

SPRING NEWSLETTER

TERM 3 & 4

WELCOME

It has been a very busy start to the Spring Term at pre-school following the Christmas break. We have loved welcoming children back after the holidays, as well as settling in new starters and their families who have recently joined our setting.

The children have returned with enthusiasm and confidence, quickly re-engaging with familiar routines and forming new friendships.

At the heart of our approach is following the children's interests, which continues to underpin both their learning and overall wellbeing.

The children are confidently leading their play, sharing ideas, and exploring their environment with curiosity. Each week, we carefully plan focused adult-led activities known as Invitations to Learn & Play. These are thoughtfully designed around the children's emerging interests and fascinations, allowing us to extend their learning in meaningful and engaging ways while nurturing their enjoyment, involvement, and sense of belonging as they explore 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

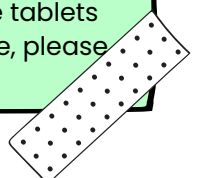
For our January starters, please return your All About Me forms and shoeboxes.

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

January Starters; 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

As we move into the Spring Term in January, the weather can still be very cold and changeable, with rain, frost, and sometimes even snow. To ensure children can continue to enjoy outdoor learning and messy play in all weathers, please can you provide your child with a pair of welly boots and waterproof clothing suitable for messy 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.



CHATTY BEARS

Each week, one child will have the opportunity to take home their Key Group Bear for a special visit. This allows children to share adventures outside of pre-school and talk about their experiences with their friends. We would love you to add photos or short notes to the book provided to show what the bear has been up to. Full details will be included in the bag.

Please take care of the bear, its belongings, and the book, and return everything the following week so another child can enjoy the experience. The book contains photos of other children, so it is important that it is kept safe.

Thank you—we look forward to seeing the bear's adventures! 🐻



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 every Tuesday, 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 **weekly, monthly** or **termly** 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, jumpers and fleeces.

Prices – New:

Polo Shirt £8.50 | Sweatshirt £11.50 | Zipped Fleece £14.00
Jumper (Hoody) £15.00

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 – (8:00–8:30am early risers) 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.

ON ARRIVAL & PICK UP

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.

We kindly ask that when dropping off your child, you do so during our morning opening time of 8:30am – 9:00am.

We have noticed that some children are arriving between 9:00am and 10:00am, which can significantly delay our morning routine. Late arrivals require us to repeatedly update our whiteboards to ensure we remain within staff-to-child ratios, and this can be particularly challenging as staff may also be in meetings during this time.

If you are running late or need to arrive outside of these hours, please contact the setting by phone to let us know, and we will be happy to accommodate where possible.

On arrival for collecting your child, we kindly ask that siblings do not play with the toys. This is because staff have already completed tidying before collection, and additional play means the area must be tidied again, which is very time-consuming.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

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.

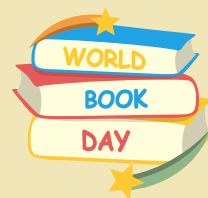
We do not allow popcorn or marshmallows in lunch boxes and if you provide raisins please ensure your child can chew them properly as they are one of the foods that can cause choking and are not recommended for under twos. Please refer to our choking guidance on our website.

UPCOMING EVENTS

(Letters for these upcoming events will be given out to parents nearer time)

February 2026

- Children's Mental Health Awareness Week – Monday 9th – Friday 13th February 2026
- Valentines Disco – Thursday 12th February 2026, 4:15pm – 5:15pm
- Valentine's Day – Saturday 14th February 2026
- Pancake Day / Shrove Tuesday – Tuesday 17th February 2026 (Activities the week before)



March 2026

- World Book Day – Thursday 5th March 2026 (Dress up all week, 02/03/26 – 06/03/26)
- Mother's Day – Sunday 15th March 2026
- Stay and Play Mother's Day – Monday 9th March, 10-11am & 2-3pm. Wednesday 11th March, 10-11am & 2-3pm and Thursday 12th March 2-3pm.
- Easter Bonnet Disco – Tuesday 31st March 2026, 4:15pm – 5:15pm



April 2026

- Good Friday – Friday 3rd April 2026
- Easter Sunday – Sunday 5th April 2026
- Easter Monday – Monday 6th April 2026



HALF TERM & IMPORTANT DATES

Half term – Monday 16th February 2026 – Friday 20th February 2026

Return back on – Monday 23rd February 2026

Easter Half term – Wednesday 1st April 2026 – Friday 17th April 2026

Staff Development Days – Wednesday 1st April 2026

Bank Holidays – Friday 3rd April 2026 and Monday 6th April 2026

Return back on – Monday 20th April 2026



Briary Pre-School Term Dates 2025-26



We offer funded pre-school education and open for 38 weeks of the year (190 days). Term time only from 8.30am – 3.30pm.

September 2025						
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29	30					

October 2025						
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November 2025						
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December 2025						
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January 2026						
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February 2026						
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March 2026						
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April 2026						
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May 2026						
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June 2026						
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July 2026						
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August 2026						
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Local Authority Funded Sessions

Non funded sessions (Pre-school Closed)

Pre-school Educational Visit (Funded day)



Staff Development Days (Pre-school Closed)

Bank Holidays (Pre-school Closed)

Give back day Tuesday for the Friday Children ONLY