



Meppershall Pre-School Newsletter
January 2017

A belated Happy New Year!

A belated welcome back after the Christmas break, and a special warm welcome to our new starters this term Linnea, Bethania, Thomas, Isla, Malaika and Aria and their families and also to Zachary, Maia and families due to start after half term.

Thank you

Thank you so much to everyone who gave us Christmas presents and cards at the end of last term, we really did appreciate your generosity as well as all your kind words. Thank you also for your support with buying snack items, washing tea towels and dressing up clothes! It all helps us to run smoothly!

We will no longer be asking for parents to help us purchase the snacks but we will still need regular help by washing tea towels, dressing up clothes and toys so if you are able to help please look out for our tea towel rota and for when we put items out to be cleaned. All offers of help are really appreciated!

Pre School Staff & Committee

I'm sure most of you are familiar with the Pre school staff team by now but for those of you who don't see all of us please have a look at the staff board in the corridor and flip up the photos to see each person's roles and responsibilities. If you haven't met everybody yet, please don't be afraid to come and say hello! We have an open door policy so if you have any queries or concerns they can be addressed to any member of staff as well as to Tamsin or Andrea, and they will be happy to help. If your query is regarding your child's progress/development please speak to your child's key person in the first instance. You will all have been informed of who your child's key person is, but if you are unsure please do not hesitate to ask.

We would like to congratulate Yvoone on completing her Level 2 training and as soon as her certificate arrives she will be recognized as a qualified member of staff. Well done Yvoone!!

We continue to support 2 students with their childcare training this term, who are volunteering with us. Please familiarise yourself with their faces as I'm sure the children will start to mention them as well as they get to know them better.

Our students this term are;



Sara Brinkley – studying for her CACHE Level 3 qualification, and



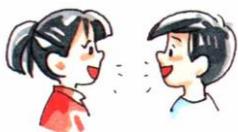
Kayleigh Hadley who is studying for her CACHE Level 2.

Our students are DBS cleared through the Pre School, as are all staff as they will be required to carry out play activities with the children as part of their ongoing assessments if you are not happy for our students to observe your child in play please let us know.

Changes to our Key Person System

After much discussion, we have made some changes to how we operate our Key Person system. All of you will be aware of who your child's key person is, and unless you have been informed, this has not changed. Their main key person will continue to record their development in their progress book and to ensure they communicate with you on a regular basis. They will be the person with whom you will discuss your child's starting point, next steps and achievements they make. They will also hold consultations with you on a termly basis. As well as their main key person children will also have a 'buddy' key person. The 'buddy' will take on the role of the key person in their absence, noting observations / achievements on their buddy key children, forming good relationships with them and ensuring they are familiar with their next steps, so as to support them consistently in reaching targets set for them. This does not mean that staff will not interact with children that aren't their key children or 'buddies', it should ensure more interaction takes place between staff and children, encouraging them to explore, interact and engage with their environment and their peers. You will all receive a note as a reminder of who your child's key person is and who their 'buddy' will be, so you should always know who to share your child's achievements and next steps with.

Something to tell us?



There are many times when we know you need to speak to us about something related to your child either at the beginning or end of a session. Please remember that whilst we really want to communicate well with you, the children's safety is paramount, so we would ask that you please

be respectful and wait until staff have signed children in and locked up, before having a chat. Please just let us know you need a few minutes and we will come to you as soon as we can, we aren't being rude. If it is something that takes more than 5-10 minutes we may need you to arrange a time to come back as we must ensure our ratios are maintained in the room. Also, we can ensure confidentiality much more easily by chatting to you in the back room without other parents being around. Many Thank you for your cooperation with this.

Topic



You should all have received a half termly update, detailing what we are doing each week for this half term, moving into next half term. (If you have not received this please let Tamsin or Andrea know). We have looked at and talked about 'Our favourite things' with the children and they have been able to show their special things to the group. Unfortunately we have been unable to get to the allotment as yet, due to new starters as well as needing lots of volunteers and weather being quite unpredictable. We will however be asking for helpers soon so please look out for texts / emails or rotas that may go out.



We are currently carrying out activities with the children around 'how we move' This will cover how we move our bodies, how animals move, under the sea, and transport. After half term our topics will be space, people who help us and dinosaurs. These have been chosen as a result of talking to children and finding out what they are interested in. If there is anything you think your child is particularly interested in, please let us know so activities can be planned accordingly!

Lift Off to Language Sessions



Tamsin and Andrea have delivered the first 'batch' of Lift off to Language sessions with very positive results. We found it was extremely beneficial to children for not just improving their speech and language but for developing listening and social skills, following instructions and for improving their self-confidence. We will be delivering the next program of 'Lift off to Language' sessions to the children after February half term. If your child is selected to take part you will have received a letter asking for

your consent. If you have any queries at any time please speak to Andrea or Tamsin.
Please note that selecting your child for the groups does not mean we have concerns about their development.

Sound of The week



We have decided to stop using our 'sound of the week' at pre school until the summer term, where we will introduce sounds in the order that they will learn them once in school. This does not mean that we will not be encouraging children to recognise initial sounds of words and letters within words, but we will be making sure this is covered through a variety of activities and by seeing print in the environment and ensuring it is noticed by children and there for a purpose. If your child still wants to bring something in (named), of course they can, and can try and find the sound it begins with but we will not be allocating some time each day specifically for this as it does not work for all children. We are however introducing a 'sign' of the week, so that children who are and are not able to communicate well, can use some familiar signs to engage with their peers. It also enables the older children to introduce these to the younger children and initiates interaction and response. The sign of each week was detailed on your half termly update.

