



LOWER WILLINGDON PRE-SCHOOL NURSERY

Newsletter - Term 1 2026

Firstly we would like to welcome all the new children and their families who have joined us this term. We do hope that they enjoy their sessions. We are very aware that it does sometimes take a little while to settle into new routines, but they have settled really quickly so far and we are sure they will all be happy with us.

For your information we would remind you that the 'morning pre-school sessions' start at 8.45am and finish at 11.45am. Lunch club runs from 11.45am to 12.30pm and 'afternoon pre-school sessions' start at 12.30pm - 3.00pm. We do ask that you do not bring children more than 5 minutes before their session time and you are welcome to come and collect them a little early if that helps with a school pick up but please do ensure that you are prompt with collecting them **by 3pm** as we do need to release staff to go and collect the after school club children from the primary school. We charge an hourly rate for the pre-school of £7.00 which we will maintain for the rest of this academic year.

You may not be aware that we also operate a Breakfast Club (BC) from 7.30am to 8.45am at a cost of £7.00 per session. We provide a healthy breakfast and then children can remain for the pre-school morning session or be delivered to their appropriate school classroom. Additionally, we run an After School Club (ASC) from 3.00pm - 5.15pm at a cost of £7.00 per hour. Again, a snack is provided and different toys and equipment and activities are available. Spaces are really limited this year and allocated on a first come, first served basis but the older pre-school children can come to these clubs too.

We like to keep you informed about what is happening in pre-school, and hope you will feel that we do a good job in this regard. Please have a look at our website which shares a wealth of information with you (www.lowerwillingdonpreschoolnursery.co.uk) and watch the notice boards at the entrance where we try to keep you up to date with day to day events and information. We also have our Facebook page which we would love you to join as it is a great, immediate way of getting in touch with you if we need to - the link to this is on the bottom of this headed paper.

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General information

We like to celebrate the children's birthdays and we have all the children's birthdays in the main room. However, if you would like to bring along a packet of stickers (or similar) to make this a little bit special for your child on that day you are more than welcome - ideally we would ask for something **other than sweets** as we are trying to promote healthy food options. However, I would like to take this opportunity to remind / inform you that we are a **nut free setting**. Please do not send your child in with **anything** that contains nuts, eg peanut butter, pesto, snack bars with nuts as we have children and staff with severe allergies when exposed to nuts. We also ask that you **cut your child's food according to the guidance sent out with this newsletter** (generally in quarters lengthwise from the stalk for most foods). We are often having to re-cut children's food that does not meet the guidance, which, as you can imagine can take quite a long time with 26 children!

Healthy lunches

When you arrive could we please ask you to place your child's lunchbox in the cloakroom and also please remove their water bottle and send it in with your child(ren) as they come through the gate.

We would really like to work with you to encourage your child to eat healthily. With that in mind we have been working with the HALO (Healthy Active Little Ones) team to develop our snack menu's and reduce the sugar intake for the children. We have attached a number of documents to this newsletter, and you will have had them in your starter pack giving some ideas on what to include in your child's lunch box and the importance of your child drinking only water and/or milk. There is a great deal of evidence showing the negative impact that squash and sugary foods have on your children's health and their teeth and we therefore **only accept water as a drink during the day, along with the milk we provide at snack times**. Just so you are aware, if your child comes into the setting with squash in their water bottle we will tip it out and replace it with water from our water machine so that we can continue to reinforce our healthy eating/drinking messages to the children. We would really like to work with you to give your child more healthy options in their diet and we are often impressed at the range of snacks that they try at pre-school. We would like to ask that you only send in fresh fruit (no processed fruit eg smoothies and fruit winders) and no chocolate products including sandwiches with chocolate spread. If you would like any further guidance the following website has many ideas: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes> We have also put a display in our cloakroom area for you to note how much sugar is in a number of products that may surprise you! There are also ideas for how to fill the lunchbox with healthy goodies.

