



# Ladybird Forest Pre-School

## Parents and Carers' Information Guide

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# Ladybird Forest Pre-School

Welcome to Ladybird Forest Pre-School. This guide is designed to give parents and carers helpful information about how our setting works, what your child will experience, and how we work in partnership with families. If you have any questions after reading this guide, please contact [enquiries@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk). We are always happy to help.

## INTRODUCTION

Ladybird Forest Pre-School is a small, friendly setting, operating from a purpose-built building within the grounds of Russell Lower School in Ampthill. Although we are located on the school site, we are completely independent. The Pre-School serves the local and wider community and is accessible to all children.

We have:

- An enclosed outdoor garden for play and learning
- A dedicated Forest School area on site
- Covered outdoor spaces so children can play outside in all weathers
- Access to additional facilities at Russell Lower School, such as the hall and playing fields

Ladybird Forest Pre-School is a registered charity and limited company, governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, most of whom are parents or carers of children attending the setting. The Board is elected at the AGM each year.

The Pre-School is Ofsted registered. It is a member of the Early Years Alliance and is registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House.

We offer approximately 38 places at each session.

## OUR OPENING TIMES

Ladybird Forest Pre-School is open during term time (38 weeks per year).

### Core Sessions

- Morning Session: 8.45am – 11.45am
- Lunch Club: 11.45am – 12.15pm
- Afternoon Session: 12.15pm – 3.15pm

### Wraparound Care

- Breakfast Club: 7.45am – 8.45am (Monday-Friday)
- After Pre-School Club:
  - Monday-Thursday: 3.15pm – 6.00pm
  - Friday: 3.15pm – 4.00pm

We offer up to ten sessions a week, subject to availability. Three and four year olds must do a minimum of four sessions each week. Children who are 2 years old must do a minimum of three sessions a week.



The Pre-School offers up to 30 weekly hours of the Nursery Education Funding entitlement to eligible 2, 3 and 4-year olds.

## **OUR AIMS - EVERY CHILD MATTERS**

At Ladybird Forest Pre-School, we believe that every child matters. The early years are a vital time for learning and development, and we aim to provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment where children feel happy and confident.

We aim to:

- Support every child's individual learning and development
- Provide a broad, engaging and play-based curriculum that is stimulating, engaging and fun
- Promote independence, confidence and curiosity
- Encourage healthy lifestyles, physical activity and emotional wellbeing
- Celebrate diversity and provide equality of opportunity for all children

The Pre-School's Curriculum Goals are designed to provide all children with the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for their transition to school.

We plan for the learning and development of each individual child, and assess and review their progress. We aim to provide quality and consistency in our teaching, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.

We promote children's well-being and allow children to experience the benefits of regular meditation and mindfulness. We help children to understand their feelings from an early age. Children may use the "Calm Room" is when children need space and time to regulate their emotions. All of our children are invited to visit the Calm room, to enjoy its sensory lights and toys.

We provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We aim to ensure that every child knows that they are unique and is confident to express their own feelings.

We aim to provide an environment that facilitates verbal and non-verbal development, that enables all children to become comfortable using a range of verbal and non-verbal vocabulary structures.

We encourage critical thinking, an essential early cognitive development skill, by encouraging children to absorb and reflect on the activities they take part in.

Ladybird Forest Pre-School is structured around a free-flow system. This allows children to choose whether they would like to be indoors or outdoors, and also ensures that all children have free choice to be where they are most comfortable, facilitating their own independence.

We encourage physical activity and help children make healthy choices and understand the importance of being active.

We provide all children with a Forest School session, to help them understand their local natural environment, teach them practical outside skills, and to understand risks, without removing them.



## OFSTED

We are registered with Ofsted. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting, regulating and reporting on schools and childcare provisions in the UK. Please see our last inspection report here:

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50272743> .

## SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding children is fundamental in providing a safe and secure environment. At Ladybirds, all staff recognise that it our duty to protect and safeguard children at our setting. All staff are DBS checked and undergo safeguarding training on a regular basis.

Our safeguarding policy outlines our commitment to Safeguarding in the setting and is on our website:

<https://ladybirdpre-school.org.uk/policies/>.

## CCTV

CCTV cameras installed throughout the setting help to protect children, staff and our property.

CCTV data is kept in accordance with GDPR principles. Our Data Protection and Confidentiality and Online Safety Policy is on our website: <https://ladybirdpre-school.org.uk/policies/>

## VISITS / OPEN DAY

We hold visits to the setting, for the child and one adult, by appointment only. Visits are usually held at 10am or 1pm. To book a visit, please contact [admin@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk](mailto:admin@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk).

