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This newsletter, other correspondence and full playgroup information is available on our website

Welcome to all the new families that have joined us this September and welcome back to the families that returned after the summer holidays. The new children are settling in to the busy and lively routine of the playgroup. It's a busy term on the run up to Christmas with lots of new experiences for the children.

This Terms Topics

Please see attached, our very comprehensive letter giving full details of what activities and events are coming up and asking for your help.

This term our main theme is **People in Our Community**. The first two weeks of term we are hearing from the children about their experiences over the summer holidays, they have produced some lovely 2D and 3D pictures.

The next two weeks we are looking at the health service including doctors, dentists, opticians and health clinic. Week commencing 2nd October for two weeks we will be celebrating the Harvest Festival. (See separate article) If we have any chefs, bakers, cooks or caterers amongst the parents or carers that would like to come in and make something simple with the children, then please speak with Mrs Mills. Week commencing 16th October we will be celebrating Diwali.

After half term we will be creating some amazing firework pictures. We will be asking the firemen to come and visit us in their fire engine. We will be celebrating Christmas celebration with our unique **Nativity Play on Tuesday 19th December**. If you have anything you would like to contribute or want to get involved, please speak with the leadership team.



Harvest Festival

St John's Nursery Playgroup and St John's Methodist church would like invite ALL St John's children and parents/carers to attend our short HARVEST FESTIVAL service on Thursday 5th October starting at 11.15 in the church.

We will take the children into the church to listen to a harvest story and the children will sing you some special harvest songs. St John's Methodist Church are supporting the White-chapel Mission as part of this year's Harvest giving. This charity supports homeless people, mostly men. Please see the list on the notice board and on the separate invitation for current needs for White-chapel mission. Please either bring the gifts in during the week or bring them on the day. The children will carry the gifts into the church.



Photographer

On Monday 16th October, Brett Lenman, a competent child photographer will be taking individual photos of all the children during the morning (fully supervised by a member of staff). If you would prefer your child not to be photographed, please speak with Mrs Mash and there is no obligation to buy. If you would like a photo with your child's sibling/s, please let Mrs Mash know ASAP so she can advise a time to arrive. Please note the following times:



- School aged siblings, Mr Lenman will be available from 8.15am. Please arrive on time as there are often other families wanting a family photo.
- Current children with younger siblings who normally come on a Monday, are welcome to arrive at 8.55am.
- If your child doesn't attend Mondays, they are welcome to have their photo taken with younger siblings. A time will be issued.

30 hours funding

St John's is offering the 30 hours free funding for eligible families for 3 and 4 year olds starting this term. If you think you may be eligible for the Spring term, for full information please visit: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>



Dates for your Diary

Autumn Term 2017

Mon 4th Sept - Tues 19th December
Thur 5th Oct 11.15am — Harvest Festival
Mon 16th Oct from 8.15am - Photographer
Fri 20th Oct STAFF TRAINING DAY,
PLAYGROUP CLOSED
23rd - 27th Oct Half Term
TBA - Annual Stakeholders Meeting, all parents invited
Mon 18th - Children's Christmas party, all children invited
Tues 19th Dec - Nativity Play 11.15am Start
Tues 19th Dec—LAST DAY OF TERM closing at 1pm after lunch club.

Spring Term 2018

Wed 2nd Jan - Inset day, playgroup closed
Thur 3rd Jan - current children return
Fri 4th Jan - new children's first visit 12.15
12-16th February - Half term, PLAYGROUP CLOSED
Fri 30th Mar - Easter Holidays starts

Farewell Picnic and Great Ormond Street Fund Raising

We would like to thank all the families who attended our annual farewell picnic, sports day and fund raising event in July. At short notice we changed our chosen charity from Barnados to Great Ormond Street Hospital GOSH. With short notice, you still managed to raise £225. Thank you for your efforts in fundraising for this important annual event.



Staff & Student News

We welcome three new or returning members of staff to St John's Playgroup:

- Mrs Cheryl Howe has over 30 years experience working with children and with 6 children of her own and 3 grandchildren. Mrs Howe is a Blue Dolphin.
- Mrs Lisa Aherne-Sime is undertaking a Level 3 apprenticeship and will be a Yellow Lion. Mrs Sime has been with us since the summer term and has already proven to be a committed member of the team.
- Mrs Carla White worked at our Oakmere setting for a while and will now be a placement volunteer whilst she undertakes her Early Years Educator course.
- Mrs Anne Philips helps out 2 mornings a week. We currently have a vacancy, please see the notice board for full details and application details or speak with Mrs Mills directly.

Childhood Influenza Immunisation

This winter, all children aged two and three can get vaccinated against childhood influenza. The vaccine is available from their GP's. The vaccine is given as a nasal spray with no injection involved. It will help to protect the children themselves, promote a healthy environment in early years settings and reduce the risk of spreading to staff and family members. For further information, go to: www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme

Families First

Families First is the name for organisations in Hertfordshire who work together to help you with any problems you or your family may be facing, before things might get worse. This is known as 'Early Help'.

Early help is available if you're worried about anything affecting your family. You may not want or need to ask for help from a professional - there's lots of support you can find yourself by looking on their directory.

<https://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/hertfordshire/directory/familiesfirst.page>

Fruit Sharing, Birthday Treats & Lunches

At St John's we promote healthy eating and ask the children to bring in a piece of fruit once or twice a week to share with the other children to supplement what we provide: pitta bread, humus, crackers, cheese, bagels, oat biscuits, vegetable sticks, bread sticks, raisins and more.



Birthday treats can be supplied in the form of fruit either fresh, dried or exotic! These special fruits will be served at snack time to celebrate your child's birthday.

Lunch box contents, we would like to encourage you to pack healthy foods. There are great ideas for healthy lunch boxes and suitable portion sizes on the notice board. Please ensure you provide just enough food for lunch, some boxes are quite full and the children can spend too long eating and not enough playing! We would also ask if you could save chocolate and treats for home please and no nuts in any form including peanut butter or Nutella.



Treasure Chest

At St John's we have a treasure chest which is primarily for children who need to bring in a comforter ranging from a cuddly toy, an old muslin or any other object that a child has formed a special bond with that will give them comfort if they 'wobble' during the morning. We are finding it is turning into a very large lost property chest. If you bring in an item for your child, whether it is a comforter or item of clothing, please remember to take it home. Don't forget to label all clothing too. Thank you.



Library Books

The book borrowing scheme is up and running. For new parents, useful information is included in your book bag. We hope your children are keen to borrow a book and that you spend invaluable quiet time together reading the story and talking about the pictures. Could we ask you to ensure your child's book is returned every week and we will endeavour to make sure they go home with a new book every week.



Mobile Phones

A reminder that mobile phones are not to be used on playgroup premises in line with statutory requirements. The Playgroup uses a mobile phone for playgroup use only (as the mainline phone is in the hallway).