child with a book to take home. We would like you to borrow a book together and update your child's records with which book has been taken from the basket. Borrowing a library book on a weekly basis is very important and educational. We wish to instill in our children a love and care for books - the responsibility of the child who chooses a book is to take good care of it, read it, return and exchange it. Reading is an important activity that exposes children to literacy and will have a tremendous impact at a later stage.

Administration & Fees

Pre-school fees are due every month in advance. It is your responsibility to ensure that payments are made on time via standing order, Bank transfer, cash or debit/visa card. Invoices will be sent out on time to your email address each month to support you in knowing what to pay if this is relevant for you. If you do change your email address it is important to inform the bookings team so we change your details on our system. Please ensure fees are paid using the bank details

Sort code: 40-52-40 Account number: 00024763 and use your child's full name as a reference for payment.

Pre-school opening

The Pre-school main opening hour is 9.00am sharp. We are unable to care for children who arrive earlier than 09:00 as each minute of the morning is important for us to prepare for the day. This is equally the same for dropping off children at 1pm unless your child has been previously booked to attend from 12.

Pick-up

Pick-up time is at 12 or 4pm. If you wish to collect your child earlier, outside of any individual arrangements, please let us know at drop-off and buzz the Pre-school (Johnston Room bell) on arrival where we will bring your child to you. If you are late to collect your child, we may need to charge you for an extra hour – extra hours are charged at £10.00 per hour. Persistent lateness cannot be tolerated and it can be upsetting for your child. It is not acceptable to be late at 12 as this disrupts the lunch time for the children staying for lunch and takes staff away from children who are busy eating. If you are going to be late, please call the Pre-school number in good time to let us know. We can also prepare your child for these times.

Pre-school Education Funding (NEF) or 2yr funding

15 hours of free Pre-school Education Funding is received by the setting for all children aged 3 years and above who attend Mary's Pre-school. Please note that we apply for all children automatically and their entitlement for the funding starts AFTER the term they turn 3yrs. If your child is 2 years old, you will need to produce a supporting letter from the local authority stating your free entitlement. Please see our website admissions policy for further supporting information.

Important Information

Illness – our aim is to keep all the children healthy! Please do not send your child to the Pre-school if you feel they are unwell or were ill the night before (eye infections, throat infections, diarrhoea etc. are highly contagious). Please respect our request if we call you during the day asking you to collect your child. We do not administrate medicine unless it is a course of medicine prescribed by a doctor when the child is no longer contagious. Medication has to have parent's signed consent before administering and parents must sign at the end of the day if medication is administered. There is a poster displayed to support your understanding of possible reasons why your child may not be able to come to Pre-school.

Emergency medical treatment - If your child becomes ill or has an accident that may require monitoring or further medical treatment during the day, you will be notified immediately. We will care for your child until you or a representative comes to collect your child. We will ask you to sign a consent form regarding this. All accidents will be recorded and you will be asked to sign the accident form when you come to pick up your child.

Calpol / Ibuprofen – We are unable to give this to children within the setting. If your child has had Calpol, it is an indication they may be unwell. Please do not bring children in if this is the case, as we may have to call you back if they deteriorate later in the day.

Allergies – As parents, you are kindly asked not to bring into the Pre-school food items that may contain nuts, given the severe allergies that some children have. Also, we kindly ask you not to send your children in with chewing gum! Please let us know if your child has an allergy as we may need to put a medical plan in place to support them within the setting.

Personal items from home – Children are welcome to bring in comfort toys. We have a 'show and tell' day on a Wednesday for other toys. However, please bear in mind that they may get lost and that your child may choose to share them with his/her peers. The Pre-school cannot be held responsible for any personal loss of items/clothing, particularly if they are not labelled.

Name Labels - Please clearly label with your child's name all items brought into Pre-school. We do our best not to lose items but things do get lost and mixed up when they are not clearly labelled. Please also put your child's spare clothes in a