



Registered Charity Number 1155711

0779 355 4340

September 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

A special welcome to all the families joining us for the first time and a warm welcome back to those of you who were with us in the afternoon sessions last year! We hope you all had a lovely summer. All the team would like to say a huge 'Thank You' for all your generous donations and gifts to staff at the end of the summer term.

On our first newsletter of the year, we try to give you as much general information as possible, to help you get to know (or refresh your memories) about our routines and procedures.

Safety on the school site

The Pre-School should be accessed by using the green pedestrian gate situated by the pelican crossing in Ashley Road or by using the green pedestrian gate in Worple Road. Please use the pathways provided and do not allow your children to walk or play in either of the car parks. For health and safety reasons, please do not walk in through the vehicle entrances. Please always supervise your children when they are on the school site and do not allow them to run ahead of you out of the gate.

There is no parking on the St Martin's School site for any parent/carer, unless with prior permission in an emergency. The car parks both belong to the main school and parents or carers with a blue badge can make an application to the main school office for permission to park. We would encourage you to do this straight away, if required, as the school will not permit entry to the car parks unless permission has been given!

Also, please do not park in the area just off Ashley Road around the entrances to Atkins and the Junior School or in the vehicle entrance from Worple Road.

Entrance Procedure – AFTERNOON CHILDREN

We look forward to welcoming our new afternoon children as they start Pre-School for the first time! You will have already received a letter confirming your child's start date. Our afternoon children start gradually over the first five weeks of the autumn term, to help with their settling-in.

On arrival children should select their photo card from the table in reception and hang it on a peg with their coat and bag. Please remember to pick up any letters or forms that are under your child's name card and respond to these, if necessary, as soon as you are able.

To help your child to settle in, we may ask you to come back before the end of session. If we feel that your child needs to be picked up before the end of session, staff will bring him/her out to you. This gives us the opportunity to let you know how your child has been and ensures that no unnecessary upset is caused to the children that are still in Pre-School.

Entrance Procedure – MORNING CHILDREN

A very important part of Pre-School is that children manage their own belongings and develop independence to do things for themselves. With this in mind, please can we ask you to encourage your child, on arrival at Pre-School, to select their own name card from the table in reception. Children should bring their name card into Pre-School, peel off their photograph and stick this to the registration (Velcro) board on the right-hand side. They should then place their name card in the basket above the registration board.

Please encourage your child to choose their own peg for their coat/bag and hang their belongings up themselves. This is a fantastic learning opportunity to develop your child's independence. We will now have an "overflow" section on our new trolley for bags that cannot fit on the rack below the coat pegs.

If children are staying to Lunch Club, then they should place their lunch bags on our new trolley, which will be in reception when you arrive.

Please remember, as parents/carers, to collect any letters or artwork that are under your child's name card. There will normally be a lot of letters/forms at the beginning of term, so please respond to these as quickly as you can!

As you drop off your child to our morning sessions, we ask you to ensure that older siblings wait in reception, as the area just inside Pre-School is small and easily gets crowded.

Collecting Your Child

As we share our main entrance with the Children's Centre, we do all we can to ensure that families who are accessing activities at the Centre, together with the staff working in the office, are not compromised in any way. Please collect your children promptly at the end of session and leave the Centre reception area quickly and quietly. If you do have to wait for a short time before collecting your child, please respect the Children's Centre staff who are working in the Centre office and any groups that are meeting in the activity room, by waiting quietly.

Whilst parents are waiting outside the Centre before the main doors are opened, we ask that you do not stand in front of the doors to the Children's Centre, or the windows to the left of the building. This allows people who are visiting the Centre to enter or leave the building easily. We appreciate your help and understanding.

When collecting at the end of the **morning session** your child will be shown out to you in reception. Unfortunately, with thirty parents collecting their children, we don't have the space for you all to come in! If you would like to speak to any of the staff, you are welcome to come into Pre-School, but please wait until the rest of the children have been shown out to their parents. The staff who are manning the door and taking the register of children leaving, should be vigilant and should not be distracted until all the children have gone.

