

# THE Stirling Birth School



YOUR GUIDE TO CHOOSING YOUR ANTENATAL EDUCATION

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# THE Stirling Birth School



@thestirlingbirthschool

Everything you  
need to know to  
choose the class  
that's right for  
you.

# WELCOME TO THE Stirling Birth School

Welcome to the Stirling Birth School and Congratulations on your pregnancy! I am delighted you have chose to find out more about different classes and benefits that The Stirling Birth School can offer you. The Stirling Birth School courses are designed with parents-to-be in mind. The focus is on you, and ensuring you are fully prepared for your birth experience. At The Stirling Birth School I specialise in ensuring you feel prepared mentally and emotionally for the day you meet your baby as well as just being prepared practically and organised for birth.



My goal is that every couple that attends my courses have a positive birth experience, feel informed, empowered and confident to give birth and look forward with excitement to the day they will meet their baby.

*Claire x*

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# ABOUT THE STIRLING BIRTH SCHOOL

FEEL EDUCATED, EMPOWERED AND EXCITED FOR BIRTH

The Stirling Birth School offers a selection of 1:1 classes and group sessions that meet the needs of expectant parents-to-be from early pregnancy up to baby's birthday. Classes enable you and your birth partner to relax and enjoy your pregnancy, preparing for birth with confidence and achieve an informed, supported and positive birth experience.

Currently in the UK, over 30,000 women a year experience lasting birth trauma. The most common cause of trauma is not a difficult delivery but instead the feeling of things being out of control during birth and feeling unsupported during labour.

## *What makes our classes different?*

The values and vision of the Stirling Birth School ensure that how you feel about birth is just as important in your preparation towards becoming parents, as how much you know. So all antenatal classes combine birth physiology with birth psychology as a minimum. The Stirling Birth School was established to ensure that all couples who walk through its doors feel supported as they navigate pregnancy and prepare for birth. Classes are welcome to everyone to attend and are a safe and inclusive environment, helping people to access the support, education and community just when they need it most.

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## *Vision and Values*

1. All women deserve a positive birth experience, in which they feel informed, confident, empowered and supported.
2. Birth partners are influential to the birth experience and should also feel informed and confident in their role, and feel supported in order to be supportive.
3. How you feel about birth is just as important as the birth experience itself.
4. Antenatal education should be of high quality, evidence based and available to all in an accessible and easy to understand format.

The Stirling Birth School's vision is that every parent-to-be is able to take control of their own birth experience. I recognise that every birth matters, every woman, baby and pregnancy is unique and there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to birth. It is my vision that you feel educated, empowered, supported and excited for your birth and have the skills and tools in order to achieve that.



## 1. What is a positive birth experience?

Birth is a life changing event. It is known that a negative birth experience can lead to birth trauma and even PTSD, but that does not mean that a positive birth experience is just one in which a woman does not feel traumatised.

The WHO insists that a positive childbirth experience should meet a woman's personal and sociocultural beliefs and expectations in every settings. One of the main causes of trauma is that birth does not meet our expectations and yet women are regularly told at appointments to lower their expectations?

Giving birth is one of the most incredible experiences we will have as a woman. We should be able to **feel excited** about it without fear.

At the Stirling Birth School, I believe a positive birth experience is one where you **feel in control**. You are **informed** so you understand all that is happening, even if your journey to birth changes. You have the tools and techniques to remain **calm** and **relaxed** and birth your baby gently. You feel **confident** in your own ability and **empowered** to make choices and decisions for your birth.

Finally, it is a birth in which you can look back on with pride, and recall to others just how wonderful it was. That is a positive birth experience.

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## 2. Birth Partners are crucial.

From the moment those blue lines appear on the pregnancy test we can experience an overwhelming range of emotions. From initial excitement, to anxiety, to confusion and exhaustion, pregnancy can be a difficult time for even the best of us.

That is why the Stirling Birth School specialises in classes tailored not just to mums-to-be but to expectant parents-to-be. Creating a safe space to share and learn together, either 1:1 or with the friendship of others, our classes ensure you both feel supported as you move into your new roles as parents.

One of our core values and beliefs is that the birth partner is crucial to your birth experience. They can influence your birth for the better by understanding how they can support and advocate for you. I'm sure no birth partner wants to feel sidelined and unsure how best to help, they want to feel like they can confidently share in the experience and be as involved as possible.

