

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Governors we wish to extend to you and your child a very warm welcome to Victoria Nursery School. We encourage your co-operation and support as we recognise that this partnership is crucial to the well-being of your child.

We ask that you work with us to help ensure that your child is afforded every opportunity to develop happily in a safe, secure and challenging learning environment. Your child will be encouraged by our supportive staff to achieve their full potential and to develop a sound disposition for learning.

We are very keen to ensure that you and your child have a happy, rewarding time with us and that a firm foundation for learning is achieved throughout this very important nursery year.

### **THE NURSERY STAFF**

Principal: Mrs O. McAllister. B.Sc., PGCE, M.Ed., P.Q.H.N.I.

Nursery Assistant F/T: - Ms A. Stewart NVQ Level 3

Nursery Assistant P/T: - Ms C. Bradley NVQ Level 3

Nursery Assistant P/T: - Ms G. Kelly NVQ Level 3

Building Supervisor: - Mrs P. Corr

Dining Attendant: - Mrs S. Coates

School Secretary: - Mrs B. Benson RSA Stage 3, CLAIT



### **THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Mr J. Devine D.E.N.I. Rep. / Chair

Mrs D. Walsh E.A. Rep

Mrs P. Carlin E.A. Rep

Mrs S. Weiniger E.A. Rep

Mrs M. Connor D.E.N.I. Rep

Mrs C. McLeish Parent Rep/Vice Chair

Mrs O. McAllister Teacher Rep / Principal

## **NURSERY HOURS**

**26 Full-time places 9.00am – 1.30pm**

**School Telephone Number: - 028 90 744247**

**Website: [www.victorianursery.org.uk](http://www.victorianursery.org.uk)**

**Email: [info@victorians.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@victorians.belfast.ni.sch.uk)**



## **WHAT HAPPENS IN OUR NURSERY SCHOOL?**

In our carefully prepared indoor and outdoor learning environment, staff will encourage your child to explore and experiment with a wide variety of play materials.

Your child will have opportunities to: -

1. Develop an understanding of themselves and others
2. Make new friends, learn to share and take turns.
3. Become confident and independent.
4. Develop positive attitudes to learning by concentrating, observing, listening and thinking.
5. Gain knowledge of the world around us.
6. Have opportunities to become creative and expressive.
7. Develop early experiences in maths, science and technology.
8. Enjoy stories, rhymes and songs.
9. Enjoy physical play in the safety of an enclosed play area.
10. Develop skills, which will provide a firm foundation for future learning.



Our Nursery recognises the importance of play as the crucial and principal mode of young children's learning and fully supports the principle that young children learn through play and engaging in well-planned structured activities. When planning the curriculum we will provide diverse play opportunities to promote the optimum learning potential of each child. Teaching and learning in nursery builds on the experiences of the children in their home setting and encourages the child to talk about their home life. Staff in the nursery class use observation to assess children's learning. This information enables staff to plan the curriculum appropriately to promote the next steps in a child's learning.

Daily play activities fall into these main areas.



### Imaginative play

Encourages children to explore the world around them and to explore the world within their own minds. Role-play may include shopkeeper, a postman/woman, a doctor, a nurse etc. Plenty of dressing up clothes and interesting equipment will spark imagination.



### Social Play

Helps to develop communication skills and social interaction. Children develop patterns of behaviour and an awareness of how behaviour affects others. They can overcome fears and inhibitions by being “grown up” children attempt to understand the adult world.



### Creative Play

Encourages children to express themselves through a variety of media: painting, drawing, craft activities, drama and movement and musical exploration. The Nursery will have creative areas where the children can pursue their own artistic endeavours by choosing from the activities provided.



### Constructive Play

Develops manipulative skills, sequencing and matching. Children can grasp concepts of size, weight, shape and number. It involves a wide range of material e.g., Lego, Duplo, Mobilo, collections of junk and assorted material, e.g., sand, dough, clay.



