



Guide for Parents of Children in Nursery

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Welcome to St George's Nursery!

For children from 3-5 years old*

**children may join from the term of their 3rd birthday*

In a beautiful parkland setting, close to the centre of Edinburgh, girls and boys at St George's Nursery develop the skills, independence and confidence to prepare for starting school and making the most of all the opportunities school life can bring.

In our nursery, we aim to provide our children with the foundations to fulfil their potential, by giving them a secure, caring, nurturing and stimulating environment. This will give them the confidence to experiment and enjoy the appropriate challenges that lie at the heart of the learning experience.

Our Curriculum

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum through a team of dedicated early years practitioners who meet the needs of all our individual children. We have an experienced nursery teacher who ensures there is a strong focus on high standards, assessment and learning across all early level curricular areas. Outstanding outdoor play areas allow us also to take advantage of outdoor learning in our Fantastical Forest and our Wild Wood.

The children's experiences are planned in consultation with them and their parents, building on advice from Scottish Government national guidelines: 'Curriculum for Excellence 3-18' and 'Building the Ambition'.

We support individual interests from a young age by listening to our children to find out what they want to learn. This allows us to create our learning experiences around them. Children have time to be engrossed and complete activities without having an overly timetabled curriculum.

Children learn through child-led activities involving purposeful play. Problem solving, creativity and role-play make up much of the day. Physical, intellectual, social, language and emotional development skills are all learnt through play. Children's literacy and numeracy are also developed and extended creatively, through contextualised, 'real' and imaginative experiences.

Children do not make a distinction between play and work, and nursery staff do not either. Staff have a sound knowledge of how children develop and learn and have a clear understanding of possible next steps in the children's learning and development.

Specialist Teaching

Children enjoy sessions with our specialist staff, all included as part of the nursery fees. This is a special advantage of being part of our nursery, as it provides access for nursery children to junior teaching and coaching that they would not experience in a stand-alone setting. It also provides familiar faces when the children transition into P1.

These include weekly visits from PE staff who introduce them to basic movement, object-control and balancing. Girls and boys practise the skills of running, jumping, skipping, climbing, balancing, throwing and catching in a variety of contexts.

- All children can participate in weekly Rugbytots play based sports sessions, with a focus to improving agility, ball skills and coordination. Through participation in this activity led by a specialist coach, the children can develop their teamworking skills and enjoyment of being active.
- We have a link with the Manor School of Ballet to offer a weekly ballet lesson for children, where an enjoyment of movement and dance is fostered through a variety of engaging early years themes.

Musical ideas and feelings are expressed through regular sessions in our Junior School Hall with music and dance, led by specialist teachers.

- Our dedicated Junior School music teacher joins each nursery group once a week to lead lessons in music, developing each child's ability and confidence.

All children enjoy weekly visits to our Junior School library, under the care of our school librarians. The children enjoy the group experience of sharing stories and songs together, aiding language development and understanding, while also developing an appreciation of libraries and library systems.

Each afternoon our nursery team of Early Years Practitioners and teachers develop an engaging programme of activities for the children, based upon the shared interests of the children and team. Currently our afternoon activities programme offers additional opportunities for art, cookery, gardening, science, and drama. We have a treasured link with Murrayfield House Care Home and we visit the elderly residents at times throughout the nursery year.

Partnership with Parents

There is a strong working relationship between our nursery team and the parents of our nursery children. This is important throughout any child's schooling, and we believe it is of heightened significance with our youngest girls and boys. We know that if we get these relationships right in the nursery all learning, progress and fun will happen naturally.

Feedback to parents happens on an on-going basis: staff take observation notes of the children to support their more informal day-to-day contact with parents. Behind the scenes, we use 'Planning in the Moment' systems to track and assess development across all areas, which in turn informs our future planning.

There is regular communication through on-line Learning Journals between nursery and home. We shall seek your permission for your child's photograph to be used in these on-line journals. This is an app you can access on your phone.

Information is also communicated to parents through regular SchoolPost messages (email), via the nursery noticeboards and through daily conversations with staff. You will be invited to welcome evenings and parents' meetings so that you may follow the progress of your child's learning. You will also be asked to join our assemblies and concerts each term.

In September you will be invited to attend an informal welcome evening, in person, which will provide information on the year ahead and give you an opportunity to meet the staff closely involved with your child.

Other Information Systems and Communications

The school uses a small number of systems which have student, staff and family accounts.

