



Painswick Playgroup Handbook



Welcome to Painswick Playgroup!

We are a community playgroup, which essentially means we provide care for pre-school aged children giving them the opportunity to learn through play and form friendships, and for their parents/carers to meet and share experiences with other families within the community. We are run as a charity by a parent and carer led committee. We hold one major fundraiser each year, our Easter Egg Hunt, and we are incredibly proud of this.

A typical day at Playgroup sees the children playing with and taking part in a wide range of resources and activities that can easily be adapted to meet individual needs. They have regular breaks where snacks and drinks are provided, and have the opportunity to play in the garden daily (weather permitting). We are also very lucky to have close links with The Croft Primary School, enabling us to use their playground and field. Please see your Prospectus for a more in-depth breakdown of our days.

We recommend your child(ren) bring a spare, named change of clothes and suitable footwear* to keep at Playgroup. It is inevitable that they will sometimes get messy and while we have some spare clothes, we don't have enough to be able to provide for all.

On the following page please find a brief A-Z breakdown of things that you may find useful as new Playgroup parents/carers. More details of some of these areas can be found in your Prospectus.

**please see 'Wet weather gear' section.*

Meet our team



Sarah Taylor is one of our joint Play Leaders and has been at the setting for 15 years. She is married to Andrew and they have three daughters – Samantha, Catherine and Jane. All her children came through Painswick Playgroup and Sarah was a member of the committee for the time they attended, eventually stepping up to become Chair.



Sharron Andrews is our other joint Play Leader and has been here for 13 years. She is married to Rob and they have two sons, Ben and Sam, and two granddaughters, Cara and Evie. Sharron also worked at Bussage Playgroup for six years.



Caroline Gardiner is our Deputy Play Leader and has been with us for 14 years. She has two sons, Charlie and Tom.



Sarah Slinger has been here for 10 years. She is married to Paul and they have two children, James and Laura. Both attended our Playgroup.



Rachel Hinds is our newest member of staff, starting in 2019. She is married to John and they have two daughters, Hannah and Lucy, both of whom also came here. Although Rachel has only just joined our team, she has a wealth of experience having worked in a private nursery for the last five years.

Allergies

Some of our children have allergies ranging from food to stings, and we take every care to minimise any risk to them. We are a nut free zone where possible and respectfully ask that no nuts are brought into Playgroup. Some chocolate spreads are nut free but please check the ingredients carefully before putting it into your child's sandwich.

Bags

It's often useful for children to bring a bag to Playgroup to carry their lunch and any (named) spare clothes etc. This lives on their peg in the lobby. We ask that you avoid drawstring bags due to the potential safety risk.

Closure

Playgroup closes for inset days in line with The Croft Primary School – these can be found on your term dates sheet. Occasionally we have had to close due to extreme weather conditions, although these events have been few and far between. Staff will always endeavour to keep Playgroup open, but please be aware that closure is sometimes unavoidable. We will always aim to inform you in advance so alternative childcare can be arranged. Please note, refunds for weather closures are not given – please see your terms and conditions for further details.

There is also one day each Summer term when Playgroup is closed so that we can carry out staff appraisals and 'parents evening' sessions. This date will be in your term dates. On this day we provide a Fun Day with a bouncy castle on the Painswick Recreational Ground, where you can bring picnics and enjoy time with other Playgroup parents, carers and children. Please note that the Fun Day is not staffed.

Committee

We are a committee-led playgroup made up of volunteer parents/carers of the children who attend. We cannot run without a fully functioning committee, so we ask that you please come along to the AGM and sign up if you are able to. The Welcome Meeting & AGM is held every September to give everyone the chance to meet staff and other parents/carers. Committee meetings are held at the end of each term and only last an hour or so, depending on what needs to be discussed, and we always provide drinks and nibbles.

