



St Mark's Pre-School Newsletter

This Terms Activities

November 2024

We started off the month with our Autumn topic. At the beginning of the week, we sent a bag home with each child and asked them to fill it up with lots of Autumn treasures, such as colourful leaves, conkers or acorns, we had so much to explore and talk about. We got creative and made some Autumn wands using sticks, baking paper and crushed up Autumn leaves, we liked looking at the different coloured leaves. On the easel we did some leaf rubbings which were effective and didn't take long at all to get the hang of it, we used Autumn coloured crayons. On the math's table we used the scales to weigh different Autumn items such as conkers, acorns, leaves and sticks, we spoke about what things were heavy and what things were light, we also tried to balance the scales so it was the same on each side, we soon realised the conkers were heavy and the leaves were light. On the literacy table we had some Autumn leaves patterns to copy.

The children have been showing a real interest in the literacy area and this was a great way to work on pencil control and to practice writing their own names on their artwork! In the Forest we have been continuing our skills using the tools and we this time we used hammers and nails; we spoke about how to keep ourselves safe and making sure there was no lasting impact to the environment. We ended the topic by decorating some very yummy Autumn biscuits.

We then moved onto Halloween, and this was definitely a firm favourite! We used the dark den to create a spooky house and inside we had glow sticks and torches. On the easel we created a pumpkin picture by using apples cut in half and orange paint. In the tuft spot we had a giant spider web with spiders, Halloween shaped pasta, eyeballs and bats. We used tweezers to try and pick up the items and place them into a Halloween paper cup! Some things were tricky to try and pick up, which made us laugh, this was a great activity to help with our fine motor skills. We loved the Halloween scavenger hunt, we had to find all the hidden items around Pre-School and tick them off as we found them, although Mrs. Odam did forget where she hid a few but we found them eventually. On the math's table we had to match the Halloween pictures, but some were big, and some were smaller, so we also spoke about sizes. The children also used child safety knives to carve their very own pumpkin which we the used on the table for our Halloween party. In the Forest we collected different sized sticks to make spider webs and broomsticks, we used the broomsticks to fly around the forest. We ended off the topic and the term with a spooky Halloween party, we loved seeing the children dress up and really get into the spirit of Halloween.

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

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 \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Children In Need

On Thursday 14th November we will be taking part in some fun activities for Children in Need. The children are more than welcome to dress up in their favourite costumes and outfits on the day. We would love it if each child could bring in a donation of £2 or what you can afford.

Harvest Festival

We would like to thank everyone who donated items to the food bank. We managed to fill three large shopping bags which will go a long way to helping those who need it. When I dropped the items off, they were so grateful for everything.

Friday Update

In the last newsletter we asked parents about a Friday session. Unfortunately, there was no uptake on this so we will remain closed on a Friday for the time being.

Additional Hours

If any parents in the New Year require any additional hours or days, can you please let Lorraine know by Friday 8th November, as we only have very limited spaces available. We would like to offer these out to the current parents before they are given to any new parents.

We will be opening up a waiting list of any new starters wanting to join.

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.

Christmas

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 and even a hot drink and treat.

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!

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. Unfortunately, this is just for the children who attend on this day. More details to follow.

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

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

- Monday 4th November – First day of term
 - Thursday 14th November – Children in Need
 - 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
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Birthday Stars

Monaco

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

www.stmarkspreschool.info