



LEWESTON
SHERBORNE

NURSERY HANDBOOK
2026

WELCOME TO LEWESTON NURSERY



Joining our nursery is your child's first important step in becoming part of our learning community.

We recognise that you are your child's first and most important educator and we look forward to working with you and sharing the extensive knowledge you have of your child. Sharing this knowledge will help us to build on your child's previous experience and enable us to plan for his/her future development.

Our nursery offers high quality education with well qualified, caring and motivated staff, whose primary concern is the well-being and development of your child. Great care is taken to ensure that our children engage in a stimulating, motivating and appropriate experience that will allow them to develop at a pace suited to their individual needs and interests.

We hope the following pages give you a flavour of Leweston. Should any questions remain unanswered, we will be happy to help. We look forward to working in partnership with you.

Beth Toop (Nursery Supervisor)

AGES AND STAGES

Babies

0 - 1 Years old (Younger Babies)

1 - 2 Years old (Older Babies)

The Baby Room is divided into two spaces which is often based around the under 1's and over 1's. We plan their transition when the Nursery practitioners feel that it is age and ability appropriate, taking into consideration many emotional and physical factors to best support each individual. The Baby Room as a whole is designed to create a homelike environment, with plenty of soft furnishings, with the main focus being placed on meeting each child's individual needs and working in a close partnership with parents to best match their routines at home and within the setting. Within those earliest months of their lives, we emphasise the importance of building secure attachments and providing opportunities for personal, social and emotional development. As the children transition across to Older Babies, they begin to grow in independence and confidence and it is wonderful watching their personalities begin to shine through right from those early stages.

Toddlers

2 - 3 Years old

The Toddler Room is a wonderful open space for our 2 to 3 year olds as they begin to become more confident on their feet and experiment with different ways of moving. The structure grows as children move through the different stages, and that occurs right from the beginning, with a flexible routine, bite-sized activities and a wide range of opportunities for exploration. The children spend a large amount of their time in the outdoor environment, exploring both the enclosed Nursery garden space and over 46 acres around the wonderful Leweston grounds. The Toddlers will continue to be fully supported to grow in independence as they learn and practice many new skills, as well as plenty of time for child-led learning and scaffolding that learning based around their interests.

Stepping Stones

3 Years old

The Stepping Stones class is a great next step as the children turn 3 years old and are ready for new challenges and a more structured routine. We begin to introduce Forest School and cookery sessions and monthly Literacy, Numeracy and Funky Fingers challenges. The children learn through themes and activities designed to follow their interests, and there are many opportunities for role-play and building on their most wonderful imaginations! The children across all rooms benefit enormously from the free-flow environment and the option to play freely indoors or outdoors as they wish, taking learning with them wherever they are.

Pre-School

3 to 4 Years old

From the age of 3 and a half, the children benefit hugely from our enhanced curriculum, including Music, PE, French, Spanish and swimming lessons with subject specialists. In addition to this, the children have Forest School activity sessions and get to try new activities such as gardening, cookery and Rugby Tots. The main aim in Pre-School is to build on that preparation for school life and ensure that each and every child is fully equipped with the core skills to move onto the next stage. The Pre-School children are always busy as our highly qualified and passionate staff skilfully match activities to extend, delight and engage each and every one of them.

OUR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Staff and management are committed to equal opportunities and will treat all persons equally and without prejudice, taking into consideration their culture, religion, gender, disability and race.

We take account of the needs of children with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Since attitudes and values are formed at an early age, the nursery seeks to provide a caring multicultural curriculum in order that children grow up experiencing these caring values together with sufficient information to form a reasoned understanding of other cultures.





MEALS AND SNACKS

At Leweston we aim to ensure that all children receive a balanced diet which provides the nutrients needed for optimal growth and development. We fully follow the government nutritional guidelines (2025) and ensure that all our menus meet the full requirements. The menus are carefully designed by our school caterers, Chartwells, ensuring that they are providing healthy, balanced and child-friendly meals. Specific medical or ethical dietary requirements are catered for and alternatives are provided for those with allergies. Chartwells take into consideration specific celebrations and allow the children to taste different foods, for example, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and a Chinese themed lunch for Chinese New Year.

