
Saplings

Nursery

Parent Handbook

2026

"... regarding the care & education of young children: centred on the principle that each child is an individual, who brings a richness of unique experiences that have shaped them thus far. it is our role to provide an environment that is challenging, welcoming, safe and stimulating to enable them to continue forward and reach their full potential"

Linda Davies 2006

ORGANISATION

Parent Updates are posted in Saplings Community, complimenting this document and should be read in conjunction with it.

Opening Hours, Holidays and Closures

Nursery opening hours are as follows:

Page | 2

Saplings is open 7.30 – 6.30pm, Monday to Friday all year round, except all Public & Bank Holidays and 3 staff training days each year, a calendar is available annually in advance showing the relevant closed days to parents & children.

How our day is organised

Throughout the day we have routines that ensure children are well cared for by experienced practitioners.

Each of the rooms have their own individual routines that follow the needs of the children present. While certain things will follow a set routine, such as meal-times, we encourage flexibility so that children & staff together may respond to events happening around us and we can respond individually to the children.

Breakfast is served between 8am – 8.45am. Lunch is served between 11.45 – 1pm. Very young babies and toddlers who need to sleep do so and are given their lunch when they wake. Snack is offered to children around 10am, some have a rolling snack time, where children manage their own timing for taking a break from the busy activities of the morning.

The administration of the day is during the period 9am – 5pm when members of the senior leadership team are available for appointments, take card payments, conduct home visits, answer telephone enquiries, show parents around the nursery, carry out a variety of audits and risk assessments and arrange for emergency repairs that are not able to wait until the end of the day or at weekends.

Contacting Us

TELEPHONE	01279 851998
CHERYL RAE	admin@saplingsnursery.co.uk
LINDA DAVIES	lindavies@saplingsnursery.co.uk
ANNA DAVIES BROWN	anna.davies@saplingsnursery.co.uk
KAYLEIGH COLEMAN	tiggers@saplingsnursery.co.uk
JESS BOYTEN	jess@saplingsnursery.co.uk
RACHEL POOLE	rachel@saplingsnursery.co.uk
GEMMA CLARKE	under2s@saplingsnursery.co.uk

GENERAL OUTLINE OF OUR DAILY ROUTINE

From 7.30am	Open to children
8.00 – 8.45	BREAKFAST served.
9.00 – 11.45	Children are engaged in child initiated; play and learning is supported by adult, led by the child indoors or outdoors
10 – 10.30	SNACK served during this time
11.45 – 1	LUNCH served
1.00 – 2.00	Quieter period while some children sleep / rest
2.00 – 4	Children are engaged in child initiated; play and learning is supported by adult, led by the child indoors or outdoors
4 – 4.30	TEA TIME
4.30 – 5.30	Children are engaged in child initiated; play and learning is supported by adult, led by the child indoors or outdoors
5.30 – 6.30	Children are engaged in play with quieter activities, this is encouraged to provide support for the principle of a pre-bedtime 'wind down' period. An additional snack is offered

ORGANISATION

The Staff

The staff work together to provide the very best that child care & education can offer. Saplings have a reputation of employing good staff and retaining a high proportion of staff recruited. This means that your child and any siblings are likely to be cared for by the same staff – in this we are very unique! A complete list of staff members, their relevant qualifications and special areas of responsibility can be found at the back of this handbook.

Staff work a combination of variable hours, some alternate late and early shifts, some work a fixed shift on the days they attend. Our core staff requirements each day allow staff absences for annual leave or off-site training. In general, we experience minimal staff absence due to illness and continue to maintain staff : child ratios required.

