

Circadian Nest Nursery

Parent Handbook

Version 2 | Effective from April 2026

Welcome to Circadian Nest Nursery. We are delighted to welcome your family to our setting. This handbook explains how we operate, what you can expect from us and what we ask of you. It sits alongside the Parent Contract and Fee Schedule, both of which form part of your formal agreement with us.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it somewhere accessible. The full set of our policies is available on our website and on our nursery communication platform. If you have any questions at any point, please ask a member of our team — we are happy to help.

1. About Circadian Nest Nursery

Circadian Nest Nursery is a nurturing early years setting built around calm, consistent routines and a child-centred environment. We believe children thrive when their environment is structured, predictable and connected to healthy natural rhythms. Our aim is to create a space where children feel secure, rested and ready to learn.

We are registered with Ofsted and follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years.

Our approach

- Consistent, calming daily routines
- Regular outdoor time and nature connection
- Warm, responsive relationships with every child
- Play-based learning aligned with the EYFS

Our values

- Low-stimulation, thoughtfully designed environments
- Emphasis on wellbeing and secure attachment
- Openness and partnership with families
- Transparency, honesty and continuous improvement

2. Our People

Knowing who to speak to matters. The key people for parents to know at Circadian Nest Nursery are:

Role	Name	When to contact
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Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo)	Samina Farooq	Day-to-day questions, safeguarding concerns, additional needs, pastoral matters
Owner / Director / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Suhail Farooq	In Samina's absence, business matters, formal complaints
Your child's Key Person	Assigned at start	Daily updates and your child's care, learning and wellbeing

Safeguarding concerns can be raised in person, by phone or by email. They are taken seriously and acted on without delay.

3. Opening Hours and Sessions

Circadian Nest Nursery is open Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year (excluding bank holidays and two INSET days). We offer the following sessions:

Session	Times	Daily Rate
Full Day	08:30 – 17:30	£85.00 (breakfast and snacks included)
Morning Session	08:30 – 13:30	£50.00
Afternoon Session	12:30 – 17:30	£50.00

A minimum attendance of three half sessions or two full sessions per week is required for all children. Full details of fees are set out in the Fee Schedule.

Government funded hours — term-time delivery

Funded hours at Circadian Nest Nursery are delivered on a term-time basis across 38 weeks of the year. Funded children attend either:

- 15 hours per week — three days, morning (08:30–13:30) or afternoon (12:30–17:30)
- 30 hours per week — five days, morning (08:30–14:30) or afternoon (11:30–17:30)

Funded hours show as £0.00 on your invoice — they are an entitlement, never a discount. If you need care beyond your funded session, extensions are available at £9.44 per hour.

During school holiday weeks, funded hours do not apply. Your child's place is guaranteed throughout the year. If you wish your child to attend during holidays, sessions are charged at our standard private rate. Holiday attendance is entirely your choice. Full details are in the Parent Funding Guide and Parent Contract.

4. Arrival and Collection

Children should arrive ready for the day with all required belongings clearly labelled. Please ensure a member of staff is aware that your child has arrived at drop-off.

Children will only be released to a parent, carer or authorised collector named on the Child Registration Form. If someone other than a named collector will be collecting your child, please notify us in advance. Staff may request photo identification on first collection by a new authorised person.

Password system

At registration, each family agrees a confidential password with the nursery. If a person not previously known to staff arrives to collect your child, they will be asked for the password. Children will not be released without verification. Please do not share the password by email or text in advance of collection.

Late collection charges

We know that occasionally things come up. If you are running late, please let us know as soon as you can — we will always do our best to help.

Where late collection becomes a recurring pattern, a fee of £1 per minute commenced may be applied after the session end time. Our first response is always a conversation, not a charge — we will speak with you before any fee is applied.

5. Mobile Phones at Drop-off and Collection

To support a calm, attentive handover and to protect children's privacy, parents and visitors are kindly asked not to use mobile phones inside the nursery building or in the entrance area when dropping off or collecting children. This is important both so that staff can communicate safety information clearly and so that no child is photographed or filmed inadvertently. Please complete any calls or messages before entering the setting. Full details are in our Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Use Policy.

6. Settling In

Starting nursery is a significant transition for children and families. We aim to make this as gentle and supportive as possible.

Settling-in sessions are arranged before your child's official start date and are tailored to your child's age, temperament and previous experience of being away from you. The number and length of sessions vary, but most children settle over two to four weeks. Settling sessions are offered free of charge and we will agree a plan with you when you accept your child's place. Some children settle quickly while others need a slower transition — we ask parents to work openly with staff during this period.

