



Fledglings Montessori Pre-School Group

# Parents' Handbook

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@FledglingsM

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## Contents

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Our Mission Statement .....         | 3  |
| Introducing this Handbook .....     | 4  |
| Trial Session and Settling In ..... | 5  |
| Preparing for the First Day .....   | 6  |
| On the First Day .....              | 7  |
| Daily Routine .....                 | 8  |
| Dropping Off .....                  | 9  |
| Picking up .....                    | 10 |
| Late Collection .....               | 10 |
| Toilet Training.....                | 11 |
| What to Wear, What to Bring .....   | 12 |
| Illnesses .....                     | 13 |
| Keeping Us Informed .....           | 14 |
| Keeping You Informed .....          | 15 |
| Parental Involvement.....           | 16 |
| Fees & Early Years Funding .....    | 17 |
| Introducing Our Staff .....         | 18 |
| Useful Contact Details.....         | 20 |
| Complaints.....                     | 21 |

## Our Mission Statement

**First and foremost, pre-school should be fun!**

This is our main priority in everything that we do. We aim to make learning an enjoyable, exciting and challenging experience, which will give a good foundation to the children for many years ahead. The habits and skills developed in early years will help them concentrate and work efficiently for a lifetime.

A child's first nursery school is an important stepping stone. Our aim is to make this step as happy and as rewarding an experience as possible, helping each child to develop confidence, self-esteem, independence, concentration, social skills and self-discipline.

We follow the Montessori philosophy of education, which recognises the importance of early years in forming a child's character and talents in later life, aptitude for learning and respect for the world and others. Children learn at their own pace, absorbing new information and concepts naturally.

## Introducing this Handbook

Starting pre-school is a big step for both child and parent. This may be the first time that you have been apart for any significant amount of time and you are bound to have concerns. This handbook is intended to relieve those concerns, help you prepare for the first day and provide you with information about life at Fledglings.

We believe in working closely with parents – after all, you are the closest people to your child. Later in this handbook, there are ways in which we (parents and pre-school) can work together to expand this partnership.

We have tried to include all the information we think you will need but if you have any further questions having read this booklet please do not hesitate to ask any member of staff, or get in touch by email or Twitter. You will also find information on the parents' board situated in the small hall.

A complete, printed copy of our Policies and Procedures is displayed in the small hall. If you would like us to email you a copy please do not hesitate to ask us. All Policies and Procedures will be available electronically on the 'My Montessori Child' system.

## Trial Session and Settling In

There are many things that you can do to help make the transition from home to pre-school easier for your child (and for you). And remember, we will be there to support you at all times.

### **Settling-in Session**

Children are invited for a settling-in session in the half-term prior to their enrolment. This gives everyone a chance to get to know each other, so when your child comes in for their first day they will be familiar with some of the staff and children. During the session your child will find out where things are, play with some of the classroom activities and meet other new children. Try to let your child explore on their own. If they sense you are happy for them to do so, it helps their independence and settling into pre-school.

The settling-in session is also a chance for you to meet your child's key person. They are responsible for planning individual work and keeping records for your child, as well as being the main point of contact to answer your questions and keeping you informed of your child's progress. Your child will stay with the same key person throughout their time at Fledglings.

## Preparing for the First Day

In the time before your child joins Fledglings, it is very helpful if you regularly introduce the idea of Fledglings and going to pre-school so they become familiar with it. Some ways of doing it could include:

- Walking or driving past the hall pointing it out to your child;
- Talking to them about the different activities they might do at pre-school.

Keep the remarks short and enthusiastic, repeating them regularly. “You will be able to hang your coat up on a peg.” “There are lots of painting and sticking things at your pre-school.” “When you are playing with your friends, I will pop out to do some shopping and come back later.” It is important to mention in passing that you will leave them at pre-school. It doesn’t need stressing, but more along the lines that your child will be so busy having fun, playing with their new friends, that you are going to leave them for a little while to do a chore.

As part of our encouragement of healthy lifestyles, we recommend that children come to school on foot, bike or scooter if at all possible. We have an area in which we can store these for you.

## On the First Day

At the settling-in session and on the first day, we will talk to you about the best way for you to deal with settling your child into Fledglings. This is an individual process as each child, and parent, is different. We do understand that this is a big day for your child - and for you. The biggest help you can be to your child is to be happy and positive.