Mealtimes are enjoyed by all in the main school dining hall, where staff and children eat together to create a family-like mealtime and to reflect the importance of enjoying mealtimes within the company of others.

Your child will receive a healthy snack mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Lunch and tea both consist of a two-course meal which are provided at 12.00pm and 16.30pm. Menus are emailed to parents weekly, and can also be found displayed on the Nursery parent noticeboard. We request that children under the age of one have their lunch, snacks and milk provided by parents. These meals need to be prepared in accordance with the government's nutritional guidance for the Under 1s, and staff are legally obligated to ensure that provided packed lunches meet these requirements. Please note that we are a nut-free school. We have the on-site facilities and equipment to store and reheat food safely for the Under 1s only.





NURSERY UNIFORM

Nursery uniform is required from 2 years and above as they move through to the Toddler Room. Nursery uniform can be purchased from the School Shop which is located beside the Senior Reception. You can email the School Shop via the following email address to arrange a fitting; schoolshop@leweston.dorset.sch.uk or you can pre-order uniform online at; www.lewestonshop.co.uk/. Please note that the School Shop is online only with appointments available to book throughout the summer holiday. Nursery children will be expected to wear the branded Leweston jumper and branded polo t-shirt with navy trousers. As children move through to Pre-School, children are required to purchase the Leweston navy school coat and navy waterproof trousers as compulsory items alongside the Nursery uniform. Pre-School children are also expected to wear smart black or navy school shoes (Velcro, lace up or buckle).

The Nursery uniform has been designed to be both comfortable and practical for our youngest pupils. The children are given frequent opportunities to participate in messy play every day and minor mishaps are likely to happen, so we do kindly ask that you provide spare clothes each day if required. We will always try to ensure that children wear aprons during messy play activities.

EXTRA ITEMS

If your child requires nappies, we ask that these and wet wipes or cotton wool is provided. These can be brought in daily in your child's bag or you can provide them in bulk for us to store in Nursery; we will then update you when they need replenishing. We are also able to administer nappy creams, so please ensure you provide these so that we can place it safely in your child's nappy basket which is out of reach of the children.

We ask that bottles are provided if those are required. Milk will need to be provided for children under two-years old and any bottles will need to be sterilised and filled with boiled water at home which we can heat and cool to the desired temperature. We do kindly ask that the powder is provided in the correct portions.

Parents must also provide waterproof trousers/all-in-ones, coats and wellies in the Winter months as we spend a lot of time outdoors in all weather conditions. Each child has an 'outdoor peg' where these items can be stored and we ask that they are taken home regularly to be washed and dried. Each child will require a pair of wellies for outdoor use which can also be stored in the Nursery if you wish. For our youngest children, we suggest that they are provided with waterproof booties if they are not yet wearing shoes or wellies. Hats and gloves will also need to be provided during the colder months.

In the Summer months, your child will require sun cream and a sun hat or we will be unable to take them outdoors. When it is particularly warm or during the height of the Summer, we kindly ask that parents apply sun cream in the mornings prior to arriving at Nursery. The staff members will then top it up throughout the day when necessary.

Each child will need to be provided with a water bottle, spare clothes and comforters/dummies. If you would like to bring in any additional items which are not listed, please do discuss this with your child's key worker during their settling sessions.

Lastly, please clearly name label all the above items to ensure they do not get misplaced or lost.



ARRIVAL AND COLLECTION

It is expected that a responsible adult will bring a child to and from the Nursery. Please wait until your arrival time when the door will be opened by Nursery staff. If arriving outside of allotted arrival time please ring the bell at the door, a member of Nursery staff will then attend to you. You will then sign your child in and out at drop-off and pick-up.

