



2025 - 2026
Pre-School
General Information

Pre-School

After-School Care

After-School Care facilities, for the supervision of pupils whose parents are unable to arrange collection at the normal time, are provided from 3.15 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. Pupils are permitted to bring a small, healthy snack (no nuts). An After-School Care Supervisor is specifically employed for this purpose. A register is kept by him/her. If pupils need to attend on an irregular basis, the Pre-Prep Office must be notified on the day. Pupils are collected any time until 6.00 p.m. from the front garden gate on Castlebar Road. There is a charge for this service. Any other pupils found uncollected outside the usual collection times are sent to After-School Care. Pupils are permitted to bring a small, healthy snack for After-School Care.

Beginning and End of the Day

Pupils in Pre-School arrive at School between 8.10 a.m. – 8.25 a.m. and enter through the Playground gate in Blakesley Avenue. There is a Breakfast Club from 7.30 a.m. – 8.10 a.m. Breakfast Club must be booked in advance. Admission to Breakfast Club is through the gate at 24 Castlebar Road, between 7.30 a.m. and 7.45 a.m. One of the Pre-School Key-workers will also be supervising at both Breakfast Club and After School club so that they have a familiar adult with them at all times.

All bags, coats and lunches are stored in the cloakroom area of the Pre-School. Pupils in Pre-School will be met at the picket fence gate of the outdoor learning garden and be guided into the Pre-School. A pupil is marked absent after 8.30 a.m. The first lesson begins at 8.30 a.m. If a pupil arrives after 8.25 a.m. they must report to the Pre-Prep Office to be registered before going to class.

Lessons end at 3.10-3.25 p.m. for Pre-School pupils, except on Wednesdays. On Wednesdays, Pre-School pupils can be collected at 12.30 p.m. (after lunch) or at 3.15 p.m. Those that stay for the afternoon are supervised by our Early Years Practitioners. There will be no formal teaching on Wednesday afternoons and children who stay will have access to play activities set out by the EYFS assistants. Parents are asked to pick up pupils promptly and not to park illegally on or near crossings, in the bus stops in Eaton Rise and Castlebar Road, nor across the driveways of local residents.

Charities

Each year the school supports one or two main charities throughout the year. This charity work is coordinated by the Assistant Head, Co-Curricular, who is responsible for leading the development of pupil awareness and spearheading fundraising work. Durston House considers this charity work as an essential part of pupil participation in the life of the community, necessary for an individual's well-rounded education.

Communication

The school communicates administrative information to parents electronically, by email and text alerts, via the school's messaging system and the Parent Portal. This enables the school to communicate with individuals, classes, year groups or the whole school. It also enables parents to reply and/or give consent online.

Parents are able to follow highlights of school life, the many activities and events that run throughout the year, by visiting our website or following Durston House on Social Media, including Facebook, Instagram, X & LinkedIn @durstonhouse

Parents/Carers are encouraged to make an appointment to talk to their child's teacher, or the Head of Pre-School, or to speak informally with staff at the end of the day if they have any concerns about their child. There is also a daily Diary/Communication Book which is used for informal communication between school and

home. Teachers will always let parents know if there is a concern about their child and will ask parents to come into school for an appointment, when necessary. The Head of Pre-School will contact parents/carers if a child is unhappy during the day for any length of time.

Parents and carers are invited to a 'Garden Party' afternoon soon after they start with us in September. Parents/carers spend an hour in the classrooms learning about the curriculum at our 'Meet the Teacher' events. All seven areas of the Early Years Curriculum are treated equally, however, as they move towards the end their foundation stage there is a special focus on Phonics, Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

Within the Pre-School we incorporate half-termly parent events. This is where we invite our parents into the Pre-School for 'stay and learn' sessions and we link the event to our learning theme of the week. An example of this is during Anti-Bullying week; where we invite the parents to join us for a teddy bear picnic. Children bring in their own teddy bears and we show our parents/carers our amazing work on Elmer, celebrating our unique differences.

