

# Playgroup News



Welcome back to all the children and families after Christmas, we hope you had a lovely break and are managing to make use of all those scarves and gloves Santa delivered. Hasn't it been soooo cold!

A very warm welcome to the 17 new children that started with us this term. Most of the children are settling well into the busy life at St Johns. Within a few weeks, we won't recognize 'old' from 'new' children as we all find our place in amongst all the activities.

### Early starts

Following our questionnaire in December, we are able to offer at this time up to 12 places for a 9.00am start, 5 days a week. This is proving very popular for working mums and spaces are limited.



If you would like to take up an early start one or more days a week, please see Mrs Mills a.s.a.p. The fee per morning is £1.00 to cover staff costs.

### Fees and Funding

As you are aware, the fees are £10.20 from this term, in line with Herts County Council session rate. We would appreciate prompt payment in advance either weekly/half term or for the full term. If your child is over 3 years of age at the start of the term, they are eligible for the government grant, please see Mrs Mash or Mrs Mills.

We have issued this term's funding forms, please complete them and get them back to us as soon as possible. If you think you might be entitled to funding as you are on benefits but your child is under 3, please speak to Mrs Mash in confidence.

### Topic 'People who help us'

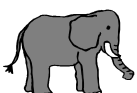
This term we will be looking at how people in our community help us. We will be exploring different occupations such as postman, fireman, doctors & medical profession, musicians, teachers, child carers, cooks, police and shop assistants. We have already had a shoe shop and fruit and vegetable market.

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 have already had one or two parents approach us willing to come in and demonstrate their instrument to the children. 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 anyone else is interested, please speak to Mrs Mills or Mrs Mash.



### Lunch Club

Our lunch club is open every day at the new rate of £3.40 per session. It still remains excellent value for money. It would be lovely to see some new faces. That extra hour is a great opportunity for children to develop their social skills, eating and chatting over lunch, the quieter children often benefiting from this smaller grouping. A reminder that lunch club fees are due in advance of bookings. See our lunch club booklet in the upper room for further information or speak to Mrs Mash or Mrs Mills.



## Clothing

A reminder to all; please ensure your child is wearing soft shoes or trainers. Hard shoes hurt fingers, are likely to be slippery on the climbing equipment, and having been worn outside are often muddy. Please remember to write names on **all** items of clothing, it makes it so much easier for us when the children have been outside and have 'hung' their coats on the floor. Can you also make sure you bring a change of clothes for your child if they are prone to be over exuberant when washing or may wet themselves. If any of the boys have grown out of their clothes, we could really do with some pants, socks and long sleeved tops as our supplies are greatly reduced. Thank you!



## Routine

This term, we have made some changes to our routine, due to trying out 'rolling snack'... We have set up a snack table which the children can access between 10 and 11am, still supported by staff. It is proving very popular as the children can choose when to stop their play and have a rest. The children are having story with their key workers in smaller groups.

## Capital Grant

We are really pleased to announce that the TOPS Grant and Capital grant that we applied for in November were successful. What this means for the playgroup is we have nearly £25,000 to upgrade and extend the outside play area. We will be creating a tactile wall mural of an underwater sea scene; work starts after Easter, an awning covering a third of the outside area to enable us to go out in blazing sunshine and pouring rain! We will be buying lots of new equipment to enhance the children's learning and play. The capital grant of £2,500 enables us to buy more indoor equipment from ICT to new carpets and partitioning, again to enhance the learning environment for the children.



## 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.



## Tissues



The 'sneezy season' is still upon us so we would be grateful if every child could bring in a box of tissues to see us through till the warmer weather comes.

## Treasure Chest

Can you encourage your child to put any toys etc. they bring in from home in the 'Treasure Chest' in the upper room. Obviously if children who are settling in need a comfort toy or item to help them settle they can keep this with them.



## Dates for your Diary

### SPRING TERM

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January - Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> - Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February *Half term, playgroup closed*

### SUMMER TERM

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April - Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April *Playgroup closed Staff training*

Tues 21<sup>st</sup> & Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> April *New children start*

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April *ALL children return*

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May *Bank Holiday, playgroup closed*

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May *Photographer: Black & White Photos, more details to follow*

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> - Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May *Half term, playgroup closed*

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June—*voting day, playgroup closed*

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June *Potters Bar carnival, all invited—can we take first place again?*

**Additional dates to be arranged:**

Road Safety Talk for ALL parents and carers.

Teddy Bears Picnic, & summer party

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July *LAST DAY of TERM*

