



PARENT & CARER INFORMATION PACK

Welcome to Astbury Acorns Pre-School

Starting Pre-School is a very exciting time, but children and parents alike may also feel a little anxious. This information pack is aimed at providing an overview of the day to day running of Astbury Acorns Pre-School and aims to answer any questions that you may have, about your child's transition to our Pre-School.

Our Ethos:

To prepare young children for their future learning experiences within a caring, secure, stimulating environment linked to our Church school.

We aim to:

- Provide high quality care and education for children aged 3 to 4 Years.
- Work in partnership with parents to help children learn and develop.
- Add to the life and wellbeing of the local community.
- Offer the children and their parents a setting that promotes equality and values diversity.

We aim to ensure that each child:

- Is in a safe and stimulating environment.
- Is given sensitive care and attention because of our ratio of qualified staff to children.
- Has the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play , work and learn together.
- Is helped to take forward his/her learning and development by being helped to build on what he/she already knows and can do.
- Has a personal key person who makes sure that they make progress.
- Is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping them to learn and develop.

Child Development and Learning

The provision for child development and learning is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, issued by the Department for Education and Skills. The Foundation Stage is a framework for children from birth to five years. This curriculum is set out in a document published by the qualifications and curriculum authority (QCA) and the Department for Education and Skills, called Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Our setting uses the Early Learning Goals and provides a range of play activities which help children to progress in each area of learning. Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research shows to be the means

by which children think. In some of these activities, children decide how they will use the activity, and in others an adult takes the lead helping the children to take part in the activity.

There are seven areas of learning that must shape educational programmes in Early Years settings. These areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity, enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and grow.

The Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others to form positive relationships and develop respect for others. To develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- Communication and Language Development – Involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- Physical Development – provides opportunities to be active and interactive, to develop coordination, control and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The Specific Areas

- Literacy – Involves encouraging children to link letters and sounds and begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials to help ignite their interest.
- Mathematics – provides children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shape, space and measure.
- Understanding the World – guides children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- Expressive Arts and Design – enables children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas, feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, dance, role play and design and technology.

For each area, the guidance sets out Early Learning Goals. These goals state what is expected for children to know, and be able to do, by the end of the reception year.

Staffing

Astbury Acorns Pre-School is fully integrated with school with close involvement from Miss Blythe (head teacher) and a team of School Governors. Astbury Acorns PreSchool is led by Mrs Andrea Armitt as Supervisor, and supported by the Pre-School team.

We maintain the ratio of staff to children: children aged 3 and above - 1 adult: 8 children

No more than 15 children can attend the morning session and no more than 15 children can attend an afternoon session. Once we are over-subscribed, we will maintain a waiting list.

Sessions and Fees

We are open for 38 weeks of the year – please ask for term dates and INSET days. We are open from 9am to 3.15pm Monday to Friday. Our pricing structure is:

Morning Session 9am - 12:00noon £13.50 (Children attending MereKats start at 8:45am)

Afternoon Session 12:00 – 3:15pm £13.50

This is reviewed annually every January.

Admission to the Pre-School is managed by Astbury St Mary's Primary School Local Governing Body. Any parents or carers wishing to apply for a place for their child must complete the relevant application form and hand it in to the School Office.

Invoices – as required

You will be invoiced for each half term. Details of how to pay by bank transfer are detailed on your invoice. Fees are non-refundable unless circumstances are deemed exceptional. They must be paid by the date given on invoice (usually 14 days). Where fees are overdue, a 10% charge may be added. Please note, if after two attempts have been made to recoup the payment without success, your child's place will be forfeited (unless there are very special circumstances).

Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has been absent over a long period of time please talk to Miss Blythe who will deal with each individual case. Difficulty in paying fees will be dealt with by Miss Naomi Smith, the School Business Manager, who will treat each case with the strictest confidence.

If you wish to withdraw your child from Astbury Acorns Pre-School, **four weeks written notice** is required or full fees in lieu (this notice period does not apply if your child only attends for the Universal 15 free hours). Please ensure Mrs Armitt and the School Business Manager are both copied in on such emails: Mrs Armitt aarmitt@astbury.cheshire.sch.uk and sbm@astbury.cheshire.sch.uk

Merekats

We offer 'wrap around care' at the start and end of the day through Merekats provided in the school hall 7.30am – 8.45am and 3:15pm – 6:00pm. Merekats work in conjunction with school to offer breakfast/ after school club to children from age 3+ in term times. Merekats also offer a holiday club daily in the school holidays.

<https://www.astburyschool.org.uk/page/astbury-merekats/53398>

Please note, Merekats is run separately to Acorns and Astbury School. Any bookings or messages for Merekats must be done directly and not through Acorns or School staff.

Child Care Vouchers

We accept payment through the child care voucher scheme. Please talk to Miss Naomi Smith (Business Manager) in the school office who will be able to give you the information to register your company.

Late collection

Whilst we understand that a busy parent may be running a few minutes late, please try to be prompt when collecting your child. Late collections cause all sorts of problems for staff and some children may become distressed if not collected on time.

There is a late collection charge of **£5.00** for every 10 minutes.

Please leave the school grounds directly after collecting your child to enable staff to lock the gate to ensure the security of all children. If you know that you are going to be late please ring school on 01260 272528.

Funding

30 hour funding is available for families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns the equivalent of 16 hours a week at the national minimum or living wage, and earns less than £100,000 a year. 30 hour funding provides the child with 30 hours of free childcare per week, over 38 weeks or the equivalent number of hours across more weeks per year.

3 year olds will be able to start their free hours at Astbury Acorns Pre-School in the September, January or April following their third birthday.

