

Peartree Way Nursery School

"Friendship, Fun & Learning for Life"

Peartree Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 9EA
Tel:(01438) 353897

www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk

admin@peartreeway.herts.sch.uk



School Handbook

Thank you for choosing Peartree Way Nursery School. We are so excited about your child joining us. We hope this handbook helps to answer many questions you have as your child starts their school life journey with us.

Peartree Way Nursery School is a Hertfordshire County Council Nursery School. We provide a wide range of experiences to encourage the children's self-esteem, social skills and a developmentally appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of all your children.

Did you know? . . . Peartree Way Nursery School was built in 1966 by local residents.

Welcome to Peartree Way Nursery School.

Peartree Way is the only maintained nursery school in Stevenage and is an integral part of the community in Shephall. I feel very lucky to be Headteacher here, as I have the chance to see children grow and develop into independent learners, ready to take their next step in their educational career, as well as work with a great team of knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff. The children are at the heart of everything we do and positive well-being for all is vital to make strong progress.

Our ethos of 'Friendship, fun and learning for Life' is reflected in our excellent provision and staff strive to respond to children's interests and needs to make the most of every learning opportunity. Ofsted stated that 'The school provides a happy and vibrant learning environment where children are well cared for and are encouraged to do their very best. Children behave extremely well. They are respectful, courteous and supportive of the learning of others.'

The first five years of a child's life are the vital foundations from which all future progress is built on and the dedication of the staff and you as parents are fundamental. Children learn best when they are healthy, happy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults who care for them.

Parents express positive views about our school and one parent has written: 'Peartree Way is a lovely setting, welcoming to both children and their families. I have felt completely reassured by the level of attention both my children have received. The staff have an amazing warmth, which has enabled the whole experience to be so magical.'

Other comments from parents are included on our website and I encourage you to read about how other parents feel about Peartree Way – there is no better recommendation for a school than the voices of parents and children.

We want every parent to know that their child is important to us here at Peartree Way, and that no concern is too small. Please come in and talk to us about any aspect of your child's welfare, wellbeing or development; by working together the results will have a positive impact on your child's development and learning.

If you would like to visit Peartree Way to experience the Nursery and Pre-School in action, please ring to make an appointment so we can share the fun and stimulating learning environment.

Deborah Willcox - Headteacher

The A - Z of School Life at Peartree Way

Let's start with our Values and Ethos . . .

At Peartree Way Nursery School we aim to:

- create a happy, safe, secure and stimulating learning environment which is valued and in which each child and adult can develop to their full potential;
- promote self-esteem, self-respect and a respect for others, including their beliefs and cultures;
- provide the highest quality Early Years education for all children in our care and maintain a high level of Early Years staff expertise;
- acknowledge that parents/guardians and carers are co-educators and develop close working partnerships between home, school and the wider community;
- offer equal opportunities for all children and adults to encourage lifelong learning;
- promote a healthy lifestyle;
- use careful observations of children's play in the planning for individual learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage towards the Early Learning Goals
- become an effective partner with a range of agencies to ensure easy access to and continuity of services for our school community.

ADMISSIONS

Our Admissions Policy is available on our website www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk

Nursery Admissions - Admission to the nursery is administered by the Nursery school. Parents can apply for a Nursery placement online via our website www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk

We offer universal 15 hours free childcare & early years education for 3 and 4 year olds, as well as 30 hour placements for eligible children.

30 Hours Placements - If you meet the criteria, you may be able to access 30 hours free childcare for your child. For more information see www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
Our 30 Hours funded offer is as follows – Monday to Friday 8:30am-2:30pm, term-time only (parents to provide a nut-free packed lunch). You can choose to extend your child's session by one hour to 3:30pm at a cost for £25 per week, payable half-termly in advance.

Pre-School Admissions - Admission to the Pre-School is administered by the Nursery School. A waiting list is in place for Pre-School places. If you would like to add your child to the waiting list, please email admin@peartreeway.herts.sch.uk with your child's name, address, date of birth, parent(s) name and contact details.

Explorers & Voyagers - Children can join us the term after they turn 2 and we are able to offer 15 hours per week FREE early learning to children the term after their 3rd birthday (subject to eligibility). These children are given the opportunity to play and learn within small groups with other similar aged children. A designated, well-experienced key-worker will be assigned to your child. These sessions are a great way of starting the Early Years learning journey and preparing your child for Nursery.

