

*Working with you to give your child
the best chance to learn and flourish in life*



Little Learners Ambleside, Elm Park Parent Handbook

**Little Learners
Nursery & Pre-School, Elm Park**

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 A LifeLine
Projects Initiative

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1. Welcome to Little Learners

We are delighted that your child is joining Little Learners nursery.

We are committed to working with you to give your child the best chance to learn and flourish in life.

We hope that you and your child will be very happy during your time in the nursery. We welcome any contributions and suggestions from you on how best to achieve this.

This handbook is designed to give you as much information as we can about our nursery and how it works.

2. Manager and Deputy Manager

Each nursery has a manager and deputy manager. Please feel free to contact these staff who are happy to speak to you about registering your child, our opening hours and fees, your child's progress or any other matters about nursery life.

Nursery Manager and Deputy Names	Telephone Number
Manager: Terri Noone Deputy Manager: Terri Stanley	01708 579449

3. Enquiries

On enquiry, an information pack and parent handbook will be given to prospective parents and an introductory visit arranged.

4. Introductory visit

We are delighted to show prospective parents around our nursery. The visit will enable you to meet with staff and explore the surroundings of the nursery. The manager will inform you about all aspects of nursery life, and will answer any questions you may have.

5. Settling-in visits

Before your child starts, we arrange with you a number of free 'settling-in' visits. These are short visits when we invite you and your child to spend some time in the nursery. This enables your child to become familiar with the nursery and some of the staff and children with the security of having you present.

The exact number and timing of these visits will vary according to the individual needs of each child. The details of these will be discussed and worked out with you. We welcome telephone calls during settling-in visits to reduce worries and answer any questions you may have.

Settling-in visits are also an opportunity for you to meet your child's key person and to exchange information. The information we gather helps ensure our staff understand your child's previous learning, which helps them to support your child's future learning by building on their existing skills.

Subject to having sufficient staff available, we may be able to offer home visits during the settling-in period to help with the transition from home to nursery. Please speak to the Manager about home visits if you feel your child would benefit.

6. Key person

A key person is a named member of staff who has responsibility for a small group of children. They develop close bonds with each child in their group and 'tune into' children's play and their conversations to really get to know each child. Children feel settled and happy and are more confident to explore and as a result become more capable learners.

Your child's key person helps your child feel safe and cared for. The role is an important one and is an approach set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The role involves in responding sensitively to your child's feelings and behaviours and meeting emotional needs by giving reassurance, such as when they are settling-in.

The key person is your main point of contact. They are able to share information about daily activities, what your child has eaten and drunk as well as how they are developing against the Early Years Foundation Stage.

7. Waiting list

Nursery places are subject to availability. You will be given the opportunity to join the waiting list if there are no places available.

Priority will be given to children requiring:

- an immediate start
- five days a week, then to those requiring four, three and two days a week, particularly those who can be successfully matched with another child's requirements to make a full-time place
- siblings of children currently attending will also take priority for places.

8. Registration

To register for a place, a one-off, non-refundable £25 administration fee and a deposit of £200 per child is payable with a completed information form. The £200 deposit secures a nursery place on the waiting list. Places are allocated according to availability. Children registered for funded only sessions do not pay the administration fee and deposit. The administration fee and deposit are payable for children registered to attend a mix of funded and paid sessions.

Once we have a suitable place for your child, we will contact you to confirm the start date. We will send you a place offer letter to confirm the arrangements.

The £200 deposit will not be refunded if you withdraw from the waiting list before your requested start date, or if your child fails to start on the agreed start date.

We will need to see a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunisation card as part of the registration process.

Children are required to be registered for a minimum of two days a week. However, we do have some flexibility on this. For example, if we only have space for one day, your child may start on one day a week, and as space becomes available, move to two days a week. We do not offer half-day places or term-time only.

9. Refund of Deposit

The £200 deposit will be refunded to you when your child leaves the nursery. This is subject to your account being settled and the receipt of one month's notice in writing from you.

