

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

TERM 1&2

WELCOME

It has been very busy at pre-school, welcoming children back after the Summer holidays and settling in new children and their families that joined after.

We've had a fabulous return to preschool following the summer break, with children settling in beautifully and confidently leading their play. At the heart of our approach is following their interests—this forms the foundation of both their learning and overall wellbeing. Each week, we plan focused adult-led activities called 'Invitations to Learn & Play', thoughtfully designed around what the children have been curious about. These invitations help us extend their learning in meaningful, engaging ways while supporting their involvement and joy in exploring the world around them.

SNACK



In line with government guidance on nutrition, we kindly ask for snack donations rather than individual snacks from home. This helps us avoid introducing charges like many other settings. As a Food Champion setting, we aim to reduce sugary snacks and encourage children to try new, healthy foods.

Donations such as fruit, bread, crackers, crumpets, cheese, butter, cereals, sugar-free jam, marmite, or honey are much appreciated. Children enjoy helping prepare and share snack time, and your support makes a big difference.

Please ensure when donating snack, you do not donate any items that contains nuts, including peanut butter, nut products, hazelnut spread & loose nuts or bars as we have a child with a severe nut allergy.

MEDICATION

Please do not leave any medication in your child's bag. Hand it directly to Carol, Nic, or Maria on arrival so we can complete a medication consent form with you.



We can only administer medication that has been prescribed by a GP, and we will need to see the prescription label. Unfortunately, we cannot give over-the-counter painkillers like calpol.

ALL ABOUT ME'S & SHOE BOXES

For our September starters, please return your All About Me forms and shoeboxes.

These help us learn about your child's likes, dislikes, and experiences, and support their key person in building a strong bond.

The shoebox is also useful for comforting your child if they feel upset. You'll find a helpful guide called All in a Shoebox in your welcome pack. We'd also love a family photo for our key group boards—thank you!

DUMMIES AND COMFORTERS

You're welcome to bring a dummy or small comforter for your child, but please avoid large items like blankets that may cause a trip hazard. We kindly ask that toys from home stay at home, as they haven't been safety checked and may get lost or broken. We do not encourage tablets for settling and will use dummies only when needed during your child's settling period. If unsure, please speak to your key person.



BELONGINGS AND NAPPIES

Please label all lunchboxes, water bottles, and personal items (coats, hats, gloves, spare clothes) with your child's name. Grapes and cocktail sausages must be cut lengthways to reduce choking risk. We are a nut-free preschool, so lunches must not contain any nuts, peanut butter, hazelnut spread, or nut-based bars, as we have a child with a severe allergy. Please avoid marshmallows, popcorn, and only include raisins if your child can chew them well. Each day, please pack plenty of spare clothes, nappies or pull-ups (if needed), wipes, and nappy sacks. A small charge may apply if these are not provided.

Thank you for your cooperation.

FAMILY PHOTO BOARD

Please could we kindly ask if you would provide or send via email to briarypreschool@btconnect.com a family photo. Each key group has a family board to celebrate each child's uniqueness and build the importance of family. These will be displayed in your child's key group room.

Please speak to your key person for more information.



BOOK LOANING

Each week your child will bring home a book, once a week to share with you at home. Please then bring back the zippy wallet and they can choose another to bring home.

Please note a small charge will be made for lost or damaged books.

WELLY BOOTS & MESSY PLAY

Please provide named wellies for your child to keep at preschool for messy and wet weather play.

Messy play is a key part of learning, supporting creativity, sensory exploration, and motor skills. We encourage aprons and waterproofs, but some children may choose not to wear them—we will not insist, as we want to support their engagement. If your child prefers, you are welcome to send in an old oversized t-shirt for messy activities.

Please also pack a full change of clothes in their bag each day.



TWO YEAR CHECKS



For our two-year-olds, you should have received a letter and questionnaire regarding your child's statutory two-year check. If you have any concerns about their development, please note them on the form. We may arrange an Integrated Review with your health visitor at preschool if needed. Nic is our two-year-old advocate—please speak to her if you'd like more information.

CHATTY BEARS



Your child will soon have the chance to take home their key group bear for a special visit. We'd love for you to share your adventures together by adding photos and notes in the book provided. A letter with full details will be included. Please take care of the bear and its belongings, and return everything the following week. The book contains photos of other children, some with image consent, so it's important that it isn't lost. Thank you!

FESTIVALS AND CULTURES



At preschool, we celebrate diversity and inclusion by recognizing a variety of festivals from Christian, Muslim, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, and other faiths.

If your family celebrates a special event, please let us know so we can include it. Learning about different cultures helps children appreciate one another and builds a strong sense of community.

ALDI & LIDL DONATIONS

Since September 2022, we've been registered with Neighbourly, who kindly connect us with surplus food donations from local stores.

Every Monday, Maria and Lucia collect bakery items from Lidl Herne Bay, and on Tuesdays, they collect a variety of food from Aldi Whitstable.

Please supervise your child when choosing bakery items to avoid them handling food, and do not allow children or siblings to enter preschool while eating, as we have children with severe food allergies.

We also place donations outside our entrance—please feel free to help yourself. We're very grateful to Aldi and Lidl for their continued support.



KEY GROUP TIME

Each morning and afternoon, your child's key person leads a 20-minute Group Time—a valuable part of our routine where children build bonds, enjoy stories, share experiences, and develop listening and social skills.

Group Time starts at 11am and 3pm, so please be mindful when collecting your child at 3pm, as they may miss this important session.



BOTTLES & SIPPY CUPS

We've noticed an increase in baby bottles and sippy cups being sent in. Please note that we provide each child with a sports bottle when they start, so there's no need to bring additional drink bottles (except for lunch drinks).

