



Parent Handbook

March 2026

Riverside Playschool

(Riverside Nursery School – Ware Ltd)

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Terms and Conditions Applicable from May 2026 By applying for and taking up a place for your child at Riverside, you agree to be bound by the terms and conditions in this document.

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1. Welcome

This Parent Handbook contains lots of useful information. Please read it carefully before your child starts at Riverside. We hope that you and your child will be very happy with us.

Riverside is a PVI Pack-Away Preschool, open during term time at Great Amwell Scout Hut. Our preschool has space for up to 40 children per session, for children aged 20 months to 5 years old. We are registered with and inspected by Ofsted and Hertfordshire County Council. We changed our name from 'Nursery School' to 'Play School' in June 2026.

2. Our Aims

We try to:

- Provide a safe and stimulating environment where children can play and learn.
- Encourage independence, develop self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Work with parents to help children reach their potential.

3. Our Staff

All of our members staff are experienced Early Years Educators. They are qualified Paediatric First Aiders and in Safeguarding Children. All members of staff have had enhanced police checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Our Staff:



Senior Manager & Admin: Natasha



Assistant Manager & SENCO: Emma



Senior EY Educator: Jessica



EY Educator: Lucy

4. Key Person System

Every child has a 'Key Person'. Your child's key person will work with you to make sure that we meet your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts preschool, your Key Person will ask you about your child's likes and dislikes, and will help your child to settle. They will spend time building an attachment with your child to help them feel safe at preschool. Your Key Person will observe and monitor your child's development and record this in your child's learning journal. Your Key Person will know your child best, if you have any questions or worries, speak to your Key Person first.

5. Tapestry Learning Journals

We use a secure online learning journal program called Tapestry. Staff regularly observe their key children and write up assessments on Tapestry to celebrate achievements and keep track of children's development. Parents can add their own observations via the Tapestry App.

6. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Although we know that children develop at their own pace, if we think that your child needs some extra help, we will work with you (and if necessary, the appropriate professionals) to make sure we can support them as best as we can. We have a designated member of staff who is responsible for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SENCo). See Appendix 1 for details of our Early Years SEND Offer.

7. Attendance & Absence

We expect children to attend all the sessions that have been agreed with parents and staff. We have a legal Duty of Care to make sure the children on our role are safe, including those who don't arrive when we are expecting them to.

If you know your child will be off e.g. holidays or appointments, let us know as soon as you can, either in person, by phone, or by email.

If your child is poorly and won't be in, call or message the preschool as soon as possible, on 07507058922 to let staff know.

If we don't hear from you, we will call you to check everything is OK.

If we can't reach you, we will try your emergency contacts, or, as a last resort, the Police to call to the child's home address and check they are safe.

8. Session Times

We are open during school term time. Our current term dates are available on our website.

Morning Session:	09:00am to 12:00pm	(Monday to Friday)
Lunch Time:	12:00pm to 12:30pm	(Tuesday to Thursday)
Afternoon Session:	12:00pm to 3:00pm	(Tuesday to Thursday)

9. Arriving at and Leaving Pre-school

It can be very busy when children are arriving and leaving the preschool. Please keep your children close to you. **Do not allow your children to run around the car park or the building**

The main gate is usually closed (but not locked) at 9.45am and is closed during the day. It is opened 15 minutes before collection times.

Please arrive just before the beginning or end of the session and wait outside until we open the door. If you would like to collect your child early, please ring the bell.

Children come in by themselves from the front door, carrying their own bag and lunchbox, to help them be more independent. A member of staff will help them take off their coat and find a peg for their things.

We let parents in one at a time to collect their children to allow time for a private, quick handover, we'll let you know if your child has had a good day. If you need time for a longer chat, please arrange a time to meet with your child's key person.

If you have arranged for another adult to collect your child, please tell a member of staff. **Your child will only be allowed to leave with someone else if we have been told in advance.**

10. Daily Routine

We have a daily routine that starts at 9.15am with Key Person group time, followed by free play, adult led activities, outside play, and whole group circle time with songs and stories. We have snack time half way through the session, and lunch between the morning and afternoon session.

It's really important that children arrive on time so that they don't miss out and don't disrupt the other children's group time with their Key Person.