Daily Breaks

Pupils have their break times in the Front Garden. Pupils are supervised by staff members in line with the expected ratio guidelines for the Early Years and Foundation Stage. Pupils are provided with an afternoon snack at 14.00. The purpose of this is not to impair the children's appetite at lunchtime. This is supervised by one of the teachers. School snacks are a healthy, small option such as; fruit, fruit muffins, and flapjacks, beetroot brownies and so on. All allergies are taken into account. At 11.45 a.m. the pupils in Pre-School go to the dining hall for lunch. After our lunchtime we go to the front garden for our outdoor play time until 13.30 p.m.

Games and PE

Pupils in Pre-School have one Games lessons each week. Pupils will do their Games sessions with one of the specialist Games Teachers and the Early Years Key workers on the outdoor playground behind the Pre-School. Pre-School pupils wear their normal school uniform on these days, however, all pupils will be expected to wear their trainers (with Velcro only). A separate PE/Games kit is not necessary for Pre-School pupils.

Library

Pupils are able to borrow books from the Pre-Prep Library, during their designated Library Lesson under the supervision of their Teachers. All borrowed books must be returned the following week.

Lunches & Snacks

Pupils' lunches and snacks are provided by the school kitchen. There are a variety of choices available each day, and allergies and food intolerances are catered for. At lunchtimes, pupils with allergies wear a lanyard which will indicate their specific allergy to staff. Menus are published on the school website. Parents are sent information with menu choices before the start of each term. Throughout the school, nuts, sesame seeds or food containing nuts are banned as there are some pupils who suffer from a serious allergy to them.

Office Opening Hours

The school offices are open from 7.45 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. each day during term time.

On-Going Assessment

Throughout the year, on-going assessment in Pre-School is carried out to aid teaching and learning. The children are assessed by performing a baseline check 6-8 weeks after they have started. This acts as a starting point to allow the team to track pupil's progress. We use frequent observations in the Pre-School to track children's attainment against the Early Years and Foundation Framework, Development Matters. Parents have a log in receive notifications of observations uploaded by the Pre-School teachers and it also allows parents to upload any observations that they feel should be celebrated in partnership from home. This informs us of each child's unique development path and allows the teachers to produce high quality informative and summative planning.

Oral Hygiene

The children In Pre-School are encouraged to bring in a named toothbrush and toothbrush head-lid from home that can be left at school. Within our toilet facilities we have a built-in tooth brushing area, including a special toothpaste dispenser provided by the school. In September, the pupils are involved in an Oral Hygiene workshop with a local dental practitioner. They are taught the importance of Oral Hygiene. Within our school day, children are encouraged to brush their teeth after lunch and we give great praise for those children who choose to do this independently.

Outings

Pupils in Pre-School are taken on one summer outing. This is normally to a farm and we also do a local mini beast hunt at Castlebar field. Once a week the Pre-School pupils have allocated time at Castlebar field for our 'Nature Lesson'. During this time, we focus on learning about the world around us and explore all different elements of nature. We will make mud potions, explore insects and bugs, observe and care for different plants throughout the seasons; as well as have the opportunity to plant our own fruit and vegetables.

Parents Evenings

Parents will have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with their Pre-School Teachers through day-to-day communication. Separate appointments can be made with the teachers or the Head of Pre-School at other times, if any concerns arise. There is then the opportunity given to make an appointment with the Head of Pre-School in June (after the summer reports are published) should you want to discuss anything further.

Personal Accident and Dental Accident Insurance

All pupils are covered under the School's Pupils' Personal Accident (including Dental Accident) insurance scheme. There are no additional charges as the premiums are incorporated within the current fee structure.

Pre-School Teachers

The Head of Pre-School and the Pre-School Teachers are the first point of contact for pupils and parents. They are responsible in the first instance for the general welfare of the pupils in that Form. They are responsible for overseeing the Pastoral Care of a pupil, which includes their academic and personal development. The Head of Pre-School reinforces policies and guidelines, which are designed to create the ordered, calm and safe environment that is Durston House. The Head of Pre-School and the teachers coordinate the school reports for the pupils in Pre-School and write a general Report. The Teachers help the pupils in Pre-School to develop a collective spirit of loyalty, trust and support.

Pupil Absence

If a pupil has an unplanned absence owing to illness or some unforeseen circumstance, parents must telephone or email the Pre-Prep Office with an explanation (PrPOffice@durstonhouse.org), before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence and make a subsequent telephone call for each further day of absence.

