

Friday 12th January 2024

Newsletter

Dear mum, dad, carer,

A huge welcome to all our existing children and their families, as well as our new starters.  We hope you all had a lovely Christmas break and are looking forward to the New Year.

It was lovely to see so many parents and children at our coffee morning Monday.  Keep an eye on our Newsletter for the next event.

**Lunches**

**Please ensure that lunch boxes are named.**  We have had children come into pre-school with lovely new lunch bags this week but they have not been named and they are so new that children do not recognise them - this could be a safeguarding risk if children are given the wrong lunch, especially as we have children with specific dietary requirements.

We have been asked by some parents for idea's for healthy lunch boxes ....

You do not need to supply drinks or spoons for yogurts. We request also for the children to be supplied healthy food in accordance with our healthy eating guidelines.

We therefore ask for children not to bring in chocolate, sweets or similar.

We thought it might be useful to you for us to provide some suggestions for a healthy lunchbox:

1)      - Sandwich

         - Yogurt

         -  Cheese

         -  Banana

2)      - Pitta bread

         - Cereal bar

         -  Fruit bar

         - Cucumber

3)      - Sandwich

         -  Rice cakes

         -  Cocktail sausages (halved length ways)

         - Grapes (halved length ways)

Staff are still spending a lot of time in the kitchen cutting items from lunch boxes.  Cherry tomatoes, grapes and strawberries must be cut into quarters, mini sausages must be cut lengthways.  Any food that could act as a "plug" or choking hazard must be cut to change it's shape.  **We are not allowed to serve food to a child that could cause them to choke**- this is an Ofsted requirement and they are very strict.  Because our register is now full, we do not have enough staff to chop food provided from home, in our kitchen.  All our staff are now needed to sit with the children to provide a safe environment for all at lunch time.  From next week, if fruit and sausages etc., are not safely chopped and we do not have enough staff to safely allow someone into the kitchen then unfortunately, we will have to send that item of food back home.

**Food safety advice for children age 5 and under**

***How to reduce the risk of choking***

Food preparation:

* remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
* cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters
* cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
* do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal
* soften hard fruit and vegetables (such as carrot and apple) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months
* sausages should be avoided due to their high salt content, but if offered to children these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
* remove bones from meat or fish
* do not give whole nuts to children under five years old
* do not give whole seeds to children under five years old
* cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
* do not give popcorn as a snack
* do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
* do not give children hard sweets

**Suitable clothing for the weather**

Can we please remind parent's/carer's that pre-school will encourage outdoor play in all weathers.  It is very cold at the moment, so children need to be dressed in layers and should always have a warm winter coat, suitable warm footwear, hat, scarf, gloves - **all must be named**.  Very few children have come to pre-school this week with a hat, scarf or gloves and many children have been sad that they have had to come inside to play because they have cold hands.

**HM Government - Childcare Choices - Childcare support is expanding**

Please see the government website below for simple explanations of the changes being introduced to funding.  You can also apply for additional funding using this website ...

https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/

**Session times**

Can we please take this opportunity to remind parent/carer's of pre-school session times ...

Morning session 8.30am to 11.30am

Lunch session 11.30am to 12 noon (packed lunch to be provided from home)

Afternoon session 12 noon to 3pm

Pre-school is now very full and session times must be strictly adhered to.  **From now on, we will only accept late children if previously agreed with staff members.**

You must let pre-school know if your child will not be coming to pre-school - it is absolutely fine to have days off for holidays or sickness but it is an Ofsted requirement that we know why children have not attended a booked session.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, pre-school can only claim a certain amount days a year for non-attendance of a child.  If your child regularly misses pre-school and funding is withdrawn, we will have to terminate their place at pre-school.

**Free to a Good Home**

Next week there will be a number of items in our garden we are offering FREE to who ever wants them - they include a large playhouse with dolls, good quality bedlinen and unwanted gifts.  First come, first served and we will have to throw away anything left when we close at 3pm Friday.

**Drop of at 8.30am and collection and 3pm**

We have a safeguarding problem with parent's/carer's dropping children with us at 8.30am or collecting their child at 3pm and then going into Queen Emma's for older siblings.  They are then using pre-school at a "cut-through" from Queen Emma's.  **Once you have left pre-school with your child we kindly ask that you do not return onto pre-school property**.  When we see children in our garden that we think left pre-school 10-15 minutes earlier it can causes a safeguarding issue for the staff as well as any children still waiting to be collected.  Thank you.

*School Applications for children born on or between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020*

*The deadline for school applications is 15th January - apply online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions*

*Please let pre-school know (by email if possible) that you have applied for a primary school place.*

