



St Mark's Pre-School Newsletter

This Terms
Activities

February 2024

This term we started off with our Dinosaur topic and it was a great one to come back too! We had fun digging for dinosaur fossils in the sand tray, we also used paint brushes to brush the sand off the fossils so we could take a closer look at the skeleton, we even found some footprints! In the math's area we used small cubes to measure how long some dinosaurs were, we then used our counting skills to count how many cubes we had used. In the creative area we designed our very own dinosaur eggs, we used glue and pieces of coloured paper, we spoke about the different colours that we used, we also used some bright colours and with patterns on. We also had great fun at trying some dinosaur yoga poses.

We then moved onto Pirates and Princess'. We had to use our balancing skills to walk the plank, we didn't want to fall off into the shark invested waters! On the creative table we designed our very own princess dresses and we used plenty of sequins! In the sand we had to use the pirate map and find the X marks the spot as that's where the buried treasure was, we also used the scales in the math's area to weigh the treasure, we talked about heavy and light. In the water tray we had lots of glitter and some special gems. In the tuff tray we had some princess dolls which we enjoyed dressing up and brushing their hair. In the literacy area with had some Pirate tracing to work on our pencil control and we could write our very own Princess party invites.

Can we please remind parents not to talk with the member of staff at the door in the mornings, they are required to make sure all children remain within the setting and to ensure their safety. If you need to speak with a member of staff, please feel free to approach another member of the team.

Half Term Topics

This half terms topics will be.

Week 1 – 19/02/24 - Pets

Week 2 – 26/02/24 - Pets

Week 3 – 04/03/24 - Space

Week 4 – 11/03/24 - Space

Week 5 – 18/03/24 – Easter and Spring

Week 6 – 25/03/24 – Easter and Spring

Mother's Day

On Thursday 7th March we would like to invite Mummies into the setting for a Mother's Day activity session and a Mother's day snack. This gives Mummies a chance to take part in some activities with their child. If Mummies can't make it then we are happy for a Grandmother/Auntie etc. to attend instead. Unfortunately, siblings won't be able to attend, and this is just open to the children who attend on a Thursday. The time of the session will be 9.45am- 10.45am

Red Nose Day

The week beginning 11th March, we will be taking part in some red nose day activities. We would love the children that week to wear something red, or a red nose or any other red nose day merchandise.

If you would like to make a donation then please use the link below. Thank you.

[Donate | Comic Relief](#)

Easter Bonnet Competition

This year we will be doing our Easter Bonnet competition again! We would love all the children to join with this fun activity and get as creative as you can. The children can bring in their bonnets during the last week of term which will be the week beginning 25th March and the winner and two runner ups' will be announced on the 27th March.

Snack

From January 2024 we will be asking parents to provide their child with a piece of fruit for snack time. This can be a whole piece of fruit such as an apple or banana or it can be a small named pot of fruit, for example a pot of strawberries or blueberries. Please remember if you are providing grapes, please cut these length ways to prevent choking.

We will still be providing a breakfast type snack such as toast or crumpets alongside the fruit.

We will also continue to offer milk or water.

Reminders

We have noticed some parents are picking up their children late, can we please ask that parents are ready to collect their children from either 12.15pm or 2.30pm, otherwise you will incur a late fee surcharge of £5.00 as per our Terms & Conditions within your contracts.

We appreciate that sometimes this can't be helped, so we just ask that you please call us and let us know.

For those children who take part in our Forest school session and who wear wellies, please make sure you add either thick ski socks or fleecy welly boot liners or both to keep your child's feet warm.

Also, a reminder that we will be leaving for the forest promptly at 9.15am, If you are running late and not there or ready to leave unfortunately you will need to walk your child over to us in the forest. The longer we are waiting at the cricket car park for children to arrive is upsetting for the children already there and waiting to go.

Two Year Funding

From April 2024, eligible working parents of two-year-olds can access their 15 hours childcare from the term after their 2nd birthday.

From 2nd January 2024, eligible working parents will be able to apply for their 15 hours childcare for their two-year-old. Parents have until 31st March to apply for a code, with the best time in mid-January to the end of February, in case more information is required to support the application.

The link below will offer more information with regards to finding out if you are eligible to apply.

[Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)

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 January 2024 you can apply between the 15th October and the 30th November 2024. 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 front of hall by the main entrance. **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 or an achievement such as a certificate or badge.** 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 £15 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.

Tuesday Forest School

All children need to bring in their own forest school backpack. This back pack 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 back pack.

From Tuesday 12th September we will offering a full day in the forest, all children joining us for lunch will need to bring a packed lunch with an additional drink and ice pack. Drop off and collection for both 12:15pm and 2:30pm will be from the cricket club

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

We ask parents to provide a piece of fruit for snack time, please make sure this is labelled. 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 or snack, 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

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

- Thursday 8th February – Last day of term
 - Monday 19th February – First day of term
 - Thursday 7th March – Mother's Day activity morning
 - Week of 11th March – Red nose day activities
 - Week of 25th March – Easter bonnet competition
 - Wednesday 27th March – Last day of term
 - Thursday 28th March – Inset Day
 - Monday 15th April – First day of term
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Birthday Stars

February - Maisie

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

www.stmarkspreschool.info