

NEWSLETTER

St Mary's Preschool, Playgroup and Toddlers



Our sponsored Bike and Scoot-a-thon was a huge success this year – thank you so much to everyone who took part and who took the time to ask family and friends to sponsor their child. We raised a massive £480! Fundraising is always so vitally important and something we have to think about and do all year round to ensure we can update resources, stay up to date with training and generally just keep running too. Please let us know if you have any ideas to help!

Dear Parents,

Wow! Another year has passed us by and we have all survived to tell the tale! Finished with lots of tearful farewells at the end of term, as well as a fantastic preschool trip to Go Bananas and a trip on the train, all finished off with the sound of laughter as Magic Wizz did only what Magic Wizz does best (even with a new wig this year!).

We are now excited to welcome our next preschool children in when we return back as well as our new starters to begin their playgroup journey with us too! We have a very big preschool cohort this coming year so things are going to be a little different and as staff we will be learning as we go. Not only that but we will be welcoming a new face too so there will be lots of changes..please be patient and bear with us as we find our feet!

As always, please take the time to read through this newsletter making a note of dates for the diary and important updates for you to read. I will also be sharing information on sessions and our upcoming AGM which I would also urge you will to read.

In the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer and we will see you all in September!

Heidi

Dates for the Diary

Autumn term 1 starts –
Wednesday 5th September

Autumn term 1 ends –
Thursday 18th October 2018

Committee AGM –
Friday 28th September
7.00pm Venue TBC

Autumn term 2 starts –
Monday 29th October 2018

Autumn term 2 ends –
Friday 21st December 2018

Dates
for the diary



Uniform

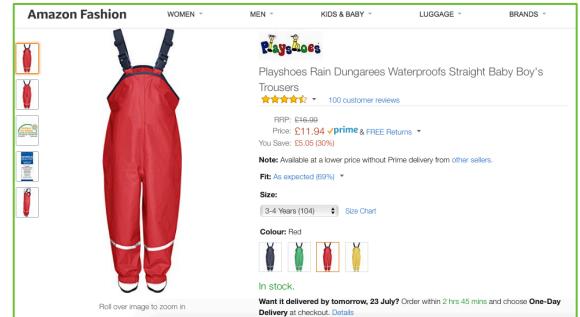
Just to clarify for all new parents, we now order our polo shirts and sweatshirts in which means you can directly buy them from us at playgroup (£7.50 polo shirt/£10 sweatshirt)

I would also like to reiterate that named wellies and waterproofs need to be sent in EVERY session.

With such changeable weather and messy/water play available almost all of the time, this will massively help us to prevent them getting wet in the session and then trying to find spare clothes!

If you do not own any waterproofs I would highly recommend Playshoes rain dungarees (age 3-4) from Amazon (from £11.94) which are hard wearing and will 'grow' with your child throughout their time at playgroup (a great investment!).

Alternatively, if you don't own waterproofs but aren't able to afford a set, please speak to a member of staff – we would never want a child to be without.



DON'T FORGET TO NAME IT!

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO NAME YOUR CHILD'S CLOTHES!!

We use a company called label planet to help raise money everytime products are bought using our code and after ordering my own (and receiving them the next day without paying P&P) I can honestly say they are worth using..I have ordered so many 'stick-ins' now and they're brilliant! There is a button (like below) on the 'parents information page you can click on to take you straight to the site, otherwise the website is <https://www.name-labels.com> and our code is 35612 for them to donate 30% with every order!



Our committee annual meeting (AGM)

With preschool children having left us this also means that some committee members will be about to leave us too. Our playgroup is ran by a team of voluntary committee members and without them we simply wouldn't be able to continue.. therefore WE NEED YOU!

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be at 7.00pm on Friday 28th of September (venue TBC) and will also be a relaxed evening to join us all for food and drinks and a chance to socialize with other parents. There are lots of changes happening and proposed ideas for the future of playgroup which we would love to have your input on. This is not a 'sign up' evening but a chance for you to hear what is going on and decide if you would like to become part of shaping our future.

If you would like to know more please speak to Darby Law our Chair of Committee or Claire Nelson our Parent Representative.



New sessions and staff

We are really excited about the changes being made to our sessions and staff and are currently looking at how to support the longevity of playgroup, ensuring we provide a service to the town that our parents need.

