

SODBURY VALE FEDERATION

Nursery Policy

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2 VERSION HISTORY

Version Number	Reason for Issue	Date of Issue
01	Initial Issue For Federation	July 2025

3 Admissions

Children can join St John's Mead Nursery the term after their third birthday. We ask that children attend for a minimum of 2 sessions (totalling 6 hours). This is so that children can settle and develop friendships and staff can get to know children well in order to support them with their learning.

Sarah Cook, the Nursery Administrator, manages the session availability when arranging for a child to start at St. John's Mead Nursery. She will be the first point of contact for parents when enrolling their child with St John's Mead Nursery. Nursery teachers are happy to undertake a tour of the nursery class with parents upon request.

We have three points in the year when children can start with us in Nursery. These are the start of the Autumn (September), Spring (January) and Summer (April) terms. We encourage all new starters, regardless of attending a previous setting, to undertake our graduated settling period prior to beginning full sessions. This ensures each child has a positive start to Nursery. This approach allows children to adapt to new staff, the setting, routines and other children. Nursery staff will be aware of some children needing additional sessions to help them settle and will work with parents to extend the graduated settling period to suit the individual child if necessary. Staff will always communicate with parents about how their child has settled at the end of each session during this period. The St John's Mead graduated settling period for Nursery is as follows:

- **Initial 'stay and play' session:** 30 minutes stay and play session in Nursery with a parent or carer at the end of the term before they start. Parents will then be provided with a start date and time for their child to begin independent sessions.
- **Day 1:** Parents to bring their child into the nursery building and help them find their peg and drawer. Parents can stay for 10 minutes to help settle their child at an activity if necessary, before leaving them to have an independent session with staff and peers for 30 minutes.
- **Day 2:** New starters to attend from 8.45 – 10.00. Parents to say goodbye to their child and leave them with a Nursery class teacher at the Nursery garden gate inside the school grounds. Parents to collect from the green gate opposite the entrance to First Steps Nursery.
- **Day 3:** New starters to attend from 8.45 – 11.45. If the child is only booked in for morning sessions, they will have completed their settling in sessions.
- **Day 4:** New starters to attend from 8.45 – 13.00. Parents to provide their child with a packed lunch when they are staying for the whole day (or the afternoon session from 12.00– 15.00). This will be the child's first session to include lunch.
- **Day 5:** New starters to attend from 8.45 – 15.00. The child will have completed their first full day of Nursery and will be able to complete their booked hours going forward, unless otherwise stated by a member of the Nursery team.

4 Communication with Parents and Carers

Once children have completed the graduated settling period and are attending their full sessions, staff encourage regular communication between parents and staff to make sure that children's well being is paramount and that there is a holistic awareness of their learning and development.

'Parents make a crucial difference to children's outcomes. Parents are children's first and most enduring educators... The benefits are greatest when practitioners and families work in respectful partnership to develop ways to support children both at home and in the setting.'
Birth to Five Matters 2021

Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers keep records about each child's progress in all aspects of the curriculum. Nursery staff at St. John's Mead will use an 'online learning journal' called 'Tapestry' to contribute towards monitoring your child's progress. It will encompass photographic evidence of the learning they undertake as well as commentary on their progress in learning activities. The contents of this journal are passed on to you at the end of your child's time in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St John's Mead.

We offer, and encourage, parents/carers to contribute comments about their child's progress at home. Parents/ carers can do this using their Tapestry account by posting videos, photos and comments about what their child has been learning outside of school. There is also the option to comment on observations made about their child in school.

In the event of a child being absent from Nursery, we request that parents inform staff in person/ via Tapestry/ via phone at the earliest possible opportunity. If parents call the Nursery phone (01454 866504) and there is no answer as staff are supporting children, we kindly request that parents/carers leave a message for staff to pick up as soon as they are able.

Each child will be allocated a class teacher as their Key Worker. The Key Worker is responsible for assessing, monitoring and reporting each child's progress while they are at Nursery. We will arrange parent/teacher meetings with each child's Key Worker, 6 weeks after a child has started with us to discuss how they have settled in, academic progress and targets. Parent/teacher meetings will take place in term 1, and term 3 or 4 (depending on the length of term 3) with a written report sent out in term 6. If parents/carers have any concerns or questions at any point, the Nursery teachers are happy to arrange an afterschool meeting to discuss.

5 Teaching and Learning

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of Reception year. At St. John's Mead, we follow the curriculum guidance ('Development Matters') for the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework revised by the Government in March 2021 and utilise 'Development Matters' to support planning to meet the educational programmes. The framework is comprised of seven areas of learning:

Three prime areas. These are 'particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving' (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage March 2021):

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The delivery of this framework is achieved by providing a broad range of first-hand relevant experiences and hands-on activities which are appropriate for this stage of children's development. Each key person will get to know each child as an individual and make sure that their individual needs are met. We want children to WANT to engage in learning, and the best way to achieve this is to provide activities in which they are interested, which have clear, well-planned opportunities for teaching, learning and assessment. At St. John's Mead, we are committed to young children learning through play, as recommended by the government. We believe wholeheartedly that this provides the best foundation on which to build the rest of each child's education. For this reason, we find out about your child's interests and plan activities based around these interests. This means we are regularly reflecting on and adapting our practice to best engage the children. Teachers often observe and support children while they play to record particular skills and achievements and to inform future planning. We refer to this approach as, 'In the moment planning'.