Nursery Registration and Inspection

Saplings is registered with Ofsted. Our new registration number is 2563298. We are legally required to maintain legislative and regulatory requirements in the provision of services to young children. We are bound by the following principle Acts of Parliament and relevant Regulations:

Education & Inspection Framework 2025; Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023); Equality Act 2010, Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice 2021, Human Rights Act 1998; Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (1992/1999), Medicines Act (1996) The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, **Childcare Act 2006, Children & Families Act 2014**, The Children Act 2004, **Data Protection Act 2018; GDP Regulations 2018**, Electricity at Work Act (1989), Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, **Food Safety Act 1990, Food Hygiene Regulations 2006**; Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 Code of practice for first aid 1997, RIDDOR 1995, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (2006), all of which impose obligations and impact us heavily – those highlighted in bold are high impact Acts.

Ofsted inspect us regularly. The Certificate of registration is displayed on the information board in each of the houses and a copy of the inspection report is available on request or on the website at www.ofsted.gov.uk using our Registration number 2563298. In 2012, we were judged Good (Leadership & Management: Outstanding) We were judged Outstanding in 2008 (most areas) 2011 (All areas) 2015 (All areas) 2022 (Good – all areas)

THE EYFS & OFSTED INSPECTIONS

Since September 2008, Ofsted inspect under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006, in which the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)* originated. A second amendment was initiated after the Tickell review in 2011. This significantly revised the EYFS in 2012, 2014, 2017, 2021 and 2023. Major changes in Ofsted's approach to inspections will be effective from 10 November 2025, following their consultation process after the suicide death of a Head Teacher following an inspection

ORGANISATION

FUNDED EARLY EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT

We are Contracted by Essex County Council to provide children aged 2 – 4 years with the government Funded Entitlement (FEEE)

From September 2017 the **extended 15 hour entitlement** was added, which when combined with the original 15 hour **universal entitlement** gave financial relief to parents of 3-4 year olds up to 30 hours a week over 38 weeks of the year.

Since September 2025, Saplings offers 30 hours funding to all children where parents are eligible. (Please refer to our **Funding Policy** for further details)

We are members of the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), and Early Years Alliance (EYA – originally the PreSchool Playgroup Association) Stortford KidsOut is a member of Out of School Alliance (OOSA)

Summer of 2009, we were selected by representatives of Essex County Council Early Years Team, to participate in the Government funded pilot Initiative 'Every Child a Talker (ECAT). We were delighted with this invitation as it offered us opportunity at the time to invest further in language & communication resources and created additional opportunities to develop as setting. November 2017 – 2018 we employed a Speech and Language specialist to assist with early intervention for speech & language delay in children where this is assessed or when parents raise concerns.

Policies and Procedures

Our policies are guidelines for good practice and are in place to ensure the well-being of the staff & children. Some are a legal requirement. Many are working documents and as such are subject to change to meet the demands of changing conditions, attitudes or legislation.

Parents can download a complete set of policies after joining Saplings using 'WeTransfer'. Copies are available on request by contacting Cheryl Rae admin@saplingsnursery.co.uk

Allocation of Nursery Places

The Nursery exists to provide day care all year round for young children aged 4m – 5 years old. There is always a high demand for places at Saplings, we do not operate a waiting list for parents that apply. Parents wanting to find a place for preschool children only, may apply one term before their child turns 3 years old.

Limited term time only provision is available for children aged 2 years who are eligible for government 2 year funding and from 3 to 5 years in preschool.

ORGANISATION

Additional Sessions

If you require a one-off additional session, please try and give as much notice as possible, we will try to be accommodating – please email Linda or Cheryl with your request. Fees for extra sessions are charged at our hourly rate or usual session rate and invoiced automatically with your next invoice. Once booked, the session is liable for payment, whether the place is used or not.

Please note that it is not possible to swap an additional session for a normal day of attendance

Withdrawal of Children from the Nursery

If you wish to withdraw your child from the Nursery, or reduce the number of sessions attended you must provide us with ONE FULL calendar month's written notice. (Please refer to our **General Terms of Service**)

Late arrival

Saplings closes promptly at 6.30pm. If you are going to be late collecting your child please inform us as soon as possible, we reserve the right to levy a late collection fee of £15.00 for each 20 minutes or part thereof for parents/carers who persistently arrive late.