In the interests of your child's safety, if for any reason someone else will be collecting your child, we will require permission from the child's parent or guardian beforehand. We do also ask for photos to be supplied if possible so that they are easy to identify and we also request a password upon arrival. If we are not informed of alternative arrangements before collection, Nursery staff will ensure that contact is made to confirm these before any child is released from the setting.

SECURITY

The Nursery and garden environments are completely secure with padlocked gates and pin-system entry codes for the front and side doors. It should be recognised that security is also the responsibility of the parents upon entry and we do kindly ask that the doors are securely closed behind you at all times. It is important that parents do not allow other parents/adults into the Nursery building for safety reasons, a member of Nursery staff will be based on door duty upon morning drop-offs and evening collections.



TRIPS AND CONSENT FORMS

Any outings or excursions will be planned in advance and consent forms will be required to gain permission for your child to participate. Children are required to be in full Nursery uniform when taken on outings to ensure they are easy to identify and enhanced ratios will be in place for the safety of the children. Risk assessments will be completed and management checked prior to the outing. Outings apply to two-years old and above, although we do also offer on-site opportunities for our youngest children, including 'Bugfest', Fire Engine visits and animal visits.



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

May we remind you of the importance of emergency contact numbers. Parents are asked, where possible, to provide us with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two contact persons for use in case of an emergency. You can speak to a member of staff or the Nursery Supervisor directly to make any amendments and keep us informed of any changes. It is extremely important that we have alternative contacts in case of emergencies and if for any reason we are unable to contact parents.

ATTENDANCE AND IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES ILL

If your child is unwell or likely to be absent from Nursery for any length of time, we kindly ask that you inform the Nursery Supervisor or your child's Room Lead. You may also contact Nursery directly on 01963 211042. If a child is absent from Nursery without informing a member of staff, the Nursery will make contact and enquire as to the reason for the child's absence.

Please note that if your child becomes unwell whilst at Nursery, a staff member will make contact to arrange collection as soon as possible. We do kindly ask that you ensure you are contactable or we have access to emergency contacts. We do expect children to stay at home if they require Calpol and we are not able to administer it in Nursery unless it is prescribed by a Doctor or Pharmacist, for example, for teething. Parents are requested not to send their child to Nursery if he or she is suffering from any of the following symptoms:

• Vomiting • Diarrhoea • Fever • Rash (indicating measles or chicken pox for example).

Please speak to the Nursery Supervisor or your child's Room Lead who will be able to provide you with the duration your child will need to be absent from Nursery following any of the above.

MEDICATION

Please ensure that the Nursery has all the relevant medical information about your child which will be required as part of the admission process. Please be assured that shared information about your child is confidential. If your child requires medication during their time at Nursery, these requirements can be discussed with a member of staff. Nursery staff can only administer prescribed drugs by a pharmacist or GP and parents will be required to complete a medicine form authorising Nursery staff to administer the drugs to your child. For any child who has any long term health needs, we will complete a health declaration booklet with you to ensure that we are fully meeting your child's needs and that an appropriate care plan is put into place. Again, if your child is on medication but appears unwell or has a consistent high temperature, we do ask that they are kept at home.

MINOR ACCIDENTS AND UPSETS

All our Nursery staff are fully paediatric first aid qualified and attend regular updates in regard to the children within their care. Basic First Aid will be administered by a qualified staff member and parents will be informed of this upon collection. Staff will complete an accident form to explain the incident and what actions were taken which will require a parents signature. If a child sustains a head injury or requires further medical assistance, we do have qualified Nurses on site who are located in the Well-Being Hub and parents would be contacted.



