



We are an Ofsted Outstanding small, outdoor preschool run from our local village hall. We are led by a qualified teacher with over 15 years' experience in Early Years and a dedicated nursery nurse with an extensive knowledge of SEND and love for the outdoors.

We take children from 2 years old, until they start in reception class, and intake throughout the academic year.

Our environment is friendly, safe and richly stimulating; prompting fascination and exploration of the world around us and enabling our children to actively engage and learn through play in nature.

What our teaching and learning looks like



Physical development
using every part of their body to help build strength, coordination and control as they take managed risks. They are encouraged to be independent in their self-care and are given the time to achieve this.



Communication & language
learning how to listen as well as to be listened to through conversation, open questions, negotiation and collaboration, whether through speech, gesture or physical expression.



Personal, social & emotional development
developing resilience and confidence, to build good relationships while learning to respect the boundaries and expectations of preschool and the wider world.



Maths
measuring, filling and emptying, ordering and balancing, counting and writing numbers - we find maths everywhere, even when we're not looking!

Expressive art & design
collaborative, creative play; inventing stories and characters. Using natural resources and found objects to explore texture and shape, rhythm and movement - a log is a rocket ship, a box is a house for the three pigs, a tyre is a raft in shark-infested waters.



Understanding the world
fostering a fascination and respect for the natural world. Visitors from the local community come in to expand the children's world and show them new things. Children and families are encouraged to bring their own traditions and cultures to share at preschool.



Literacy
learning to 'mark make' with mud and chalk, paint and pencil. This develops into early writing as they learn to listen carefully, hearing sounds linking them to the letters they begin to scribe.



Clophill Preschool



Safe operating procedures

Extra measures we're taking against Covid-19

Central to everything we do is the safety of our children, their families and our staff, this includes their mental health as well as their physical wellbeing and we have adapted our everyday practices to reflect this. We have developed these procedures based on guidance from Central Bedfordshire Council and most recent Government Guidelines.

Changes

- We are now operating as an outdoor preschool only coming in to eat breakfast, snack and lunch
- All children must come dressed in full waterproof outdoor gear every day

Symptoms

- Families are asked to isolate if anyone in their household, or 'bubble', shows symptoms of Covid19
- If anyone in setting develops symptoms they are removed from the main area and sent home
- Parents are asked to get those with symptoms tested and results made known to preschool
- If anyone who attends the setting whether child or staff member, tests positive for Covid19 the setting will close for 2 weeks

Drop off/pick up

- Parent/carers are asked to socially distance as they line up to our entrance gate
- Parents are asked not to come into setting unless specifically invited by a member of staff e.g. for settling in
- Parents are asked on the gate each morning whether anyone in the household has Covid19 symptoms
- At pick up, children will be brought to the gate with all their belongings
- A hand sanitizing station is available on exit

Visitors to setting

- We have minimised visitors to the setting
- One parent/carer will be allowed to come in to support new children settling in
- Visits from prospective parents will be held on Fridays when there are fewer children on site due to Forest School
- Socially-distanced staff/parent meetings will be held at the front of the hall to ensure privacy

Social distancing

- Children are not required to socially distance from each other
- Adults in the setting will socially distance where possible
- Staff are not required to socially distance from the children – this would not be beneficial to the children, if they are upset, they need a hug

Hygiene

- Children must wash their hands as they come in
- Hand washing is promoted throughout the sessions e.g. before and after eating
- Children are encouraged to rub soap into their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds before rinsing
- Children are encouraged to use a tissue to wipe their nose and dispose of in the pedal bins – support is on hand to assist with nose wiping!
- There are hand sanitiser points all around the setting for the use of staff and other adults
- Children are encouraged to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing

Cleaning

- We have enhanced the cleaning of our setting and it's resources
- We have removed all soft furnishings to minimise contamination
- Frequently touched surfaces are regularly cleaned throughout the day e.g. table tops, doors

What to expect...

