

Huntingfield Pre-School

Spring Term February 2020

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NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents/Carers,

A belated Happy New Year to everyone. Christmas is a distant memory now, but thank you for all the very generous cards & gifts, we are all very, very grateful.

Our topic this half term has been 'Music and Art' where the children have been learning about and listening to different music genres, from classical to rock/pop/jazz/films and so on. Through painting, we have encouraged their own interpretations of very familiar and well known paintings/portraits/still life and these are displayed in the foyer. Please have a look because they are great. To cover all the variations we will be changing the board (Art Gallery) every two weeks so please keep looking, there are definitely some budding Picasso's at Huntingfield.

We have also enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year (year of the RAT) with an array of Chinese activities which included cooking Spring Rolls and next week we will be celebrating Valentines Day.

Our regular activities such as Mini Football, Phonic Stars, MAD Academy and Musical Bumps continue to be held on a monthly basis too!

Staff Update

On a Sad but Happy note too, we will be saying 'Goodbye' to Auntie Gemma who is leaving us at Easter to have a baby! Gemma has been an important part of our happy team for nearly 10 years. We will all miss her very much and wish her well with her new little baby.

I need to re-organise Gemma's key children and I will be speaking to the parents concerned at the parent morning.

Parent Morning

Pre-School will be closed to the children on Monday 24 February (we re-open on Tuesday 25th) so that we can hold our parent morning. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your child's progress and any concerns that you may have and also to look at your child's folder. The appointment letters have been given out so please return the slip if you require an appointment as if you do not return the slip, I will assume that you do not want a meeting?

I will be running a creche in Room 4 so you will be able to have your meeting without any distractions! However, I would be grateful if you would only plan to use this as a last resort, as space in Room 4 is limited.
THANK YOU

World Book Day

Thursday 5 March is World Book Day. As in previous years we would love your children to dress up as a favourite character of a favourite book. So get thinking and let your or their, imaginations run wild!! Please do not worry if your child does not want to dress up, this is optional.

Home Learning Packs

The Home Learning packs are continuing to be a great success! If you have not yet seen them in the foyer please do have a look. Thank you to everyone who has borrowed them and completed the feedback form, your comments are very constructive.

Wanted

We would be grateful for any multi-cultural packets/boxes/containers etc that we can use in our role play supermarket. **THANK YOU**

Digital Parenting/Online Safety

The digital world is now one of the biggest challenges for parents in today's society. There are many concerns that parents have around children's use of technology, including, how long they spend on it, what content they are looking at, who they are talking to and what they are sharing. I recently attended a Safeguarding Forum highlighting the dangers/concerns and my initial thoughts were that the discussion wouldn't really apply to children of pre-school age as they are too young. How wrong was I!! I was astounded at how many young children have access to a digital device. 90% of under 4's use some form of device and even more alarming 20% are under 1!!!! My worry now is, are all my families aware of the dangers and threats and what can we, as a pre-school do about keeping our children E-safe?

Firstly, I want to sign post you to some of the many information sites that give guidance on how to protect your children from the dangers. These are:- Smartie the Penguin, Childnet, Common Sense Media, Good Digital Parenting, Internet matters and NSPCC.

Secondly, I have ordered and subscribed to (enough for all my families) monthly copies of the Digital Parenting magazine which I am sure you will read with interest. Finally, I am considering organising a presentation for parents, providing I receive enough interest, so please let me know if this is something you would be interested in?

If you would like to speak to me regarding any of the above or have any concerns, I am in the foyer most mornings or please send me an email.

What is That?

Sometimes children may produce a piece of work whereby you have absolutely no idea what it is. It may look like a mess to you, just colour/material on a piece of paper but to them it is a 'masterpiece'. Quite often they have sat at the craft table creating their 'masterpiece' for 'mummy' or 'daddy' for a considerable time. They have painted, mixed, shredded, cut, drawn, coloured and stuck to achieve perfection. Please can I remind you that it is the process that the children go through, not the end result that is important!

