

# Playgroup News

ST JOHN'S  
NURSERY  
PLAYGROUPS



St John's Methodist Church • Oakmere School

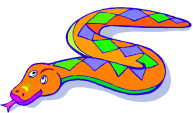
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## Spring Term 2013

**Welcome** **W**elcome 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 Activities

**T**he theme for the spring term will continue with 'Me and My Senses'. With 'feely bags' and 'feeling fingers', 'smelly feet' and musical chairs, there are lots of exciting focused activities for your children. Focusing on 'sound' and 'hearing', we are appealing for any parents or carers that are musicians and who are willing to spare 15 minutes at the end of the session to demonstrate their musical instrument. Please see the notice board for more details.



**W**e will also be celebrating Chinese New Year, the year of the Snake. During that week we will be tasting Chinese food, setting up a 'Chinese take-away' and talking about the celebration. If you have any resources which you could let us look at, please bring them in. Maybe you can write Chinese symbols?

### Snow Conditions

**W**e 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.



### No Mobile Phones

**P**lease be aware that as part of new 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.



### Marie Currie Daffodil Appeal

**W**e 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.



**A**s part of the fundraising activity each child will bring home a donation envelope to help raise money for this worthwhile cause as well as a letter explaining a bit more about where the money will go and of course the daffodil bulb! Please ensure all details are completed and the form is returned so that we can claim gift aid on

### Library

**S**t John's runs a book borrowing scheme (see poster on the notice board). It is proving very popular with the children who are asking to change their books, which is great news. For the new children, you will be given a 'book bag' and guidelines on reading with your child and a note stating the day of the week your child's book will be changed. If you can, please try to bring the book back on this day every week. If your child has finished their book earlier than this day, you can still bring it back but it may not get changed until their allocated day.



## Lunch Club

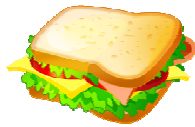


Lunch club continues to be a great success with up to 36 children on some days. It is important therefore that we provide some guidelines for lunch box contents.

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.

## HQS: Herts Quality Standards

Both our Baker Street and Oakmere settings have completed all the modules relating to the reaccreditation of HQS. The final part will be a visit this term from the HQS team to judge us against a set of standards called 'Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale'. A set of 43 very strict ratings, each with 7 grades from 'inadequate' to 'excellent' will be used. Mrs Mills can show you the book if you are interested in finding out more. Thank you to all the staff, children and parents who have contributed. Each unit was sent to the HQS team for verification and each one came back 'passed' with many positive comments about our practice in every area of the playgroup (and no actions). We will continue to provide the best possible care and education for your children with dedicated staff teams.

## Students/Staff News



At St John's we encourage and support students

undertaking their early years training. We currently have **Ellie Allan-Kerwin** (a St John's pupil herself in the past) who is studying at Oaklands College undertaking her NVQ Level 3 in Early years. Ellie has already proven herself to be invaluable to the setting. Ellie is with us on Monday and Friday's for the Spring term.

**Lydia Balubuliza**, who last term was a volunteer and who is studying for her Early Years Professional Status will be working at St John's on Monday's and Thursday's. Unfortunately Mrs Balubuliza has had to fly back to Ghana for family reasons but will be returning on Monday 4th February.

**Virginia Mash** (Deputy) will be away from 24th January to 13th February. Virginia will be away, in Australia, for family reasons. She has arranged cover for all her sessions and other keyworkers will be working with her keychildren so the professional care will be consistent.



## Payment of Fees

At the beginning of each term, 3 year old children eligible for government funding will receive a funding form to be completed and returned asap. Parents who are required to pay playgroup fees, will receive an invoice and are asked to ensure these are paid promptly. If payment falls behind, we will work with you to set up a payment plan. Our policy states you should be no more than 2 weeks behind with fees or your child's space may be at risk.



**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

## 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. Why not try it out this week?

Or if you have any skills you would like to share with the children (or staff) like singing, musical instruments, gardening or artwork, then please speak with Mrs Mills or Mrs Mash.

It's important though that your child has fully settled at playgroup and won't be 'too' distracted by your presence.



## 2 year old reports

Following the introduction of the new EYFS curriculum in September 2012, we introduced the new Two Year Check. This check is for children between 24-36 months and is a short written summary of each child's development. It looks at the three prime areas of the curriculum - Personal, Social and Emotional development; Physical development; Communication and Language development.

These reports have proven very popular with parents as did the consultations and the chance to look at the learning journal with the keyworker. It was an opportunity for parents and their child's keyworker to catch up on any concerns, achievements and so on.



We also had our consultations for all the 'older' children. As on previous occasions this has proven to be a lovely chance for a 10 minute consultation, looking at the learning journal and for those children who left in December, to discuss their leaver's report. Keyworkers will be carrying out observations and produce a 2 year old report ready for after half term. More details to follow.

## 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!

Please contact us by email if you have any queries or questions, the email addresses is on the front page.



## 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' - be it spilling food, jumping in puddles or not quite making it to the toilet, 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.



## BIRTHDAY SWEETS

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 for their children's birthday's. The other consideration is the quantity of sweets which the children have over the year with 65+ children, that is a lot of packets of sweets to be purchased and consumed.

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.



## Dates for your Diary

### Spring Term 7th Jan - 28th Mar

Mon 7 Jan - INSET DAY, no children  
Tue 8 Jan - Current children return  
Fri 11 Jan - New children start  
18-22 Feb - HALF TERM, CLOSED  
Mon 25 Feb - Start 2nd half spring term  
Wed 6 March - District Synod held in Church, parking issues, more information to follow.  
Thur 28 Mar - End Spring Term  
Fri 29 Mar - Fri 12th April EASTER HOLIDAYS

### Summer Term 15th Apr - 24th Jul (TBC)

Mon 15 Apr - INSET DAY, no children  
Tue 16 Apr - Children return  
Fri 19 Apr—new children visit at 1.30  
Mon 6 May - Bank Holiday  
Date T.B.A. - Polling Day, PLAYGROUP CLOSED  
Thu 23 May - Richard Kerber, b/w Photos  
27-31 May - HALF TERM, CLOSED  
Mon 3 Jun - Start 2nd half summer term  
Sun 9 Jun - Potters Bar Carnival all families invited  
Date T.B.A. - Barnardo's Sponsored Toddle Waddle