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Relevant Policies for Parents/Carers:

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- **Child Protection (summary for parents)**
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- **Diet**
- **Fees**
- **Parent partnership policy**
- **Inclusion policy**
- **Selection of toys and equipment policy**
- **Health and safety policy**
- **Hygiene policy**

Within a month of your child starting at The Exwick Ark we will provide you with a Parent's set of our Policies and Procedures. Please read them and return them to us. We will ask you to sign to say you have read them and welcome any comments you may have about them.



Aims and objectives.

Aim – To provide high quality childcare care and education for 0-5 year olds that meets the needs of Exwick families.

We will do this by:

- Providing a safe, fun and challenging learning environment that meets the needs of every child and family, regardless of background, gender or ability.
- Providing flexible childcare that enables parents to access training, employment and welfare support.
- Maintaining Quality Assured status, demonstrating a commitment to standards significantly above those required by OFSTED.
- Building strong working relationships with parents and acknowledging their role as the primary educators of their child.
- Working co-operatively with West Exe Children's Centre, Exwick Heights Primary School, Redhills Primary School and other providers of services for families.
- Demonstrating Christian values in the way we operate and interact with children, parents, staff and the community.

We offer your child

- An OFSTED approved and Quality Assured Early Years Setting.
- A specially tailored curriculum leading to approved learning outcomes.
- Individual care and attention made possible by a high ratio of adults to children.
- Fun and friendship with children and other adults.
- A healthy mid-morning/ afternoon snack and drink.
- Opportunities for you and your family to be directly involved in the activities of the group and in your child's progress.
- A pre-school with underlying Christian values.

Introduction to the Exwick Ark.

Welcome to the Exwick Ark Pre-school. Thank you for registering your child with us. There are probably many questions in your mind about this new part of you and your child's life. Even when this is not your first child there are likely to be questions as things can change. We want your child's time at The Exwick Ark to be a very happy and productive one. If you have any queries, or if we can help in any way, please contact a member of staff or one of the managers, Paula or Harri.

Settling in

When your child first starts here you are welcome to stay as long as you like. We ask parents /carers to *be prepared* to stay for at least two sessions especially if the child has had no contact with the Exwick Ark before. However, each child's settling-in time will be unique to them and parents are likely to be best placed to know what will suit their child. Please feel free to discuss the settling in process with a member of staff.

Many children will settle into their group after a few sessions. Others will find it a long process till they feel confident and happy to be left without their parent/carer. Please do not worry if your child seems to be taking longer to settle than others.

Management

The Exwick Ark is managed as a partnership by Harri Sharp and Paula Stone. We aim to achieve very high standards of care and education for the children at the Exwick Ark. We are happy to receive comments, positive or negative so that we can keep The Exwick Ark at the high standard we expect from ourselves and that you expect of us. Details about how the setting runs including how we are meeting the National Care Standards and how we implement the National Curriculum for the children in our care can be found in our Operational Plan. Please ask to view a copy in the pre-school (Yellow Folder).

Our Routines

During the morning we join together for a time (sometimes as a whole, other times in our Family Worker Groups), usually after snack time, to share news, talk about the number, letter or colour planned for that week or other appropriate activity for the group. We offer a snack and a drink in the middle of the morning and afternoon. This is provided by the Exwick Ark. The Exwick Ark operates a healthy eating policy and snacks will include food and drink that fits in with this. In every session your child will be offered a drink of milk or water, a piece of fruit or vegetable and other snacks such as bread sticks, plain biscuits and food from other cultures. We aim to introduce children to food they may not have come across before as well as that with which they are familiar. Children will not be forced to try food they do not want to try. Please keep us informed of any food/ substance that your child may be allergic to.