11. Settling In

It is important for parents and staff to work together to help your child to feel confident and secure at preschool, as an unhappy child is unable to play or learn properly. This can take longer for some children than for others, don't feel worried if your child takes a while to settle.

Please be prepared to stay within easy reach by mobile phone, until your child is happy and secure. We may need to adjust sessions while children settle, staff will be able to talk to you about your child's individual needs.

12. What to Bring

All children need to bring:

- Suitable outdoor clothes:
 - Winter: coat, mittens, warm hat
 - Summer: sunhat, sunglasses, sun cream
- A bag, with their name on the outside, containing:
 - A full change of clothes (extra if toilet training)
 - Nappies, wipes, nappy sacks (if needed)
- Named water bottle, full of water
- Lunch box with their name on it, if staying for lunch
- Snack for each session, in a box with their name on it (unless you have paid for preschool snack)

13. What to Wear

Children need to wear comfortable clothes that they can get dirty, and that are easy to take on and off for using the bathroom or having a nappy change.

We recommend:

- **Top:** T-shirt, polo shirt, sweatshirt, plus a cardigan or zip-through top.
- **Bottoms:** Joggers, leggings, shorts.
- **Feet:** trainers with Velcro fastening or elastic laces.

Please avoid: buttoned shirts or blouses, dungarees, skirts, playsuits, vests with poppers (unless in nappies), restrictive or tight clothing, wellies, crocs, sandals, shoes that are difficult to get on e.g. converse high tops

14. Snack Time

We provide cow's milk at snack time, water is available all of the time.

Snack is not covered by early years childcare funding, we charge a small fee to provide a healthy snack e.g. fruit or veg with crackers or rice cakes etc.

If you prefer to provide your own snack, this should be in a box, separate from lunch, with your child's name on it. Snack must be healthy to comply with Ofsted requirements.

Let us know if your child has special dietary requirements.

15. Lunch Time

We do not make lunches at preschool. Children staying for lunch need to bring a packed lunch from home, in a lunch box, which must have your child's name on it.

Lunches must be balanced and healthy. Talk to staff if you are not sure what to pack, or have a look at NHS guidance for ideas or further advice.

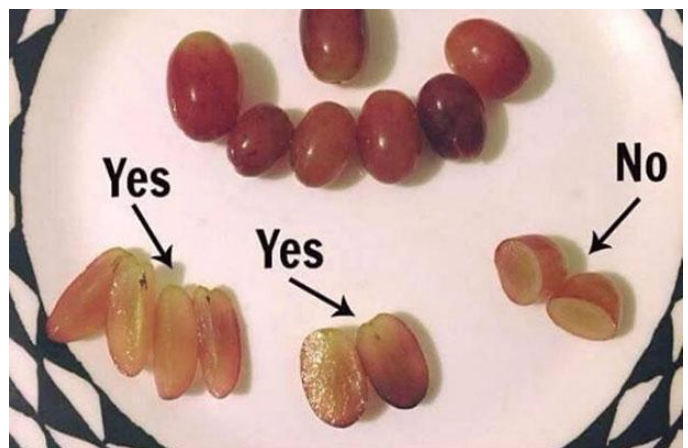
<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes>

Please put your child's name on any little boxes inside their lunch box.

Provide spoons for yoghurts etc

Due to high risk of choking:

- **No whole nuts**
- **No marshmallows**
- **No popcorn**
- **Grapes, olives, mini sausages, frankfurters, or anything that is a similar shape, MUST be cut LENGTHWAYS**
- **Parma ham should be into smaller pieces, particularly across the fat.**



All the foods listed above have caused staff to have to intervene to prevent a child choking here at Riverside. If staff think any item in your child's lunchbox is not safe, they will not allow your child to have it, and it will be returned to you.

16. Early Years Childcare Funding

We offer funded places in line with government and Hertfordshire County Council guidelines.

Working Parents: If your child is aged 9 months to 4 years old, you can get 30 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks of the year (i.e. a school term time year). We accept funded children from age 20 months.

Parents who get extra support:

You can get 15 hours of free childcare from the term after your child's 2nd birthday.