Your child's birthday must be before:

31 March to be eligible for free nursery education from the Summer Term (April)

31 August to be eligible for free nursery education from the Autumn Term (September)

31 December to be eligible for free nursery education from the Spring Term (January)

These are the cut off dates. If your child's birthday is for example on the 1st or 2nd January and the term starts on the 5th January, unfortunately their funding will not start

until the Summer term after Easter because they have passed the cut-off date of 31st December.

It is parents' responsibility to ensure the appropriate funding is in place when applying for a place at Astbury Acorns. The Cheshire East Early Years team can be contacted on: 0300 123 5033.

Application to Reception class

Admission to Acorns Pre-School does not guarantee admission to the Reception class at Astbury St Mary's. Applications for Reception must be made by parents/carers on a separate application and submitted to Cheshire East Council by the statutory deadline.

Clothing

Please try to dress your child in comfortable clothing to enable them to make the most of their time at Astbury Acorns Pre-School and be prepared to get messy! We love our outdoor environment and use it in all weathers. We do have sets of waterproof clothing for children to wear. Leaving a spare set of clothes on your child's peg and keeping a pair of wellies in Pre-School would be a great help. Please ensure these are clearly labelled with your child's name. Jumpers and hoodies with the school logo are available from DP Sportswear in Congleton if you would like to purchase these for your child.

Learning Journeys

Staff keep a learning journey for each child. Your child's learning journey helps us to celebrate together their achievements and to work together to provide what their next steps are for learning. To do this staff will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interest and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress.

Learning Opportunities for Adults

The Pre-School staff take part in training to help them to keep up to date with developments in early years care and education.

Routines

Our Pre-School believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the session 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, and provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

Explore and Play

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose to work at a range of activities and 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 small adult led 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.

Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have an opportunity and are encouraged to take part in outdoor child chosen and adult led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor environment.

Snacks and Meals

We make snacks and meals a social time at which children eat together supported by an adult. We offer fruit each day. Other snacks (such as toast / teacakes) can be purchased from the kitchen through ParentPay (our online cashless payment system). Alternatively, please send your child with a snack which is healthy and nutritious such as rice cakes, bread sticks, a piece of fruit – please avoid crisps and biscuits. Please tell us about your child's dietary needs and we will make sure that these are met.

We take the children to eat their lunch in the school dinner hall and a member of staff supports them. At lunch time, children can eat a school dinner or they can bring a packed lunch. Parents and carers are requested to provide each child with a drink bottle to allow free drinking water throughout each session.

A hot school dinner can be purchased via ParentPay for £2.40. All snacks and meals from the kitchen need to be booked onto ParentPay by 8am on the day required.

Policies

Copies of our policies are available for all parents and carers to read, they can also be found on our website. Our policies help us to make sure that the service provided by Astbury Acorns Pre-School is a high quality one and an enjoyable and beneficial experience to each child.

The staff work together to adopt the policies and all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review on the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling the setting to provide the quality service for its members and the local community.

Special Needs

Staff in the setting work to the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and the Special Needs code of practice (2014). Mrs Simpson is Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) within school and supports the Astbury Acorns Pre-School team. As part of the settings policy, to make sure that its provision meets the needs of

each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have. Parents must inform us of children's medical background and known special needs.

Toileting

Changing facilities are extremely limited and your child needs to be toilet trained or well on their journey of using a toilet. Please let the Pre-School staff know if your child has any particular toileting requirements.

Administration of Medication

Our medicine policy advises you that children taking prescribed medication must be well enough to attend the setting. **Only prescribed medication can be administered.** It must be in date and prescribed for the current condition. Please ensure that your child's prescribed medicines are stored in the original containers and are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Parents will be asked to give prior written permission for the administration of medication. The administration is recorded accurately each time it is given and is signed by staff. Parents must sign the record form at the end of each session to acknowledge the administration of medication.

Sickness

We have a policy for the exclusion of sickness of ill or infectious children. This includes procedures for contacting parents or other authorised adults if a child becomes ill whilst in the care of Astbury Acorns Pre-School.

- We don't provide care for children who are unwell, have a temperature, sickness and diarrhoea, or who have an infectious disease.
- Children with sickness or diarrhoea should be kept from Astbury Acorns Pre-School until they are free of symptoms for 48 hours.
- Children with headlice are not excluded, but must be treated to remedy the condition.
- Parents are notified if there is a case of headlice in the setting.
- Parents are notified if there is an infectious disease such as chicken pox.
- Staff members suffering from sickness and diarrhoea do not attend work until they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours.

Please refer to the following table for guidance:

Infectious Disease	Symptoms	Incubation Period	Infectious Period	Prevention and control.
Chicken Pox	Fever for 1-2 days. Small red pimples will appear and turn into blister	10-21 days	A few days before the rash develops and not more than six days after the first crop pimples appear.	Do not give aspirin it can cause a liver reaction. Child to be kept at home during fever and rash.
Measles	Cough, runny nose, high fever for four days, then a rash at the back of the neck.	7-14 days	Child is infectious until 7 days after developing the rash.	MMR Vaccine, Child to be kept at home.
Rubella	Headache, fever, cough, sore throat	2-3 weeks	1 week before to 5 days after onset of rash.	MMR Vaccine, child to be kept at home.
Mumps	Swollen, painful gland behind ear, Dry mouth, acute pain on swallowing. Face swelling.	14/28 days	1-2 days prior to the appearance of the swelling five days after.	MMR Vaccine, Child to be kept at home.
Hand, foot and Mouth disease	Sores in mouth, tongue, throat lips. Clear blister on fingers, hands, toes and feet	3-5 days	1 week or so.	Provide bland food and drink while mouth is sore.
Acute viral Gastroenteritis	Diarrhoea and vomiting	1-3 days	Entire period of infection.	Isolate during diarrhoeal disease. Child to be kept at home for 48 hours after final episode.