



St Mark's Pre-School Newsletter

This Terms
Activities

December 2024

Wow! November was an exciting month. We started the new term with some new uniform for the staff and for the children, we are loving the new colour and logo and think the children look very smart. Please speak to Lorraine if you would like to purchase any polo tops or sweatshirts.

We started the term with our Bonfire night topic and what a week that was, we toasted marshmallows, had a yummy hot chocolate in the Forest and each child had a turn at starting their own fire using the flints. This was a great learning experience for the children, and we were able to talk about the safety of fires and being careful. In the math's area we built our own rockets using different coloured shapes. On the creative area we made our own firework pictures using cars, paint and glitter, it made it look like the fireworks shooting through the sky. In the tuft spot we made our own mini bonfire with small logs and red and orange paper, and we used the small world figures to recreate bonfire night.

Our next topic was Remembrance Sunday and Children in Need. We spoke with the children about remembering all the soldiers who fought for our country. We took part in a two-minute silence which the children were amazing at and we were so proud of them. On the creative table we did some size ordering with different sized poppies and spoke about big and small. We designed our own medals at the creative table and in the tuft spot we had lots of toy soldiers and horses. On Thursday it was all about Children in Need and what fun we had! We think Pudsey bear sneaked into Pre-School as when we arrived the hall was covered in spots, and he even left his bandage on the door! It was a very spotastic day, we decorated some yummy cakes, we were also blindfolded and had to try and stick the bandage on Pudsey bear, we even got some new Peppa Pig toys to play with too. The children had a great day and all received a special sticker. Thank you to all who donated, we made £28.05 plus any Pudsey merchandise that was purchased.

We ended November with our Artic animals and Winter topic. In the water tray we had blue glittery water with bubbles and arctic animals, the children enjoyed talking about the different animals and the differences in the animals. In the math's area we worked our number skills and had a Winter number matching game. In the literacy area we worked on our fine motor skills and used small dot stickers to decorate Winter clothes. There was a day where we really thought it might snow so the children did a snow dance to try and help things along but unfortunately it didn't work, but we will keep trying!

In the Forest the children have been enjoying different group games such as What's the time Mr. Wolf and Granny's footsteps.

Throughout November we have been lucky enough to purchase some new resources such as a fantastic dolls house, Peppa pig toys and new superheroes! The children have been really enjoying these.

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 – 04/11/24 – Bonfire night
- Week 2 – 11/11/24 – Remembrance Day and Children in Need
- Week 3 – 18/11/24 – Winter and arctic animals
- Week 4 – 25/11/24 – Winter and arctic animals
- Week 5 – 02/12/24 – Christmas
- Week 6 – 09/12/24 – Christmas
- Week 7- 16/12/24 – Party Day and Forest

School Admissions

If your child was born between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021, they will be eligible to start school in the school year beginning September 2025.

If you live in Hampshire, applications can be made from 1st November 2024.

[School admissions | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

If you live in Surrey, applications can be made from 4th November 2024.

[Primary, infant and junior school admission applications - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Forest School Clothing

The temperature is really starting to drop now, and we are finding the children are complaining of being cold when in the Forest. We can't stress enough how important it is to layer the children up! If they are too hot, we can take a layer off, but once they are cold it is hard for them to warm up and it doesn't make it a fun experience. There is a kit list further below and we have attached a great visual which we hope you find useful.

LAYERING BASICS FOR COLD WEATHER

Following the OMFS Layering System will help children and adults stay warm in the chilliest and wettest of conditions!

There's no such thing as bad weather - if you're dressed for it!

BASE LAYER

Base layers are the most important part of any layering system. Long underwear and socks can vary in weights depending on the weather. Choose synthetic or wool material - **never cotton**.



Down sweater & fleece pants



Wool sweater & nylon pants



MID LAYER

Mid layers help to create a pocket of warm air around the body. Material should always be based on the temperature, thicker mid layers for colder days. Again, cotton is not a good choice for a mid layer, think wool or fleece with nylon pants for warmer days. *Multiple mid layers can be used when the conditions are cold.*

OUTER LAYER

The Outer layer is responsible for keeping the elements out and warmth in! At Forest School it is essential that this layer is waterproof on both the top and bottom, even when dry outside. If in a rain coat, on colder days, add another jacket for warmth.