You're classed as getting extra support if any of the following apply:

- you get Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- your child has an Education and Health Care plan
- your child gets Disability Living Allowance
- your child has left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

For up to date information, please go to www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

17. Fees

Any sessions or other expenses not covered by funding are charged for at our standard rates. Current fees are available on our website.

Fees must be paid in advance, BEFORE your child can attend. We send invoices before each half term which include details of how to pay.

The fees are for your child's saved place at preschool, and still have to be paid if you don't attend e.g. due to illness or holidays. We cannot offer that place to another child and we do not provide refunds.

If you are experiencing any difficulties in paying fees, please speak to the manager as soon as possible. Court action will be taken to recover any unpaid fees.

18. Late Collection Fees

Please collect your child on time. You must call or message the preschool to let us know if you are delayed.

If we have not heard from you within 15 minutes of the collection time, we will try to contact you or the emergency numbers that you provided. **If after a further 15 minutes we have had no response from any of the numbers, we will contact Social Services who will take responsibility for your child.**

Persistent late collection will be reported to Social Services as part of our duty to safeguard all the children in our care.

Late Collection Fees

5 minutes late (For first 3 times in a half term)	£0
1st 10 minutes late (after above 5 minutes)	£15
Per following 15 minutes or part thereof	£10

If you collect your child in the 5 minutes grace period 3 times in one half term you will be charged a £15 late collection fee.

Where individual session times have been agreed with parents, the individual session times will apply when calculating late fees. **Late fees must be paid before your child can attend their next session.**

19. Giving Notice of Leaving or Reducing Sessions

You must let us know, by email, **6 term time weeks** before you leave the preschool or reduce the number of sessions. You will still be liable for full fees due during the notice period.

Funded children: Standard fees will be charged where funding cannot be claimed e.g. if you move to another setting without giving us proper notice. Court action will be taken to recover unpaid debt.

20. Accidents

Accidents happen at preschool, children are still working on their gross and fine motor skills. The fall, trip, and drop things. We work hard to minimise the risks of accidents while still allowing children space to be adventurous, learn and play freely.

All staff are paediatric first aid trained. We will treat any injuries, as well as comforting the children involved. We will fill out an accident form and share it with you at pick up. For head bumps and bites, we will message you straight away.

21. Illness

Please do not bring children to preschool if they are ill, if more than half the staff are absent due to sickness, the preschool will have to close as we will not have enough adults to be within required adult:child ratios

We do not look after sick children. Children who are ill get not benefit from being at preschool, it is not in their best interests, they should be at home.

If a child becomes unwell in preschool, we will contact you to arrange immediate collection. Poorly children must be collected within 20 minutes of a parent/carer being contacted

Our policy is to ask parents to collect a child immediately if

- their temperature reaches 38 degrees centigrade or more
- they vomit or try to vomit
- they have a loose bowel movement/diarrhoea or appear to have tummy pain

In order to prevent illnesses spreading to other children or staff, the following minimum exclusion periods will apply before children can return to preschool:

- All Diarrhoea & Vomiting – 48 hours following the last symptoms
- Chickenpox – until all spots have all crusted over
- Rubella (German Measles) – 7 days from onset of rash
- Measles – 7 days from onset of rash
- Impetigo – until all lesions have crusted and healed
- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease – 10 days from onset of symptoms
- Scarlet Fever – 3 weeks/21 days after symptoms start or 48 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment (with evidence that treatment has begun)
- Scabies – 48 hours after treatment has started

- Slapped Cheek Syndrome / Fifth Disease / Parvovirus B19 – 48 hours after the rash has developed
- Shingles – until all spots have all crusted over
- Influenza (flu) – Until fully recovered
- Whooping Cough/pertussis – 3 weeks/21 days from onset of symptoms or 5 days from starting antibiotic treatment (with evidence that treatment has begun)
- Headlice – After treatment has been started and until all the headlice are gone
- Conjunctivitis – until eyes are clear and recovered fully or 48 hours after treatment has started
- Meningitis – until fully recovered
- Viral Meningitis – until fully recovered
- Mumps – 7 days after onset of swelling
- Threadworm – 2 weeks after treatment has started
- Ringworm – 48 hours after treatment has started
- Wart/Verruca/Ulcer/Cold Sore – No exclusion, but staff must be informed

The Manager may extend the above exclusion period if they feel a child is still unwell.