NHS guidance discourages bottles and sippy cups, as they can contribute to tooth decay—especially when used for sweetened drinks. At preschool, we promote milk and water. If your child refuses to drink water, you may send sugar-free squash, but please be aware that even these can encourage a preference for sweet drinks. Water is always best!



TAPESTRY

We use an online learning journal called Tapestry, where you can view your child's progress, photos, and videos from their time at Briary Pre-School. Log in at <http://eyli.org/login/> with your secure details. If you don't yet have an account, please speak to Maria so you don't miss out on your child's journey with us.

We're pleased to let you know that our new invoice system is now live on Tapestry. This system will automatically generate invoices and receipts, making the process quicker and more efficient for everyone.

If you have any questions or need support using the new system, please feel free to get in touch.



FEES

A quick reminder that fees **must** be paid in advance of your child attending sessions.

As a charity-run preschool, fees are our main source of income. You can pay by cash, cheque, or bank transfer:

Lloyds Bank
Sort Code: 30-99-50
Account No: 17809463

If you have any questions or are facing financial difficulties, please speak to Carol or contact Lucia Wells,

Please note: Unpaid fees may result in your child's place being withdrawn, as stated in your parent agreement.

MOBILE PHONES



Please ensure that **mobile phones** are put **away** when entering the preschool. This is a safeguarding requirement to keep children safe. **Mobile devices** should **not** be answered in the setting or **photographs taken**.

UNIFORM

Uniform is available year-round, including both new and nearly new (washed and donated) items. We currently have stock of polo shirts, sweatshirts, and fleeces.

Prices – New:

Polo Shirt £8.50 | Sweatshirt £11.50 | Zipped Fleece £14.00

Prices – Nearly New:

Polo Shirt £5.00 | Sweatshirt £6.50 | Zipped Fleece £7.50

Please note: Some sizes may be unavailable. New items may need to be pre-ordered, and nearly new stock depends on donations.

OPENING TIMES

Briary Pre-School is open during term time only (38 weeks per year). Please refer to our Term Dates page at www.briarypreschool.co.uk under Information for details on holiday periods, bank holidays, and staff development day closures.

Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 3:30pm

Entitlement Hours:

15 hours: 8:30am–11:30am or 12:30pm–3:30pm (Mon–Fri)

30 hours: 8:30am–3:30pm (7-hour day; 6 funded hours + 1 non-funded hour)

Children attending full days will need a packed lunch in line with our healthy eating guidance.

For more information, please see the Funding and Fees page under Information.

EATING ON ARRIVAL

Sometimes children arrive at pre-school eating a snack or breakfast. At the time of arrival staff are busy greeting and settling children and are not able to supervise your child eating, which is part of our eat safe policy.

Please can we kindly ask you to reassure your child that they will be able to have snack when the snack bar opens at 9am and 1pm which is properly supervised.

LUNCH CHOICES

Did you know Briary preschool has the NHS 'Food Champion Accreditation'? if you would like ideas on healthy lunch boxes please visit our website, go to the pull down menu 'About' then 'Food Champion'.

We do not allow sweets, chocolate bars or nut products. Chocolate covered biscuit bars or wafers are ok. Please be mindful that a child's stomach is the size of the palm of their hand, choices and smaller portion sizes are recommended with fruit and dairy choices, such as a yogurt. We do not recommend potato crisps, as they pose a choking risk, crisps that melt like wotsits, quavers, skips are better.

We do not allow popcorn or marshmallows in lunch boxes and if you provide raisins please ensure your child can chew them properly as they are one of the foods that can cause choking and are not recommended for under twos. Please refer to our choking guidance on our website.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Here are some key dates for your diary over the coming months. We have a range of exciting events planned and hope you can join us where possible!

🎃 October

- Grandparents' Week
Tues 7th Oct: 2:00–3:00pm
Weds 8th Oct: 10:00–11:00am & 2:00–3:00pm
Thurs 9th Oct: 10:00–11:00am
A chance for grandparents to visit and join in the fun!
- World Healthy Food Day – Thurs 16th Oct
We will be exploring healthy eating with fun food-themed activities.
- Spooky Disco – Thurs 30th Oct, 4:15–5:15pm
Dress up and dance – a fun Halloween celebration for all!



🔥 November

- Bonfire Night – Weds 5th Nov
Themed activities to celebrate safety around fire and sparkles.
- World Nursery Rhyme Week – Mon 10th to Fri 14th Nov
A week of songs, rhymes, and storytelling.
- Road Safety Week – Begins Mon 17th Nov
Learning how to stay safe with fun, age-appropriate activities.



🎄 December

- Christmas Jumper Day – Thurs 11th Dec
Wear your festive jumper and help spread some cheer!
- Stay & Play Singing (Younger Children) –
Tues 16th Dec: 10:00–11:00am & 2:00–3:00pm
A cosy singing-themed session for our youngest children and their families.
- Reg E Mental the Entertainer – Weds 17th Dec (all day) and end of term party.
A fun-filled day of magic, laughter and entertainment.
- Christmas Concert – Thurs 18th Dec, 2:00–3:00pm, at St Peters Church Hall, in Greenhill.
Join us for a festive performance to end the term.



We look forward to celebrating these special events with you and your children. More details will be shared closer to each date, so please keep an eye out for updates!

HALF TERMS

Half Term: Monday 20th October – Friday 24th October
We return on Monday 27th October.

End of Term: We break up for the Christmas holidays on Thursday 18th December.

Staff Development Day: Friday 19th December – *No children in preschool on this day.*

Christmas Holidays: Monday 22nd December – Friday 2nd January

We reopen after the holidays on Monday 5th January.