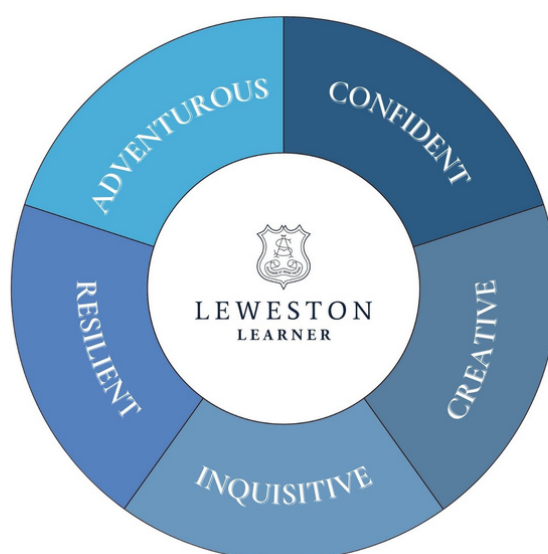
THE NURSERY CURRICULUM

The first five years of your child's life are very important and encompass a complex period of growth and development. At Leweston we are very aware of this and operate in such a way that maximises your child's potential. Please see the information on our website about the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework that we work towards within Leweston.

THE LEWESTON LEARNER

Our Leweston Learner system is an approach to teaching and learning which under-pins our work throughout the school. All pupils from Nursery to Sixth Form use the approach and share a common language for learning.

The Leweston Learner is a learning philosophy, not a curriculum with particular content. Leweston Learner encourages pupils to be adventurous, confident, resilient, creative and inquisitive. We believe that these learning behaviours are the key to raising pupil achievement and progress and therefore the most important aspects in a modern education.



Whilst the programme was developed independently it was inspired by the internationally recognised concept of 'High Performance Learning' (HPL). HPL believes that all learners can aspire to greatness if the focus is placed on learning skills. Pupils are taught that by embracing these qualities they can improve every aspect of their lives, not just their academic performance. They learn that they have the ability to control these important qualities and get better at them!

We embed the philosophy in all our teaching and learning and ensure that the language of Leweston Learner sits at the heart of everything we do. Children are encouraged to reflect on their learning and to consider the extent to which they employed the Learner characteristics. Our learning observations also focus on the development of these skills, seeking to increase evidence of them in the environment.

SPECIALIST TEACHING

The education of the Pre-School children is overseen by Miss Lauren Blundell, our Head of Early Years, as well as their class teacher, Mrs Sammi Wrixon and their individual key workers. In addition to this your child will have lessons with some of our specialist teachers for the following subjects; PE, Music, French and Spanish, Forest School and swimming.



FOREST SCHOOL

The philosophy of Forest School is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences. Children learn to work as part of a team, to solve problems and adapt their ideas, to interact with the world around them and to approach challenges logically. These 'soft-skills' are those that will be transferable and beneficial throughout the rest of their lives. Each class has a weekly Forest School session. The sessions take place in all weathers, from snow to sun, so it is crucial that children have full kit for each lesson. We share our philosophy with the Norwegians - there is no such thing as the wrong weather, only the wrong clothing.



HOW WELL IS MY CHILD DOING?

All pupils have a Tapestry account which builds a record of their experiences during their time with us. The journal acts as part of our monitoring and assessment and links directly with curriculum objectives. Children's progress and attainment are recorded and evidenced in the system, so parents can monitor this as often as they wish and Nursery staff are able to track children's development. The journal also provides insight into the Nursery day with regular photographs of nursery life and Nursery updates. We provide annual written reports for all Nursery children, at the end of the academic year, to reflect upon their development to that point.

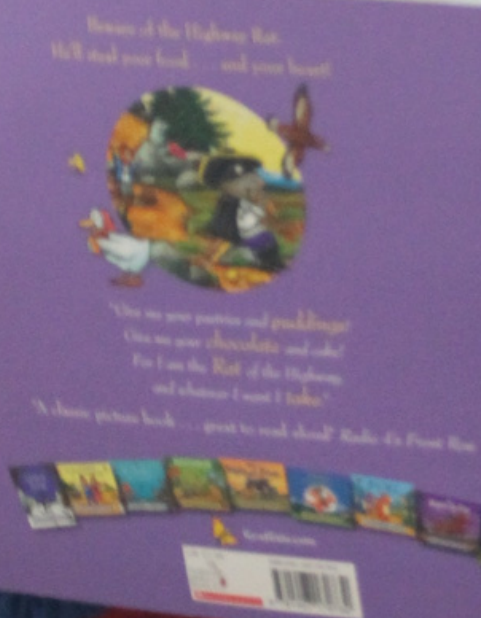
Tapestry is hosted in the UK on secure servers. Parents have secure access (via email address and password) and, in addition to viewing our contributions, we encourage you to add photos and posts or comments about observations made by us. Tapestry is accessed at www.tapestryjournal.com, or if you have an iPhone or iPad, visit the iTunes store and download the Tapestry app from the Education section (search for TapestryMobile). Once you have provided us with your chosen email details we will set-up two accounts for you. You will then be emailed a password which you can use to log in. We strongly recommend that you change your password on your first visit. If you have any difficulties please email Mrs Toop at toopb@leweston.dorset.sch.uk.

