



NEWSLETTER 30 OCTOBER 2017

Term Dates

Autumn term: Mon 30 Oct – Fri 15 Dec
Spring term: Thurs 4 Jan – Fri 9 Feb
Mon 19 Feb – Wed 28 Mar
Summer term: Mon 16 Apr – Fri 25 May
Mon 4 Jun – Fri 20 July
Bank holiday Mon 7 May

We are delighted at how well all the new children have settled in over the past half term. This next half term is 7 weeks long and, with all the Christmas activity going on, is always incredibly busy. It will fly by. Welcome to Miles and Robin who join us this half term.

Parent consultations

We had consultations for new starters last half term; next week we have consultations for the established children. The sign-up sheet to book a slot will be available this week.

Festivals and topics this term

The first two weeks we are focusing on Bonfire Night and Autumn. Weeks 3 to 6 we will be making our Christmas surprises - much of which will not be coming home until the end of term. The last week will be a fun week with lots of Christmas cooking, the Christmas show and the party.

Child's Play "Things I do at Home" wall

The theme for board this will change each month, and we will let you know the themes via Tapestry. For November it is "Bonfire Night and Fireworks". The idea is that the children make a picture at home – any kind of picture they like – based around the monthly theme. We will display them all on the board to make a fabulous display of artwork.

Key worker boards

You may have noticed this big space at the bottom of the hall.....we will very soon be ready to fill it. We are busy making portraits of the children and the idea is that the key workers will peg in their hands lovely things they have done at pre-school – art work, things they have said etc.

Photo frame notice board

We will be sending your child home with a cardboard photo frame shortly. We would like you to decorate this and to return it with a photo of your child. We will then put them up on one of the the boards, grouped in to

"Lions", "tigers" and "bears". The staff will also be included.

30 hours free childcare

This scheme is now up and running. There has been very little in the way of information or advertisements put out by the Government for parents, so if you are unsure as to whether you qualify, or have any questions about it, please speak to Susan.

Existing claims

You **MUST** re-confirm your claim every 3 months. You will be prompted to do this via text or email from childcare choices. You should receive 3 reminders – 4 weeks before the due date/ 2 weeks before/ and on the due day. If you do not re-confirm, you will fall out of eligibility and will need to pay for the additional hours. So please keep an eye on this. Also, please be aware that there are some "phishing" emails out there asking parents to click on a link to re-confirm. HMRC have stated that they will never send you a link – you will always have to re-confirm via your Childcare Choices account.

New claims

Parents whose children turn three this term become eligible from January. Those who intend to claim **MUST** have applied via the Government's website by **31 December**. But I urge you to apply as soon as possible as there have been problems with the website. You need to apply via:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

If you are eligible you will be given a code which you must give to us. At the start of term in January we will give you all the necessary forms to allow us to make your claim, but we can check your code at any point before that so let Susan know as soon as you get a code and we can make sure all is OK.

If you do not get this code by 31 December you will not be able to claim the additional 15 hours until April. As the scheme is run by HMRC the deadlines are absolute and there is nothing we or Surrey CC can do if you have not applied in time.

Universal 15 Hours Free Entitlement

The process for claiming this is unchanged and we will issue all forms at the start of next term.

Extra sessions

If anyone wants to add extra sessions, at any point, please do let us know. We have spaces at the moment but we have quite a few new starters in January and the spaces may not last long.

Children in Need – Friday 17 November

We will put a note out on Tapestry nearer the time but we will be taking part in this fundraiser. The children can wear pyjamas, with a £1 donation, and we will make cakes for a cake sale at 1pm on Friday 17th.

Items wanted

For the Home Corner we would love the following items: a mug tree, a small light-weight mirror, kitchen roll holder, phone, magazine rack, salt and pepper pots, a chopping board. If anyone has spares knocking around at home we'd love to have them. We also want to make a "window" and wondered if anyone had a collection of same size wooden frames which we could tie together to make a window.

Tapestry

Tapestry is our system for recording the children's Learning Journeys, and it is also our communication tool between pre-school and home. We really want to encourage you to get involved on Tapestry so we thought it was worth a re-cap of how it works and what you can do.