7. Key Person Approach

Every child at Circadian Nest Nursery is assigned a key person who forms a warm, consistent relationship with your child and acts as your main point of contact within the nursery. Your child's key person will:

- Help your child settle and feel secure in their new environment.
- Get to know your child's individual needs, interests, routines and preferences.
- Plan and support their learning and development against the EYFS, recording observations in their learning journey.

- Communicate with you regularly about your child's day, including a daily handover and ongoing updates through our nursery communication platform.
- Notice patterns in behaviour, wellbeing and development and raise any concerns with you early.
- Liaise with our SENDCo, external professionals and your child's next setting where relevant.

If you would prefer to discuss something with someone other than your key person at any time, you are welcome to speak to the Manager.

8. Our Daily Rhythm

Our day is structured around a consistent, calming rhythm that supports children's wellbeing and development. The routine is predictable but flexible enough to respond to children's ages, needs and interests. A typical full day includes:

- Arrival and breakfast
- Free play and guided activities
- Morning snack
- Outdoor play
- Lunch
- Rest or quiet time
- Afternoon play and exploration
- Afternoon snack
- Wind-down and collection

9. Sleep and Rest

Sleep is central to children's wellbeing, mood and development, and we take it seriously. Babies and younger children sleep according to their individual rhythm; older children have a quiet rest period after lunch. We work with parents to mirror home sleep routines as closely as possible while children are with us.

Safer sleep

For babies and young children, we follow Lullaby Trust safer sleep guidance. Babies are placed on their back to sleep, on a firm flat surface, in a cot or sleep mat with no loose bedding. Sleeping children are checked at regular, recorded intervals and are always within sight and sound of a member of staff.

Where you have specific sleep needs or preferences for your child — including comforters, sleep sounds, room shading or particular routines — please share these with your child's key person so we can support them consistently.

10. Food, Drink and Nutrition

Food shapes mood, behaviour, sleep and development. We take our nutrition approach seriously and keep meals simple, natural and calming.

We provide	Parents provide
Breakfast — served on arrival, included in all	A clearly labelled packed lunch

session fees	
Morning snack — included in all session fees	Nappies and wipes where required
Afternoon snack — included in all session fees	A named water bottle (optional — we provide water)
Fresh drinking water throughout the day	

Please inform us before your child starts of any allergies, intolerances, dietary restrictions or religious dietary requirements. We will work with you to plan suitable provision.

Allergen restrictions

Where the nursery operates allergen restrictions to protect children with allergies, parents must comply with these — for example, avoiding nuts in packed lunches if a nut restriction is in place. Where unsafe foods are brought in, staff will remove them and provide a suitable alternative for the day. Repeated non-compliance will be addressed in a meeting with the manager. Full details are in our Food and Drink Policy and Allergies Policy.

11. What to Bring

- A clearly labelled packed lunch
- Nappies and wipes if required, clearly labelled
- A labelled bag of spare clothes
- Weather-appropriate clothing including coat, hat and suitable footwear
- Any comfort item agreed with your child's key person
- Named sun cream during warm weather, where requested

Please label all items clearly. The nursery cannot accept responsibility for unlabelled belongings that are lost or mixed up.

12. Clothing

Children should attend in practical, comfortable clothing suitable for active play, messy activities and outdoor time. Nursery is a place for exploration and children will regularly take part in painting, water play, sensory activities, outdoor play and messy play. We encourage parents to send clothing that can get dirty.

13. Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an essential part of daily life at Circadian Nest Nursery. We aim for children to spend time outdoors every day where safe and appropriate. We go outside in most weather — please dress children accordingly. Outdoor time supports physical development, confidence, sensory learning, emotional regulation and a healthy circadian rhythm.

14. Intimate Care and Nappy Changing

Where intimate care is needed — nappy changing, toileting support, changing clothes after a spill — it is provided in a way that protects every child's dignity, privacy and emotional comfort. Staff who provide intimate care are appropriately trained, change children in dedicated areas and follow strict hygiene procedures using personal protective equipment.

Wherever possible, intimate care is provided by your child's key person or another familiar adult. Each nappy change is recorded in your child's daily log and shared with you on collection. If you have any specific care preferences, please share them with us at induction. Full details are in our Intimate Care and Nappy Changing Policy.

15. Health, Illness and Medication

To protect the health of all children and staff, children must not attend nursery if they are unwell or infectious.

Sickness and diarrhoea — exclusion rule

Children must remain at home for at least 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. This rule cannot be waived regardless of the cause.