Regularly collecting late is taken seriously, even if notified, and may lead to exclusion from the nursery. We prioritise and respect the staff working the late shift, any re-occurring, regular delay in being able to return to their own families will lead to temporary exclusion until the matter can be resolved.

If you wish to discuss your child's day with a member of staff you should arrive at least fifteen minutes before the end of the session or make a separate appointment to speak with them at a time that is mutually acceptable.

BEING HEALTHY

Meal Times and Snacks



Our water is delivered from a local supplier who sources water from the Welsh Mountains. The TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) reading for our water is less than 50mg/litre. Throughout the day your child will drink very high quality, mineral rich water, healthy meals, milk and snacks.

The bottled drinking water is available to every child, children in Tiggers and Preschool can access water independently, the health benefits to children drinking water throughout the day is well documented, we adopt the approach that encourages children to drink plenty of water.

'Drinking adequate amounts of water regularly throughout the day can protect health and contribute to well-being.' Water is Cool in School Campaign

'The key to boosting the capacity to learn is to keep well hydrated throughout the day' Water is Cool in School Campaign

Annie plans weekly menus that are nutritious, healthy and meets the daily dietary requirements that apply to young children. All meals are freshly prepared and cooked on the day. We shop mainly at Tesco, increasingly we source organic products from farms or Abel & Cole. Alternative menus are offered for vegans/vegetarians and those children on restricted diets. We offer a 4 week rolling menu plan that is changed each term, incorporating seasonal foods. The menu is published in Saplings Community.

Childhood Illness

Children who are unwell should not be brought to nursery. The day is too demanding for a sick child. We recognise that as parents, you have work responsibilities, but if your child becomes unwell during the day, we will notify you and ask you to collect your child as soon as possible. It is therefore very important that you advise us of any changes to your contact details as soon as they occur. A list of childhood diseases and their exclusion periods are included in the downloaded policy document. If you would like a paper version, but do not have a printer at home, please ask Cheryl for a copy.

All parents are encouraged to have **two** alternative contacts for the emergency collection of unwell children from the nursery. If you do not have family nearby, you are required to find a trusted person living close to you who would be available in an emergency – this is particularly relevant for parents who work more than one hour from the nursery - choose a friend or neighbour.

BEING HEALTHY

Administration of Medicine

We only administer medicines that have been prescribed by your child's GP.

Please do not ask the staff to give children 'over the counter' medicine.

If your child needs medicine while in nursery you will need to complete a medication form on the first day. This form lasts the week, a signature is needed daily when you collect your child to ensure that you are aware of the medicine given to your child on that day. If your child has been prescribed antibiotics, they should be absent from nursery for 24-36 hours and only return if they have sufficiently improved and are back to eating and behaving as usual. When medication is given to children, two members of staff check and confirm the dosage and are present at the time the medication is given. Both staff are qualified, early years practitioners



For further information please read our **Medication Policy**

Calpol/Nurofen. While it is acknowledged that Calpol reduces a child's temperature, it is however also very good at masking symptoms when there may be something more seriously wrong with a baby or child. For this reason, as a general rule we will not give calpol or nurofen to your child; exceptional circumstances are at the discretion of senior management team members and reserved for those children where there is a known history of febrile convulsions.

We use traditional methods to bring a child's temperature down e.g. tepid sponging, removing clothing. In any event, we always contact parent/carers to inform you of your child's condition and request that you collect your child immediately. It is essential that if you have a long arrival time that you arrange for your local contact to collect your child.

For children prone to febrile convulsions associated with a sudden rise in temperature, we will agree an individual action plan with the parents/carers in association with the recommendations from your GP or Paediatrician. Linda is a trained nurse, midwife & health visitor and staff are trained in this policy.

Accidents

Each member of staff holds a recognised paediatric first aid certificate (12 hours); the qualification is renewed every three years.