Sickness & Absence

Please ring or text Pre School on 07816 357159 by 9.30am if your child is going to absent, giving a reason for absence. If we have not heard from you by 10am, it is our policy to call you to find out why your child is not in.

Please remember that if your child has sickness and/or diarrhoea then they must stay off for 48 hours after the last 'attack'

Be Prepared!



Please clearly name all clothing, bags, wellies and lunchboxes, as well as small tubs and drink bottles they may also have with them at lunchtimes. Remember, fresh drinking water is available for children at all times, so they do not need to bring a drink to Pre School unless they want something else with their lunch, we also provide spoons. Please remember to cut all grapes or cherry tomatoes in half lengthways as these are a huge choking hazard and children will not be able to eat them unless they are cut.

Please ensure all children have a coat at all times and wellies if the weather is wet. They do go outside every day, whatever the weather. It is also advisable to ensure they have layers to wear as the hall can sometimes be chilly when the door is open for free flow play.

Please do not bring your child in clothes that you do not want to get dirty; activities are free for the children to choose so we cannot promise they will stay clean!!! Please ensure they always have a change of clothes available as even if not needed for toileting reasons they can get wet, painty or muddy at various activities. If you would like to order any uniform please see Tamsin, it is priced at £7 for a polo shirt and £10 for a sweatshirt.

Emergency contacts and children's details

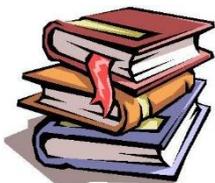


Please remember to keep us informed if phone numbers and/or email addresses change. Also, if you will not be available to contact on a particular day whilst we have your child at preschool please ensure we have an alternative contact number. We will be asking you to check and sign to say the details we have on file are correct, very soon.

Please also notify us of any changes to your child's health and wellbeing and anything that may affect your child at pre-school.

Our email address is meppershallps@gmail.com Please use this email for non-urgent queries or our mobile number 07816 357159 to contact us during session times

Pre School Library



Don't forget we have a lending library so that your child can borrow a book to share with you at home. Home learning and reading with children at home has great benefits for communication and language skills in young children and we would like to encourage this. Children can choose a book from the library box, have it stamped and written in a book before taking it home. Please make sure you look after the books and let us know when you have returned it so it can be signed back in. Children take it in turns to be helpers with the library and stamp the books, giving them a bit of extra responsibility.

Fudge the Bear



Fudge our Pre School Bear continues to go home with children. He goes home with each child in turn with a diary for you to record what he has been up to, with some pictures if possible! This is again to strengthen links between pre school and home, giving children a chance to bring him back and talk about what they have been up to together. Please don't feel like you have to go somewhere special if your child has Fudge..even just having tea together and watching their favourite programme or playing in the garden gives them something to talk about.

Website

Please have a look at our website when you can, it is also helpful as letters are archived there so if you can't find a letter that has been sent out, it can be found there!

Pre School Committee

If you have some spare time and would be interested in joining the committee, either just to help on the fundraising side, or to help on the management team, please let a member of staff know and we will put you in touch with either our chair Laura or a committee member for more information!

Change of Opening Hours



We are now open 9.15 – 3.15 every day, so are able to offer 30 hours of childcare each week for your children. We are still very quiet on the 'new' Tuesday and Thursday afternoon sessions so if you would like to add any of these sessions or change your child's days, please speak to Tamsin about availability. Believe it or not we will be booking children's sessions for September very soon so please have a think about what sessions you may like for then and let Tamsin know.

New Village Hall

We are delighted to be able to tell you that we have been along to a meeting with Croudace and village representatives regarding the proposed new village hall development. We know we will be moving into a temporary village hall whilst the permanent building is being constructed, but the temporary one will still enable us to run for the same hours we do currently and to take the same numbers of children, it what will be a much lighter, brighter and inviting space. We will tell you estimated dates of and any proposed changes as soon as we know but please



VIEW FROM CAR PARK ENTRANCE

be reassured that this will only enhance the provision we offer to your children.

For more information on the development please take a look at the website below

<http://meppershall.org/index.php/villagehall-development> if you have any questions please ask, and we will answer if we can.

We will of course be requiring Ofsted to inspect both the temporary and permanent premises before we can open from a different building.

Sainsburys Active Kids 2017



Sainsburys will start giving out their Active Kids vouchers again next week and we would like to collect as many vouchers as we can to be able to get some new resources for our children. Please, if you do go to Sainsburys, or if you order online ensure you collect and donate your vouchers to us, and encourage friends and family to do the same! We will have a collection box in Pre School for your children to post the vouchers into. Many Thanks in advance.

And finally.....

Diary Dates

Half Term – week commencing 13th February

Parents Consultation Week – Week commencing 27th February – appointments available nearer the time. Please note that progress books will not be going home this time prior to consultations but you are always welcome to ask to see them at any time.

Easter Holidays – Wednesday 5th April – Monday 17th April (inclusive)

Training Day – Tuesday 18th April – PRE SCHOOL CLOSED

Thank you all for your continuing support.

Pre School Staff