

Dandelion FAQ

- **How will my child keep warm in the winter / dry in the rain/Cool in the sun?**
At Dandelion we provide a recommended kit list. As long as children wear appropriate clothing they are warm and dry whatever the weather! We have a cosy yurt with a wood burner if we ever need a cosy warm place to snuggle. Children can use this at almost any time of the day, it is a place for resting, napping, reading and quiet games. In the sun, we apply sun cream on a regular basis, legionnaires hats and long sleeved tops must be worn, again we provide a recommended kit list. We have covered areas where shaded activities are based.
- **Where do they go to the toilet?**
We have a gorgeous compostor toilet with a child seat. The children learn how to use this, as it is a little different to your loo at home! We also have a changing shed for children in nappies; there's also a potty in here for children to use while in the transition from potty to loo.
- **Do you help with/encourage potty training?**
Dandelion policy is always child-centred; we go with the child, when they are ready, and potty training is always in discussion with carers. Research shows that forcing children out of nappies too soon can be damaging for the child; we believe that training should be linked to the stage of development rather than the age of the child.
- **What happens in extreme weather?**
Our yurt is built for extreme weathers. We risk assess daily, check weather forecasts and have foul weather plans in place for any eventuality.
- **How do you help to prepare the children for school (phonics, numbers etc)?**
Both directors/managers are fully qualified teachers; as such they are aware of the skills children need to make that next step. We have daily phonics sessions which children may choose to take part in, we use a great resource: Read, Write INC to help get children ready for early reading/Writing-we also offer parent meetings where we demonstrate how we teach phonics to your child; we plan daily play activities that will: encourage number recognition and number skills; encourage mark-making; promote letter recognition and book skills for early reading; we plan daily play activities that will build independent skills; skills needed for problem-solving, for working with others and collaborating, for language acquisition/skills and for promoting confident communication skills with both adults and children; we plan opportunities for thinking independently, for building resilience, self-efficacy, creative/critical thinking and positive decision making; we plan all of the above through both forest school and philosophy based activities.
- **Do you have set activities / how structured is the day?**
We plan our weeks through child-led themes and cover all areas of the Early Years Framework. Children can choose to take part in activities that are adult-led, they may play in any area they wish at all times; they may ask for help with a self-directed task at all times. We meet around the fire at warm snack and story-time, at

around 10.00am, and all children eat at the table at lunchtime around 12.30. Children are free to direct their own play, adults follow the child's needs and interests.

- **What happens if a child does not want to take part in an activity?**
We offer children positive choices, but would never force a child to take part in an activity if they do not wish to do so.
- **How will they be kept safe round the fire?**
We have a willow and wood screen around the fire; the children are taught the fire safety rules from day 1 of attendance; we learn these through singing and modelling.
- **Aren't tools dangerous for young children? I am worried my child might hurt himself.**
It is vital that children are taught to manage risk for themselves; at Dandelion we allow an element of risk that has been pre-managed by staff, thus exposing children to a small element that allows them to develop their own management systems, build problem solving skills, responsibility, confidence, self-efficacy and resilience. Forest school tools are always used on a 1-1 basis with a forest school trained practitioner; children are taught the safety rules from day 1.
- **What happens if my child has an accident?**
Managers hold 16 hour paediatric first aid qualifications, and our forest school leader also holds a 16 hour forest-school first aid qualification; additional staff will be trained in basic first aid. We have policies and procedures in place to manage any accidents, this includes a protocol where parents are contacted first and immediately, if the accident necessitates an ambulance, emergency services are then called immediately and a member of staff is on-hand to travel to the hospital with the child if needed.
- **How will you comfort my child if they are upset? Do you give cuddles?**
As in all settings, we comfort children when they are upset; we give hugs and are always available to offer comfort when needed. See our Touch Policy for further information.
- **Does going to a forest school nursery make it harder to settle in to a 'normal' school?**
The skills we develop at Dandelion are life skills that enable children to manage change and transition with resilience and independence. From feedback we have 100% agreement from families that their children have moved into their primary setting with confidence, independence, great social skills and an enthusiasm for learning.
- **How do you deal with challenging behaviour? (Do you use time out etc?)**
At Dandelion we follow the therapeutic approach to behaviour management, as advised through the Norfolk County Council Step-on programme. This is a gentle, non-threatening approach based on positive choices which allows the children to be in control of their own behaviours and enables them to make a connection between the action and the consequence. We NEVER use the word naughty, and NEVER use time out or 'naughty-steps'. See our Promoting Positive Behaviour policy on the policies page.