We hold an Open Day in March for children joining the Pre-School in the following September. Two adults may accompany each child.

## ADMISSIONS

Ladybird Forest Pre-School is accessible to all children.

We meet the needs of children regardless of gender, special educational needs or disabilities, social background, religion, ethnicity or whether English is an additional language. We employ staff trained in SEND to support individual needs.

We encourage families to take an active role in the setting and regularly consult with parents and carers to ensure we meet a wide range of family needs.

Attendance patterns can be flexible where possible, provided this does not disrupt continuity for children or conflict with funding agreements.

Children are admitted from the term after their second birthday, subject to availability.

Our waiting list is organised by date of birth, with priority given to:

- 3 and 4-year-olds
- 2-year-olds receiving funding via the government support route
- 2-year-olds receiving funding for working families

The main intake of new children is in September, and we tend not to have space to join at other points in the year.



When a place is offered, parents/carers will be asked to confirm requested days and hours, sign the Terms and Conditions, complete a Child Registration Form and provide a copy of the child's birth certificate for funding purposes.

Our Admissions Policy is available on our website: <https://ladybirdpre-school.org.uk/policies/>

## **HOME VISITS / KEY PERSON**

You will be offered a home visit that will take place a few days before your child is due to start at the Pre-School. This will give you the opportunity to meet your child's "Key Person" and for them to get to know your child in their familiar surroundings. You will share details your child's likes, dislikes and family background in an All About Me form, to help staff to get to know your child. You will discuss your child's settling in process.

Your child's Key Person is your main contact during your child's stay at Ladybirds. The Key Person will look after both the emotional and developmental aspects of your child. They will be responsible for your child's online learning journal. If you ever need to discuss anything regarding your child's development or wellbeing at Pre-School, please talk to your child's Key Person to arrange a time to speak in more detail.

Our Key Person Policy is on the website: <https://ladybirdpre-school.org.uk/policies>.

## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM**

Ladybird Forest Pre-School monitors the development of all using the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is based on the following areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Understanding of the World
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design

## **CURRICULUM GOALS**

Our Curriculum Goals are designed and implemented by our whole staff team. These goals are in line with the Early Years Framework 2024 and will help to support children to learn and develop effectively. Each goal is broken down into steps so that we can see the progress being made by the children and also allow staff to know where each individual child is and what they need to work towards. Our Goals are designed to prepare children for school and feed into the areas of learning above and can be found on our website.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS**

Staff will continuously monitor your child's development against the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This is done by carrying out 'observations' on your child, either on a pre-defined activity or by 'tracking' your child at a series of activities. The observations are used to highlight those areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum that your child has achieved. The setting uses an online learning journal called Tapestry, as detailed below, to record and share all observations.



## **YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS**

The observations performed on children at Ladybirds are used to 'map' the developmental progress of each individual child. If your child's Key Person has any concerns about a child's development with regards to any of the seven areas of learning, in the first instance they will speak to the parent/carer. Ladybird has an appointed SEND member of staff (a Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator), who receives up-to-date training. Should your child need some extra help with any particular area, with parental consent, the SENDCo can call on the support of other professionals to assist, such as speech therapists, health visitors or Early Years Advisory Teachers.

## **TAPESTRY**

Tapestry is our online learning journal used to record and celebrate children's progress. Parents and carers can access Tapestry to view observations and photographs of their child's learning. Updates are shared regularly for each day your child attends.

When children leave the setting, parents and carers will be able to download their child's learning journal.

## **COMMUNICATION FRIENDLY AWARD**

Ladybird Forest Pre-School holds the Communication Friendly Award, recognising strong practice in supporting children's communication and language development.

Early communication skills are essential for later learning and school success. Our daily practice and learning environment support children to become confident and capable communicators.

## **PLANNED THEMES & ACTIVITIES**

The curriculum is delivered through half-termly themes and planned adult-led activities at each session. Children are invited to take part in these activities. Parents and carers are informed of themes and activities through the Weekly Bulletin.

## **CIRCLE TIME, PHONICS AND MATHS**

Children take part in small-group phonics and maths sessions during circle time in their designated capet area.

These sessions support communication, early literacy, numeracy and school readiness, and reinforce EYFS learning through structured discussion and play.

## **EXTENDED LEARNING AT HOME**

Early literacy is supported through weekly reading books and book logs. Parents and carers are encouraged to read regularly with their child and discuss stories together.

Guidance is provided on how to support learning at home.