Although every effort is made to ensure your child is kept safe, accidents do happen. If a child is involved in an accident, emergency first aid treatment will be given, an assessment of the child's condition made, and an account of the accident and treatment given will be recorded on an Accident Report. Serious accidents will be notified to parents immediately, otherwise, for minor or incidental accidents/scrapes common to children, parents are

BEING HEALTHY

informed at the time of collecting; you will be asked to read and sign the accident sheet/book.

If the accident requires hospital treatment, you will be informed immediately with arrangements made to meet you at the hospital if necessary. In all instances where it is felt necessary to take a child to hospital an ambulance will be called. We do not take children to hospital in staff cars.

Accidents at Home

It is very important that you inform senior staff if your child has had an accident at home prior to coming to nursery. A written record will be taken of this and parents will sign a declaration that outlines the details of the accident that occurred outside of nursery, whether a mark is present or not, whether it occurred immediately prior to coming to nursery (within 12 hours) or in the day(s) prior to nursery attendance.

In the event a child reveals an accident not reported to us, we will note any mark and contact you immediately. If a child becomes unwell or incapacitated for no apparent reason unrelated to nursery activity, whether or not you have notified us of any home accident, you will be contacted, information exchange will be expected to take place over the telephone and a decision made about the next step for your child. A written report will be made by a senior member of staff - this will require a signature on your return.

Babies' Bottles:



Parents pay an all-inclusive fee that includes milk feeds. It is our policy, that we take full responsibility for all food hygiene processes; we have the facilities to prepare babies milk feeds and sterilise bottles, we have a strict hygiene code for the preparation of babies' milk feeds. It is therefore vital that **no previously prepared milk feed from home is accepted for use in the nursery**. If a bottle (milk or otherwise) is brought into the setting, the contents will be discarded, the bottle rinsed and placed in your child's bag.

If you are still breastfeeding and expressing breast milk you may bring your own milk into nursery, fresh or frozen, but a signature from you will be required which exempts us from food hygiene responsibilities.

Child Protection

We are required by law to inform the relevant agencies of any concerns that we have about a child who is or may be at risk of harm. You would be informed by the designated Safeguarding Lead (Anna Davies Brown) of our concerns and any actions to be taken. Anna is supported by Kayleigh Mulvey (Under 2's-3's)

BEING HEALTHY

Staff will support you in any way possible. All staff receive level 2 Safeguarding training as required by the [Essex Safeguarding Childrens Board](#) and Early Years Statutory Framework (EYFS 2025) Safeguarding, training is updated every two years.

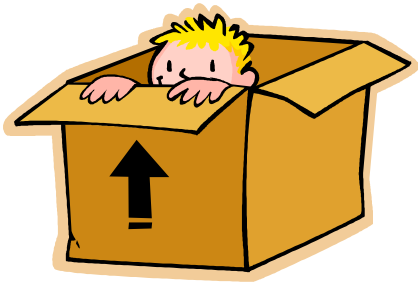
Password

We operate a password system for the collection of children by unfamiliar persons if you are unable to collect your child and need someone else to do so on your behalf. These persons are unlikely to be known to nursery staff and so the need for a password is essential. The nominated person(s) collecting your child will only gain access to the nursery to collect your child if they have the correct password. In the event you forget your password, you can elect to change it or inform us of a single use only password. Please be aware, that even if an unknown close relative of your child attends to collect e.g. father of child and they do not have the password, your child will not be handed over to them until contact is made with you. It is always best in the early days of attending nursery, that you introduce us to your contacts.

Grief First Aid

We appreciate that experiencing grief can be a difficult time for parents and young children. Annie and Rachel are both qualified to support parents, children and staff in grief first aid. Please contact either of them direct if you would like to talk to them using their email address (page 2) This is an inclusive service and no charges apply.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



'Babies and young children start learning from birth. They thrive on new sensory experiences and learn through a variety of activities, interaction with people and by exploring the world around them'.

