

Playgroup News

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Summer Term 2025

A big welcome to the new children and families who have started with us this January. The children are settling into the busy life of St John's. Your child's keyworker is available to see you at the beginning or at the end of the session if there is anything you wish to discuss regarding your child or children.

New Term

This term, we welcomed new children to St John, and they are settling in very well. We are looking forward to spending more time outdoors as we anticipate some lovely weather during the summer term. There will be a wide range of learning opportunities both indoors and outside, including messy and sensory play, as well as plenty of water play on warmer days. We will also be planting seeds and plants, and conducting various experiments. Following the children's interests, our theme this term will be *Space*, where we'll explore the different planets. In addition, we will be focusing on understanding the world around us—learning about butterflies and their life cycle, and growing plants such as cress.

Staff News

We are pleased to let you know that we have offered the manager position to a lovely, kind and caring lady who will take over the role of Manager when Mrs Mills leaves. She will probably start some sessions for the last few weeks of this term so we can arrange for a professional transition and you can get to meet her. More details to follow later this term when we have checked references and so on. She has lots of experience as leader and manager in different early years settings. She has significant relevant qualifications in Early years, leadership, business studies and holds a Level 3 special needs co-ordinator.

Internet Safety

We cannot overstate the importance of keeping your children safe on the internet. It is often easy for them to access unsuitable content if you don't have parental control set up. *Chicken Clicking* is a good book to start talking to your child. This link is useful: <https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/0-5/>

Keeping fit

Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership in conjunction with Hertfordshire have launched *Herts Mini Movers* in a bid to suggest ideas for playgroups and help families and settings to encourage more movement every day to reduce the number of young children who are overweight or obese as this will affect their health for the rest of their lives. Some lovely ideas can be found via this website: <https://sportinherts.org.uk/herts-mini-movers>.

'Research indicates that children between ages 2-5 should achieve 180 minutes (3 hours) of physical activity daily, with 60 minutes of that time being high activity/intense physical activity'

Walking to playgroup, using the buggy less can all count towards the 180 minutes. The children at playgroup spend most of their time standing (rather than sitting on chairs), climbing, running, exercising, using bikes, trikes and scooters. Inside and out

Going outside looking for, listening to, touching, smelling makes a good focus for a walk.

Teeth

As children are increasingly presenting with tooth decay across the country, we are keen to help children to have a better teeth health. We regularly talk to the children about what foods are not good for our teeth and how we need to brush them every-day. We advise that you sign up with a dentist for your child as soon as they start on solid food so they can get used to going.

Library & Story

We have started to lend out story sacks which can make reading a story more interactive. If you would like to borrow one of these please ask your child's keyworker. We only have a small selection currently but will be expanding the choice over the coming terms.

Sessions for next term

We have a number of children that are now eligible for 30 hour funding as of January 2025.

If you think you might be eligible for 30 hours of funding for your 3 year old or your 2 year old because you work, please check via the childcare choices government website. <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> **before 31 August.** You will need to meet certain criteria which will be clear once you login. You may also be able to take advantage the Tax Free childcare scheme on the same website

Please let friends know that we have spaces available from January (who have children of playgroup age)

Mini me's

We have recently introduced mini me's to the children. So if they tell you they have a picture of themselves on a little wooden block—that's the mini me. It means they can take 'themselves' into play. they can be the train driver, the hero, the mummy, daddy, brother or sister while playing with other small world characters. We also found out that if your child's best friend isn't in, they can just borrow their mini me to play with. A really popular addition to their play.

Clothing

Please ensure your child arrives at playgroup in appropriate clothing for a fun, messy, outdoor, indoor, painting, gluing, playdough, water, shaving foam, cornflour, lots of fun kind of day!

Change of clothes

Can you also bring a change of clothes for your child in a small bag (drawstring gym bags are ideal for hanging 'low' on the peg, allowing room for the coat above).

Weather

Hopefully the warm weather will start at some point. We have plenty of St John's playgroup hats which the children wear when outside in the sun. We would ask you to apply sun cream to your children before coming into playgroup. If it's particularly hot and sunny, we can give the children a top up. If your child does have an allergy to some sun creams, please let us know and you may choose to provide your own.

Transition Support

As this is the final for many of the children, we want to make their transition to their new school as smooth as possible. In the second half of the summer term, we will be talking to the children about moving on to school, showing them school uniforms which they can try on if they choose, show them photo books provided by local schools. There will be lots of discussions about what the children can expect at their new school.

Supporting your children

Children develop at different rates and at different ages. At St John's we support all children to move on to their next steps, whatever stage that is. In addition to the steps as outlined in the EYFS document, we are working on the following activities, particularly this term with so many children leaving to go to either nursery or reception. Phonics-learning to distinguish between everyday sounds and some letter sounds; playdough gym; transition support; recognising their name and for those who are showing an interest, writing their name. See the following link which gives excellent advice for pre-writing skills: <https://childdeveloping.com.au/areas-of-concern/writing/writing-readiness-pre-writing-skills/>

Notices and Requests payments of fees

The current fees are £7.50 per hour for those who are not funded or who has extra hours above their funded entitlement.

Cash is welcome. We can also accept payment via BACS, the bank details are as follows:

CAF bank: St John's Methodist Church, Potters Bar
Sort Code: 40 52 40

Account No: 00021445

Please use the name of your child as a reference.

Snack & Healthy lunch

At St John's we promote and encourage healthy eating. We as a nursery, following our statutory guidelines, have to ensure our children are given and eat the healthy options. Chocolate or cakes etc. are always given to the children when they have eaten other options in their boxes. **Remember NO SESAME SEEDS and NO NUTS IN ANY FORM, INCLUDING PEANUT BUTTER OR NUTELLA.** We would ask parents please to cut all grapes, sausages etc in quarters lengthways, to avoid any choking hazards, and guidance also suggests avoiding popcorn and marshmallows (these can also cause a choking hazard). This is important and the responsibility of parents as we cannot spend time cutting up your child's fruit when we have to support all our children during lunch.

Dates for your Diary

Please beware of revised inset days.

Tuesday 22nd April- Return
Thursday 1st May- closed for polling station.

Photographer 16th May 2025

Monday 26th to 30th May- Half term.

Monday 2nd June- inset day

Parent consultations Monday 30th June 2025

Leavers party 8th July 2025

Graduation ceremony 15th July 2025

Friday 18th July- End of term.

Autumn Term 2025

3 September- Wednesday 17 December (14 weeks)

Wednesday 3 Sept—inset day

Thursday 4 Sept—first day of term

Monday 27 to Friday 31 Oct, Half Term, playgroup closed

Photographer—date to be confirmed

Christmas party Date to be confirmed

Nativity provisional date Wednesday 17 December