Before snack time children will wash and dry their hands. They will have the importance of clean hands explained to them. At snack time children are encouraged to become independent and choose their own drink and snack under adult supervision. Children are encouraged to chat with each other and, when they have finished their snack, to ask to get down from the table, say Thank you and to clear their place. During snack and lunch times a simple “grace” (sung prayer of thanks) will often be sung. Children are given opportunities to help prepare the snacks, including supervised use of sharp implements when appropriate, and to clean and lay the table. We believe that this encourages independence and responsibility as well as practising skills such as counting and name recognition.

Singing is an important part of the routine at the Exwick Ark. It is educationally accepted that singing in a group at a young age helps to develop a sense of rhythm, beat and tone and this musical awareness leads to children who achieve better at school than those who have not had these early musical opportunities. Children will not always join in with these singing times but by being involved they are still learning many of the same things. Using simple musical instruments will encourage enjoyment of music and develop basic musical understanding.

We believe that outdoor play is vitally important to a child’s development and can involve all areas of learning. We carry out activities such as growing plants, watching insects, playing with sand and water, make believe in the Play House, painting pictures with water on the floor and watching them evaporate, as well as physical activities with balls, bean bags, hoops, bikes and scooters. We use the local facilities such as the park throughout the week. The world around us is

amazing and as we explore it we want to encourage the children to have a sense of awe and wonder.

Your role

Research shows that children learn best when their parents are involved in their education. We are always keen to involve parents in their child's time at pre-school and there are many opportunities for you to help out. You can volunteer to come in and play with the children on an occasional or regular basis. If you have a particular skill, such as playing a musical instrument, we would be happy for you to come in and share it with the children. If you would like to learn more about working with children we can give you information about local training courses. Also carrying on at home with some of the activities that we have been doing is very beneficial. Please let us know of any special events coming up in your child's life that we may be able to talk about at pre-school.

We ask parents and carers who wish to visit the setting, beyond just settling their child at the start of a session, to sign the visitors' book when they arrive and sign out when they leave, for health and safety reasons. Visitors are also asked to wear a visitors' badge these can be found with the visitors' book in a red box.

On occasions we go on outings and would love to have your help. If we do not have enough adults to safely go on an outing it cannot go ahead. The children's safety is very important to us.

The Operational Plan for The Exwick Ark is in the Staff Information Cupboard. The sort of information it contains is our Routines, our two year theme programme, our up to date Policies and Procedures, who the staff are and their training and up to date versions of the Prospectus and Parent Handbook. We would love you to share your views about it with us. We have a comments book in the Parents' Area.

We have a cyclical planning process (plan, implement and review) which enables us to review your child's interests and development each week and plan appropriate activities for all our children, which will meet their developmental needs and which they will enjoy.

Parents are invited to help with cleaning of equipment e.g. dressing up clothes, large toys in order to provide equipment of a consistently high standard.. Parents are welcome to take part in planning meals and snacks, please give any ideas to your Family Worker or Paula.

We have a parent forum which meets twice a term. It is organised by the Parents. You are welcome to get involved in the Parent Forum, if you would like. Please ask.

Staff

Harri and Paula jointly manage the Exwick Ark. Paula Stone is a Play leader/Supervisor. Harri Sharp is a Play leader and the Administrator. Sarah Emerton is a Play Leader and Under Three Year Olds Co-ordinator, Nicola Mudge is a Play Assistant and in charge of Behaviour Management and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Judita Zalieckiene, Liz Letten and Angie Wilson are Play Assistants. Di Philp is responsible for Health and Safety in the setting. Further details of staff responsibilities are on the notice board in the Parent Area.

Three of our staff have relevant degrees and are also qualified as Early Years Professionals, an other has a relevant Level 4 (and is working towards Level 5), and another two have Level 3 qualifications, one has a level 2 NVQ Qualification in Childcare and Development and one is working towards level 2.

Staff photos are on display by the front door. Groups have more than one member of staff allocated to them so that your child has a Key Person they can relate to even if a member of staff is out of the Pre-school.

Opening times

The Exwick Ark is currently open 8.15-5.45pm, for Early Years Educational sessions Monday to Friday year round, apart from between Christmas and New year and at Easter, where we are shut for a week.