'It is never too early to learn' ... high-quality child care and early education will give your child the best start in life. Saplings children emerge confident, physically capable and equipped with independence skills that support their transition to Reception Class in school

The Early Years Foundation Stage

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. 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' EYFS 2021

Saplings provides for children's development and learning guided by The Early Years Foundation Stage (2023) and the key themes found in Every Child Matters (2003)
(See next page)

'every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured' (EYFS 2021; Every Child Matters 2003)

Child Development: Skilful communicator, competent learner

Inclusive Practice: Equality and diversity, children's entitlements, early support

Keeping Safe: Being safe and protected, discovering boundaries, making choices

Health and Well-being: Growth and developing, physical and emotional wellbeing

'children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**'
(EYFS 2021; Every Child Matters 2003)

Respecting Each Other: Understanding feelings, friendship, professional relationships.

Parents as Partners: Respecting diversity, communication, learning together.

Supporting Learning: Positive interactions, listening to children, effective teaching.

Key Person: Secure attachment, shared care, independence

children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers (EYFS 2021; Every Child Matters (2003)

Observation, Assessment and Planning: Starting with the child, planning, assessment.

Supporting Every Child: Children's needs, the learning journey, working together.

The Learning Environment: The emotional, indoor and outdoor environments

The Wider Context: Transitions and continuity, multi-agency working, the community.

children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates (EYFS 2021; Every Child Matters (2003)

the characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

How we provide for Learning & Development

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by Saplings helps children to continue to do this by treating them as individuals and offering creative experiences and opportunities to explore. Staff observe and assess children to plan age-appropriate activities that support a child individually. We focus on all areas of development but prioritise Communication & Language, Personal, social and emotional and Physical development (Prime Areas)

For each of the 7 areas in the EYFS, the practice guidance sets out the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know and be able to do by the end of the reception year of their education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires early years practitioners to review children's progress and share a summary with parents at two points:

- between the ages of 24 and 36 months via the progress check; and
- at the end of Reception via the EYFS profile

Staff observe children in free play and during adult supported activities, we draw on our knowledge of the child and the shared partnership with parents, to assess their progress – we share our professional judgment with parents on a daily basis face to face and uploaded to a web based journal for parents to contribute towards - we use Tapestry

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

The areas of LEARNING and DEVELOPMENT are divided into two sections – 3 prime and 4 specific areas

3 PRIME areas:

Communication and language giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations

Physical development being active and interactive; and to develop co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food

Personal, social and emotional helping children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; form positive relationships & develop respect for others; develop social skills & learn how to manage feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities

4 SPECIFIC areas:

Literacy encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write

Mathematics opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measure

Understanding the world 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 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

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

General principles that apply to babies & two-year olds

We place great emphasis on children learning as they play through self-discovery and adult support. Not all children learn in the same way; children under three can demonstrate patterns of repeatable behaviour called schemas - we may use these schemas as a starting point to assist us to provide appropriate resources, create opportunities for children on an individual basis that are meaningful to them.

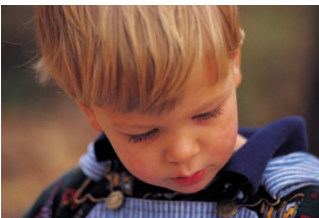
Often, play arises using natural materials that children can safely explore including pebbles, feathers, sand, water, different textured fabrics, cork, heavy glass, items made from metal and wood, fir cones and so on. We are always grateful for any donation of these types of items and will circulate letters requesting help to build up our collections. Children often use the lovely outdoor environment to explore further what natural materials are around them.

Babies



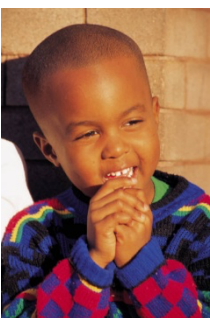
We prioritise and respect the importance of doing our best to re-create your baby's home routines and individual needs during the early days at nursery. Your key carer will discuss your routine with you so that we can follow the pattern you have established and incorporate this where possible into our daily routine.