Requests for any planned, future absence from school must be made by parents, in writing, to the Head of Pre-Prep, giving the dates and reasons for such absence. The office will send you a form to complete. The Head of Pre-Prep considers the request and takes whatever action necessary. We do not believe that it is in the best interests of your child to miss school and discourage holidays and travel during term time. However, each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Reports

Reports are sent to parents in Pre-School once per year. Please note only the children who are graduating from Pre-School that year will receive an end of Pre-School report.

Rewards and Sanctions

Pupils may be presented with a 'Star of The Day' certificate by their Teacher on an irregular basis which celebrates an element of their work or progress, or any other aspect of school life. Children in Pre-School are frequently praised for their achievements and we celebrate this in our assemblies with Star of the Week, stickers and lots of verbal praise.

Minor misdemeanours are dealt with by the Pre School teachers or Head of Pre-School/Pre-Prep. If a pupil continues to misbehave, teachers will meet with parents to work out a strategy to support the child going forward. Please see the behaviour policy for more details.

School Bags

Pupils in Pre-School should use the book folder and spare clothes draw-string bag, as listed in the Uniform List.

School Calendar & SOCS

A calendar of events is published on the school website, on a termly basis. It is a comprehensive list of events and fixtures for the term, which parents are asked to refer to.

We use SOCS for the School Calendar, Fixtures, and booking of After School Activities. Parents can access SOCS using their Parent Portal logins.

Security

The security of pupils at the school is paramount. The gate at Pre-Prep is shut and locked during the school day. If parents wish to enter the school grounds, they should push the buzzer on the outside of the gate and wait until the Pre-Prep Office has identified them on the outside of the gate of no. 26 and either come to meet them at the door, or let them in. Once inside school property, it is essential that all visitors report directly to the Pre-Prep Office on the ground floor, from where contact with staff, concerns or issues can be dealt with. If they are visiting the school, parents are asked not to admit other visitors to the school property. Please advise such people to make contact with the Pre-Prep Office in the first instance.

It is vital that the Pre-Prep Office is notified of any changes to drop-off and pick-up arrangements for any pupil, as well as changes to personal and contact details that the school must know. At the beginning of term, it is a

requirement to send a photograph of the adult or adults who will collect your child to the Pre-Prep Office for the attention of the Pre-School teachers with written permission for your child to be dismissed to this adult; they will not be allowed to go with anyone else without prior arrangement.

There may be times when you wish your child to go home with another family. On these occasions, please let the Pre-Prep School Office or the Pre-School Teachers know by email, message or telephone call, as they will not be released to another adult without parental permission.

Term Dates

Term Dates are published well in advance. A copy of the dates are sent to all parents, and can also be found on the school [website](#). Parents are asked to respect the holiday dates and to avoid absence during term time.

Themed Weeks

Throughout the year, pupils in all sections of the school take part in themed weeks. Where possible, the Pre-School teachers integrate these special themed weeks within our planning. This allows us to expose the Pre-School pupils to significant themes in an age appropriate, engaging way. In November, the pupils and staff focus on Anti-Bullying, reflecting on the nature and causes of bullying and how best it can be tackled at Durston House. In the Spring Term, Durston recognises Children's Mental Health Week and celebrates our own Wellbeing Week. Later in the year, two themed weeks occur: the Literature Festival and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Week.

Uniform

Pupils in Pre-School must wear full Pre-School uniform, which is mostly supplied by Stevensons. Details about Uniform can be found under the Uniform tab on the school [website](#). All uniform should be clearly named. Lost, unnamed uniform is held in the lost property box in the Pre-Prep Office, which will be available to search on request. The use of school uniform is monitored. Any persistent failure of pupils to have the correct school uniform is noted and parents will be contacted by the Head of Pre-School.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

All parents will have access to a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Each parent is provided with a login to the site, where they can access communication, and guidance in their child's learning and important curriculum information. Parents are encouraged to check the VLE regularly. Parents have their own log in for the VLE where they can access school and curriculum information.

Water

Pupils should bring one, named water bottle from home, which they will store in their classroom and bring home each night. This will be refilled during the day on request. Pupils must only bring water to drink during lessons - no juice, squash or fizzy drinks are permitted.