



Spring 2026

# NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our latest newsletter. In this edition we are pleased to share a range of helpful information, including guidance on supporting children's online safety, practical ideas for preparing children for school, and simple advice around healthy eating in the early years. We are also delighted to introduce our Climate Action Plan for 2026, outlining how our nurseries will continue to care for the environment and encourage children to value the world around them.

You will also find information about the support available through local Family Hubs, which offer advice and services for parents and carers at every stage of family life. For families expecting a baby or with young children, the NHS Healthy Start Scheme provides support to help buy healthy food and milk for mums who are over 10 weeks pregnant and for families with children aged 0-4.

As we move towards the Easter break, we would also like to wish all of our families and staff across our wonderfully diverse nursery community a peaceful holiday and some special time spent together with your children.



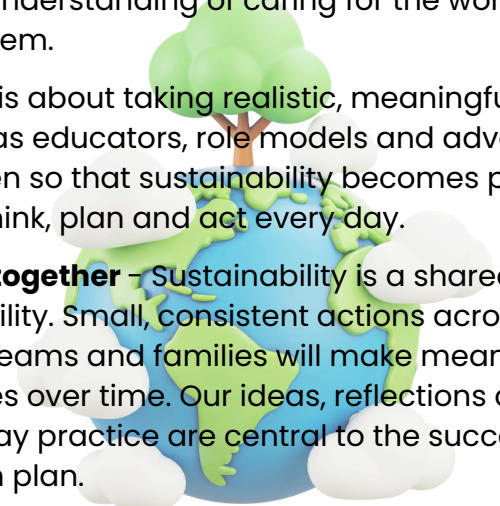
## CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

At Paint Pots, and as an education organisation, we have a responsibility not only to care for children today, but to consider the world they will inherit tomorrow.

As part of the Department for Education initiative, we have created our own Sustainability and Climate Action Plan setting out how we will reduce our environmental impact, make thoughtful choices in our daily practice, and support children to develop an early understanding of caring for the world around them.

This work is about taking realistic, meaningful steps together as educators, role models and advocates for children so that sustainability becomes part of how we think, plan and act every day.

**Working together** - Sustainability is a shared responsibility. Small, consistent actions across our settings, teams and families will make meaningful differences over time. Our ideas, reflections and day-to-day practice are central to the success of our action plan.



### Our Aims and Objectives for 2026 are to:

- Reduce our environmental impact and carbon footprint.
- Use resources responsibly and minimise waste.
- Embed sustainability within everyday practice and in our curriculum.
- Promote positive environmental behaviours through role modelling.
- Work in partnership with families and the local community.
- Review and improve our environmental practice regularly through data collection, observations, reflections and meetings.

Each of our nurseries and preschools has a Sustainability and Climate Ambassador and their role will be to implement new ideas, support staff, children and parents to have a new mindset and to review and reflect on changes as they happen.

We hope you will help us make a small difference and start thinking about the things you can change at home. Our staff are always happy to help and advise.

## Online Safety Update



The UK government has introduced new laws to help make the internet a safer place for children. The Online Safety Act 2023 places stronger responsibilities on social media companies, websites and search services to protect their users, particularly children.

Since March 2025, online platforms have had a legal duty to remove illegal content and prevent their services from being used for illegal activities. From July 2025, additional rules mean companies must take further steps to keep children safe online.

These new protections require platforms to introduce age-checking systems and prevent children from accessing harmful or inappropriate content. This includes material relating to pornography, self-harm, suicide, eating disorders, bullying, hateful content and dangerous online challenges.

The bill also requires firms to show they are committed to removing illegal content, including:

- child sexual abuse
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- extreme sexual violence
- promoting suicide or self-harm
- selling illegal drugs or weapons
- terrorism

The Act has also created new offences, such as:

- cyber-flashing - sending unsolicited sexual imagery online
- sharing "deepfake" pornography, where artificial intelligence is used to insert someone's likeness into pornographic content.

Companies must also make it easier for parents and children to report concerns and must remove harmful content quickly when it is identified. The UK regulator Ofcom is responsible for enforcing these rules and ensuring that platforms meet their legal responsibilities.

Although these new measures strengthen online protection, parents and carers still play an important role by talking with children about staying safe online and encouraging them to share any concerns they may have.



## Family Hubs – Support for Families

Family Hubs offer a welcoming place where families can find support, advice and opportunities to connect with others in their community. Whether you live in Southampton or elsewhere in Hampshire, Family Hubs provide a wide range of services designed to support parents, carers and children from pregnancy through to starting school.

**At a Family Hub, families can enjoy stay and play sessions, meet other parents, and access practical support in a relaxed and friendly environment. Many hubs also offer quiet spaces for breastfeeding, infant feeding advice, and access to healthcare support. Staff are available to help families find the right information and services, whether that relates to child development, parenting support, health, or employment advice.**

In Southampton, the Start for Life offer and the local Southampton City Council Family Hubs provide a variety of sessions and guidance for families across the city.

Across Hampshire, the Best Start in Life programme delivered through Hampshire County Council Family Hubs supports children's development from pregnancy through the early years and up to school age.

Family Hubs are a valuable resource for families looking for guidance, reassurance and opportunities for their children to learn and play.



***'Children have the potential to become school ready when families, early years providers and schools work together to support the development of their confidence, resilience and curiosity.'***

## Supporting Your Child to Become School Ready

Starting Reception is an exciting milestone for young children and their families. It is a time filled with curiosity, new friendships and many learning opportunities. While it can feel like a big step, children develop many of the skills they need for school naturally through play, daily routines and their experiences at nursery or preschool.