Two Year Olds



As your child progresses, we offer a wider range of activities including paint, malleable materials, stories, music, pretend play, role-play, loose parts play. Children make choices, they practice new skills, consolidate recently acquired skills and learn how to become sociable in a group environment.

Three to Five Year Olds



Saplings pre-school children build upon the experiences gained earlier in the nursery. The children are encouraged to take responsibility, have respect for others and their environment. There are group times, opportunities for experiential learning indoors and outdoors. Our location with a fabulous garden means children are exposed to the natural world as the seasons unfold. Children are observed regularly, staff assess their progress with parents. We encourage parents to become involved in planning the experiences we offer the children and are always looking for ways to bring home and nursery together, so that we care for & provide relevant learning experiences for your child, in partnership together.

Forest School Activities

FOREST SCHOOL ACTIVITIES for PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

- ✓ Tree climbing
- ✓ Balancing logs, branches and thick ropes
- ✓ Using real tools
- ✓ Den building
- ✓ Contact with woodland Creature Games (use of blindfolds to promote sensory awareness)
- ✓ Experience of a natural terrain and it's benefits to children's health, well-being and physical development; appreciation of nature; caring for nature

Our aim is to enable preschool children to be ready for school. we do our best to ensure children reach their full potential; being equipped with the necessary skills and confidence to make the transition into school as smooth as possible.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Settling into Nursery

We require that you help your child to settle into the nursery by attending some introductory visits. This will involve a few visits over a two week period, initially with you present, then gradually leaving your child with us for longer time periods. Each child is different, some children will find it easier to settle than others. It is therefore important that the introductory period is negotiated individually.

Moving through the Nursery

The process is similar to starting at the nursery – you will be informed ahead of time that your child makes introductory visits to the new room with their key carer who will stay with them. Gradually the length and frequency of these visits will increase to include a meal time, working towards a permanent move when they are ready. Parents will be introduced to the new room and the staff once your child is permanently settled.

Parking and Dropping Off/Picking Up

Signs are displayed to indicate an IN and an OUT drive. The car park is one way in a clockwise direction. Parents may use our car park for dropping off / collecting their child from nursery, we ask that parents park on the left between 7.30am – 10am, at any other time, you may park wherever there is a space available. Disability, wheelchair access is to the side of the building opposite the barn.

Home Toys and Personal Belongings

The need for children to bring something from home to nursery and vice versa, is a very important stage in a child's development and because of this we are happy to allow children to do so. It is impossible for the staff to keep track of an individual toy; **we therefore do not take any responsibility for mislaid home toys.**

If you have lost anything specific, toy or clothing, we are able to circulate a request to parents. Please email us or post a request in our Saplings Community on Discord.

Children's' Personal Clothing

Please send your child with at least one complete set of spare clothing (more if they are being toilet trained) clearly marked with your child's name. Label/mark your child's bag. Please do not leave medication in your child's bag, this includes inhalers, all medication must be handed directly to the staff member greeting your child.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Parent/Carer Involvement

Parents are regarded as members of our setting who have participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected
- kept informed
- consulted
- involved

Our Commitment

To ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment
- is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children
- have the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
- has a personal key person who makes sure each child makes progress and communicates with you
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop and
- is in a setting in which parents are encouraged to help shape the service we offer.

Parents/carers are more than welcome at any time and are free to spend as much time as is needed to ensure that their child is settled and happy.

We communicate with parents via email, poster/notices, Tapestry, Saplings Community (Discord), Termly Parent Updates/Newsletter, Parent Evenings, our annual calendar, events, website and webinars.

Parent Evenings will be held twice a year, in the Spring and Summer Terms. Parent meetings can be either by appointment or open access and are an opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress with his/her key person or any member of the staff team and to share any thoughts or concerns you may have.