For all other infectious illnesses, the nursery follows current UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance on exclusion periods. A summary of common exclusion periods is included in our Infection Control Policy. If your child becomes unwell during the nursery day, you will be contacted and may be required to collect promptly.

Medication

Medication is administered only with your prior written consent, recorded in our Medication Record, and in accordance with our Medication Policy. Prescription medication must normally be in the child's name, in the original labelled container, and used in line with the prescription. We can also administer agreed over-the-counter medication for short periods with written consent. Please discuss any ongoing medical conditions with us at induction so we can plan appropriate care.

16. Accidents and Emergencies

Minor accidents and any first aid treatment will be recorded and shared with you at collection. You will be asked to sign the accident record. For any bump to the head — however minor — we will contact you on the day so you are aware and can monitor your child at home.

In an emergency the nursery will take whatever action is reasonably necessary to safeguard your child, including calling 999 and accompanying your child to hospital where required. We will contact you as soon as possible.

17. Fire Safety and Lockdown

The safety of children and staff in any emergency is a priority. We carry out fire evacuation drills at least termly, and lockdown drills at regular intervals throughout the year. Drills are conducted in a calm, age-appropriate way so children know what to do without becoming distressed.

Following any actual emergency or significant drill, you will be informed. Full details of our procedures are in the Fire Safety and Evacuation Policy and the Emergency Lock Down Policy.

18. Safeguarding and Child Protection

The safety and welfare of children is our highest priority. All staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection on induction and through ongoing professional development, and they are required to act in the best interests of children at all times.

Designated leads

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Samina Farooq

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Suhail Farooq

If you have any concern about a child — your own or another — please speak to one of the designated leads as soon as possible. You can also raise concerns directly with Oxfordshire Children's Social Care or the police if a child is in immediate danger.

Where a concern arises, we follow our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. We will normally discuss any concern with you, but where doing so would put a child at greater risk we may share information with relevant agencies (such as Children's Social Care, the police or health services) without parental consent. This is a last resort and is only ever taken to keep a child safe.

19. Online Safety, Prevent and British Values

Our Online Safety Policy sets out how we protect children from online harm at the nursery, including controls on devices, supervised use of any digital content and safe handling of children's images.

As an early years setting, we have a duty under the Prevent strategy to be vigilant for signs that a child or family may be at risk of being drawn into extremism. In practice this is a small but important part of our broader safeguarding work. We promote the fundamental British values — democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance — through age-appropriate everyday practice, including taking turns, listening to others, kindness and celebrating differences. Full details are in our Promoting Fundamental British Values Policy.

20. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We are committed to supporting every child as an individual and to working positively with families to support children with additional needs wherever reasonably possible.

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is Samina Farooq. Please share any known needs, diagnoses, concerns or professional involvement with us at the earliest opportunity, including at induction. The SENDCo works with parents and, where helpful, with external professionals such as health visitors, speech and language therapists, the local authority and your child's next setting. Full details are in our SEND Policy.

21. Photography, Video and Social Media

The nursery uses photographs and videos of children for learning observations, daily communications with parents, internal displays, our website and social media, and printed marketing materials. We do so only with your explicit, informed consent.

At registration, you will be asked to complete a photography consent form which sets out your wishes separately for each of these uses:

- Learning records and your child's own progress file

- Internal displays inside the nursery
- The nursery website and social media
- Printed marketing materials

You may grant or withhold consent for any category, and may change your wishes at any time by contacting the Manager. Consent is reviewed annually.

Other children — important

Parents and visitors must not photograph or video other children at the nursery without the express consent of those children's parents. We ask that you do not post identifiable images of other nursery children on social media at any time.

22. Behaviour and Emotional Support

Children are supported through positive, age-appropriate approaches. We do not use harsh discipline, humiliation or punitive methods of any kind. Staff help children learn boundaries, routines, sharing, turn-taking and emotional expression in calm and developmentally appropriate ways.

Where a particular behaviour is repeated or causing concern, we will speak with you early so we can take a consistent approach at home and at nursery. Full details are in our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

23. Biting

Biting is a common, normal part of early development — particularly between roughly twelve months and three years — and is almost always a way of communicating frustration, teething discomfort, tiredness or overstimulation rather than aggression. We treat it as a developmental matter, not a disciplinary one.

If a biting incident occurs, both the child who bit and the child who was bitten are supported with care. The child who was bitten receives first aid and reassurance, and the parents of both children are informed at collection. Names of other children involved are kept confidential. Where a pattern develops, we work with parents to identify triggers and put a consistent plan in place. Full details are in our Biting Policy.