## **ACTIVE WELLBEING AND MINDFULNESS SESSIONS**

The setting runs 10 minute "Healthy Movers" sessions at every morning session and mindfulness at the end of each afternoon session. We believe that children should experience the benefits of meditation and mindfulness to help them understand their feelings and the importance of meditation from an early age.





## **PANCO AND HEALTHY CHILD QUALITY STANDARDS AWARD**

The setting has a Physical Activity and Nutrition Co-ordinator (PANCo) who promotes health and wellbeing for children and families.

Ladybird Forest Pre-School holds the Healthy Child - Healthy Workforce Quality Standards Award, reflecting our commitment to healthy lifestyles, nutrition and wellbeing.

Our healthy Lunch Clubs help all children to develop healthy eating habits and also promote the importance of Oral Health. We encourage children to keep active by encouraging physical activity throughout the day.

Our *Food and Drink* and *PANCo Policy* is on the website: <https://ladybirdpre-school.org.uk/policies>

## **FOREST SCHOOL**

Forest School provides opportunities for children to extend learning outdoors, building independence, confidence and self-esteem.

Children learn about the natural environment and may use age-appropriate tools and equipment under close supervision. To do this, children have opportunities to use hand tools such as bow saws, potato peelers and bill hooks, as well as learning about different fires and their uses.

Forest School takes place in most weather conditions, except for high winds and thunderstorms. Waterproof clothing is provided, and parents are asked to supply wellington boots, and weather appropriate clothing.

Sessions run on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, lasting between one and one-and-a-half hours. Forest School is led by a qualified Forest School Leader, with safe adult-to-child ratios maintained.

Forest School is managed by a qualified Forest School Leader. A ratio of 2 adults to 16 children or less is always maintained so that children taking part in more potentially hazardous activities are adequately supervised. For more information, see our website: <https://ladybirdpre-school.org.uk/forest-school/>.

## **COMMUNICATION**

We aim to build positive relationships with children and their parents and carers.

Drop-off and collection times can be busy. If you need to discuss anything in detail, please arrange a convenient time to speak with your child's Key Person.

We keep parents and carers informed through:

- A half-termly newsletter
- A weekly bulletin with reminders and updates
- Regular updates on your child's learning via Tapestry

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise any concerns promptly so they can be addressed.

You can contact the office on 01525 403706 or by email:

- [enquiries@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk) - queries about your child's care and development
- [admin@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk](mailto:admin@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk) - absences, fees, funding and schedules



We also encourage families to join our Facebook page.

## **PARENTS AND CARERS' EVENINGS**

Parents and Carers' Evenings are held annually in the Spring Term. This provides an opportunity to discuss your child's progress with their Key Person.

A report outlining your child's development across the EYFS areas of learning will be shared.

## **PARENT AND CARER EVENTS**

We value strong partnerships with families and invite parents and carers to attend events throughout the year, such as the Christmas Concert and Sports Day. Families are encouraged to support our Fundraising Committee and events including the Christmas Bazaar, Easter and Summer activities.

## **PLAYGROUND**

Our playground features coloured wet-pour surfaces designed to encourage imaginative play and support early road safety learning.

In line with the EYFS (2024), our outdoor environment provides challenging and adventurous play opportunities, with resources such as tyres, planks and sand to promote physical development and exploration.

## **LUNCH CLUB**

Children may attend Lunch Club as part of a morning, afternoon or full-day session.

We promote healthy eating and ask parents and carers to follow our healthy eating guidance, available on our website. Children should bring a clearly named packed lunch. Unfortunately, we are unable to refrigerate or reheat food.

## **AFTER PRE-SCHOOL CLUB**

The club is open to children at the Pre-School. A hot tea is served around 4.00pm. At each After Pre-School Club, a member of staff will plan and deliver an activity.

## **BREAKFAST CLUB**

The Breakfast Club runs from 7.45am to the start of the morning session at 8.45am. A breakfast of cereals and toast is served between 7.45am and 8.15am.

## **SNACK**

Refreshments are provided, and we therefore request that you do not give your child snacks to eat during the Pre-School sessions.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DROPPING OFF / PICKING UP**

Please ensure your child is dropped off and collected on time so they can benefit fully from their session.

### **Password System**

Parents and carers will be asked to provide a unique password to be used if someone else is collecting their child.





### **Drop-Off**

Children are allocated to either the Caterpillar or Bumblebee Room. Parents and carers should say goodbye at the entrance and encourage their child to enter with a member of staff.

Children are supported to store their belongings independently.

