

Playgroup News

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Autumn 2023



Welcome to all the new families who 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

We are following the children's interests as we plan our activities. We have introduced activities linked to Harvest and fire-works, there are some beautiful fireworks art-work on the noticeboard. We have talked about fire works and dangers of burns.

With the weather turning colder as winter approaches and leaves falling off, seeds, acorn and conkers, we would like to ask you and your child to collect items from nature to enhance the children's learning. We have emailed some autumn treasure hunt sheets and we will go for walks to find leaves, conkers, acorns, pine cones etc. Do bring items in which you find. We will create stickman pictures, count, sort and arrange natural shapes. We will look at the different shapes of leaves and try to work out which tree they come from.



We are exploring various celebrations including Rosh Hoshanan, Harvest Festival, Yom Kippur, Divali/Diwali, fireworks, Hanukah and then Christmas, while we prepare for the nativity play. If you celebrate any of the above or other special events during the autumn term we would love you to come in and talk to the children about them for 10 minutes or so about how you celebrate. We have DVD's which introduce the various celebrations but it is also nice to find out how your families celebrate.

During national Nursery Rhyme week we will be exploring new and old rhymes and doing lots of fun learning activities.

Mrs Stone and the team will be introducing lots of new science, technology, engineering and maths activities, having been inspired by an excellent training session. So listen out for new words from the children.

Playgroup News

We are sorry to have to tell you that Nazia Dziduch (Ms G) will be leaving the playgroup at the end of this term. She will start a new job at Ladbrooke school where she will continue to support one of our children who left at the end of the summer. We wish her well in her new job. We will miss her.

We are actively recruiting, so if you know of someone with an early years qualification who would enhance the lovely team at St John's, please ask them to contact us.

Our other playgroup which was based within Oakmere School moved to new premises in September. The Wayside Jubilee Centre had lots of work done to make it compliant with safety regulations as well as installing rubberised surface in play area. It was a huge job moving all the equipment across to Wayside, with the staff working hard to get everything ready. Phil Day did the upgrades which included new lights, paving, smoke detectors, cleaning the old garage, then installing shelving. The Wayside playgroup team have settled in well and are enjoying their new surroundings.

Thank you to John Powell carpets for our new rug in the Rainbow room.

Healthy eating,

At St John's we promote and encourage healthy eating. Please see the poster on the notice board for ideas for healthy lunchbox content.

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. Or if you enjoy baking a healthy banana bread (without nuts or sesame seeds) is another option See our poster on the display board for more ideas



Remember NO SESAME SEEDS and NO NUTS IN ANY FORM, INCLUDING PEANUT BUTTER OR NUTELLA.



Nutrition Guidance

Nutrition guidance from 'The Nutrition Foundation'.

The British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) has published its updated 5532 guide, a resource about portion size and healthy eating focussed on toddlers, which includes new information on free sugars, and more advice on vegetarian and vegan diets for young children, aged 1-4 years.



For easy access to the resources we will email the presentations. There are some great ideas for both meals at home and food to put in your child's lunchbox.. See the booklet on the notice board for 10 Steps for Healthy Toddlers. If you would like a hard copy we can print it for you. We have lots of ideas to share, including a toddler cookery book from which we can copy recipes.

For further information see our notice board.

Family Centre & Health news

The Autumn Programme is now available to view on www.hertsfamilycentres.org/events/whats-on-at-family-centres-in-hertfordshire.aspx (You can cut and paste via the newsletter on our website)

We recommend you register with your local Family Centre (PB1 or Furzefield) to receive regular updates and newsletters. https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ufs/CHSERV_FCREG.eb?ebd=0&ebz=1_1601375741952

Some more links which you may find useful: [Families First News](#) contains a regular article on mental health and emotional wellbeing support with many useful links.

The [Families First Portal](#) provides links to information, advice and guidance on local and national services for families, parents or carers needing support.

We will continue to email updates from Hertfordshire's Best Start newsletter relating to health, funding,, safety advice and any articles which we feel might be useful to you

Snow Conditions

With winter on its way, there is the possibility of snow. We would like to remind you of our 'snow policy'. If at least two of the local primary schools are closed due to the snow, we will not be able to open either. Please check our website or phone the playgroup (07969924482) where we will leave a recorded message.