24. Communication with Parents

We value open, respectful and timely communication. You will receive updates about your child's day through:

- A verbal handover at collection
- Daily and ongoing updates through our nursery communication platform
- Regular conversations with your child's key person
- Termly progress conversations and the statutory two-year-old progress check at the appropriate age

It is your responsibility to keep the nursery updated with any changes to contact details, authorised collectors, medical needs or family circumstances.

25. Absence and Holiday Attendance

If your child is absent for any reason, please notify us as soon as possible on the day of absence.

Fees during absence

Nursery fees remain payable during all periods of absence including illness, holidays and personal absences. Your child's place is reserved exclusively for them and all staffing costs continue regardless of attendance. No deductions are given for personal absence.

Holiday attendance

Circadian Nest Nursery is open 51 weeks of the year and your child's place is guaranteed throughout, including school holidays. During holiday weeks, government funded hours do not apply and any sessions you choose to attend are charged at our standard private rate (£85 full day / £50 half day).

Holiday attendance is entirely optional. If you would like your child to attend during holiday weeks, please let us know in advance so we can confirm arrangements.

26. Transitions

Children move through the nursery as they grow, and on to school when they reach reception age. We plan transitions carefully so that each move feels familiar and supported.

- Room transitions are planned in advance with you and your child's key person, with several visits to the new room before the move.
- School transitions in the term before reception start are supported through conversations with you, transition information for the receiving school, and where helpful a visit from the new teacher.
- Where your child has additional needs, the SENDCo coordinates a more detailed handover so the next setting is ready for them on day one.

Full details are in our Transitions Policy.

27. Fees Summary

Private session rates are shown below. Full details are set out in the Fee Schedule and Parent Contract.

Session	Times	Rate
Full Day	08:30 – 17:30	£85.00
Morning Session	08:30 – 13:30	£50.00
Afternoon Session	12:30 – 17:30	£50.00

All sessions include breakfast and morning and afternoon snacks. Parents provide packed lunch, nappies and wipes. Government funded hours are delivered on a term-time basis (38 weeks/year) at 15 or 30 hours per week and appear on invoices at £0.00. During school holiday weeks, all sessions are charged at the standard private rate.

Registration, deposit and other charges

Fee	Amount	Notes
Registration Fee	£85.00	Non-refundable. Payable on acceptance of a place. Applies to private hours only — not charged where a child takes up funded-only hours with no paid sessions.
Holding Deposit	£50 per contracted day	Refundable. Secures your child's place. Private children: deducted from the final invoice on departure (subject to notice and all fees paid). Funded-only children: refunded in full by the headcount date in the term the funded place is taken up.
Sibling Discount	10% discount	Applied to the eldest sibling's session fees while more than one sibling is enrolled. Does not apply to registration fees, deposits or trips.
Late Payment Fee	£25.00	May be applied if payment is not received within 7 days of the invoice date.

28. Notice Period

Four weeks' written notice is required to end your child's place at Circadian Nest Nursery. Email to the Manager is acceptable as written notice. Fees remain payable in full during the notice period. Full terms are set out in the Parent Contract.

29. Concerns and Complaints

We welcome feedback and take all concerns seriously. If you have a concern about any aspect of your child's care or our provision, please raise it with us in the first instance — most concerns can be resolved quickly through open conversation with the Manager. Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, our Complaints Policy sets out a formal process. We will respond to a formal complaint within 20 working days.

Ofsted complaints

Parents also have the right to raise a concern directly with Ofsted at any time, including alongside our internal process.

Telephone: 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Postal address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

30. Our Policies

Circadian Nest Nursery maintains a full suite of policies governing our day-to-day practice and statutory duties. These include — among others — Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety, Medication, Promoting Positive Behaviour, Complaints, Inclusion and Equality, Data Protection, Online Safety, Infection Control, Fire Safety and Evacuation, Emergency Lock Down, SEND, Sleep, Intimate Care, Settling In, Photography, Mobile Phone Use, Promoting Fundamental British Values, Transitions and Risk Assessment.

All policies are published on our website and on our nursery communication platform. Printed copies are available in the nursery on request. Policies are reviewed annually.

31. Contact Details

Nursery	Circadian Nest Nursery
Address	Donnington, Oxford OX4 4BB
Telephone	01865 965064
Email	manager@circadiannest.co.uk
Website	www.circadiannest.co.uk
Manager / DSL / SENDCo	Samina Farooq
Owner / Director / Deputy DSL	Suhail Farooq