



# **Caterpillars Pre-School**

## **Marks Tey**

### **Parents Handbook**

**2023-24**

## 9.1a About Our Childcare and Early Education

Welcome to Caterpillars Preschool (Marks Tey) and thank you for registering your child with us. We know how important your child is and aim to deliver the highest quality of care and education to help them to achieve their best.

This document aims to provide you with an introduction to Caterpillars Preschool, our routines, our approach to supporting your child's learning and development and how we aim to work together with you to best meet your child's individual needs. This should be read alongside our Childcare Terms and Conditions for a full description of our services.

### General Information

<b>Address</b>	Caterpillars Marks Tey, St Andrews Church Hall, Church Lane, Marks Tey, Colchester, CO6 1LW
<b>Telephone number</b>	<b>07981 169883</b>
We don't have a fixed line into the pre-school. If you call during setting opening hours, please leave a message or send a text and someone will return your call as soon as possible.	
<b>Email</b>	markstey@caterpillarspreschool.org
<b>Website</b>	www.caterpillarspreschool.org
<b>Facebook</b>	Search for Caterpillars Pre-school in Marks Tey and click on <a href="#">Like</a>

### Caterpillars Opening Times

We are open for	38 weeks each year
We are open for	4 days a week (Monday to Thursday)
Our opening times are	9:00am-2:45pm

We provide care and education for young children between the ages of 2.5 years and 5 years

## **Our setting aims to:**

- provide high quality care and education for children
- work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop
- add to the life and well-being of the local community
- offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity

## **Parents**

You are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected
- kept informed
- consulted
- involved
- included at all levels

## **Children's Development and Learning**

We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment
- is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as volunteer helpers
- has the chance to join in with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what they already knows and can do
- has a personal key person who makes sure each child makes satisfying progress
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers

## *The Early Years Foundation Stage*

Provision for the development and learning of children from birth to five years is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our provision reflects the four overarching principles of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE 2021):

- *A Unique Child*  
Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- *Positive Relationships*  
Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- *Enabling Environments*  
Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and/or carers.
- *Learning and Development*  
Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## **How We Provide for Learning and Development**

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

*The Areas of Learning and Development comprise:*

- *Prime Areas*
  - Personal, social and emotional development.
  - Physical development.
  - Communication and language.
- *Specific Areas*
  - Literacy.
  - Mathematics.
  - Understanding the world.

- Expressive arts and design.

For each area, the level of progress that children are expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know, and be able to do, by the end of the reception year of their education.

We refer to non-statutory curriculum guidance to support our professional judgment as we assess each child's progress and level of development as they progress towards the Early Learning Goals. We have regard to these when we assess children and plan for their learning by creating a curriculum that is ambitious and meets every child's needs. Our educational programmes support children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

#### *Personal, social and emotional development*

- self-regulation
- managing self
- building relationships

#### *Physical development*

- gross motor skills
- fine motor skills

#### *Communication and language*

- listening, attention and understanding
- speaking

#### *Literacy*

- comprehension
- word reading
- writing

#### *Mathematics*

- number
- numerical patterns

#### *Understanding the world*

- past and present
- people, culture and communities

- the natural world

### *Expressive arts and design*

- creating with materials
- being imaginative and expressive

## **Our Approach to Learning and Development and Assessment**

### *Learning through play*

Being active and playing supports young children's learning and development through doing and talking. This is how children learn to think about and understand the world around them. We use the EYFS statutory education programmes to plan and provide opportunities which will help children to make progress in all areas of learning. This programme is made up of a mixture of activities that children plan and organise for themselves and activities planned and led by practitioners.

### *Characteristics of effective learning*

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Early Years Foundation Stage as:

- playing and exploring - engagement
- active learning - motivation
- creating and thinking critically - thinking

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child engages with learning and being clear about what we can do and provide to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

### *Assessment*

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them. We use information that we gain from observations of the children, to understand their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we will ask you to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what your child likes to do at home and how you, as parents, are supporting development.

We may make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our on-going observations. These help us to build a picture of a child's progress during their time with us and form part of children's records of achievement/learning journeys. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals, as well as at times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

### *The progress check at age two*

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that we supply parents and carers with a short-written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas of learning and development - personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language - the check using information from on-going observations carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

## Records of Achievement/Learning Journeys

We keep a record of achievement/learning journey for each child. Your child's learning journey helps us to celebrate together their achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for their well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work in partnership with you to keep this record. To do this they will collect information from you about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's progress. Together, we will then decide on how to further support your child's learning and development.

