

Playgroup News

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Spring 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.

Staff News

We are excited to announce that Despo Katsantonis has joined us as our new Practitioner this term, and we bid farewell to Mushfika Ameer. We are also pleased to share that Keely Brand has been appointed as the Leader at Wayside, and Sophie Smith will serve as the Deputy. Celia Mills will be retiring at the end of the summer term, ready to hang up her toys — provided we find a suitable replacement by then. She has been involved with the playgroup since 1995 and will greatly miss the daily contact and interaction with the children, staff and parents. A new era for the playgroup which first opened in 1965, so 60 years of excellent care and education for a huge number of children. Many of those children bringing their own offspring. It has been a real privilege to have been part of this journey for so long.

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

Early Years Alliance, Family Corner

St John's Nursery Playgroups are members of Early Years Alliance. They provide us with speedy updates of news and regulations, provide learning for the staff team via their EY Central platform, actively campaign for better financing, better conditions on behalf of Early Years settings. In addition they have a 'Family Corner' which is free to all families through their link: <https://www.familycorner.co.uk>. There are lots of articles such as internet safety, World Book day and short courses/webinars which you may want to join



Thursday 6th March is designated World Book Day. <https://www.worldbookday.com/families/> There are some lovely ideas suitable to our younger children on the BBC tiny happy people website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/world-book-day>. We attach a book token for you to spend on reading material for your child.

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.

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! In this weather they should have a warm coat and sensible shoes (useable inside and outside) as we do go outside in all weathers unless it is really inclement. We have a supply of St John's fleeces, rain trousers and jackets which the children can grab in their haste to go outside and a stock of wellington boots if it is really wet with puddles. You could bring your child's Wellies, clearly named please.

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).



Learning

This term, we've been busy celebrating Chinese New Year—the Year of the Snake. Over the past few weeks, we've set up several role play areas, including a hairdresser station and a pets area, where the children have been brushing dolls' hair and putting in clips. We also had a visit from Miss Becky's new puppy, Frank, and the children were thrilled to meet him. They all sat calmly to greet him.

Illnesses at Playgroup

Thank you parents for keeping us informed when your children are unwell and not able to join us.

There is considerable NHS concern about children who have not had their measles/MMR vaccinations. See this link for more information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>

Measles is a preventable disease which can leave you with long term side effect which can be serious.

Measles can also affect your unborn baby if you are pregnant, so it is really important to keep up to date with your child's immunisations.



Snack & Healthy Eating

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.

Notices and Requests payments of fees

Fees In line with rising costs, we have increased our hourly rate from £7.00 per hour to £7.50 per hour. Cash is welcome or Cheques, made payable to ST JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH, POTTERS BAR, please write your child's name on the reverse 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.

Dates for your Diary

Please beware of this years revised inset days.

Friday 14th February-inset day

Monday 24th February-inset day

Thursday 3rd April-inset day

Friday 4th April- inset day

Monday 7th to 18th April- Half term.

Tuesday 22nd April- Return

Thursday 1st May- closed for polling station.

Monday 26th to 30th May- Half term.

Monday 2nd June- inset

Leavers party to be confirmed

Graduation ceremony to be confirmed

Friday 18th July- End of term.