- [ISAMs](#), including Parent Portal: the school management system, including links to the Parent Teacher Forum and whole school policies and where your contact data is stored.
- Schoolpost: the school mailing system to groups within the school community
- Office 365: windows based operational system used by students and staff
- [Website](#), [calendar](#), e-news and [social media](#): communication and celebration channel

The username and the password for the portal will be sent to you by our Systems Management IT team when you join. If you experience difficulty using this system, please get in touch with our Systems Management team directly using ISAMs@stge.org.uk.

Reporting

During the autumn term, parents will be invited to attend an individual parent meeting. In addition, Preschool parents are invited to attend an individual parent meeting in spring term to discuss looking ahead to Primary 1.

A written report in summer term provides information for parents about their child's progress, development and next steps in all areas of the curriculum.

Facilities

Being an integral part of the whole of St George's School gives nursery children access to extra facilities out-with the nursery's dedicated wing. Throughout the day, children have plenty of space to move around indoors as well as outside. Our excellent environment both inside and outside the classrooms allows us to take advantage of outdoor learning, and our girls and boys are guaranteed to spend more of their time outside than children in most other nurseries.

Our facilities include:

- Specialist nursery accommodation housed within a wing of the Junior School
- Facilities split across six playrooms over two floors with immediate access to spacious outdoor purpose-built play areas and landscaped garden.
- Outstanding outdoor play areas with stimulating adventure playgroup equipment. In addition, we also make regular use of our extensive school outdoor areas such as our fantastical forest, wild woods, secret garden and fort, Junior School playground and school playing fields.
- Use of whole school facilities: music centre with auditorium, purpose-built gymnasium, specialist music and art rooms, library, general-purpose hall for dance, PE and ballet.

- Use of the St George's Centre – our family whole school dining facilities where we encourage good table manners and healthy eating.

Smooth Transitions

As an all-through school we guarantee smooth transitions with a continuity of learning and care between all transition stages. All our nursery children know staff and pupils in the Junior School and feel secure and known. As children move from Nursery to primary schooling, they have a number of opportunities to spend time with their new teachers exploring their classroom and different resources.

Our pre-school nursery children join Junior School pupils in weekly assemblies in the hall, visit classrooms, have lessons with specialist teachers and play in the wider St George's campus. Nursery children are actively involved with whole school events, such as Eco-days, Sport Relief, fund raising events, Nativities and many others.

In the summer term, before your child starts in Primary 1, there are planned events to provide information for parents and to support children in this important next stage of their education.

What we offer in our Nursery

We take girls and boys from 3 years old, from the term of their third birthday.

There is a pathway for boys to join us in Nursery and to progress with us into Junior School, until the end of Primary 3.

We call our nursery children:

- 'Big Owls' (our preschool class)
- 'Little Owls' (our ante preschool class)

Flexibility to meet our parents' needs is a vital part of our offering as a school and it starts in our nursery. We offer flexible morning and afternoon sessions, with or without lunch, and are happy to fit in around family life for drop-off and pick up times.

Some children will have attachment, separation difficulties while others settle more easily. After you have handed your child over to a member of staff, please leave promptly after saying goodbye, even if your child seems upset – children usually recover very quickly once a parent has left. We will telephone you if there is a problem.

Nursery hours

Morning and Afternoon Sessions

There are flexible options: half day, half day with lunch, full day, or a combination.

From the beginning of term of a child's third birthday, there are two main points of intake - August and January - although children may join throughout the year depending on their age and availability of places.

Session times:

Morning Session	8:30am - 12:00 noon
Morning Session "plus additional hour with lunch"	8:30am - 1:00pm
Afternoon Session	1:00pm- 3:00pm*
Full day session	8:30am- 3:00pm

**Afternoon sessions should follow on from the morning sessions chosen.*

Please note that there is an extra charge for the children staying for the Morning Session "plus additional hour with lunch" (in addition to the cost of the standard morning session fee) which may be subject to annual increases.

A late collection fee may apply if your child is not collected promptly at the end of their morning (12 noon/1.00 pm) or full day session.

To allow us to deliver a high standard of early education and childcare and best nurture our children's development we have outlined the following minimum session requirements for each nursery class.

Ante preschool:

Autumn and Spring terms: 5 morning sessions
Summer term: 2 days & 3 mornings

Preschool:

Autumn and Spring terms: 2 days & 3 mornings
Summer term: 5 full days

Wrap around care

- **Breakfast Club** - Open daily to all children from 7.45am – 8.30am. Please see our website for details of costs.
- **Nursery+** - Nursery+ (After School Care) for ante preschool and preschool children is charged at half hourly increments and is available for nursery children from 3.00 pm. Children may stay until 6.00pm. Tea is also available daily from 4.30pm at an additional cost. Please see our website for details of costs.

All children must be collected by 6.00pm, or a late collection fee may apply.