### Manipulative Play

Develops hand eye co-ordination and visual discrimination. It provides children with the opportunity to experiment with different media. Activities include cutting, sticking, colouring, drawing, painting, stringing beads, lacing, matching and modelling with dough and clay.



### Investigative Play

Encourages children to explore, classify, question, predict and test. Children examine a variety of materials, objects and situations and thereby develop basic mathematical and scientific concepts.



### Water Play

Water play is therapeutic, calming and relaxing.

Children examine its properties, for example how it pours, drips, splashes make ripples etc. Children explore properties of materials in water - floating, sinking, absorbency, etc. Children learn basic volume and capacity concepts.



### Sand Play

Through sand play the children can explore and describe its qualities, for example pouring, sifting, moulding patting etc.

Children can investigate the difference between wet and dry sand and make models, patterns and landscapes.

Children discover how wet sand takes the form of its container.

These areas of play are categorised under -

- 1 Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- 2 Physical Development
- 3 Creative/Aesthetic Development
- 4 Language Development
- 5 Early Mathematical Experiences
- 6 The World Around Us



Several examples from the six areas of learning are constantly available to the children during the indoor and outdoor session. Staff will try to present these curricular experiences in a manner which ensures increasing challenge over the three terms.



The curriculum will be enhanced by visits from visitors for example:

- Sports Coaching Sessions by qualified providers (subsidised by weekly school snack contributions).
- A Dental Health co-ordinator visits frequently and talks to our children.
- We enjoy special seasonal sessions with visitors from Central Library with story sessions and art activities.
- Curriculum support from Music organisations provides additional expertise.
- We also have additional visits by the local community e.g. Fire Service .
- Educational visits from Belfast City Council.



The children will go on various educational outings to enhance our delivery of curriculum including Central library and the Farm. On these occasions we appreciate and depend upon the parents who kindly volunteer to come along with us. Young children really enjoy their parents accompanying them on outings and it makes it a memorable occasion for all.



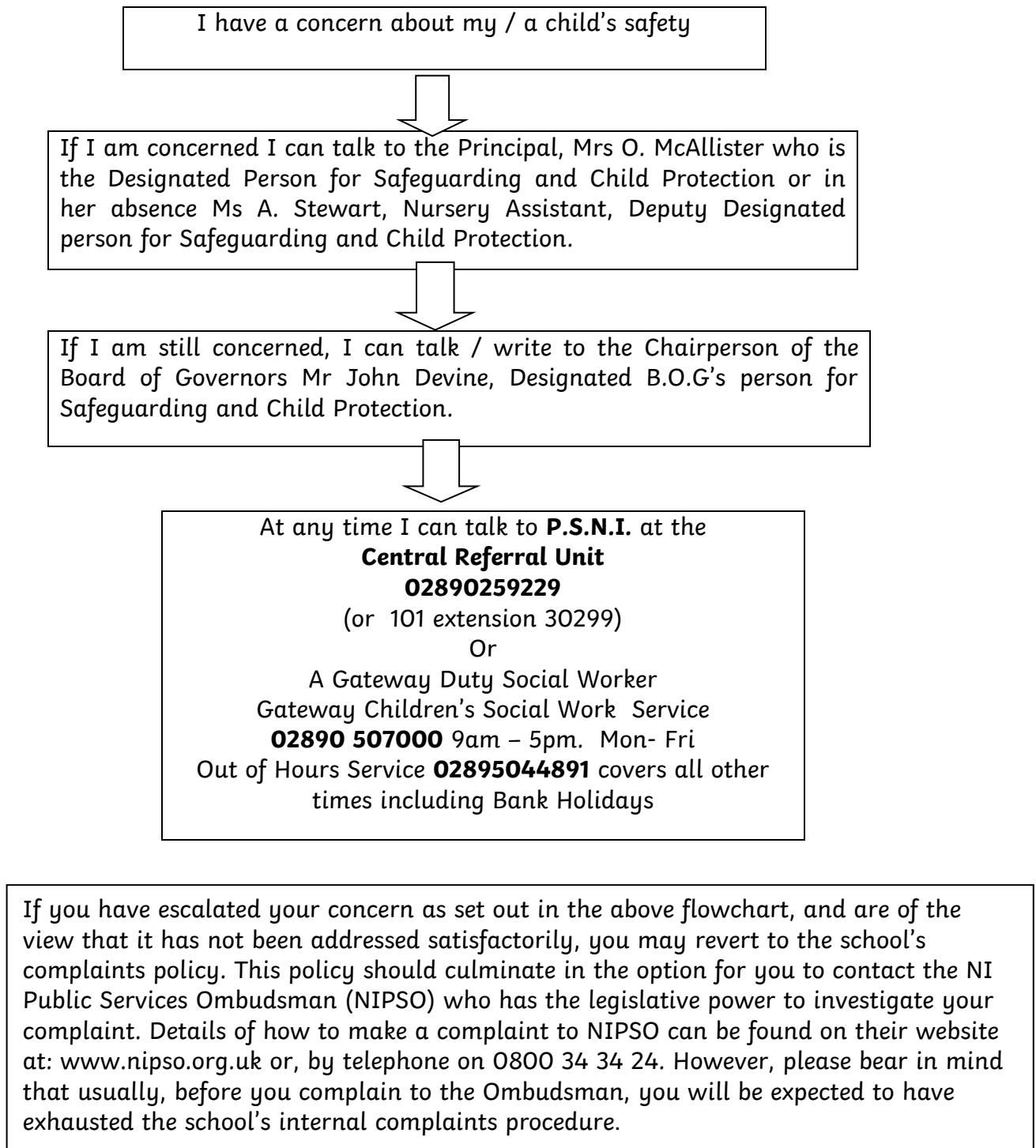
Victoria Nursery School is a 'Silver Award Winner' in the Eco Schools Northern Ireland initiative. This award has been given in recognition of our achievement in working towards a sustainable environment.

