



FIRST FRIENDS

Pre-School

Parent Handbook



A place to make lasting friendships

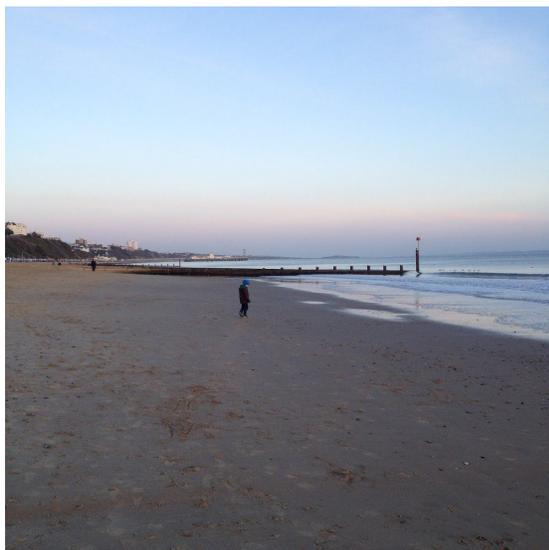
Welcome to First Friends Pre-School

- - - - X

Our Parent Handbook includes all the information you will need to know about First Friends Pre-School. If we have missed anything, or you would like to arrange a visit, please talk to a manager or contact us at firstfriendswallisdown@gmail.com.

At First Friends we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment in which your child will flourish. We value every individual at First Friends, whether children or adults, with equal consideration and respect.

-First Friends Team



Setting Profile

First Friends is a small, privately run Pre-School located in the spacious and bright Saint Saviour's Mission Church on Scott Road in Wallisdown.

During opening hours (Mon-Fri, 9am-1.30pm) we have sole use of the hall and outdoor space. We cater for children from 2 years up to primary school age (the month that children

turn 5 years old) First Friends is open during term times in line with schools in Poole and Bournemouth.

Staff

All of our enthusiastic and experienced staff at First Friends are DBS certified and either fully qualified or undergoing study to achieve relevant childcare qualifications. The managers, Danielle Haigh and Shelley Hatchard, hold NVQ Early Years Care and Education qualifications and have many years experience of working with Pre-School children in a variety of settings.

All staff at First Friends are committed to providing the highest possible standard of care and education for your child. They provide for the emotional security of all the children in their care, actively promoting kindness, empathy, responsibility and self-awareness.

We are all enrolled on a programme of continual professional development, attending regular training sessions to benefit our working practice in First Friends and, most importantly, the children attending.

Child/Adult ratios

First Friends will meet the requirements set out by Ofsted to ensure that all children are adequately supervised. For 2 year olds our ratio is 1 member of staff to 4 children and for 3-4 years olds we have 1 member of staff to 8 children. We will strive to exceed Ofsted's minimum requirements to ensure that every child's emotional and physical needs are met.

Key Person approach

Each child attending First Friends will be assigned a 'key person'. Your child's key person will work alongside you to create a personalised learning journey to detail their achievements and

experiences at First Friends, ensuring that what the pre-school provides is right for your child's personal needs and interests.

The key person will ensure that from the moment your child starts they are helped to settle and will be supported and nurtured throughout their time at First Friends. You will be given the opportunity to spend time with your child's key person to create an initial profile, detailing your child's likes and dislikes as well as the important people and events in their life.

Your child's key worker will also be happy to update you with the progress and experiences of your child at First Friends and will arrange regular 'catch-up' meetings with you to look through their learning journey together.

Parent Partnership

We operate on 'open door' policy which gives parents/carers and staff the chance to keep each other up to date with your child's learning at home and in the Pre-School. This helps us to get to know your child better and build positive relationships.

We value your opinions and ideas, as the person who knows your child best, and consider a partnership with parents and carers to be vital in providing the highest possible level of care and education for your child. Parents and carers are always welcome to discuss any specific needs or concerns that may arise, either during drop-off or collection times or upon arranging a mutually convenient time with your child's Key Worker or one of the managers of First Friends.