Explorers - A place to learn through play for 2 – 3 year olds in the safety of a well-planned, nurturing and awe-inspiring environment with caring, supportive adults where opportunity to explore natural curiosity and develop own interest is embraced. With a focus on well-being and Personal, Social and Emotional development we will

support your children in the development of foundational skills such as communication and language, core muscle development and motor skills, early maths and literacy such as developing a love of books and mark making opportunity and lots of time to explore and understand the world in our safe but challenging outdoor space.

Voyagers - A chance to secure foundational skills in the wider environment that is Peartree Way Nursery before your child reaches nursery age. As your child grows and learns we will explore and provide challenge to their learning based on their individual development and interests. The Nursery environment is much bigger therefore offers more opportunity through discovery to develop skills in all areas, opening up many more experiences such as the expansive outdoor play and learning area. Being part of the larger group of children enables the development of a greater circle of friendship groups and opportunity to learn with, and from older children.

ACCIDENTS

Minor first aid accidents are treated in school. We do not use antiseptic cream or cotton wool. Most of our staff are trained first-aiders and a rolling training programme is in place. All minor accidents are recorded and parents are informed at the end of the session. If your child suffers a bump to the head during their session, we will treat the child accordingly, make a phone call to a contact on their emergency contact card, issue a head bump form and attach a head bump wristband.

If your child needs his/her clothing changed, we have a supply of clean clothing available. Please return these to the school after washing.

ADVERSE WEATHER

In the event of heavy snow, staff that live locally aim to travel by foot. Therefore, if we have the correct number of qualified staff to open the nursery we will always try to. However, should you wish to keep your child at home to enjoy the snow please do so! Please travel only if essential.

Keep an eye on our FACEBOOK pages and your emails for up to date information on our snow status.

For news on school closures please tune into:

BBC Three Counties Radio – www.bbc.co.uk/threecounties/local_radio

ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE & COLLECTION

Children should be brought to and collected from school by a responsible adult. If you are not collecting your child, please tell us who to expect as we will not let your child go with an adult that is unknown to the Nursery staff without checking with you first.

In an effort to promote independence, we would ask you to encourage your child to do their “big boy/girl walking” when they are in the school grounds, rather than being carried by you. When they arrive, please let them choose if they want to take their coat off – they may choose to play outside first.

Our doors open at 08:30am and 12:30pm at the start of sessions and re-open at 11:20pm and 15:20pm. Opening the gates before the end of the session helps ease parking in Peartree Way.

If your child is upset about you leaving, the best approach for them is for you to find their keyworker or an adult from the setting. Please say a clear goodbye and say you will come back soon and then leave. Whilst we absolutely appreciate how difficult it is to see your child upset, they will often recover more quickly once the moment of leaving them has been and gone. You are always very welcome to phone the Nursery once you get home to check things are ok and we will always phone you if we think we need to. We have lots of boxes of tissues placed around the Nursery if Mums (or Dads) need them 😊

Prompt collection of your child is very important. Children can become upset if their adult is late collecting them. If you are going to be late, please call the school office ☎ 01438 353897.

Late Collection Fee

It is essential that minimum staffing ratios are maintained at all times. If a child is collected late, then ratios may be exceeded and staff may have to stay on beyond the end of their shift. When this occurs we will pass this cost on to the parents at £10.00 up to first 10 minutes and then £5.00 each subsequent five-minute period.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the way in which staff make decisions about children's learning and is an integral part of our teaching.

We do this by:

- observing, listening, interacting and talking
- keeping samples of children's work
- collecting information from parents and other adults
- recording children's development in all areas of the curriculum
- reporting to parents
- sending transitional records to your child's primary school

ATTENDANCE

Children really do make the most of their nursery education if they attend regularly and punctually. If your child has to miss school through illness or other reasons, please email admin@peartreeway.herts.sch.uk or ☎ 01438 353897.

BABIES & BUGGIES

All prams and buggies must be left outside the building for Health and Safety reasons (other adults or children may fall over them in the close confines of the cloakroom).

BEHAVIOUR

Our school has a positive approach to discipline and encourages children to develop respect, understanding and tolerance. We encourage caring and sharing and appropriate behaviour within agreed boundaries.

By treating everyone with respect and acknowledging feelings, we hope to encourage the children to be empathic to others and raise their awareness of the consequences of their actions. A copy of our Behaviour Policy is available in the *Statutory Information* area on the school website.

BIRTHDAYS

We celebrate each child's birthday. They receive a card from their group and have a chance to blow out the birthday cake candles. If you would like to send in sweets or small cakes for your child's birthday, you are welcome to do so. Please make sure these do not contain nuts.

CHILD PROTECTION

Peartree Way works in partnership with parents to support children in every way possible.