22. Administering Medicines

Only medication prescribed by a doctor (or other medically qualified person) will be given to a child at preschool, and only where it cannot be given at home. It must be in-date and prescribed for the child, for the current condition.

Parents must complete and sign our form to give written permission for the administration of medication. Medication will not be given without these details being provided:

- full name of child and date of birth;
- name of medication and strength;
- who prescribed it;
- dosage to be given in the setting;
- how the medication should be stored and expiry date;
- any possible side effects that may be expected should be noted;
- parental consent with signature, printed name of parent and date.

Medicines can only be administered according to the instructions printed on the prescription label, and NOT by verbal instructions from carers. A letter from an appropriate health professional MUST be provided if there are any changes to how the medicine is to be administered.

23. Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding children is our highest priority. We take our duty of care to all of our children very seriously.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are our Manager and Senior Manager. The Deputy Manager is our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). Staff have regular safeguarding training and updates from Hertfordshire County Council. All of our staff have had DBS background checks and good references prior to joining the team. We have policies in place to keep children and staff safe while at the preschool.

If you see or hear anything at the preschool that concerns you, speak to the manager or deputy manager straight away.

Where we have concerns about a child's safety outside of preschool, we will first speak to parents about our concerns, unless we feel to do so will put the child at risk of harm. We have a duty to refer any allegation, complaint or concern received relating to any child to Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children Board or to the Police.

24. Mobile Phones

Mobile phones and smart devices e.g. smart watches, Meta glasses etc, must not be used in the preschool or grounds. They should be turned off and put out of sight.

25. No Smoking

Smoking and vaping are not allowed anywhere on site.

26. Dogs

Dogs are not allowed on site at all, including being carried in arms.

27. Complaints

Riverside aims to deliver a high quality service in the care and education of your children. We hope to provide children with the best possible start to their education. We promote a supportive, happy working environment for staff and encourage parental involvement. However, there may be something that you are unhappy about and if this is the case, the following procedure exists for your guidance.

1. In the first instance, approach your child's key person to discuss issues concerning play activities, lost clothing etc. The majority of concerns are settled at this stage.
2. If the issue is not resolved at the first stage or you feel unable to discuss the problem with the person concerned, a verbal complaint can be made to the Deputy Manager.
3. If you are still unhappy with how your complaint has been handled, please email the manager with as much information as possible. The manager will investigate the issue within 28 days of receiving your email.
4. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, you can email the senior manager, who will arrange a meeting with you to try to come to a resolution.

Any complaint concerning a breach of Ofsted Regulations under the Children's Act can be reported to Ofsted.

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Helpline: 0300 123 123 1
Complaint line: 0300 1234 666
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Please write PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL on all letters of complaint

Early Years Offer at Riverside

1. How does the setting know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

At Riverside we take time to get to know each child and to carefully monitor their progress. If your child is not progressing within their age and stage expectations, or if they demonstrate that more support is needed in specific areas, we will begin to put measures into place to help them. If your child has an identified special need before joining our setting we will work with you to ensure that everything is in place before your child joins us, for example, staff training, special equipment, room organisation etc. Your child's Key Person will work closely with our SENCo to continually monitor and review your child's development and progress in the setting through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. We work closely with other professionals such as health visitors, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and other healthcare professionals to ensure that your child is given appropriate support and that we provide the very best care and educational opportunities for your child.

2. How will the setting staff support my child?

We have a SENCo and a deputy SENCo who have a wide range of experience of helping children with different needs.

Your child's Key Person will develop a strong bond with your child and will work with you to ensure that your child is happy, settled and making progress at preschool. The Key Person will work closely with the SENCo and will liaise with a wide range of professionals and ensure you are closely involved at all stages.

3. How will I know how my child is doing?

You will be given feedback on your child's progress verbally each time you collect your child from preschool. You are always welcome to discuss your child's progress informally at the setting, by telephone or by email. We will also review progress with you via their learning journals and through parents' consultations and termly summaries of your child's progress. We provide opportunities for parents to stay for special sessions which offer an opportunity for you to see how your child is getting on at preschool, what activities they enjoy and the friendships they have formed. The regularity of formal meetings between staff and parents will depend on your child's level of needs. Please speak to us about any concerns you may have no matter how small you may feel they are.