## Working Together For Your Children

We maintain the ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set by the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. We also have volunteer parent helpers, where possible, to complement these ratios. This helps us to:

- give time and attention to each child
- talk with the children about their interests and activities
- help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide
- allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety

The staff who work at our setting are:

Name	Job Title	Qualifications and Experience
Becky	Setting Manager, Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)	<b>Level 3 CACHE Diploma in Childcare &amp; Education</b>  First Aider, Safeguarding Lead, Food Safety (Level 2)  Becky joined the Caterpillars team in May 2022.
Stacey	Deputy Manager	Level 2 Safeguarding First Aider Food Safety  Stacey joined Caterpillars in 2019. She is currently studying for a degree in Education with the Open University
Teresa	Senior Early Years Practitioner	<b>NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Childcare</b>  Health & Safety, First Aider, Safeguarding, Food Safety

		Teresa joined the Caterpillars Team in 2003 having been a regular parent helper at local playgroups and still regularly volunteers at Forest School sessions at a local school.
Helen	Senior Early Years Practitioner	<b>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare</b> First Aider, Safeguarding, Food Safety Helen has worked at Caterpillars Birch for many years before returning to Marks Tey in 2018.
Charlotte	Early Years Practitioner	<b>Level 3 Diploma in Childcare</b> Charlotte joined Caterpillars in October 2022 having achieved her level 3 qualification in July 2022

## How Parents Take Part in the Setting

Caterpillars recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All our staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for their children. There are many ways in which parents take part in making our setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with our staff
- contributing to the progress check at age two
- helping at sessions of the setting
- sharing their own special interests with the children
- helping to provide and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities
- being part of the management of the setting, where appropriate
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting
- joining in community activities, in which the setting takes part
- building friendships with other parents in the setting

## Joining In

Helping at the session enables parents to see what the day-to-day life of our setting is like and to join in helping the children to get the best out of their activities.

Parents can also offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. We welcome parents to drop into the setting to see it at work or to speak with the staff.



## Key Person and Your Child

Our setting uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom they are particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that the childcare that we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the setting, they will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the setting, they will help your child to benefit from our activities.

## Learning Opportunities for Adults

As well as gaining childcare qualifications, our staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to date with thinking about early years care and education. We also keep up to date with best practice, as a member of the Early Years Alliance, through *Under 5* magazine and other publications produced by the Alliance. The current copy of *Under 5* is available for you to read. Occasionally, we hold learning events for parents. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years.

## The Setting's Timetable and Routines

Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in our setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that they are a valued member of the setting
- ensure the safety of each child
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning

## The Session

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others. Outdoor activities contribute to all areas of learning and development, including their health and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom(s).

## Snacks and Meals

Snack time is an important part of the Caterpillars morning sessions. As well as being a social activity for the children to sit together and eat, it also enables the children to get involved in the preparation, cutting, spreading etc which helps develop their independence and fine motor skills as well as providing opportunities to try a variety of foods in a shared experience with their friends.

Caterpillars will provide your child with a healthy daily snack. The snacks will be varied and we also link the food choices in with any festivals or celebrations we are learning about throughout the year.

Please tell us about your child's dietary needs, particularly any known allergies or food intolerance and we will plan accordingly.

A charge of £1.00 per morning session your child attends. This will also be charged and invoiced electronically on a half term basis the same as the invoices for fees. If your child is fully funded, then the charge is requested as a voluntary donation.

## **Clothing**

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities. We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.

Caterpillars have a range on embroidered clothing that can be purchased for you child. Wearing the uniform can help children feel part of Caterpillars and also prevents home clothes from becoming spoiled during messy play.

The following uniform items are available for parents to purchase;

T-shirt - £6.50

Jumper - £12.00

Book Bag - £7.50

Starter Pack – T-shirt, book bag and an information booklet for parents is available for £18 and £30 to include a jumper

## **Policies**

Our staff can explain our policies and procedures to you. Copies of which are available on our website and available in hardcopy in the setting.

Our policies help us to make sure that the service we provide is of high quality and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and their parents. Our staff and parents work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling our setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

## **Information We Hold About You and Your Child**

We have procedures in place for the recording and sharing of information [data] about you and your child that is compliant with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) as follows:  
The data is we collect is:

1. processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject [you and your family]

2. collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed for other purposes incompatible with those purposes
3. adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data is processed
4. accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
5. kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects [you and your family] for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed
6. processed in a way that ensures appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures

When you register your child with us, we will provide you with a privacy notice that gives you further details of how we fulfil our obligations with regard to your data.

