

The Local Offer

Name of Setting: Penguin Pre School

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Name of person to contact: Pre-School Manager- Sally-Ann Price. Setting SENCO- Tracy Manders

My child has SEND. I would like to look around. What do I need to do?

Each setting is as unique as the staff that work there and the parents and children who attend, so we strongly recommend that parents visit a variety of settings to ensure they are getting the right place for their child and their particular needs. Initial contact is usually made by phone or e-mail. We have an open door policy welcoming all families/carers to visit our setting prior to their child being enrolled at our pre-school. Parents are free to come for an initial visit during our 'free play' times as this is when our pre-school is at its liveliest. Its important parents see it at its loudest, most boisterous time as it gives them a true reflection of what happens at our setting. This enables them to gain a 'feel' for the room and see if it is right for their child. Parents are encouraged to make as many visits as they feel they need and to ask all the questions they need to before deciding whether or not we are the choice of setting for their child. The manager, deputy and setting SENCO are also available to discuss your child's particular needs and how we can best meet them. Parents can also find lots of information on the main schools website in the pre-school section including a page of 'frequently asked questions'. Parents may also contact us via email or phone to ask further questions and to clarify decisions.

How will my child and I be made to feel welcome and how will you get ready for my child coming?

Our staff team have worked together for many years and we have considerable experience in working with children of all abilities and families from all walks of life. Two of our staff members also have children with SEND so we fully understand the issues, worries and concerns having a child with SEND can bring from a parents perspective. Thorough preparation is key to aid transition into the setting. This cannot be done without establishing a strong, supportive and above all honest relationship with the parents. Each child's interests and needs will be discussed with parents, child's current or previous setting and any outside agencies already involved in the child's care. Once you have decided to place your child with our Pre-School, you will receive a starter pack which contains an information sheet with photographs and a personal 'blog' of each staff member, a 'New Parent' newsletter and an 'All About Me' booklet for you to complete about your child. This booklet includes information about your child's current interests, likes, dislikes, special words/sounds/actions they use to communicate, family members and some basic self-care questions. Families are welcome to bring their child in for visits to meet the staff and children and get used to our room and outdoor play area. If needed, we can arrange for one of our staff members to visit the child at home and in their current setting to gather as much information as possible and to further connect with the child in an environment they are comfortable with. The child's voice is encouraged and included in preparation for them starting, and everything from what they may like to bring for our show and tell table to toys and equipment they may like to have out on their first day. We encourage any other professionals involved in the child's care to liaise with us before the child starts and to remain involved whilst they are in our care, sharing strategies and best practice to further support the child's growing development. We would discuss any support plans already in place and how best to transfer these into practice in our setting. We would gain advice from these professionals on how best to prepare for the child starting and look at any further training needed for staff, possible equipment needed and previous strategies used. The needs and ongoing development of our children with SEN are discussed a regular intervals between key staff, the manager and the settings SENCO and relevant information would then be passed on at staff meetings to ensure continuity of care. As a small setting, all staff would be involved in the care of the child, supporting the key person, the parents as well as the child.

How accessible are your premises?

Our Pre-School building is a secure unit within a village primary school. We have our own entrance which has a built in graduated concrete ramp. Our classroom, children's toilets/wash area, and cloakroom area are all on one level, with access to our secure outdoor area via ramp. Although we do not have disabled toileting facilities within the unit, we could access the foundation stage disabled toilet which is within easy distance of our classroom. Our classroom is quite a good size compared to some but we would adapt the room, tables and equipment to ensure a child with physical SEN could be as independently mobile as possible. All tables, chairs and equipment are at child height and within easy access. We have an adjustable table that can be lowered or made higher for those who may need to get a wheelchair underneath to aid table top play and large supportive beanbags can be made available for floor play. We have access to a large playground area, tennis courts, adventure playground, grass areas, a pond (fenced off and used only under strict adult supervision), a nature trail, an outdoor classroom and a vegetable growing area with chickens and a chicken house. Most are accessible due to fixed ramps and on one level, provision would be made when visiting the nature trail for those less mobile. Inclusion is key for any child with SEN and we strive to ensure all children have access to all activities bearing in mind the health and safety of all involved.

