

BEST Preschool Parent Handbook

Thank you for your interest in BEST Preschool services.

You are further invited to use BEST Preschool parent handbook material for a detailed summary on curriculum, procedures, and recommendations:

1. British Curriculum details:

At BEST Preschool we use *The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework* that is the statutory framework in England and Wales which sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

Children need all their senses to be stimulated and activities should be provided that cater for auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic learners. Children also need to access the curriculum both indoors and out.

The Early Years Foundation stage is made up of seven areas of learning and development. These seven areas are presented as separate areas, but they intertwine as almost all learning in the EYFS is cross-curricular. The seven areas are divided into Prime and Specific Areas.

The 3 Prime areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal Social and Emotional Development

The 4 Specific Areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding of the World

Arts and Design

Communication and Language

Involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

This area provides children with opportunities for speaking and listening and ignites children's interest in reading and writing. To give children the best opportunities for developing Communication and Language, positive relationships support children to communicate their ideas and thoughts with each other and with adults. Enabling environments contain signs, symbols, words, songs and notices. They also have books and pictures that consider interests, backgrounds, and cultures.

CL is made up of these aspects:

- Listening and attention
- Understanding
- Speaking

Physical Development

Involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

It develops understanding of the importance of being physically active and eating healthily. To give children the best opportunities through positive relationships children are supported in their understanding of exercise, sleep and eating to promote health.

PD is made up of these aspects:

- Moving and Handling
- Health and Self-Care

Personal Social and Emotional Development

Involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

This area develops children's positive sense of themselves. It teaches about having respect for oneself and others, developing social skills and a good attitude to learning.

To give children the best opportunities through positive relationships, adults form caring relationships with all children. In Enabling Environments opportunities for play and learning are created that help children embrace differences between themselves and others. Learning and Development experiences are planned to promote all round development.

PSED is made up of these aspects:

- Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness
- Managing Feelings and Behaviour
- Making Relationships

Literacy

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Literacy is made up of these aspects:

- Reading
- Writing

Mathematics

Involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding, and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. This area supports children's understanding in different situations by providing opportunities to explore, practice, learn and talk. They practice skills and gain confidence and competence. To give children the best opportunities through positive relationships children use mathematical words and ideas in their play. Enabling Environments have resources for counting, calculating and shape available indoors and outdoors.

In Learning and Development, stories, songs, and imaginative play help with mathematical understanding.

Mathematics is made up of these aspects:

- Numbers
- Shape, Space and Measures

Understanding the World

Involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology, and the environment.

This area offers children opportunities to explore and observe the environment, living things and objects. To give children the best opportunities through positive relationships, parent's knowledge extends children's experiences of the world. In Enabling Environments, open-ended questions like, "How can we...?" and "What would happen if...?" are used. Learning and Development is based on first-hand experiences to observe, predict, make decisions and discuss.

UW is made up of these aspects:

- People and Communities
- The World
- Technology

Expressive Arts and Design

Involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

This area supports children's curiosity and play. To give children the best opportunities through positive relationships children value their own unique ideas and those of others rather than reproducing those of someone else.



Enabling Environments are stimulating, and originality and expressiveness are valued. Learning and Development experiences allow children to express themselves through various types of representation.

EAD is made up of these aspects:

- Exploring and Using Media and Materials
- Being Imaginative

2. English Only Policy

Most of our families do not have English as their first language, and they have chosen this school for their children to acquire the language. English is the only language used throughout the school. (The only exception is when a child is distressed and staff may use the child's mother tongue to soothe them). It is not taught as a separate subject, instead children are immersed in the language.

3. Policies and Procedures: How is your child doing?

If children follow the normal developmental patterns, you will not hear anything from the staff i.e., 'no news is good news'. However, if there are any issues staff will come to you to discuss them. We take a joint approach to solving difficulties if the school and the family work together great progress can be made. During each day staff make observations, formal and informal, on the children. They keep records of children's development in all areas (physical, social, emotional, and intellectual). Then, each term, parent/teacher interviews are organised and parents make an appointment* to formally discuss their child (the child should not be present).

You will receive a summary of your child's development in advance, so you have time to review the report and decide which areas you want to clarify.

*Please note appointments must be kept at the time arranged. It is not possible to offer additional appointments to parents who are late or have forgotten.

4. Special Educational Needs

Should your child's teacher feel that your child is having difficulty accessing the curriculum you will be asked to attend a meeting with the teacher. If a child is not following the normal developmental pattern, in an area of learning, we will start discussions with the parents to address any issues. It is a requirement that the parents work with the school for the benefit of the child. If all strategies have been exhausted and the school is unable to meet the needs of the child, the school retains the right to recommend to parents that they seek an alternative facility where their child's needs can best be met. Alternatively, in cases where the child's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children or when parents refuse to collaborate with the school, BEST Preschool reserves the right to withdraw the child's place in school.

