

Nursery Handbook
2026/2027



Welcome to St Mark's Early Learning & Childcare

Our Contact Details



Address - 177 Oxgangs Road North
Edinburgh
EH13 9ED

Tel Number – 0131 529 3703

Email address – nurseryadmin@st-marks.edin.sch.uk

Twitter - @StMarksNursEdin

Website - <https://stmarksrcedin.wordpress.com/nursery>

Other APPS/Social Media

Parents and carers often set up groups for communication purposes. Due to Council Policy, the nursery team will not be included in these groups.

Welcome Message from our Head Teacher



Dear Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to you and your child at St. Mark's Early Learning and Childcare. Nursery is a very important time for your child. They will learn lots during their time here and will develop skills that they will use now and in their future. Your support in helping your child to learn and develop is crucial and is welcomed by the Nursery team. Here at St. Mark's, we wish to nurture our young people to become Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors, Independent Learners and Responsible Citizens. All of our children are valued, and their strengths and differences are celebrated.

Here at St. Mark's, we work closely as a team to provide a safe, nurturing and consistent environment for all of our children. We work with our local and wider community links to plan broad experiences which will provide opportunities for children to develop skills for now and the future.

I hope that this handbook gives you a glimpse of life at St. Mark's Nursery. Our aim is that you always feel part of our Nursery and know that you are welcome to discuss your child's progress at any time with your Key Worker or myself. If you need any more information, please do not hesitate to contact the setting to discuss matters further.

I very much look forward to working with you and your child.

Kindest Regards,

Mrs Stacey Preston

Head Teacher

**Senior Early Years Officers (SEYO's)**

- Kerryann Craig
- Kerry Gilmour

Early Years Officers (EYO's)

- Claire McKenna (Poppy Two's)
- Catherine Duffy (Heather Two's)
- Gary Mackay (Heather Two's)
- Amani Mourtada (Poppy 3-5's) – **Maternity Leave**
- Steph O'Neill (Poppy 3-5's)
- Rhianna Coorey (Heather 3-5's)

Early Years Practitioners (EYP's)

- Clare Armstrong (Poppy Two's)
- Enrique Huidobro (Poppy Two's)
- Cara Rudden (Heather Two's)
- Clara Deasy (Heather Two's) – **Maternity Leave**
- Ruby Wilson (Poppy 3-5's)
- Jay Campbell (Poppy 3-5's)
- Erin Gordon (Poppy 3-5's)
- Katie Hunter (Poppy 3-5's)
- Alana Jones (Poppy 3-5's)
- Hannah Duncan (Heather 3-5's)
- Cristina Fratila (Heather 3-5's)
- Maria Inserny (Heather 3-5's)
- Martina Majerova (Heather 3-5's)
- Rocio Gomez Diaz (Heather 3-5's)

Early Years Assistants (EYA's)

- Kim Wood (Poppy Two's)
- Namita Pathak (Poppy 3-5's)
- Tamanna Jahan (Heather 3-5's)

Administrator – Beth Roarty (Mon – Thurs, 8.30am – 2pm)

Domestic Assistant's – Jennifer Robertson & Janice James

Our Community Team Members

Allermuir Centre (this is a centre that also incorporates Craiglockhart Medical Group, Colinton Surgery & Firhill Medical Centre)

Allermuir Health Centre
165 Colinton Mains Drive
Edinburgh
EH13 9AF
Tel : 0131 312 2140

Health Visiting Team – 0131 312 2164

We will work with the health visiting team to support our children and families at home and in our nursery.

Speech and Language Therapists (SALT)

- Karen McMichael (SALT)

Speak to a member of our team if you have any concerns regarding your child's speech and language, we have referral forms which we can complete with you.

Educational Psychologist (Ed Psych)

We can work with families and refer children who require support to this service.

Students

We support teaching students and Nursery Practitioner students too. We will update our staff board to reflect any additional members in the building.

Childsmile

We conduct the Childsmile programme here at St Mark's. This is an opt-out programme which gives your children the opportunity to brush their teeth with us everyday, helping them to keep their teeth and gums healthy. We recommend that children are registered with a dentist and have regular check-ups.

Our Vision, Values and Aims



Relationships

Respect

Inclusion

Resilience



- ✓ Support our children to develop a curious, creative and independent approach to learning through play.
- ✓ Create a nurturing environment where children feel safe and secure.
- ✓ Foster an inclusive environment that is challenging and diverse for all our learners.
- ✓ Engage parents to be actively involved in their child's learning and to feel a part of St Mark's setting.
- ✓ To build and maintain positive and restorative relationships with our children, families and wider community.

