

Welcome to Gracehill Nursery Unit



Settling In

Information Booklet for Parents 2023-2024

Address: 19 Church Road, Gracehill, Ballymena BT42 2NL

Telephone Number: 028 25643482

Website: www.gracehillps.com



*Gracehill Primary School
Nursery Unit*

19 Church Road,
Gracehill.
BALLYMENA
BT42 2NL

Tel. 028 2564 3482

Fax. 028 2563 1878

Website: www.gracehillps.com

**Principal: Mr R McCombe
BSc(Hons) PGCE MEd PQH(NI)**

Dear Parent

I am delighted to be able to welcome you and your child to our Nursery Unit.

Please take some time to read this information booklet. We hope that this will answer most of the questions you may have. We will be happy to help you with the process of starting your child's education here at Gracehill and discuss the "Settling In" process.

The intake of children will be phased from Friday 25th August to allow staff time to meet you all and to get to know the children, most importantly for the children to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings.

You will find details about your child's starting procedure towards the back of this booklet in the Individual Timetable. Please keep this safe.

We look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Rowe
Acting Principal

GRACEHILL NURSERY UNIT

Information for Parents

History of Gracehill Primary School

Gracehill has a long association with education. The Moravian Church, which founded the original settlement, pioneered child centred education.

The Moravian Church began in Czechoslovakia in 1457 and spread to the British Isles during the early 1700's. Gracehill was founded through the work and preaching of the English Moravian Evangelist John Cennick.

The Moravians were always very keen on education and built schools wherever they went. At Gracehill the Moravians built four schools. These were The Ladies' School, the Boy's Academy (both boarding schools), a Primary School for Girls' and Primary School for Boys'.

The old school building, which was vacated in May 2000 was used for over a century as the Single Sisters' House and from 1931 until 2000 housed the present primary school. We were then moved to our current site. The Nursery Unit opened in 2004 and continues in the proud traditions of the education provision of the village.

Meet the Nursery Team

Welcome to Gracehill Nursery Unit.

The Nursery Unit is under the direct management of Mr McCombe, the Principal. He is responsible for the general management of the curriculum and resources in both the Nursery Unit and Gracehill Primary School.

The Board of Governors of Gracehill Nursery Unit has overall responsibility for the management of the Nursery Unit, the Chairperson is Bishop Groves.

Our unit staff consists of the Principal of the school, a Nursery Teacher, Nursery Assistant, SENCO, caretaker, cleaner and a clerical officer.

The Nursery Teacher is responsible for the development and monitoring of the Nursery children and ensuring that appropriate resources are selected and used to meet the needs of the children.

The trained Nursery Assistant supports and assists the Nursery Teacher in the provision of activities for the children.

The Clerical Officer, Caretaker and Assistant Cleaner have very important roles in the Nursery Unit and help us with the organisation and management of the Nursery.

We are all looking forward to getting to know your child and trust that he/she will have a happy year at Gracehill Nursery Unit.

Our General Policy Statement

The staff at Gracehill Nursery Unit aim to provide, in partnership with parents, a safe, secure and stimulating environment where your child will thrive in our warm and welcoming Nursery.

We trust your child will be happy and content at Gracehill Nursery Unit. We accept that every child is a unique individual and we will provide opportunities and experiences which will help them to achieve their full potential in their physical, intellectual, social, emotional development while developing their language skills.

Aims of Gracehill Nursery Unit

- Provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children can feel happy and secure.
- To provide quality provision to benefit childrens' physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs at their individual stages of development.
- To foster positive attitudes to self and others, to develop confidence, self-esteem and help them to experience success.
- To nurture positive relationships between the staff and children.
- To develop and encourage parental partnership and involvement recognising the parents are the first and most influential educators of children.
- To provide opportunities for both staff and parent/carers to develop their knowledge and skills.
- Through a play based approach we:
 - Create opportunities for children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment.
 - Provide opportunities to stimulate interest and imagination
 - Encourage children to communicate ideas and feelings in a variety of ways
 - Give children appropriate responsibility to make decisions, choices, express judgements and be respected as autonomous learners.
 - Value the rights of the child to realise and expand his/her potential
- To ensure equality of opportunity and to encourage an awareness of different cultures alongside/together with an appreciation of their own culture
- To foster links between school and community

SAFEGUARDING

Parents will be given our Policy Booklet on Safeguarding (Child Protection) at our parent interview in October. All Welfare Policies are on the School Website (www.gracehillps.com)

SCHOOL TIMINGS

We receive the children into the Unit between **8.30 – 8.45 am**, once your child has settled. If you arrive later than 8.45 a.m. the Nursery door may be locked and you will have to wait until a member of staff is available to open it. This is in the interests of the safety of the children due to the heavy volume of traffic.