6 Nursery Resource Fund

At St John's Mead Nursery, the children are encouraged to play with a wide range of toys and learning equipment to help them develop in all seven areas of learning. We also carry out weekly cooking activities as part of this. In order to help maintain toys, resources and fund cooking activities, we kindly request that parents contribute a voluntary £5 to the Nursery Resource Fund each half term (£2.50 for those who are in receipt of Pupil Premium).

7 Appropriate Clothing

When children start at St. John's Mead Nursery, they are given a yellow logoed nursery class t-shirt (covered by the admission fee). Parents can purchase additional t-shirts for £8. Children are welcome to wear these t-shirts when they attend nursery, but can also wear their own clothes from home. We recommend that children wear old clothing that parents do not mind getting dirty when exploring outdoors (including our woodland area and nursery garden) or inside when using creative resources such as paint. We request that all children wear sensible footwear that they are able to get on and off independently, for example, using Velcro, and do not attend nursery in open toed sandals in order to protect their feet. All children are encouraged to have a pair of wellington boots and a waterproof coat that remain in Nursery. In addition, we request that parents provide a small bag of spare clothes including pants, socks, t-shirt, trousers / shorts (depending on the season), jumper / cardigan for children to change into if they have a toileting accident / get particularly soiled during messy play opportunities. All items of clothing, including footwear, must be named.

8 Changing and Toileting

There is the expectation at St John's Mead Nursery, that children will be toilet trained before starting at nursery. However, we do recognise that some children with medical needs and or SEND may need additional time before they are ready to toilet train. This will be achieved through working with parents, having appropriate expectations and positive reinforcement. As a school, we aim to be inclusive to all children and to consider the individual needs of each child. We see toilet training as a self-care skill that all children should have the opportunity to learn through the full support and non-judgmental concern of adults.

Children who are not potty trained will only be able to stay for a maximum of one session (3 hours) at a time. To ensure children are comfortable and happy, any child still in nappies will be checked when they arrive at school / nursery and changed if wet or soiled. Nappy checks and changes will be recorded in the Changing Record Book. Teachers will ensure that ALL staff in the team are fully aware of each child's stage of toilet training.

For further details on changing and toileting, please see our Changing and Toileting Guidelines.

9 Health and Nutrition

The government recommends that children in the Early Years develop healthy balanced and nutritious eating habits from birth.

'Plan meals and snacks that include a variety of food and drinks from the 4 main food groups every day. The more children try new foods, the wider the range of nutrients they will get from their meals.' (*Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance May 2025*)

9.1 SNACK

At St John's Mead Nursery, children will be offered a snack of milk and fruit or vegetable once a day, usually in the morning. The selection of fruit or vegetables does vary. If a child prefers a particular fruit, parents/ carers can send specific fruit in with them. If a child does not like milk, they will be encouraged to drink water from the bottle they have brought in from home at snack time. As part of being a Healthy School, we request bottles of water, not squash.

9.2 LUNCH

If children are attending a whole day at Nursery, or they are attending the afternoon session (12.00 – 15.00), then they require a packed lunch provided by their parents/carer. It is important to ensure that food provided from home aligns with the healthy options offered by nursery at snack and during cooking activities, so that children receive consistent messages about nutrition. Therefore, we request that you provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food, encouraging healthier food choices for packed lunches. We want to make sure children eat a balanced diet covering the 4 main food groups; fruit and vegetables, carbohydrates, dairy and alternatives, and protein, while avoiding foods and drinks high in salt, sugar and saturated fat.

The Government recommend the following daily portion sizes for children aged 5 and younger:

Food group	Portion size
A variety of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions each day)	
Cooked and raw	40g
Carbohydrates (4 portions each day)	
Cooked rice, pasta and potatoes	80g
Bread	25g
Average sized potato	1
Dairy and alternatives (3 portions each day)	
Milk	150ml
Cheese (sliced or grated)	15g
Cottage cheese	30g
Plain yoghurt	60g
Protein (2 portions each day)	
Baked beans	55g
Egg	55g
Meat, fish and poultry	40g
Most pulses and hummus	40g

All lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be clearly named.

9.3 ALLERGIES

We are a nut-free school. All lunch boxes will be checked for nuts. If nuts are found, to avoid the risk of cross-contamination, the item will be kept in its packaging, sealed if possible, removed from the reach of children, and returned to parents / carers at the end of the session, with reasons why. Parents / carers must ensure they communicate any additional allergies with staff prior to their child starting at Nursery so that a health care plan can be put in place and all staff in Nursery are aware of the child's allergies and are up to date with any necessary medical training prior to the child starting nursery.

9.4 CHOKING

All food served to children must be prepared in a way to prevent choking, including food provided in lunch boxes. This includes ensuring food, like grapes, are chopped into quarters. Staff will sit with children during lunch to ensure close supervision while eating.

9.5 CELEBRATIONS

To ensure all children are able to join in with celebrations, rather than parents sending in cakes and sweet treats to share at birthdays and celebrations, we request fruit platters or non-edible options to celebrate with such as bubbles, balloons or stickers.

9.6 COOKING ACTIVITIES WITHIN NURSERY

Cooking is a great experience for young children and helps to create a positive relationship with food. We plan healthy cooking activities once a week. We will plan recipes to fit in with any known allergies. If your child has allergies, we will inform you beforehand of the ingredient list. If there are any ingredients that your child cannot have contact with, we will substitute it for an acceptable alternative ingredient. Your child will bring their cooking home with them at the end of the session.