



St Mark's Pre-School Newsletter

This Terms
Activities

December 2022

We can't believe it is December already and that we are getting ready for Christmas! We are all really looking forward to welcoming you in for our Christmas activity morning.

Our first topic this month was all about Autumn animals, Remembrance Day and Children in Need. The children have been learning about autumn animals and hibernation. The children learnt which animals hibernate and how they need to eat lots of food before going to sleep through the winter. They really enjoyed using the animal masks in the nature area to help support their role play. We were able to explore all of the autumn items the children collected in the tuff tray where we spoke about each item collected, what they felt like and identifying all the different colours. For Remembrance Day we decorated our own poppies and designed some medals. We spoke about the importance of wearing a poppy and what this means. The children even took part in a 2-minute silence while on our forest school session.

We then went on to learn about Winter. We have been looking at some winter scene pictures in the literacy area before the children were able to use some glitter pens to recreate the pictures. We have had some truly wonderful pictures drawn. This activity has helped promote mark making and for the children to give meaning to the marks they make. In the maths area the children have been having a go at placing the correct number of buttons onto the numbered snowmen. This activity encourages the children to recite their numbers in the correct sequence, identify numbers and to correctly match quantity to numerals. We have had fun in the water tray with big blocks of ice, inside each block there was an arctic animal that needed to be rescued! The children were very good at problem solving with how they would free the animals, some used the tools provided and some suggested using warm water to melt the ice. We have been exploring different animals that live in cold climates and what they do to keep warm.

In our Forest School sessions, the children have had fun collecting acorns for the squirrels, looking at the roots growing out of the acorns and we even made a fantastic Pudsey bear out of natural materials for children in need.

We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we look forward to welcoming you back on Monday 9th January.

Children with covid-19 should not attend their education setting while they are still infectious, they should return to their setting as long as they do not have a temperature and are well in themselves after the 3 days recommended isolation.

We would like to also remind parents that if your child is unwell and requires Calpol then they are not well enough to attend Pre-School.



Half Term Topics

This half terms topics will be.

Week 1 – 31/10/2022 – Autumn / Fireworks night
Week 2 – 7/11/2022 – Autumn Animals / Remembrance Day
Week 3 – 14/11/2022 – Autumn Animals / Children in need
Week 4 – 21/11/2022 – Winter
Week 5 – 28/11/2022 - Winter
Week 6 – 5/12/2022 - Christmas
Week 7 – 12/12/2022 - Christmas

School Admissions

If your child is starting school in September 2023 you will need to apply for a school place.

If you live in Surrey, applications can be made from 31st October 2022 until 15th January 2023

If you live in Hampshire applications can be made from 31st October 2022 until 15th January 2023

To find out more information or to apply online please visit your local council website.

Hampshire – www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions

Surrey – www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/admissions

New Starter Open Morning

On Friday 16th December we will be holding our new starter open morning. It will run from 9.30am and finish at 11am, it gives you the opportunity to meet your child's keyworker, ask any questions and for your child to explore the setting in quieter surroundings.

Christmas

On Wednesday 7th December we would like to invite the parents into the setting to join us for a fun filled activity morning. The session will run from 9:45am until 11am. During the morning there will be lots of fun Christmas activities for you to do with your child. We will have tea and coffee available and some mince pies. There will be a sign-up sheet located at the parents table for you to sign up if you would like to come along. This session is only available to children who usually attend a Wednesday session. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow younger sibling to attend this session.

On Thursday 15th December we will be holding our Christmas party. We ask that the children come dressed in a Christmas jumper or T-shirt. On this day we ask that parents do not provide a lunch, instead we will be having a party snack.

If you would like your child to attend the party but this is not their usual session, they are welcome to join us, but a fee will incur for the morning session.

Activities at Home Box

We are very pleased to be introducing our activity at home box again. This box will be available every morning for you to choose and activity to share with your child at home. Please fill in the book to sign in and out your activity.

Internet Safety

Online safety advice More and more pre-schoolers are using their parents' computers, smartphones or tablets to play games, use apps, and watch their favourite TV shows. There are simple things you can do to make sure they're using the internet safely. Copy and paste the following link for further online safety advice. www.internetmatters.org

Working in Partnership with Parents

We would like to thank all the parents who log in, makes comments and add their own observations onto tapestry. We value our partnership with parents and this is a wonderful tool to enable us to do this. These home observations give us a chance to see things we are unable to observe within pre-school and provides great topics of conversation between your children and all the staff. We hope that you enjoy seeing what your children do during their time day and this is also a wonderful keepsake of their journey with us which you will keep once they move on from pre-school.

Mrs. Odam's Fortnightly Challenge

Every fortnight Mrs Odam will be setting an exciting challenge for you and your child to complete at home.

The challenge will be uploaded onto tapestry every other Monday and we would love for you to add your pictures and comments onto tapestry any time before the next challenge is set, so we can see how well you have done.

We believe this will be a great way to gain stronger links between Pre-School and home and involving parents within their child's learning and development.