Nursery begins 8.45 a.m. and ends 11.15 a.m. Please ensure you arrive on time to pick up your child as children can become very upset if their guardians are late and it can affect how they settle into Nursery.

When arriving in the morning encourage your child to take off and hang up his/her own coat on his/her own, labelled peg in the entrance hall. Then escort your child into the room, **(no earlier than 8.30 a.m.)** into the care of a member of staff. Do try and let us know if you are going to be late collecting your child. Please inform us in if there are any other changes to your normal routine.

At home-time, enter the classroom from 11.10 a.m. and help your child to 'finish' their task and tidy up. If you arrive earlier you may have to wait unless prior consent has been obtained from the Nursery Teacher.

Please inform all family members/friends/childminders who might on occasion pick your child up of these timings. Extra copies of the booklet may be viewed or downloaded from our website.

A member of staff will be stationed at the door to ensure that children do not leave without their parent/guardian.

TYPICAL DAILY ROUTINE

8.30 a.m.	Doors open start receiving the children
8.45 a.m.	Start of Nursery morning/ registration/self-registration
8.45 a.m.	Independent Play
9.55 a.m.	Tidy Up
10.00 a.m.	Story/Rhymes
10.25 a.m.	Outdoor Play
11.10 a.m.	Parents admitted to setting for release
11.15 a.m.	Home-time

SNACK ACTIVITY

The children will be provided with a variety of healthy snacks including fruit, cereal and toast. Occasionally they will also try different foods from different cultures and celebrations. Every day they will be served a bread product e.g. scone, muffin, pancake, toast, cereal and a fresh fruit platter.

Snack will be served from 9.15 am. It is not a substitute for breakfast. Please ensure your child has eaten before they come to school.

This is an important part of the morning session which will provide additional opportunities for learning and develop social skills.

NURSERY FUND - £16.00 per month per child, or can be collected once a term payable 1st day of term. Sept - Dec £60, Jan - March £50, April - June £50.

This contribution is used to provide the children with their snack each morning.

It is also used to buy baking and play dough ingredients; small toys and extra equipment that we know the children will enjoy playing with. We also use it to help fund parties and trips. A plastic wallet and money collection card will be given to you at the Open Day in June. This will be collected at the beginning of each month or term. If you have a baby during the school year, a gift will be bought for you from the fund to welcome your child into the "Nursery Family". Tea and biscuits will be bought for visitors/volunteers to the setting.

CLOTHING

Many activities in the Nursery can be quite messy so therefore you should send your child in clothes, which are easily washed and comfortable.

We encourage children to be independent and to manage by themselves when changing or at the toilet. Please dress your child in clothes, which are easily managed – no belts, jeans, braces, all-in-one suits, dungarees, etc. to avoid fewer accidents. When you are buying coats, clothes or shoes please consider carefully how easy they will be for your child to manage by themselves.

Suggested clothing:-

- Sweatshirts are available to try on for size at the Open Day. These can then be ordered at a later date when the online shop opens in June
- White polo shirt
- Trousers, joggers with elastic cuff at bottom/leggings (not jeans) for both girls and boys
- Shorts may be worn in hot weather but **NOT** sandals, flip flops or clogs
- Trainers with velcro – no laces please

Your child will be given a red nylon gym bag for their change of clothes to be kept in. This bag stays in the Nursery and is taken back at the end of the year. The change of clothes should contain trousers, t-shirt, jumper plus socks, pants and vests also. Please ensure that your child has a change of clothes- this is your responsibility.

**EVERY ITEM OF CLOTHING INCLUDING THOSE IN THE CHANGING BAG
MUST BE LABELLED CLEARLY WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME**

OUTDOOR PLAY

We will be playing outdoors in all weathers for a period of time each day so please provide your child with a pair of wellington boots (to stay at Nursery), a warm waterproof coat and when appropriate mittens, hat and scarf. Please provide your child with a hat on sunny days and apply sun protection before he/she comes to school. We cannot apply sun cream to children.