You will receive a weekly e-newsletter with all important information about what is happening at First Friends and we will organise informal 'catch-up' sessions with your child's Key Worker in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss your child's progress. Together with your child's Key Worker an individual plan will be created, detailing your child's changing needs and interests and how we are planning to build on their progress in all areas of learning.

Parents and carers are invited and encouraged to join in with our themes and topics with any insights you may have. We value visits from family members who would feel happy to give talks on their profession, host activities relating to their interests, or share our story and circle times as a 'special visitor'

From time to time we will organise activities for groups of children where parents will be welcome to join in; focusing on special occasions, festivities or introductions to areas of learning so that parents are well informed about how to continue and build upon their child's learning at home.

We acknowledge the valuable contribution that parents and carers can make to First Friends. If you would like to be involved as a parent helper and have some free time then please talk to a member of staff and we would love to get you on board!

Learning Journeys

Every child at First Friends will have a comprehensive Learning Journey regularly updated by their Key Worker. This will include a collection of observations with photographs and stories detailing your child's progress and experiences throughout their time at First Friends. This document will follow your child up to primary school providing a consistent record of development. All observations of children are kept strictly confidential.

Each observation will be linked to an area of Learning and Development as outlined by the EYFS. Observing and reflecting on children's spontaneous play, and building on this by planning and resourcing a challenging environment helps us to support and extend specific areas of children's learning.

We will create termly reports for each child which will help us to identify their interests and needs and we will then use their learning

journeys to plan for 'Next Steps' to ensure that all children fulfill their potential at First Friends.

You will also have the opportunity to add in any special home experiences that will help to build their learning journey so that there is a continuation of care between the pre-school and your child's home life.

You will always have free access to your child's learning journey and we encourage you to read about your child's progress regularly and to contribute with any special events, outings, comments and memorable moments to help us to build a picture of your child and how they are developing. This will help us to continue to meet their changing needs and interests and to extend their learning accordingly, and will also give us the opportunity to celebrate their achievements together. We consider a partnership with parents and carers to be extremely important in having a positive impact on your child's progress.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

To download and view a copy of the Early Years Statutory Framework, which we use to inform our planning and assessments, please visit <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs-statutory-framework/>

The government made the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory from 1st September 2008 to ensure that all under 5s in childcare benefit from a safe, secure and happy environment where they can play and develop. It seeks to assure that whichever nursery or pre-school parents choose, they can be confident that their child will receive a quality experience that supports their development and learning.

The EYFS is built on the principle that young children need to play in order to have fun, make friends and begin to learn about and understand the world around them. Ensuring the welfare and safety of children is fundamental to the EYFS. The standards made statutory by the EYFS reassure parents that by enrolling in childcare they are

doing the very best for their child, as they will be safe and well looked after.

The EYFS principles that guide the work of all practitioners of First Friends are grouped as follows:

- ❑ A Unique Child
- ❑ Positive Relationships
- ❑ Enabling Environments
- ❑ Learning and Development

This approach provided by the EYFS meets the overarching aim of improving outcomes and reflects that it is every child's right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and enjoy economic well-being.

How we provide for development and learning

The care and education offered by First Friends helps children to learn about the world around them providing all of the children with interesting activities appropriate to their age and stage of development.

The EYFS framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development. Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development.

Children should mostly develop the 3 prime areas first. These are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

These prime areas are the most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning.

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in 4 specific areas. These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Together, these 7 areas of learning are used to guide the planning of your child's learning and activities. Your child's Key Person will ensure that the activities planned include elements of each of the 7 areas and are suited to your child's individual needs and progress.

The practice guidance also sets out in '*Development Matters*' the likely stages of progress a child will make along their learning journey towards achieving their early learning goals. First Friends will track your child's progress alongside these stages and will use the information gained to feed into children's assessment, planning and programme of learning.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Our programme supports children in developing positive approaches to learning and finding out about the world around them; confidence in themselves and their ability to do things; valuing their own achievements; their ability to get on, work and make friendships with other people (both children and adults); their awareness of, and being able to keep to, the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people and the environment; their ability to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs; and the ability to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

Physical Development

Our programme supports children to develop: increasing control over the movements they make with their arms, legs and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift; increasing control over the small movements they can make with their arms, wrists and hands so that they can pick up and use objects, tools and materials with increasing safety and control; and their understanding about the importance of, and how to look after, their bodies.

