



NEW PARENTS GUIDE 2022

Shackleford Village Hall
Shackleford
Surrey GU8 6AE

During nursery hours call 01483 860723
Mobile for text messages 07849 633614
Administration - acornsoffice@gmail.com
Leadership and management - acornsnurseryleader@gmail.com
Admissions - acornsadmissions@gmail.com

The following pages are intended to be a quick guide for Parents and will hopefully answer many of the general questions you may have. The subjects covered include:

- Nursery Fees
- Messages and Collecting Children
- Illness
- Spare Clothes
- Pegs and Wellington Boots
- Sunscreen
- Drinks
- News Time and Bringing in Toys from Home
- Fruit and Snack
- Birthdays
- Medicines
- Oral Health and Dummies
- Sweatshirts and T-Shirts
- Staying for Lunch
- Home News Books and Family Books
- Library Books
- Acorn Hunt
- Christmas Party
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Summer Party
- Keeping Parents informed of Progress

If your question is not answered, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff.

NURSERY FEES

Nursery Fees are forecast and agreed by the Nursery Committee every year, parents being informed of any rise during the Summer term (May), any rise being kept to a minimum. As a Charity the Nursery aims to break even or make a small surplus which is then reinvested in the Nursery.

Fees are invoiced to the parents via Quickbooks during the first or second week of each term and, in order for the Nursery to run efficiently, are requested to be paid on their receipt. Any queries should be sent to Ali at acornsoffice@gmail.com.

Fees may be paid via a bank transfer or by childcare voucher scheme. Fee information and voucher schemes can be found on our website.

Free Early Education (FEE) is deducted from your child's invoice the term following your child's third birthday. When the time comes you will be asked to register your child to claim for FEE with Acorns and you will be asked to make a declaration of hours used each term after the initial registration.

MESSAGES AND COLLECTING CHILDREN

If there is something you need to let us know about your child (e.g. if you are collecting them early, that you are starting toilet training, or that something has happened which means they may be particularly upset that day) please speak to a member of staff who will make a note of the information and ensure that all other staff members are made aware.

If your child is to be collected by someone other than a parent or a childminder who regularly collects them please let a member of staff know. You will be asked for their name and contact details, unless they are already named on your child's personal details. If we have not been informed of collection arrangements and someone different arrives to collect your child we will telephone you to confirm the arrangement before we hand over your child.

If your collection arrangements have to change during the morning (e.g. if you get stuck in traffic) please phone Acorns during the morning to let us know of the change (01483 860723). It may be that if a new arrangement is made during a session, and someone unknown to Acorns collects your child, and a password will be agreed with the parent.

ILLNESS

Unfortunately bugs and viruses spread very easily between small children. In order to safeguard the health of all our children we would ask that:

- All parents are encouraged to keep their children up to date with all recommended childhood vaccinations – this helps safeguard the population of babies, children and young people overall.
- If your child is too unwell to attend please let us know the nature of their illness so staff can observe other children for symptoms. At arrival time it is often difficult to answer the phone, please leave a voicemail and a member of staff will respond as soon as possible.
- Please do not bring any child into Acorns who has been vomiting or had diarrhoea **until at least 48 hours has passed since the last episode**.
- If your child seems generally unwell in the morning please do not bring them in as they may be incubating an infection – if in doubt please keep them at home.
- Cuts or open sores should be covered with a plaster or other dressing

If your child becomes unwell during a session we will phone the number given on your emergency contact form to request that they be taken home. Please ensure that all contact information we have for you is kept up to date.

- Acorns reserves the right to refuse admission to any child who staff believe to be unwell at the time of their arrival at Nursery.

- When space permits, we will offer swap days for those missed through illness. Please speak to a staff member to make arrangements.

SPARE CLOTHES & NAPPIES - All clothes, shoes and boots need to be named please

Clothes can get wet, muddy or covered in paint despite our use of aprons. We give you a named drawstring bag when your child starts, please make sure it contains:

- T-shirt or jumper
- Skirt or trousers
- Underwear
- Socks
- Also leggings/trousers for our trips to the woods

Please return the bag to us when your child leaves. If your child is in nappies please bring the following in a separate drawstring bag:

- Nappies, baby wipes and nappy bags
- Any used nappies will be bagged and left on your child's peg to be returned to you for disposal as we do not have enough soiled nappies to warrant the expense of a disposal collection.

