

# Parent Handbook

## Holiday Childcare



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## Welcome

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At Blossom Tree we want to nurture children's curiosity, imagination and development through a nature-based curriculum, fostering a safe, supportive environment. Our practice is Waldorf inspired which influences our educational ethos and approach.

Guided by our warm and supportive team, we create a safe, engaging space where each child can explore, grow, and thrive at their own pace.

We aim to nurture children's nature.

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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As an early years provider we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which has 4 overarching principles. Our practice weaves together EYFS principles and Waldorf philosophy:

- **Unique Child:** We honor every child's individuality.
- **Positive Relationships:** Secure attachments with adults foster confidence.
- **Enabling Environments:** Nature-based, sensory-rich spaces support deep learning.
- **Learning & Development:** Rooted in play, imitation, and practical activities.

These principles are demonstrated throughout this handbook.

## Nature-based Curriculum

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Our curriculum is connected to nature, which means that our activities, songs, festivals and resources relate to the great outdoors for example making clay candle holders or lanterns in the autumn, weaving and threading with wool or felt in the winter to planting throughout the spring and summer.

By connecting our curriculum to nature, we aim to support children's meaningful learning about the world around them in a way that emulates the gentle, slow pace of nature's seasons. We believe this gives children time, energy and space to learn independently, explore their own interests and develop at their own pace (The Unique Child).

Our focus on nature means that the majority of our physical resources are made from natural fibers such as wood, cotton or wool. These resources are simple in their design as to foster children's imaginative play or are everyday objects such as pots and pans. Due to the open-ended opportunities of our resources (Enabling environments) children's play naturally encompasses the characteristics of effective learning which are, thinking critically, being engaged and motivated (EYFS). When children's play engages these 3 characteristics, they build confidence, learn creatively and develop their skills.

## Teaching

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Lead by a qualified Early Years Teacher and supportive team, we create a safe, engaging space where each child can learn and develop at their own pace. While the environment is valued as the child's first teacher and children's independent play in these environments is seen as the most authentic (enabling environment). Children still require a skilled and tuned-in adult to guide and support their continual development through awe and wonder (positive relationships).

Our approach to teaching has two branches, breathing in and breathing out. This idea of breathing in and out is a metaphor that leads our sessions routine, with moments when the child breathes out

which is self-directed free play to moments of breathing in which is moments led by an adult.

During children's free play, adults will act as models providing an example for the children to follow. This is because we believe that children between 0 -7 years old learn through imitation and participation of purposeful activities. Therefore, during children's free play (breathing out), adults shall be busy preparing the daily snack, mending and maintaining toys or gardening. During these activities children can observe, participate and be curious with the adult, wondering about the resources and skills needed for the task at hand. Additionally, by modeling care for others and the environment children can take ownership and build a sense of belonging which further supports their learning and development.

Adult led activities or moments (breathing in) are planned then implemented over a 2 to 3 week blocks that are linked to nature and the children's current and emerging interest and developmental needs. The gentle influence of teaching in these blocks let children build their own connections to the subject; be that through the songs, crafts, food, stories or discovering their own wonders in the inspiring environment.

# Rhythm

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Consistency within the daily, weekly and yearly routine ensures a strong foundation for children to feel secure and grounded in the session. The repetition becomes a rhythm which the child can anticipate and depend upon. Again this builds on the idea of children having moments to breathe in and out during the session.

Our typical daily routine looks like:

- Outdoor play (activity / bush-craft)
- Snack
- Circle time
- Indoor play (craft/ cooking)
- Story
- Lunch
- Outdoor play
- Snack

The transitions between each daily elements are accompanied with songs and supported by adults. This gentle flow and consistency supports children's self-regulation and its simplicity and connection to a physical process is implicitly natural.

Our typical weekly routine looks like:

Tuesday	Watercolour painting	Porridge with honey & apples	Corn cakes with cheese
Wednesday	Bread making	Rice & seeds with apples	Oatcakes with hummus
Thursday	Wax crayon drawing	Homemade vegetable soup & rolls with apples	Rice cakes with jam

Children come to learn the days of the week and the routine, fondly referring to the day of the week by its activity or snack.

## Sessions

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We are open from 8.15 to 17.45 Tuesday to Thursday, providing holiday childcare to children aged 2 to 5-years. We aim to offer a home from home experience through the mixed age group and smaller group size (18 children per session).

To support children's wellbeing we have a minimum attendance of 4 sessions over the 4 weeks.

### Private sessions

We offer 3 core session lengths between 8.15 to 17.45 which are customisable to meet your childcare needs.