Communication and Language

Our programme supports children to develop: conversational skills with one person, in small groups and in large groups to talk with and listen to others; their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words; their ability to use words to describe their experiences; their ability to listen to, and talk about, stories; knowledge of how to handle books and that they can be a source of stories and information; their skills on how to connect ideas about past and present and the links between them.

Literacy

Our programme supports children to develop: their knowledge of the sounds and letters that make up the words we use; knowledge of the purposes for which we use writing; and making their own attempts at writing with meaningful context.

Mathematics

Our programme supports children in developing: understanding and ideas about how many, how much, how far and how big; understanding and ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the space taken up by objects; understanding that numbers help us to

answer questions about how many, how much, how far and how big; understanding and ideas about how to use counting to find out how many; and early ideas about the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.

understanding the World

Our programme supports children to develop: knowledge about the natural world and how it works; knowledge about the man-made world and how it works; their learning about how to choose, and use, the right tool for the task; their learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do; their learning about their locality and its special features; and their learning about their own and other cultures.

Expressive Art and Design

Our programme supports children in developing: the use of, and interest in, materials, paints, colours, music, dance, words, stories and role-play to express their ideas and feelings; their interest in the way materials are put together to represent their experiences in imaginative role-play based activities.

Our planning and assessment is also informed by the '*Characteristics of Effective Learning*' as outlined in the EYFS. The characteristics of effective learning are split into three main areas and then three sub sections within each area. These are '**playing and exploring**' which shows how the child *is engaging*, '**Actively learning**' which shows the *motivation* behind the child's learning, and finally '**creating and thinking critically**' this shows the *thought* processes behind learning and new achievements.

Planning

Our planning builds on the experiences the children bring to Pre-School. We aim to provide activities which will extend and expand upon each child's unique knowledge and skills. Our planning is flexible in order to address and include individual needs and interests.

First Friends uses a system of long, medium and short term planning.

The long term planning is built around the pre-school environment, using seasonal activities and festivities to create a framework of themes to build upon. These take into account the physical and emotional needs of the children as they prepare for, and achieve in, their stages of development in preparation for stepping up to primary school.

The medium term planning covers all seven areas of development, linking the themes to the curriculum and including a focus on key 'life skills' to encourage independence and self confidence.

The short term planning (weekly) is created using child-led ideas, Key Person plans and parental input, and will include, and build upon, spontaneous activities introduced by the children and families of First Friends.

Parents and carers will receive a weekly e-mail which will inform you of our current themes and topics so that you can talk about them at home and have the opportunity to bring in relevant items, books or pictures to help your child gain more fun and interest from our activities. We welcome ideas and suggestions from parents and carers and encourage involvement so that you have opportunities to share your skills and knowledge with the children at First Friends.

Supporting children

If members of staff feel that a child is in need of support in order to achieve his/her full potential, this will be discussed with parents/carers and all staff will work together to develop a strategy of support. We will monitor progress regularly and carefully and continually adapt the programme of learning activities to suit the child's individual needs. Should additional help be considered useful or necessary, First Friends have members of staff trained as SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator) and will work closely with Poole Children's Services to access professional advice and resources from specialist outside agencies.

Behaviour Management

We have clear boundaries of behaviour for staff and children, and we hope that the children at First Friends will learn by example to be considerate and kind to each other.

Together with the children we devise and review a set of 'golden rules', and by involving their ideas we hope to give them a sense of ownership and instil in them a responsibility for their own actions and a positive course of action for the consequences of their behaviours. Children are consistently rewarded for making good choices and we award children with 'star of the day' recognitions for being positive role models to their peers.

If situations occur where continued poor choices are made we will work with parents/carers to develop a strategy whereby our approach to the situation is consistent between home and the pre-school. We believe that a calm and ordered environment with established guidelines for behaviour leads to relaxed, settled and happy children.

Inclusion*

We aim to ensure that all children are offered equal opportunities to develop to their full potential, endeavouring to help and encourage all children to develop a well-rounded sense of their own value and self worth. We celebrate diversity, welcoming children and families of every race, creed, culture and ability; an approach that enriches the pre-school for children, staff and parents/carers alike.