We hold annual / bi-annual / termly events in the year for parents, including an Open Day, Summer Leavers Celebration, Sunday morning special events and Funding Meetings. In addition, we may offer workshops including free First Aid Training, once or twice a year. We would welcome any new suggestions / ideas from parents

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

How Parents take part

Saplings Nursery recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for their child. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
- helping at nursery social events;
- sharing your own special interests with the children;
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;
- participating fully in Saplings Community server – a private place to discuss and share information
- joining in community activities that the setting takes part; and
- building friendships with other parents in the setting.

Joining In

Parents can offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. For example, if you play a musical instrument, or are a collector of interesting objects/artefacts or photographs, you might like to share these with the children. We would welcome shared, celebratory cultural experiences or ideas too. Feel free to participate, in the past we have had parents bring in a pet lamb and geological rocks to name just two!

Key Person and your child

Saplings uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that what we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at nursery, she/he will help your child to settle and as your child progresses through the nursery, the key person will help your child to benefit from the activities on offer.

Learning Opportunities for Adults

As well as gaining qualifications in early years care and education, the staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to-date in early years care and education.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

From time to time we hold learning events for parents. We began parent workshops in 2009 and these ended during the lockdown period. Since this time, interest dropped, but we are keen to offer workshops or other events like our recent 'Walk 'n' Talk! We have 20 some new ideas too, but would welcome suggestions from you – just let us know!

Student Training

We accept students from local schools on work experience, college students on practice placement and University students carrying out research projects or casual employment during holidays. Students will not be left alone with children and are always supernumerary to staffing levels. You may be approached by a student for permission to undertake a child study or observations on your child. There is no obligation to agree. If you should participate in any such work it is expected that you will be shown the student's final work. Please do not attempt to discuss your child's day with a student - they have all been instructed to refer you to a member of staff.

Baby Sitting Services

The nursery does not provide a babysitting service outside of our operational hours. If a parent/carer should use past employees for babysitting, it is your responsibility to ensure the suitability of the individual. Saplings Nursery does not accept any liability for the conduct of an individual, past or present staff outside their contractual terms of employment.

Saplings Community on Discord

We closed our Facebook Parent Group and no longer maintain a public Facebook page as a result of the restrictions and concerns surrounding the privacy that most social media platforms offer. Instead, we have been using [Discord](#), a private platform to provide a safer haven for parents and staff. The Community we have created means that parents past and present will remain as members until you choose to leave our server. To join Saplings Community, you will need a link. The process for joining is sent to parents with a time limited link. We encourage everyone to join as this is our main communication channel.

Fees at Saplings

As the costs of running the Nursery increase year on year it is inevitable that Nursery fees will also increase. Wherever possible these increases are kept to a minimum. Please visit the website to download our Pricelists for funded places and our Private Fees. All fees are fully inclusive of meals, milk, nappies, outings or any other activity the children are involved in.

If your child is absent from Nursery on days where sessions have been booked, (whether because of illness, holiday or unplanned changes to arrangements), full fees are charged. Fees are due for all Nursery closures as

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

staff continue to be paid and staff salaries are our greatest expense. Our fees are calculated annually in relation to our costs and worked out on this basis.

Financial Support for Childcare

Childcare Vouchers

The Nursery is registered to accept all childcare vouchers which obtained via an employer.

Funded Early Education Entitlement

This is provided from the DfE through the LEA (Essex County Council) and is claimed for on your behalf. You will be required to complete our application process that includes a 2 part parent agreement for our services and Essex Parent Agreement Form (PAF) declaration that confirms that your child is attending this particular setting. All children are entitled to this funding from the term following their third birthday. Parents may claim Universal Entitlement for 15 hours a week or the additional 15 hours Extended Entitlement making a total of 30 hours.