Clothing

Pre-school t-shirts can be purchased at the price of £7.50 each. Sweatshirts (which are fleecy backed and nice and warm) are also available at the price of £11.50 each. Both of these are now available and stocked in the setting, and the charge will be added to your Parenta account which is then invoiced at the end of the month. **Please could you ensure that all of your child's clothing, eg coats, bags, lunch boxes, water bottles, jumpers etc are all named.** With so many children having similar clothing it can take a long time to find the right bag or jumper / coat which can prove frustrating for the children waiting to go outside or go home.

Tapestry

I hope you are all enjoying seeing your child's development using Tapestry. We endeavour to write one observation per week for your child (and Julie reads each one before they are published) so watch this space for when they will appear! Just as a reminder as well as seeing the observations of your child whilst with us, you can give us feedback (and a 'like'). You can also capture special times, uploading a photo or video, of times spent with your child at home that we can then share with friends when in the setting. You have also been asked to complete the 'All about me' section which will give us an excellent overview of what your child loves to do and what they feel anxious about; for your information, this can only be accessed from the website login and not the app. Please feel free to either speak to a member of staff or email your child's key person with any queries that you may have and they will get back to you as soon as possible. We do have an open door policy for all parents and carers at the setting so do please ask to speak to your child's key worker if you would like to.

Parenta

If you encounter any charges when your child is at pre-school we use an online accounting system called Parenta. You will have been given a login to access your child's account. On this you will be able to see the sessions that they have attended and at the end of each month you will be emailed an invoice which needs to be settled within 14 days. We ask that payments are made using BACS which enables both us and you to track any payments. The BACS details are included in the covering letter with the invoice every month. Please be reminded that there are additional charges of £12.00 every term (6 times a year) which cover costs such as healthy snacks. Please note that the link for Parenta is as follows: [Parent Portal \(parenta.com\)](https://parenta.com). Please note that you will only be able to see your own details when you log in to the system, not any other parent or carers details due to data protection (GDPR). Please be assured that all of the relevant details are on the system for staff members to access.

Staff

I would also like to give a special mention to all of the staff, but especially Shelley who continues to work tirelessly to ensure that we give the children the best opportunities we can whilst they are in our care. We have a really strong and knowledgeable team who are always happy to help the children in the setting. I hope you agree they have made it a really welcoming place for the children to return to.

Committee

We are always looking for new members to join our committee. We are a registered charity with a committee of principally parents who assist with the management of this group. This is not an onerous task and if you speak to any of the existing members, we are sure you will find that they enjoy their role and feel more involved in the group. **Our AGM will be on Thursday 19th November at 7.30pm in the setting.** We do need to have at least 10 committee members and welcome anyone who is interested.

Fundraising

As we are a charity it is important to raise funds for the setting throughout the year to help get new resources. Every year we hold a range of fundraising activities including our annual Christmas Fair, and further details will follow once dates are confirmed.

You can also help us raise funds if you join 'easyfundraising'. You can collect free donations for us every time you buy something online. It won't cost you a penny extra so please help us using this simple link each time you shop:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/lowerwillingdonpresch/>

Dates:

1 October - photographer in to take photographs of all children in the setting. Siblings are also welcome and the photographer will be here from 7.30am onwards so you can bring them all up earlier if you would like to, but please be patient as it is always a very busy morning. However, please note we cannot have extra children staying with us at BC as we are very full so you will need to take them out of the setting once the photograph has been taken. Every child is welcome to come in to have a picture taken; those that are not due in on a Thursday can pop up for the photograph **any time before 10am.**

19 & 20 October - Masterpiece pottery painting and craft studio will be in the setting making amazing Christmas gifts for the children, if you have pre-ordered them. Further details will follow and payments need to be made directly to Masterpiece.

Term 1 - we finish on Friday 23 October and return on Tuesday 3 November
2 November - INSET day which is a training day that the school have put in the calendar and we will therefore be closed on that day.

9 November - National Grandparents' Day is 4 October however, we will be celebrating this during the week of the 9 November (as there is so much going on to settle your children in term 1) by inviting grandparents to join us during this week where all grandparents are invited to come into the setting to play/read/draw with the children. Please let us know if you have a grandparent who can come in to join us either between 9-10am or 2-3pm.

4 December - Pre-school nativity & Christmas Fair in the primary school hall.
Further details to be sent nearer the time, but it will be at around 2pm.