Snow suit



Rain suit



HEAD, HANDS & FEET

Head - always wear or bring a winter toque, lighter weight toques can be used for warmer days.

Hands - while mini mitts are nice to have on hand for dexterity, winter mittens (not gloves) are needed for all days when temps below 5°C.

Feet - insulated rain boots are needed when temps are below 5°C. Winter boots should be used when the temp will stay below 0°C for the day.



EXTRAS

An extra sweater, pair of wool socks (suitable for the temperature), and up to 3 extra pairs of mittens should be in the pack at all times!



STAY WARM, LAYER UP!

Christmas Stay and Play

On Wednesday 11th December we would like to invite parents in for a Christmas stay and play session, this will run from 9.30am to 10.30am. There will be lots of fun activities along with a hot drink and mince pies. Unfortunately, this will just be for the children who attend on this day and siblings will not be able to attend. Children and parents are welcome to wear a Christmas jumper!

Christmas Party

On Monday 16th December we will be holding our annual Christmas party for the children. Children can wear their favourite party outfit or a Christmas t-shirt if they wish.

All children are invited to the party, however if this is not your child's normal session a morning fee will incur, please let Lorraine know if you wish your child to attend so an invoice can be sent out.

In the morning there will be a bouncy castle and lots of fun and games and all children, we will also be having a party lunch, even those children that go home at 12pm. Please do not send children in with a packed lunch or a morning snack on this day, those children that are in all day, please can you send them in with a piece of fruit for the afternoon.

The children have asked for a movie day so we thought in the afternoon we would cozy up and watch a movie with popcorn, please send each child in with a pillow/cushion and a blanket, this will need to be placed in a named bag.

We will pop a Christmas food list up soon in the foyer, this gives parents a chance to contribute to the party, these will just be small items such as crisps, cocktail sausages etc.

Christmas Cards

If the children would like to send their Pre-School friends a Christmas card this year, we will have a special postbox they can pop them into. We will also have a list of all children's names for you to pick up if you wish.

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.

Pick Up

Please can we ask parents when picking their children up when at the hall that you do not allow your children to run in the graveyard and over the graves! Unfortunately, we have had a couple of complaints about this, these are peoples loved ones and this needs to be respected. We understand that in some areas there is a path but as we know children don't always stick to these!

Could we also ask that parents don't allow their children to run around the side of the building, both sides are used as exit points, and we have had a few near misses of children running around the side and nearly bumping into children leaving.

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 12pm or 2.45pm, 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 9am, 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 September 2024 - For eligible working families in England with a child between 9 and 23 months old can access their 15 hours childcare. Apply for your code from 12th May.

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

This box will be available every morning for you to choose an 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.

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 changing how we charge for the Consumables contribution.

This will now be charged at 48p per each hour that your child does with us; the cost will cover items such as;

Wipes
Nappies
Additional snack / Milk
Tissues
Arts & Crafts
All nursery resources

Fees

From April 2024 our fees will be increasing in line with inflation.

2yr old, 3hr session - £25.56

2yr old, full day session - £44.73

3yr old, Top up of funded hours - £7.00 p/h

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 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.

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 12pm and 2:45pm 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 cooler I would like to give you the kit list for our forest school sessions.

- Warm layers i.e – vest, long sleeved 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 as this means when having a nappy change or using the toilet they will get cold!
 - Waterproof mittens on elastic
 - Waterproof hat
 - Neck warmers are safer than scarves
 - Please label everything!

Please remember if it is a bit colder your children will need extra layers to keep warm.

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.

[St Mark's Pre-School | Facebook](#)

Diary Dates

- Wednesday 11th December – Parent Christmas morning
 - Wednesday 11th December – Christmas jumpers
 - Monday 16th December – Children's Christmas party
 - Tuesday 17th December – Last day of term
 - Tuesday 7th January – First day of term
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Birthday Stars

India, Margot, Jimmy, Keighla

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

www.stmarkspreschool.info