



Information Sheets

Information Sheet 1 ORGANISATION AND FINANCE

Mulberry Bear Day Nursery and Pre-School is constituted as an independent company, limited by guarantee and without share capital. It is also registered by the Charity Commissioners as a charitable organisation (registered charity no.278304). Details of the company are contained in the Articles and Memorandum of Association, a copy of which is available for reference from the University library and the Chair of the Management Committee.

Members of the Association elect the Management Committee annually at an AGM. Please note that parents and guardians do not automatically become members. If you wish to vote at the AGM or stand for election to the Committee, you must sign the register of members. You will be invited to do this when your child joins the Nursery.

The Management Committee consists of a maximum of ten ordinary members, of whom four are officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer); a further two ordinary members may be co-opted. The Nursery Manager is an *ex officio* member of the Committee.

The Open University's General Purposes Fund provided a grant to cover the cost of the conversion of the original building in the late 1970s and has also made a number of grants over the years towards specific items, such as new and replacement equipment. At present the University provides some support through the Fee Subsidy Scheme for members of its staff who use the Nursery. Details of how fees are calculated are given on the Information Sheet 5: Fees.

The Nursery is independent of The Open University and is wholly dependent on fees, fundraising and grants for its finance. Fundraising plays an important part in developing the Nursery's facilities and parents are asked to help with this as far as possible.
Note: The Nursery's independence means that there is no connection between your University work and any aspect of the nursery provision.

Demand is high for the places in the Nursery, especially for babies. This means that a waiting list operates for parents and guardians who have applied for a place. Generally, admissions are made on a first-come, first-served basis, determined by the date on the application form. However, priority is given to children who have older siblings already attending the Nursery and also to the children of staff members.



Information Sheet 2 ATTENDANCE HOURS AND DATES

Mulberry Bear Nursery is open to children from 8.30a.m, Monday to Friday.
From Monday to Thursday, the nursery closes at 6.00p.m.
On Fridays it closes at 5.30p.m.

Within the hours noted above, attendance is flexible and can be varied within limits to suit your needs. This is subject, of course, to the hours for which your child has a place allocated. In general, it is best for children coming in the mornings to join their group before 10.00a.m. so that they can join in the full routine. You can be more flexible over when you collect your child.

Please keep within the opening times!

After 6.00p.m., staff are not able to stay to care for children collected late. It is not a happy experience for a child to be the only one left, with members of staff, after everyone else has gone.

A fee of £3.25 will be charged for any time up to ten minutes late. Parents who arrive to collect their children more than 10 minutes after the Nursery closes will incur a fine. This is currently £10.00 and is charged directly with your fees.

Please phone us if you know you are going to be late or delayed.

The Nursery is open every week, except for those dates when the University is closed for public holidays and the closure at Christmas. There are four further closure days, which give an essential opportunity for building and equipment maintenance, and for staff to discuss and plan future activities and policies. These are usually two days during the Easter period and two days during the October school half-term break.

Places for children can be on either a full-time or part-time basis. Part-time places for babies are normally either two or three full days per week. For toddlers and top-enders, more flexible arrangements may be possible subject to the availability of places.

Parents who apply for a part-time place will generally be offered a place if a 'partner' can be found to fill the remaining sessions each week (i.e. to restore the place to a full-time equivalent), or if the parent is willing to pay for a full-time place until a suitable 'partner' can be found. In the Baby Room usually no more than two babies can 'share' a full-time place, but above the age of 18 months the division of places into part-time fractions will be at the discretion of the Nursery Manager. It is the responsibility of the Nursery Manager and the Waiting List Manager to match up 'partners' to share a place, and to find a new partner if one leaves.

Please note that fees for part-time places are payable per session used. A morning session runs from 8.30am to 1.00pm, and an afternoon session from 1.30pm to 6.00pm. Part-time places are fixed arrangements and the sessions used cannot vary from week to week.



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Information Sheet 3 THE NURSERY BUILDING