Children's Learning

Each day, after registration, the children in the hall are split into two groups for circle time. One group remains in the hall and the other group is taken to room 1, so enabling quality learning for all groups. Circle times consist of "Good Morning", counting, date/days of the week, reminders of rules & routines and our theme for that day as highlighted on the planning (could be phonics, feely bag, musical instruments/sound box, memory game, number activities, story, singing or topic discussion) During the morning the children are organised into their insect groups for 40 minutes of physical/outside play. Structured focus activities throughout the morning (particularly in Room 5) include writing, phonics, numbers and mathematical games, sharing activities, computer activities and possibly reading. If we feel your child is ready to begin early reading, in other words if they have a good understanding of identifying many letter sounds particularly the SATPIN letters/sounds and how to sound out each letter and blend them to then identify the word, then they are ready. At this stage your child's key person will begin the Oxford Reading Tree books with them and this will be discussed with you and set as a 'next step.' Your child will be given a new book each week and this will be sent home in a zippa bag with a contact book. Your key person will keep the book updated with comments as to how your child is progressing so if you could do the same we would appreciate it.

Our 'Special Box' activity is a 20 minute, 1-1 or small group (2-3 children) activity, involving a box full of special exciting items put together to capture and hold a child's focus and attention and also encourage communication skills. We are aiming this activity at children who have difficulty with listening, maintaining attention and speaking. We choose children who we feel would benefit from this daily activity and I will advise you if I have included your child in the group.

While I appreciate that most parents want their children to have a good education, it is also very important that children are equipped with the basic social skills in life, it is such an important part of their learning and development. Sometimes parents put more emphasise on their children learning to write their name, read, count or develop letter and sound skills, than basic social skills. While I agree that these skills are important and need nurturing, we are a Pre-School, where children should be learning how to play with each other, share, develop independence and gain in confidence. Learning through play and not worksheets is how children at Huntingfield learn, develop and achieve, while still having fun.

Healthy Eating

It is common knowledge that children's diets contain too much sugar. As a Pre-School, we are continually trying to encourage and promote healthy eating and I have displayed some information in the foyer that you may find useful. At the children's snack time, we offer healthy alternatives, such as bagels, crackers, snack-a-jacks, malt bread, pitta bread, breadsticks, toast and a varied range of familiar and unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. Drinks continue to be milk or water. Sweets are no longer given out to celebrate children's Birthdays, instead we have opted for the donation of a book for our Home Learning Library as explained in a previous newsletter or on the welcome letter when your child started at Huntingfield.

At lunch club we would be grateful if parents could make sure that their child has a sandwich or an alternative such as pitta bread, crackers, wraps or bagels and a piece of fruit. Fruit should be cut into small pieces (grapes in half-lengthways and bananas sliced into half moons, no kiwis please!) to prevent choking. **Please no fizzy or drinks high in sugar!** We hope you will support us in trying to keep your child healthy.

Photos

I will be updating the photo display in the foyer after half term, so please have a look.

Food Bank

Before Christmas I introduced the idea of supporting the local Food Bank via the local Salvation Army. It was a great success as you were all so generous in your donations. The use of Food Banks continues to be in the news on a regular basis and therefore I would like to continue supporting this worthwhile cause. Please, if everyone just brought in one item each week/month that would be amazing and mean so much! The items that are really needed at the moment are size 5, 5+ and 6 nappies, dog food, laundry tablets, washing up liquid, ladies deodorant, razors, kitchen towel and household cleaning products.

The donation box will be in the foyer from Monday. Thank you!

Reminder

Please, please ensure that your child's bag is named on the front (easy for us to see) and that their coats/gloves/hat are also named. Going outside is taking ages as we are trying to find so many items as some of the children cannot identify their own things.

If your child is no longer in nappies/pull ups then please do not bring a bag, I have spare clothes in case of need.

Coffee Morning

Please come along to our next Coffee morning which is on Friday 7 February from 9.20. There will be tea/coffee/cake and biscuits, this is a great opportunity to meet other parents! Everyone is welcome!

Finally

Just to remind you, we will be breaking up for half term on Friday 14 February and returning on Tuesday 25 February. Monday 24 February is our Parent Morning, the pre-school will not be open for the children.

Happy Half Term everyone.

Elaine