Children can attend term time only (with or with out occasional holiday sessions) or they can attend year round. The day is split into sessions and children need to be booked in for whole sessions. Please see the chart attached. Any changes to regular bookings or occasional changes need to be put in writing and submitted to Harri Sharp. Please give us at least five working weeks notice in order to not incur extra charges for sessions you no longer want.

If a child is sick we can usually find space to replace their sessions another time that week, or the next.

Fees

Children are eligible for Early Years Entitlement funding, EYE, usually from the school term following their third birthday. They can use the EYE for up to 12.5 hours a week, increasing to 15 hours (at the Exwick Ark) from September 2009. Regular bookings for sessions are to be made in advance, so that we can make sure we have enough staff. Other sessions during a term are to be paid for in advance.

Current fees can be found on the attached sheet. Bills are currently issued at the end of the preceding half term. Usually, over a year, the pre-school room is open for 38 weeks. We will give at least a term's notice of the weeks and days we plan to be closed. See noticeboard and news letters.

EYE is not dependant on your income; every child is eligible. There is a simple form to fill in once when your child first registers for EYE and then a signature is required at the beginning of each term. When you register we will need to see the child's birth certificate (or other document proving date of birth) and make a copy for the EYE team (please bring both with you if you do not wish to leave the original with us for photocopying).

We are registering to be a setting that can offer 15 hours a week free childcare for some 2 year olds. There are conditions attached to this funding (currently a child must live in the catchment area for Central Children's Centre and the Parent/ Guardian must be in receipt of some Government Benefit). It is planned that this finding will will become available to all 2 year olds.

We can accept Childcare Vouchers (a tax free part of your wages/salary) towards payment of fees. Fees are payable even if your child is ill or on holiday. Fees are payable in advance. Please ask for more details.

Family worker system and record keeping

During some of your child's time at the Exwick Ark they will be in a small group, with their family worker. The family worker will introduce them-self to you when your child starts attending the Exwick Ark. If you have agreed for us to do so, your family worker will observe your child and keep notes of their developmental stages so that learning through play activities can be planned appropriately. The family worker will liaise with you over your child's development and activity. Each term you will be given the opportunity to come to the Exwick Ark to meet your child's family worker and for you both to talk about how your child is doing. The first of these meetings is usually towards the end of the first half term. The input that parents /carers have into a child's life is

vitaly important and the Family worker will ask you for your opinion of your child's development. The records we keep of your child are always available for you to see but we ask you not to look at the records of other children. Parents may request their child's Records are sent home if they cannot attend the setting. These should be returned as soon as possible.

Should there be any changes to your circumstances that may affect your child's emotional well being please inform your Key worker (Family Worker).

Clothing

Please send your child in old clothes that do not matter if they get dirty, or buy an Exwick Ark t-shirt or sweat-shirt, so that they will feel free to explore and experiment with all kinds of materials, including messy ones.

It is good for children to practice skills, which will make them independent. Simple clothing, which they can handle themselves, will enable them to go to the toilet when they want to, and put on and take off their outdoor clothes without being too dependent on other people.

We do have aprons available, however a change of clothes is also handy if a child has a toileting accident or just gets too engrossed in some messy activity! Please send the spare clothes in a named bag with a plastic bag for the dirty/wet clothes. In the hot weather we will ask your child to wear a sun-hat outside, you may provide your own if you wish. Please also bring a named sun cream, which we will supervise them in applying. Sun Cream Sticks are very easy for little ones to apply and can be good fun. We always have plenty of cleaning equipment including wet wipes. If you do not wish us to use wet wipes to clean up your child please advise us, and provide an alternative.

Accidents

If your child has an accident you will be asked to sign in our accident record book when you collect your child. A record of the accident is kept in our files. Serious accidents are reported to Ofsted. The Exwick Ark regularly reviews the accident book to see where we can make things safer.