PEGS AND WELLINGTON BOOTS

When they join Acorns, children are allocated a peg marked with their name.

This should be used for:

- A coat (please bring a waterproof coat every day)
- A bag of spare clothes – we provide you with a named drawstring bag
- A warm hat in cold weather
- Gloves/mittens when appropriate.

Please name all your child's belongings

We have a lovely garden and try to make use of it every day, whatever the weather, so a pair of wellington boots is essential.

- Children will keep a pair of boots in their named space in the boot rack by the door to the garden. These must be named.

SUNSCREEN

Young skin is very vulnerable to sunburn.

- Apply high factor sunscreen to children before they arrive in the morning.
- We supply sunhats for all children, please don't bring your own as they get easily mislaid.
- Water is always available to the children and it is not necessary to bring a drinks bottle with your child. We take water outside during hot weather and when we visit the woods.

DRINKS

At Acorns we offer milk at snack times and water is available to the children at all times. We encourage children to drink from plastic cups and pour drinks for themselves from jugs.

Children staying to lunch can drink water, supplied by Acorns. We do not allow children to bring fruit smoothies, fruit juices or fruit drinks to accompany their lunch as these have a high sugar content and reduce their appetite for real food.

NEWS TIME AND BRINGING IN TOYS FROM HOME

Children are welcome to bring in an item that is connected to our topics, or is special to the child because of a recent family event. Children are encouraged to show their possession and talk about it at group time.

We understand that children may have a particular favourite 'comfort' toy which can be a helpful when they are first settling in with us, however, over reliance on such items restricts play and we encourage children not to hold onto them all the time. Toys can be used as a comfort still and left a short distance away. This gives children the opportunity to use both hands to play. Children are encouraged to leave them at home as quickly as possible.

If your child brings in anything for news time please ensure that it is named (wherever possible), is not too fragile, precious or valuable, has no small or detachable, pieces, is not too large and is free from sharp points or edges

We ask that children do not wear costumes or masks that may frighten some children (eg super hero type action costumes, and skeleton or monster masks).

FRUIT AND SNACK

In order to encourage healthy eating for the children, we supply fruit, vegetables that can be eaten raw, and savoury carbohydrate and a small amount of protein daily.

We have a juicer and often make fresh fruit/carrot juice. This is popular with the children and is known as 'super juice'. It is nutritious and delicious too.

Afternoon snack is also offered to children staying all day. This happens at around 2.30pm and usually consists of milk, or milkshake/hot chocolate, or water, and a cracker or some fruit.

BIRTHDAYS

On a child's birthday (or the first day they attend following their birthday) we mark their special day by giving them a card and singing Happy Birthday during news time. For 4th birthday celebrations children make and decorate their own birthday cake and take it home to share with their family.

You are very welcome to bring a treat for all the children to share at snack time in the form of a cake or biscuits. Please make sure these are **nut-free**. Or if you would prefer to bring individual treat bags for children to take home we would prefer these to be chocolate buttons or iced gems and not Haribo's.

MEDICINES

If your child needs, or may need, to be given medication (including inhalers) during the hours they are with us please discuss with a member of staff. Please ensure:

- Medicines are in their original containers
- Medicines are clearly labelled with your child's name, dosage and instructions
- You let us know if the medicine needs to be refrigerated
- You supply an appropriate spoon or syringe for administration
- You complete and sign the Medication consent form when you bring the medicine into Acorns.
- You countersign the Medicine Administered book when you collect your child
- Medicines needed for on-going use can be left at Acorns overnight.
- Named inhalers and spacers can be left at Acorns permanently.

If the administration of a prescribed medicine requires medical knowledge (e.g. an Epi-pen), please ensure that you give us full and detailed information so we can look after your child and minimise the risks.

