

Playgroup News



Baker Street, Potters Bar EN6 2DZ Mobile: 07969 924482
email: st_johns_playgroup@hotmail.co.uk Website: www.stjohnsbakerstreet.co.uk

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Christmas Nativity Thursday 11 December at 11.30am

Following the success of the last few years, we will again this year be returning to an old tradition of holding our nativity event in the church. Please let us know if this causes you any concern. Coffee and mince pies will be served in the Clifton Room from 10.50am and parents can take their seats from 11.20am. Please enter the church through the Clifton Room (by the front door).



On the day the children should arrive and leave via the normal entrance at all times. All children are given the opportunity to wear a costume if they wish. Some children don't want to and some children change their mind on the day. We will not put pressure on the 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!



We would like to borrow some children's dressing gowns on the day, if you have one we could borrow, please can you bring it in, **clearly labeled**, first thing in the morning on Thursday 11 December.

Children who **normally attend on Thursdays** should be dropped off at the normal time (9.15am), the **remaining** children to be dropped off at **10.50am**. The car park usually gets packed so please park considerately and avoid blocking other cars in, as other groups may be using the buildings on this day and some parents may have to rush to pick children up from other venues. It may be a good idea to walk if at all possible. In the past we have allowed 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 Mash or myself in confidence.

Christmas Party

Our Christmas party will be held on Tuesday 16th December. We would like to invite all 'our' children, whether they attend on a Tuesday or not. They should be dropped off at the usual time of 9.15am and picked up as normal at 12.15am.



If your child does not normally attend on a Tuesday, but you would like them to come to the party, please let us know and include a payment of £8.50 to cover the additional session. (This can be paid separately or included in with your normal payment, but please mark this clearly on the back of your cheque or on the payment envelope). The children will be offered a variety of fruit, crisps and party treats at snack time.

Extra Days this Term

If you would like to take up the opportunity of your child attending a few extra days THIS term, please register their name on the appropriate form on the notice board.

Snow Conditions

With the possibility of snowy conditions, can I remind you of our 'snow policy' which is that if at least two of the local primary schools are closed due to the snow, then we will not open either.



Environment

The application for the capital grant and TOPS grant were sent off during the half term. This was a very lengthy process of obtaining quotes, deciding what would really make a difference to the children and their learning environment. Everything which we asked for had to be justified as to how it would benefit the children and in which area of learning (i.e. Communication, physical etc). We still have not heard from the grant panel, except to confirm they have received it. Let us hope we are successful - it would be a wonderful Christmas surprise.



Fees for next Term

You have hopefully by now received our questionnaire

on the possible change of opening times. We would really appreciate a response from ALL families to make sure St John's provides the 'service' which you as parents really need. We will let you know the outcome asap. The letter did also explain the increase in fees from January. We believe we still provide very good value for money at £10.20 for 3 hours.



We have a high proportion of qualified staff, with 2 members of staff who have a EYFD Early Years Foundation Degree, (in England there are still only a small proportion of the early years workforce who have a EYFD, and only very few of those are in playgroups); one member is also studying for a BA(Hons).

Additionally we have 2 with level 3 qualification, 2 with level 2 and one studying for level 2 and we also have staff with many years of experience, all adding up to a formidable and competent staff base. To retain experienced and qualified staff at these levels, we need to pay them a fair rate. All staff undertake regular relevant training to ensure we all keep up with latest developments within early years education. At St John's this is valued by the management and I am sure by you, but is a further necessary expenditure.

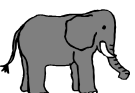
Training

All the staff will be undergoing a two hour EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage training on Wednesday 3rd December. This will help the staff recognise a child's next steps through observations and to then plan accordingly. There will be no lunch club on this day. Mrs Mills is hoping to start her EYPS - Early Years Professional Status in January and is waiting for confirmation from the University. By 2010 day nurseries have to have a member of staff with EYPS and 2015 is the date set for preschools. We continue to strive to be the best playgroup in Potters Bar, with up-to-date training.

Lunch Club

We would like to open lunch club as early as we can in the new term. Please record your interest on the form on the notice board in the upper room, stating which day you would like your child to attend. Please note we need a minimum of 6 children per day in order to cover staff costs.

The price per session will be £3.40. Once we have 6 confirmed bookings for any one day, then that day can be opened. If you would like more information about lunch club, please speak with Mrs Mash or Mrs Mills



Spring Term Plans

Next term we will be looking at how people in our community help us. We will be exploring different occupations such as postman, fireman, doctors & medical profession, musicians, teachers, child carers, cooks, police, shop assistants etc.



We will be asking local people to visit us and talk to the children about what they do. For example, for our musician week, we would like to invite any musicians connected with the group. Perhaps you can play an instrument and would like to play a simple tune (or even a complicated one) and explain how the instrument works.



Our local police support officer, postman and maybe even a fire engine and its crew will be invited during the term. We will also be incorporating Chinese New Year, Mothers Day and Easter. A busy few months ahead, so any resources (including yourselves) which you think might enhance the learning experience for the children will be appreciated. If you want to join in, please see myself or Mrs Mash.

Dates for your Diary this term

- Wed 3rd December: Staff Training - No lunch club
- Thurs 11th December 11.30: Nativity Play in Church
- Tues 16th December: Christmas Party (lunch club as normal)
- Fri 19th December: Last day of term, no lunch club.

.....and next year

- Thurs 8th & Fri 9th January: New children start
- Mon 12th January: First day of term
- Mon 12th -Fri 20th Feb: Half term, playgroup closed
- Fri 3rd April: End of term
- Mon 20th April-Tue 21st July: Summer term
- Mon 25th-Fri 29 May: Half term playgroup closed