5. School Calendar

The school year starts at the beginning of September and is divided into three terms:

Autumn Term (September to December),

Spring Term (January to March or April),

Summer Term (May to June).

There are usually 180 teaching days in the year. The length of each term varies depending on public holidays. Please refer to the school calendar for details.

6. Drop off and Pick up.

The classroom doors will open at 8.45 and all children are **expected to be in their classrooms by 9 AM** ready to start their day. Lateness should always be avoided .

In the first 10 minutes the teacher will outline the learning focus for the day. Therefore, it is essential for children to be on time. If there is a situation which is unavoidable, please inform the office as soon as possible.

Please note that you are responsible for your child until handed over to a member of staff. Children should not be left unattended.

Collection on time is also very important. At the end of the morning session staff must organise lunches and perform other duties. At the end of the afternoon session there are often meetings or training courses which the staff need to attend. *More importantly, if you do not arrive on time and all the other children have gone home then a child often becomes distressed.*

Repeated latecomers will be asked to pay a supervision fee at an hourly rate.

7. School Schedule

We offer part time sessions (8.45 am—12.15 pm) and full-time sessions (8.45am—3.30 pm). Even if you start on part time you may ask to go to a full-time schedule at any point (this does not apply to the under 2 years group). The teacher will tell you if your child is ready for a longer day. If you are not sure, you can add one full day at a time to see if your child is ready for this next step.

Teaching takes place throughout the day and children do not sleep in the afternoon.

Extended classes are available daily for the full-time programme, between 3.30 pm and 5.30 pm.

Extending the school day

We offer an extended day care facility from 8am—8.45am (3 Euros per day). If you do not opt for extended classes, there are afterschool clubs for the older children. These clubs finish at 4.15 pm.

8. Lunches and Snacks

Children who stay all day have a hot lunch at 12.15pm. **There is no additional cost for this.**

Snacks

During the morning and afternoon session the children have a small, simple snack. This is provided by the school and includes a healthy option recommended depending on season type by our nutritionist collaborator. At other times, the class food preparation activity (part of the curriculum) may provide the snack, or a snack may be chosen to support the learning objective. For example, if the children were looking at shapes, they may cut out circles from carrots or apples or cut triangular shaped sandwiches.

Wednesday is Parent Contribution Day and each week we will ask you to contribute something that supports the learning objective of the lessons taught that specific week. The teacher will let you know in advance what this could be.

All lunch and snacks menus are provided daily by Stejariei Pool Club restaurant, using top ingredients to ensure high quality of meals for learners.

9. Birthdays

Birthdays will be acknowledged and the class will know who is celebrating. A cake may be sent to school with candles along with a certificate from the bakery. We apologise but we will not accept homemade cakes.

Parents may leave a camera and a photograph of your child blowing the candles out will be taken. Our policy does not allow for balloons, hats, presents or other sweets besides the birthday cake. If a child is having a birthday party, we will distribute the invitations only if all children in the class are invited.

10. Clubs

Our school offers a variety of afterschool clubs which take place from 3:30-4:15 pm. Some clubs take place at Stejariei Country Club and are led by the facility's teachers.

One of our members of staff always accompany the children to Stejariei Country Club for these clubs. Other clubs take place onsite and are offered by our class teachers.

11. Educational visits

Every term BEST Preschool teachers will organise educational visits in and around Bucharest that will be carefully planned for. These trips are an important part of our curriculum as they help

reinforce information and concepts linked to a current area of study. Anything that will take place outside of the Stejarii complex will be organised well in advance and you will be asked for your permission. A risk assessment will be made in advance and ratios of children to adults will be adjusted to the specific need. These will also vary according to the age of the children. Due to the road conditions in Bucharest, we may call on parents to help with transport.

12. Health Care

The school employs the services of a full-time nurse practitioner. The school nurse performs regular general checks on all the children in the school. **Please note we do not administer any medications while in school.** Children are expected to have all immunisations up to date.

Romanian law requires a medical certificate at the beginning of each academic year.

Please inform the school about any allergies your child may have or other illness they suffered in the past.

Please consider the well-being of other learners in your child's class; if your child is sick, please do not send them to school. If a child is not well enough to go outdoors, then we please ask that they stay at home. If your child was absent from school for more than 3 consecutive days, they need to present a note from the doctors to say that they are fit to re-enter the school's community. If children are vomiting or have an upset stomach or diarrhoea, they are required to stay at home for 48 hours after their last incident or until symptoms have cleared, to ensure we are not allowing for bacteria to spread. If your child becomes ill during the school day, we will inform you of the situation and suggest a course of action. In most cases parents will be required to come and collect the child.