30 Hour Funding

If you are eligible to apply for the 30hrs childcare funding from April 2023 you can apply between the 15th January and the 28th February 2023. If you are unsure whether you are able to apply you can use the childcare calculator on the childcare choice's website.

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Once you have received your code, please give this to Lorraine.

Show and Tell Table

The children very much enjoy bringing items in from home to share with their friends at the end of the session. This is a great way for the children to listen to others and share what they have, building speech and language development. The show and tell table is the red table, located at the back of hall on the left. We ask that items being brought in are theme related or something special, for example if they have had a birthday or been somewhere for a visit. The themes can be found on the first page of the newsletter under what we have been learning about. The themes are also always displayed on the poster above the table and changed weekly if your child is unsure of what they can bring.

Proud Clouds

Our children all love to achieve new things. At Pre-School we want to hear all about it too! Proud clouds are shared with everyone at the end of the session. Proud clouds are a chance for you to share what your child has achieved i.e., learning to count, riding a bike, becoming independent in getting dressed. These are all massive achievements and we want to share it. If your child has done something amazing, please write it down on a coloured shape which can be found on the parents table and give it to a member of staff. Once it has been read out it will be attached to our proud clouds which can be found on the garden door windows. Please ask if you have any questions about proud clouds.

Consumables

From April we will be increasing our Consumables contribution. This will now be £10 per half term; the cost will cover items such as;

Wipes
Additional snack / Milk
Tissues
Hand sanitiser

Testimonies

We would like to be able to display some testimonies on our website, if any of our parents would like to write a testimony, we would be very grateful. These can be emailed to Lorraine.

Thank you

Bags and Welly Boots

Please remember to bring a bag in for your child with a full spare set of clothes in, to be left on the trolley in the foyer area. Please also remember to bring in welly boots on the days your children attend. The children are encouraged to be independent in their dressing so shoes with Velcro rather than laces please.

Book Bags

Every two weeks the children will be able to choose a book to bring home and share with you. Once your child has finished their book you can bring back their book bags and place them in to their keyworkers box. This is a great way for the children to share stories with you and encourages the joy for reading.

Forest School

All children need to bring in their own forest school backpack. This backpack needs to be big enough for the children to have a complete change of clothes, (top/bottoms/pants/socks) nappies and a spare set of waterproofs in, but small enough that they are able to carry it. They will also require a small named water bottle to go in this backpack.

Can we please ask that you let the teachers partner up the children for the walk into the forest, they are partnered up on age and ability following a pre-organised list. The children can find it upsetting if they are moved after parents have let them choose who's hand they would like to hold.

Thank you

Oral Health

As part of the early years' foundation stage (EYFS, 2021) we are required to support oral health.

A regular teeth cleaning routine is essential for good dental health. Follow these tips and you can help keep your child's teeth healthy.

[Children's teeth - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)



Healthy Lunchboxes

At St Mark's Pre-School, we will provide a piece of fruit ready to eat (i.e., a banana or apple) during snack time. We will provide additional snack such as toast, flatbread and crumpets etc. as well as water or milk to drink. We ask parents if their child brings grapes for lunch, they need to be cut in half length ways and not left whole or cut width ways. Grapes are the perfect size to block a child's windpipe and pose a choking hazard.

Lunches, please ensure that your child's lunch box is also a healthy one, please, no big bars of chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks. Please could we ask that the food in your child's lunch box is healthy and has good nutritional value to it.

For example: A sandwich/wrap/roll with nutritional filling i.e., cheese, ham, chicken etc. Or pasta. A piece of fruit / vegetable sticks Yoghurt / cheese Crisps / popcorn, small treat

We want to promote a good varied diet with our children but following the Healthy Lunch Box values which the schools also adept. As a reminder, please no large bars of chocolate, large chocolate biscuits, sweets or fizzy drinks.

For ideas of lunchbox ideas please visit

www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes

Love your packed lunch!
Create a healthier packed lunch by choosing foods from the 5 main food groups below:

- 1 Starchy Carbohydrates**
to re-fuel your body
Ease your lunchbox on starchy carbohydrates.
Choose ONE EVERY DAY from:
 - ✓ Bread, rolls, bagels, wraps, pitta or baguettes
 - ✓ Pasta
 - ✓ Couscous
 - ✓ Noodles
 - ✓ Potatoes*Choose wholegrain*
Use a thermos flask to keep your soup warm
Get kids involved in the kitchen
- 2 Fruit and Vegetables**
to keep you healthy
Pack one portion of fruit and one portion of veg every day
Choose TWO EVERY DAY from:
 - ✓ Apple, banana, pear, orange, plums
 - ✓ Small pot of mixed berries or grapes
 - ✓ Prepared melon or mango
 - ✓ Chopped vegetable sticks: carrots, cucumber, pepper, celery, mange tout, mini corn
 - ✓ Salad vegetables
 - ✓ Vegetable Soup*Add salad to your sandwich*
Use a thermos flask for delicious soup
- 3 Dairy and Alternatives**
for healthy teeth and bones
Don't forget the dairy!
Choose ONE EVERY DAY from:
 - ✓ Milk
 - ✓ Cheese – hard cheese, soft cheese, cheese spread
 - ✓ Yoghurt or Fromage Frais
 - ✓ Custard*Choose low sugar dairy products*
Use a thermos flask to keep your yoghurt and have fruit on the side
- 4 Protein Foods**
for growth and repair
Pack a protein punch!
Choose ONE EVERY DAY from:
 - ✓ Meat
 - ✓ Fish
 - ✓ Eggs
 - ✓ Non-dairy protein e.g. lentils, chick peas, beans*Keep processed meat to a minimum*
Choose oily fish like salmon once every 3 weeks
- 5 Drinks**
to rehydrate your body
✓ A large glass of water
✓ Semi skimmed milk – or skimmed milk for children over 5 years.
✓ 150ml of fresh unsweetened fruit juice/smoothie
Milk with or 150ml juice
Plain cakes occasionally!
Meat products such as sausage rolls, pies, sausages
Plain cakes/sponges and biscuits of appropriate portion sizes