However, the Children's Act 2004 places a clear responsibility on schools to ensure that they work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. As a result, if concerns are raised within the school, or a child or parent reports a situation involving possible abuse, we would not be able to guarantee confidentiality. It would have to be referred on to Children's Services. This is in line with Government and Hertfordshire policy.

CIRCULARS

The school sometimes receives letters and flyers from organisations, agencies and charities which are organising activities for children to take part in. We do from time to time send children home with these letters and/or leaflets. This does not mean we are approving or recommending the activity. We are only acting as a distributor. Please make careful checks yourself as to their suitability.

CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR

Please, please name your child's clothes . . . last year we had 4 un-named coats in exactly the same style from Asda!!

Our uniform is non-compulsory, but if you would like to buy it, it is available via the uniform area on our website <http://www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk/nursery-uniform/>

Children need easy "on-off" clothing . . . zips and buttons can be tricky for little fingers and cause delays if they need to undress quickly to use the toilet!

Outside play - in Autumn/Winter children have to wear welly boots outside. We do have lots of spare welly boots, but if you would prefer to send your child with their own pair, please name them.

Inside play - easy "on-off" shoes/trainers (no laces please). As we ask children to wear welly boots outside, so children don't need plimsolls and can just wear their shoes/trainers inside.

Nappies – If your child wears nappies, please send them in side fastening nappies and **not pull-ups** please, as it is time demanding for staff to fully undress children. You will also need to provide us with a supply of nappies, wipes and sacks in a drawstring bag.

A change of clothing in a shoe bag is helpful (no rucksacks please as children share pegs).

COAT PEGS

Every child has their own coat peg at each session. You may find another shoe bag hanging there - this is because another child in the other session 'shares' the peg – please do not remove the other bag.

COMMUNICATION

At Peartree Way Nursery School we know the importance of keeping parents regularly informed about what's going on at the school.

Email – All parents will be asked to provide us with an email. This enables us to communicate with all parents reliably and you will quickly know about important or urgent messages, including emergency school closures. We have found that sending paper letters home can be rather 'hit and miss' with letters often going astray on the way! We are also increasingly aware of the substantial cost and environmental impact associated with the amount of paper and photocopying involved.

Facebook - We have found our Facebook page to be a great way of communicating with parents. When you complete your child's registration papers you will be able to choose whether or not images of your child are posted to our public Facebook page.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Headteacher is always pleased to discuss queries/concerns with parents; occasionally it will be necessary for appointments to be made.

The procedure for complaints is through:

1. The Headteacher
2. The Governing Body
3. The Hertfordshire County Council Education Department

The school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Complaints Procedures. A copy is available on the school website www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk

CONTRIBUTIONS

Termly contributions from parents made to the nursery allow the children to take part in exciting extra-curricular sessions and allow small gifts to be bought for the children at various events throughout the year. Previously, these contributions have paid for a farm visit, baking, Christmas party (and gift for each child) and first aid training for Nursery children.

COOKING

It is our aim that all children experience cooking. If your child is allergic to any food, please do tell us and we will plan the cooking to provide for their needs.

CURRICULUM

Peartree Way Nursery School is guided by The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes.

The EYFS supports an integrated approach to early learning and care. It gives all professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare experiences to all children.

In addition to being the core document for all professionals working in the foundation years, the EYFS framework gives mums and dads confidence that regardless of where they choose for their child's early education, they can be assured that the same statutory commitments and principles will underpin their child's learning and development experience.

DRINKS

Milk is provided free for the children. For those unable to drink milk, water is provided. Water is available for the children to help themselves to at any time throughout the session.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

We aim to enhance children's understanding of different faiths and beliefs by participating in a range of celebrations throughout the year. Children have the opportunity to dress-up in clothes and try different foods from other cultures and we encourage parents/carers to participate and support our multi-cultural events.

FIRE DRILLS

We have a fire drill every term so that the children learn to evacuate the building quickly and safely. A record is kept of when this happens. The school's fire drill procedures and exits are clearly displayed around the building.

FIRST AID, MEDICAL NEEDS & ALLERGIES

You will have completed the registration papers for your child already and advised us of any medical needs/allergies.

We are unable to administer medicines but we do make exceptions for asthmatic children or those with chronic or life threatening illnesses. **NO MEDICINES SHOULD BE PLACED IN CHILDRENS BAGS.**

Although we do our best, there is no comfortable quiet place for children to rest in school. In cases where we feel a child is unwell, we will contact you by telephone. It is essential that you provide us with at least 2 emergency contact numbers.

Antibiotics - We are unable to administer antibiotics to children and believe that if your child is prescribed antibiotics, the best place for them is to stay at home until they are fully recovered from their illness.