Term Dates

PLEASE NOTE THAT PLAYGROUPS ARE FUNDED FOR 38 WEEKS OF THE YEAR SPREAD ACROSS 3 TERMS

Autumn term 2023—14 weeks

Monday 4 September - Friday 15 December (14 weeks)

Manday 4 September - inset day - playgroup closed
Tuesday 5 September, current children start
Friday 8 September new children induction 12.20
Tuesday 10 October: Harvest in church. All children and families invited 11.15
Monday 16 October, Photographer (Lenman) 8.15-11. All families invited
Monday 23 - Friday 27 October Half Term - playgroup closed
Saturday 11 November; Scout event - Santa visiting and Christmas market
Monday 13 November - Nursery Rhyme week
Week commencing 4th December, parent consultations
Monday 4 December. Stakeholders annual meeting 16.30-17 online. Invite to follow
Tuesday 12th December - Nativity in Church - all children and their families invited
Friday 15th December Playgroup Christmas Party. ALL children invited. Details to follow.
Friday 15 December LAST DAY OF AUTUMN TERM

Spring Term 2024 - 11 weeks

5 January— 28 March (11 weeks)

Friday 5th Jan—current children return - MORNING ONLY
Friday 5th January new children induction 12.20
Monday 19 —Friday 23 February Half term, playgroup closed
Thursday 7 March World Book Day dressing up day
Thurs 28 March— Easter Service in Church TBC THURSDAY 28 MARCH. LAST DAY OF SPRING TERM

Summer Term 2024

15 April - 19 July (13 weeks)

Monday 15 April - Inset day
Tuesday 16 April - current children return
Friday 19 April new children induction 12.20-2.00
Monday 6 May - Bank holiday playgroup closed
Monday 27 - Friday 31 Half term, playgroup closed
Sunday 9 June - Potters Bar Carnival. All families invited to take part.
Week commencing Monday 1 July - parent consultations
Friday 19 July Picnic, sports day, end of term event at Furzefield open space and woods
FRIDAY 19 JULY. LAST DAY OF SUMMER TERM

Christmas is only a few weeks away so for the playgroup that means the annual Nativity Play, the children's Christmas party, Letters to Santa, parent consultations and lots of glittery pictures and cards! Information on all of these activities now follows:

Letter to Santa/Father Christmas



You will receive a letter asking permission for your child to join in the writing to Santa/Father Christmas. If Christmas is a celebration that you as a family do not celebrate we can arrange for a different letter to be sent direct to you.

Once the children have written their letters to Santa, we will walk with them to the post box to post their letters using the Walkodile. Letters must be with the post office by Thursday 30 November. We would appreciate some parent helpers that week to accompany us on the walk. Extra warm clothing may also be needed if it's



NATIVITY TUESDAY 12 December, 11.15am



We are planning to perform our nativity event in our St John's Methodist church. All the children who attend St John's Nursery Playgroup are invited to take part. Family and friends are invited to attend this wonderful event, sharing in the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Coffee and mince pies will

be served in the Clifton Room from 10.40am and parents can take their seats (entering via the Clifton Room entrance) in the church from 11.00 where you will be able to view pictures from our sessions. If you are able to help serve refreshments before the service, please let us know.

Children who attend on Tuesdays should be dropped off at the normal time at 8.55am, the remaining children are to be dropped off at 10.40am. Please let us know if your child will be attending (using the form on the notice board)

All the children are given the opportunity to wear a costume if they wish but we will not pressure any children to dress up if they don't want to. However please do not feel too disappointed if they refuse or change their mind – remember this is the first of many opportunities they will have to perform! The car park usually gets packed so please park considerately and avoid blocking cars in; we encourage you to walk if at all possible. We allow parents to take pictures and videos (as unobtrusively as possible please), however we can only allow this with the agreement of all parents – if you have any concerns about this, or any other issues concerning the nativity, please speak to Mrs Mills or Mrs Stone in complete confidence. Videos and photos must not be uploaded onto social media sites e.g. Facebook

Children's Christmas Party

Friday 15th December
11.30am–2.00pm.

We would like to invite **all the children**, whether they attend on a Friday or not, to join the Christmas party. During the party we will have time for making Christmas crafts and party games. We will provide lunch and Lizzie will entertain the children in the main hall at the front of the building. The party food will be sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, snacks, and party treats and including fruit squash or water.

We ask for a contribution of £3.00 from every child to go towards the days activities.

- Children who attend Friday mornings arrive at normal time (8.55) but can stay until 2pm.
- Children who **do not** attend Friday morning are invited to arrive at 11.30. (or can request the extra 2.5 hours at £17)



- Children who normally are with us on a Friday afternoon can stay until the usual 3.00pm pick up time.

In order to make this day possible we will need some parent helpers to help us prepare the lunch, set up the rooms and to generally help with the children.

A form will be on the notice board for you to let us know if your child will be attending and if you are able to help on the day

Parent Consultations



Consultations with your child's keyworker will take place from **Monday 4th December**.

We will give you your child's learning journal and a brief report to take home earlier in the week; please remember to bring it back with you for your 10 minute appointment.

There will be a form on the notice board stating when your 10 minute appointment time will be. This is a time to discuss your child's progress with their keyworker