

Huntingfield Pre-School

Spring Term February 2021

www.huntingfieldpreschool.co.uk

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NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope you have all enjoyed the half term week, despite the soggy weather! As Spring approaches, Christmas is now a distant memory, however we would like to thank you for all the very generous cards & gifts, we were very, very grateful.

2020 was certainly a year we all want to forget. Covid-19 has brought such pain and stress to so many people, I don't think there is anyone who hasn't been affected by it in some way. Initially I was nervous about re-opening, as I wasn't convinced we could do it safely, but I am glad we did, as seeing the little ones back and happily playing with their friends has lifted our spirits. Hopefully this will continue!!

Children's Learning

We are no longer choosing a half termly topic but a weekly theme and this is advised in my weekly email and on my website. 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.

It is very important that you use letter sounds and not names when teaching your children please!!

Our 'Special Box' activity is a 20 minute, 1-1 or small group (2-6 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 and 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.

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!

Parent Morning

Unfortunately, due to the Covid situation I am unable to organise face to face Parent Mornings this year. However, you will be receiving a short written report about your child's progress over the next couple of weeks. This will be sent home along with your child's folder.

If your child's 2-year check is due, this will replace the report. If your child did not return after Christmas, you will not receive a report yet as our information will not be up to date. If your child has only recently started with us, a report will be organised at a later date.

If you wish to speak with your child's key person or myself at any time then please let me know as this will be possible outside..

World Book Day

Thursday 4 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.

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?

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, and Good Digital Parenting. If you would like to speak to me regarding any of the above or have any concerns, please send me an email.

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. 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.

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, cherry tomatoes in half 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.

Lunch Club runs on Wednesdays only from 12.15-1.30. Cost £5 payable by bank transfer. If you would like your child to join us please let me know. You will need to provide their lunch and drink in a named bag please.

Food Bank

Many of you have been great supporters of the local Food Bank. 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. The Church have advised me of the monthly collection dates which I will display on my whiteboard. **THE NEXT COLLECTION DATE IS SATURDAY 6 MARCH.** 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 tins, packets of dried food, toiletries, size 5, 5+ and 6 nappies, and household cleaning products. **The donation box will be outside from Monday. Thank you!**

Absence

If you keep your child away from pre-school you must inform me please. I need to keep a record of why children are absent so I would be very grateful for either a phone call, email or text. **THANK YOU**

Pre-school Closed

Unfortunately the Pre-School will be closed for a few days during the first week of May for reasons beyond my control.

Monday 3 May is Bank Holiday, Thursday 6 May is the Mayoral Elections (hall used for voting) and Friday 7 May the Church will need to be deep cleaned . If the Election is cancelled then we will be open on both the Thursday and Friday as the deep clean is only needed if the voting goes ahead.

Fees will not be charged for the closed days.

Wanted

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

New Children

Unfortunately, our usual January intake of children was delayed due to the uncertainty related to Covid, however we now look forward to welcoming our new little ones during February, March and April. We hope that they will settle in well but appreciate that for some this may take longer due to the restrictions many of them have lived under for the last year. We have every faith that they will all be settled by Easter!

Many of our older children did not return after Christmas but from next week most of them will be back, so pre-school should be back up and running as normal! (well nearly).

Extra Curricular Activities/Photographs

Sadly, all these activities are still suspended due to Covid. I hope, moving forward, we will be able to welcome them all back, sooner rather than later!

Finally

We return on Monday 22 February and break up for Easter on Thursday 1 April.

Elaine
