

Nursery Handbook 2025-2026



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To go forward together in
Christ.

To respect our neighbour.
And to always give of our best.



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Introduction

The Nursery in Sacred Heart consists of two rooms but is one Nursery. Your child will be allocated a room for self-registration in the morning and to be picked up from at home time. Children have free access throughout the day to the whole Nursery and outside area. All Nursery staff will interact with your child at some point.

Nursery staff

Mrs O'Mahoney	Class Teacher and Nursery Manager
TBA	Early Years Practitioner Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)
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Nursery Places

Children with a part time place will attend Nursery for three full days - Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Their place can be topped up into a full-time place by paying £40 per week payable half-termly in advance.

An eligibility code is required in order for your child to have a free full-time place. This code needs to be renewed every three months for this arrangement to continue.

Nursery Hours

A soft start will be running from 8.45-9am and the school day finishes at 3.25pm. Lunch is at 11.30am. It is **very** important that children arrive and are collected on time. If your child is going to be late please ring and inform the school. If your child normally has a school lunch you must ring so a lunch can be ordered in time.

Going Home

Your child will **only be allowed** to be picked up by people who you have nominated in writing. This information will be taken during the initial visit. We understand that

circumstances change so these details can be amended at any time by informing the staff. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the children.

Attendance

It is very important that children attend school every day as frequent absences can seriously affect their learning. If your child is sick and unable to attend school, please ring and inform us. Holidays in term time will not be authorised.

Settling In

A settling in period is crucial for children to make sure their first experiences of Nursery are not stressful or traumatic but positive and happy. All children are individuals, they have different pre-school experiences and different personalities. Although some children settle very quickly into Nursery others may find being separated from their main carer difficult. It is not unusual for some children to take weeks or even months to settle into Nursery. This will sometimes mean that you either have to stay with your child or leave them for short periods initially until they become more familiar with the environment, routines and build up relationships

with the staff and children. Staff will discuss an individual plan for you and your child to suit best the needs of your child.

Lunchtimes

We are very lucky to have excellent catering at Sacred Heart. At the moment school dinners are free for all the children in our school. You must register with the office otherwise you will have to pay. Of course, your child may have a packed lunch if you prefer. As part of our approach to healthy eating, packed lunches should not contain crisps or sweets. Your child should bring water to school in an unbreakable bottle for use throughout the day and at lunchtime. No other drinks are allowed. We encourage the children to be independent, i.e. use a knife and fork and try to cut their food. Children are supervised by the Nursery staff during lunchtimes and are encouraged to try new foods.

There is a wide range of food for the children to choose from. Everyday a hot main, a vegetarian main, vegetables, salad, jacket potatoes, and fruit are

provided for the children to choose from. Menus can be viewed on the school website and the kitchen staff often provide themed meals, for example, Christmas dinner or a special St Patrick's Day menu.

Our school lunches are very popular and children often have second helpings. However, please do not be alarmed if your child is hungry when they finish school. This is simply a sign that your child has been working hard. The children also have access to fruit, milk and water throughout the day.

School Uniform

It is compulsory for children to wear uniform in Nursery. School uniform can be purchased from Rough Cut Casuals, 16 Chapel Market, N1 9EZ.

Tel: 020 7837 7924. Orders may be placed on-line at www.roughcutcasuals.co.uk.

In Nursery we are working towards independence so shoes with velcro are a practical alternative to laces. Children in Nursery **ONLY** are allowed to wear black velcro trainers. A dark waterproof coat that children can fasten for themselves is also a good idea. Nursery children may wear grey track suit bottoms instead of

the grey trousers as these promote independent toileting.

School winter and summer hats are part of the school uniform and can also be purchased from Rough Cut Casuals.

Your child's name **MUST** be put on all their clothing, shoes and hats because on occasion garments can be mislaid and it is very difficult to identify unnamed articles of uniform. This is the responsibility of parents and guardians. If your child loses an article of clothing and their name is not on it, we may not be able to find it.

Spare Clothes

Please provide a change of clothes including underwear for your child in a bag with your child's name on. This does not have to be school uniform.

Jewellery

For health and safety reasons children are **not allowed** to wear jewellery. If they must wear earrings these should be studs or very small "sleepers".

Home/School Books

In Nursery we aim to encourage enjoyment of books. Children are therefore able to choose a book to take home and share with their parents or carers. It is important to keep books in good condition and children **must** have a **Sacred Heart book bag** to keep their book in. These are available from Rough Cut Casuals.

Nursery Fund

We ask for a voluntary contribution of £1 a week that goes towards consumable items such as flour for play dough. This helps to keep your child's Nursery well resourced.

School Newsletter

Our school newsletter is available on our website and is also sent out via email every Friday. This keeps parents up to date with important information and events occurring in the school.