Ultimately, to have happy children, families and staff!



Arrival and Collection Procedure

Nursery Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm

Term Time Children	Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 3.00pm Friday 8.30am – 12.30pm
Full Year Two Day + Flexi Friday	8.00am – 6.00pm
Full Year AM	8.00am – 12.35pm
Full Year PM	1pm – 5.35pm

We encourage parent to arrive 5 -10 minutes prior to your child's official finish time.

- Please ring buzzer to get through to your child's room and wait for a member of staff to let you in.
- Staff members will ask parents and carers to give details of collection times and the name/relationship of the person who is collecting the child that day.
- Children should not be dropped off or collected by anyone under 16 years of age.
- Children can only be collected by authorised adults in their care plan or a given password can be used for a one-time collection.

Parent/Carers Parking

At the end of the school day parking is difficult around Oxgangs Road North, please allow yourself time to park further away and walk to nursery.

Prams/Bicycles/Scooters

- Please leave scooters and bikes outside the Nursery, tucked in to avoid blocking the pathway.
- For families with younger children and babies, unfortunately we are unable to accommodate prams and pushchairs inside the nursery building during busy drop off and collections times.
- We kindly request that all prams and pushchairs remain outside.



Settling in Policy



On arrival to the nursery a member of staff will support families to settle in and complete all relevant paperwork. We work with the GIRFEC principles to cater to each individual child and their families to ensure we create the optimum settling in process for everyone, with the child's needs at the centre of the approach.

Day 1

The first session will be for **1 hour at the Nursery** and parents must stay for this.

This first visit will include:

- Greeted by a member of the team alongside your child's allocated keyworker. Your keyworker will be available to discuss any issues or questions while your child attends nursery and will oversee your child's ELC experience.
- Allocation of a peg and a show round of the playroom.
- Given a tour of the building, including toilets, office, kitchen, indoor and outdoor play areas.
- Initial enrolment paperwork

Day 2:

This session will be for **2 hours** and will include:

- Play for most of the session on their own but with you on site or near the building.

Day 3:

This session will be for the **full morning/afternoon** including eating lunch and will include:

- Most of the session without parents on site (dependent on child)

Day 4:

This session will be the first full session of the model that your child is attending. We will work in partnership with all parents to ensure the best settling in process for each individual child. This 4-day process is a foundation base to work and build from to suit the child and family's needs. We may extend a settling period if necessary.

What does your child need to start at nursery?

Starting nursery can be quite daunting for all members of the family and it may be useful to know what is needed on your child's first day and what to expect here at St Mark's.

- On arrival parents are required to come into the building, you cannot drop your child in reception or the foyer.
- Children should be encouraged to find their peg with their name & photo on it and hang up their jacket, bag and change to their indoor shoes.
- Next, children should self-register by finding their "name" with Velcro and stick this on the wall to show they have arrived. Children are encouraged to let us know how they are feeling by using our emotion area. They choose the face that best reflects how they feel, and place this in the basket.
- Please provide your child with a **small** bag with changes of clothes (see clothing page)
- Please ensure you provide your child with a set of waterproofs and wellington boots for the outdoors, as we play outside in all weathers.
- If your child is not yet fully toilet trained, please ensure you provide enough nappies for their session and wipes.

Clothing



Clothing and Personal Belongings

- Nursery children are encouraged to explore and investigate! The children will use a wide range of materials - sand, water, mud, paint, glue, clay and dough. They enjoy opportunities to run, jump, climb and ride bikes and scooters. We go outside to play every day.
- It is very important that the children are comfortable, safe and relaxed in their clothing. It is best to dress your child in washable easy-fitting clothes that your child can manage independently for going to the toilet unaided.
- Please do not expect your child to stay clean, neat and tidy at nursery! We provide aprons for messy activities. Please label all clothes as it helps us to reunite misplaced garments with their owners.
- Please provide spare clothing for your child. A bag will be provided for items to be left on your child's peg for their session at nursery. If your child's clothing has required to be changed during the nursery session, a member of staff will inform you of the reason for this.

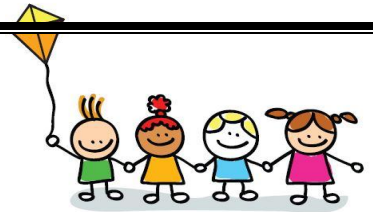
We ask that all parents carers provide their children with the following items and put them in the spare clothes bag provided for you:

- Full change of clothes including pants and socks!
- Wellies
- Nappies/pull ups/wipes (if required)
- Appropriate clothes for weather

Promoting Independence

To enable us to support children to become independent with self-help skills, buckles, laces, belts and tight clothing are discouraged.