Term 2 - we finish for Christmas on Thursday 17 December (as Friday 18 December is an INSET day) and return on Monday 4 January

15 January - final school submission date for all children starting school in September 2027. Please note that Willingdon Primary School and Polegate School have confirmed their dates already (as detailed below) so do look at other local school websites for their dates too.

Willingdon Primary School -

We will be holding open events on the following dates - no need to book.

Wednesday 4th November 2026 @ 9.15am

Monday 16th November 2026 @ 5.00pm

Thursday 24th November 2026 @ 1.45pm

[Willingdon Primary School - Home](#)

Polegate School have the following dates on their website - no need to book

Wednesday 11th November at 9am

Wednesday 11th November at 2pm

Thursday 12th November at 5.30pm

[Polegate School](#)

Key person dates:

All key workers have an allocated hour (from 9am - 10am) that we would like to invite you in to talk about how your child has settled in and how they are developing. These occur every term and we strongly encourage you to take the time to come and see how your child is progressing. I have included all of the key workers email addresses below so if you would like to come and meet them could you please email them **prior to the day** to arrange a specific time so we can stagger the times you come in.

This terms dates are as follows:

- Thursday 22 October Harriet (harrieta@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)
- Tuesday 3 November Jenni (jennib@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)
- Wednesday 4 November Justine (justinef@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)

- Friday 6 November Angela (angelas@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)
- Monday 9 November Jodie (jodie@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)
- Tuesday 10 November Lauren (laurend@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)
- Wednesday 11 November Shelley (shelleyr@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)
- Friday 13 November Lisa (lisap@lowerwillingdonpreschool.co.uk)

The meetings will be held in the canopy area at the front of the setting, or in the back room in the setting. We appreciate that these times may not be convenient for everyone but hope we can see as many of you as possible. If the time above is not suitable then please email your child's key worker to see if there is another possibility. Also if you would like Lisa (Special Educational Needs & Disability Coordinator) to join your meeting to discuss any concerns please let her know.

Cloakroom information

Lending library - please do come into the cloakroom area to look at the notice boards in there. We have a wealth of information about healthy packed lunches (which is a real eye opener!), special education needs and disability (SEND) and many other aspects. We would also like to highlight to you our lending library which is a selection of books that you are welcome to help yourself to to read for a few days. You do not need to sign them in and out as we know you will look after them and return them when you have enjoyed reading them for a couple of nights. You are more than welcome to take a few books at a time and we will keep topping up the books / changing them to give you a variety to choose from.

Activity boxes - you will find these in the cloakroom area and they are designed to support all areas of learning within the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) and give you an opportunity to share some simple games and activities with your children. Please feel free to take home a box from the set to use with your child(ren) and bring it back when you are ready. We hope you will find these useful, and would love to see some pictures on Tapestry of them being used!

Our pre-school teddy coming home - we will soon be starting to send our special teddy, Patch, home with you. The idea of sending him home is to give you a great opportunity to have some adventures with him whilst he is with you and you can then upload some photographs of what you get up to on to your child's Tapestry account. This year Patch is also coming home with his special recipe book. If you get the chance to make any of the recipes please include photographs on Tapestry of the process and result of the cooking. Also, if you have any favourite recipes at home we would love to add to Patch's menu for others to share. If you could email the recipe in to the office we will endeavour to build on Patch's menu throughout the year. Our plan is for all of the children to get the opportunity to take Patch home at some point during their time with us so please be patient as there are a lot of children to get through, and we will be starting with the older children!

Finally, we also have a bag called '50 things to do before you are 5' which we are going to start sending out with the children each week. This is an ESCC incentive which gives you lots of ideas of free or very low cost activities to do with your child before they are 5. For further information about it please follow this link. [Before You're Five :: 50 Things To Do](#)

Finally, please do find us on Facebook to get further information about any events and useful tips and hints that we often share. Search for Lower Willingdon Pre-School Nursery and request to join the closed group of current parents.

Sorry for such a long newsletter (they won't all be this long, honest!) but if you have any queries, thoughts or ideas, please come and talk to Julie or Shelley (or any other members of staff). You can always email or make an appointment if necessary!