



Preschool Committee Handbook

Foreword

This handbook gives an introduction of the work of the voluntary Committee at Brookside Preschool. We hope it gives you some insight into the role of the Committee and that you might like to join us!

Working with the committee can be many things; a way to get more involved in your child's preschool experience, a way to improve the running of an established and valuable local service, a way to make friends, learn new skills and even have some fun.

You will find out that jobs on the committee are varied and interesting and that, depending on the role you take on, it is up to you how much of your time and energy you are willing or able to give.

In this handbook we hope you will get a good idea of what goes on and hopefully see that there is something for you.

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Our Preschool

Brookside Preschool is an OFSTED-regulated preschool situated in Gatley, Stockport. As a charity, we rely on grant funding, fees payment and fundraising to keep us running. We serve the surrounding local area; and generally, feed into Gatley Primary School and Lum Head Primary School, predominantly, although we are not affiliated with any primary school.

We provide early years education to 2, 3 and 4-year olds. We were rated "Good" by OFSTED at our last inspection in March 2024.

We are based in Gatley Scout HQ, which has a kitchen, large hall and accessible toilet facilities. We have a large, secure outdoor area, accessible to wheelchair users and those with physical disabilities. As well as a large selection of outdoor play equipment, our outdoor area boasts a bug hotel, large planters, mud kitchen and two purpose built sheltered areas.

We are open Monday to Friday, 9am - 3:15pm, during term time only. We offer a breakfast club provision from 8:30am till 9am.

We offer forest school sessions to our preschool children, these are held in the woods within Scholes fields, just behind preschool. We also have an allotment plot located just next door to preschool.

We offer sessions in the mornings, afternoons, or all day, with a minimum of two sessions per week. Our fees are currently £6 per hour. We accept 2-year funding, 30 hours funding, Government Tax free childcare payments and are registered with a variety of childcare voucher providers.

Committee and Staff Roles

Committee

The Officers consist of a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. These positions are filled at our AGM each January and those voted in are in position for at least one year. Sometimes we also have a Deputy Chairperson and/or Co-Chair to support the role of the Chair.

The Chair: The Chairperson plays a strong coordination role; bringing the Committee together to make key decisions, supporting the Management team with any issues and generally represents the Preschool in a positive way. The Chair needs to have a certain level of confidence, along with good people and communication skills. They need to be willing to read up on certain legal documents

and gain an understanding of Charity Commission and Ofsted requirements in running the setting. They should have a real desire to improve the Preschool and any business management skills could be useful.

Responsibilities of the Chair are to:

- oversee the committee, and chair meetings (approx half termly)
- welcome at the AGM and report on preschool events
- assist with staff recruitment, retention and any employment or legal issues that may arise
- provide management support to the preschool Manager
- support and authorise the work of the Treasurer, Management Secretary and Manager
- act as a signatory
- delegate and ensure jobs within the committee are shared and completed

The Management Secretary: This role is required to take minutes at committee meetings and compile agendas. On behalf of preschool, you may also need to compose letters and emails, produce posters / flyers and work closely with the management team; sharing information and keeping each other up to date.

Responsibilities of the Management Secretary are to:

- liaise with the Chairperson to draft & agree committee meeting agendas
- take detailed minutes and actions at all committee meetings
- liaise with other committee members to collate and prepare all papers needed for committee meetings (at least a week beforehand). The papers should include correspondence since the last meeting and minutes, which are a record of the last meeting

The Treasurer: This role responsible for keeping the financial records of the preschool in order and requires a reasonable level of financial awareness and spreadsheet knowledge. They oversee income and expenses and help set budgets and plan for projected spend.

The responsibilities of the Treasurer are to:

- be primary contact for preschool bank account
- receive bank statements and perform regular checks of income and outgoings, receipts and invoices (this is managed more regularly by the Preschool Administrator)
- act as primary signatory
- work with the Manager and accountant to set annual budgets with the committee
- report on finances at each Committee meeting
- prepare a Treasurer's report for the AGM

- ensure submission of end of year reports to the Charity Commission (legal requirement)
- support banking of fundraising income
- liaise with the Payroll Administrator over correct payment of staff salaries

Other Committee roles, which can be split between members if required, include:

Fundraising Lead

- Liaise with committee members and parent helpers to make sure fundraising events are fully staffed and run smoothly
- Report to committee on profits made
- Liaise with preschool management team to ensure widespread promotion of fundraising events, which should include Tapestry posts to parents and publication on Facebook and the Preschool website.
- Arrange design, printing and distribution / display of posters, leaflets, banners and/or advertising as agreed by committee and in liaison with the preschool management team

Policy Lead

Liaise with the Manager to ensure all preschool policies are fit for purpose, comply with statutory requirements and reviewed at least once a year by Committee.

Safeguarding Lead

Receives appropriate training and supports the Preschool Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead in ensuring preschool policies and practices fulfil statutory child protection requirements.

