

Margaret McMillan Nursery School



Handbook for Parents

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Welcome to Margaret McMillan Nursery School and Children's Centre

STARTING SCHOOL

Starting school is a very important time for you and your child. This pack and notes were designed by parents and staff to help with all the information you will receive at settling and over the next few years.

There is a pocket at the back of this folder where you can keep your notes and hand outs.

The pack contains information about:

Settling in at Margaret McMillan

School Organisation and Routines

Attendance, Timekeeping and Collection of Children

Security, Health and safety

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Parental Involvement



There might seem like a lot to find out about and do. Don't worry, staff are there to help, ask as many questions as you like!

We are all looking forward to working with you and your child.



Settling in at Margaret McMillan

Settling programmes are designed individually to best suit the needs of each child.

Every child is allocated a key worker. Your child's key worker will be part of a team who will work together to support your child's learning and development. Your child's key worker is your main point of contact but any of the team members should be able to answer incidental questions.

Children and their families are all individuals with different needs. To allow for this admissions are organised on an individual basis. Staff will want to talk to you about what is best for you and your child.

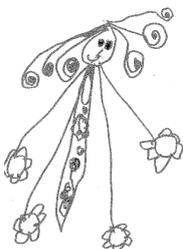
Some children will be used to many different people, others may not. Some children are naturally outgoing, others like time to adjust. Some children will settle very quickly, others will take more time.

Some parents may have lots of time to settle, others may not. Some parents feel very confident about leaving their child, others feel much more anxious.

All of this is very normal. Remember there are no hard and fast rules. Staff are ready to organise an individual program.

If your child is under three, or will be at school for a long day, a more complex settling program will be needed. As day care programs are very varied staff will work this out with you at the start.

It will take time for us all to get to know each other but once the registration is over we can take the time we need to help your child get settled into school. After about a month, staff will ask you to help them review the settling period. You will be invited to an initial conference to review how your child has settled and plan next steps.



School Organisation and Routines

School hours

From September 2010 all children are entitled to 15 hours free nursery provision from the term after their third birthday. At Margaret McMillan we offer this as four part-time sessions and 1 full day.

Part time sessions are

9.30 am - 11.45 noon or 1.15 pm - 3.30 pm

Full time sessions are

9.30 am - 3.30 pm This is called the core day.



In Islington parents can have full time nursery class provision free from the term after their child's fourth birthday if places are available. Full time class places are allocated firstly based on specific need. If there are still places left when all the identified needs have been met the rest of the places are allocated on an age basis.

Day-care hours

Alongside the class places the school is open between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm for 48 weeks of the year. There are places for children from 0-5 years. This is sometimes called wrap-around care or day-care. Parents pay for day-care based on hours used and joint family income.

Allocation of places

The first 30% of all places are allocated, by the borough, on the basis of a referral by one of the agencies who work with families and young children. This could be the health visitor a social worker or perhaps the family G.P. The rest of the class places are allocated to any local parent based on the distance between home and school. The rest of the day-care places are allocated to parents in work or accredited study, based on availability and nearness to the school. There are a few unsubsidised day-care places called marketed places, Islington residents and workers are prioritised for these places., people who live outside of Islington can only have a marketed place.

Parents who wish to change their hours should apply in writing by completing a change request form which can be obtained from the main office.

Classes

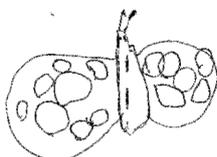
There are three parallel classes for 3-5 year olds. The classes are open from 9.30-3.30 each day term-time only. Each class has at least one teacher and one qualified nursery education worker. Sometimes we have additional support staff working in the classes.

As part of our Equal Opportunities policy we try to make sure that the make-up of the classes is broadly the same in terms of boys and girls, racial and ethnic mix and the inclusion of children with special need. The children benefit enormously from being part of the richly diverse community here in school. In class the staff ratio is 1 adult to 13 children.