## **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

Victoria Nursery school is committed to promoting the health and welfare of all pupils. A full version of the school's Child Protection policy is available in the school foyer and our website - **[www.victorianursery.org.uk](http://www.victorianursery.org.uk)**

A poster outlining how a parent may make a complaint and contact details is displayed on the Parent's Notice Board and on our website.

If a parent has a potential child protection concern:



## **PASTORAL CARE**

Staff promote a caring atmosphere, where each child is valued and respected as an important individual. We foster respect for each other, our toys, our school and what we make or create. Victoria Nursery School won the Derrrytrasna Award for Exceptional Pastoral Care, the award and silver cup was presented at a special celebration at Stormont by the Minister for Education.

We learn to express our feelings in a positive manner and encourage a climate of praise and encouragement to build self-esteem and a positive self-image.

Every effort is made to ensure that parents feel welcome and an 'Open Door' policy ensures that information can be shared regularly. We encourage positive behaviour through our consistent, positive and nurturing environment.



## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Victoria Nursery aims to provide quality learning experiences which will help the child become increasingly independent, self confident and competent. Every child is special and different. Children presenting with Special Educational Needs are identified early and a special educational programme is provided to meet their individual needs. Parents are continually informed of the nature of any additional need/ area of concern and we work together as a team to help your child. On occasions additional specialist help is provided by outside agencies. Parents are informed and involved at all times.



Through careful monitoring of children's progress, nursery staff, are able at an early stage to: -

- identify children who are experiencing difficulties
- draw up plans based on the child's needs
- liaise with parents
- seek appropriate help and advice from outside agencies e.g. Medical Professional, Educational Psychologist, Social Worker



## **MEDICAL NEEDS**

Parents of children who require medication during the school day must make separate arrangements with the Principal and provide the necessary medical advice. Should your child have an allergy this must be brought to the Principal's attention prior to starting nursery so the necessary arrangements can be put in place.

We have a 'Healthy Eating Policy' within the school and only provide treats at seasonal celebrations such as at the Halloween, Christmas and whole class parties. Due to the prevalence of nut and egg allergies we request that birthday cakes etc. are reserved for your home celebrations.