ORAL HEALTH AND DUMMIES

Oral Health is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. We are keen to reflect this in our New Parent's Guide.

Dummies can be a helpful way to help settle a baby in the early months. Ideally, babies should be only using a dummy at night, or to help fall asleep during the day, as soon as possible. Even a young baby is trying to communicate, make sounds and respond to speech. A dummy blocks these attempts and can also lead to the following difficulties:

Teeth and Mouth

- Incorrect positioning of teeth so that the bottom and top teeth at the front don't meet properly
- Tooth decay (especially the front teeth) if the dummy is dipped into sweet things
- Mouth breathing - a child may tend to breathe through their mouth rather than their nose - often linked to long-term dribbling
- Soreness around the mouth area may lead to discomfort and infection
- It is important that your child visits the dentist as soon as their first teeth appear to help them to be confident to visit the dentist and so that teeth can be checked for alignment and decay.

Speech and language challenges / delay

- A child may not use the full range of tongue movements that are necessary for making all the speech sounds
- A child has fewer opportunities to babble and use sounds to communicate

Our advice regarding dummies

In order to avoid these problems health professionals recommend stopping dummy use as early as possible, ideally by their first birthday but certainly by the time a child is 2. Try these ideas to help break the habit:

- Gradually decrease the times when dummy use is allowed.
- Restrict dummy use to bedtime.
- Give fun activities, stickers or star charts as a reward – (not sweets)
- Point out older girls and boys, who don't use dummies.
- Encourage the child to give their dummies away to the dummy fairy.

Other chewing/sucking comfort toys and cloths

- All objects, toys, and fabrics held in the child's mouth frequently or for long periods have the same effect as dummies. Encourage your child to break the habit.

Once at nursery we only use proper cups to drink from without spouts, which promote better muscle development than sucking from spouts and bottles.

SWEATSHIRTS AND T-SHIRTS

Despite our use of aprons, clothing will get messy! You may wish to protect your child's clothes with an Acorns' Sweatshirt or T-Shirt. These are available in two sizes and the costs are:

- Sweatshirts £10.00 available in size 3 - 4, or 5 - 6
- T-Shirts £5.00 available in size 3 - 4, or 5 - 6

If you decide to purchase sweatshirts or t-shirts (please ensure they are named).

We sometimes have second hand sweatshirts available for a donation, please ask a member of staff.

STAYING FOR LUNCH

Lunchtimes are a social occasion where children eat together. Tables are set and children eat from their lunch boxes, and are encouraged to eat all their food, and in the order of savoury first and sweeter food afterwards. Parents provide their child's packed meal in a lunchbox. Children can stay to lunch, and the afternoon session until 2.45 pm, in their second year (or the year in which they will leave Acorns for school). The afternoon session is aimed at more mature children, with activities for their age and stage of development.

We are able to offer children in their first year and who are over 3 years old the opportunity to stay until 1 pm. This means they can stay and join in lunch and leave an hour later than normal.

Please talk to your child's key person to decide whether your child is ready for the afternoon session.

Please put lunchboxes on the trolley outside. It is not necessary to include a drink as water is always available. We can also supply spoons and forks.

We ask that lunchboxes:

- Are named
- Are easily managed by your child, including any packaging
- Contain a healthy well-balanced packed lunch including protein (amounts and type of food to suit your child's normal appetite e.g. perhaps just a few crisps, not a whole packet, perhaps half an apple, one carrot, half a banana)
- Sandwiches should have a savoury filling.
- We ask that packaged and sugary food is kept to a minimum, and food should be real, recognisable and whole food (not processed) wherever possible.
- Contain a cool block in warm weather

Please do not include:

- Nut products, including peanut butter sandwiches, pesto made with nuts.
- Any drinks
- Chocolate and sweets
- Whole grapes and olives - please cut them in half lengthways
- Fruit smoothies, fruit juices, fruit drinks as these all suppress the appetite for real food.

Please look at the lunch suggestion book attached to the lunch trolley.

Children repack their lunchboxes after eating with any packaging and any uneaten food. This shows you how much your child has eaten, and allows you to recycle any wrappings.