Day care

There are regulations which specify staff : child ratios

- Children aged under two ,1 adult to every 3 children
- Children aged two, 1 adult for every 4 children
- Children aged 3-5 1 adult for every 8 children



Clothing

We ask every parent to supply a change of clothes for their child. Staff can advise you on what to bring.

The nursery is a workshop - staff prepare a lot of interesting activities and your child will want to get really involved. Aprons are provided but even so clothes may get messy. It is a great shame if children are unable to enjoy school life because they are worried about their clothes. Please use older, comfy, washable clothes for school. You can always bring a change if you are going somewhere special after school.

Please mark all your child's clothes with their name. Many children wear the same size and style and clothing can easily be mixed up.

Our garden provides the children with wonderfully exciting opportunities for learning and exercise. We try to make the best use of this open space. Even in winter children benefit from the outdoor life. We do provide spare wellingtons for wet weather and the digging patch. Sensible, sturdy shoes are best to help the children gain most from the garden.

Toilet Training

Staff work alongside parents to start toilet training when their child is ready. As part of their 'green' initiative Islington subsidises eco nappies, we use these in school for children under 3. Staff will explain the system to parents.

Very few children are totally secure with toileting even by the time they are three. At nursery children can become very involved with their work and sometimes they forget to go to the toilet or leave things a bit late. You can help most by using simple, easy to manage clothes where possible. Jeans, belts and braces look smart but can make all the difference between success and an "accident".





Attendance, Timekeeping and Collection of Children

Where possible all children should attend school regularly and arrive punctually.

Nursery education is not compulsory but regular and consistent attendance is an important part of the experience for the child. If your child is unable to attend we ask you to call and let us know on the first day of absence. Staff are required to check on absence and to make inquiries about lateness particularly where it is persistent.

At the beginning of each class session a member of staff is on door duty for 15 minutes. This offers flexibility and makes sure that someone is free to greet you. Anyone arriving after 9.45 am or 1.30 pm will need to ring the bell and wait until a member of staff is free to let you in. We will have to record a late attendance.

It is important for children to start their session in a positive way. At the start of the session staff are free to help your child settle in. Starting their session late can make it difficult for the child to make sense of what is happening, make friendships and become fully involved.

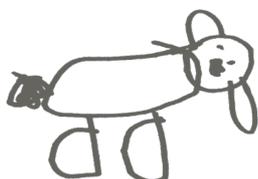
It is distressing for children to be collected late, we ask that parents ring the school office if they are running late. If we are not informed of late collection we will telephone the parent/carer. We are required to monitor time keeping for both arrival and collection.

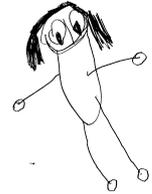
Collection times for class children are between 11.30 and 11.45 or 3.15 and 3.30. Children should not be collected at other times except in exceptional circumstances as it interrupts the session and is disruptive for all the children. If for any reason parents need to arrive early on one day we ask to be notified in advance and that they be as unobtrusive as possible so as to minimise the disruption. In special circumstances, with agreement from the Headteacher, children may be collected at 3.00pm

Collection times for day care children are specified on their contract. Late collection may incur additional charges or loss of the place.

Children with infections should not come to school, it is unfair to everyone. You will need to contact your doctor for advice.

If your child becomes unwell in school staff will contact you to arrange collection.





Security, Health and Safety

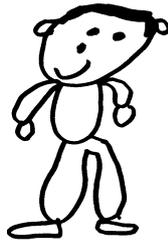
Keeping the children safe and secure is a priority. Here are some ways you can help:

- **Make sure we have up to date information about who is collecting your child.** Children can only be collected from school by their parents or by a responsible person nominated by their parents. Only the parents identified on the child's full birth certificate can nominate an alternative collector.
- **Always notify the school of a change in the collection arrangements.** You can do this by telling staff on door duty, by telephoning or by sending the adult collecting with a note signed by you authorising a change of plan. If you have a regular arrangement it can be helpful to fill in a collector's slip which you can obtain from staff on the door or the school admin officer. If we are unsure about collection arrangements we will contact parents.
- **Please do make sure your child is registered each day.** The staff on door duty will do this. If you are late make sure that staff know your child has arrived.
- **Keep your emergency contact numbers up to date.**
- **Please take your buggies home,** space is limited so there is only storage for parents using the day-care program.
- **Please label your child's clothing with their name.** The school cannot accept responsibility for items left in school though every effort is made to keep things safe.
- **Children should not wear jewellery to school.** Young children cannot be responsible for such items which are easily lost in play. Jewellery can be dangerous, it can catch on clothes or scratch children at play. For these reasons only stud earrings are allowed in school.
- **Flip-flop style sandals are not safe for school use.**
- **Staff can only administer medicine in special circumstances.** When a child has a chronic illness such as asthma you will need to speak to staff to make special arrangements.
- **Please keep your child at home if they not well enough to attend school and take part in all the activities.** If your child has had vomiting or diarrhoea a clear 24 hours should pass before they return to nursery.



Accidents

All young children have falls and minor accidents. If your child has an accident that needs minor first aid, staff will deal with it in school and make a note in the accident book. We will let you know at the end of the session. In the event of a more serious accident or if we are in any doubt the first-aider will be called. If necessary the school will send for an ambulance to take your child to the hospital. A trained member of staff will go with your child whilst we make arrangements for you to meet us at the hospital.



Fire drill

It is very important that we hold fire drills to be sure we can evacuate the building safely. We cannot always give notice but we do always explain that it is only pretend during the exercise. It is recommended that we alternate regular fire drills with rehearsed drills so staff can explain to the children what is happening as we do the drill. Drills are over very quickly and most young children take them in their stride. If you have concerns talk to the staff.



Child protection

The school is responsible for child protection and safeguarding for all the children. This means that we need to monitor their well being. For example, if your child comes to school with an obvious cut or bruise and you forget to tell us about it, we will have to ask. Remember we also need to tell you about accidents in school so if for any reason we miss passing on a message please do ask. The main point of this is to be sure that all the children are monitored carefully and that they see all the adults who care for them talking to each other. This will help them to understand how to care for themselves in a larger group.

Ofsted regulations restrict the use of mobile phones and cameras in school, please check with staff before you take photographs. Any pictures taken in school must not be put on social networking sites.



The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the core statutory framework for children from birth to the end of their reception year, informs all planning.

EYFS identifies 3 prime areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

And 4 specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and design



It also identifies characteristics of effective learning.

In the early years the curriculum is based on skills the children need to acquire rather than on information they need to learn. Each year the school makes long term, medium term and short term curriculum plans. This allows us to organise interesting activities and programs that support the children in working towards all the targets.

Although the Foundation Stage document covers what the children need to learn and how they need to learn the school is left to develop its own style and approach.

Our garden is a key part of our curriculum and we expect all children to be able to take part in activities both indoors and outdoors throughout the session and the year. Being active outdoors helps children stay fit and healthy.

Monitoring progress

In the nursery children should be working at their own individual level and pace to achieve their full potential. The EYFS recommends that structured play is the best way for young children to learn. Staff observe the children and plan activities which help them use their play to extend their learning.

Once the settling period is complete staff continue to monitor children at play. The whole team review the children about once each term. The class teacher or the Homebase senior nursery nurses are responsible for compiling these records. Information from the child observations is used to plan and modify the class activities for individual children and for the class group as a whole, they are also used to complete a leavers' record when the children transfer to Reception class.

We like to meet with parents regularly to share progress and plan ahead. We need your help to understand your child and to find out how each child learns best. If you have concerns or want to talk about your child you should ask the Homebase senior nursery nurses or the class teacher, who will be happy to meet with you.



Behaviour management

Research shows that very young children work best when adults link any behaviour programs to the children's growing understanding of their world. It is best to have a few straightforward rules that children can understand. It would be wrong if children never felt able to express anger, what matters is that adults are on hand to help them see the consequences of what they do and where possible put things right.

From time to time most children have tantrums and a few children have difficulty controlling themselves. Simple withdrawal from the scene and reward for sensible behaviour works in most cases. In a very few cases we can ask for advice from the educational psychologist.