Our classes fully include birth partners so that they can also meet other expectant parents, share their own worries as a birth partner and they too can feel supported, excited and prepared for their baby's birth.

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### 3. *Your feelings matter.*

It's not about the type of birth you have, **it's how you feel** about the type of birth you have.

A positive birth isn't a specific type of birth. It's not about whether you give birth at home, in the water, whether you are induced, have or don't have pain relief or end up birthing baby in theatre. It is about how you **FEEL** about your birth.

Did you feel you understood your options and decisions? Did you feel calm and in control, regardless of what was happening around you? Did you feel respected and supported by those in your birth space?

You can give yourself the best possible chance of feeling good about your birth by preparing for it. The Stirling Birth school is committed to ensuring you feel fully prepared for your baby's birth, whatever journey they take.

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## 4. High Quality Antenatal Education

One of my core values is that The Stirling Birth School antenatal education is of the highest quality.

I believe that antenatal education should be accessible and inclusive to all, delivered in a manner that is engaging and interactive so you feel able to ask questions and learn in a style that suits you best.

Equally important, I believe that antenatal education should move with the times - I continually read the latest research to ensure that all content is evidenced based and current. Furthermore, education should be non-biased or prejudice to a particular birth path.

You should feel supported in your antenatal education to make the choices and informed decisions that are right for you and your baby.

In every class, we will explore an element of birth, learning how our bodies birth babies. The role of your uterus and birthing muscles, as well as your hormones, so that you can use this knowledge to birth your baby better.

Because knowledge is power - and when we understand what it happening, we are in a much more informed and powerful position to take charge of our birth.

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# THE STIRLING BIRTH SCHOOL CLASS STRUCTURE

FEEL EDUCATED, EMPOWERED AND EXCITED FOR BIRTH

*Feel calm, confident and well prepared for the birth of your baby, however they make their entrance! Let go of your fears, embrace the excitement and let The Stirling Birth School equip you with the knowledge and skills to make any birth better.*

## What will you get from Classes?

Which ever birth course you choose, the overarching goals for each remains the same. On completion of your course it is hoped you will feel able to:

- Understand birth and make informed, confident choices that are right for you.
  - Take control of your own birth experience and define your birth preferences the way you envision.
  - Work with your birthing partner more effectively, so that they are better able to support you in birth and know what to do.
  - Release any fears that may be associated with childbirth and learn to trust your body to work naturally and in harmony with your baby.
  - Look forward optimistically to a safe, calm, comfortable and stress free birth.
  - Gain the positive belief that giving birth can be the most wonderful experience.
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# THE CLASS CURRICULUM

All courses have 6 key components

## Antenatal Education

So you understand birth.

## Support

1:1 email support right up to baby's special birth.

## Mental Preparation

So you feel prepared for birth.

## Friendship

So you can connect with other parents and make friends.

## Practical Birth Toolkit

So you can get organised and know what to do.

## Relaxation Exercises

So you can stay calm and relaxed in birth.





## Antenatal Education

Understand what happens

“The explanation of how the womb works blew my mind – why aren't we taught this in school?!?!”

**Second time Mum, Group Class Feedback**

Head back to school to learn all about how the body works to birth a baby. We are taught all about the female reproductive system during school as well as how a baby is made, but for some reason - how the baby actually comes out is not explained - prepare to be amazed by the wonder of the human body and actually understand how it works! Our curriculum fully involves you and your birth partner every step of the way.

The antenatal curriculum content has been written by a group of fantastic women: a midwife, doula, clinical hypnotherapist and psychologist. And it is delivered by a teacher with over ten years teaching experience. Not only that, it is continually updated with the most recent and ground breaking research in birth and obstetrics so that all information you receive is evidence based. Antenatal education can be a bit dry and boring, especially in the traditional sense. Our classes are fun and interactive, you won't even realise you're learning!

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## Mental Preparation

### Really feel Ready

'Beware; for I am fearless, and therefore powerful.'  
– Mary Shelley.

Don't underestimate the power of the mind over the body! There is a reason why elite athletes all have a Sports Psychologist on their payroll. They understand that in order for their body to perform at its best - in order for them to win their race or beat their opponent - their mind has to be mentally prepared for the event.