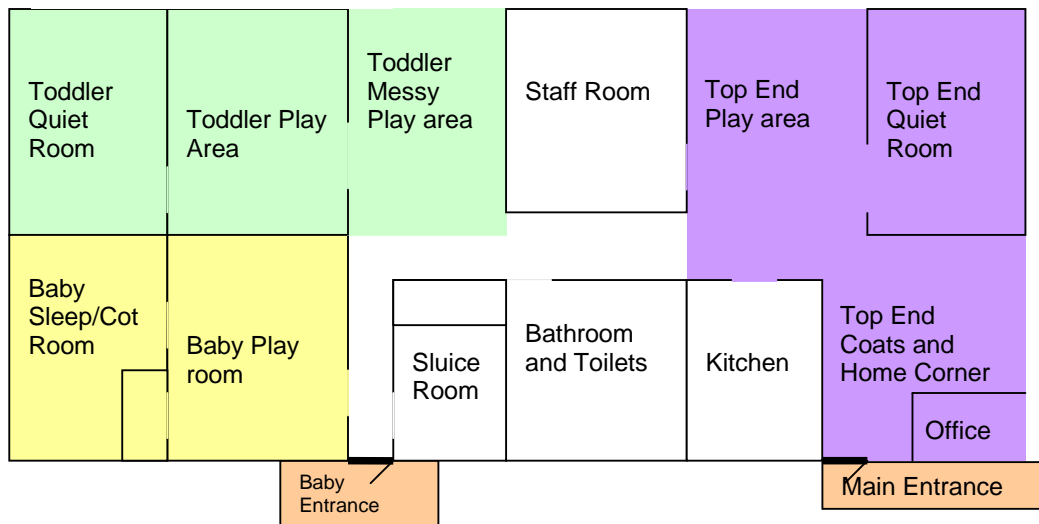
The internal layout of the Nursery was planned specifically with the needs of this form of day-care in mind. There are numerous legal requirements relating to amounts of floor space per child, and provision of facilities such as toilets and sinks, etc., and these provided the starting point for planning the layout. The design aimed to combine the advantages of an **open plan building**, its ease of rearrangement and supervision, with the need for a number of small areas within which children could feel at home. The larger areas are rearranged at different times of the day to allow for different activities.

A laundry and sluice room provides full facilities for laundry. A small kitchen allows parents to heat food, if they wish, using either a microwave oven or a cooker. There is also a fridge for the storage of food. **Please read and follow instructions on all notices around the kitchen.** Please label all food with your child's name.

The whole of the Nursery is centrally heated by low surface temperature radiators, which provide even temperatures throughout the Nursery. Light clothes are all that are required for inside wear.

There is a large garden which is part grass, part all-weather surface. It has many facilities including a covered area for external play in wet weather. The toddlers have the use of a conservatory for a variety of activities in both summer and winter. **Parents should supply suitable clothing and footwear for outdoor play according to the time of year.**

Layout of Nursery





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Information Sheet 4 THE AGE GROUPS

The Nursery is equipped and staffed to provide for children from 3 months old up to the age of compulsory schooling. In common with many other forms of nursery provision, the Nursery's children are grouped into three age bands: babies, toddlers and older children. There are 9 baby places, 19 toddlers and approximately 24-26 top-enders at any one time.

Babies are those children between 3 and approx. 18 months old who require cot sleep during the day, nappies and special feeding.

Toddlers are aged between approx. 18 months and approx. 3 years, are being toilet trained, and may need an afternoon sleep period.

Top End, or older, children are normally between 3 and 5 years old, toilet trained and able to feed themselves. Normally they will not need an afternoon sleep, although there is always an hour's quiet time after lunch and older children may sleep in the story or quiet corner.

Age is not the sole criterion for a child's placement into one of these groups, or for moving a child up from one group to the next. Rather, it is their developmental readiness for the different activities and expectations of the groups.

Each age group has its own area within the Nursery, with appropriate furnishing, toys and equipment. At any time, there will always be at least one member of staff with a responsibility for each group.

Whenever possible, opportunities are provided for children from different groups to come together for specific activities. For example, Toddlers and Top Enders regularly play together outside.

In partnership with parents, staff will help to decide which group is most suitable for a child at a particular time. Staff have a lot of experience and knowledge of the different demands each group makes of children, and will recommend the group most suited to a child's stage of development.

Foundation stage record transfer sheets, records of achievement and the under threes observational files will be shared with other settings the children move on to with parents consent.



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Information Sheet 5 FEES

The Nursery is an independent charitable company. Fees are set at a level that enables costs, on the basis of annual projections of expenditure, to be paid. The Management Committee aims to increase the fees only as needed when costs rise, and no more often than once every six months.

Fees are calculated, and charged, on a monthly basis. Costs over the year are predicted, and divided by 12 to arrive at the monthly figure. Fee payment is by direct debit from salary in advance: you must complete a direct debit mandate before your child starts at the Nursery. Please ask in the Nursery for this form if you have not received one. Fee deduction is administered by the University's Finance Division, and overseen by the Nursery Manager.

Fees are not normally refundable. In exceptional circumstances, any changes to the fees will be at the discretion of the Nursery Manager. If a place has to be kept open for your child, the Nursery has to meet the costs of keeping that place vacant. If you do not wish to keep a place open during a long absence, you will normally rejoin the waiting list in the same way as a new applicant, unless you are away on study or sabbatical leave or University business when you will rejoin the top of the waiting list.

- Please give the Nursery as much notice as possible of expected absences will keep staffing costs down.

There is a limited subsidy scheme available to provide assistance to parents in certain circumstances. Please ask the Nursery Manager for details.

