



FEBRUARY Newsletter 2022!



Just in time before the end of the month! Sorry for the delay in getting this Newsletter out and the general lack of communication at the end of last term. We have been quite short staffed due to illnesses etc. so I have not had so much time in the office lately!

It was a strange end to the week before the break and apologies again for the closure at short notice. I don't think we have had a daytime storm with such an impact in my whole time at the Pre-school (A Loooong time!!). I hope you all stayed safe and your homes intact.

COVID UPDATES

So, all COVID mandatory restrictions have now been lifted but the virus has not gone away over night so please, feel free to carry on wearing your masks if that is what you prefer. Staff will do the same. We will also continue to keep the setting well ventilated and encourage extra hand washing and hygiene measures as always. Staff are no longer required to lateral flow test twice a week but some of us will continue to do so for as long as our supplies allow. We would also encourage those with symptoms to get a PCR test if not sure.

A reminder that normal Coughs and Colds DO spread wildly amongst young children and, whereas it is tricky to know whether this is just what it is or worse, if your child really is poorly then the safest and best place for them is at home!

Avoiding Catching a Cold?!

As we have previously said, it is also important to note that a Cold is a **virus**. **Children do catch colds easily from each other BUT you do not get a cold from getting cold!!** The Cold virus does like cooler temperatures and that is why it is more prevalent in the winter months BUT it also spreads more quickly when we are all couped up together inside!! So, even though it is colder at the moment we still need to get outside as much as possible because being in fresh outdoor air is better and safer to avoid colds AND COVID spreading!!

The Importance of OUTDOOR PLAY in the Early Years - Sorry to repeat this but it is a bit of a passion of mine!

Outdoor Play is important in early years' work with children for many other reasons too. There are many benefits for children in spending time outdoors, including physical development and a sense of emotional and cognitive well-being. Outdoors is where children will experience a sense of freedom, engage with the changing seasons and nature, and develop friendships. For some children, outdoors is where they prefer to be and find it easier to communicate. There is a growing body of research to suggest that children are spending less time outdoors compared to previous generations which makes it even more important for us to provide quality environments and experiences for them in our own outdoor environments and the wider community.

We will continue to try to get the children outside as much as possible!!

Our Termly Focus is 'Communication, Language, and Literacy'

Each Term we are trying to have a special 'focus' to support a different aspect of the reformed Early Years Foundation Stage and this term it will be '**Communication, Language, and Literacy**'. We will be focussing on ways to support young children's communication and language skills as well as start them on their journey towards reading and writing in a fun and 'play based' way both at pre-school and home 😊 We will be giving out more Goody Bags to support this in the coming weeks - look out for it and don't forget to pick yours up!!

World Book Day is THIS Thursday (3rd March)!!

This ties in very nicely with this term's Focus! On Thursday we will celebrate with lots of book themed activities and opportunities to share stories. We invite all children to bring in their favourite book to show and share with their friends (please remember to label them if you can!) and the children are also welcome to 'dress up' as a favourite character from a book. PLEASE don't feel obliged to buy elaborate costumes though. It can be as simple as adding a hat, a spot of face paint, or a cloak. We will have a few of our own costumes available too. We will also be relaunching our '**BOOK IN A BAG**' Borrowing scheme!! We have lots of books together with an odd prop, a reference book to support the story, and a list of activities and ways you can extend your child's

learning in a fun and engaging way. Please remember to sign the Book Borrowing list when you take a bag home and tick it back off when you return it. You can borrow them for as long or as short as you like! Have fun!

Tapestry - Theres so much more to see and do on the Browser version!!

Have you explored Tapestry on their website rather than just using the App yet?? There are lots of other features on Tapestry that you may find useful, including an 'Activities' section with lots of ideas of things you could try at home with your children too. Why don't you start by taking a look there and seeing what you can find?! <https://tapestryjournal.com/s/st-josephs-pre-school-3453/activity-templates> (Note: It will ask you to sign in before taking you back to the Activities page)

We still have a Vacancy at the Pre-school (adjusted hours and criteria)

Following receipt of additional funding to support some of our children with SEND, we now have a temporary Vacancy for a One-to-One Support Worker to help support three different children. A Level 3 qualification in Early Years is preferred but not required, as is experience of supporting children with additional needs. The role is for approximately 14 hours a week and is initially until July 2022 but is likely to be extended. For further information and to download an application form please see our website: <https://www.stjoespreschool.co.uk/staff> The role could be extended to cover some bank work. Please share with others you know who may be interested!

Forest School - We are going to explore the Mud Bath!!

I am hoping for drier weather this term and for a little less mud in the valley! In any case, Forest School will recommence this term with some of Frogs, Dragonflies, and Butterflies taking part on a Wednesday morning and some of Centipedes, Beetles, and more of Butterflies on a Thursday morning. The groupings are often very flexible as some children prefer to go when their friends are going and others prefer to stay if their friends are staying!! We usually play it by ear on the day, factoring in the weather, which children are in or out, and if we have enough staff to maintain our ratios. Hopefully, in the summer term we can increase our visits to make up for missed session. A few more volunteers to help walk the children down there will also enable us to take ore children at once!

Don't Forget We have New Uniform Stock!

We now have a full supply of new uniform if you would like to buy some for your child. Uniform is not compulsory at all but it does help build a good sense of belonging and is useful if you don't want your child to mess up their best clothes! The prices have changed a little and Sweatshirts are now £9.50 whilst Polo Shirts are £7.50. See Cathy if you would like to buy any.

Finally, a quick REMINDER that we have a **NO NUTs** Policy at Pre-school! This is because we often have children with nut or other allergies, and even when we don't have any with a known Nut allergy, it can often be because the children are too young for this to have been picked up yet and we would prefer it not to be discovered on our watch!! This means NO Peanut butter, NO Nutella, and certainly NO loose nuts with their packed lunches. Nuts can also be a serious choking hazard, as can uncut grapes, cherry tomatoes, mini sausages, and Popcorn! Please do help us to keep your children safe!

That's all for now! Cathy and Team.

TERM TIMES AND CLOSURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- **Term 4 Monday 28th February 2022 to Friday 8th April 2022**
- **Term 5 Monday 25 April 2022 to Friday 27 May 2022**
- **Term 6 Monday 6 June 2022 to Thursday 21 July 2022**

NB: WE WILL ALSO BE CLOSED FOR FIVE IN-SERVICE TRAINING DAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

We will have two of these In-service dates left as follows: **Tuesday 3rd May plus**
There will be one further date in June or July which we will advise as soon as we can!