Communication

We have various ways of communicating with you:

- Termly newsletters sent via email
- Emails with additional information
- Messages on the whiteboard outside our front door
- Notes in trays (which are on yellow paper so they don't get muddled with any drawings your child/ren may have done)
- Facebook (we have a closed group, so please search for 'Painswick Playgroup' and answer the questions to help us verify you as a member)

This year sees the introduction of Tapestry, an online platform through which staff will be able to send you pictures and brief comments on what your child is doing. This will replace the weekly paper diaries that we previously used. We also understand that sometimes you need to talk to us face to face. We have an open door policy and are happy to chat with you about any questions/concerns you may have – somewhere a little more private should it be necessary.

Please ring and let us know if your child(ren) won't be in, and also let us know of any detail changes eg. change of address, phone number, medical info etc.

If you would like to do a Stay and Play session, please sign up on the blank rota on the parent/carer notice board in the lobby – an excellent way for you to see what really happens during sessions.



Drop off & pick up

Doors open at 8:50. You are asked to sign in, help your child find their peg for coats and bags, and put their lunch boxes on the blue trolley. Staff will meet them at the inner door to oversee them into the main room and settle them at an activity. Some children like to stand on a chair to wave to you through the window as you go back down the path. If your child is upset, you are more than welcome to come into the main room until they have settled.

Lunchtime drop off/collection is either 12:00 or 12:30, depending on whether your child is having lunch at Playgroup, and afternoon collection is 15:30 Mon-Thurs and 15.00 on Fridays. If you need to collect your child early, please let a member of staff know so we can make a note of it.

If anyone other than the regular parents/carers as detailed on the registration forms are coming to collect a child, please note our measures in 'Security' below.

Easter Egg Hunt

Some time ago it was decided to concentrate all of our fundraising efforts over the year into one big annual event, and so Painswick Playgroup's Easter Egg Hunt was born. It is held on Easter Saturday each year and has become incredibly popular across Gloucestershire, usually raising in excess of £4000. All of this goes towards new equipment for your children and maintaining the building! There is a separate, parent/carer led committee for this that meets (usually in the local pub) to gather ideas and put things into motion. This is our only fundraiser and we ask that all parents/carers donate their time to the organising committee or to volunteering on the day so we can continue to make this a success.

Extra/ad hoc sessions

Extra/ad hoc sessions can be booked at any time (as long as there is availability) but must be paid for on the day. Costs are currently £13.50 per session for 2-year-olds, and £12 per session for 3- and 4-year-olds. Unfortunately we cannot offer to swap sessions, so all sessions above your usual quota are payable. Please see a member of staff if you would like to book extra/ad hoc sessions at any time. If you would like to permanently have extra sessions, please speak to Sarah T or Sharron and they will see if there are any available spaces.



Holidays

If your child(ren) will be missing any booked sessions due to, for example, family holidays, please let us know so we can record it in our diary. Any booked sessions not attended, through holidays or illness are payable.

Lunches

We ask you to provide your child with a packed lunch as we don't have the storage facilities to be able to provide a hot lunch at Playgroup. There are few hard and fast rules about what should be in your child's lunchbox, but we suggest some of the following:

- A sandwich/wrap/cracker, fruit, packet of crisps, yoghurt, yoyo or other similar fruit bar and a drink. If your child runs out of their drink, we can top them up from our water cooler.
- Try to keep it simple – too much choice and they quite often don't know what to have first or they think they have to eat it all, and we only have half an hour for lunch.
- We do ask that fizzy drinks and sweets are not included (a chocolate biscuit or small piece of cake is fine). Experience has taught us that children will sometimes refuse to eat anything else if they see sweets, therefore making their lunch break not very enjoyable. Staff encourage the children to eat sandwiches and fruit first, followed by things like crisps and yoghurts, and then fruit bars.

Medication

If for any reason your child needs medication during their session, be it prescribed or otherwise, you must fill in a medical form so that staff can all see exactly what needs to be done. If your child is asthmatic or has a dairy allergy, please provide us with a copy of their wheeze plan or milk ladder from your doctor. All medicines are kept in the kitchen, clearly labelled and out of the reach of the children. Please always let a member of staff know if your child has taken any medication before starting their day with us, and details of the medicine itself.