- **What food and drink do you provide? Do you cook your own food? Do you cater for dietary requirements?**

All of our snacks are vegan(excepting eggy bread which is made from free-range locally purchased eggs). We offer rolling snacks all day: apples, rice cakes, bread sticks etc, and a warm mid-morning snack such as almond milk porridge, beans on toast or eggy bread. Children then bring in their own packed lunches (we provide families with a recommended list of foods) Some children bring in a flask with warm pasta/beans/soup , etc. We amend our snack choices to accommodate our children and always in discussion with parents.

- **What is the child:staff ratio?**

At Dandelion we believe that children deserve and need high-quality interactions, and because of our commitment to our ethos and beliefs, we have excellent adult:child ratios. For children aged 2 we have a ratio of 1:2, most nurseries are 1:4. For children aged 3+ we have a ratio of 1:6. This again is higher than conventional ratios.

- **What is the maximum number of children at any one time?**

20

- **What happens if someone you don't know comes to collect my child?**

Parents must always inform us if someone else is collecting their child from us. You must inform us face-to-face or via phone. This person must be nominated on your child's registration form. We ask for a security password on your registration form which the nominated person must know. If we are ever in any doubt, we will phone you and will not release your child.

- **How will I be informed of my child's development?**

As with all settings, we complete a learning journey for your child. We observe and assess your child, tracking their development throughout their time with us. We also send regular photographs/emails to you, we discuss the day at pick-up time, we hold drop-in sessions, and parent brunch meetings where we offer 1-1 sessions with parents to discuss your child. We believe that parents should be partners in learning and have an open door policy.

- **Can I book extra sessions?**

Extra sessions can be booked, though we normally ask for a week's notice in-order to ensure we maintain ratio.

- **What happens if I am late picking up my child?**

We ask that you contact us if you know that you are going to be late. We will wait for you to pick up your child. A late fee may be applied to your next invoice.

- **What if my child requires medication / is ill/has additional needs?**

Should your child require medication, we ask that you complete a medication form. This is completed by us during the day and signed by you at the end of the day. We will only administer medication given under prescription. If you bring your child to nursery and ask us to administer calpol, we may recommend that your child stays at home. We

telephone you should your child become ill while at nursery.

If your child has additional needs, we make site amendments to accommodate your child. We have an inclusion policy which states our commitment to inclusivity and equality of provision. One of our managers also has a national SENDco (Special Education Need and Disabilities) award and has trained in SEND for Early Years. Both directors/managers are experienced in working with outside agencies, making referrals and identifying/addressing a wide variety of needs. We will always work with you to ensure your child has equal access to our provision and gains the maximum benefit from our offer.

● **Who are OFSTED and what do they do?**

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. We are Ofsted registered and inspected.

● **How will you settle my child into nursery? What if I'm worried about my child settling in?**

We have gentle, child-centred settling policy. We initially make a home visit to begin forming an early relationship with both you and your child. We then offer a two hour free settling session where you attend with your child. It is usually then possible to see how quickly your child will settle, and, from this point, we then devise an individual program for settling with you and your child.

● **Do you accept childcare vouchers?**

We are currently registered with Edenred, Computershare and Kiddicare voucher schemes.

● **How does the free entitlement for 3-4 year olds work?**

The government offer 15 hours of free childcare for every child aged 3+. We apply for this on your behalf.

● **Can my child stay beyond age 5 if I am home schooling?**

We currently take children who are aged 5 and are being home-schooled. We hope to extend our offer at some point in the future. Our holiday club is also open to children who are aged 5-7.

If you can't find an answer to your question, please email us/call, and we will do our best to answer your query.