The EYFS is delivered with consideration and creativity by skilled practitioners who will take into account any special needs that children need addressing. Children will not be excluded from any activity because of a special need, the responsibility will be with the practitioners to deliver it in a manner and appropriate way that meets the needs of all children.

Equal Opportunities*

First Friends complies with the requirements set out in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and code of practice, a copy of which can be viewed upon request at any time. First Friends have members of staff trained as Equalities Named Co-ordinators (ENCO) who will assess the individual and group needs of children. Assessments will be made in accordance with the SEN code. If required, an Individual Education (or play) Plan will be formulated for individual children to ensure their needs are met, monitored and reviewed. If a child's needs are more pronounced then we will work with parents, a SENCO, pre-school staff and outside agencies such as the Poole Children's Service team and therapists.*

Safeguarding Children*

As childcare professionals, members of staff at First Friends have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children attending the setting. We have robust recruitment procedures and all staff are fully DBS certified.

If your child has a minor accident at the pre-school this will be recorded following a set procedure and you will be informed at collection time. If there is a serious injury you will be informed immediately and our Paediatric First Aid qualified staff will follow the procedure for recording the accident and gaining advice for how to attend to the injury from the NHS helpline. In an emergency situation we will always contact emergency services and contact you immediately (simultaneously if possible) Please ensure that we always have a current contact number for you as well as an additional contact and you must tell us if your phone number or details change.

Staff at First Friends have a legal obligation to record any bruising, injuries or concerns regarding a child. We follow the Local Authority Child Protection procedure and may, on occasion, have to contact another agency such as Health and Social Care without first informing parents.

**For further details, please refer to our setting policies, a copy of which you will receive upon your child commencing attendance at First Friends Pre-School.*

A typical day at First Friends Pre-School

At First Friends we operate a free-flow setting where children have the freedom to explore a wide variety of activities that interest and excite them. The routine for the day is a mix of child-led and adult initiated activities to enable children to develop skills in different areas and to foster their natural curiosity and creativity. We also include some planned activities to ensure that children thrive in all areas of development, as detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Each day will follow a similar routine to allow each child to settle in well and develop independence. Our planning and observations are all based around your child's personal needs and interests. We celebrate each child as a unique individual and invest time in getting to know them: their likes, dislikes, strengths and challenges. With this knowledge we plan challenging and interesting activities to support your child in developing new skills whilst encouraging independence and building their self confidence and self esteem. Our aim is to instil positive values of respect, care and attention that will guide them towards a love of learning and to develop valuable social skills in preparation for the next big step up to primary school.

Daily Routine

9am The doors to First Friends are opened and children are welcomed in and helped to settle by their Key Workers. Parents and carers can chat with members of staff to tell us anything we need to know that might affect how their child is feeling that day. Children are helped to self-register by fixing their personalised picture on our 'who is here today' board. They hang their coats up on their pegs and change into their indoor shoes.

9am - 10am Freeplay in the hall. Children can select activities from a variety on offer that interest them. There will be an adult initiated craft activity on offer, as well as areas for construction, messy play, role-play and shelves set up with toys, games and puzzles that children are encouraged to access based on their interests. Staff will support and interact with children in their choices of play, and make spontaneous observations to add to their learning journeys.

10am - 10.20am Tidy-up time and circle time. Children will be encouraged to tidy away the toys they have been playing with, making space for circle time. They will then be split into small groups to participate in 'circle time' based on their age. Each group will be led by a member of staff to introduce the topic and/or new skills and activities related to a specific area of learning, centred around our planning for that day. Children are encouraged to participate with their ideas and share any news. This time also provides the opportunity to extend the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and practice literacy and numeracy skills.

10.20am Snack time. Following circle time, children will be offered a healthy fruit snack that they have brought from home along with a drink of milk or water. This a social time where children will sit at tables and talk with each other whilst a member of staff helps them to prepare their snack.

10.35am - 11.45am Free choice re-commences. Further activities are laid out and children make choices about what they would like to do, whilst staff continue to support, interact with and make observations of them. During this time Key Workers work closely with their children to carry out planned activities or observations based on their unique needs and stage of development, and to support them in acquiring new knowledge and skills. Nurture groups will also take place to support children with any additional requirements to ensure that their personal, social and emotional needs are met.

