

Playgroup News

May 2025



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We welcome the new children and families who have started with us this Term. Your child's keyworker is available to see you at the beginning or at the end of the session if there is anything you wish to discuss regarding your child or children.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE LINKS IN THIS NEWLETTER WILL EITHER NEED TO BE TYPED IN OR COPY AND PASTED FROM THE OUR WEBSITE OR EMAILED COPY

Summer Theme

The focus for this term is Life Cycles and Growing. The tiny little caterpillars will be turning into butterflies and we will watch them fly away. We are looking forward to the chicks arriving this week. The tadpoles are growing well; soon we should have cute little froglets. We plan to go for lots of walks, looking at how plants are getting bigger and visiting the local allotment. We are learning lots of science while playing with water, fitting pipes together, seeing how quickly the ball runs down the pipe when you tilt it. Exploring natural materials such as pine cones, wood offcuts, leaves and stones all help to enhance natural learning.



Staff News

We are pleased to let you know that we have offered the manager position to a lovely, kind and caring lady who will take over the role of Manager when Mrs Mills leaves. She will probably start some sessions for the last few weeks of this term so we can arrange for a professional transition and you can get to meet her. More details to follow later this term when we have checked references and so on. She has lots of experience as leader and manager in different early years settings. She has significant relevant qualifications in Early years, leadership, business studies and holds a Level 3 special needs co-ordinator. And she also likes active learning through real events so hopefully next summer will see more chicks, frogs and butterflies

Library & Story sacks



Children already regularly borrow our books to read at home. We have started to lend out story sacks which can make reading a story more interactive. If you would like to borrow one of these please ask your child's keyworker. We only have a small selection currently but will be expanding the choice over the coming terms.

Internet Safety

We cannot overstate the importance of keeping your children safe on the internet. It is often easy for them to access unsuitable content if you don't have parental control set up. Chicken Clicking is a good book to start talking to your child. This link is useful: <https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/0-5/>

Mini me's

We have recently introduced Mini Me's to the children. So if they tell you they have a picture of themselves on a little wooden block—that's the mini me. It means they can take 'themselves' into play. They can be the traindriver, the hero, the mummy, daddy, brother or sister while playing with other small world characters. We also found out that if your child's best friend isn't it, they can just borrow their mini me to play with. A really popular addition to their play.

Water Safety

Some relevant advice for this time of year from Royal Life Saving Society. The website has advice for various areas where children are likely to play in water, at home, on the beach, in the park.



<https://www.rlss.org.uk/Listing/Category/splash-safety-at-your-pad>

NEXT TERM SESSIONS

With around 25 children leaving at the end of the summer term, we have lots of spaces from September onwards. Please note your choice of additional sessions on the form on the notice board or contact us via WhatsApp or email. Please let friends know that we have spaces available from September (who have children 2-5 years old)

FUNDING

If you think you might be eligible for 30 hours of funding for your 3 year old or 15 hours for your 2 year old because you work, please check via the childcare choices government website. <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> **before 31 August.** You will need to meet certain criteria which will be clear once you login. You may also be able to take advantage the Tax Free childcare scheme on the same website. If you are receiving state benefits such as Universal Credit, you may be able to claim 2 years funding through the Hertfordshire 2 year funded website.

Hopefully the warm weather will start at some point. We have plenty of St John's Playgroup hats which the children wear when outside in the sun. We would ask you to apply sun cream to your children before coming into playgroup. If it's particularly sunny, we can give the children a top up. If your child does have an allergy to some sun creams, please let us know and you may choose to provide your own.



We ask that children still wear sensible shoes and sandals with a back strap; flip-flops are not suitable as they don't give the children the support their feet need when using the climbing equipment.

Supporting your children

Children develop at different rates and at different ages. At St John's we support all children to move on to their next steps, whatever stage that is. In addition to the steps as outlined in the EYFS document, we are working on the following activities: phonics (learning to distinguish between everyday sounds and some letter sounds), playdough gym (strengthening hands and fingers ready for writing); transition support (recognising their name and for those who are showing an interest, writing their name).

See the following link which gives excellent advice for pre-writing skills: <https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/writing/writing-readiness-pre-writing-skills/>

Church Summer BBQ

You and your family are all invited to the Church summer Barbeque taking place on Sunday 6th July at Morven Guide Centre. We start with an outdoor Sunday service at 11, followed by a BBQ and games afternoon. Includes lunch, dessert and hot drinks—please bring your own drinks and you may want to bring a picnic blanket and chairs. No charge but voluntary donations welcome. Games and activities will be organised for all ages. Everyone who uses the church (such as for playgroup, Jumping John's and their families are very welcome but needs to be pre-booked. More details from Margaret Rhodes 07979858458 Further information to follow



Transition Support

As this is the final term for many of the children, we want to make their transition to their new school as smooth as possible. In the second half of the summer term, we will be talking to the children about moving on to school, showing them school uniforms which they can try on if they choose, show them photo books provided by the local schools. There will be lots of discussions about what the children can expect at their new school.



We are having visits from the reception and nursery teachers from your child's new school. This gives the teachers the opportunity to see the child in an educational setting where they are already settled. We will note on the notice board which teachers are visiting when.

We also have a lovely poster with tips for parents about getting their child ready for school

Teeth Health There are some great resources via this link for how to support your child to have healthy teeth. Foods to eat and avoid, good routines. <https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/ttft/> and <https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/how-to-take-care-of-your-baby-or-toddlers-teeth/>

Dates for your Diary

Summer Term 2025

22 April - 18 July (13 weeks)

Wednesday 23 April - current children return

Friday 25 April, Easter Service in Church, All families invited 11-12

Friday 25 April new children induction **no afternoon session**

Monday 5 May - Bank holiday playgroup closed

Monday 26 - Friday 30 May Half term, playgroup closed

Week commencing 30 June - parent consultations

Saturday 12 July Playgroup 60th Anniversary, all past and current children, parents and staff welcome from both our playgroups. Details to follow.

Friday 18 July Picnic, sports day, end of term event at Furze Field open space and woods

FRIDAY 18 JULY. LAST DAY OF SUMMER TERM

Autumn Term 2025

3 September- Wednesday 17 December (14 weeks)

Wednesday 3 Sept—inset day

Thursday 4 Sept—first day of term

Friday 5 Sept new children induction 12.30 **no afternoon session!**

Monday 27 to Friday 31 Oct, Half Term, playgroup closed

Photographer—date to be confirmed

Christmas party Date to be confirmed

Nativity provisional date Wednesday 17 December