Friends of Sacred Heart (FOSH)

FOSH is a very active group which organises events and fundraises for the school. Information on FOSH meetings is detailed in the school's weekly newsletter and new parents are encouraged to become involved. There are also FOSH class representatives. Please ask the Nursery staff for more details.

Parent Meetings

Please feel free to discuss any issues or concerns with Nursery staff at the end of the day.

You will be invited to attend a parent meeting in the autumn term to meet with staff and discuss how your child is settling in at Nursery. In the spring term you will also be invited to a parent meeting to discuss your child's progress and in the summer term you will receive a yearly report recording your child's achievement.

Special Books

We keep an achievement record in the form of a "Special Book" which documents your child's progress while they are in the Nursery. This is a large scrap book where we

keep a record of the things your child has achieved such as paintings, photographs, writing, collages etc. Children are encouraged to include contributions from home in this "Special Book".

The children contribute to this book with an adult throughout the school year and you will be given an opportunity to look through your child's book at parent meetings. Your child will be able to take their "Special Book" home to keep at the end of Nursery.

Parent Contributions To Learning

We recognise the importance of home/school links and the role of parents and carers in children's learning. Much of our assessment in Nursery is through observation. We focus on a small group of children each week to ascertain and plan for their interests and needs. We would like parents to contribute to these observations and once a term will provide a sheet for you to fill in to tell us about the things your child has been doing or is interested in at home.

Moving To Reception

Children who come to Sacred Heart Nursery are not guaranteed a place in Reception. For Islington residents, admission to Reception must be made through Islington Council. Any other applications should be made through the Local Authority you live in.

First Aid

As children are involved in active play there are occasions when accidents do happen and children hurt themselves. All accidents that require treatment are recorded and parents are usually informed at the end of the day. If we feel there is cause for concern we will ring parents. There are qualified pediatric First Aiders in Nursery.

Contact Numbers

Should we need to contact you in an emergency it is very important that school has the correct contact numbers. Please inform the school immediately if your contact details change.

Nursery Curriculum

- For children between the ages of 3-5 years the Nursery provides a curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage of Education. This curriculum is set out in a document published by the Department for Education. The Nursery and Reception follow this guidance.
- The guidance sets out Early Learning Goals. These goals are the knowledge, skills and understanding young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five.
- For each Early Learning Goal there are Educational Programmes. These are the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children in order for them to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
- As a Catholic school we teach Religious Education. We use the Islington Catholic RE Project scheme, with units provided by Westminster Diocese. Further information is provided on page 18.

Learning and Development

■ There are seven areas of Learning and Development covered by the Early Learning Goals and Educational Programmes. Three areas are fundamentally important in the Early Years:

- **Communication and language** (listening, attention and understanding; speaking)
- **Physical development** (gross motor skills; fine motor skills)
- **Personal, social and emotional development** (self-regulation; managing self; building relationships)

These three areas (the prime areas) are key in promoting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, supporting children in their capacity to learn and encouraging children to form good relationships.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through activities and experiences in four specific areas:

- **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)

Further information for parents on the Early Years Foundation Stage can be found at www.foundationyears.org.uk.

Religious Education

- At Sacred Heart, as the foundation of our RE teaching, we follow the Islington Catholic RE Project scheme, with guidance provided by Westminster Diocese. This scheme is based on the teachings of the Catholic Church and is taught through different themes which offer opportunities for young children to explore and develop spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally. These themes promote caring values and attitudes, help to raise self-esteem and encourage children to make their own moral decisions based on their knowledge of the Catholic Faith and experience.

- We supplement the scheme's programme with information texts, artefacts, music and other materials. We celebrate Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and the Feast Day of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Father Francis, our parish priest, visits the children in the Nursery.

Importance of Play

Research has shown the importance of play in helping children to think, learn and develop. In Nursery we offer a rich environment that stimulates and encourages spontaneous play.

The environment promotes the Characteristics of Effective Learning through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically by allowing the children to:

- **Play and explore** - investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Actively learn** - concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Create and think critically** - have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We observe and record observations of children in order to assess their needs and interests and plan accordingly to extend their learning and development. We also use the Early Learning Goals and Programmes to provide a range of play activities which help children to make

progress in each of the areas of learning and development. Children in our Nursery work and play in a very stimulating environment and are exposed to a wide range of experiences.

We hope this booklet has been helpful in answering some of the questions you may have. If you have any more queries, please feel free to ask the staff during the home visit prior to your child starting. We understand that this time can be difficult for parents, and we are here to support the whole family.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our school. We hope that you and your child enjoy their time here at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School.

Maria O'Mahoney
Nursery Manager