Birth is a major event for our bodies, and in order for our body to perform its best, our mind also has to be on board and prepared. Imagine going to a marathon and telling yourself all along that you couldn't do it, it was too hard - it is highly unlikely that you would then cross the finish line. Often antenatal classes don't include this element in their teaching - but to be mentally prepared is a powerful position to be in!

In order to be mentally prepared for birth we first have to address our beliefs and fears that we hold about birth. It is normal and natural to have some anxieties but by acknowledging these fears, exploring their origins and challenging them, we can start to address them and move forwards to a more positive starting position for birth. Don't ignore that little niggle at the back of your mind - it can get blown out of proportion when the time to birth your baby arrives.

By building a positive mindset, immersing ourselves in positive birth stories, videos and affirmations, you will really begin to feel eager, excited and ready to meet your baby.

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## Practical Birth Toolkit

### Know what to do

- What to include in your hospital bag for you, your birth partner and baby.
- How to plan your perfect birth environment.
- How to write an effective birth plan and get it seen by your midwives.
- What positions to use during labour.
- How to use light touch massage techniques during labour.
- How to make decisions during labour.
- How to remain calm and in control.
- What your birth rights are and how to advocate for yourself at appointments and in labour.

It's all very well learning about birth and feeling ready, but we have to also be prepared practically. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to birth - no instruction manual that you can buy that will tell you what you should do step-by-step, however there is a tool kit - and if you have the tools then no matter what happens, you will know what to do.

It is also extremely important you have the knowledge, skills and tools to make informed decisions during birth, and are able to advocate for yourself or your birth partner. Understanding your rights in birth and labour can ensure that you are listened to and ultimately have the birth experience that you are dreaming of. By exploring hypothetical scenarios, you will develop the practical skills necessary to consent or decline, any or all, medical interventions or services offered to you.

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## Relaxation & Breathing

Know how to stay calm



Breathing in birth and labour isn't the same as normal day-to-day breathing. We need to breathe most efficiently so that our birthing muscles have as much oxygen as possible. As part of each class we will learn breathing techniques to help you do this. We will learn different breaths to practise for each stage of your labour and how to use this breath to help you birth your baby more gently. This part of our classes is a lovely opportunity to take some time just for you and your partner to connect with your baby.

We also practise hypnobirthing. Whilst the name may be off-putting, it is not as daft as it sounds. It is a technique of using self-hypnosis to teach our bodies to relax quickly and deeply. It would be unrealistic to expect ourselves to remain calm all the time, especially in birth. What's important is learning how to be able to bring yourself back to that feeling when you need to and that is what hypnobirthing teaches us. We use guided meditations and following each course you will be given a link to download the MP3s of these meditations so that you can practise them at home and listen to them in birth.

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## Friendship

### Connect and feel understood

Knowing that together you are as prepared as you could possibly be for your baby's arrival, have a network of friends at the same stage and are ready to become confident parents is the next step on this amazing journey to confident parenthood. The people you meet on your birth education journey might just be the new parents of your baby's best friend!

In our classes, I hold space for sharing and connecting, as the bonds that you make are so important for your journey and future as parents. Connecting with other parents-to-be gives you the opportunity to make friends and share the ups and downs of pregnancy whether you are the birthing person or the partner. This safe space gives permission for all the emotions you may be having. There is no right or wrong way to feel when pregnant, or as the birth partner - but feeling understood by others definitely helps us feel connected, seen and heard.



Your journey after the classes does not end. Finding your way through the early days with your new baby can feel overwhelming, scary and definitely different! Having others you can call on when baby arrives for walks, a cake and some coffee plays a crucial role as part of becoming a confident parent. The aim is that well supported couples become confident parents that create secure children, and have the potential to create a positive ripple effect for future generations.

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## Support

You are not alone

*Patients should be seen as **individuals** within the healthcare system. This requires healthcare professionals to recognise the individual and for services to be tailored to respond to the needs, **preferences** and values of the patient. Advice on treatments and care, including risks and benefits should be **individualised** as much as possible.*

**NICE** National Institute for  
Health and Care Excellence

At The Stirling Birth School, no couple feels alone on their journey to birth. As a client, you deserve the freedom and flexibility to navigate your journey with support and evidence based education. Whilst it would be ideal if that support came from our NHS, unfortunately this is not currently realistic.

The NHS is in crisis and whilst midwives and consultants are doing their best, they are under enormous pressure and stretched to breaking point. Antenatal education has not returned to what it was since 2020 and continuity of care remains a challenge.