General Committee Members

To run a successful committee, we need different people with a variety of skills. Most importantly enthusiasm is a must. Our committee is made up of:

- Family Members
- Co-opted Members - sometimes those without children at the preschool, who are enlisted for their expertise in certain areas.

All committee members provide a supportive decision-making role. You would be expected to:

- attend committee meetings (in evenings)
- help with fundraising ideas and events

- help review and agree Preschool policies
- suggest business improvement ideas
- act as Ambassadors for Preschool, for example by promoting it online and acting in a way that is supportive and professional
- discuss Ofsted reports and relevant audits as appropriate
- help at certain special days in the setting through the year

All Committee members must pass enhanced DBS checks before being able to support preschool business.

Staff

The staff team at Brookside Preschool currently consists of:

- **Manager:** Michelle is responsible for the day-to-day management of preschool activity; including leading the staff team and children's activities. Planning curriculum activities, managing staff issues and rotas, liaising with parents and committee, and overseeing health and safety and is the preschool SENDCO.
- **Deputy Manager:** Leanne supports Michelle as part of the management team in the day to day running of the preschool. Leanne is responsible for admissions and is the preschool Designated Safeguarding Lead. She deputises for Michelle in her absence and also has key children and offers 121 support to a child.
- **Early Years Practitioners (Level 3 qualified):** Emma and Saima work various days. Saima is covering for Holly who is currently off on maternity leave. Staff with a Level 3 childcare qualification are "key workers", which means they have responsibility for a group of "key children" and for leading the care and development of those children during their time with us. As key workers, practitioners are also required to document observations and learning achievements on our Tapestry system to record their key children's preschool journey and ensure the care and support they receive best meets individual needs.
- **Preschool Assistants:** We currently have 3 preschool assistants, Kate, Kat and Leoni. Leoni will be looking to study for her Level 3 early years qualification with us soon, and as part of her training, supports a small number of key children. Kate is a ballet teacher outside of Brookside and provides weekly ballet classes to the children.
- **Bank staff:** We currently have 2 bank staff members on our books; Lauren, & Amelia. They do an important job in supporting our core staff on ad-hoc temporary hours, as well as providing staff sickness cover.

- **Payroll Administration:** This is managed externally. Payment of staff wages remains the responsibility of the Committee Treasurer and Preschool Administrator.
- **Students:** We also support fully-supervised students on work experience from time to time, to support them in gaining practical experience to support their early years studies.
- **Preschool Administrator:** We employ an external administration lady who is responsible for ensuring all income, fees and invoices are paid and recorded. She also works with the Committee Treasurer to ensure bills and staff wages are paid

Meetings

- Committee meetings take place approximately once every half term (6 a year). They are usually held on a weekday evening, either at Preschool or at a committee member's house - usually the chairpersons.
- All members are invited to add items to the agenda, which is sent out by the Management Secretary or Chair.
- The Chair runs the meeting and everybody has the chance to talk and raise ideas.
- Members of the committee vote on any key decisions and if they cannot get to a meeting they can send a vote "by proxy". In the event of a non-majority vote, the Chair has the deciding vote.
- Respective reports are provided by the Chair, the Preschool management team, the Preschool Administrator and the Treasurer.
- Policies are reviewed and any changes are discussed and voted on.
- If an event is coming up, jobs will be discussed and shared out.
- The Management Secretary takes the minutes and they are subsequently sent out to all the committee members after the Chair has signed them off.
- All our meetings are relaxed, friendly, open and productive!

The AGM

- This happens once a year at the end of January and is usually held at Preschool. It is open to anyone and is a chance for community members, committee and staff to hear about preschool's successes and challenges of the past academic year.
- The agenda and details are distributed beforehand.
- The minutes from the previous AGM are approved. Full reports of the past year are given by the Chair, the Manager and the Treasurer, including

checked accounts from the previous year.

- This meeting serves as an official handover between the old committee and the new, so committee members are elected or re-elected and new general members are nominated and then voted in.
- There may be changes to the constitution (our legal "rules" of operation) that need to be discussed and voted on.
- Other issues, including related local or national issues, might be discussed.
- Any resolutions are proposed by a member and seconded, then opened to the floor for discussion before any decisions.

Annual Jobs and Other Roles

The preschool calendar is fairly predictable, and many events occur annually. This list is a pretty good guide, although it is not exhaustive or fixed, as each year group of children and families is different and we are always welcome of new ideas and improved suggestions.