LOST PROPERTY

We are not responsible for your child's clothing, although we do make every effort to return garments to their owners. Please ensure everything brought to school is **named** and do not encourage children to bring toys, etc unless specifically requested, to avoid loss or breakage which can lead to distress. If you notice that your child has lost an item of clothing please ask staff. We will be happy to help you.

BOOK BAGS

In the Spring term we will begin the library. The children are encouraged to choose fiction, non-fiction and rhyming books from the Nursery Library to share at home with their parents. Many of these books are large and some quite expensive so each of the children will get a book bag that they can use for Spring and Summer term which is to be returned at the end of the year. If a book is lost we would ask that parents pay for or buy a replacement book for the library.

HOME BOXES

The home boxes are our main home/school link. At the end of each day please allow time to check the pigeon hole for letters, newsletters, receipts and other information. **Any information from yourselves such as letters or money are to be given to a member of staff on the day, please do not put it into pigeon holes.**

PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP

At Gracehill Nursery Unit we are keen to work in partnership with parents. One of our most important and valued resources in our Nursery are the parents bringing their experiences and expertise. There are many ways in which parents can become involved in their child's nursery experience, working alongside staff on visits and outings, library duties and/or becoming involved with fundraising. We particularly need parents to run the library.

We have a policy of "Open House" where parents have the opportunity to speak informally to staff on a daily basis at the beginning and end of the morning about their child's progress. A formal parent-teacher meeting will be arranged at specific times during the year to discuss and share your child's progress. An end of year report will also be written. If you wish to discuss a private matter, please make an appointment to see the Nursery Teacher.

We would appreciate any voluntary support that you can give. There will be a newsletter each month to keep you up to date with curriculum information, diary of events and other Nursery news.

SICKNESS

Please do not send your child to school if they have had vomiting or diarrhoea until they are 48hrs symptom free. Sickness spreads rapidly amongst young children. Children who become ill during class time will be cared for in the office and parents/carers will be called to take them home. An email explaining absence must be sent to khunter100@c2kni.net which will be attached to the weekly register.

SETTLING IN

Joining the Nursery can be a very big step for some children. It might be the first time they have been in a large room with so many adults and children and heard so much noise and bustle. Chat with your child about this to prepare them a little bit. All children are individuals and react differently to separation. On your child's first day a parent is required to stay in Nursery. Please be prepared to stay with your child should he/she become distressed. This is a short induction period for the first week or so, it might take several sessions before they feel comfortable and confident enough to let you go. We will endeavour to make this transition as easy as possible.

At home encourage your child to be independent

Allow him/her

- Clean himself/herself on the toilet and flush the toilet
- Tuck himself/herself after they have finished
- After every visit to the toilet wash his/her hands
- Use a tissue to clean their own nose
- Pull up their sleeves
- Dress himself/herself and put on and take off his/her coat and shoes
- Help set the table and feed himself/herself
- Wash hands before eating
- Talk to you about their day at Nursery or other events
- Listen to stories without interrupting
- Give encouragement and praise for their achievements
- Ensure your child has a good bed-time routine and gets plenty of sleep
- Promote a healthy diet, encourage foods that are low in salt, sugar & fats.

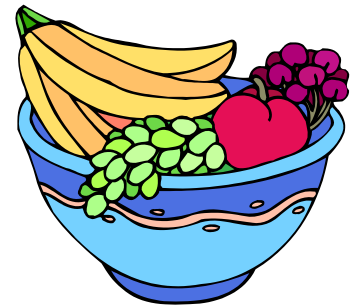
Please limit their intake of foods with E numbers.

- Ensure that your child has given up his dummy or bottle well in advance of starting school.
- Encourage use of good manners such as 'Please' and 'Thank You'
- In particular please teach your child how to take off/put on their shoes and their wellington boots.

We offer a variety of food for SNACK Time

Each day the child will be offered:-

Oranges, Apples, Melon, Grapes or Bananas



Also, a bread product such as:

- Cereal
- Muffins
- Toast
- Low fat pizza