Parent observations – we love it when parents give us information and photos about what the children have been up to at home. This is easy to do. There should be an "Add observation" button at the top of the page when you are in the Learning Journey. Just click on that and you can add your text and upload a photo. The screen options may be different on different devices so if you are unsure just ask one of us to have a look with you. You can tell us about achievements at home – or just about what your child has been up to so we can chat to them about it. We want the Learning Journeys to be a collaboration between home and pre-school so we'd really encourage you to use Tapestry as a two-way communication tool. You will get a copy of the Learning Journey on USB when you leave, so the more that is in there, the more there will be to look back on.

Privacy

Tapestry is private communication between you and pre-school. The only time your comments are seen by other parents is if the observation you are commenting on is a group observation where other children have been tagged. When that is the case you will see the message "Note: this observation contains other children and parents of those children will see your reply". This is quite prominent above the "Leave a reply" box. Parents don't get the list of the tagged children so it can sometimes not be immediately obvious that it is a group observation - we therefore try to make that clearer by including the words "Group observation" in the title.

The majority of observations will not have other children tagged and in that case your comments are only viewable by the staff. All the staff have access to all the children's journals as all the staff interact with all the children and regularly make observations on children other than their own key children. The member of staff who made the initial observation will be alerted when you make a comment, as will your key person.

If you have any questions on Tapestry, or are not sure about anything, please let us know.

Visit from Infant school Headteachers

The new Headteacher at St Nicolas – Emma Smart – is coming in on Friday 10th November at 9am. This will be an opportunity to meet her in a small, informal, setting. All interested parents are welcome. We will also try to arrange for the Onslow Head to come over.

Shalford Infants have asked us to pass on the following dates for their parent tours:

Tuesday 31st October – 9.30am & 1.30pm
Tuesday 7th November – 9.30am & 1.30pm
Monday 13th November – 9.30am
Tuesday 14th November – 1.30pm

Library

Jessica (Emilia's Mum) and Simon (Layla's Dad) have very kindly volunteered to run the Library for us. This will get going shortly. If your child comes home with a book, it is a book they have chosen from the Library. Can you PLEASE, PLEASE remember to return these the following week so they can choose another book.

Sound of the week

Each week we focus on a sound of the week. This half term will be:

30 Oct – "g" for grass not giraffe
6 Nov – "h"
13 Nov - "i" for ink not ice
20 Nov – "j" and "g" for jigsaw/giant
27 Nov – "p"
4 Dec – "m"
11 Dec – "n"

It would be great if the children could bring in items from home beginning with these sounds each week. We will talk about sound of the week at story time. If you put the item in the box for your child please can you make sure they know what you have put in for them.

Music – Message from Rebecca

Wow! What a first half term - all the children have settled in so well to music lessons. What Budding musicians we have here in Child's Play. I'm sure many of them will have told you that we have already begun working on our Christmas show. So this half term we will be working on the songs and learning the instruments so we can put on a wonderful musical Christmas show for all the Mummy's and Daddy's!

Forest school

As the weather is getting colder, can all children wear their long sleeved t-shirts plus a jumper or fleece.

Uniform

We still have a good supply of rucksacks (£18), short sleeved T-shirts (£6.50), long sleeved T-shirts (£9), and winter beanie hats (£6) – all in various colours. The children wearing the uniform look lovely – so please let us know if you would like to buy any. We can also

order hoodies in very easily, in almost any colour. Drop us an email, or ask us, if you would like anything.

Christmas events

Christmas cards

You were all given your child's art work before half term. All orders must be in by **this Friday – 3rd November**. The cards are always lovely.

Christmas show – Thursday 14th Dec

Our Christmas show – “A Wiggly Nativity” - will be on **Thursday 14th December at 11.15am**. Most of the practice for the Christmas show happens in the music lessons. All children are welcome to take part in the show but we need to know who will be coming in order to allocate parts and make costumes. Please let us know **by this Friday – 3rd November**:

- a. If your child normally attends on a Thursday but you are going to be away on 14th December please tell us;
- b. If your child does not normally attend on a Thursday but you want them to be involved in the play, please tell us; if we do not hear from you we will assume you are not coming and will not allocate your child a part.