Special Need

The school works within the DfE Code of Practice. The school has a special needs co-ordinator. We have a special needs inclusion project for children with profound and complex special educational needs. These places are allocated by a borough panel. The children are fully included throughout the school.

Any child may experience a special need at some time during their schooling. The school has a very positive approach to working with all children. The emphasis is always on the child's strengths and the ways in which they can be developed. The record keeping system aims to identify need as soon as possible. Early intervention helps to make sure that every child is given the best opportunity to benefit from all the experiences available in school. Parents play an important role in sharing the very close understanding they have of their child and in helping to design and implement programmes to help when necessary.

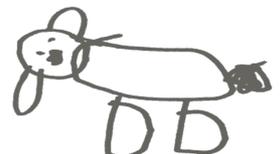
Occasionally the help available within school is not enough to support the child. Then we consult parents about seeking additional specialist support.

Equalities

Margaret McMillan Nursery School and Children's Centre is committed to valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti discrimination practice for all children, families colleagues and members of the community who use the centre.

Our aims are:-

- To provide a secure environment in which all our children and their families can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- To include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- To provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities.
- To improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity.
- To use local information and data to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community.



Parental Involvement

Curriculum evenings

We hold regular curriculum evenings. Parents and staff meet together to look at the activities the children have been doing and how they relate to learning. These evenings are well attended. They are informal, with parents free to ask questions and have a go at nursery activities. There is always a crèche. There are handouts available at parents' evenings covering different aspects of the curriculum.



Parents' Workshops

Each term we run workshops for parents during the school day. Each series of workshops is different but all are designed to help you to support your child's learning at home. Sign up sheets for workshops are put on the doors, staff will let you know when a workshop is coming up.



Children's Centre

We offer a range of different Children's Centre activities and services. We have a new timetable each term.

We work with partner agencies as part of a multi-agency team which includes:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| *Family Support Workers | *Clinical Psychology | *Speech and Language Therapy |
| *Islington Working for Parents | *Midwifery support | *Adult and Community Learning |
| *Health Visiting | *Social Care | *Education |

We work with families with children aged 0 to 5 years. We offer:

- drop-in activities where you can just come along and join in!
- one-off workshops—usually run by one of our partners.
- courses for parents and courses for parents and children together.
- services tailored to individual needs alongside our partner agencies.

Notice Boards

There are notice boards in each school area which have up to date information for parents/carers.

Complaints

Everyone hopes that you and your child will enjoy your time at Margaret McMillan. We want you and your child to obtain the most from these important early years. If anything seems confusing or unclear please do come in and ask. Class teachers and the Homebase senior nursery nurses will be able to answer most of your questions but if not you can make an appointment to see the special needs co-ordinator, deputy or head teacher. If you have a problem or query that you feel is not solved in this way you can always speak to your parent governor representatives. Finally, if problems remain there is a formal complaints procedure.

The Governing Body

The school has a governing body. There are:

- four elected parent governors
- staff representatives
- representatives from the local authority
- co-opted governors who bring special skill or advice to the governing body



Governors meet at least once a term to discuss progress in school. They are responsible for finances, appointments, health and safety, special need and for checking that the school is offering the children the best opportunities within government guidelines. Governors work through sub-committees which meet more frequently. Once elected or co-opted governors can serve for a period of four years even if their child moves on to another school. The list of governors is on the hall notice board.

Communications

Most of our communications are done by letter. Incidental information is displayed on the notice boards in the relevant school areas.

Each half term the teams make posters with photographs of the children at work which are on display for parents and children.

Someone will always be on door duty when you arrive so you can exchange messages.

For urgent messages please use the telephone. As the school is open all year round from 8–6 there is not always someone available to answer the phone. Please do leave a message. We have a school website: www.margaretmcmillan.islington.sch.uk and the school email is admin@margaretmcmillan.islington.sch.uk

Core school policies are available on our website or via the school office.

Finally... We ask all parents not to use their mobile phone while in school, it makes it difficult for staff to pass on messages and more importantly for your child to tell you about their day.