We believe in the value of nature and the great outdoors. We want your children to seize opportunities, be positive when seeking out new challenges and our outdoor environment reflects this. It allows children to learn through open-ended activities, developing resilience and adaptability while taking risks where appropriate.

All of this means that your children get muddy, wet and dirty in the process of learning. They may be climbing or digging as they develop their physical ability, tending the allotment or feeding the chickens as they learn how to care for our environment or expand their mathematical skills as they “cook” in the mud kitchen.

What your child wears is so important, as Alfred Wainwright wrote...

*“There's no such thing as bad weather,
only unsuitable clothing”.*

We believe it is important for your children to be out in all weathers to explore all the seasons and know there is fun and learning to be had outside at all times of year. We ask that you provide your child with the right kind of clothing to come to our preschool. While we make every effort to ensure your child stays as physically comfortable as possible in adverse weather conditions, there may be times when they will come home muddy and wet.

Our belief is that the benefit should outweigh the risk, and this is how we assess all of our activities. Children will come home covered in dirt, please be aware of this, the road to learning through nature is not going to be a clean and tidy one but it will benefit their physical and mental wellbeing and engender a lifelong love of the outdoors.

We teach children through the things that interest them. Whether they have a love of cars or are fascinated by a caterpillar they find, their interests are always an avenue into deeper learning. We plan ‘in the moment’, our excellent staff use their experience to tune their teaching to each child’s play.

Each child is assigned a key worker, this person will be the main point of contact for the parents and will a record of the child’s development in their learning journey book. However, all staff are encouraged to get to know all children as we place huge value on the relationships our staff build at preschool. To know a child well is to understand their development and know how to further it.

We hold regular focus weeks for each child when all staff can make observations. These notes along with photographs and children’s own work create a record of their development during their time with us. Staff notify parents in the run up to their child’s focus week, they will ask them to contribute to this and staff will later share their findings and discuss ideas for next steps.



Your first day at Clophill Preschool

Settling in

Your child's first settling in session will be from 9.30 until 11.30 on your start date, please come round to the entrance at the back of the hall. Please bring your child dressed in waterproofs and wellies - and some spare clothes just in case!

When you arrive you and your child will be asked to sanitise your hands and if you have a bag and/or phone you will be asked to leave it in our cupboard in the hall. While you're in the setting we ask that you please socially distance from the other adults and children, your child does not need to.

Chris will complete paperwork with you that will involve a discussion about your child and their development, do feel free to allow your child to go off and explore while you're doing this, staff will be on hand to support them. Before you leave Chris or Carol will discuss your child's next session with you depending on how your child has settled. If we feel your child is happy to be left we may suggest you leave them in the setting for a short time.

There are a few things you'll need to bring with you:

- A form of photo id for you
- Your child's birth certificate
- Nappies if needed, a snack and water bottle



Things to bring each session

- Please arrive ready for outdoor play with your child dressed in waterproofs and wellies.
- Nappies if needed.
- Water bottle, snack tub and lunch box (if staying past 12pm) - all named.
- Spare clothes and trainers.
- Please see clothing and food sections for more information.

Starting the day

- Preschool starts at 9am.
- Please adhere to social distancing as you line up.
- You will be greeted at the gate to preschool by Chris or Carol.
- Lunchboxes, snack tubs and water bottles should all be placed in the trollies/drinks crate
- Please follow the one-way system to leave promptly – we ask that you do not call out to staff or children already in setting.
- If your child is not coming in, please let us know via email, if you do not let us know please expect a phone call.

Ending the day

- Sessions finish at 12, 1 or 2.30pm.
- Please pick your child up where you dropped them off.
- Please retrieve lunchboxes, snack tubs and water bottles from the trollies/drinks crate.
- Your child will be brought out to the gate with their belongings.
- A sanitising station will be available for your use on exit.

Clothing

Your child will need to be dressed appropriately, remember, we're outdoors every day in all weathers - they're going to get wet and muddy!

As a minimum they'll need...