Asthma - If your child suffers from asthma, please tell us. If you would like us to keep asthma medication in school for your child, please complete a medicines authorisation form at the school office.

Illness - It is probable that your child will suffer at some time from one or more of the common diseases shown below. Please call the school office to check our exclusion period for any other diseases/illnesses/infections your child develops.

Infection	Exclusion period
Chickenpox	Five days from onset of rash. Exclusion decision by school: Children must not return to school until all the pox have scabbed over.
Conjunctivitis	Exclusion decision by school: Due to the contagiousness of this infection, children will need to absent from school 24 hours from the commencement of treatment.
Diarrhoea & vomiting	Whilst symptomatic and 48 hours after the last symptoms.
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted /healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
Threadworms	Exclusion decision by school: Children will need to absent from school 24 hours from the commencement of treatment.

These are the minimum exclusion times currently recommended by Hertfordshire Area Health Authority.

Many expectant mums come into the Nursery so please let us know if your child has been exposed to German measles or chickenpox.

FOREST SCHOOL

All our children are given the opportunity to take part in Forest School sessions if they choose to. Forest School is an inspirational process that offers opportunities to

achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a natural outdoor environment.

GATES

The safety of everyone using our school is paramount. Please make sure that you always shut our gates behind you. It is better to appear rude to someone coming in a little behind you than risk a little one using the opportunity to escape!

GOVERNORS

The Governing Body of Peartree Way Nursery School is committed to developing the school. A list of governors is available on our school website www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk If you are interested in finding out more about being a school governor, please do speak to the Headteacher.

We welcome applications from ethnic minority groups in order to help us develop our curriculum etc.

HEADLICE

You can treat head lice without seeing a GP. Treat head lice as soon as you spot them. You should check everyone in the house and start treating anyone who has head lice on the same day. If we do see adult lice, we will call you to collect your child so you can commence treatment promptly.

IDENTIFICATION

All of the school staff are identified by photos on the noticeboard and by their identification badges. All visitors to school also wear identification badges.

IN THE MOMENT LEARNING

Everything the children have learned so far, they have learned from you at home!

We hope to build on those experiences through our curriculum which is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

We believe that young children are naturally curious and actively learn through their play. Children must be 'doing' rather than just being talked at, 'discover' rather than be told how things work. When we find something out for ourselves it is much easier to remember. During play, children explore, investigate, talk, listen, learn to share and cooperate and find out about the world in which they live.

JEWELLERY

For health and safety reasons, rings, earrings, necklaces and other items of jewellery should **not** be worn to school. We cannot accept responsibility for their loss or damage. Please do speak to the Headteacher if this causes any difficulty. With regard to religious adornments the school will consider individual cases but will not automatically give permission. Requests to the school should be made in writing.

KEY PERSON (KEYWORKER)

What is a key person and why are they important?

It is a requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that every registered childcare setting must assign a key person to your child when they start. They will help your child to settle and will then be responsible for ensuring that the care your little one receives meets all of their needs.

The key person will keep a record of the observations made in a Learning Journal, which will document your child's progress during their time with us.

The key person will use observations to ensure learning opportunities are based on your child's individual interests and needs. This is because they know that children learn best when the experiences they have are challenging and enjoyable, allowing them to play and explore, to concentrate and to develop their own ideas.

The most important aspect of the key person's relationship with parents is that you can work together as a team to ensure the very best care and education for your child whilst they are away from home.

KINDNESS

At Peartree Way Nursery School we believe that a child's time with us is very precious and an important part of growing up. All of the staff treat your child with the kindness and care that they would expect their own child to receive.

MOBILE PHONES

The use of mobile phones within the school grounds is completely prohibited! If you are seen to be using your mobile in school/the school grounds, you will be asked to stop! To save any embarrassment, please respect this request!

NUT-FREE

To protect children with allergies, please note that Peartree Way Nursery is a NUT-FREE nursery school.

OFFICE

The office is open between 8:30am and 3:30pm. The Office Manager will be pleased to help you with any queries you might have.

OFSTED

Our most up-to-date Ofsted report is available on our school website www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk

PARKING

Parking is limited around the Nursery and the CAR PARK IS FOR STAFF PARKING ONLY, unless you or your child has a disabled badge. If this is the case, please take your badge to the office so we can log the details. Please do not park on the garage forecourt opposite the Nursery as a disabled neighbour needs access at all times. It is illegal and highly dangerous to park across the pavement as this means pedestrians have to walk in the road with their children.