With fewer children in our **afternoon sessions**, it is possible for parents to come in at the end of the session to meet your child. Your child is asked to wait on their chair for you to go to them. Please do not call them from the door – please go and collect them from their chair. This is for your child’s safety.

Children’s Bags

Our peg space is very limited, so **SMALL** bags are very much appreciated! **Please clearly name your child’s bag on the outside**, together with all clothes and shoes. Do not put any medicines, sun cream, food, drink, plastic bags, money, toys or sweets in your child’s bag. Please do provide nappies, wipes, (**not** nappy sacks), extra underwear, a spare set of clothes and, if you feel it’s needed, a comforter. We have additional space for bags on the shelves under the coat racks and on the blue trolley (bottom shelf) if the peg space is crowded when you arrive with your child.

Tapestry Online Learning Journals

Our practitioners use an online learning journey, known as Tapestry, to record your child’s individual progress. We record an average of one observation for your child for each week of any given term. However, as children are all individuals, you may find that some weeks you may see more than one observation, whilst other weeks there are no observations recorded!

As you know your child best, we would welcome your input to Tapestry. The sort of information we would like to see would reflect the interests and learning of your child during their play and interactions outside of pre-school. This enables our practitioners to gain a broader view of your child and develops our ability to support their learning and wellbeing whilst at pre-school.

Please note that Tapestry is your child’s individual learning journey and should be used to record information about your child only. Occasionally, other children may appear in photographs linked your child’s profile. Please respect the privacy of other children and families by refraining from downloading photographs to share on social media or any other digital platform.

Please do not use Tapestry to correspond with the pre-school as we cannot respond via this platform. You are always welcome to talk to us at the beginning or end of each session. If you require a longer discussion, you are always welcome to make an appointment.

We hope that you will enjoy using Tapestry as much as we do!

Absence

Please ensure that you inform us (preferably before 08.45) if your child is unable to attend Pre-School. If we haven’t heard from you by 9.15am (morning children) or 1.15pm (afternoon children) then we are legally obliged to contact you and find out where your child is. This obviously takes time out of session, so please do try to remember to call or text us. All absences are recorded to comply with safeguarding regulations.

Buggy Park

We ask that if you are leaving buggies in the buggy park that you fold them up. We share use of the buggy park with the Children’s Centre and it is sometimes over-flowing with buggies

when the Children’s Centre parents arrive! Child scooters can only be left in the scooter parks (there is a scooter park at the end of the garden area, near the Ashley Road entrance or alternatively next to the site manager’s house near to the Infant School). Please do not leave trikes or bikes. Buggies or push-chairs cannot be brought into the Children’s Centre reception.

Internet Banking is Available When Making Payments to Pre-School

The Pre-School can accept payments made by BACS (internet banking) for fees/donations/lunch club etc. The details for payments are as follows:

Account Name:	St Martin’s Pre-School CIO
Sort Code:	40-52-40
Account Number:	00024891
Reference:	Please use your child’s name to reference the payment

Payments can continue to be made to the Pre-School via childcare vouchers and cheques; please make cheques payable to ‘St Martin’s Pre-School CIO’. It is not necessary to write separate cheques for different payments, they can all be lumped together providing a breakdown is written on the back of the cheque. Cash payments can also be accepted; please make sure you are given a receipt for these.

Free Entitlement Funding for Two, Three and Four-Year Olds

Your child will be eligible for funding from the beginning of the term after their third birthday. Nancy will issue you with the relevant form to complete each term. Please remember that a new declaration must be signed each term for all children who are eligible for funding. There are always tight deadlines to meet when submitting our funding applications, so please return your signed declaration forms to Nancy straight away. Some families may also be entitled to Free Early Education for their two-year-old. More information on this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/free-early-education>

Snack bar

We rely on parents to provide donations of fruit or healthy snacks once a week for the children to share. For example, we would like bunches of bananas, bags of apples, oranges, pears, peppers, cucumbers, carrots, strawberries, raspberries, grapes, breadsticks, crackers, cheese, raisins or rice cakes. Please can we ask that you don’t bring in chocolate, cakes or biscuits as we promote healthy eating.