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How will you keep my child safe?

All employed staff, regular volunteers, students and committee members are DBS checked. We are registered with the local authority and inspected by Ofsted. Visitors are supervised at all times and must sign in and out when attending/leaving the premises. Students on placement and regular volunteers have an induction meeting with the manager where relevant policies will be shared and questions asked to ensure full understanding of safeguarding, confidentiality, health and safety procedures etc, and their role regarding this. All are expected to sign a 'code of conduct' and sign to say they have read and understood the relevant policies. We have comprehensive health and safety, safeguarding, confidentiality, positive behaviour, anti-bullying policies and procedures in place which are reviewed and updated regularly by the manager, staff and committee. We have a designated staff member for health and safety, safeguarding, positive behaviour, SEN and inclusion and these attend regular training to keep up to date with best practice and regulations and feedback to all staff at meetings. All permanent staff hold valid first aid certificates and renew courses with training providers recommended by the local authority. The manager ensures there are no changes to staff health or status to make them unsuitable to work with children. Risk assessments are in place for all equipment and craft supplies are sourced from child friendly suppliers. Accidents are recorded in line with our policy and are monitored by the health and safety officer to pick up on any 'red flag' areas. Policies and procedures are in place for the storage and administering of medicines and creams and comprehensive permission forms are filled in by parents with the relevant details. Information about diet and allergies are recorded from the registration records and displayed for staff to see alongside a photograph of the child. We follow the schools 'no nuts' policy and ask parents to leave nut products out of their child's lunchboxes. Each area is checked daily before we open to ensure safety of the room and equipment and documented, as well as staff being vigil throughout the day. Children are taught to look after the toys and equipment and to seek out staff if they see something is broken or looks untoward. They are also taught rules about what is and isn't appropriate behaviour and are encouraged to say 'NO!', 'Stop it!' and 'I Don't Like it!' if another child is doing something to them that is unkind or unfair. They are also encouraged to come to an adult for support and help and staff will intervene to ensure fairness and to help children cooperate and resolve any issues. Positive behaviour is always strongly encouraged through praise and reward as well as adult modelling. Health care plans are put into place for children with specific needs and risk assessments would also be completed if relevant. The pre-school unit is secured from the rest of the school by a keypad coded door and access to the premises is via a video link phone with the main pre-school gate. Our outdoor area is fenced off from the rest of the schools playing area and is secured with a sliding bolt and padlock. We hold regular fire drills alongside the rest of the school and the toilets, cloakroom/office area and main classroom all contain smoke alarms linked to the schools mainframe alert system. Staff are aware of their fire duties and perform these competently. We monitor and reflect up on each drill and make appropriate changes where necessary.

How will you communicate with me what my child has done, enjoyed and learnt?

We are above all honest with our parents about their children. It is essential that we build a strong, open and respectful relationship with our parents. Being honest about everything from behaviour, what sort of time they have had during a session to how they are progressing as this is crucial for continuity of care and development. We have many ways of passing on information about your child's development and what they have been doing whilst in our care. During the 'settling in' period, parents are encouraged to phone the setting, particularly if children are upset when parents leave. Staff can also phone parents if they wish. Key staff will also provide parents with a written 'settling in review' a few sessions after their child starts. This shows how they have settled, current interests and what we are looking to work on next. Staff are available at the beginning and end of each session to pass on relevant information to you. And key staff will also use a child's home/school book for those parents who like to use them. The daily whiteboard, parent information board and displays show what we will be doing in the short term, and pictures and descriptions of current/past activities are also on view. You will receive a newsletter at least termly, a copy of the most recent can be found on the whiteboard. Child progress documentation such as progress summaries and learning journey folders are shared with parents at open events, regular parent/practitioner meetings and verbally throughout your child's time with us. Learning journey folders can be taken home to share with the wider family. If outside agencies are involved you will also be invited to participate in their full review meetings. We have systems in place for sharing information with other settings your child may attend such as nurseries or child minders. 'Wow' moments and achievements are always passed on to parents/carers and we love seeing the pride on the children's faces when they are praised to parents. Staff actively look for reasons to give praise and reward these with a sticker. Children have individual sticker cards and staff will add a sticker to the card, tell the child why, write the reason on the card, date and sign it. When a child has 3 stickers, these are taken home and a new sticker card allocated. Children who have been given a sticker also have their name written on our daily whiteboard. We are happy to contact you by e-mail, phone or letter.