For safety and space reasons, pushchairs should not be brought inside the setting and may be left by the shed along the walkway.

Please inform staff if someone else will be collecting your child and ensure they know the password.

### **Pick-Up**

Children should be collected from their assigned room. Children attending After Pre-School Club should be collected from the Caterpillar Room.

Children's artwork and items not on display will be placed in their tray.

Our Drop Off and Collection Policy is available on our website.

### **Late Pick-Up**

A charge of £5.00 per 10 minutes will apply after three late collections.

## **ILLNESSES, ALLERGIES AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

Please do not send your child to Pre-School if they are unwell. Children must be kept at home for at least 48 hours following sickness or diarrhoea.

If a child becomes unwell during a session, parents and carers will be contacted. In an emergency, the emergency services will be called and parents informed.

Please inform the setting of any allergies, intolerances or medical conditions. A Care Plan will be created where required.

Relevant policies are available on our website.

## **STAY & PLAY SESSIONS**

You will be invited to attend a Stay and Play session during designated weeks during the school year.

## **CHILDREN IN NAPPIES / POTTY TRAINING**

We welcome children at all stages of toileting.

Parents and carers should provide nappies or pull-ups and spare clothing where required. We are happy to work in partnership with families who are potty training.

Children should wear clothing that allows them to use the toilet independently.

## **CLOTHING & SAFETY**

For safety reasons, jewellery should not be worn, except for stud earrings in pierced ears.

Children will take part in outdoor and messy play. Please ensure they wear appropriate clothing. During warm weather, sun cream should be applied before sessions and a sun hat provided.



## **UNIFORM / WELLIE BAGS**

Optional uniform items, including T-shirts, sweatshirts and wellie bags with the Ladybird logo, are available to purchase. Please contact [admin@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk](mailto:admin@ladybirdpre-school.org.uk) for details.

## **SHOW & TELL AND 'WOW' MOMENTS**

Children are encouraged to bring in items related to their learning or letter of the week. Comforters may be brought in but are usually kept in the child's tray.

"WOW" moments from home are welcomed and shared during circle time, displayed in the setting and added to your child's learning journal.

## **LEAVER'S REPORT**

When your child leaves our setting to go to 'big' school, we provide parents/carers with the opportunity to download their learning journal, which includes their Leavers' report.

## **SCHOOL TRANSITIONS**

All children leaving to go to school will be given the opportunity to have a 'transition day' to Russell Lower School with their Key Person. Ladybird Forest Pre-School works closely with the local schools to make your child's transition to school as smooth as possible.

## **DISABLED PARKING**

Ladybird has one disabled car parking space in the school car park, off Saunders Piece. If you would like to use the disabled car parking space, please contact the setting beforehand so that we can advise you of how best to access the Pre-School from the car park. Our main entrance is via Queens Road.

## **FUNDRAISING**

As a registered charity, Ladybird Forest Pre-School relies on fundraising to support improvements and maintenance of the setting.

Parents and carers are encouraged to support fundraising events or join the Fundraising Committee. This is a great way to get involved and support your child's early years experience.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Ladybird Forest Pre-School is overseen by a voluntary Board of Directors, usually parents or carers, who manage governance alongside other commitments.

Directors are elected at the AGM in June to prepare for the new academic year.

## **WORRIES, CONCERNS & PROBLEMS**

If you have any concerns about your child or the setting, please speak to a member of staff or the Pre-School Manager in the first instance.

Our Complaints Policy is available on our website.

## **ATTENDANCE, FEES & FUNDING**

### **Fees April 2025 - April 2026**

For children who are not eligible for funding or who exceed their allocated funded hours, fees will apply. Our current fees are set out below.

| Session               |        | 2 year old fees Apr 25<br>- Apr 26 £ | 3 & 4 year old fees<br>Apr 25 - Apr 26 £ |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Breakfast Club        |        | 8.00                                 | 7.00                                     |
| AM / PM Session       |        | 24.00                                | 21.00                                    |
| Lunch Club            |        | 3.75                                 | 3.75                                     |
| After Pre-School Club | 4.00pm | 6.00                                 | 5.25                                     |
|                       | 4.30pm | 10.00                                | 8.75                                     |
|                       | 5.00pm | 14.00                                | 12.25                                    |
|                       | 5.15pm | 16.00                                | 14.00                                    |
|                       | 5.30pm | 18.00                                | 15.75                                    |
|                       | 6.00pm | 22.00                                | 19.25                                    |

You will also be asked to make a contribution of £1.25 per funded hour, to cover the cost of consumables and extras not covered by fees or funding. This contribution allows us to provide healthy daily snacks (fresh fruit and veg), maintain and resource the Forest School, care for our pets, run seasonal events, provide gifts and birthday cards, and arrange termly outings or visitors to the setting

NB: A breakfast of toast and cereal, and a hot tea is included in the Breakfast Club and After Pre-School Club fees.

