



It has been a strange summer term for us all. The very sudden closing of the playgroup from 23rd March, the lockdown and isolating ourselves at home has been difficult but necessary to do our bit to avoid spreading Covid 19. Throughout the closure we made sure to keep up to date with new information and regulations relating to this new normal.

When it was time to open, we contacted all our families and communicated closely with the staff team, to find out who felt ready to return. We made the decision to wait until 22 June, spending the previous week doing risk assessments including a detailed report to the Methodist Church to ensure we had put all possible measures in place.

We divided the playgroup into several areas, 3 indoors and 2 outside, put up dividers inside and out to make sure we could keep the children and adults apart. Every toy, climbing equipment, tables, chairs and dividers being cleaned each day as well as every surface touched by children or adults. Wash and sanitising units and bins have been placed in all areas to ensure we had easy access to cleaning. We staggered start times, avoided any unnecessary contact, washed and sanitised hands.

The team have been amazing, adjusting to the new set up and the children just accepted the changes. Saying goodbye to their adults outside the building, waiting to wash hands, not being able to play with all the children and being quite happy in their individual group bubbles, with two members of staff in each.

Government Covid updates

From 20 July, early years settings will not be required to arrange children and staff in small, consistent groups.

Settings should still consider how they can minimise mixing within settings, for example where they use different rooms for different age groups, keeping those groups apart as much as possible.

Removing the groups approach is based on the fact that the overall risk to children from coronavirus (COVID-19) is low. It also recognises that early years settings are typically much smaller than schools. Adopting the system of controls set out here in a robust way will ensure there are proportionate safeguards for children as well as staff and reduce the chance of transmission'.

With the news that we no longer have to keep the children in strict groups of up to 8, which we have been doing during the 4 weeks we opened this term, it will be easier to accommodate all the children from September. We will of course continue with precautions such as extra cleaning, having less resources available at any one time and limiting close contact with the children. This has proven to work well, with the children concentrating better when there was less choice.

Staffing

We are very sorry to tell you that Claire Dean, who joined us in September 2019, will be leaving us at the end of the summer term. Mrs Dean very quickly became part of our lovely team of practitioners and has been a brilliant deputy, keeping the team and Mrs Mills organised. She has decided that she wants a break from working so she can concentrate on looking after her family. We wish her all the best and know that she will keep in contact with us all.

Autumn Term

If you haven't already let us know which sessions you would like to attend from September, please text or email your requirements. Don't forget to check if you are eligible for the 30 hours of free childcare if you are working (check on childcarechoices.gov.uk). If you have already accessed the 30 hours, make sure you check your eligibility applies for next term. Fees from next term will be £6.00 per hour for those who are not funded or for any time over their 15 free hours. Please let friends know that we have spaces for September and to contact us if they are looking for a place for their child.

Events

Unfortunately the children have missed a lot of events and exciting learning while we have been closed.

Lots of events which didn't take place 😞
Easter family service in church; Mother's day; raising of chicks, caterpillars, frogs; Father's day; PB carnival, leavers party and entertainer; annual fundraising picnic at Furzefield; books for Reception children from Bookstart, to name a few. We hope we might be able to celebrate harvest in the autumn, or that we should be sufficiently back to normal to be able to hold our family Nativity performance. Potters Bar carnival for 2021 is in the diary - 27 June (to avoid clashing with football and Father's Day). We have however planned a Bubble Party to take place within each bubble area but with the same activities taking place in all 3 bubbles.

Transition

Transition to Reception or Nursery has been very different this year. Whereas we have in the past 20 years invited teachers from all the schools where our children are transitioning to, this year we have had to have conversations over the phone, submitted data to schools, including a report giving details of where the children are in their development. Although 14 out of the 27 children leaving for Reception or Nursery in September have been attending for the last 4 weeks, the reports will reflect that we didn't see any of them for 12 weeks, and more for those who self isolated early. We have had to miss out the parent consultations, but reports are on their way to all the children. Those who are attending currently will be able to take them home and all other leavers will have the opportunity to collect their reports and journals on Wednesday 15 July. Please return your library books at the same time. Those children who are staying with us in September will have their reports emailed.

Dates for your Diary

Autumn Term 2020

3 September—17 December

Wed 2 Sept - Inset day, playgroup closed
Thurs 3 Sept - current children return
Fri 5 Sept - new children's first visit 12.15
Oct—Harvest Festival, all families invited; 11 for 11.15 TBA
Oct—B Lenman Photo, all children + siblings welcome; 8.15-10.45 TBA
26 Oct—30 Oct - Half term, playgroup closed
Thurs 17 Dec—Nativity play and last day of term; we finish at 12.55

Spring Term 2021

4 January—26 March

Mon 4 Jan—Inset day, playgroup closed
Tue 5 Jan—current children return
Fri 8 Jan—new children's first visit 12.15
15 Feb—19 Feb—Half term, playgroup closed
Thurs 25 March—Possible Easter Service in Church TBC

Summer Term 2021

12 April—16 July

Mon 12 April—Inset day, playgroup closed
Tue 13 April—current children return
Fri 16 April—new children's first visit 12.15
Mon 3 May—Bank Holiday, playgroup closed
31 May—4 June—Half term, playgroup closed
Sunday 27 June Potters Bar Carnival
July: Picnic, fundraising & sports day
July: End of term party

End of 2019-2020 year

As we come to the end of this academic year we say a fond goodbye to 24 children. Twenty will be joining a reception class and four will be going to a nursery within a school. We wish them all the very best and hope we will hear news from the children about how they have settled.

We look forward to welcoming the rest of the children back in September when they will be joined by a small group of new children.

Please let friends know that we have some spaces for additional children in September. They can contact us via phone, text or email.