- Closed-toed shoes for running and climbing – velcro trainer are best.
- Wellies – be careful of snow boots, they can often not be waterproof.
- Double layer of socks.
- Waterproof trousers/dungarees – don't use all-in-one puddle/splash suits as they're tricky for children to get in and out of themselves and are usually not waterproof.
- Warm waterproof coat.
- Double layer of long sleeve tops, the underneath one should be close fitting.
- 2 pairs of gloves – ideally one waterproof and one woollen pair.
- Woolly hat.
- Sun hat – if you have one with a flap for the back of the neck, even better.

Please remember to always bring two full spare sets of clothes, not forgetting socks and pants.

We recommend getting waterproof coats, gloves and trousers from Waterproof World or Lidl (where they're available in the 'middle aisle' every couple of months). Both offer good quality, well priced ranges. If you're child is attending Forest School Friday they'll need the same clothing.

We've shown some examples, right...





Food

Remember, your children are running around outdoors all session expending huge amounts of energy, they'll need hearty food to keep them fuelled.

Monday to Thursday 9-9:30 we offer breakfast of a variety of cereals and toast. We encourage children to serve themselves - supervised by Lisa!

Mid-morning snack, 10:30. Please supply a snack, packed separately from their lunch, in a named tub they can open themselves. We'd suggest something like a small portion of fruit or vegetables together with a slice of fruit loaf or flapjack.

Please don't include chocolate bars or sweets.

Your child will need to bring in a drinks bottle full of water every day. This must have their name on it.

Packed lunch needs to be brought in for those children staying after 12.

Ideas of what to put in –

- Bread roll, pitta, wrap - filled with salad and their favourite filling
- Cheese and biscuits
- Pasta/couscous salad
- Hot soup or noodles in a food flask

Don't forget a spoon if they're likely to need it!

We are a NO NUTS setting, this includes any products that may contain nuts. Thank you for your consideration in advance.

Please let us know about any allergies.



SEND

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child's ability to learn. They can affect their behaviour or ability to socialise, their reading and writing, their ability to understand things or their concentration levels.

Chris is our SENDCo (special educational needs and disabilities coordinator), if you have any concerns about your child's development please talk to either Chris or your child's Key Worker.

Chris has a huge amount of experience in supporting children and families; whether you're worried about a lack of speech, perhaps they're not as physically able as you expect them to be or you feel their development is not as it should, Chris is here to talk through your concerns and find ways in which to help.

If we think there is an area your child may need additional support in we will chat to you about it, there may be something we can work on together or we may need to refer your child for help from a professional outside the setting. We have great links with a variety of local agencies, from speech and language therapists to the Nursing team and paediatrics. Chris and the team will put your child's needs at the centre of what they do.



Potty training and toileting

We are experienced at helping children to toilet train. A huge part of what we do is about enabling children to become independent particularly in their self-care and of course toilet training is a huge part of this.

We have toilets both inside and out, as well as potties available. If your child is in nappies, please supply spares. If your child is starting to toilet train, then do let us know so that we can support them.

To help your child use the toilet:

- Ensure they have waterproof separates and not puddle/splash suits as they cannot get these off and on easily themselves, this can be quite stressful when you're desperate for a wee!
- Please make sure that they have lots of spare clothing with them, especially pants, bottoms and socks.
- Please don't use pull ups, they do not allow your child the sensation of wetting themselves and make changing them exceedingly difficult as we must take off all waterproofs and clothing in order to replace them.
- Put them in loose trousers that are easy to get down, under their waterproofs.
- Be consistent - once you've made the decision to move to pants, stick to it.
- Be positive - and give lots of encouragement - this is a skill for them to learn and it's not always easy.
- Be patient - children will do it in their own time and at their own pace. There is no hurry.

We understand that this can be a stressful time for everyone so do let us know when the time is right and we will work together.

Forest school

Fridays are Forest School days. Chris is a Level 3 qualified Forest School leader. Due to insurance and the complexity of some of the activities, children must be 3 years old to participate.

Staff teach children how to assess and manage risk, how to use tools safely and cross the road with an adult with care. Learning at Forest School is a step beyond our usual preschool experience, children face more challenges and explore deeper into nature.