How do you work with other professionals?

We feel the most important partnership is with our parents. You are your child's most trusted, consistent educator. No one knows your child like you do, their likes, dislikes, what frightens them, makes them happy. What motivates and interests them. With your input we can support every area of learning for your amazing and unique children and we take as much pride as you do in all of their achievements. We work alongside many other professionals such as educational psychologist, speech and language therapists, our area SENCO and the SENCO within the main school. We work alongside the school nurse, health visitors and paediatricians. We have worked alongside social workers and family support agencies. We work hard to establish a valuable partnership with other settings

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in the local area. Particularly when our children attend more than one setting such as nurseries, sure start centres and child minders. We have regular contact with local school reception teachers, particularly when looking at transition. We also attend meetings and workshops held at Forest Way School as part of the teaching school alliance. We would be more than happy to make and maintain contact with any specialist support services needed in the care of our children.

What training have you/your staff had in SEND?

All permanent, full time staff members hold a level 3 qualification or higher and continually attend courses with a view to keep up to date with legislation regarding their own particular roles within pre-school (health and safety, safeguarding, SEN etc) and for their own personal professional development. We have a designated SENCO who has attended the 'SEN code of practice and role of the SENCO' training. 'Writing individual education plans'; 'Promoting positive behaviour'. She has considerable experience of supporting our children/families that SEN affects as well as writing relevant documentation and sourcing outside agencies where needed. The manager has also attended SEN training. All staff have attended a wide range of positive behaviour courses and we have two named staff responsible for implementing our behaviour policy. Our SENCO attends meetings led by the local authority to ensure we are continuing to adhere to the rules and regulations regarding SEN, any new thinking that current research shows, and to further her own knowledge. This is then cascaded back to all staff during our fortnightly meetings. Our SENCO and inclusion officer have both completed the Menphys course and are due to attend Makaton training at forest way school this month (OCT 2014) Within the setting we use lots of action as well as visual pictures to communicate. All staff have a consistent approach to rules and boundaries to ensure children feel supported within the routine and structure of our pre-school promoting safety for all. All staff hold a current first aid and food hygiene certificate. Between us we have attended and will continue to attend many more courses relevant to the development of children in the Early Years. We would ensure the key person assigned to your child had the most relevant experiences and skills and we would look at an individual child's needs to see if we would need any further training.

How will you adapt play opportunities for my child?

We provide age/developmentally appropriate equipment to support a variety of children's needs. The room, equipment/resources can be adapted to ensure they can participate on a level they can access and investigate specialist equipment/resources, depending on the nature of your child's needs. One to one care would be made available where necessary to support the child physically/emotionally, to ensure they get the most out of all available. Strong partnerships with parents and other professionals would be fostered to gain an insight into the child's likes/current interests and starting point of development so activities and toys could be made available for the child to access. We have a wide range of equipment at child height level to encourage self-choice and independence. This is key for children's sense of belonging, inclusion and self-confidence. Adult led activities would be planned inclusive of the needs of our children with SEN to ensure full participation (higher staff ratio's, risk assessment, use of adjustable table etc).

How will you get ready for my child going to his/her new school?