11.45am - 12.30pm Tidy-up time will be followed by a whole group physical activity, such as dancing, group games, indoor obstacle course, singing and music. During this time the space will be cleared and children wash their hands and set tables in preparation for lunchtime.

12.30 - 1pm Lunch time. Children sit together to eat their packed lunches. As with snack time, this is a social activity where children are encouraged to have conversation and practice good eating habits.

1-1.15pm Stories, songs and sharing. As each child finishes and tidies away their lunch items, they then join a whole group singing and sharing session where we talk about what we have done today and share stories, favourite rhymes and children can show any special items that they have brought in from home to share with their friends.

1.15-1.30pm Home time. Parents and carers arrive to collect their child and Key Workers are on hand to share updates about their child's day. The Pre-School closes at 1.30pm.

Settling in

Starting at pre-school is a big step in a child's life and we strive to ensure that it is as smooth and enjoyable as possible. The way in which children respond to their parents and carers leaving them in this new place varies enormously. Some children will be at ease immediately, whereas for others it can take some time to feel comfortable in their new surroundings. We work closely with parents and carers to develop a settling in programme that suits their child. At the beginning we invite you to stay at pre-school for as long as you feel necessary, and make steps to gradually leave your child for longer periods until they feel confident and settled and have become familiar with their key worker.

Clothing

Children at First Friends will have free access to lots of messy play activities; with paints, glue, sand, water and play dough often laid out for them to create and enjoy with. We endeavour to provide aprons for such activities, but on occasion children may get their clothes messy, so for this reason we advise that they are not dressed in their 'best' clothes but in clothing that they feel comfortable in and won't be too worried about getting dirty. We encourage all parents/carers to provide a named bag with spare clothes that we can change your child into should accidents happen, which can be hanged on their peg along with their coat and outdoor shoes.

We ask that children are provided with indoor shoes for their time spent at First Friends. These can be simple slippers or plimsoll shoes to avoid getting any outdoor dirt onto rugs, cushions and blankets laid out for the children to sit on whilst they play. These can be left at pre-school so that they are there when they arrive each day, and putting them on is part of their morning registration as they enter the setting.

For outings and wet weather conditions we ask that parents provide a pair of named wellington boots, which can also remain at pre-school if preferred. Please provide wet weather clothing all year round to help us to ensure that children are suitably dressed for outdoor play. During winter months warm coats are required for outdoor play, and in summer we ask that sunhats are provided and that sun cream is applied at home before the beginning of the pre-school day.

When dressing your child for pre-school, we kindly ask that clothing is comfortable and easy for your child to put on and take off themselves, to encourage them to dress themselves after going to the toilet. Shoes with velcro fastenings and coats with zips rather than buttons help children to develop skills of independence in dressing themselves.

Toileting

If your child is not yet potty trained we ask for a supply of nappies and wipes to be left in their bag. For all children a spare set of clothes and extra underwear should be left in their bag, as accidents do happen from time to time and children can be reassured that they have more clothes to change into.

Dietary Needs

We will gather information about your child's dietary needs and preferences in their initial registration form when you accept a place at First Friends. Should their dietary needs change throughout their time with us then please inform us and we will accommodate any changes.

Packed Lunches

At First Friends we adhere to a healthy eating policy and we encourage all children attending to develop positive eating habits. Please bear this in mind when packing a lunch for your child and we ask that you do not provide any sweets, fizzy drinks or chocolate (although the occasional snack bar/biscuit could be included)

Our staff are always happy to offer advice if you are unsure of what to bring, but as a general rule a sandwich, pre-cooked pasta, filled wrap along with cheese, vegetable sticks, pieces of fruit and a yoghurt and a small bottle of water or diluted fruit juice are ideal items for a lunchbox.

Childrens' lunchboxes/bags should be named and since we are not able to store them all in a fridge we recommend that you include a cool pack.

Collection of Children

The safety of the children attending First Friends is paramount at all times. Should a parent or carer wish to collect their child at any time other than at the end of the pre-school session, staff must be informed with prior warning.