It is an excellent opportunity for children who are soon to start school to push the boundaries of their learning, challenging themselves physically and mentally, building the confidence and resilience needed for their next steps in life.

We will provide your child with a small rucksack and hi vis top to wear when we go off site. We have a smaller number of children on these days with a higher ratio of staff. Fridays cannot be chosen as a single session, it must be done in tandem with a minimum of one other day. Due to high demand, we're only able to offer Fridays to those children starting in reception class the following academic year.

Food

In addition to the items listed on our food page, children are offered breakfast of plain brioche and staff will offer hot chocolate on cold days. You are welcome to provide hot food in a food flask.

As a reminder, no NUTS, sweets or chocolate bars

Clothing

Please take a look at our clothing page for guidance.



Activities

- Fire pit: sitting round and cooking on the fire
- Tool use: potato peelers, hammers, bow saws, secateurs and tree loppers
- Rambling in the local area off the preschool site
- Tree climbing
- Den building



Payments

We accept all Nursery Funding at preschool; 2 year funding, and both the 15 hour statutory and 30 hour extended funding, however, please note we are only open for 26 hours per week. If you would like to you may share your funding between 2 settings.

Below you'll see a breakdown of when your child is entitled to their Nursery Education Funding.

Children who are 3 between:	Will have a free place from the following:
1st April and 31st August	1st September following either their 2nd or 3rd birthday
1st September and 31st December	1st January following either their 2nd or 3rd birthday
1st January and 31st March	1st April following either their 2nd or 3rd birthday

Those eligible for 2-year funding should receive a letter from Central Bedfordshire Council, if you don't, it's worth contacting your local Childrens' Centre to check you meet the criteria. You could also check eligibility on all funding on the government's website: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/

Funding for 2-year-olds also starts the term after their second birthday.

Should you wish to increase your hours please email Imogen who will check availability for you.

At the start of each term you will be asked to complete a funding application (commonly known as a headcount form) to claim your hours for the term. If you require additional hours on top of your funding you will be billed for these. Any hours that need paying for you may use childcare vouchers against, we accept all voucher schemes. Alternatively, you can pay us directly. All invoices are handed out at the start of each term with 2 weeks in which to pay them.

We hope you understand that we have to pay for our hall rent and our staff, this means that if your child is away or you decide to leave our setting before the end of the half term we cannot refund you. If you are having difficulty with your payment, please get in touch so that we can work out a payment plan for you.

Mutual support

We were noted by Ofsted for being very supportive of our children and their families, including those with additional needs. We realise the benefit of this mutual support for everyone and seek to foster this relationship in a number of ways - with communication being the key.

Ways we can help you:

- We are always available to listen if you have any worries or concerns - whether you want to chat in person, online or on the phone - just ask Chris on the gate
- We have a lending library of helpful books (as well as a wealth of knowledge!) on topics as diverse as autism to potty training, please just ask
- We have excellent links to many external agencies
- We produce a monthly newsletter for parents, keeping you up-to-date with everything we're doing and what's coming up
- Every month we give you the opportunity to give your opinion on an aspect of preschool life, just click the survey link in the newsletter email to 'have your say'!
- If your child attends another setting or childminder alongside ours we will share information with them on your child's development

Ways you can help support us at Preschool:

- Help us to enrich the diversity of our cultural community at preschool by sharing your festivals, celebrations and traditions with us
- To fully support every child we need to have a holistic view of their lives so please do share life events with us; from the birth of a new sibling to the passing of a guinea pig - everything has a bearing on their wellbeing and development. Please remember that, where appropriate or requested, we treat such information in the strictest confidence.
- If you decide you would like to send your child to another setting alongside ours please let us know before they start
- 'Like' our Facebook page and you can keep an eye on what we're up to
- Save up your old clothes, shoes and handbags so that you can support our regular fundraising collections with Happy School Bags
- Sign up for easy fundraising - a great way to support preschool as you shop online, without spending a penny!