Being "school ready" is about much more than wearing the correct uniform or arriving on time. It includes developing a range of physical, social, emotional and communication skills that help children feel confident and settled in a school environment. These include learning how to play alongside others, take turns, ask questions, express their choices and begin simple routines such as eating with a knife and fork.

Many children already have a number of these skills without even realising it. Nursery and preschool experiences help children practise these important abilities every day. Regular attendance also helps children become familiar with routines such as getting ready in the morning, arriving on time and participating in group activities, all of which support a smooth transition into school life.

If your child is still developing some of these skills, please do not worry. Every child learns at their own pace and support is always available.

## Helping Your Child Prepare for School

There are many simple and enjoyable ways families can help children feel confident about starting school:



### Talk about school together

Bring the topic of school into everyday conversations. Ask your child what they think school might be like and what they are looking forward to. Speaking positively about school can help children feel calm and excited about this new experience.

### Read books about starting school

Sharing stories about school can help children understand what to expect. Your local library is a wonderful place to find books about starting Reception, and reading together is a comforting and valuable routine.

### Practise everyday skills through play

Children learn best through play and daily experiences. Talking together, listening, sharing toys, and following simple instructions all help build the communication and social skills they will use in the classroom.



### Visit the school if possible

Seeing the school building and playground can help children become familiar with their new surroundings and feel more comfortable on their first day.

### Encourage independence

Simple self-care skills help children feel confident at school. Encourage your child to practise getting dressed, using the toilet independently, washing their hands, and blowing their nose. Being fully toilet trained is particularly important before starting school, so please speak to us if you would like support with this.

Starting school is an important step in your child's learning journey.

By building routines, encouraging independence and supporting social skills, families and early years settings can work together to help children begin school feeling happy, confident and ready to learn.

**If you would like further guidance or support with preparing your child for school, please speak with a member of the nursery team.**

# Healthy Eating in the Early Years



Early childhood is also the time when lifelong eating habits begin to form. When children are regularly offered a variety of healthy foods, they become more confident in trying new flavours and textures. Colourful foods such as peppers, carrots, sweet potatoes and fresh fruits can make mealtimes enjoyable while helping children develop a positive relationship with food.

During the nursery years, children experience a period of rapid growth and development. Providing a balanced and nutritious diet during this time plays an important role in supporting their physical health, learning and emotional wellbeing.

Nutritious meals provide the vitamins, minerals and protein children need for healthy growth. Foods such as whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables help maintain steady energy levels throughout the day. This energy supports children as they take part in active play, explore their environment and concentrate during learning activities.

Establishing healthy eating patterns in the early years is important not only for childhood wellbeing but also for long-term health. Good nutrition supports strong growth, healthy teeth and bones, and helps reduce the risk of health conditions later in life. Encouraging balanced meals and regular eating routines is therefore an important investment in a child's future health.



## Introducing Solid Foods (Weaning)

For babies, all the nourishment they need during the first six months comes from breastmilk or infant formula. Health professionals recommend that babies begin trying solid foods from around six months of age, alongside their usual milk feeds. This stage is often known as weaning or complementary feeding.

When starting solids, foods should be smooth, soft or well mashed so they are easy for babies to swallow.

### Suitable first foods may include:

- Plain baby rice mixed with breastmilk or formula
- Well-mashed vegetables such as potato, carrot, parsnip or cauliflower
- Soft fruits such as mashed banana or stewed apple or pear
- Unsweetened natural yoghurt
- Unsweetened custard made with custard powder



Solid foods are usually offered two to three times a day at first, gradually increasing to three or four meals a day between nine and eleven months as babies grow and develop. Starting solids before six months is not recommended, as babies' digestive systems and kidneys are still developing.

## Working Together to Support Healthy Choices

At nursery we support children to develop positive eating habits, encourage them to try new foods and promote balanced, nutritious meals. By working together with families, we can help children build healthy routines that will benefit them throughout childhood and beyond.

If you would like advice about healthy eating or weaning, please speak with a member of the nursery team.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

**If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or you have a child under four, you could get support to buy healthy food and milk with @NHSHealthyStart. It could take as little as five minutes to apply. Check if you're eligible today:**

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>



### For further information for Online Safety:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety>  
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/>  
<https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>  
<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/protecting-children/how-ofcom-is-helping-children-to-be-safer-online-a-guide-for-parents>

## Family Hub Information

You can find your nearest hub and learn more here:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/beststartinlife>  
<https://www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk/beststartinlife/>  
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/activities-and-support-for-families/family-hubs/start-for-life-offer/>  
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/activities-and-support-for-families/family-hubs/>



## Useful support and information School Readiness:

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>  
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/activities-and-support-for-families/family-hubs/family-hubs-whats-on/school-readiness/>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/znpwkty>



## Healthy Eating information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/baby/weaning-and-feeding/what-to-feed-young-children/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/recipes-and-meal-ideas/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/baby/weaning-and-feeding/fussy-eaters/>  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5bbb790de5274a22415d7fee/Eatwell\\_guide\\_colour\\_edition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5bbb790de5274a22415d7fee/Eatwell_guide_colour_edition.pdf)  
<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/weaning/safe-weaning/preparing-food-safely/>  
[https://assets.ctfassets.net/dvmeh832nmjc/1xYCYWqIaiFfCyddkL32/1bceae0a6144c7e7d395852580c1a17f/A\\_healthy\\_balanced\\_diet\\_for\\_children.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/dvmeh832nmjc/1xYCYWqIaiFfCyddkL32/1bceae0a6144c7e7d395852580c1a17f/A_healthy_balanced_diet_for_children.pdf)