As in the past, entry to the show will be by donation with proceeds going to our nominated Charity (this year we are supporting “Cherry Trees” – a local respite care home for children with additional needs). We would appreciate a few volunteers to help sell raffle tickets/ make cakes and mince pies and to help serve tea/coffee and mulled wine on the day.

Once the show has finished we will continue with pre-school as normal so if your child normally stays for the afternoon they may still do so.

There will be no Forest School on the day of the Christmas show, but we will try to take all the children together on the Tuesday of that week for a special Christmas Forest School. We'll work on the logistics and will let you know nearer the time if it will be possible.

Christmas drinks – Thursday 14th Dec

Thea will also be hosting the traditional Christmas Soiree at her house. This will be on the evening of **Thursday 14th December**. We will put out invitations nearer the time but get it in your diary now. This is a fund raiser for our charity so we will sell entry “tickets” at £5 each.

Christmas party – Friday 15th Dec

This will be on **Friday 15th December from 10.00-11.30**. All children are welcome to come. We will provide some party food. There will be no lunch so pick up will be from 11.30 – 12.00. Anthony and Ana-Maria from Pyjama Drama are doing the party so it should be lots of fun.

Christmas Raffle

In previous years we have had a successful charity fundraising raffle. Parents donate prizes; tickets are sold at the Christmas show; the raffle is drawn after the Christmas Party on Friday 15th. This only works if we get some raffle prizes so we would be grateful for any donations. Please bring things into pre-school by **Friday 1st December** or let us know by email if you will be providing a prize.

Birthday Bear

We send a Birthday Bear home with each child when it is their birthday. It would be really great if you could send the bear back with a sheet telling us what you got up to with the bear so we can put it in the journal. It doesn't have to be much and you don't have to include photo's – a drawing by your child would be just as good.

Twitter – Group account

Twitter is a really useful and quick way of sharing information (most schools use it extensively, especially for keeping parents informed while away on school trips). We want to rejuvenate our Twitter account so have set up a “GroupTweet” account. This means parents can post on it too, so it becomes more of a “noticeboard” for all of us. Those of you already following us should have had (hopefully....) a link to join the Group Tweet. New followers should use the following link:

<https://grouptweet.com/infochildsplay/6ed7bb1b3d88d6105f22342aa3318118>

If you are not a Twitter user, and don't want to be, you can still use this link – you just sign in to our dashboard using your email address and tweet from there. If you do have a Twitter account, once you are registered with GroupTweet you can use your own account to post.

The more of us who sign up and get involved, the more useful it will be. There will no doubt be some teething issues while we all get to know how to use it but hopefully it will be a success.

And as always.....

Food and drink

Please remember to bring a **named** water bottle -water only though please, no juice; a piece of fruit each day (to be put in the fruit box); a packed lunch; and an afternoon snack for those staying for the afternoon session. **No nuts of any kind please.**

And, please, please, can you make sure if your child has grapes (or tomatoes etc) that they are cut in half.

Also please ensure all coats, hats, gloves etc are **named**. We waste a lot of time trying to sort out unnamed clothing and containers!

Car park

It is very important that you park only in the white bays – the yellow ones are contract spaces and **must not be**

used – not even for a few minutes. You may only use the car park at drop off and pick up times.

Useful links

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the “Curriculum” we work to (as do all Early Years providers). Here is a Parents Guide to the EYFS which includes simple explanations of the goals we use for each age group.

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/09/4Children_ParentsGuide_Sept_2015v4WEB1.pdf

Surrey Family Information Service – has lots of information on a range of issues eg education, childcare, support services.

<http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/family-information-service>

Also, Surrey Children’s Therapies which has lots of information on Speech and Language therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy resources.

<http://www.surreychildrenstherapies.co.uk/>

Surrey CC Early Years and Childcare Service have developed some lovely leaflets to provide parents with useful information on how you can support your child’s development. They cover speech, reading, counting, physical development, emotional development etc. and are well worth a look.

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/family-information-service/education-and-learning-advice-for-families/early-learning>

Thea and Susan