Naps

As most of you will be aware, we are limited on space for children to nap. However, we do have sleep mats so if your child(ren) should need to rest, we put them on the floor in a less busy area of the room where we can still see them.

Payments

Invoices are issued termly in your child(ren)'s tray(s), through our treasurer Lisa – all enquiries about bills should be made directly to her. Her email address is lwarnaby@yahoo.com and she will be happy to help. We accept the Government 15- and 30-hour funding, and various childcare voucher schemes. Government funded voucher forms are given to staff by Lisa, and you will be called into the main room to fill them in as soon as we have them. Please note, if you are eligible for the 30-hour funding, it is your responsibility to make sure you access your code before the given deadline, and this has to be done on a recurrent basis. If you are late doing this, the council will not let Lisa put your details in and you will be billed for any sessions above the 15 free hours.

Please note all designated sessions are payable, even if your child is absent through illness or holiday.

Pre-school session

These sessions are on Tuesdays, and are for children in their pre-school year only. They are slightly different in that we focus more on preparing the children for school. We have Letter of the Week where the children sound out letters and try to think of words beginning with the letter; recognition of whole names; group sorting in various ways i.e. how may 3/4 year-olds do we have, how many boys/girls etc; PE changing; furthering self care eg. pouring their own drinks; Prince the Playgroup Teddy to help extend speech and language skills; and transition visits to school in the Summer term.



Security

Access to Playgroup is at the top of the ramp through the main door. Our main door has an inner latch and both doors have alarms. Parents/carers will not be able to access the building once the morning session has begun and will need to ring the bell to attract the attention of staff. Gates in the garden are padlocked and can only be opened by an adult, and when playing in the garden there is always at least one adult present to supervise.

Anyone collecting your child who staff have not met will need to know your password. Staff will not let any child go with someone they have not met if they don't have the password. Please let staff know either at drop off or by phoning if someone else is collecting, along with their name.

Sickness

Listed are a few of the illnesses that are frequently caught and our guidelines on what you should do:

- Sickness and/or diarrhoea – no Playgroup for at least 48 hours after the last bout
- Chicken pox – no Playgroup until all spots have scabbed over
- Headlice – if spotted at Playgroup, staff will ring you to collect and treat your child, after which they are welcome to come straight back. If spotted at home, please treat before bringing your child in
- Sticky eyes - as headlice
- Coughs/colds/temperatures – keep off if necessary

If your child has been given any medication before coming into Playgroup it is vital you let us know.



Toileting

If your child is still in nappies/pull ups when they start with us, it's not a problem. We ask that you bring in spare nappies, wipes, etc. so that staff can change them as and when necessary. Staff are happy to encourage the use of toilets when you feel your child is ready. Please note, we use the term "little accident" to relay information to you if a child should wet/soil themselves, but if you'd prefer a different way to word it please feel free to let us know so we can support you by doing the same.

Toys

We don't generally encourage children to bring their own toys into Playgroup for the simple reasons that it can upset them if another child tries to play with the toy, or the toy can go missing/get muddled up with ours. However, if your child is particularly upset when they start with us and they have a favourite toy/comforter, they are more than welcome to bring one in until they are settled.

Trays

We ask that your child's tray is checked each time they attend. As well as being where we put their creations, ready to take home, they are also where any information can be found. All letters home are printed on yellow paper so they are easy to identify. All Playgroup invoices are put in the trays too.

Wet weather gear

If the weather is very wet or snowy and your child(ren) has/have worn wellies to Playgroup, please could you also bring them a spare pair of shoes or slippers to change into as the floors can get very wet and slippery. We have a few spare pairs, but not enough for everyone.

If you feel there is anything we haven't covered in here, or you have any other questions/queries, please feel free to speak to a member of staff.

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