On the first day please arrive at the normal time. Try to ensure that whoever normally will bring your child to school is there as well as you. You are very welcome to accompany your child into the hall. Go through the normal arrival routine with them, e.g. hanging up their coat, finding their name label and putting it on the board. If your child needs you to stay for a while, please do. Find an activity with them, but try not to get too involved. Sit back if possible and let them work independently.

Aim to leave after 30 minutes, or sooner if your child looks settled. Say "goodbye" and go. Please don't worry if your child cries when you leave. Many children do, but stop as soon as you are out of sight. A member of staff will comfort your child if they are upset and help them to settle down. We will phone you after 15 minutes to say if they have settled or not. The main thing is - once you have decided to leave, do please leave decisively.

When you return, focus on how excited you are that they have started at nursery, rather than how much you have missed them. For the first few days feel free to follow the same routine, unless your child is happy and confident, in which case shorten the time before you leave.

## Daily Routine

The children arrive at school at 9.15am. After greeting the teacher sitting by the door the children are encouraged to hang up their coats on the pegs. In the hall the children put their name card onto the board and go straight into the free work cycle. We start each morning with a Circle Time. This is an opportunity to discuss projects and activities for the day, and to do some singing.

The work cycle continues for around 2½-3 hours. The children choose their own activities from our carefully-prepared environment. There is a snack table available to all the children from 10.30 onwards, where we have fruit and vegetables prepared and fresh water and milk.

During the week we do music and movement sessions as well as drama both in small and large groups. We go outside every day where different activities are set up each day.

At 12.30 the children go home. The children are brought to the door when their parent/carer arrives. The children take their name from the registration board and hand into the teacher on leaving the building.

For afternoon sessions, children arrive at 12.30pm and go home at 3.45pm.



## Dropping Off

Once settled, children follow the normal procedure for arriving and leaving school.

Children arrive at 9.15am and leave at 12.30pm. The main doors are opened at 9.00am (for morning and Lunch Club children), and 12.30pm (for afternoon children). They stay open for 10 minutes and are monitored by a teacher.

At the entrance to the hall your child will be greeted by a teacher who will mark them present in the register. Any messages or information should be given to this teacher who will note it in the diary. If your child is not going home with their regular carer, you should notify this teacher and ensure they write it in the "Going Home Diary". If this is not done, we will have to contact you before allowing your child home with anyone else. Your child then finds their name label and pops it in the box. We try to encourage parents to help their children to find their names and then say "goodbye" to them in the small hall. There will be a teacher to take the children up to the big hall to join their friends.

## Picking up

On collection (at 12.30pm or 3.45pm), please wait outside the pre-school. We will say “goodbye” to your child and direct them to you. A record is kept of who picks up each child.

Please remember your child will become distressed if you are very late, or even regularly late. Children don't like to be the last to leave or to worry that you may not come for them. Obviously if you are delayed by traffic or something totally unavoidable, please contact us by telephone if you can and let us know what is happening.

## Late Collection

If you (or your child's carer) does not collect your child at the correct time the following procedure will be followed:

- after 15 minutes the teacher in charge will telephone you at home and/or work;
- if no contact has been made within a further 15 minutes, the teacher in charge will telephone the emergency contacts using the numbers in the Emergency Contacts File;
- if no-one on the emergency form can be contacted within a further 15 minutes, the teacher in charge will contact the Social Services, the Child Protection Unit or the Police.

We have to follow these procedures as they are in line with current Child Protection legislation. Obviously, every possible effort will be made to contact you before this more drastic action is taken.

# Toilet Training

The aim is that your child should arrive at Fledglings happy to use the toilet with support. However, there is flexibility on this goal and we will work with you and your child to help them with this process. In our settling-in questionnaire we ask parents to provide us with any relevant details regarding their child's toilet habits. If your child is still wearing nappies we will liaise with you to make a plan when your child will be changed.

## **“Help me to help myself”**

To help your child help themselves, please send them in clothes that they can manage to undo themselves e.g. track suit bottoms, leggings, etc.

Dungarees and body vests with poppers cause frustration for the children and are fiddly and awkward for teachers especially during the toilet training stages.

All children are asked to bring a labelled bag with labelled clothes in case they need changing. If the child is still wearing nappies it is the parent's responsibility to provide enough spare nappies.

Only staff at Fledglings will change children. They will be trained on the correct procedures during their induction. This excludes students doing their teaching practice and parents/carers assisting at the group.