HMRC

There are Government options to support parents with the financial costs of child care. Parents are advised to register with HMRC on the following website [Best Start in Life](#) As an alternative to child care vouchers the Government will match 20% of the cost of your child care fees in an account that can be shared with or example grandparents who may wish to contribute each month.

Tax Credits

Working Tax Credit /Child Tax Credits with/or without the Child Care Tax Element is available if you are on a low income and work 16 hours or more a week. Contact HMRC for more information <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-with-tax-credits>

Compliments, Comments and Complaints

We are always happy to listen to any compliments, comments or complaints you may have about the Nursery.

We prefer that the starting point is with the staff in the room your child is with. If you want to share with anyone else, you are very welcome to email any of us. (page 2)

In regard to Complaints. If you have a complaint about the service being offered, please discuss this in the first instance with the staff concerned. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of these discussions or actions, please put your complaint in writing to Cheryl Rae (Administrator) who will respond to your complaint within 5 days. You will be invited into the nursery to discuss your complaint face to face, and we will seek to provide you with a follow up written response within 5 days of meeting with us. If you are still not

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

satisfied a formal written complaint can be made to Linda Davies. The complaint will be considered, and a written response sent to you.

If your complaint is serious enough, or relates to the Registered Person (Linda Davies) you may take your complaint to the Registering Authority at Ofsted. See contact details overleaf.

Ofsted Early Years
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

TEL: 0300 123 1231

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

We strive to create an atmosphere conducive to working in partnership with parents and carers so that children are happy to attend and you feel confident about leaving your child with us".

Linda Davies January 2010

Senior Management Team

Linda Davies

Registered Person / SRN, SCM, HV, Cert. Ed. (PCE) NVQ Assessor & Verifier

Anna Davies

Co-Owner / Level 3 Food Hygiene / First Aid at Work / Safeguarding Level 3

Cheryl Rae

Administrator / HR / Early Years Educator / Management (Level 4)

Saplings Nursery

Please refer to our Terms & Conditions alongside this Handbook

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Rachel Poole	Early Years Lead Professional (All Ages) Early Years Leadership (Level 5)
Kayleigh Coleman	2-3's Co-Ordinator / Early Years Educator / Deputy DSL
<i>Gemma Clarke</i>	Under 2's Co-ordinator / Early Years Educator / <i>Early Years Specialist (Level 2)</i>

Under 2's

Gemma Clarke	Team Leader / Early Years Educator
Siobhan Pagan	Early Years Educator
Emily Ambrose	Early Years Educator
Sian Allen-Parry	Early Years Educator
Sevenia Barcelon	Health & Social Care Practitioner / Early Years Practitioner
<i>Natalie Catley</i>	<i>Apprentice Early Years Educator</i>
Sophie Bennett	Early Years Support Practitioner
Michelle Davies	Early Years Support Practitioner

2's – 2.5's

Kayleigh Coleman	Team Leader / Early Years Educator (Level 4)
Rhiannah Evans	BA Hons Early Childhood Education (Level 6)
Helena Cucchiara	Early Years Practitioner
Louise Salmon	Early Years Educator
<i>Charlotte O'Neil</i>	Early Years Practitioner / <i>Apprentice Early Years Educator</i>

2.5's – 5 years

Rachel Poole	Foundation Degree Early Childhood Education (Level 5) Lead Professional
Maxine Stapleton	Early Years Educator / Primary Education (Teacher)
Mia Dunne	Early Years Educator
Ila Vaja	Early Years Educator / Early Years (Knowledge) Level 5
Carol Bullo	Primary Education Teacher
Jess Boyten	Early Years Educator (Level 4) SEND Diploma
Michelle Sandford	Early Years Educator
Michelle Rayner	Early Years Practitioner
Gracie Miller	Early Years Practitioner
Teyla Crick	Early Years Practitioner
Ashdon Houston-Taylor	Early Years Support Practitioner

Housekeeping

Carly Wood
Jodie Jeffery

Level 2 = Early Years Practitioner Level 3 = Early Years Educator
Italics = In training