This is where The Stirling Birth School can support you. From the moment you make contact throughout your pregnancy, we offer individualised support. Even if you are learning as part of a group, 1:1 help is available through email and the inbox is always open. This is important as hospital guidelines and policies can be outdated and assume a one size fits all approach. Instead I will provide you with evidence based information to help you make the decisions that are right for you and your baby. You are not alone, your voice matters and I've got you.



## Choosing your Course

There are currently 2 courses on offer.



### COMPLETE BIRTH PREPARATION COURSE

My complete, comprehensive group class for you and your birth partner combining antenatal education with fun! The ultimate birth preparation course. Available as a group class in Stirling or 1:1.



### ESSENTIAL BIRTH PREPARATION WORKSHOP

A shorter, condensed version of the complete course, packed with tips and tricks to prepare you for birth and still as fun! This is perfect if you are shorter on time before baby makes their arrival. Available 1:1 for couples short on time.

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# COMPLETE BIRTH PREPARATION COURSE

Comprehensive antenatal education, combined with extensive mindset building and all the practical birth tools you could need for the ultimate birth preparation. Everything you need to know and do to birth your baby your way and feel confident and excited for birth.

## *What does the Full Course include?*

- 10 hours of teaching and learning for you plus your birth partner.
- Complete Course Manual
- Exclusive Access to the Members Area of the website where you can download 6 Guided Relaxation MP3 tracks to use at home.
- Exclusive Access to a library of birth videos (not seen on One Born Every Minute!)
- Positive Affirmation MP3 track to use at home
- Personal 1:1 email support right up to your babies birth.
- Birth Planning Support and Interactive Guide.
- A goody bag of surprise treats!

## *Teaching Options Available*



1:1 CLASS  
£295



1:1 ONLINE CLASS  
£250



GROUP CLASS  
£195

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# ESSENTIAL BIRTH PREPARATION WORKSHOP

A shorter, condensed version of the complete course, suitable if you are shorter on time. Essential antenatal education, combined with mindset building ideas and tips and tricks for you and your birth partner to help make your birth better.

## *What does the Essential Course include?*

- 4 hours of teaching and learning for you plus 1 birth partner.
- The Complete Course Manual.
- Exclusive Access to the Members Area of the website where you can download 6MP3 tracks to use at home.
- Personal 1:1 email support right up to your babies birth.
- Birth Planning Support and guidance.
- Tea and cakes and a chance to share and connect.
- A goody bag of surprise treats!

## *Teaching Options Available*



1:1 CLASS  
£150



1:1 ONLINE CLASS  
£130

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# THE 1:1 Experience

Any of the classes available can be taught 1:1 with just your own birth team and personal instructor. This may appeal to you for several reasons:

## *Flexibility*

With 1:1 you are not limited to the days and times offered. This might suit you if you work shifts and can't be available at set times every week. It could also be the best option if childcare is difficult to source in the evenings. With 1:1 days and times can be adapted to your needs. These sessions could be delivered daily, weekly, fortnightly or on alternate days that best suit your schedule.

## *Affordability*

Whilst it is more expensive for 1:1, I strongly believe that antenatal education should be accessible to all, so prices are capped at £35 an hour - in most cases less. This is for you and however many birth partners you plan on having available. For comparison - you would pay more for a haircut, personal trainer, lawyer or any other personal adviser or trades person for 1 hours labour.

## *Bespoke Experience*

With 1:1, your course is customised to your needs for a completely bespoke experience. This means that if you are planning a water birth for example, the course will steer towards that. If you have any additional pregnancy risk factor such as gestational diabetes, low lying placenta, or high BMI, additional education and guidance can be explored for your needs.

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# Join a Class of 2024!

*Sign us up! How do we book?*

I can't wait to welcome you to The Stirling Birth School.

**For 1:1 classes, please email [hello@thestirlingbirthschool.com](mailto:hello@thestirlingbirthschool.com) to enquire about availability.**



For any group classes, click the link below to find out what classes are coming up and book your spot. Spaces are limited to a maximum of 8 couples as I want everyone to feel included, that they have a chance to connect, share, be seen and heard and nobody feels overlooked. This means they do fill up quickly so book early to avoid being disappointed.



# Welcome to the Positive Birth Movement

