

Starting Preschool at Swallows and Stawley Under Fives

Thinking about starting preschool can raise a lot of questions for you and your child. We have put together this list so that you can feel as prepared as possible. If you have any questions that are not answered here or on the [website](#), please email manager@stawleyunder5s.co.uk and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

What to wear

We believe that play should not be restricted by the clothes children wear. We want all children to be able to access all of the opportunities on offer, regardless of how messy they may be! We don't insist on aprons, because for some children, insisting that they wear one is enough to put them off joining in. There are aprons available for children who want them, but we still ask that children do not wear anything to preschool that you want to keep clean! Mud and even washable paint and pens are not as washable as manufacturers would like us to believe!



In summary, children should wear comfortable clothes and shoes that you don't mind getting dirty.

What to bring



Below is a list of the things your child will need to bring to preschool **every day**. It is absolutely essential that everything is named. If anything comes to preschool without a name, we will name it with a sharpie, so to avoid this, please make sure everything is labelled! Any kind of label will do, from sew in, to stick on, to written on in pen that won't wash off. We like the labels from www.mynametags.co.uk and if you enter the school ID 48990, we will receive a small commission.

Please use first name and surname, or personalise your labels in a way that your child recognises as theirs.

- **at least one full change of clothes, including pants and socks**
- **nappies, wipes, nappy bags and cream if needed**
- **wellies**
- **head to toe waterproofs (all-in-one, trousers or dungarees and coat)**
- **water bottle**
- **lunchbox**
- **For the summer term and the first half of the autumn term, we ask that you apply sun cream before preschool and supply a bottle to be kept at preschool that we can reapply at lunchtime.**
- **Sun hats are provided**
- **A carrier bag or wet bag for any wet/dirty clothes. Wet bags are available from preschool for £5.**

If you prefer, waterproofs and wellies can be kept at preschool, but please be aware that we cannot be responsible for these whilst the preschool is not open.

Food

For a voluntary charge of £1 per day, we provide snack. This includes milk, water, fruit, veg and a variety of things like toast, breadsticks, rice cakes and things we bake ourselves. Alternatively, you can send a healthy snack yourself.

Children are encouraged to be independent when eating, including peeling their fruit and spreading their toast. Don't worry if your child isn't there yet, snack time is a great learning opportunity at preschool!

We ask you to supply a packed lunch. These are not stored in the fridge, so on warmer days, you may like to include an ice pack. We do not have set rules as such when it comes to lunches because we all know how difficult it can be to pack a lunch that children will actually eat! However, there are a couple of guidelines and we do ask that you do not include nuts.

We expect children to eat their savoury food first, followed by sweet, but if they want to leave a less healthy option, e.g. crisps and eat their fruit or yoghurt, that's fine too.

- **Please do not include nuts or peanut butter**
- **Try to send a balance of healthy foods and a small treat**
- **Please do not include sweets. A small chocolate treat such as a chocolate coin or a Kinder bar is fine**

- **Young children often like to graze, so a selection of little pots or a lunchbox with different sections filled with different things can work well. For example, pieces of cheese, fruit, pasta, chopped vegetables, dried fruit, cold meat**

If your child has any specific dietary requirements or you have concerns about your child eating a packed lunch, please do get in touch.

Drop off/pick up

At Swallows, please bring your child to the village green, opposite the school for 9am. The preschool staff will meet you there and take the children in to preschool.

At pick up time (12 or 3pm), staff will bring the children back to the green, where they will be released to an adult one at a time. If you need to speak to a member of staff, please wait until all children with parents present have been released.

At Stawley, please bring your child to foyer at 9am. Staff will meet you at the door and welcome children into the building. This can be a good time to speak to staff if you need to.

At pick up time (12 or 3pm), please wait in the car park until you see your child brought to the door. When you see your child, please come up to the building to collect them.