10. Fees

- The daily rate varies at each nursery. Please contact the relevant Nursery Manager who will explain the fees to you (see 2 above for names and contact details).
- Fees are payable in advance.
- Invoices for fees will be raised on the 18th of each month.
- Fees are payable into our bank account by Direct Debit (see 10.5 below for link to mandate), childcare vouchers or tax-free childcare on or before 1st of each month.
- Fees are payable 51 weeks per year regardless of closures such as bank holidays and staff inset days and children's absence through illness and holidays.
- Extra sessions must be booked and paid for at least 24 hours in advance.
- Fees are subject to increase. Little Learners will give one month's notice of change of fees.
- We will accept childcare vouchers and tax-free childcare – please ask the Nursery Manager for more information on these schemes and what you need to do.
- If you pay in part, or in full by voucher or tax-free childcare we require email notification of the amount. Please ensure you pay into your voucher or tax-free childcare account 6-7 working days before the end of the month to ensure cleared funds reach our account by 1st of the month.
- Parents who have more than one child attending Little Learners will receive a 10% discount on the second child.
- Children who attend full-time will receive a 10% discount.

10.1 Consumables charge

The consumables charge is £1.40 per hour for funded hours.

- All meals, snacks and drinks during the nursery day. This includes breakfast, mid-morning snack, a two-course cooked lunch made on site by our nursery cook, and tea.
- Your choice of formula milk, if applicable.
- Nursery provided brand nappies, wipes and nappy and sun creams as required throughout the nursery day (you are welcome to provide your own branded nappies if you wish).
- This charge allows you as parent/carer to choose (within our nursery registration and ratios) the days you wish your child to attend and to have the option of changing these days as and when required (spaces allowing) throughout your time at nursery.
- We also guarantee your child's place at nursery until he or she leaves for school.

10.2 Opt out of consumables charge

The above charges are not compulsory you can opt out of this charge if you so wish. The following conditions apply to you if you choose to opt out:

- All meals must be provided for your child during the day - this includes breakfast cereal (milk will be supplied by nursery), a mid-morning snack, a packed lunch, afternoon snack and a packed tea.
- Due to our limited storage we do not have the facilities to store any items in our fridge. Therefore, all foods brought in must not require refrigeration. Please note our tea is served between 3pm and

4pm so this needs to be taken into account when planning what to supply as food will be out of the fridge for some time.

- We are unable to reheat or cook any foods brought in from home due to food safety and hygiene regulations.
- Our nurseries are nut free. Therefore, any food brought into nursery must strictly adhere to our food policy due to allergies.
- The food we offer at nursery is very important to us and supplying high quality healthy food is a vital part of our ethos. We check food brought into the nursery to ensure food provided meets our health eating requirements.
- If food brought in isn't in accordance with our Food and Drink policy, we will provide your child with our nursery food and will apply a charge of £4 per day to your account.
- If required, you must supply us with enough nappies and wipes for your child's day at nursery. If you do not supply us with nappies, or if your child uses more than expected, we will apply a charge to your account. The charge is 50p per nappy (subject to change). Nappies and wipes are not able to be stored at nursery due to lack of storage and so must be supplied daily.
- A clearly named bottle of sun cream must be supplied from April until October. This must be of a minimum factor 50. Sun cream bottles are not able to be stored at nursery so must be supplied daily. If sun cream is not supplied but is required, we reserve the right to add a charge to your account. The charge is £2.00 per day (subject to change).

10.3 Unpaid fees

We will take the following actions if fees are not paid by 1st of the month:

- a) Charge an administration fee of £25 per account.
- b) £5 administration fee for each failed Direct Debit.
- c) We reserve the right to withdraw your child's place and refuse entry if your Direct Debit fails and you do not make a payment within 3 working days.
- d) If fees remain unpaid for a total of 7 days we have the option of permanently withdrawing your child's place.

