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The newsletter is available on our website which will make it easier to link to the web pages listed in this issue.

We welcome all the new children and families that have started with us this January. It's lovely to see the new children settling into the busy life of St John's so quickly. Your child's keyworker is available to see you at the beginning or at the end of the session if there is anything you wish to discuss regarding your child or children.

Spring Term Theme

This term the theme is **Animals**. The first half of the term we explored the polar lands and all the animals that live in the coldest regions of the world. We talked about penguins and polar bears, arctic hares and walruses. There were lots of opportunities to play with ice, experiencing it melt in their hands then learning about the process of water freezing when it is put into the freezer! We celebrated Chinese New Year, year of the Rooster and then to end the half term, thanks to Thomas' interest and Mrs Turner and Mrs Stone for making it a live event, we had an erupting volcano!



This next half we are exploring other animals that live on our planet from wild animals to farm animals! We will also be celebrating Shrove Tuesday and Mother's Day.

In amongst all of this exciting activities, we are covering the 7 development areas. Animal stories - literacy; maths they are sorting and categorising; learning new words in CLL; describing the textures of material in E&D, physical play has seen the children climbing in and out of tents, PSE learning to play nicely and sharing with their friends and peers and getting along with the routine for the new children and loads of UtheW with the ice and water.

Tax-Free Childcare: 10 things parents should know

St John's is currently in the process of joining the Tax-Free Childcare scheme. The scheme will be available to around 2 million households to help with the cost of childcare, enabling more parents to go out to work, if they want to, to provide greater security for their families. To find out more information, please go to....

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-free-childcare-10-things-parents-should-know>

Sessions for next term

Please complete the form on the notice board asap advising if you wish to add to your current sessions for next term.

Child Car Seats

A new legislation will come into effect on 1st March concerning car seats. It is very important to ensure that your child travels in an appropriate child restraint, which:

- Conforms to the United Nations standard, ECE Regulation 44.04 (or R 44.03) or to the new i-size regulation, R129. Look for the 'E' mark label on the seat.
- Is suitable for your child's weight and size
- Is correctly fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

There are many different types available. They are divided into categories, according to the weight of the children for whom they are suitable. These correspond broadly to different age groups, but it is the weight of the child that is most important when deciding what type of child seat to use. i-size seats are designed to keep children rearward-facing until they are at least 15 months old.

New regulations regarding the sale and use of booster cushions will take effect by March 2017. The new rules mean that manufacturers will no longer be allowed to introduce new models of backless booster seats (booster cushions) for children shorter than 125cm or weighing less than 22kg.

For full information, please refer to the following two web links:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules>

<http://www.childcarseats.org.uk/types-of-seat/>

Creative Church

Creative Church mornings at St John's Methodist Church



All the family are warmly invited to our informal Creative Church craft mornings which take place monthly in the Rainbow Room. Two dates confirmed are 19th March and 21st May from 10.30am to midday - art, craft, games, cooking, singing, food, bible story, toy corner, crèche and refreshments. All are welcome.



<https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/moreinfopar/2>

St John's is in the process of looking at the options with regards the 30 hours free childcare scheme. We will make a decision hopefully by 1st March 2017.

For further information and to see if you are eligible, please go to the following link:

Staff News: St John's Playgroup Oakmere

There are currently staff changes

in our Oakmere setting.

- Sarah Dicker who joined us in January 2008 and held the deputy role for a period of time, is leaving to do more cleaning work.
- Leanne Travell who joined us in September 2008 is moving to a nursery to be a room leader
- Jane Higley left at the end of her probation period.

Thank you to the ladies for their valued contribution over the years.

We are very pleased to announce the appointments of Julie Gauden, Sophie Smith and Neringa Rackauskaite who will be starting at St John's over the next few weeks. Welcome aboard ladies!

Clothing

Please ensure your child arrives at playgroup in appropriate clothing for a fun, messy, outdoor, indoor, painting, gluing, playdough, water, shaving foam, cornflour, lots of fun kind of day! In this weather they should have a warm coat and sensible shoes (useable inside and outside) as we do go outside in all weathers unless it is really inclement. Hard soled boots can hurt fingers and be slippery on the climbing frame. We have a supply of St John's fleeces, rain trousers and jackets which the children can grab in their haste to go outside and a stock of wellington boots if it is really wet with puddles so it is not necessary to bring in your child's own pair.



Change of clothes

Can you also bring a change of clothes for your child in a small bag (drawstring gym bags are ideal for hanging 'low' on the peg, allowing room for the coat above). If children use playgroups clothes and underwear i.e. if they have an 'accident' please could you wash and return the loaned clothes as soon as possible. We are in desperate need of girls knickers, socks and leggings, socks and trousers for the boys and plimsolls and larger sized wellington boots. Thank you!

Payment of Fees

Everyone has been issued with at least one invoice this term. If you need another copy please let us know. Please ensure you have at least paid first half term's fees as we run on very low profit margins so when fees are not paid on time we in turn struggle to pay bills and wages on time. We have a very flexible attitude to payments and how you can pay these.....

- ♦ **Correct cash** in an envelope marked with your child's name
 - ♦ **Cheques** should be made payable to ST JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH, POTTERS BAR, please write your child's name on the reverse.
 - ♦ You can pay by **childcare vouchers**, please speak with Mrs Mash if this is an option for you.
 - ♦ We can also accept payment via **BACS**, the bank details are as follows:
CAF bank
St John's Methodist Church Potters Bar
Sort Code: 40 52 40
Account No: 00021445
- And soon tax-free childcare payments....



Sainsbury's

Active Kids
Eat well • Move well • Live well

We are collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers which enables us to

buy sports equipment for the playgroup. If you shop at Sainsbury's we would appreciate you collecting vouchers on our behalf. Please place in the box in the Upper Room.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

We have two children with nut allergies and two with egg allergies. If your child attends lunch club, please do **not** include egg, peanut butter or Nutella sandwiches or a hard boiled egg.

Grapes are the third most common cause of death among children who die in food-related choking incidents. It is recommended grapes and cherry tomatoes are chopped into halves or preferably quarters before giving to young children. For lunch clubbers, please could we ask for your co-operation and chop up your child's food.

Dates for your Diary

Spring Term 2017

Thur 30th Mar 11.15 start Easter Event & Coffee morning

Last day of term Fri 31st March

Mon 3rd - Mon 17th April inclusive - Easter Holidays, CLOSED

Summer Term 2017 18 Apr-Fri 21st July

Tues 18th Apr - INSET DAY - CLOSED

Wed 19th Apr children start back

Fri 21st Apr new children's first day

29th May - 2nd June, Half term, CLOSED

Sun 11th Jun - Potters Bar Carnival

Fri 21st July last day of term

Dates to be advised

Barnado's Big Toddle & Farewell Picnic