



September 2021

We are looking forward to welcoming back our returning children after the Summer Holidays and to meeting all our new children. We hope you have had a lovely summer and are ready for your child to start Pre-school.

Last year we supported school with their staggered start times for children, however, as school is now reverting to a standard opening time, from September, we will be reverting to our core hours of 9am – 3pm. I appreciate that school have said that children will be able to be dropped off from 8.40am but unfortunately, it is financially unsustainable for us to remain opening early, as we are not funded for this time. We will endeavour to open the doors a little earlier to try and help out. However, if you need to drop your child off early, children from Pre-school (aged over 3) are able to use the before and after school club operated by S4YC who will then bring your child to Pre-school and many Pre-school children have used the club previously. If you are interested in using S4YC please visit the following link and contact S4YC directly:

<https://www.uptonheath.cheshire.sch.uk/s4yc-school-club/>

Because we have been unable to have our usual schedule of settling in visits in the Summer Term, you may well want to start your child slowly and build up their time with us. This is something we will discuss with you in your visit to one of our Open Days on Thursday 2nd or Friday 3rd September. Pre-school begins the new term properly on Monday 6th September. If you still haven't arranged a time-slot for the Open Days, please let me know and I will book you in.

At the beginning of term, there may initially, be a bit of a queue as children learn our routines and begin to settle in, so please do bear with us as experience shows that this does improve but for the first couple of weeks you may need to queue for a short while.

As ever, we continue to adhere to Covid-19 guidelines. The Government has recently released its updated Covid-19 guidance for parents of children attending childcare, schools or colleges and can be read using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

I am due to attend a Public Health briefing on Wednesday, which will give me the latest County advice about Covid-19, so if needed, I will email again about that. However, at the moment, if your child has one of the main symptoms of Covid (repetitive cough, temperature or loss of taste/smell), they should not be sent in to Pre-school and if they become unwell with one of these symptoms during Pre-school you or your emergency contacts will be contacted and asked to collect your child. A PCR test should be arranged and your child must self-isolate until the test result is negative, when they are then able to return to Pre-school. Obviously, if your child is positive they must then self-isolate for 10 days. If you are notified that your child is a contact of a positive case, as they are under 18 they no longer have to self-isolate. A PCR test is only recommended if the close contact is a close family member.

Some parents have asked about lunches and we will be giving out an information leaflet during the Open Day with further information, but we ask you send in a packed lunch (containing a cool pack if needed). We ask you not to overfill their lunch box as experience has proven that children feel overwhelmed if they open it up and see lots of items to choose from and then eat very little! So please just put in what you know your child will eat. If you feel your child needs a treat, we ask you to limit this to a single plain biscuit – chocolate and sweets are not permitted, please keep these for at home. We also ask you to send in a named water bottle so the children can access water throughout the day and we will refill these if needed.

We offer snack both morning & afternoon and this typically contains chopped up fruit/veg and a dry product such as breadsticks, rice cakes, brioche or malt-loaf. This is served with a drink of milk or water. Can I take this opportunity to remind you that we have a voluntary snack charge of £10 per half-term. We will continue to offer snack to all children regardless of whether you are able to pay this fee or not. If you are willing and able to donate this amount, (£10 per half-term or £20 for the full Summer Term if you prefer to pay in one go), please pay by direct bank transfer using the following details:

Account name: Upton Village Pre-school

Account Number: 47886268

Sort code: 30-90-89

Please use your child's name and /snack as the reference, e.g. Heather/snack. As this is a voluntary donation, we are able to claim gift-aid on this so we will be asking you to sign a gift aid form when we see a payment come through.

For new parents, we have a closed Facebook Group that you can apply to join called "Parents of Upton Village Pre-school". We upload daily posts/videos so you can see what your child is doing during the day, and this acts as a prompt for conversation with your child about the friends they have made in Pre-school and what they have been doing during the day. So please feel free to look us up and apply to join in the meantime. This has proven to be very popular with parents in previous years and is only ever visible to parents of the current academic year, all previous posts and members are deleted (unless you are a returning parent!). Your application to join can only be approved by a staff member to ensure privacy of this group.

In addition, we provide a daily update on our chalkboard, which you will see on the wall opposite the wooden fence and this is where you will wait to drop off/collect your child at the beginning and end of the day.

On Wednesday 13th October we will be holding our AGM. This is when we have to elect our Committee Members, as we are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and as such, run by a voluntary committee of Trustees comprising of staff, parents and interested community members. If you would like to become involved in Pre-school life a little more, please come and have a chat with either Heather or Julie who can give you more details. We meet once per half term for a couple of hours in an evening. This used to be in an informal setting such as the Wheatsheaf Pub but more recently has been via a Zoom virtual meeting. If you are interested, you will need to write just a short paragraph about yourself so this can be advertised prior to the meeting and on the night we vote you in!

The term dates for 2021-2022 are as follows:

Term	Pre-school starts	Pre-school breaks up
Autumn 1 st half term	Monday 6 th September	Friday 22 nd October
Autumn 2 nd half term	Monday 1 st November	Friday 17 th December
Spring 1 st half term	Tuesday 4 th January	Friday 18 th February
Spring 2 nd half term	Monday 28 th February	Friday 1 st April
Summer 1 st half term	Tuesday 19 th April	Friday 27 th May
Summer 2 nd half term	Monday 6 th June	Friday 15 th July

May Day bank holiday – Monday 2nd May 2022

This half-term we say "Happy Birthday" to Kinsey, Gracie and Ivy who turn 3 in September, and to Gene, Albie, Josephine and India who all turn 4 in September. In October, we say "Happy Birthday" to Millie, Lyla-Grace and Archie who all turn 4.

For parents of children who are moving on to school in 2022, the Council has not yet confirmed the closing date for applications for a place in Reception but as soon as this is confirmed, I will email you with the link to complete the online application as currently it is still showing the 2021 application deadlines

Lastly, a couple of reminders. Please also remember that parking is **not** allowed on school grounds during term times so if you have relatives/childminders dropping off or collecting your child, please do let them know. Our relationship with school is very important to us, so I would ask for your support with this as they do let us know if they spot our parents parking inside the grounds.

I would also ask that if you send your child in with grapes at lunchtime, these need to be sliced lengthways to prevent a choking hazard. This is on the recommendation of the Paediatric First Aid Training we have received. If you do forget, please don't worry as staff cut up any grapes that are sent in whole.

As the weather is typically up & down during the Autumn term please ensure you send in sunhats/sun cream or wellies & waterproof coat as needed! Please remember to pack spare clothes in your child's bag and check these at the end of the day as sometimes drinks are spilt, puddles are splashed or a child may be so involved in play they ignore the sign and have a toileting accident even if they've been potty trained for a while. Wet/dirty clothes are bagged up and sent home at the end of the day.

We also keep the kitchen towelling industry going all by ourselves, especially with the enhanced cleaning now done due to Covid – so if you would like to kindly donate a roll to keep us going, we would be very grateful. Thank you.

Many thanks,
Heather and Staff