If you experience difficulties in paying nursery fees we ask that you speak to the Nursery Manager or email the Finance department on accounts@lifelineprojects.co.uk so that arrangements can be made for fees to be paid as soon as possible.

10.4. Late collection fees

Late collection of children fees are:

- Funded only children – the effective hourly rate
- All other children - £1 per minute.

10.5 Direct Debit

All payments are processed by direct debit with Go Cardless.

You will need to register and set up a direct debit with Go Cardless by following this link:

<https://pay.gocardless.com/AL0000VSQHQQK7>

11. Free Early Education Entitlement

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England are entitled up to 570 hours of free early education a year. Some two-year olds may also be eligible.

The date you can start claiming funding depends on your child's birthday – please see table below:

Child's birthday	When you can claim
1 January to 31 March	The beginning of term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August	The beginning of term on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December	The beginning of term on or after 1 January

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England may be entitled to 1140 hours of free early education a year.

We offer early years funding on a stretched basis only. This means a total of either:

- 570 hours over 51 weeks (11 hours a week over a minimum of 2 full days)
Or
- 1140 hours over 51 weeks (22.25 hours a week over a minimum of 3 full days)

12. Parental involvement

We actively encourage you to become involved in nursery life and particularly in the progress your child is making. We do this through providing:

- regular parent newsletters
- six monthly progress reports about how your child is progressing
- inviting you to six monthly parent's evenings so that we can discuss any issues, targets and next steps

We also seek your feedback via parent surveys and ask you to let us know how we can improve our nursery.

13. The Curriculum

Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. Little Learners follows the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage. Our curriculum consists of:

Communication and language	This involves giving children opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• experience a rich language environment• develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves• speak and listen in a range of situations.
Physical development	This involves providing opportunities for young children to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be active and interactive• to develop their co-ordination, control and movement.• Children are also helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, social and emotional development	This involves helping children to develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a positive sense of themselves, and others • form positive relationships and develop respect for others • develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings • understand appropriate behavior in groups • to have confidence in their own abilities.
Literacy	Development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
Mathematics	This involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems • to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
Understanding the world	This involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
Expressive arts and design	This involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

14. How we record your child's learning journey

Our staff use iConnect, an online learning journal app. The app uses the latest early years framework and guidance and allows our staff to use the app to track your child's progress against the framework. Our staff upload observations, photographs, and videos of the activities your child takes part in at nursery - we call this the learning journey.

We share your child's learning journey via an app called ParentZone (this is linked to iConnect). ParentZone enables you to log in and view your child's activities and wow moments at a time convenient to you.

Our staff will set you up with access to ParentZone when your child starts nursery. You will need to download the ParentZone app which is available on Google Play or the Apple App Store. Access to ParentZone is controlled by a username and password.

This is a fun and exciting way of keeping up to date with your child's progress. Once you have downloaded the app you can comment on the observations and photos uploaded by our staff. ParentZone also allows you to upload photographs and comments about what happens at weekends - we actively encourage parents to do this.

We do not record sensitive personal information about your child on ParentZone, you will only have access to your own child's information and we make sure that your child's information is protected by following the Data Protection Act.

15. Safety

We are always vigilant about our security systems. This includes knowing who enters our nursery and preventing children from leaving unnoticed.

We have door entry systems at our nurseries and CCTV cameras at entrances and exits, gardens and perimeter fencing and gates. A member of staff will let you into the nursery.

We ask that you not to hold the main entrance door open for other parents, or anyone else.

Visitors to the nursery will have an appointment and identify checked before admittance.

Children are supervised at all times and staff do not work on their own with children.

Our staff wear a uniform that is branded with the Little Learners logo and we display staff photographs and their names in the reception area.

16. Mobiles phones

We request that you do not use your mobile phone or other personal devices such as tablets, smart watches, e-readers, digital cameras when collecting your child from nursery. Should you need to stay at the nursery for any period of time, for example during settling-in visits, we provide a secure area to store personal devices and bags.

Taking photographs in the nursery is not allowed.