HOME NEWS BOOKS & FAMILY BOOKS

Please make a note of anything that involves your child at home in the Home News Book. Maybe jot down a visit by relatives, stick in a train ticket, note a favourite meal enjoyed, or anything that is a significant achievement for your child and you want to share with us.

You are also given a My Family book. Please add some photos of your family and friends. This can be used in many ways, as a comfort for your child, as a talking point for news, as a way of sharing experiences for your child. It's also useful to have photos of regular collectors such as childminders or nannies. It helps the staff get to know who is connected with your child, and who your child is talking about.

LIBRARY BOOKS

We read books, rhymes and poetry daily at nursery and use this as a means to extend language and learn new vocabulary. In all areas of the nursery and outside children have access to books and magazines.

At Acorns Nursery we have a library in the entrance lobby. You will also find on the rack, books, magazines, poetry books as well as non-fiction books that your child may be interested in. There is a clipboard to record which books have been borrowed and by who. Please date when you return the book.

We show the children how to treat our books with care so we would encourage you to do the same at home.

ACORN HUNT

During the last week before October Half Term we organise a golden Acorn Hunt for the children. We hunt for golden acorns and other things in nature. This takes place within Acorns hours.

Children are awarded a certificate of participation.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

We organise Christmas celebrations for the children each year. These take place during the last week of the Autumn term.

We like to perform a short child friendly singing time for the parents to watch which you will be informed of nearer the time.

EASTER EGG HUNT

At the end of Spring Term we organise an Easter Egg Hunt for the children. All children will take home a bag containing Easter eggs and gifts.

- The hunt takes place during days in the final week of the Spring term.
- All children will have the opportunity to take part.

- The hunt takes place in the Nursery garden.
- Children hunt for pictures of Easter eggs which they swap for a bag of chocolate Easter treats to take home.

SUMMER GATHERING

At the end of the Summer term we organise a family get together. This is an opportunity to spend time together. You will be informed of more information nearer the time.

Please note that although staff are present at the gathering, children are under the supervision and are the responsibility of their parents/carers during the event.

KEEPING PARENTS INFORMED OF PROGRESS

We have a key person system in place. This means that:

- Each child is allocated a key person when they start with us. The key person, along with help from all members of staff, will help assess the child's development and progress throughout their time at Acorns.
- Even though your child has a key person, all staff work as a team and get to know your child well.
- Please share any information you feel will help us understand your child. Each term you will be asked to complete an 'About me' information sheet to keep staff informed of any changes in likes/dislikes/feelings etc.
- Your key person will update you with news and progress frequently, on an informal basis.
- Your key person will share any concerns there may be regarding development, progress or behaviour.
- When your child has been with us for 2 weeks your child's key person will complete a starting point check. Once this is complete we will share this information with you and have a chat about how they have settled in and ask if you have any concerns.
- Should we have any concerns at any point that we feel needs input from other professionals we will discuss our concerns with you and seek further advice. If we feel your child is experiencing any difficulties we will talk to you and work out ways to resolve any problems.
- All children go through many changes as they develop, and usually when rapid development is happening in one area, another skill that seemed previously mastered is suddenly not so assured. Children's development usually follows a bumpy upward course, not a straight incline.
- We offer Parent/Key person appointments at a parent's evening or appointments over the phone. This is an opportunity to catch up on your child's progress and achievements.
- Should you wish to have an appointment with your child's key person at any other time please speak to them to arrange a mutually convenient time.

We have various ways of recording progress and achievements – taking photographs, making observations and taking notes, and saving examples of your child's drawings and work. These are made into a Scrap Book and given to you as your child leaves us for school.

- We will complete a termly progress check at the end of every term to monitor how your child is developing and progressing in all areas of the curriculum. We will share these with you for discussion, signing and will then be kept as a record in your child's file.

The curriculum offered throughout your child's time at Acorns is linked to meeting the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We assess and record each child's progress towards these. The EYFS finishes at the end of Reception Year, so your child will leave us and still work within the EYFS at your chosen primary school.

**Your child is unique, they are at this special age for a very short time,
make sure you have fun together!**