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### Term Dates

Return to Playgroup for Spring Term: Monday 6th January 2025

Break-up for Half Term: Friday 14th February

Return to Playgroup for 2nd Half of Spring Term: Monday 24th February

Break-up for Easter: Friday 4th April

### Upcoming Events / Dates

Monday afternoons - cooking

Every third Monday afternoon - Library Bus

Tuesday afternoons - Hartbeeps

Looking ahead - Monday 3rd March p.m. - Visit from popular children's author and illustrator, Nick Sharratt

### Welcome to the Spring Term

Firstly, we hope you all had a fantastic Christmas and New Year. A big THANK YOU to families that supported our Christmas raffles; between the two we raised around £200. All monies raised go straight back into providing as many lovely resources and activities as we can for your children. We hope you enjoyed our visits from Father Christmas, our wonderful Christmas play and even a planned snow storm!

Welcome to all of our many new families we have starting with us this term. By now, we hope most of the children have settled into their new routines and are getting to know us and the other children. Much of this newsletter will be reinforcing some of the info given in the last one as we have so many new families.

### New Play Areas

These have taken a little longer than we would have liked but unfortunately, once the Autumnal weather kicks in and we get a lot of rain, the field we are building on gets extremely waterlogged and really slows down the process of getting materials onto the site and also affects the erection of new fencing. However, things are progressing and the end is in sight, more details to follow...



### 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.



## Snack / Lunches

We provide all children with a healthy mid-morning snack, for example, cheese and biscuits, fresh fruit etc. We have 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.

We ask you to provide a healthy and not too large lunch for children that are with us all day or in the afternoons. If unsure of what this might be, we have some literature in our foyer to read. An example would be perhaps a cheese sandwich, yogurt and piece of fruit (always pre cut grapes in half, length ways, if in lunchboxes please). There are lots of alternatives but we ask for no sweets, chocolates or fizzy drinks and would ask consideration with crisps, cake bars etc.

We do teach children about healthy foods and it is lovely to look at healthy options in lunchboxes. We have a '**No Nuts**' policy in case of severe allergies—this includes products such as Nutella. Thank you for your co-operation in this.

For those children in all day, a named water bottle is an essential.

**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 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.

**Winter Clothes** - As the weather is rather chilly and the children have more outdoor clothes, there are several things you can do which will be helpful to both them and us:

- Clearly label as many items of clothing with their names as possible
- Provide mittens instead of gloves as easier for them to get on and off
- Avoid all-in-one suits for the above reason
- Practice putting coat on themselves, at home
- Trainers are more comfy than wellies. Most of our surfaces drain very quickly. Also, Velcro rather than laces helps the children become independent.



## Looking Ahead...

Giving everyone a 'heads-up' as close to the beginning of next half-term - on Monday 3rd March, we are very excited to have booked an afternoon visit from one of our favourite authors and illustrators, Nick Sharratt.

For anyone unfamiliar with his work, his stories include the 'Shark in the Park' series (our fave!), 'The Foggy Foggy Forest' and 'You Choose', to name just a few. Nick also illustrated for Jacqueline Wilson in the Tracy Beaker books. Although we have to pay for this visit, we feel it is money well spent as our children love his books.

We will send out a letter nearer the time but apart from an interactive afternoon with Nick, he will also do book signings and photos at the end of the session. His books can be purchased on the day or you can bring your own copy from home. For those not attending on a Monday afternoon, whether morning or afternoon children, you will be welcome to come along at the end to meet Nick and have books signed / photos. More details to follow...



## And finally...

We want all families to have the best possible experience with us. Please let me know at the earliest opportunity, if any problems arise. Everyone should be aware of who their child's Keyperson is and can chat informally at any time. Your Keyperson will arrange more formal meetings with you to discuss your child's progress at least once a term and if you need to speak to myself or Deputy Manager, Tara, at any time, then a suitable appointment can be made.

Here's hoping for some early Spring sunshine and a bit less rain than last term!

*Sue & the Team*