There is always at least one qualified First Aider on duty at the Exwick Ark. There is always an up to date first aid kit at the Exwick Ark, and a travel one is taken on outings. In a serious emergency an ambulance or a child's GP will be called. The Parent /carer will be contacted at the same time to let them know. Please make sure your contact details are kept up to date.

Illness

If your child is unwell please do not send them to pre-school. It is very distressing for a child to be unwell whilst away from home. If a child is considered to be too unwell to be left at Pre-school the Play leader may ask you to take them home. Should a child become ill whilst at Pre-school we will contact the parent/carer or emergency contact.

If a child has had Vomiting and/or diarrhoea they should not return to pre-school for **48 hours after** the last attack. If your child has an infectious disease please do not bring them to the pre-school setting until they are clear of infection. We have a useful book, the Spotty book, which can help identify illnesses and tells us what action should be taken. Please ask to use it if you would like to, or ask a staff member to look it up. This can be done over the phone if necessary.

Medicines:

We will administer prescribed medication and supervise children administering their own medication in the form of inhalers for asthma or creams for eczema/dermatological conditions. Any other medication needed must be registered with us by the parent/carer. We have forms for long term medication (eg Asthma inhalers) and for short term medication (eg antibiotics). Please talk to us about sending your child to pre-school when they are still needing medication so that we can do what is best for the child.

We will administer invasive or life saving medication such as adrenaline/insulin in the case of emergencies. Any member of staff who may be called on to administer such medication will be given full training. A copy of a letter from the child's G.P. stating the child's condition and the treatment required, written consent from the child's parent to allow the staff to administer medication and proof of staff training in the administering of such medication by a qualified nurse or G.P. will be forwarded to our insurers to allow us to extend our cover, before the child will be admitted to the pre-school.

Lunch clubs.

We run lunch clubs from 11.45- 1.00pm. Lunch clubs give the children a chance to eat their packed lunch with their friends, either outside as a picnic or in the playroom depending on the weather. Children receive as much adult support with their meal as they need whilst developing independence. In this way they learn important skills for when they start school but in a much smaller and more supportive group. **You will need to provide them with a packed lunch. The lunch club fees do not include their food and drink.**

We ask that you send your child's lunch in a named container. We have a fridge for keeping food chilled, which needs refrigerating, but we cannot fit in the whole lunch box. Foods such as sandwiches, yoghurts, cheese etc. should be put in a **named bag/box inside the lunch box** so that we can store them in the fridge until lunch-time. Please include a drink, which should also be labelled.

We operate a healthy eating policy at The Exwick Ark so we ask that you think about a healthy packed lunch for your child. This helps to set up healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. Try to include carbohydrates, protein and fruit or vegetables with only minimal levels of salt and sugar. Children eat more healthily if their friends are doing the same. Please **do not send sweets, crisps, chocolate biscuits/cakes or fizzy drinks**. Due to the risk of allergies and children swapping foods we also ask that you **do not send any nuts**. We have a useful booklet with lots of ideas for lunch boxes which you are welcome to borrow, you will find it on the Parent Area Shelves (in the cupboard).

Other

Please feel free to leave pushchairs (or children's bikes and scooters) in the parent's lobby. External doors are kept locked. Please be careful to shut doors in and out of the rear lobby; your child's safety depends upon it. There is a doorbell at the front of the building should you find the door locked.

Notices for your attention will be on display on the board opposite the door and letters to go home will be put in the children's trays. Please check your child's tray daily for it will also contain the things they have been making recently that you can take home.

Contact details:

The Exwick Ark
Tel. 07931 591735 or 01392 425551
Admin@exwickarkpreschool.com

Other useful contacts:

-Ofsted Early Years; Help line and complaints

Tel. 08456 404040

-Devon Early Years Childcare Services; Training team

Tel. 01392 385528

www.devon.gov.uk/zero14plus

-Devon County Council , Special Educational Needs (SENCO) team

Tel. 01392 385394