



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

This term the theme is 'All About Me'. We have already talked about our family and who's in our family and produced a family tree. The children have looked at themselves in the mirror and have drawn what they see, not always accurately but we help them identify they have two eyes, a nose, hopefully a smiley mouth, ears and hair. We shall be introducing maths skills by counting our fingers & toes, checking our understanding of the world by looking into how we differ from each other, talking about what we were like as a baby and what we are like now! Please provide or email a baby photo so we can show and talk about it with your child - email address above. Last but not least the children will be finding out how we can move across playgroup equipment by slithering, sliding, crawling and moving our body in different ways!



Other topics we will be covering this term will be 'Shrove Tuesday and they will be tasting pancakes', Chinese New Year - the year of the Dragon and making something special for Mother's Day.

Snow Conditions

We have already seen some snow this month and there is likely to be some more so 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 websites. Mobile numbers and web pages are listed on the front page.



Learning Journals

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 which can be included in the journal.



Marie Curie Daffodil Appeal

We have again 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.

As part of the fundraising activity each child will bring home a planted daffodil bulb, a donation envelope and a letter explaining a bit more about where the money will go. Please ensure all details are completed and the form is returned so that we can claim gift aid on your hopefully, generous donations.



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; once again we would like to encourage you to pack healthy foods - great ideas are 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 treats for home please as other children can look on enviously at 'little chocolate wrappers'!



Staff News

Clarice Stokes is a student from Oaklands College studying her Level 3 in Early Years Childcare. Clarice is in the setting on Monday's, and Friday's and is already proving to be a very capable practitioner. She shows great initiative and is very quick to grasp the needs of the children and the setting. We wish Clarice well in her studies.



Parent Helpers

We always appreciate help from parents or carers who can spare an hour or two in the 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. If you would like to join us, please speak with Mrs Mills or Mrs Mash.



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.

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.

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... **Y**ou can also contact us via email if you have any queries or concerns, the email address is on the front of this newsletter. All correspondence, newsletters is available on the website.

Dates for your Diary

Spring Term 7th Jan - 2nd April

Mon 5 Jan - INSET DAY, no children
Tue 6 Jan - Current children return
Fri 9 Jan - New children start
16-20 Feb - HALF TERM, CLOSED
Thur 2 April Easter event in church; families invited
Thur 2 April - End of Spring Term

Summer Term 20 Apr - 22 July

Mon 20 Apr - INSET DAY, no children
Tue 21 Apr - Current children return
Fri 24 April - New Children's first visit
Mon 4 May - Bank holiday, playgroup closed
Thur 7 May - voting day, playgroup closed, possible group outing to woodland or farm
Thur 14 May Photographer, B/W photos
25-29 May - HALF TERM - CLOSED
Sun 7 Jun - Potters Bar Carnival- children and families invited to attend
Barnardo's sponsored walk: all children with family invited to attend date TBC
Wed 22 July - End of term TBC