Session	9.15am – 2.15pm	£36.00
School session	9.15am – 3.45pm	£46.80
Day	9.15am – 5.45pm	£61.20
Session +	8.15am – 2.15pm	£43.20
School session +	8.15am – 3.45pm	£54.00
Full day	8.15am – 5.45pm	£68.40

### Invoicing

To confirm your child's place we ask for a 30% deposit and the remaining balance can be paid:

- In Full for a 5% discount
- Via Payment plan (up to 4 payments)

## Collection

Parents are required to notify staff of any delays to collecting. Repeated failure to notify or collect on time will result in a penalty fee of £5.00 per 5 minutes late (rounded up).

If another adult is collecting your child you must notify us in advance of them collecting. We will need their full name and a password of your choosing. On collection the adult will need to bring ID that matches their name and provide password.

# Clothing & what to bring

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Children spend significant time outdoors in all weather, so appropriate clothing is essential. Please provide a full change of clothes for your child in case of accidents. We also ask that children's clothes be colourful, have limited logos or images and suitable for playing in.

- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- wellies or closed-toe shoes (not laced)
- Sun hat
- long-sleeved light top and trousers

## Other Essentials:

- Spare set of clothes in a named bag (please label your children's clothing)
- Nappies and wipes (if still toilet training)
- Rubber-soled slippers (indoor shoes)
- Any comfort items needed for rest time

## Snack & Packed lunches:

Snack time is an important part of our day: it provides opportunities for children to come together, share food, and develop key social, communication, and physical skills. For this reason, we encourage families to support their child's development by contributing. If you do not wish to make a contribution, we ask that you provide a healthy snack alternative that meets our nutrition policy.

We require that your child bring with them a healthy and nutritious packed lunch (as per our food and nutrition policy). This should be insulated and have a cooling method (such as an ice-pack) to keep it

fresh.

We recommend something substantial and filling like a sandwich/ wrap or pasta with a small homemade treat. Chocolate, sweets and highly sugary foods are not acceptable and shall be returned home and a £3.00 fee for the provision of a healthy alternative.

We shall keep you up to date of any allergies which may restrict the foods you provide where necessary.

## Health and Illness

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To ensure the health and wellbeing of all our children, families and staff, please inform us of any contagious illnesses and keep your child at home if they are unwell.

### **We ask that you keep your child at home until:**

- A minimum of an 48 hours after the last episode of sickness/diarrhea has passed,
- They are Fever-free for 24 hours without medication,
- Free from any contagious symptoms (e.g., chickenpox, conjunctivitis)

### **In Case of Illness at Setting:**

- Parents or an emergency contact will be informed immediately
- Children will be cared for in a quiet area until collected

### **Our medication policy states that children may attend the setting:**

- 24 hours after the first administration of a prescribed medication is taken at home,
- And they are deemed, by staff, well enough to attend.

### **We can administer prescribed medication as long as:**

- We have written consent from the parent to do so
- The medication is clearly labeled with the child's details and dosage

We are able to administer paracetamol, antihistamines or medicated nappy cream and other medications with parents consent.

However, if we feel your child is not well enough to attend the setting we will require you to collect them. We do not accept cough syrup as a medication and therefore will not administer it during the session.

Staff are trained in the administration of medication and hold paediatric first aid certificates.

# Self-care & Toileting

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We do feel that children should have started engaging in self-care prior to attending our setting as they will need to be able to get themselves changed from outside to inside attire without much support from an adult. This involves changing footwear, taking off waterproofs and washing hands. These are life skills that promote children's self-esteem and well-being and essential to children's school-readiness.

We appreciate that some children may not be toilet trained yet and we will support you and your child through this transition. Ideally, children will have begun this process at home where they are comfortable and have more time and space to start mastering the toilet. We will have potties, steps and toilet seats available to support and promote children's independence when using the toilet and washing their hands.

## Policy and procedure overview

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We have a comprehensive set of policies to ensure the safety, inclusion, and well-being of every child. These are available for parents to view on request.

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Equal Opportunities & Inclusion (SEND)
- Health & Safety, Risk Assessment
- Food and Nutrition
- Medication
- Data Protection and Confidentiality
- Complaints and Concerns Procedure

## Contact & communication

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We value ongoing dialogue with parents. Please don't hesitate to speak with us about any questions or concerns.

### **Communication Channels:**

- Daily informal conversations
- Scheduled parent meetings
- Social media (Facebook)

Please keep us informed of any changes in contact details, health needs, or family circumstances.



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