4. How will the learning and development provisions be matched to my child's needs?

Through the EYFS we will observe and assess your child and then plan their learning and development provision around our observations. We follow advice from other professionals and how to support your child's particular needs and the SENCo will ensure training is accessed for staff, where possible, to support your child's learning.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

We will involve other professionals to ensure that we support your child in all areas of their learning and development. We will support your child with toilet training, and any issues regarding eating etc. There is a strong emphasis on providing a caring environment, we encourage all children to look after each other. We do not separate children by age which encourages the older children to be mindful and caring towards the younger. If your child has any specific medical needs our staff undergo any training that is necessary e.g. epi-pen, replacing breathing tubes, administering GP/hospital prescribed medicines etc. We have a behaviour management policy which outlines the procedures used at the preschool, however, if specialist help is required to manage behaviour we can request the support of professionals and the local authority. All staff have a positive approach to all children's individual learning and development and are sensitive to their needs. Unwanted behaviour and the testing of boundaries is often part of growing up, and we will work closely with you to put strategies into place to support and enhance your child's positive behaviours.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the setting?

We have very good links with the local children's centres and with specialists from the local authority. We are proactive in building links with specialists as required, dependant on the needs of the children attending the preschool.

7. What training and/or experience do staff, who are supporting children with SEND, have?

Staff have a lot of experience in dealing with special needs. We use Makaton signs regularly with all the children and can use specific signs to support individual children. Our SENCo has over 10 years of experience supporting children with a wide range of needs, including children with Arthritis (JIA), speech and language, Tourette's, autistic spectrum, ADHD and ADD, as well as non-specific general delays in educational development. Our deputy SENCo has experience with autism.

8. How will my child be included in activities outside the setting?

Your child will benefit from all activities outside the setting and full risk assessments will be carried out. We will discuss your child's needs with you to ensure they can be included. You will not be required to accompany your children on any outside activities. If you are unhappy about your child joining a trip, visit, or event without your presence, you would be welcome to act as a parent helper on the outing.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's learning and development?

Your child's key person will be available to discuss your child's needs however it may be necessary to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting. If outside professionals come in to see your child we try to organise a meeting at the end of that visit for a brief discussion. If this is not possible any reports are always copied and given to you.

10. How accessible is the building/environment?

The indoor environment is very accessible and meets current disability regulations. We have a disabled toilet with wheelchair access and wide opening doors. There are no stairs in the building and there is level access through the front door. Our garden is grassy. There is a slight slope from the hall to the main playing area. We will work with you to adapt our outdoor area to make this area as accessible as possible to your child.

11. How will the setting prepare and support my child with transitions between home, setting and school?

When your child starts preschool, we have a meeting with you so that you can meet your child's key person and discuss their needs. If necessary, an Education and Health Care Plan is completed. Taster sessions are available for your child to attend prior to their start date. If your child receives care from another provider (e.g. another nursery or a childminder) we will work with them by sharing learning journals on a termly basis. When it is time for your child to leave us to start school, we will contact the setting and invite them to visit your child at preschool. During this visit the teacher or key person from the school will meet and play with your child and discuss their development and progress.

12. How will Riverside's resources be used to support children's special educational needs?

All resources and toys are moveable and can be made accessible, they are age and stage appropriate. We will acquire or borrow specific equipment for specific needs. Your child will receive plenty of adult support. We are a very inclusive setting and use a range of resources and strategies to support children with their varied needs.

13. How many children with special needs attend at Riverside?

Due to the increased staff workload and resources needed to meet the additional needs some children may have, we limit the number of children with additional needs attending the preschool to 3 at any one time. This means we can concentrate on providing quality education and childcare for those children and all the other children attending Riverside.

14. Who can I contact for further information about the early years offer at the setting?

For further information about how we can help support your child please contact the Manager or Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), admin@riversidenurserysch.co.uk or 07507 058 922.

For further information on the local authority's Local Offer of service and provision for children with special educational needs and disability go to www.hertsdirect.org/localoffer