## **HOME- SCHOOL LINKS**

You as parents are the strongest influence and example in your child's life. We actively encourage the involvement of parents in our nursery.

Below are some ideas to help your child settle into nursery quickly and comfortably:

- Always talk about nursery in a positive and enthusiastic manner.
- Familiarise your child with names of staff members.
- Encourage them to express their feelings about starting nursery.
- Try to compliment and offer similar experience's at home e.g. drawing, painting, making models, counting, saying rhymes and singing simple songs.
- Encourage your child to talk about the experiences that they are likely to encounter whilst at nursery.
- Encourage your child to complete one activity before progressing on to another. This fosters a sense of satisfaction upon completion of an activity.
- Encourage your child to tidy away toys when they are finished and to share them with others.
- Read as much as possible with your child, discussing pictures and encouraging discussion about what they thought of the story. It is also beneficial to establish a regular bedtime story routine.
- Establish good routines – early to bed – so your child arrives each day rested and ready for an active day in nursery to play and learn. Parents should note that research indicates that lack of sleep lowers immunity and makes children three times more likely to pick up bugs. The National Sleep Foundation recommends that pre-school children (3-5 years) get 10-13 hours sleep per day!
- Promote personal hygiene by ensuring that your child can visit the toilet independently and that they recognise the necessity of washing hands after particular activities, before handling food and after visiting the toilet.
- Please discourage your child from bringing toys to the Nursery. Additionally it is not necessary for children to bring any food or sweets as a snack will be provided.
- Always be at school on time to collect your child – he / she may not cope well with a prolonged wait, if an unavoidable delay occurs, please telephone the school to inform us.
- Regular attendance is importance for your child's learning and to help them successfully settle into nursery. Please inform staff of any changes in regard to the person nominated to pick up your child from nursery. This must be a responsible person of at least 16 years of age.
- Please inform the Principal of any change in contact details; telephone numbers landline and mobile /address etc



### Children's Progress

Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in the life of our school. Children's progress meetings are held twice a year (November and March), with the option of requesting a third meeting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> term. Meaningful reporting to parents takes the form of both written and oral feedback. There are opportunities to talk to staff informally at the start and end of each school day- however, should you wish to have a lengthy discussion with staff please make an appointment.



### Big Bedtime Read

The Big Bedtime Read is a programme supported by the Education Authority that focusses on the importance of reading to children and encourages parents to read each night to their children. Children will receive a Lending Library bag with 5 books to help promote early language and literacy skills and children enjoy having a special book to share with parents. The pack also contains an activity to promote fine motor skills.



### How Can You Help?

A successful nursery experience is the responsibility of all- children, parents and staff. There are many ways of helping us in the nursery e.g. attending parents meetings, outings, mending equipment, helping out with specific chores, donating old clothes / accessories etc. for dressing up. We very much appreciate any practical help you can provide. Participation in our various fund raising activities is both rewarding for parents and benefits your child – as monies raised help to pay for an enhanced programme of visits/trips and educational visitors to the school.

### SCHOOL UNIFORM

When coming to Nursery, we want your child to feel as comfortable as possible. We encourage children to wear our tracksuit. The uniform consists of a navy sweatshirt exclusive to Victoria NS with our logo on it. We also recommend a red or yellow polo shirt and navy track suit bottoms (elasticated waists are best).



Please ensure all items are clearly marked with your child's name (including their own coat) to avoid mix ups.

Velcro trainers are the most suitable footwear for nursery children. Other shoes such as wellington boots, laced trainers, sandals etc. are unsuitable for climbing outdoors and children will not be able to partake fully in physical activities unless they have the correct footwear.

Our uniform supplier is **Northend School Wear, 331 Antrim Road, Belfast** (opposite the Water Works).

