



Registered Charity Number 1155711
0779 355 4340

January 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to all our families and a very Happy New Year to you!

May we take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for the presents and generous donations towards the gift cards that the whole team received at the end of term.

Donations wanted for our Spring Fair Toy Stall/Tombola prizes - Monday 15th – Friday 26th January

We would love to take any unwanted Christmas presents and any good condition or as new toys that your home no longer needs, off your hands! However, please no baby toys as these items do not sell well. Please bring these in during the week starting Monday 15th January!

Termly Donations to Pre-School

The Pre-School continues to operate in a very challenging financial climate, and over the last two years we have been unable to cover our costs. With the significant challenges, the Pre-School made a substantial deficit in both 2015/16 and 2016/17 and is predicting another loss for the current year.

As you know, the Pre-School is a registered Charity, a non-profit making organisation, and we rely on voluntary contributions to help cover the shortfall between the amount the Government give in education funding and the real cost of running the Pre-School.

To remain viable, the Pre-School has no other alternative than to increase the amount of the voluntary donation from parents. Currently we ask for a donation of £50.00, paid at the beginning of each term (September, January and April). With effect from 1st April 2018, the donation will be increased to £60.00 a term.

We are extremely grateful to all our parents for their continued support.

Football

Owing to the winter weather we no longer run the fun football sessions during the spring term. These will be reintroduced for the morning children at the beginning of the summer term when the weather will be better.

Special Days

Special Days start on Monday 15th January for morning children. A list of dates is being sent out at the beginning of term. Please try to remember when it is your child's Special Day as children do get upset if theirs is forgotten!

Chinese New Year, Festivals

Chinese New Year will be celebrated during the week beginning 19th February. We plan to make a large Chinese dragon with the morning children and for them to take part in a dragon dance to Chinese music. If any of our parents have a Chinese heritage, we would love you to help us to celebrate Chinese New Year! Please just let us know.

If you celebrate any festivals at home with your child, then please do talk to us about these. We would love to hear your ideas.

Sponsored Bounce Week – Starting Monday 5th February

During the week starting Monday 5th February, we will be holding our annual sponsored bounce! We will send sponsor forms home with your child/ren and ask you to get as many sponsors as you can. Children each have a turn to bounce on the trampoline, whilst the number of bounces is counted. Some sponsors choose to sponsor per bounce (can get costly!) or just sponsor a sum for the total bounces done. The children really enjoy taking part in this and it is a big fundraiser for our Pre-School, with all money raised used for new resources, activities or outings at Pre-School.

This year we will also be raising money to enable us to book “Living Eggs” again – where children have the chance to look after and watch our chicken eggs hatching and then caring for the baby chicks! Please try and get as many sponsors as you can! Forms will be sent out nearer the time.

World Book Day – Thursday 1st March

Although a long way off at the moment, we will be celebrating World Book Day with the children on Thursday 1st March. Children will be invited to come to Pre-School dressed as their favourite book character.

Easter Hat Parade – Wednesday 28th March (afternoon children)

To give you some notice, we would like to confirm that our Easter Hat Parade will take place on Wednesday 28th March. The afternoon children will be making an Easter hat at Pre-School, which they will then proudly show at the hat parade (in the garden if the weather is suitable). All children are invited to take part, even if Thursday is not their normal day. Parents are invited to come along at 2.15pm to watch; there will be music and songs for you to enjoy and a surprise visit from the Easter Bunny! More details to follow nearer the time.

Morning children will enjoy an Easter egg hunt in the garden on Wednesday 28th March, followed by a surprise visit from the Easter Bunny.

Learning Journeys and Tapestry

As you know each key person produces a “Learning Journey” for each of their key children, whilst they are at St Martin’s Pre-School. They consist of many different documents (photos, artwork, mark-making etc.) to provide an overview of your child’s development. Each document is accompanied by an “observation” (normally notes relating to conversation/situation etc.) and all observations are then matched to the Early Years guidance.

Currently St Martin’s uses a paper based system (each child has a folder containing all their information).

With the support of the Pre-School Management Committee, we are delighted to announce that over the next couple of terms we will be introducing a new system called Tapestry into the Pre-

School. Tapestry will allow your child's key person to capture your child's experiences, as well as monitor their development and learning electronically. This journal can then be shared online with you and will eventually replace the existing paper journals for our afternoon children.

Your key person will let you know when they are starting to use the system with your child and an email will be sent to you with all the information you require and how to set up your account. If you have any queries regarding Tapestry or Learning Journeys, please contact Leanne Walsh, from our Management Committee, on lwalsh1980@gmail.com, who will be happy to answer your queries.

Continuing Communication

For us to have a greater insight into your child's learning and development at home, during this half term we will be sending some more 'wow sheets' home for you to fill in.

Please record and date those special moments/achievements made at home, that children don't always tell us about e.g. kicking a ball for the first time, using a knife & fork, independent dressing, sleeping for a whole night! Just anything that is significant for your child as an individual.

Recording can be as simple as a few words or a dated photo of the achievement/development. These moments will be included in your child's Learning Journey, helping us to make greater links between development at Pre-School and development at home and assisting us when setting the next steps for your child's learning.

Spring Fair – Saturday 12th May- Organisational Team needed

We are still seeking to fill 4 of the 6 main roles that ensure that the Spring Fair happens. If you are interested in finding out exactly what is involved (i.e. Time commitment etc) please contact Emma Campbell, smartinspreschoolfamilies@outlook.com

Main Organiser - this is the key role and must be someone who is willing and able to commit a good deal of time to the preparations, from January through to the event and the wrap up afterwards.

Publicity Organiser - This activity begins in February and is a great role for someone who would like to help but can't be there on the day itself.

Poster and Flyer design - A crucial role that requires some design expertise.

Refreshment Organiser - Once it has been decided what will be done in terms of refreshments (also possibly including a BBQ) then most of the work for this role is in the last couple of weeks.

Absence

Please ensure that you inform us (preferably before 08.45) if your child is unable to attend Pre-School. If we haven't heard from you by 09.45am (morning children) or 1.30pm (afternoon children) then we are legally obliged to contact you. This obviously takes time out of session so please do try to remember to call or text us.

If your child has a funded place, then you are required to attend regularly and declare any reasons for your child's absence. If your child is regularly absent, without good reason, then you could risk losing your child's free place.

Waiting list

Our Pre-School remains extremely popular and, as most of you will already know, we have very long waiting lists. Please register your younger siblings straight away – we already have a full waiting list for September 2018. We have so many parents who contact us when their child is two years old and find they are too late, so if you know of someone who is interested in our Pre-School, please let them know that they must register their child very early!

Parking on the School Site

Please remember that there is no parking on the school site at any time, unless you are displaying a blue badge. Also, please do not stop in the area by the entrance gates to the school, you are able to park along Worples Road at normal drop off and collection times.

Buggy

We have a black buggy in the buggy shelter, with a pink and white striped blanket. This has been there for a few weeks now, so we are unsure who it belongs to. If it is yours, please just let us know!

Finally, please remember that you are welcome to speak to your child's key person, or any of the team, at any time if you have any questions or concerns!

We are looking forward to a busy half term, with lots of exciting activities planned.

Happy New Year!

St Martin's Pre-School Team