Buying additional hours

St Mark's Early Learning & Childcare

A child will be entitled to up to 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare from the term after the child's 3rd birthday.

1. To be able to purchase additional hours your child must be in receipt of funded early learning and childcare within this setting.
2. Once a funded place has been offered and accepted it will be available until the child leaves for school

Criteria for purchasing additional hours

1. Parents/carers in work or training
2. Any other parents/carers

Fees

- For children aged 2-3 years - £6.10 per hour
- For children aged 3-5 years - £5.60 per hour

Please note there will be an additional charge for meals and snacks if required at the following rates:

Snacks - £0.70

Meal - £3.10

Paying your fees

- You will be invoiced 4 weeks in advance and the fees are payable immediately. We require at least 4 weeks' notice for hours to ensure payment is received one month in advance.
- If you are paying direct, and not using tax free childcare or vouchers, this is done online on our ParentPay site.
- Non-payment of fees will result in one reminder and final notice being sent. If payment is not made, City of Edinburgh Council may withdraw the offer of additional hours.

Childcare Voucher Schemes

- Parents should provide the setting with information on the Childcare Voucher Scheme Provider and the amount involved as soon as possible.
- All childcare vouchers or other payments must be received at least 5 working days before the applicable payment due date, to enable the voucher to be allocated against the next instalment.
- It is the parent/carers responsibility to set up the childcare vouchers in time for the first payment run, otherwise the full monthly instalment will be requested.

Attendance

- Children are expected to be collected no later than 12.35pm for AM session, 5.35pm for PM session and 6pm for full day sessions. Failure to do so may result in your ability to purchase additional hours being withdrawn.
- St Mark's Early Learning & Childcare reserves the right to withdraw your child's place if the following conditions are not met:
 - Fees have not been paid for additional hours requested.
 - If parent/carers are persistently late in collecting their children.

No longer require the hours...

- You will be required to provide one months' notice that you no longer require the additional hours.

If you are interested in buying extra hours please get in touch with our Administrator, Beth Roarty on nursery.admin@st-marks.edin.sch.uk or 0131 529 3703.

Reporting



Absences

Notification of child's absence

To help us to code absences correctly, we ask that you update us daily. Any unreported absence will be followed by a call or text message requesting parents to contact the nursery.

Absences Procedures

- Phone 0131 529 3703 or email before 9.30 am
- In line with council policy, please allow 48 hours from last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea before returning.

Sickness/Other Illness Absence

Please inform us if your child has an infectious/communicable illness such as

- Chicken Pox
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella
- Whooping cough
- Hepatitis
- Allergies
- Norovirus
- Covid

Planned Holidays

Please let a member of the team know if you have any planned holidays so that we can update registers correctly.

Colds/Flu/Virus

We understand that children are prone to colds and other viruses at certain times of the year and our team will work together with parents and carers to ensure that children can attend where possible.

Accidents/First Aid and Medicine



First Aid

- We administer basic first aid in the nursery.
- We will support all staff to be First Aid trained.
- Parents/Carers will be telephoned at the earliest opportunity regarding any injuries to the head or face.
- If your child has incurred an injury at nursery that required first aid there will be a form for you to sign at collection.
- Please ensure that we have an up-to-date address and telephone number where we can reach you at all times.
- Please keep us informed of any allergies or ongoing medical conditions.

Sun cream

- Please check weather reports and where necessary apply sun cream to your child before they arrive at nursery.
- Staff will apply a top up on warmer days and this information will be communicated to parents/carers.
- Please supply a bottle of sun cream to keep in nursery for your child. We have a limited supply of spare sun cream but we rely on all parents providing their own.

Broken Bones

Please contact us to discuss short term plans for your child to attend nursery. We have risk assessments which support working with children with injuries.

Emergency Health Care and Allergies

In line with City of Edinburgh Council policy and Care inspectorate guidelines, we will complete all relevant paperwork to support children with any medical health care needs and allergies. Here are some examples of the medical needs or allergies that may require a health care plan (this is not an exhaustive list); Epilepsy, Asthma, Diabetes, Anaphylaxis etc. A member of the SEYO team will guide you through the process to complete the required documents and keep up with the reviewing of your child's medical care whilst at nursery.