## What to Wear, What to Bring

Please ensure anything coming to school is clearly labelled. Also, remember that we use our outside area every day!

### **Clothing**

At Fledglings we encourage the children to be independent. Therefore, we ask you to dress your child in clothes which they can fasten/unfasten on their own. No dungarees, please. We also suggest you avoid their “best clothes” or fancy dress costumes - we use a lot of paint and glue!

### **What to Bring**

There are several things your child may need, particularly depending on the weather. Please bring a named bag in which these items can be stored, e.g. change of clothes, a sunhat, wellies and raincoat. The bag can be kept on the wooden chairs in the small hall.

### **Toys**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school (other than for circle time). Experience has shown us that these cause arguments or tears, by getting lost or broken.

### **Show and Tell**

We encourage children to bring in photos, a ticket from an outing, a book or some other interesting object which they can talk about during our circle time. Please discuss it with them beforehand so they know what to say.

## Illnesses

For many illnesses there are specific incubation periods during which children must not come to pre-school. In line with the Health Protection Agency guidelines Fledglings operates the following exclusion procedures:

**Chicken pox:** exclusion from school until 5 days from the onset of the rash.

**Conjunctivitis:** child may return after successful treatment.

**Diarrhoea and vomiting:** exclusion from school until 24 hours after the last episode.

**Flu:** child must not return to school until recovered.

**German measles:** exclusion from school until 5 days from the onset of the rash.

**Head lice/nits:** child may return after successful treatment.

**Impetigo:** exclusion from school until the lesions are crusted or healed.

**Measles:** exclusion from school until 5 days from the onset of the rash.

**Mumps:** exclusion for 5 days from onset of swollen glands.

**Ringworm:** exclusion from school until treatment has commenced.

**Scabies:** child may return to school after first treatment.

**Scarlet fever:** child may return 5 days after commencing antibiotics.

**Slap cheek (Fifth Disease):** no period of exclusion necessary.

**Threadworms:** child may return after successful treatment.

## Keeping Us Informed

In the event of illness, you can call the pre-school phone number (07803 310 849) on the first morning. It is not necessary to call us on any subsequent days, but please do not send your child back to school until 24 hours after all symptoms have ceased (see illness policy below). If your child is due to be absent for reasons other than illness, please inform us as soon as you can so that we can make the necessary record in our register.

You can also message the group directly using the My Montessori Child system. Login details are provided once your child starts with us.

It is always helpful for us to know if your child has had a bad night's sleep, or if anything else has happened that may affect their behaviour or mood. Please inform the teacher on the door when you arrive. Also let them know if you will be picking up your child early or if someone different will be collecting them.

We also need to know if there are any changes to your contact details - address/phone number/emergency contact person - or if there are changes to your care arrangements such as change of nanny etc.

Finally, please keep us informed about your plans for your child's next school. Staff are always available to discuss options with you and will be able to share their experience of different schools. Please remember we need to have half a term's notice in writing if you wish to change pre-schools.

## Keeping You Informed

We will keep you informed about your child's progress in a number of ways:

- We send home regular newsletters outlining the term's projects and forthcoming events.
- There is a large notice board outside the school. On this you will find useful information about activities at Fledglings and elsewhere, as well as articles we think you may find interesting.
- Our classroom displays will give you an idea of the work the children have been doing. Please come in and look at these.
- The teacher on the door at the beginning of each session will pass on any general information and hand out letters etc.
- Your child's key person will keep records of their daily activities and progress in relation to the government's Early Learning Goals. You are welcome to consult the key person regarding your child's progress at any time by making an early morning (9am) or afternoon (12.20pm) appointment.
- We hold at least one parents' coffee morning a year. This is an informal occasion and is an opportunity for you to speak to your child's key person, see photos of the work the children have been doing and meet other parents.
- We also hold two formal parents' meetings. These are individual appointments during which particular aspects of your child's progress can be discussed.

## Parental Involvement

Fledglings recognises that parents are their children's first educators. We believe firmly in the active involvement of parents at Fledglings. We aim to create a partnership between parents and pre-school.

### **Parent/Grandparent/Carer Activity**

Parents, carers and grandparents are warmly welcomed into the nursery to share activities with the children, such as bathing a baby, or a hobby - cooking, dancing, singing, picture framing, film-making, reading - or talking about their culture or country - dancing, songs and stories from around the world. Other parents have talked to the children about their work e.g. doctor, dentist, photographer. These have led to role play areas being created in the nursery (i.e. a doctor's surgery), allowing the children to explore these worlds for themselves.

