

September 2014

Playgroup News

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This newsletter, other correspondence and full playgroup information is available on our website

We welcome all the new families that have joined us this September and welcome back to the families that returned after the summer holidays. The new children show early signs of settling in to the busy and lively routine of the playgroup. It's a busy term on the run up to Christmas with lots of new experiences for the children.

This Terms Topics

This half term we are looking at 'our summer holidays' and experiences the children may have had at the seaside or travelling to different locations either via plane, boat, train or car. We have asked on a separate note if you could bring in a photo of your family holiday or a special outing so the children have the visual memory in which to talk about it in small groups.



We will also be looking at some favourite stories like Handa's Surprise, Kippers Sand Castle and Going on a Bear Hunt. Later in the term we will be celebrating the Harvest Festival, Diwali, Fireworks and of course Christmas. If you have anything you would like to contribute or want to get involved, please speak with the leadership team.

Staff & Student News

During the summer holidays, Mrs Narula moved house to Bushey, near Watford and has subsequently decided that travelling to Potters Bar every morning and with a young daughter, may prove to be a stretch too far. She has therefore taken up a new role as a Teachers Assistant in a reception class near home. We are sad to see Mrs Narula go as she made a fantastic contribution to St John's during her time with us.

Sarah Cornwell has completed her CACHE Level 2 in Child Care and will be starting her Level 3 during the coming year. Sarah works most sessions and is a valuable member of the team with her youthful energy, enthusiasm and young spirit that the children love. Good luck this year Sarah.

Harvest Festival

We will be celebrating the Harvest Festival on 16th October where we will be inviting all the children and their families to a special ceremony from 11.30am. We will take the children into the church to look at the magnificent decorations followed by a relevant harvest story, the children will sing you some songs and Ali Facey, St John's Minister will talk to us all about why we celebrate the harvest. More information will follow.



Photographer

On the 21st October, Brett Lenman, a competent child photographer will be taking individual photos of all the children during the morning (fully supervised by a member of staff). If you would prefer your child not to be photographed, please speak with Mrs Mash, there is no obligation to buy. If you would like a photo with school aged siblings, you are welcome to come at 8.20, children with younger siblings are welcome to come at 9.00am even if your child doesn't normally attend on a Thursday. Children who attend in the afternoon are welcome to come along at 9.00am to have their photograph taken, the photographer won't be here in the afternoon.



Library Books

The book borrowing scheme is up and running. For new parents, useful information is included in your book bag. We hope your children are keen to borrow a book and that you spend invaluable quiet time together reading the story and talking about the pictures. Could we ask you to ensure your child's book is returned every week and we will endeavour to make sure they go home with a new book every week.



Marie Curie Daffodil Appeal



Once again, we have joined the Marie Curie 'Mini Pots of Care' daffodil growing appeal. This 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 Marie Curie Nurses.

Every child will plant a daffodil in a pot (all resources supplied). These will be named and in February we will be fundraising to raise money for this very worthwhile cause; one which sadly affects so many families. The children will not only plant the bulbs but will also have the chance to care for them here at Playgroup.

Barnado's Big Toddle Waddle



We would like to thank all the families who joined the Barnados' Big Toddle Sponsored Walk which took place at the Furzefield at the beginning of July. We had another fantastic day, the weather was brilliant and we raised £230 for Barnados and £70 for the playgroup which will go towards new toys and resources. Thank you for your efforts in fundraising for this important annual event.

Fund Raising On-Line

St John's has joined Easyfundraising, recommended by the PSLA. Go to easyfundraising.org.uk and raise money for St John's Nursery Playgroup. It doesn't cost you anything, just shop on-line using their partner retailers including Amazon, John Lewis, M&S and over 2000 others.

Treasure Chest



At St John's we have a treasure chest which is primarily for children who need to bring in a comforter ranging from a cuddly toy, an old muslin or any other object that a child has formed a special bond with that will give them comfort if they 'wobble' during the morning. We are finding it is turning into a very large lost property chest. If you bring in an item for your child, whether it is a comforter or item of clothing, please remember to take it home. Don't forget to label all clothing too. Thank you.

Playgroup Polo-Shirts

St John's Nursery



Playgroup polo-shirts are available from Lee Joys. They cost £5.50 for one or £15.00 for three. We have a few second-hand shirts which you can purchase for a donation of £1, please see Mrs Mash.

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 which can be added to the journal, located in the green plastic pocket at the end of the notice board.

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'!



Mobile Phone Use

A reminder that mobile phones are not to be used on playgroup premises in line with statutory requirements. The Playgroup uses a mobile phone for playgroup use only (as the mainline phone is in the hallway). Digital photos of the children are taken 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.

Annual Stakeholders Meeting

The next Stakeholders meeting will be held on Friday 14th October at 12.30pm at St John's Methodist Church. All parents, carers, staff and interested parties from both settings will be invited to attend as we would really appreciate your views, ideas and feedback. We will be looking for new parent reps, if you are interested, please speak to Mrs Mills.

Via Email...



If you would like to receive the newsletter and any other playgroup notices via email, please speak with Mrs Mash. Let's save a tree to two! Newsletters are also available on our website. Please do contact us by email if you have any queries.

Old Birthday Cards

We celebrate your child's birthday at playgroup with a mock cake but real candles and create a unique birthday card for them. Our stock of birthday cards is running low so we would really appreciate your child's old birthday cards if you are willing, so we can create new ones for the children. Thank you!



Children's Centres PB1 and Furzefield Autumn Programme

The Autumn programme is only available online either via their website www.hertsmere-children.co.uk or Facebook www.facebook.com/HertsmereChildrensCentres. We have the programme displayed on our notice board. We would like to highlight there are several speech clinics available which may be of interest to some of you:

Speech and Language Assessment Clinic
10/9, 8/10, 5/11 and 3/12 at the Furzefield Centre from 1.30-3.30.

Speech and Language Play and Stay
15/10 and 10/12 at PB1 from 9.30-11

Speech and Language at Play and Stay
6/11 at Elm Court from 10-11.30

There are other specialty courses available that are displayed on our notice board.

Playdough

Several parents have asked for the play dough recipe, so here it is!

2 cups of plain flour
2 cups of warm water
1 cup of salt
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
1 tablespoon of cream of tartar
Food colouring to suit

Mix all ingredients together and stir over a low heat. The dough will begin to thicken until it resembles mashed potatoes.

When the dough falls away from the sides and clumps in the centre, remove the pan from the heat and allow the dough to cool enough to handle then knead it like bread dough.



Dates for your Diary

Autumn Term 2014

Tue 2nd Sept - Fri 19th December
Tue 21st Oct from 8.20am - Photographer
27th-31st Oct Half Term PLAYGROUP CLOSED
Fri 14 Nov 12.30pm Annual Stakeholders Mtg
Thur 11th Dec - Nativity Play 11.30am Start
Fri 19th Dec - Xmas party all children invited and parent helpers required
Fri 19 Dec - last day of term

Spring Term 2014

Tue 6th Jan - Thur 2nd April
9th Jan New children visit 1.30-2.45
16th-20 Feb Half term, PLAYGROUP CLOSED