Food and Nutrition



Serving Times

AM snack 8:30 – 9:30	Lunch 11:30 – 12:30	PM snack 13:00 – 14:00	High Tea 16:00
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Snack Information

- Children will be supported to create healthy menus.
- Monthly tasting sessions will support children's learning.
- We use 'Setting the table' as guidance to deliver our snack.
- Water and milk are offered during snack times.
- Additional snack menus are planned seasonally and include opportunities to learn about cultures and celebrations.

Lunch Information

- Menus are set up at the beginning of the nursery year
- Food is prepared by & delivered from Gorgie Mills.
- Children will receive a 2-course lunch Monday to Thursday and a packed lunch on a Friday.

Dietary Requirements

- Please discuss any allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements with one of our staff members. We will ensure children are offered a safe alternative. Please note that any allergies must be doctor verified for the kitchen to provide an alternative.
- We keep note of all contents of the foods from our menu.

Other Information

- Water is available throughout the day (Indoors and outdoors)
- Snack and lunch are provided free of charge (unless purchasing additional hours)
- Staff are all trained in food hygiene.
- Staff will share information on how much children are eating.

Birthdays

To celebrate your child's birthday, in line with healthy eating and our allergy policy, we also discourage families from giving out cake or sweets. Please keep these lovely treats at home.



Communicating with Families

We try to communicate effectively using the following methods:-

- Sending all correspondence by Email, Group Call, Learning Journals & Parent Pay
- Providing monthly SWAY newsletters
- Providing monthly Parent Information Sheets (this pauses over holiday periods)
- Offering 2 parent consultations per year (Cuppa Chat's)
- Updating Twitter and Learners Journals as often as possible
- Ensuring staff are available
- Providing relevant information at handovers
- Special events/Open days
- Stay and Play sessions

We also send regular questionnaires to ensure you have a voice too!

Parents are always welcome in nursery. If you have any questions, queries or worries please reach out to any member of staff who can help or direct you to the relevant person.

Please note, that it is City of Edinburgh Council policy that parent helpers in Nursery are PVG Disclosure Scotland checked – we can organise this for you.

We ask parents to observe and listen to their children at home and help the nursery with planning and extending the children's learning in a way which is inclusive. This can be by sharing hobbies or interests and any little happening in a child's life.

Partnership with parents

- Sharing talent
- Sharing religious celebrations and cultures
- Reading stories
- Making resources

If you feel this is something you would like to do, please speak to Kerry Gilmour or Kerryann Craig (SEYO's).

Breast Feeding Information



“The breast feeding friendly scheme (BFS) is across the whole of Scotland. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure breastfeeding mums know that if they see the sticker the establishment will make them feel welcome and be supportive of her feeding choice”.

Breastfeeding friendly Scotland (May 2022)

- 1 - To contribute to social and cultural change by creating an environment that is safe and friendly where breastfeeding is seen as the natural way to feed infants and young children.

- 2 - To provide opportunities for further education as a choice to staff to enable them to further promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

- 3 - To review representation within the establishment and to ensure that breastfeeding is promoted as a natural way to feed your baby.

- 4 - To provide an atmosphere where breastfeeding is encouraged, supported and protected.

Some of the benefits of Breastfeeding are:

1. your breast milk is perfectly designed for your baby
2. breast milk protects your baby from infections and diseases
3. breastfeeding provides health benefits for you
4. breast milk is available for your baby whenever your baby needs it
5. breastfeeding can build a strong emotional bond between you and your baby.

Personal Care and Toilet Training Policy



Personal care and toileting training is a natural part of young children's daily routine both at home and in nursery. Our aim is to work with families, to respect and support each child at their developmental stage and to comply with the Health and Social Care Standards, the Care inspectorate guidance and infection control procedures.

Personal care:

Parents/carers will be asked to supply nappies and wipes for their own child's use whilst in nursery. If a child requires barrier cream, this must be brand new and in date. This will then be added to the nappy creams list and labelled. The cream will be returned to parents once finished or expired, whatever occurs first.

Parents and carers will be verbally informed by staff when a child has been changed. All changes will be recorded by staff in the groups red folder for parents to see and sign at pick up. All nappy changes are recorded by staff responsible for the change. Any queries should first be raised with a child's key worker.

If any clothes have been soiled due to a nappy leakage or whilst toileting training the clothes will be double bagged and labelled with the child's name. These will then be kept in a sealed box in the changing room until the end of the day. The staff will then retrieve this box at pick up time to hand out at collection to keep the accident discrete for the dignity of the child.

Toilet training:

Children's nappy and toilet training needs will be discussed with parents and carers during initial visits, where decisions and notes will be recorded in the child's care plan. We will then work closely with parents to support children with their needs as these change and develop.