17. Collecting your child

We have systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of children.

As part of our registration process we ask you to provide:

- the names of the adults who have responsibility for dropping off and collecting your child.
- a passport-sized photograph of the adult(s) collecting your child.

Photographs can be printed or emailed to the Nursery Manager. We keep this information in your child's file.

We request you limit who drops off and collects your child to two nominated adults; this can be any combination of mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, childminders and grandparents.

We understand that there are times when things happen and one of the nominated adults is not available to drop off or collect. In these circumstances we ask that you:

- Ring the nursery as soon as you know you will be unable to collect your child
- Tell us the name of the person who will be dropping off or collecting, the relationship to your child and provide a brief description of that person (if not one of the nominated adults)
- Tell us the password this person will use. Please note that you will be required to provide a new password for each new collection.

Children will not be released without this information.

We keep a record of your child's arrival and departure times.

It is essential that you contact us to let us know if you are going to be late.

18. Accidents

All our staff are trained in Paediatric First Aid and renew this training every three years. This training exceeds the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Most accidents that happen are minor and easily dealt with by our staff. If your child has an accident at nursery, we will contact you as soon as practicable and let you know what has happened and what we have done. Details of the accident will be recorded on a form which you will be asked to sign as confirmation that you have been informed.

We always review what has happened so that we can make sure we identify how we can continually improve safety in our nurseries.

19. Illness

If your child appears unwell during the day, for example they have a temperature, sickness, diarrhoea or pains, particularly in the head or stomach, we will call you to ask you to discuss and agree what we will do.

If your child has a temperature, we keep them cool by removing top clothing and sponging their heads with cool water. We take temperatures using an under-arm thermometer/ear thermometer, or forehead thermometer for babies. We may administer Calpol or Nurofen if we deem this is necessary. When Calpol or Nurofen (and any other medication) is administered, it will be witnessed by two members of staff and recorded. We will ask you to sign to confirm you have been informed of medication administered.

We also administer teething powders to babies who are teething.

In cases of emergency, we will call the paramedics or take your child to the nearest hospital. We will keep you informed.

Please don't send your child to nursery if they are unwell or infectious, for example if they have a temperature, sickness and diarrhoea or a contagious infection or disease. We use advice provided in the 'Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings' for excludable diseases and exclusion times – see information provided on the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522337/Guidance_on_infection_control_in_schools.pdf.

Children who have suffered from sickness and diarrhoea should not come back to nursery until they have been clear of symptoms for 48 hours.

20. Prescribed medication

We will administer prescribed medication as part of maintaining your child's health and well-being, or when they are recovering from an illness or, taken ill whilst at nursery. However, if your child is taking prescribed medication, he/she must be well enough to attend the nursery.

If your child has not had a medication before, especially a baby or child under two, it is advised that you keep your child at home for the first 48 hours to ensure there are no adverse effects, as well as to give time for the medication to take effect.

21. Allergies

We will ask you at the registration stage if your child suffers from any known allergies. This is recorded on the Registration Form.

If your child has an allergy, a risk assessment form is completed that details the following:

- the allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, guinea pigs etc).
- the nature of the allergic reaction e.g. anaphylactic shock, rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems etc.
- what to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is administered (e.g. EpiPen).
- control measures - such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen.

This form is kept in your child's personal file and a copy of the information is displayed where all staff.

Please do not bring nut or nut products into the nursery.

22. Food

We regard snack and meal times as an important part of our day and make mealtimes fun and sociable, where children can learn about healthy eating. We use meal and snack times to help your child develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.

All of our food is freshly cooked on site daily and our dedicated cooks design a four-week rolling menu that changes according to the seasons and availability of produce. All of our food is nutritionally balanced and contains lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. We display menus of meals and snacks in our reception areas for you to view.

During the settling-in process we will ask you about cultural and religious food preferences. We provide a vegetarian alternative to all meals and snacks.