Please be advised that fees are usually reviewed annually, once the Local Authority has informed us of the hourly funding rate that will apply from 1<sup>st</sup> April. You will be given a month's notice of any fee increase, which will likely take place from the start of the Summer Term.

An invoice will be issued at the beginning of each half term, based on the number of unfunded sessions, Lunch Clubs, Breakfast Clubs or After Pre-School Clubs your child attends per week. Fees must be paid as per the deadline on the invoice. We accept payments via BACs transfers, your government tax free childcare account, or pre-existing childcare voucher schemes.

Unfortunately, we cannot give any refunds for any sessions your child might miss due to holiday or sickness within that half term.

## Funding

### 3 & 4 year old funding:

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to up to 15 hours of funded childcare a week for up to 38 weeks a year, i.e. 570 hours per year. This "universal" funding applies from the term following a child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

3 and 4 year old children of working parents may be entitled to an additional 570 hours per year, or 30 hours per term-time week for each of their 3 or 4-year-olds. Parents/carers will be responsible for checking if they are eligible for the extended entitlement and if they are, will be issued with a code by HMRC that they are responsible for keeping valid every three months.

### 2 year old funding:



2 year old children of working parents, or those receiving government support, may be entitled to up to 30 hours of funding childcare a week for up to 38 weeks a year. Parents and carers will be responsible for checking if they are eligible and will be issued with a code. For more information please visit: <https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/free-childcare>.

Before the beginning of each term, you will be asked to complete a 'Parent and Carer Agreement Form' that allows the Pre-School to claim funding for your child.

Funded hours can be applied against Sessions and Lunch Clubs. Please note that at Ladybird Forest Pre-School, funding cannot be used to fund wraparound care, i.e. Breakfast and After Pre-School Clubs. If you have not used your full funding entitlement, you may be able to use any "leftover" funding at our Holiday Clubs. You can claim your weekly funding entitlement across more than one setting.

If your child is booked to attend but is unexpectedly absent for a single period or short term period, the Local Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council) will not penalize the setting by reclaiming the funding. If your child's absence is recurring or for extended periods of time, we are obliged to contact the Local Authority, who will look at each individual case and will use their discretion regarding whether or not to reclaim the funding. Should the Local Authority decide to reclaim any of the funding under the above circumstances, we will look to recoup the reclaimed funding from the parents /carers at the 'regular' session rates.

## HOLIDAY CLUB

The Holiday Club is run by Ladybird staff and is open from 9am to 4pm during the October half-term, the first week of the Easter holidays and the first three weeks of the Summer holidays. Holiday Club is open to all children (not just those attending Ladybird Pre-School) from the age of 3 to 7 years.

The Lunch Club runs from 12pm - 1pm. As we are catering for a diverse age group, the staff ensure that activities are age-appropriate and put together a fun-filled programme for all. Children can watch a film during the afternoon and enjoy a snack.

Our current Holiday Club fees are as follows:

The current prices for the sessions are as follows:

**Early Bird rates (until 2 weeks before the start of each Club):**

| Session          | Fee  |
|------------------|--|
| 8.00am - 4.00pm  | £40.00   |
| 9.00am - 3.30pm  | £32.50   |
| 9.00am - 1.00pm  | £20.00   |
| Sibling Discount | 8.00am - 4.00pm: £35.00, 9.00am - 3.30pm: £30.00 per child, per day  |
| Weekly Discount  | 8.00am - 4.00pm: £35.00, 9.00am - 3.30pm: £30.00, Per child, per day |

**Rates (from 2 weeks before start of each Club):**

| Session | Fee |
|---------|-----|
|---------|-----|



|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 8.00am - 4.00pm  | £42.00   |
| 9.00am - 3.30pm  | £34.50   |
| 9.00am - 1.00pm  | £21.00   |
| Sibling Discount | 8.00am - 4.00pm: £37.00, 9.00am - 3.30pm: £32.00, per child, per day |
| Weekly Discount  | 8.00am - 4.00pm: £37.00, 9.00am - 3.30pm: £32.00, Per child, per day |

We hope your child enjoys their time at Ladybird Forest Pre-School.

**LADYBIRD FOREST PRE-SCHOOL AMPHILL, December 2025**