Before you join the Nursery you will be asked to complete an "All About Me" booklet. Please complete this and return it to your child's key worker as this will provide us with valuable information about your child and will help to inform the planning and next steps, as well as support the settling process and providing a little piece of home in the setting. We do kindly ask that you fill it with lots of photos which children are able to access throughout the day to support their personal, social and emotional development from those early stages.

When your child reaches Pre-School the learning becomes a little more structured, in order to ensure that your child is developing to their full potential. At the end of their time in Pre-School you will receive an End of Year Report which will detail their development, progress and current interests. Any parent who is concerned about their child's progress should request a meeting with the child's key worker and/or consult with the Nursery Supervisor.

CHILD SAFETY/PROTECTION POLICY

Should any member of staff have concerns regarding the welfare or safety of any child, they will report these concerns to the Nursery Supervisor, Miss Ford as Designated Safeguarding Lead. They would then judge if there are grounds for concern regarding the welfare or safety of the child, and would immediately speak with the Dorset Safeguarding Team to obtain advise/report the concern if felt necessary. At all times, these discussions would be dealt with in a confidential manner and shared in confidence with the relevant member of Nursery staff. There is also a whistle blowing policy in operation to support and encourage staff members if they have concerns about a member of staff within the setting and any concerns in this instance would go directly to the Head, Mr Richard Thompson.



THE STAFF TEAM

Our staff are selected very carefully, not only for their qualifications and experience but also for their love of children. We are fully committed to developing and growing our staff's individual knowledge and skills and utilising them fully throughout the Nursery. Our staff to child ratios are guided by the OFSTED regulations for nursery age children as follows: (Age of Child Staff-Child Ratio)

Under 2 years 1:3, 2 – 3 years 1:5, 3 - 5 years 1:8

We always seek to better these ratios wherever possible, as we know that high quality adult interaction is the key to exceptional care and progress.

KEY WORKER SYSTEM

Each child will be assigned a key worker within their set room upon joining the Nursery setting.

The key person's role is to:

- Ensure that the health and well-being of the child is considered with utmost importance, and that individual caring and development needs are met.
- Ensure that parents are kept informed of all aspects of their child's care and development
- Ensure the implementation of all planning and next steps for the child.
- Ensure a smooth and positive settling process for all individual children, when changing rooms and key person

BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Our Behaviour Policy is based on reinforcing positive behaviour. We have high expectations of children's behaviour and learning and we use praise to promote the positive aspects of behaviour and learning. We have a clear code of behaviour which is consistently applied by staff and understood by children.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Leweston complaints procedure is available on the website. We would hope that all our parents/carers would feel comfortable about approaching any member of staff to discuss an issue of concern and would be confident that the staff would deal effectively and promptly with their complaint. Should you feel uncomfortable speaking directly with the staff member, please speak with the Nursery Supervisor who will be more than happy to investigate and support you with your complaint. Similarly, if you have any suggestions to make about how we could improve the service you receive, please discuss the matter with the Nursery Supervisor, Miss Ford.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees are aware that during their employment they may be party to confidential information about parents and their children. The employee shall not (either during the term of this employment or beyond) disclose or allow the disclosure of any confidential information regarding parents or their children.



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