If your child is under two years old, we will provide you with daily information about feeding routines, what food has been eaten, preferences and milk intake.

23. Inset days

Little Learners will be closed three days (New Year, Easter and Summer) a year for staff training (inset) days. Fees are payable for these days. The scheduled dates for 2023 are:

2 nd January 2024	28 th March 2024	Summer 2024 date to be confirmed
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24. Equal Opportunities

Little Learners setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families. We respect and value the diversity which exists in the wider community. We are committed to challenging attitudes that promote discrimination, ensuring respect for all and preparing all children for life in a diverse society. We:

- Ensure all children and adults are encouraged and able to achieve their full potential.
- Help children to respect and value differences between people.

- Prepare children for life in a diverse society.
- Acknowledge the existence of prejudice and take steps to prevent it.
- Make our environment a place where everyone feels welcomed and valued.
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of beliefs, cultures and disabilities.
- Access staff training when the opportunities arise.
- Embed British Values in our curriculum.

25. Safeguarding

In England, the law states that people who work with children have to keep them safe.

We make sure that all staff who have contact with your child are suitable to do so. We complete detailed pre-employment checks, including taking up references and making enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks and identify and employment history checks before they start working for us.

All Little Learners staff are trained in child protection procedures which includes the action they must take if they have concerns. Each nursery has a trained designated lead safeguarding practitioner, and deputy, who are responsible for following local borough procedures in the event of a concern. We also have a senior manager designated as safeguarding lead and a deputy lead – please see information below for contact details:

Lead Safeguarding Practitioner at Ambleside, Elm Park	Terri Noone – Senior Nursery Manager T: 01708 450781 terrinoone@lifelineprojects.co.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Practitioner at Ambleside, Elm Park	Terri Stanley – Deputy Nursery Manager T: 01708 450781 terristanley@lifelineprojects.co.uk
Senior Management Designated Safeguarding Lead	Julia Ward – Head of Support Services T: 020 8597 2900 juliaward@lifelineprojects.co.uk

We make sure we keep up to date with safeguarding through regular training and by participating in local borough safeguarding forums.

We will always take safeguarding concerns seriously. Staff will discuss any concerns they have with the designated safeguarding practitioner, or deputy, who will seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead about what action needs to be taken. We will make referrals to the local safeguarding team when necessary. Unless permission-seeking places your child at risk of signification harm, we will seek your permission before discussing a referral with other agencies. Unless it puts your child at further risk, every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality.

It is important to inform staff of any bumps, bruises or injuries that your child has incurred at home. Our staff will ask you to complete a pre-existing injury form on the day we are informed about such injuries.

Please inform staff of any incident at home that may affect your child’s behaviour e.g. birth of a new baby, loss of a relative or pet, break up with a partner as this could impact on your child’s behaviour.

We have a Whistleblowing policy in place that staff can use to report concerns they may have about malpractice by colleagues.

26. Concerns and Complaints

We improve our services by listening and responding to your views and those of your children, and in particular responding positively to concerns and complaints and by putting mistakes right. We are committed to dealing with concerns and complaints fairly, impartially and quickly.

Many concerns raised will be informal and we aim to deal with these quickly. In the first instance we would expect you to raise your concerns directly with the Nursery manager. We aim to resolve informal complaints within 5 working days.

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, or if you wish to make a formal complaint (this can be done verbally or in writing), we will meet with you to discuss your complaint and find a resolution. We aim to resolve informal complaints within 10 working days.

An appeal can be made if you remain unsatisfied with the response or outcome of a formal complaint. Appeals can be made by email or letter by writing to:

Julia Ward
Head of Support Services
LifeLine Community Projects
LifeLine House
25 Neville Road
Dagenham
Essex
RM8 3QS.
Email: juliaward@lifelineprojects.co.uk

We aim to respond to an appeal within 10 working days.

27. Policies and procedures

Copies of our full policies and procedures are available to you. You can find them in a Policies and Procedures folder in the reception area at our nurseries and on the Little Learners website.