## **Safeguarding Children**

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'. Our employment practices ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role and help to protect children against the likelihood of abuse in our setting and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff. Our way of working with children and their parents ensures that we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

## **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

To make sure that our provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special educational needs a child may have. We work to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is Becky Barber

As our SENCO, Becky is responsible for supporting children and the parents/carers of children with Special Education needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

If you have concerns regarding SEN or if you wish to talk to someone about your child's development, please speak to your child's key person or Becky.

## **The Management of Our Setting**

Caterpillars Pre-school is a registered charity and as such is managed by a volunteer management committee - whose members are elected by the parents of the children who attend our setting. As a registered charity, without the parental involvement in the management committee, Caterpillars simply could not continue to operate.

The elections to the committee take place at our Annual General Meeting. The committee make up the registered person with Ofsted and are responsible for overseeing :

- the management of our finances
- employing and managing our staff
- making sure that we have, and work to, policies that help us to provide a high-quality service
- making sure that we work in partnership with parents

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all the children who attend our setting. It is our shared forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's plan.

## **Fees**

Our current fees from September 2023 are ;

£6.50 per hour for over 3 year olds

£7.50 per hour for under 3 year olds.

£1.00 per morning sessions attended for snack

The under 3 rate will be charged until the end of the term after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Invoices are issued on a half-termly basis. Fees must still be paid if children are absent for a short period of time such as sickness or family holidays. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, talk to Sarah Lawrence who is our Preschool Administrator or our setting manager Becky Barber. For your child to keep their place at our setting, fees must be paid in a timely manner (21 days from the date of issue).

Where children are in receipt of nursery education funding for two, three and four year olds, we will submit funding forms for eligible children each term/ Where funding is not received, then the above fees apply.

Some parents may be eligible for up to 30hours funding. To find out if you might be eligible and how to claim, please visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

## **Changes to Agreed Sessions and Notice Periods**

A 4-week term time notice period is required if you find you no longer require a place at Caterpillars (including for new starters) or need to reduce your child's hours with us. If less than 4 weeks' term time notice is given then fees will remain payable for the remainder of the notice period.

## **Starting at Our Setting**

### *The first days*

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, our staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the setting. Our policy on the role of the key person and Settling-in is enclosed with this document or is available from [insert name]. We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of our setting and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. Our staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or to respond to any questions.

## Other Useful contacts:

Department for Children, Schools and families	<a href="http://www.education.gov.uk">www.education.gov.uk</a>
Ofsted - 0300 123 1231	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a>
Government information	<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.essex.gov.uk/Early Years &amp; Childcare">www.essex.gov.uk/Early Years &amp; Childcare</a>
Information on Downs Syndrome, hearing and visual impairments	<a href="http://www.earlysupport.org.uk">www.earlysupport.org.uk</a>
Online Safety	CEOP (Child exploitation Online Protection) <a href="http://www.ceop.police.uk">www.ceop.police.uk</a> <a href="http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents">www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents</a> <a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.childnet.com">www.childnet.com</a>
Be a mathematician	<a href="http://www.beam.co.uk">www.beam.co.uk</a>
Net mums	<a href="http://www.netmums.com">www.netmums.com</a>
Parentline -0808 800 2222	<a href="http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk">www.parentlineplus.org.uk</a>
Lone Parent's -0800 018 5026	<a href="http://www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk">www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk</a>
Contact a Family - Support for parent's of disabled children - 0808 8083 555	<a href="http://www.cafamily.org.uk">www.cafamily.org.uk</a>
Dyspraxia Foundation - 01462 454988	<a href="http://www.dyspraxiafoundatuion.org.uk">www.dyspraxiafoundatuion.org.uk</a>
Association for all speech impaired children (Afasic)	<a href="http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk">www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk</a>
Social Care – Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations about a staff or volunteer. 0345 603 7627	Essex Safeguarding Children Board <a href="http://www.escb.co.uk">www.escb.co.uk</a>

# Our vision for your child's time with us at Caterpillars Pre-School



To be  
resilient  
and  
confident

To learn  
and  
develop

Give  
encourage  
ment and  
guidance

Learn life skills  
and  
independence

To be safe  
and secure

Work in  
partnership  
with families  
and support  
home

Give  
additional  
support if  
needed

Teach skills  
ready for  
their next  
stage of  
learning