There will be a weekly booking email sent each week for both Breakfast Club and Nursery+ arrangements. It is possible to make a repeat, regular booking.

If you require more information or wish to register for this service, please contact Iris in the Nursery office, (call 0131 311 8005 or contact nursery@stge.org.uk). You can contact the St George's staff directly on 07971 236874 after 4.30pm.

Holiday Club

Holiday Club is for all nursery children and opens at 8.00am and closes at 5.00pm, Monday – Friday. This runs during all school holiday periods apart from Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Monday and staff in-services days (the last three days of the summer holidays and one day at May half-term).

We will email you full details of the Holiday Club and proposed activities available each term. There is a booking email sent each term for the corresponding holiday club attendees.

Traffic on the school site

Please do not bring cars, e-bikes or electric scooters on to the school premises between 8.15am and 4.15pm, unless there is an emergency, as our school becomes a pedestrian only zone to allow for safe movement of children and staff.

Travelling in bad weather

In the event of bad weather, school will always remain open as usual, but if travelling arrangements require you to collect your child before the end of the school day, please contact Reception.

Absence

Please speak with the Head of Junior School and Nursery to request any time off from school. Requests for a day or more of absence should be put in writing and will then be recorded and acknowledged.

If your child is absent through illness, please telephone the Junior School office on the morning of their absence (0131 311 8005) or as early as possible on the first day of absence, or email nursery@stge.org.uk. If we do not hear from you, we will telephone you, as it is crucial that children are accounted for each day.

A record is kept of all pupil absences and these are monitored to ensure safeguarding of all children.

Illness or accidents while at Nursery

If your daughter or son feels unwell while at school, they will be supported by our Junior School first aider in the Junior School Medical Room. If they continue to feel unwell, we will contact you so that they may be taken home.

While we prioritise safety within our school buildings and playground areas, we understand that minor injuries can occur. Our Junior School First Aider and School Nurse are on site to provide care, treatment and advice in these instances. In some cases, we will contact you so that they may be taken home for further monitoring or treatment.

It is essential that we always have a current daytime emergency contact telephone number for these situations, and we ask that you update your details on the online Parent Portal when there is a change in circumstance.

Should your child require prescribed medication to be administered throughout the nursery day, or if she/he has received prescribed medication prior to coming to nursery, please fill in the appropriate form, which can be found on the Parent Noticeboard outside your child's playroom, or on request from a member of the nursery team.

All nursery staff have an up-to-date, paediatric first aid certificate.

Clothing

Children should wear practical, easily washable clothes, and elasticated waists are ideal! In the event of a child having an accident, spare clothing is available. However, we would recommend that each child keeps a clean, spare set of clothes, including underwear and socks, in a small drawstring bag by their peg. Please check your child's spare clothes bag regularly and refresh as required. Wet clothes will be placed in the downstairs toilet and staff will inform you about their collection.

Please ensure that all items brought to nursery are clearly named. We would prefer that your child did not bring toys from home into nursery.

Suitable shoes are essential. They should be easy to put on and take off. We recommend soft Velcro fastening shoes. All children should have a pair of named wellington boots and warm socks to wear for outdoor play during the autumn and winter seasons.

An appropriate anorak or coat is necessary, as well as waterproof dungarees for outdoor play in the Fantastical Forest and walks to the Wild Wood.

All children are required to bring a sunhat for the Spring and Summer terms. It should be labelled and kept in the cloakroom for use, as and when appropriate. On hot weather days, parents will be asked to give their permission for the application of sun-cream by nursery staff, or to provide their own. We would advise applying the first layer of sun cream to your child at home, before the start of the nursery day.

Lunch

For children who stay all day, lunch is provided in the St George's Centre, with a wide range of fresh and healthy foods to choose from.

Please see the website for menus and further detail: <https://www.stge.org.uk/about/lunch-menu/>.

Parents should notify the Head of Junior School and Nursery of any special dietary or allergy requirements. This can be done directly via email, during the Admissions process or directly to the Junior School First Aider by contacting the Junior School reception.

Snacks

Snack is provided every morning and afternoon, sometimes prepared in Nursery by the children themselves. We encourage the children to be independent in their snack and healthy food choices.

As a health-promoting school we are keen to encourage healthy snacks and lunches and, as we have a number of children with nut allergies, we aim to be a nut free school.

We encourage the children to stay hydrated throughout each day. Each child has their own water bottle in nursery which is cleaned and filled daily by nursery staff. There is an opportunity to buy a St George's water bottle (lid in red or blue) when your child joins nursery in support of the Nursery and Junior School Eco Committee. This is available for purchase from the Junior School reception for £3.00 (added to end of term fees).

