

Playgroup News

ST JOHN'S
NURSERY
PLAYGROUPS



St John's Methodist Church • Oakmere School

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Spring Term 2014

Welcome to all the new children and families that have started with us this January. It's very early days for the new children, however many of the children are beginning to settle into the busy life at St John's. Your child's keyworker is available to see you at the beginning or at the end of the session if you have any queries or concerns.

Spring Term Theme

The theme for the spring term is **POLAR LANDS**. We have started already with some exciting science and craft activities. The children have experienced ice and it's changing of state from water to ice and back to water again; watching ice 'fizz' as vinegar is poured onto it and experienced what effect 'lard' has as a barrier to prevent you feeling the cold. This was explained as 'blubber' i.e. what the arctic animals have to keep them warm. They've made penguins, polar bear faces and igloos! We need some extra sleeping bags, rucksacks or a sledge or 2 (preferably wooden) for expedition week (imaginative play) from parents if willing!! week commencing 3rd Feb. We will also be celebrating Chinese New Year - the year of the Horse.



Marie Currie Daffodil Appeal

We have joined the Marie Curie 'Mini pots of care' daffodil growing appeal. Last November, a letter was sent home advising of the appeal. The children attending at the time, planted a daffodil bulb in a pot (currently being protected from the frost by being placed under our large outdoor sandpit) with extra bulbs planted on behalf of the new children starting in January. In February we will be having a fundraising day to raise money for this very worthwhile cause; one which sadly affects so many families. This Mini Pots of Care planting activity is an interactive and creative fundraising activity, which helps children aged 3-11 learn about science, nature and charitable giving whilst raising money to fund our Marie Curie Nurses.



Snow Conditions

We hope to have some snow this term to fit in nicely with our Polar Lands theme but not too much that we should have to consider closing. However in case we do, we would like to remind you of our 'snow policy'. If there are at least two local primary schools closed due to heavy snow then we will not be open either. A message will be left on the playgroups mobile phone on the morning if the playgroup will be closed or please check on the website. Mobile numbers and web pages are listed on the front page.

We are also registered with Herts Direct on their Closure Notification System which can be accessed via www.hertsdirect.org/eycclosures. A simple message will be displayed under St John's Nursery Playgroup.



Annual Stakeholders Meeting

The next Stakeholders meeting will be held on Friday 31st January **12.15 start** (during lunch club) at St John's Methodist Church in the Rainbow Room (main play room). All parents, carers, staff and interested parties are invited to attend as we would really appreciate your views, ideas and feedback. We will be looking for new parent reps if you are interested, please speak to Mrs Mills. Toys will be available to keep children occupied during the meeting. We aim to keep the meeting short (30-45 minutes).

Lunch Club



Lunch club continues to be a great success so it is important we provide some guidelines for lunch box contents.

In the first instance, to ensure that children are eating healthy, nutritious food and secondly so children see other children eating food similar to them. Research has shown a direct link between eating a healthy lunch and a positive impact on children's behaviour and learning.

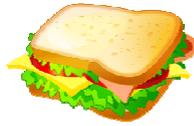
Here are some tips to help you provide a healthy lunch. Try to include 1 item from each of the following food groups:

Starch/carbohydrates: bread, pitta pockets, pasta and potato salad or crackers

Protein: chicken, ham, tinned fish, bean salad or boiled egg

Dairy: cheese, yoghurt or fromage frais

Fruit: including fresh, dried or tinned fruit.



- ◆ **Please do not provide peanut butter, Nutella or nuts in any form as we currently have 2 children with a severe nut allergy.**
- ◆ We would prefer no sweets are included in the in lunch boxes. Please 'leave' the treats until they get home.
- ◆ Don't over pack the bag, some children sit there nearly all the lunch time eating their food and miss out on valuable play time.
- ◆ If you provide a drink, preferably in a bottle that can be resealed AND fits inside their lunch bag. Juice cartons are not always finished and there is a lot of wastage. Alternatively, we can provide the children with a cup of water or milk if you prefer.
- ◆ **Please label your child's lunch box.** With up to 36 children taking a lunch box and finding a seat, there are often 2 or 3 boxes with the same popular designs and it helps us to locate the right lunch box with the right child.