We would encourage a large volume of changes of clothes to ensure that if the child has an accident that they have plenty of their own clothes to get changed into to ensure

they are always comfortable. We use the "Let's go potty – let's go together" advice from ERIC (The children's bowel and bladder charity). Here are their top tips:

Some signs of a child being ready for toilet training is; a regularly dry nappy/pull up, feeling uncomfortable when wet or soiled, recognising that they need changed, able to get themselves dressed and undressed



When your child is ready for toilet training we would recommend that they are dressed in clothes that are easy for them to pull up and down independently eg leggings or joggers, we would encourage you to refrain from dressing them in dungarees or jeans for example to make it easier and to encourage independence as much as possible at this stage.

Expect plenty of accidents!! This is completely normal and part of the process of your child recognising what it feels like to go to the toilet and what they don't want to feel like (wet/soiled).



Top 5 practical tips for practitioners and at home

1. Start early and help them to use a potty from sitting up if they can
2. Keep stopping using nappies as the last stage in the journey
3. Be playful and try to give the child consistent messages and expectations
4. Don't leave it to guesswork
5. Avoid using pull-ups!



Promoting Positive Relationships and Emotional Regulation.

At St Mark's we aim to support children in building their own emotional resilience and understanding of themselves and others. This is quite a complex ideology at the age of 3-5 years old, but there are plenty of strategies and tools that we can use to support our littlest learners to express themselves and use appropriate strategies to regulate themselves through some tricky emotions. Here are the stages of support we use in the nursery:

1. First: we always give attention for best behaviour
2. Reminder: of our 5 expectations within the setting (Walking feet, inside voice, gentle hands, feet on the floor, put your toys away)
3. Caution: Give time and space to rectify behaviour, draw back from confrontation, model ideal behaviours, remind child of a positive experience, follow up.
4. Cool down: begin supported regulation, using emotion cards and strategies (Happy, Sad, Angry, Scared, Worried, Excited), put aside issue and focus on getting back to happy, *follow the needs of the child.*
5. Repair: listen to the child, restorative conversation, speak to child privately.

It is important for us to share with you our ethos and values around supporting the children with their emotions and behaviour. Children have the right to express themselves and be listened to by others, it is important that us as educators and you as parents/carers are the facilitators and supporters of this **together**. Consistency and collaboration is key to building positive relationships and behaviour with children. We are here to help and support you in whatever way we can for each individual learner. We recognise that these strategies are not a one size fits all and we will adapt to suit the child as an individual.

The BLUE zone	The GREEN zone	The YELLOW zone	The RED zone
How might you feel?	How might you feel?	How might you feel?	How might you feel?
sad tired bored moving slowly	happy okay focussed ready to learn	nervous confused silly not ready to learn	angry frustrated scared out of control
What might help you?	What might help you?	What might help you?	What might help you?
Talk to someone Stretch Take a brain break Stand Take a walk Close my eyes	The goal of this exercise is to get to the GREEN zone. What can you do to be happy, calm and ready to learn?	Talk to someone Count to 20 Take deep breaths Squeeze something Draw a picture Take a brain break	Stop what I'm doing Make sensible choices Take deep breaths Ask for a break Find a safe space Ask for help

Learning Journals



Observations, photographs, and work produced by your child will be used to build up their Learners Journey. This working document profiles the children's achievements within the early level of **Curriculum for Excellence and CEC Developmental Milestones and Learning Overview**, we encourage you to contribute towards it too.

At nursery, every child is treated as an individual, developing and learning at his/her own rate. Staff continually observe the children to ensure that they provide stimulating and interesting activities as well as challenge and assistance when required.

Each child has an online Learner's Journey which contains examples of drawings, photographs and additional achievements from home or school. These Journeys can be accessed by both parents and children at any time. Parents and other family members are encouraged to contribute to these.

A separate email detailing how to access your child's online journey will be issued once you have signed to consent you would like access, our Learning Journals.

Child Protection

The City of Edinburgh Council has developed an inter-agency approach to Child Protection. This means that the school and nursery work together with police, health and social work on child protection issues. We follow established "Child Protection Procedures" provided by CEC Council. These procedures make it clear that any allegation or suspicion of child abuse must be investigated.

Complaints



If you have any issues or concerns, please contact a member of our team who will try to resolve things promptly and professionally.

Senior Early Years Officers	Kerryann Craig & Kerry Gilmour	Tel: 0131 529 3703
Head Teacher	Mrs Stacey Preston	Tel: 0131 441 2948
Email	nurseryadmin@st-marks.edin.sch.uk	