Parent/Teacher Forum

The Parent/Teacher Forum (PTF) has a parents' representative in each class. It is a means for families to raise any general issues for discussion with the school and also supports in organising social events for families and the wider community.

Names and contact details of parent reps will be circulated at the start of each session, once expressions of interest have been collected. There is a PTF section in the Parent Portal.

Parents Groups (WhatsApp/Social Media)

We are aware that the usage of social media as a communication tool between parents is common and we appreciate that social media platforms such as WhatsApp can play a useful role in helping parents connect on a personal and private basis.

However, there are several dangers that using these platforms can pose. Inappropriate or inaccurate content can be accidentally or purposefully shared. Comments which are defamatory, or distress other members of the school community can be widely distributed and difficult to remove. Some platforms (such as WhatsApp) oblige users to share personal data to participate in a group. Some parents are not comfortable with this and hence will be excluded.

The school cannot therefore officially support use of WhatsApp or other non-inclusive platforms for communication by or for parent groups. The school will always use SchoolPost as a means of communicating with you directly.

If discussing school-related topics on any form of social media, we advise parents to take note of some basic ground rules:

- Treat all members of the school community with kindness and respect
- Check all information with a reliable source or directly with the school before sharing with others
- Try to resolve any issues directly with the school before sharing problems with others
- Ensure you have the consent of other parents before sharing any of their personal data within the group, including contact details
- Under no circumstances share personal information about pupils or others at the school outside of the group or in any way which may be searched online

We don't want to discourage families from connecting; the absolute opposite. We would hope all families can be included and welcomed as part of the school community. We will organise social elements to school events to enable families to get to know each other and exchange details and of course should you wish to connect via social media on a personal basis, that is entirely acceptable!

Administration

The telephone number for the Junior School and Nursery reception is 0131 311 8005; the Main School switchboard number is 0131 311 8000.

All enquiries regarding payment of fees should be made to the school Finance Office, for the attention of Mrs Jennifer Millar. It is essential that both the nursery and the Finance Office are made aware of any change of address or personal circumstances during the session.

Concerns and complaints

And finally, it is our privilege to look after your children. We have an open-door policy at St George's and should you have any concerns and wish to discuss them, then a member of staff will always be available. When your child joins us, you will be introduced to their key person, who will communicate important daily information to you when you are collecting your child and they should be your first point of contact.

Our Head of Junior School and Nursery visits nursery regularly, knows all the children and works closely with the nursery team for all children's learning and development. Mrs Nettleton will be available to talk with you about any matter concerning your child and their development. Please contact the Junior School office if you would like to arrange an appointment.

Complaints

St George's welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously concerns or complaints which may arise, as they can help us to improve the educational experience that we provide.

The Complaints and Concerns Policy can be found in the parent portal. It encourages an informal resolution of any difficulties in the first instance and sets out procedures thereafter, if this is not possible.

At St George's Nursery we believe that childhood is about quality time for play, developing secure relationships and supporting natural curiosities. Our creative learning environments and inspirational teaching team help children to reach for their dreams.

We find it exciting that a child's imagination and possibilities for learning are endless! We look forward to working in partnership with all our parents and sharing with you in this special, formative stage of your child's early years learning journey.

Welcome to St George's Nursery!

Nursery Equipment List

These are the main things that your child will need for the first week of nursery in the Autumn and Spring terms. **Please ensure that all items are named.**

Ante-Preschool

- Indoor shoes - soft Velcro fastening please. No crocs or flip flops.
- Coat – warm and waterproof (appropriate for the season).
- Waterproof trousers.
- Wellington boots and warm socks.
- Warm hat and mittens.
- Drawstring bag (small) – containing a full change of clothes (including underwear and socks).
- Nappies and wipes (if your child still requires these for toileting).
- Shoe box – child sized please. We use these for under peg storage.

Preschool

- Indoor shoes - soft Velcro fastening please. No crocs or flip flops.
- Coat – warm and waterproof (appropriate for the season).
- Waterproof trousers.
- Wellington boots and warm socks.
- Warm hat and mittens.
- Drawstring bag (small) – containing a full change of clothes (including underwear and socks).

The easiest place to store these items is on your child's nursery peg. They will also be allocated a small tray which can be used for storing additional items. You will be shown where to find these on your first day of nursery.

We would encourage your child not to bring in toys from home to the nursery as these can often be lost or confused with the nursery toys. If your child does bring a toy to nursery, for comfort or security, then we would ask that you let the nursery team know and they will advise of the best place to store the toy for safe-keeping.

If any items of clothing are borrowed from the Nursery, we would ask that these are returned to us at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.