Autumn Term

Month	Event	Committee Role
October	Halloween Party	Promote event in advance Help set up Run the stalls Provide cakes for cake stall Help clear up
October	Christmas Raffle	Help source raffle prizes Begin to plan for Christmas events
December	Gatley light switch on	Promote event in advance Help set up Run the stall Help clear up
December	Afternoon Tea with Sants	Arrange Santa! (we have someone that is usually happy to help) Assist on the day
December	Christmas Party	Assist with wrapping gifts Organise party food Help clear up
January	AGM	Invite parents / new members Handover of the leaving committee New committee members voted on Minutes taken and shared

April	Easter Event	Promote event in advance Help set up Run the stalls Help clear up
June	BrookFest - our very own festival!	Promote event in advance Help set up Arrange entertainment Help clear up
July	Gatley Festival	Source float Help set up
July	Graduation	Help set up Wrap presents Take photos during the event Help clear away

The committee are always welcome in supporting various activities throughout the year as required. These include:

- **Assisting within the setting:** helping with washing of laundry, washing of toys, clearing storage cupboards and outdoor area, helping prepare craft activities and supporting Stay and Play sessions
- **Fundraising:** Supporting fundraising efforts, providing ideas, promoting, selling tickets, attending events and bringing along friends and family.
- **Ofsted Inspection:** In the event of an inspection the committee should be seen to be taking an active interest in the setting, offering suggestions for improvements.
- **Special Days:** On occasion days away from the setting may be organised which require extra support, for example, we usually arrange at least one preschool trip a year.
- **Allotment:** We are always on the lookout for help and support at the allotment. Ideally we would like to have somebody take charge of coordinating seasonal planting and providing support in keeping the allotment in good order.

The Constitution

The constitution is the set of rules by which the Pre-school is run and how the committee organises itself. It is a committee role to check that the constitution is fit for purpose. It will qualify how meetings and how the AGM should be run, amongst other things.

Policies and Procedures

There are Policies and Procedures in place covering everything from Special Educational Needs (SEN) to Data Protection (GDPR). Policies are reviewed on a rolling basis at each committee meeting. Committee members are asked to read and input ideas into the policies at the time of review. These are voted on during committee meetings, and members sign that they are in agreement. From time to time it may become apparent that a new policy is needed. This will be usually initially be drawn up by the staff for committee input. The Manager has overall responsibility for implementing policies. Committee members should have a good idea what is written in the policies as these provide the basis for how the setting is run. Some will directly refer to the committee, such as the Equal Opportunities or the Complaints Procedure. Full and up to date copies of all policies can be found on the preschool website and are freely available to all visitors and families.

Fundraising

Fundraising is a large part of the committee's role; a lot of the work and most of the fun, comes from arranging and working on fundraising ventures. During the first half term the committee decide what sort of fundraising they would like to do. They need to consider how much they would try and make - this might depend on the preschool wanting to buy certain things that would cost a set amount. Of course fundraising is not just about making money, it often creates great opportunities to socialise and support the wider community. Coffee mornings or events are a time to meet other family members and friends of the children. Working together tends to cement a team and successfully raising cash is very satisfying. Jobs that sometimes need filling might include:

- Advertising events around the area.
- Booking a space (preschool for eg.)
- Finding raffle prizes
- Requesting suitable prizes by email or letter
- Creating posters, flyers etc.
- Communicating the event to preschool families - and maybe beyond.
- Sourcing specific things - food, cakes, entertainers etc
- Manning the event
- Securing and coordinating donations
- Marketing the preschool well is also an important committee role

Handing Over

After new Committee members are elected at the AGM, the outgoing Chair, Management Secretary and Treasurer (known as "Officers") hand over all of the information, emails and paperwork they have used during the previous year. New details of the Officers are sent to the Bank, to Ofsted and to the Charity Commission. All new members need to apply for a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Certificate relevant to Committee roles. This requires completing an on-line process and providing identity verification, supported by the Committee chair and the preschool management team. The Committee contacts list is updated and emailed to all new members.

Working with the staff as a committee-led charity, the Committee are classed as the staff employer. So, a major role for the Chair particularly is working with the Manager if any issues arise.

While being on the committee you may be involved in decisions on wages, staff training, changes to contracts, problems or grievances or recruiting new staff. The Officers should be prepared to read up on legalities involved in this area and the correct procedures that should be followed. They will lead the committee in any decisions that need to be taken.

Support Available to the Committee

Sources of Support	Contact Details
ACAS: Help and advice for employers and employees	0300 123 1100 www.acas.org.uk
Charity Commission for England and Wales: Regulatory body for charities, with advice on running a charity and information on charity performance.	0845300218 www.charity-commission.gov.uk
Health and Safety Executive: Advice, guidance, news, tools & legislation for work-related health, safety & illness	08453450055 www.hse.gov.uk

Ofsted: Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills. Our inspection and regulatory service.	0300 1231231 www.ofsted.gov.uk
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The **Ofsted website** holds lots of information on inspections, including what inspectors look for and what to expect on a visit.

Stockport Early Years Team - Early Years Support Workers can provide advice and information, to both staff and Committee, on all aspects of preschool business, including template documents and policies. They also hold a wide range of training courses for staff and committee members.

The internet also holds a wealth of information to support Committee members understand their roles and responsibilities.