We have up to 50 children here each day and rely on parents donating generously so that there is enough for each child to enjoy a snack at the snack bar, which is open each day during session. Please make sure that no foods brought in contain sesame seeds or nuts and no kiwi fruit as we have children with allergies. Please place your donations in the fruit bowl on the table or trolley in reception. Thank you!

Lunch Club

We offer a Lunch Club for our morning children which runs from 11.45am until 12.20pm each day. The cost is £3.60 per day, but places must be booked in advance and are paid for in half term blocks. Unfortunately, we cannot offer refunds for any missed sessions. Lunch should be provided in a named container/bag and should not be food that requires heating, as this is not possible. Please do not include any food or cereal bars containing nuts as we have children with allergies. Lunch bags should be left on the trolley in reception, on arrival at Pre-School. Children should be collected promptly, from the side garden gate, no later than 12.20pm.

Waiting list

Our Pre-School remains popular and, as most of you will already know, we have long waiting lists! Please register your younger siblings straight away. We have so many parents who contact us when their child is two years old and find they are too late, so if you know of someone who is interested in our Pre-School, please let them know that they must register their child early!

Birthdays

We are often asked how we celebrate children's birthdays at Pre-School.

We have a large (pretend) cake with real candles, which the children love! We all join to sing Happy Birthday to the birthday child, followed by counting and blowing out the candles. The birthday child receives a card and small gift from Pre-School, which is presented to them by a friend.

Parents sometimes ask if they should bring in cakes or sweets for their child to share with the other children. This is not necessary and can prove difficult as we have several children with allergies who cannot have cakes or sweets. We also have some parents who do not like their child to have cakes or sweets, which has caused a few problems in previous years.

Special Days

Each morning child is allocated a 'special day', usually one each term. They are invited to bring in a toy, book or something special to talk about. They get a special day sticker and 'special' jobs to do. More information and dates are given in a separate letter.

Ask Me About Stickers (afternoon children)

We use "Ask Me About Stickers" for our afternoon children. Many children will leave Pre-School wearing an 'Ask Me About....' sticker, to encourage them to tell you about something that they have done at Pre-School that day. Parents may also like to send their child to Pre-School with an 'Ask Me About.....' sticker so that our practitioners can also do the same! Parents can use their own stickers, but if you would like some of our Pre-School ones to use, please let Hayley or Nancy know.

Superstar Board (morning children)

We have a Superstar Board for the morning children, to celebrate their achievements at Pre-School. The Superstar Board will be in reception, so look out for this when you are dropping off or collecting your child!

Activities and Dates for Your Diary

At Pre-School, we follow the ‘in the moment planning’ philosophy and provide a rich learning environment based on the children’s interests and needs. Themes and adult-initiated activities/learning opportunities are therefore fluid and constantly subject to change. This supports children to learn through play, as we find out what their interests and needs are and provide appropriate activities and interventions.

Our first theme for the term is “All About Me”. Among numerous other learning opportunities, we will use the theme to explore families, body parts, emotions, senses and to look at the similarities and differences between ourselves and others.

Week starting 17th September - “special days” will start for our morning children (details will be given in a separate letter). Our fun football sessions will also start for morning children on Tuesday 18th September and will continue on Tuesday mornings throughout the Autumn Term.

Week starting 24th September – Harvest

Please can we ask families to donate food or toiletries, which we then take to the Leatherhead Night Hostel.

Donation List

As a Registered Charity we rely on parent donations and contributions to ensure our viability. Once or twice each half term, we put a “donation list” in reception. We would be very grateful if you could purchase and donate one or two of the items needed. Thank you!

Contact details

If you need to contact us during a Pre-School session, or to let us know that your child is unwell, please call 0779 355 4340. If you need to contact Nancy, our administrator, she is available most mornings at Pre-School or you can email her at admin@stmartinspreschool.com.

If you have any concerns about your child at all, you are always welcome to speak to your child’s key person, or Hayley Dawson our Manager, or Wendy Pearch our Deputy Manager.

Kind regards

St Martin’s Pre-School Team