Thank you for your co-operation.

No Mobile Phones

Please be aware that as part of statutory requirements, no staff or parents/visitors should use their mobile phones (or phone cameras) whilst on the playgroup premises. The Playgroup uses a mobile phone for playgroup use only (as the mainline phone is in the hallway). We also use a digital camera to take pictures of the children for their learning journals. These photos are monitored and managed by the Leadership team. If you have any concerns regarding this ruling, please speak with Mrs Mills.



Staff News

Mrs Cooke has undertaken a 10 week course entitled Introductory Module in Autistic Spectrum Condition through University of Birmingham. It will give Mrs Cooke an excellent insight and understanding of the complex nature of Autism and how simple techniques can make a big difference to a autistic child's communication and experience which will be invaluable in the setting. Mrs Cooke will be awarded a University Certificate at the end.



Parent Helpers

We always appreciate help from parents or carers who can spare an hour or two in a week to come and help at the playgroup by playing and learning with the children - read a book, paint a picture, create with play dough, come for a walk, do a jigsaw puzzle or help the children with role play activities, all of which are of real benefit to the children. It's important though that your child has fully settled at playgroup and won't be 'too' distracted by your presence.



Birthday Celebration

In keeping with our healthy eating policy and due to children's food allergies and cultural dietary needs, we are asking for parents to no longer bring in sweets to hand out to the other children. Instead, you could bring in some special fruit or vegetable or special bread which the children can share at snack time. Thank you for your understanding.



Reminders

CLOTHING can we ask you to ensure your child arrives at playgroup with a warm coat and possibly hat, gloves and scarf 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 stock of plimsoles and wellington boots as spare but we could always do with some more if your child has outgrown theirs.



CHANGE OF CLOTHES Can you also bring a change of clothes for your child in a small bag (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. Thank you.

TISSUES We would be grateful if every child could provide a box of tissues to help us keep the children's 'noses wiped' as much as possible.



PULL UPS If your child is wearing nappies or pull-ups, please make sure you provide enough for the session they are attending. Wipes would also be appreciated.

LEARNING JOURNAL Your child's learning journal is available to view at any time, please speak with your child's key worker and don't forget to take a 'You're a Star at Home' slip - available at each setting which can be included in the journal

FRUIT SHARING At St John's we want to promote healthy eating and would ask the children to bring in a piece of fruit once or twice a week to share with the other children, then hopefully there will be enough each day to supplement the other healthy foods which the playgroup provides.



Payment of Fees

Thank you for all the parents that have returned their 3 and 4 year old funding forms, we appreciate your prompt response.

Parents who are required to pay for additional hours or those children not yet entitled to the free 15 hours early years funding, you are required to pay playgroup fees. The invoices have been issued. Please can you ensure these are paid promptly.

We would also ask you to make sure you have given the playgroup your child's NHS number as this is a requirement in order to receive the free 15 hours funding.



- ♦ **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

Via Email...

If you would like to receive the newsletter and any other playgroup notices via email, please let us know. Let's save a tree to two! Newsletters are also available on our website! You can also contact us by email if you have any queries or questions, the email address is

Dates for your Diary

Spring Term 7th Jan - 4th April

Mon 6 Jan - INSET DAY, no children

Tue 7 Jan - Current children return

Fri 10 Jan - New children start

17-21 Feb - HALF TERM, CLOSED

Fri 4 April - End Spring Term NO LUNCH CLUB

Summer Term 22 Apr - End July TBC

Mon 21 Apr - Easter Mon - CLOSED

Tue 22 Apr - INSET - CLOSED

Wed 23 Apr - Current children return

Fri 25 April - New Children's first visit

Thur 22 May - voting day, playgroup closed

26-30 May - HALF TERM - CLOSED

Sun 8 Jun - Potters Bar Carnival