

[illegible]

Return after Christmas break: Mon 5th January 2026

Friday 24th October - Spooky Day - All Day

This term, we are carrying on with finishing some of our other exciting rooms. Our purpose built Sensory Room is now ready for use for those children that might benefit from some quiet time and a smaller group. To begin with, this room which is furnished with coordinating lights, music and calming resources, will mainly be used by Ashleigh our SENCO. Whereas usually there would be two members of staff present, the Sensory Room will work best with a very small group and one member of staff. To comply with Safeguarding standards, we have installed a continuous motion camera with audio that is triggered the moment anyone enters the room. This is for the safety of children and adults using this space. We have a new policy called 'Security Camera Recording Policy Sensory Room', which sets out how this works and we invite you to look at this, along with other policies, either online (can be found on our website: www.williamolderplaygroup.org.uk) or a hard copy in the Playgroup foyer (please ask).



Our new Bistro is close to completion and the Fun House will be the last room to be finished but is also on the way. We will be posting videos of all three new rooms on our Facebook and Instagram pages when complete. Finally, we also have a new Trim Trail, Teepee and Bird Feeding Centre running alongside the car park and next to our Train Area. This term we will be having a seating area built at one end before fencing it in, ready for use.

Other New Policies

In line with St Margaret's Lockdown Policy and Procedures, we have also devised a policy which complements theirs, which can be used if a partial or full lockdown ever has to be instigated. This can also be viewed in the same way as the Security Camera policy.

The government are encouraging a higher emphasis on attendance and treating non-attendance as a Safeguarding issue. We recognise that there is no legal requirement for children to attend any sort of preschool education but also understand the benefits of it and regular attendance once registered. Equally, we believe that family time is of huge significance and days out / holidays etc. before formal education are nothing but beneficial. What we will be asking however, is for your cooperation in letting us know if your child won't be in or if they are off sick etc., then please do give us a heads up by email or phone. If we have unexplained absences then we may call or email you ourselves to just check all is well. In the near future, I will be writing a policy and procedures which will set out the above expectations. This policy will be named 'Attendance Policy' and can be viewed as before.



Government Funding

This September saw the government increasing the funding offer, which is great news for working families. However, as many other settings may not have the capacity to allow parents to take up these hours, William Older Play-group remains as before:

- We can take from 2 years old (if space available).
- We accept government funding, both LA and working families for 2 year olds or current fees at £18 per session.
- We offer morning sessions for our 2 year olds.
- We offer either Universal 15 hours Funding for 3 & 4 year olds or up to 30 hours for 3 & 4 year olds qualifying or Extended Funding (again, if space available). 15 hour Universal Funded 3 & 4 year olds can also top-up hours at £18 per session if space available.

This year, we have the largest amount of carry-over children and new children we have ever had in an Autumn term. This is due to several factors including in part, us being a well known, respected and popular group with excellent links to local primary schools, government funding increasing and new housing bringing new families to the area.

We already have around 90 children on our register (not all at the same time!) and it is very likely that we will not be able to increase current 2 year olds that are accessing 15 hours at present and 30 hours (or up to) during the coming school year, as there will not be enough spaces available until September 2026 and I already have a waiting list. We feel it is likely that other settings may also be in the same position as us. We will do our best to accommodate requests but feel it's best to inform everyone at the start of the year, what the likely situation will be.

Spooky Day - Friday 24th October (also last day of this half term)

We are having our annual fun event when all children are invited to dress up for the occasion in a 'spooky' way. This is not compulsory as some children will not be happy to do this, which is fine. During the day we will have lots of fun, spooky-ish activities going on.



Book Bags

All children in their last year with us will be given a Book Bag to borrow for the coming year. They can choose books to read at home with you and when finished, bring the bag back and drop in the basket by our doors (can be daily or whenever a new book is required). Staff will talk about the book with the children and invite them to choose a new one.

Lunches

We actively promote healthy choices. So far this term we have seen some lovely lunches however, please remember your child has a small stomach and also if they are in all day, we provide a healthy mid-morning snack and drink. Some lunches are larger than we could eat (and most of us can eat a lot!).

A sensible, manageable size are welcome please, with healthy options such as fruit, vegetables, sandwiches or wraps. Please no chocolate, sugary drinks or too many salty snacks. No nuts either please (including peanut butter and Nutella).

We also ask for a large named bottle of water they can access during the day and we can top up if needed.



Snack

As mentioned above, we provide all children with a healthy mid-morning snack, for example, cheese and biscuits, fresh fruit etc. We gave an allergy list so please keep us updated with changes. We ask for a voluntary monetary donation to pay for this as it is quite a weekly expense. Please do this if you can, the amount is discretionary and can be paid at any time and at intervals that suit. We have a physical 'snack pot' outside the front door for cash donations but many people prefer to donate via bank transfer which you can do using the following details. Please use the reference 'SNACK' for payments made in this way:

Sort Code: 30-95-09

Acc Number: 00626350

Acc Name: William Older Playgroup

Many thanks.

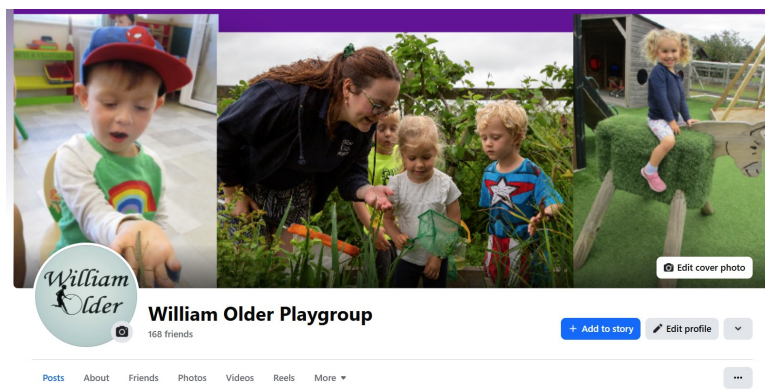
Social Media

We use our Facebook and Instagram pages to help keep you up to date with all the exciting activities your children are experiencing. We know it's not for everyone but if you change your preference and are happy to let your child be featured in our posts, then please let us know any time.

May we ask that as many families as possible request to follow us, as this is our main way of getting information out quickly, not just for posts and pics of the children

having fun, for example, our recent phone line fault, outbreaks of illness, exceptional weather causing closure etc.

You can request to follow us without giving permission for us to show your child on social media but please may we also ask that you like or love our posts so that we can see who we are engaging with and who might be missing info.



Car Park - The school car park is only for staff of St Margaret's and William Older Playgroup. There have been reported incidents of cars following in staff and those who have been permitted entry by the school via the intercom, whilst the secure gates have been open momentarily. Please park on the surrounding roads safely and with consideration to local residents. Thank you for your understanding.

Illness - It is our policy that all children should be kept off for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness and/or diarrhoea. This is to protect other children and staff alike. Children who are also on antibiotics or taking Calpol are also much more comfortable at home so please do keep them off when they are poorly so they can fully rest up.

Clothes - As the beautiful Summer draws to a close and the children are bringing in more coats / hats etc., please label or write name clearly and obviously, as we end up with huge amounts of lost property every year where children have emptied their rucksack out without telling us or dumped coats on the floor, not on their pictured pegs. Many thanks for your help on this.



And Finally...

Thank you for choosing us - beginnings of year can be hectic but will soon quieten down. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or issues. You should all know your child's Keyperson by now and they will be in regular contact with you to keep you updated on your child's progress.

If you need to see me (Sue, the Manager) or talk to Ashleigh (SENCO), then please let me know so that we can schedule an appointment.

Sue & the Team