Zig Zag Lines - The yellow zig zag lines are there to protect your children. Please do not park on them.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Experience has shown that it is better if children do not bring their own toys to nursery. Little children who are just learning to share things can become confused.

Children like to see a bit of home at school and naturally a bit of school at home. We understand this and appreciate you returning such items to school.

POLICIES

Peartree Way Nursery School has a range of written policies. Our Statutory Policies are available on the school website. Please do call into the office if you would like a copy of any of them.

READING

We encourage a love of books. From holding them the right way up, to turning pages, to choosing who they want to share their book with. Over time, reading is a skill that will give your child 'lifelong' pleasure.

RECORDING & REPORTING

We do keep records. All staff make continuous observations and each child has a record that indicates entry, review and exit levels of achievement. This record will be passed to your child's next school after you have had an opportunity to read and comment on it.

The school monitors the progress of all children regardless of race, colour or creed.

RED FLAGS

You may notice that some activities/areas are marked with a red flag. We use red flags in our Forest School sessions as safety markers - they mean "please do not touch".

RESPECT

Part of our school ethos and behaviour policy is built around Core Values such as 'Respect', and children are modelled this by caring, sharing and listening to others. Staff help children to understand how to respect by talking about how actions/words can affect others.

SETTLING YOUR CHILD

We usually find most children settle into their nursery school environment with ease, but occasionally children may need parental support in school. In such cases the school will work with the parent until the child feels happy and secure in their new surroundings. The "Family Book" we asked you to fill with photos of friends and family are very effective in settling children. We have found children love to share their family book with the staff and their peers.

If your child would benefit from bringing their comforter e.g a familiar toy or teddy (sorry - no dummies, bottles or food) to help them settle in the early days, please put it in their bag and let their keyworker know it is there for us to access if needed.

Please take a moment to show your child the Nursery toilets and to reassure them they can go at any time. Perhaps you could show them how to flush the toilet and remind them to wash their hands.

If your child is one who takes time to adjust to new experiences, please be patient. In the long term it pays to invest time during this very important, initial stage of a child's development. We feel coming to school should be a pleasurable experience for both parent and child.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY

Our setting prides itself on the help and support it gives to children and families with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. Wherever possible, we believe a child's special educational needs and disabilities should be met in the nursery.

Staff are always happy to discuss your child's needs and monitor and record the progress of each child through observation and assessment. Activities are planned to meet individual needs and children are given time and encouragement to develop.

We have a number of additional adults who support children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities, helping them to achieve and make good progress.

If you have concerns about your child, please do speak to the Headteacher or our SENCo.

SPEECH

If you have any concerns about your child's speech or language development, please do speak to a member of staff or the Headteacher.

STAFF

An up to date list of staff is available in the "Meet the Team" section on our school website. We pride ourselves on our 'open door' philosophy and welcome any question or query. If you do have a problem, please do speak to a member of staff or the Headteacher in the first instance.

Good home/school links are vitally important for the wellbeing of your child and we do all we can to foster this partnership.

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

TRANSITION

When the time comes for children to move on, we do all we can to ensure a smooth transition by liaising closely with receiving schools. Teachers from the 'next' school should make time to come and visit your child at Nursery.

UNIFORM

Although our uniform is non-compulsory, being party of a Nursery School means belonging to a community and showing pride in the place you learn. If you would like to order uniform for your child you can do so at www.myclothing.com and choosing Peartree Way Nursery School

VALUING CHILDREN'S WORK

Your child will have been busy throughout their session, but may not have produced anything to bring home. Through talking to him/her and the staff, you will be able to find out what your child has achieved and we hope you will value their efforts and hard work so as to foster their self-esteem. All efforts, no matter how small, are worthy of praise.

VISITORS

We welcome visitors with a special interest, knowledge or talent to share. The children benefit by widening their experience and it provides an opportunity to develop relationships with other adults in a safe environment. We also have close links with other professionals working with under-fives, such as Health Visitors.

WORKING TOGETHER

We believe that we are co-educators with you and strong links between home and school can only benefit your child's achievements.

We want your children to develop trust, self-confidence, independence and positive attitudes to learning whilst in our school. With your help and support we will provide the necessary knowledge and skills to help your child achieve this.

You are a vital part of your child's success; by working together we can really ensure that 'the sky is the limit' for your child's learning.

WOW SHEETS

WOW sheets are available for completion when you feel your child has had one of those very special moments when they do or say something new e.g achieving something new like pedalling a bike, catching a ball or building a model.

You can write about and date the event and, if you wish, add a photograph. "WOW" sheets are available on the parents notice boards at either end of the nursery.