Key Worker

Your child will be assigned a key worker. This person will be responsible for helping them to settle initially and will become their first familiar adult in the setting. That said, children sometimes decide that they are more attached to a different adult and the team all work with all of the children, so we all get to know them well. When your child is a 'focus child' (see 'assessment' below), their keyworker will be the member of staff responsible for liaising with you.

Assessment

The WARF preschools team are all very skilled at assessing the children informally on a day-to-day basis, as well as recording observations. Because of the child-led approach that we use, we get to know our children really well. Our knowledge of young children's development means that we can move children on in the ways that are most appropriate to them.

Each term, each child is a 'focus child' at least once. It is a lovely way to bring home and preschool closer and helps us to focus on any particular areas of development that you, or we have identified. We ask you to fill in a 'home information sheet', which asks you about your child's interests at home and anything they've been doing that they would like to share with us. We also ask you to send us up to three photographs that they can talk to us about.

Over the time they are with us, we build up a file of photographs and observations, which the child is presented with to keep when they leave.

Each child will receive two written 'reports' from preschool. One when they are two (often called the 'two year old check') and another when they leave to go to school.

The Preschool Day



The structure of the preschool day is very simple. We believe that the less children are interrupted from their play, the better, so we try to have as few unnatural breaks as possible.

When the children come into preschool, they wash their hands and can choose what they would like to play with straight away.

Snack is available from 9.30-11am. Children can come to snack once at any time during this period. This means that they can bring what they are doing to a natural end and not break their concentration until they are ready.

At 11.30 we tidy up ready for lunch. If children are engrossed in something which can be carried on after lunch, we will always try to leave it for them to return to. All children are expected to help tidy up.

Once the tidying is done, we sit down together for a story, game or some singing before saying goodbye to any children who are going home and washing hands for lunch.

After lunch, children are again free to choose what they want to play with.

At 2.30, we stop and tidy up ready to go home. When we have finished, we sit together again for another game, story or singing.

Sometimes we go on local walks, visit the school playing field or have visitors such as the local PCSO or a farmer with some lambs.

Children always have access to both indoor and outdoor space and can ask for any resources that are not immediately accessible to them.

Funding

You are probably aware that all children are entitled to 15 hours funded childcare from the term after their 3rd birthday, but did you know that some two year olds are also entitled to 15 hours, or that many families can claim an additional 15 hours per week?

Check the government website to see what you are entitled to

<https://www.gov.uk/get-childcare>

Please note that if you have a 'golden ticket' from Devon County Council for two year old funding, this will be honoured by Somerset, but you will need to apply on the Somerset website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/paying-for-childcare/funding-for-2-year-olds/>

If you are entitled to the additional 15 hours (30 hours in total), you will need to provide us with a code and sign a form to allow us to claim. Please speak to us as soon as possible about this. You can apply at

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Please be aware that you are responsible for keeping your code up to date and supplying preschool with the correct information.

Early Years Pupil Premium is additional funding that can be claimed by parents on behalf of the preschool. Please have a look at the criteria and see if you may be eligible. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/early-years-and-childcare/early-years-pupil-premium-information-for-parents/>

Payment

All payments should be made through the Parentpay website. You will receive a letter containing an activation code shortly after your child starts preschool.

Once an invoice has been issued, the amount will be loaded onto Parentpay as a 'payment item', which you will then be able to pay.

Please note that there is always a 'school meals' option showing. Please ignore this, we cannot get rid of it!

Play sessions

We offer two, one hour long, free of charge play sessions. You can stay to one or both of these and chat to your child's keyworker about what makes them tick and how to help them if they are sad or angry. If you don't feel that your child needs these sessions, that's fine too!

One last thing!

We would really appreciate it if you could send us a photograph of your child (head and shoulders please), so that we can make their peg label etc before they start. We would also love to see some photos from home, or a drawing they have done that we can look at them with when they first start. It's a lovely way to start their learning journey file. Photographs and scanned artwork can be emailed to manager@stawleyunder5s.co.uk or whatsapped to the preschool phone on 07707416871.

We look forward to getting to know your family soon!