If any person other than the legal parent guardian is to collect a child from pre-school at the end of the session then it is necessary that procedures are followed. Staff must be made aware of the name and relationship with the child of the person who is to collect them, and an agreed password will be required before we will allow anyone other than the legal parent guardian to collect a child.

A member of staff will be present at the door at all times, and if an unknown person arrives to collect a child they will not be allowed access into the setting until the necessary procedure has been followed. It is important that parents and carers understand that First Friends staff will not allow a child to leave the setting with an adult other than their legal guardian unless prior notification has been given.

Absences

All absences, whether planned or due to ill health, must be paid for. If your child is absent from pre-school, or if you know your child will not be able to attend on any given day, please can you inform us in person or by telephone at your earliest convenience as we are legally obliged to provide reasons for absence in our daily register. We will make contact with you after your child's second day of non-attendance if you have not informed us of the reason for the absence.

If your child has been absent due to illness they must be clear of infection before returning to pre-school. Public Health England provide a useful document to detail how long children are contagious and should be kept off from pre-school:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522337/Guidance_on_infection_control_in_schools.pdf

With a case of sickness and/or diarrhoea it is important that children do not attend pre-school for at least 48 hours after your child is free from symptoms, to prevent cross-infection.

Please be aware that children will often catch a number of illnesses if this is their first time in a social setting, and if your child is showing symptoms of feeling run down or tired at certain times of year this is quite usual and it is fine to keep them at home to prevent contracting infections and allow them time to get back to full health.

Please give a minimum of four week's notice if you wish your child to leave the pre-school.

Fees

Fees are payable every month in advance by invoice. Please make cheques payable to 'First Friends Wallisdown Pre-School' and hand them to a manager, or use the details on the invoice to arrange a bank transfer.

Any additional pre-school hours will be added to your next invoice to be paid in arrears. Late payment of invoices will incur a fee which will be added to your next invoice.

Fees as of September 2017 are £4.25 per hour for unfunded places.

Free Entitlement

From the term after your child's third birthday, all children in Poole will be entitled to 30 hours of free pre-school care per week, for 38 weeks of the year. For children starting with First Friends before this time, fees will apply.

First Friends offers 22.5 hours weekly with our opening times of 9am-1.30pm daily, which means that fully funded places are available for 3-4 year old children attending on a full time basis, Monday - Friday.

The date you can start claiming depends on your child's birthday.

Child's birthday

When you can claim

1 January to 31 March	The beginning of term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August	The beginning of term on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December	The beginning of term on or after 1 January

Some 2 year olds are also eligible for free funding. You should receive forms from Poole Children's Services. To find out if you are eligible, please contact the Poole Family Information Service, or visit this link:

<http://www.poolefamilyinformationdirectory.com/kb5/poole/fis/advice.page?id=0-rsbX6uoPo&category=2>

Unexpected Closure of First Friend Pre-School

In the event of unexpected breakdown of services (e.g. failure of heating services, loss of water supply), severe weather conditions or where the pre-school may need to close due to an illness epidemic, a final decision to close will be made by the First Friends management and you will be informed as soon as possible. If heavy snow falls

overnight, please establish whether the pre-school is open before bringing your child. A message will be recorded on our pre-school mobile telephone by 8:00am.

Policies

First Friends pre-school adheres to a comprehensive list of policies, which are regularly reviewed and updated, to ensure good practice and the highest possible care and education for children attending the setting.

A copy of all of our policies is available to view at the setting at all times. You will be provided with a copy of all of our policies upon registration and accepting a place for attendance at First Friends via e-mail. Please take time to read through them as you will be required to sign a document to demonstrate that you have read, understood and comply with our policies as part of your child's registration, and should you have any questions we will be happy to answer them.

Thank You

Finally we would like to thank you for choosing First Friends and we hope that you and your child will enjoy your time spent with us.

If you have any queries or would like any more information, you are welcome to come and talk to us at any time during opening hours, or feel free to contact us via e-mail firstfriendswallisdown@gmail.com

Throughout your time with First Friends if you have any comments, critical or otherwise, please pass them on either directly to a member of staff or by using our comments and suggestions box.