If we have a clear diagnosis of an infectious disease, we will alert parents so that they can watch for the signs. Advice for parents is available on the parent's noticeboard or in the office.

What we do as a school to stay healthy

- Maintain a clean environment: disinfect toys and surfaces
- Make sure children and staff wash hands properly
- Make sure that areas are well ventilated and that children play outside regularly (fresh air)
- Teach children to cover their mouths when they cough, or sneeze then wash their hands afterwards
- Or teach children how to cough or sneeze into their elbow
- Show children how to blow their noses with a clean tissue
- Alert parents when they notice a child is unwell

What can the parent do?

- Show children how to wash their hands properly
- Teach children to cover their mouths when they cough, or sneeze then wash their hands afterwards
- Or teach children how to cough or sneeze into their elbow

- Show children how to blow their noses with a clean tissue and then discard it safely
- Keep children at home if they are unwell and especially if their coughing is bad
- Check with the doctor before returning your child to school
- Make sure your child gets plenty of fruit, vegetables and fresh air

13. COVID-19 health and safety enhanced protocols

What to know

Health and safety are our top priority and to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, we've added new measures to our standard procedures. Here are just some of the new protocols we will be following, in agreement with the Authority Guidelines and announced procedures:

Health checks upon entry – Before any child enters the building, they must go through a health screening – including a temperature check - to ensure they are showing no symptoms of illness. Please consider a thorough health screening of your children at home and acknowledge the fact that our nurse will decide to send any child home if they see any symptom of illness.

If fever and/or other Covid-19 symptoms are present, access on BEST Preschool premises will be restricted; to re-join the school activities, it is mandatory that the child brings a medical certificate.

Fever and/or other COVID-19 symptoms refers to: A “fever” is a body temperature at or above 37.3°C. The “other COVID-19 symptoms” include coughing and difficulty breathing in severe cases. It is also recognised that other symptoms may be present including sore throat, body aches, runny nose and gastro-intestinal manifestations not associated with food (diarrhoea, vomiting and/or nausea) lack of taste and smell.

Children and parents will go directly home. They will not congregate in common areas or outside, on school grounds (parking area, front grass area, walkway towards school entrance, etc.).

NOTE: Comprehensive cleaning and sanitising will begin daily at the end of the school programme. Additionally, UV-C lamps will remain on after the school personnel will leave the building.

Staff wearing face coverings – All staff members are required to wear a face covering throughout the day in all indoor areas and outdoors.

Sanitation Procedures – We've always implemented strict cleaning and sanitation procedures, but now there are new considerations, such as: cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces several times throughout the day, UVC lamps. Disinfecting solutions available on the hallways, reception area, classrooms, toilets and offices.



Limiting Foot Traffic – While we love having family members and special guests visit our classrooms, we do not allow visitors currently while the children are in school. Visitors are only allowed after 15:30 hrs., under strict hygiene conditions and with a confirmed appointment.

Parents are not allowed to enter the campus while children are in school. Should you need to make an appointment for meetings with our staff members, please reach out to our Office Manager.

Wellness Checks – Our staff (teaching and non-teaching) are trained to spot any symptoms of illness, and they shall conduct wellness checks throughout the entire day.

Increased Hand-Washing – We know handwashing is one of the easiest ways to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria, and our staff and learners will practise proper handwashing throughout the day.

Social Distancing – We are social distancing as often as we are able to do so. For example, we are spacing children out during classes and play to ensure that they keep the recommended distance apart.

Organising the so-called class bubbles – learners will only use their assigned classrooms and work areas, with individual resources and cleaning protocols for used toys/books/materials that cannot be ensured individually. Bubbles also imply:

Meals are served in the lunchroom with each class going in at a different time which has been allocated.

Specialised clubs will be offered to each individual class taking into consideration the current COVID 19 situation children from different classes will not be mixed for clubs.

Physical Education will be held outdoors whenever possible; if not possible, the gym equipment will be disinfected between different groups/classes.

Continued Communication with Families – we've always made it a priority to ensure strong communication with our school families, and these times are no exception. Any time we hear news about a COVID-19-related matter at our school, we will immediately notify you.

Transparency is a point of pride at BEST Preschool, and we know this is important now, more than ever.

What to bring on the first day of kindergarten

Medical certificate and a copy of the child's vaccinations from your Family Doctor / Paediatrician. Please note that the certificate (Ro: aviz de intrare în colectivitate) must be issued with a maximum of three days before the first day of school. For returning families who have already given us a copy of the child's vaccinations we will just need an updated form if the child has had any new vaccinations since the last copy was sent to school.