Please speak to your child's teacher about any ideas you may have, or you may like to come in to read to the children.

### **Outings**

We try to arrange at least one visit to the park weekly and also a visit to the library termly. To help us with these trips we often ask parents to come with us. Before each trip we will send out details and let you know if we need parents to come with us. If you are available to help, please let us know and we will then confirm if you are needed.

Every trip is carefully planned to ensure that it is safe and appropriate for the children. For most outings a member of staff will make a preliminary visit and carry out a risk assessment.



## Fees & Early Years Funding

You will receive an invoice at the beginning of each half term for the following half term's fees. Fees from January 2018 are £18.50 a session and children receiving Early Years Funding, the fee for the additional time is £6 a session.

Details of how to pay can be found at: <https://www.fledglings-bromley.com/how-to-pay>

### **Early Years Funding**

Most of our parents claim Early Years Funding for their child, when they become eligible. These schemes are run by the local education authorities (London Borough of Bromley) and as such, Fledglings is required to undertake a large amount of administrative work.

We do this on your behalf to ensure you receive the funding each term. It would help us a great deal if you can provide any information we may ask you for, that is required by the authorities (e.g. parental declaration, birth certificates, etc), in a timely manner.

We participate in the Extended Entitlement (30 hours) scheme.

## Introducing Our Staff

### **Brigid Mahony: Manager**

After having four children (the youngest of which attended a Montessori Pre-School) Brigid became interested in the methods of Maria Montessori. Brigid completed her Montessori training in 1989. After working at another local setting she decided to set up her own Pre-School which she did in 1991.

### **Kelli Hartley: Deputy/Montessori Practitioner**

After having two children Kelli realised that she would like to pursue a career in Early Years. She joined Fledglings in 2001 and undertook a Diploma in Childcare which she finished in 2004.

### **Sue Delaney: Montessori Practitioner**

Sue joined Fledglings in 2010 after having helped as a volunteer during her children's time at the group. She undertook and completed a Diploma in childcare in 2011.

### **Emma Brewer: Montessori Practitioner**

Before having children Emma worked as a solicitor, then, after a career break she decided to train as a Montessori teacher. As part of her course, Emma joined Fledglings as a trainee, and qualified in 2014.

### **Seana Everett: Montessori Practitioner**

Before starting a family, Seana worked as a nurse at King's College Hospital. Her children all attended a Montessori setting. Seana started working at Fledglings in September 2015 after her youngest daughter started school.

### **Emma McNaughton: Montessori Practitioner**

Emma started her career in banking, and lived in Luxembourg for some years where she became a swimming instructor for children. Both her daughters attended Montessori settings, and Emma started at Fledglings in September 2015.

### **Clare Stone: Montessori Practitioner**

Clare obtained her NNEB qualification in 1999 and since then has worked in pre-school groups locally as well as starting a family of her own. Clare started working at Fledglings in September 2016.

## Useful Contact Details

**Pre-School Address:**

Fledglings Montessori Pre-School  
Friends' Meeting House  
46 Ravensbourne Road  
Bromley  
BR1 1HP

**Pre-School Telephone:** 07803 310 849

**Pre-School e-mail:** [information@fledglings-bromley.com](mailto:information@fledglings-bromley.com)

**Pre-School Twitter:** @FledglingsM

**Website:** [www.fledglings-bromley.com](http://www.fledglings-bromley.com)

**Ofsted Registration:** 137247

## Complaints

If a parent has a concern about the pre-school or a particular member of staff, they should speak to the Manager who will investigate the issue in complete confidence and act upon it if she considers it justified. A written record of this matter will be kept by the school in its Complaints File. If the parent is not satisfied with the result of the Manager's involvement, they must clearly state their complaint in writing to the Manager, Brigid Mahony. After a complaint has been resolved the final outcome will be written in the Complaints File. Any recommendations for changes in procedure will be made and noted against the complaints policy. If the parent feels that they have not received a satisfactory response to their complaint, they are invited to contact Ofsted directly at the following address:

Ofsted,  
Early Years,  
Northern Regional Office  
Royal Exchange Building  
St. Anne's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7AL

Complaints and enforcement telephone number: 0300 123 4666  
Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)