**Tel: 028 90 748600. Northend School Wear** offer a 10% discount on all uniforms during the month of July.

## **SCHOOL SNACK FUND AND SCHOOL MEALS**

Although nursery education is free, **we request a contribution on a weekly basis of £5** to cover the cost of Daily Snack / Fruit, to help subsidise sports sessions and outings, resources for home learning and for small items of additional indoor and outdoor play equipment. Some school trips – transport and admission may incur a small additional charge.

Parents should apply for free school meals online in June so they are available for the end of September <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>.

For those children who pay for their school meals the cost is £2.50 per day (£12.50) per week (these prices are subject to change) and should be paid with the snack money (£17.50 each week). This should be paid weekly on a Monday morning in the labelled Snack/Dinner envelope provided each Friday. It is important that the correct change is placed in the envelope.

If your child is off sick, dinner money paid in advance will be credited to you in the following week; however, snack money cannot be reimbursed.



## **SETTLING IN**

Your child will be gradually introduced into nursery life. Some children settle with no difficulty, others require a lengthy period of time for settling in – rest assured that staff are very experienced in this respect and your co-operation is much appreciated. Please ensure that a parent/ carer is available for the first few days of attendance in case you are needed to help your child to settle without undue stress. Each child is an individual so we would ask you to be guided by the teacher as to when they are fully settled into the nursery routine.

Whilst at nursery your child will be assigned a symbol. This will be used for their coat hook, pigeon hole and for snack etc. This will help them to recognise their name and locate personal belongings.



## **WHAT WILL I BRING ON THEIR FIRST DAY?**

We would appreciate if you would provide a box of tissues, a packet of baby wipes and a bottle of hand soap each term. These can be brought with you on your child's first day.

A full change of clothes including pants and socks should be provided. A drawstring bag is provided by the school for storage of the clothes and will remain in the children's bathroom. Staff should have access to a full change of clothes in case of an accident. All soiled clothing will be put in a plastic bag to take home along with a note describing the reason why a change of clothing was necessary. We would appreciate it if a fresh set of clothing is supplied immediately, as children often refuse to wear clothing that they do not recognise as their own. All clothing should be clearly labelled with the child's name.



## **NURSERY SERVICES**

**Website:** Our school website enable you to keep up to date with nursery activities and information - [www.victorianursery.org.uk](http://www.victorianursery.org.uk)

**Follow our Facebook page.**

**Newsletter:** We produce a monthly newsletter for parents, giving details of forthcoming events and themes that our children will participate in. Prior notice of trips and events are useful reminders to reserve the day to accompany your child on a trip.

**Parents Notice Board in our Foyer:** This provides information relating to our curriculum, topics of interest, health and safety leaflets, magazines on childcare and information on community events. Please collect all artwork / notices from your child's 'pigeon hole' in the hall daily.



## **Wrap Around Care**

**Early Drop Off** – If the demand exists we hope to offer an early drop off in Victoria Nursery School from October from 8.35am to 9am at a cost of £1 per day.



**After Schools** - Kinderkids offer pick ups during the settling in period and after school. Their sites are the McSweeney Centre at Henry Place (028 9521 9830) and on the Cliftonville Rd (028 90749 146). For more information email [fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com](mailto:fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com)



## **CONCLUSION**

At Victoria Nursery School we value the opportunity to promote and maintain a child's social well-being. We recognise that children with well-developed social and emotional skills are more able to:

- Express their ideas and feelings
- Display empathy towards others
- Manage feelings of frustration and /or disappointment more easily
- Make and develop friendships more easily and help your child to succeed in school.

We hope this booklet has provided you with some information about life within our nursery school. Please contact the school if you require any further information. We value the close links established between home, nursery school and community and we aim to make this a memorable and happy year for you and your child. We look forward to the year ahead, 'learning and growing together'.

### **Holiday List 2024/ 2025**

<b>October 2024</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> inclusive
<b>November 2024</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>December 2024</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> inclusive
<b>January 2025</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> - 3 <sup>rd</sup> inclusive
<b>February 2025</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> inclusive
<b>March 2025</b>	17 <sup>th</sup>
<b>April 2024</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> inclusive
<b>May 2024</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> inclusive