Transition is important for all children. As a designated pre-school our main transition is when children attend primary school. Although the majority of our children attend the primary school we are based in, we also feed to several other schools in the local area and therefore already have good working relationships with the reception/SENCO staff at these. Links would be built with any school your child may attend that we have yet to have contact with. We arrange for a relevant staff member to visit the teacher early on to ensure the school can begin to look at preparing to receive a child with SEN. We include other professionals who are involved where relevant and include information such as, strategies we have been using, medical/specialist equipment, additional staff support etc. A meeting with the school SENCO would be sought and where relevant a full meeting with parents and all the professionals who have been and will be supporting the child would take place. Reception teachers and any school staff who will be involved in the care of the child on a daily basis visit the children in our setting to play and get to know the children in a familiar space and some teachers pay us many visits. We also support the children on their first formal transition day by sending a staff member who knows the child/family well. We offer this to all schools we feed to as we feel it is of paramount importance to have someone familiar who knows the child well available during this time. We feed back to parents, encourage the child to settle/explore and give relevant information to the teacher. The transition process may take longer for a child with SEN and staff would be made available for extra visits and to help support the child and the family. Parents are encouraged to share their child's learning journey folder with key school staff and copies of all developmental/SEN/strategy records are passed to the feeder school (permission is sought upon application). Our setting plans for transition in a low key way so as not to overstress the children. Our large teddy bears are always dressed in uniforms from local schools and we talk about the badges/colours etc alongside our own baby penguin uniform. We encourage chats about siblings attending local primary schools and build on the knowledge some children already have. We include caps, book bags etc in our dressing up clothes and share familiar toys/resources with the reception classes next door. Stories, role play and a range of equipment and planned activities about changes/feelings and school are implemented during this time. We are in an enviable position where we can take small groups of children to 'play' with the older reception children to familiarise them with the rooms/space and staff. The children also regularly help fetch milk, go to the office and printer room in the main school. This aids all children, as they get to experience different rooms and areas within a primary school that can be a range of quiet, lively and busy. They also get to see older children doing P.E in the hall, cooking in the children's kitchen, taking the registers

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to the office etc and we talk about what their siblings/and they, may do at 'big' school. We feel it is as important to support families during transition as it is their children. Parents are pre-warned to prepare for possible changes in children's behaviour, with some children regressing slightly in toileting, beginning to show separation anxiety and deterioration in behaviour. Why this happens at this time, alongside strategies and coping tactics and the fact that this can be normal are all explained. We hold a meeting with parents of the new school starters and explain a little about what to expect, encouraging questions and helping them support each other, showing them they have the same worries as many others. We also speak to the school teachers at this time and ask if there is anything they would like us to highlight with the parents in order to help smooth transition. (Names in uniforms. Reading books. Passing on of relevant information. Teaching assistant/learning support assistant roles etc.) Key persons work hard to reassure parents at this time and a parent/practitioner meeting can be booked for parents who have any specific concerns regarding their child starting school. We hold a leaver's 'tea party' at the end of the summer term for our children and all family members and carers are invited to celebrate this milestone in a positive way.

How will you and I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

We communicate regularly and freely with our parents at the beginning and end of each session. Each family has a home/school book which the key person will use to share information with parents and can include everything from how they have settled, what they have been doing, to how they are coping with transition. We also include areas of learning we are looking to do and how this can be extended at home with simple activities. This is a two way 'chat' book and parents are encouraged to use them to tell us of their child's achievements and what they have been doing outside of the setting. Parents are invited to parent/practitioner meetings with their child's key person, where their child's assessments, progress and development documentation is discussed. Progress summaries are shared with parent's and have an area for 'learning at home' which the key person will talk through with the parent. We have activities and toys that we encourage parents to borrow with basic information on how to utilise these at home to extend children's learning which can be adapted for different areas of learning. We have fun activities that we share designed to target specific areas a child needs such as certain speech and language sounds. We share basic strategies on dealing with inappropriate behaviour and how to encourage positive behaviour. Talking through expectations with families and their children to aid continuity of care. If a child shows an interest in a certain book, jigsaw or set of toys we can arrange for this to be borrowed for a time and will give parent's ideas on how these can be used to support learning at home. All home learning is important, not just for those children with SEN. And we strongly encourage all our parents to play an active role in the education of their child. We also hold lots of 'open event' weeks where family members, carers and child minders can visit the setting with their children, see what we do, engage in a wide range of activities and look through their child's learning journey with them and us.