Revisions of fee levels are announced at least one month before they come into effect. Parents are notified individually by letter.

Notice given by parents must be one month in writing. If sent by post, the parent must obtain a certificate of posting or send by recorded delivery. If handed to a member of staff, a receipt will be issued to the parent and a copy recorded in the child's personal file.



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Information Sheet 6 SECURITY

All families are issued with a swipe card to gain entry to the Nursery. Other cards are available on request. It is a requirement that a £5.00 deposit per card is paid upon receipt of the card(s). To keep your card safe, please keep it in your purse, wallet, etc.

To open the gates - hold up card, green light appears, and then the gate will be unlocked for 15 seconds. Please ensure that the gate is not opened further than 90° as it will then not close automatically.

To Exit - At each exit there is a discreet green button to press to unlock the gate automatically for 15 seconds.

Gate 1 - Baby Room Entrance (for parents of babies only)

The exit button is on the wooden support of the conservatory at eye level.

Gate 2 - Main Entrance / Garden Gate

The exit button is on the wooden support post of the overhead canopy near the wooden gate at eye level. Whenever possible please use the Main Entrance in preference to the Baby Room Entrance.

Please do not allow the children to press the buttons at any time.

If, on the odd occasion, you forget your Swipe Card - Please press the button at the Main Entrance gate, speak into the microphone and you will be let in.

- Please collect your swipe card from the office as soon as possible.
- If you lose a card you will not be entitled to your £5.00 deposit for that card.
- When your child leaves the Nursery, please return the swipe card(s) to be reimbursed your deposit(s).
- Please inform the Nursery immediately if you lose your swipe card as it is important to void the card as soon as possible.

There will be a further £5.00 deposit required to replace any lost swipe cards.



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Information Sheet 7 HEALTH, HYGIENE AND SAFETY

The Nursery aims to maintain high standards of health, hygiene and safety, and the co-operation of parents is essential in this. The Nursery does not have the facilities or staff to nurse sick children, who need individual attention. Therefore, all children who are ill should be kept away from the Nursery until they have fully recovered.

The 48-hour Rule

In some cases the Nursery has a rule that 48 hours must elapse after an illness before a child can return to the Nursery. This is especially important in the case of all infectious illnesses, such as sickness and diarrhoea, as one child's illness can so easily spread to other children and staff. It is only by keeping to this rule that we are able to avoid the risk of children being unnecessarily exposed to infection. This is particularly important as the Nursery caters for babies as well as older children. An example of the application of this rule is: if the last incidence of illness was at 4.00p.m on Monday, then the child should be excluded until 4.00p.m on Wednesday.

The Nursery has a trained first aider available to staff and parents for consultation on general aspects of childrens' health (also see posters on Nursery notice board), and we ask parents to accept the first aider's advice as to when a child is sufficiently unwell to be kept away. Having the first aider available means that immediate attention is on hand in the case of sudden illness or accident, and all necessary medical care can be provided very quickly. However, all normal health matters should be dealt with through your own doctor.

Please ensure your child has the necessary **vaccinations and immunisations** against childhood diseases at the correct ages. You will be asked to fill in a form with these details, and are further asked to keep us informed of any new vaccinations.

It is not normally possible for Nursery staff to take responsibility for giving children **prescribed medicines** while they are at the Nursery. You must do this yourself. However, if you are not able to administer medicine at the prescribed time, you may complete a medicine form beforehand, which authorises a member of staff to administer the medicine on your behalf. However, this does not apply to occasional doses of paracetamol (e.g. Calpol), which must be given by parents. If your child develops a mild temperature then you will be phoned and may come in and administer some paracetamol yourself.

In the case of **childhood infectious diseases**, we ask that you observe the following minimum isolation periods:

Conjunctivitis	24hrs has elapsed since medication has first been given
Mumps	7-10 days from appearance of swelling, if swelling has gone
Measles	7 days from rash appearance - provided rash has gone
German Measles	5 days from rash appearance
Chicken Pox	Until all spots have been replaced by dried-up scabs
Whooping Cough	28 days from first symptoms
Hand, Foot & Mouth	24-48hrs from first symptoms

Please treat these as *minimum* periods, and wait until your child is fully well before allowing them back to the Nursery.



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Important: Please let us know as soon as possible the details of any illness your child has, as we may wish to inform other parents of possible exposure.

It is, unfortunately, a feature of nursery life that simple colds are common amongst the children, particularly in the Autumn when the weather begins to turn cold. Headlice are also a recurrent problem, especially among the older children. Please check your child's hair every week and, in case of infection, please inform the Nursery Manager and treat it promptly. We are given regular advice by the Local Authority.