Our first step in moving forward are the amended session times, extending a Monday and Thursday session until 3/3.30. In doing so this has meant having to alter the transition times and we will now have a morning (9-12) and afternoon session (12-3/3.30) in order to cater for this. The uptake so far however has been really positive and in doing so we have now appointed a new member of staff too. We are really excited to welcome Jess to our team and I have asked her to share a little more about herself...

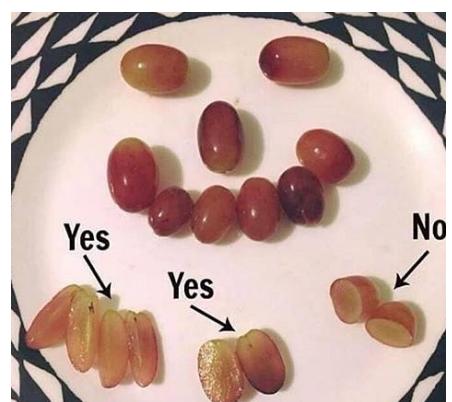
"Hello my name is Jessica I am very friendly, enthusiastic, and passionate about caring for children. I have an NVQ level 3 qualification, first aid qualification and also qualified in safe guarding. I have over 10 years experience working in an 'outstanding' nursery and working with children from ages 9 months to 5 years. In December 2016 I became a mum myself to my now 19 month old son Freddie. I am very excited to be joining the fantastic and friendly team at St Marys playgroup!"



Lunch boxes

As we are about to start the year again we would like to remind you all about lunch boxes. Please remember...

- We encourage healthy lunch boxes and ask that chocolate bars and sweets are NOT put in boxes for lunch and ONLY ONE 'sweet item' be packed, for example one yogurt.
- Any chocolate bars or sweets in lunch boxes will be set back home so please help us avoid the upset this may cause by not packing it.
- To make sure your child also has **at least one piece of fruit in their lunch box**. This doesn't have to be a whole apple or banana but could be a few blueberries or a few slices of melon (etc) in a pot. Don't forget, they are far more likely to eat fruit with their friends than at home so be brave and give something new a go too!
- **Grapes, cocktail sausages and cherry tomatoes MUST cut in half lengthways** to avoid choking



Please, please, please ALWAYS slice grapes before giving them to young children....

Please help us start the year as we mean to go on with healthy lunches – we really do appreciate your support in this.

Forest School for Preschoolers...and a Thursday!

As you all know, we now offer a Forest School session once a week to our preschool children which for the last 9 months has taken place at Mary's garden on Northfield Road. We are now looking at extending this provision to a Thursday too and we are currently in the process of finding at least one other local site to set up a Forest School in..watch this space for more details! Forest School is an absolutely fantastic opportunity for children to learn outdoors for an extended period of time and focuses on developing self-esteem and confidence, as well as problem solving and building relationships with others.

To allow the children to settle in after returning back from the summer holidays and provide time for all forms to be completed we will begin these sessions the week beginning the 24th of September but further letters and information will be provided nearer the time.

Please note, there is a 'dress code' for Forest School including waterproofs and wellies which they will need for every session. If you are unable to get or get any of the items including waterproofs, please speak to a member of staff.



Wishlist

For those of you who haven't seen or heard, I would just like to share with you our Amazon wishlist which previously has already been hugely successful!

After several parents asking if there was a way they could help we decided to start listing the items on amazon so that every now and then parents (and strangers!) could see what we needed and buy them for us!



The items on the list range from cleaning products, tissues (which we never have enough of!), stationary and toys and all at a range of prices. So if ever you are looking to spoil us (and I promise you we absolutely love it when a parcel arrives in the post!) then please have a look at our wishlist or share with your friends. There is an icon to take you straight to it from our website (stmarysplaygrouptetbury.co.uk) or the link is:

<http://amzn.eu/dQ7GO4q>

Smooth transitions

Next half term is going to be a learning curve for us all with session times changing, new staff and new children so please bear with us and continue to talk to us if there is any way we can improve on what we're doing.

Prompt drop offs at 9 also really helped last half term so thank you to everyone in helping to make a 'swift exit' in the morning. This has been particularly useful to our new children who have been a little bit unsettled first thing and after such a long summer break it is likely that we may have a few 'wobbles' again starting back for the first couple of weeks – so please continue in helping to make this time swift and easy when we go back.