For more healthy packed lunch ideas and recipes visit www.phunkyfoods.co.uk/recipes

Design and print: www.baggycreative.co.uk, May 2015, Lic. 0016

EYFS Changes

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is changing, as part of these changes, we will be making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan for your children.

What's changing?

- *Most of the changes are regarding Learning and Development, with some minor adjustments to Safeguarding and Welfare.*
- *Fundamentally, what we teach children is very similar, albeit worded differently.*
- *The new framework also specifically talks about the pressures of Early Years staff and wants to remove unnecessary paperwork requirements which result in time spent away from the children. It says the following: "Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence." – EYFS 2021*

Changes to Learning and Development – Educational Programmes

- *The Educational Programmes lead up to the Early Learning Goals – a description of what we want children to know by the end of Reception.*
- *These are divided in to 7 areas of learning. The 'Prime' areas form the basis for all learning, and the 'Specific' areas build on those skills and broaden children's understanding, experiences and knowledge. In Pre-School, we always focus on the Prime areas in the first instance as they really do form the foundation for everything else.*

"Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence." – EYFS 2021

These changes and the removal of the requirement for a lot of evidence-based tracking means that we are making some adjustments to the way we observe, assess and plan.

The team here work hard to ensure they know your children extremely well, we observe their play, development and interests, we assess what they know and what we want them to learn and then we plan activities and provision which will extend their development and teach them something new or help to bed in the skill they are already mastering. All of these things are done by using our understanding of child development and our knowledge of your child as an individual person.

At the moment, we produce written observations which are sent to you through Tapestry and are designed to help us 'track' the children's learning and development. These observations are lengthy, time consuming and require staff to spend time away from doing what they do best every day. Up until now it has been a requirement for us to produce evidence-based tracking. Now this requirement has been removed, we have decided to use our Practitioners' time more effectively.

Forest School Winter Kit

Now the weather is becoming colder I would like to give you a kit list for our Forest School sessions.

* Warm layers i.e., vest, long sleeve top and fleece/jumper - thermal or ski items are warmer. Legging's underneath jeans or joggers - thermal or ski items are warmer

* Wellies/walking boots/ski boots with wellie warmers or ski socks

* Heavy duty waterproof coat and trousers - please do not send children in all in ones once they are potty trained as it makes it very difficult for children to go to the toilet independently. The children also get wet if it's raining when we remove them for toileting.

* Waterproof mittens on elastic

* Waterproof hat

* Neck warmers are safer than scarves

Please also remember to label everything.

Decathlon in Farnborough provide a vast range of the above clothing layers/boots etc. either in the ski section or the camping section at very competitive prices. Millets and Trespass are also good retailers

Please don't forget to apply insect repellent to your children.

Please check for your child for ticks after each forest school sessions. Ticks are small, spider like creatures that live in woods and long grass. They are not something we can check for when we enter the forest. They attach themselves to skin that brushes past them. A tick bites into the skin and feeds on blood before dropping off a few days later.

Ticks can cause Lyme disease, which is a bacterial infection that can be spread to humans by infected ticks. Some people suffer with flu like symptoms in the early stages of the disease. These include: a high temperature or feeling hot and shivery, headaches, muscle and joint pain and tiredness and loss of energy. Not everyone with Lyme disease gets the rash.

For more information on Lyme disease please visit
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/>

Facebook Page

Please take a look and like our Facebook Page (St Mark's Pre-School) to receive daily/weekly notices, diary dates and also to find out what we have been doing with your children throughout the week.

Diary Dates

- Wednesday 7th December – Christmas activity morning – 9:45am – 11:00am
 - Thursday 15th December – Christmas party / Christmas jumper
 - Thursday 15th December – End of term
- Friday 16th December – New starter open morning – 9:30am – 11:30am
 - Monday 9th January – First day of term

Birthday Stars

December – George and William

Keep up-to-date with the latest information, diary dates, Forest School sessions and more,
on our Website and Facebook page;

www.stmarkspreschool.info