Minor bumps and scrapes are inevitable accidents in the lives of young children, and we cannot entirely prevent these. However, all play that involves such risks is always supervised by one or more members of staff. If your child has a minor accident a note will be made in an accident book. You will be asked to countersign this for our records. Ofsted also requires that any accident that 'marks a child outside the Nursery setting' (i.e. at home), is also recorded in the Nursery accident books by the parent and countersigned by staff. We would welcome parents' co-operation in this matter.

The Nursery has insurance cover against accidents sustained by children. Children are also covered by the University's third-party insurance.



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Information Sheet 8 SETTLING CHILDREN INTO THE NURSERY

It is important for both you and your child that you feel confident about your child being cared for in the Nursery. Children are very sensitive to their parents' feelings, any uncertainties you feel will be noticed by your child, and will make it more difficult for you to leave them happily. Part of building up confidence in the Nursery is getting to know the staff so that you can show your child that you are friendly with them and trust them to look after your child. Feel free to ask lots of questions to familiarise yourself with our routines, and do let us know of any concerns or worries you might have.

The first weeks when a child is settling in are of crucial importance to their later happiness in the Nursery, and extra care taken before and during this period will minimise difficulties later on.

Before your child starts at the Nursery, you can do some preparation by talking to them about some of the activities which they may particularly look forward to. It may also be helpful if they can join in preparing 'things to bring', such as labelled wellingtons, 'lunch' boxes etc. You may like to read with them one or more of the childrens' books that are available, which describes going to a nursery in children's terms.

It is good preparation, both for you and your child, if you can visit the Nursery together for short periods before you start settling them in. You could combine these visits with a visit to your usual place of work so that they have some idea of where your workplace is in relation to the Nursery.

You may wish to mention that you will be settling your child in at the Nursery to your immediate superiors at work. This will be a period when you need to be particularly responsive to your child's needs, and a little extra flexibility in working hours may be needed. You can explain that settling a child carefully will minimise calls on your time later on.

The settling-in period is a gradual introduction of the child to the Nursery, its children, activities, daily programme and the staff. It is also a gradual withdrawal of your presence, and these two aspects have to be carefully and sensitively balanced. At first, the Nursery is bound to be rather an overwhelming experience, particularly for children under 3, and for those who have not had experience of a playgroup, childminder, or some other form of care outside the home. First children, and those from a small family may find settling in a bit more difficult. Your child's personality will certainly make a difference: some take to the change very easily, whilst others need more care and time.

At first, your child is going to need your support and presence to be able to cope with the new experience. This is why your first visits should be short and you should not try to leave your child at all. However, you can use these visits constructively by talking with the staff and other children, and perhaps drawing your child into whatever activity is going on. It is worth stressing again that they will be particularly sensitive to how you relate to the staff: after all, you will be handing over to them before long, and your child must feel that you get on well.



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Do mention to the staff early on anything that may make it easier for them to respond to your child's special needs. For example, is there anything your child particularly likes or dislikes, are there any 'family words' for particular things, does your child have a special comforter and so on. Mention anything you feel may be relevant. There is no reason why your child shouldn't be with you when you do this; it will help them to see that you are concerned that they are well looked after.

Once you have acquainted yourselves with the Nursery (and the Nursery staff with you!) and you feel your child is ready to be left for a while, first mention this to the staff so they can be ready to provide any extra help that is needed. It is normally best to be open and straightforward with your child about leaving them. Slipping away when they are not looking can be very distressing to a child when they find out you have gone. For the first time, you are only going to be away a short while, so tell your child and the member of staff, then leave without hesitating. It is much harder for a child to deal with you leaving if you are obviously unsure and hovering. It may help if you give the child a minute or two's notice that you are leaving, so they can begin to get used to the idea.

Some tears may result, but usually these are very short-lived, and stop as soon as you are out of sight. When you think about it, tears are a good sign, and show how much you mean to your child. You will probably feel a bit wretched too, at leaving them.

After your child's first short spell without you in the Nursery, you will be able to discuss with the staff how to proceed with settling in, which is a gradual extension of your time away up to the full period your child will be spending in the Nursery. Staff will base their advice on how your child responds to your absence.

Virtually all children will settle in if this guidance is followed, and even if there are setbacks, your child is gradually getting used to what is a major change in their life. You will probably find that your child reacts in some way; they may be more clingy than usual, or they may be more rejecting. Both are normal reactions, and a little extra attention and love will help them to cope with these feelings.

If for some good reason, it is impossible for you to spend time settling in your child, you should arrange for a relation or friend who is well-known and liked by your child to do so. Parents are welcome in the Nursery, and many visit on a regular basis during their lunch hour when work commitments allow.

Please remember that when visiting the Nursery your child will look to you for care and control, and staff will only intervene where accepted safety rules are being challenged. Also note that any other children you bring with you will be considered to be under your control.

Due to the Nursery insurance cover, at the end of the nursery day, staff have to ensure that everyone is off Nursery property.