List of necessary items: a set of labelled indoor shoes, a complete set of labelled spare clothes (underwear, t-shirt, long sleeved shirt, socks, shorts, and trousers), hats for sunny weather, mosquito repellent and sunscreen lotion, a set of forest clothes (waterproof) and rubber wellies.

Affidavit "Declarație pe propria raspundere"

If a student or member of staff shows fever and/or other COVID-19 symptoms while at school:

- the teacher will inform the nurse and keep all learners in their seats, the child will be taken to the designated room by the nurse;
- the Nurse will notify the parents to pick up the child as soon as possible;
- The child's parents are advised to require a medical consultation - paediatrician / family doctor and to communicate the diagnosis to us as soon as possible;
- The medical staff can inform the parents of the specific group/class (or adjacent groups) by email depending on the medical situation;
- To re-join kindergarten, the child who has been suspected of Covid-19 infection, will be made only based on an epidemiological certificate issued by the family doctor/pediatrician, regardless of the number of days of absence.

If the individual is a teacher or other staff member the same measures will be applied, that is:

- that person is directed to his family doctor and allowed back to the workplace based on a favourable medical opinion.

With our strong health and safety protocols, we know we can help prevent the spread of illness and provide a clean, safe environment for our community.

If your child receives any type of medical treatment for an accident that occurs in the school, you will be informed immediately by phone. For serious accidents, the school will call the ambulance and will inform the parents.

15. Attendance

Your child's attendance is extremely important. Absences must be kept to an absolute minimum to ensure success at school. Parents are requested to call the school before 9am if a child is going to be absent on that day. Returning to school after an extended absence can be difficult for children and put them at a disadvantage in relation to peers who attend regularly.

A child should attend school for at least 70% of the term to qualify for a report.

16. Assessment

Assessment in EYFS enables the teacher to track the interests, abilities, and development of the children. We assess children on a regular basis using observations. We encourage parents to all send observations from home. A photo with a caption of your child's achievements will be placed on our WOW Wall commending excellent achievements that take place outside of school also. Children are assessed using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which is a statutory document. Each child will be given a full written report twice per school year. The report offers details about your child's achievements in each area of the curriculum. Three formal parent - teacher meetings are scheduled each school year. Our school has an open-door policy and we are happy to meet and discuss any concerns you may have with a prior scheduled meeting with the class teacher or head of school.

17. Behaviour

We encourage and reward sensible, responsible, and courteous behaviour. We encourage our learners to be respectful, kind and always caring. The school has an ethos of positive behaviour management. There are systems in place that all children are made aware of. These include verbal praise or a smile, written comments on children's work, sharing work with others and stickers. Bullying is taken very seriously and is under no circumstance accepted. In such incidents parents will be contacted and invited for a meeting with the head of school to discuss this matter and to find solutions.

18. Footwear

Children **do not need** to change their footwear on entering school each day.

'Wellies' (rubber boots) must be left at school as we explore our forest every day. Please write your child's name inside the boots.

19. Our outside garden and facilities

BEST Preschool has developed an extensive outdoor area dedicated to outdoor play and physical education. Learners benefit from a variety of child-designed features, providing them access to a running track, mini-tennis, mini-basketball, and mini-football areas. Our goal is to deliver daily outdoor activities for our learners.

20. Our Forest Experience approach

A Forest Experience is an innovative educational approach to outdoor play and learning in a woodland environment. The philosophy behind this approach is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences over an extended period.

The original concept was developed in Sweden and became established in the UK in the 1950's and it has since extended throughout the world.

It is becoming increasingly recognised that this 'outdoor' approach to learning and play can have a significant effect on the natural development of children. In the outdoors children have a larger range of choices for play in nature and it was found that children played for longer amounts of time. Outside air is almost always better than indoors, therefore a child is less likely to be exposed to a virus and bacteria.

Opportunities in outdoor settings allow children to develop a range of life skills: independence, self-awareness, altruism, and social communication skills, all of which assist individuals to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Participants gain confidence in their own ability. Kinesthetic learners are particularly suited to learning in this woodland outdoor environment.

BEST Preschool will utilise the fabulous forest setting and will adopt part of the aspects of forest schools within its Forest Experience. The children will go outside every day and take advantage of the excellent outdoor facilities. It is only in extreme weather conditions that they will stay indoors the whole day.

Suitable clothing is required so children can climb, crawl, build, jump, run, pull, push, ride, create, and enjoy all that the outdoors has to offer.

Some examples of clothes suitable for exploring the forest:



Thank you for your attention.
BEST Preschool