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20th January 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

We would like to wish a belated Happy New Year to everyone and welcome the new families joining us this term. Please read the following information carefully as it contains important information and dates.

Outdoor play in the winter

Outdoor play is a very important part of the Early Years Curriculum and we have a lovely outdoor area where children can learn a lot about the natural world, develop their physical skills and extend their ideas through play in a variety of ways all year round.

Last year the British Heart Foundation published advice and a manifesto about how important physical activity is for children. Two to four year olds should be getting three hours of physical exercise a day and apparently 91% of two to four year olds are not getting enough.

You can find this information on www.bhfactive.org.uk/beststart.

At this time of year it is important that the children keep warm so please make sure your child is dressed appropriately. This includes warm tops as well as hats, scarves and gloves (labelled with your child's name).

Please also write your child's name in their coat.

When it is wet outside we provide waterproofs and wellington boots for the children to change in to, although you can provide your child with their own if you wish.

NB: Some of our nursery wellington boots have gone home with children and have not been returned. Please make sure you return them as we have a limited supply.

Curriculum

Our theme this term is "**New Life**". The children will be learning through core books. For the last two weeks they have been looking at 'Owl Babies' and over the next few weeks they will be learning through Jack and the Beanstalk (as well as Jim and the Beanstalk, Jill and the Beanstalk and Jasper's Beanstalk), The Elephant and the Bad Baby, Avocado Baby and Little Rabbit Foo Foo.

They have already also started experiencing and thinking about winter weather, bird watching (including making food for the birds), themselves and their families. We will be thinking how to make the world more sustainable through litter picking, recycling and saving water and energy.

Over the next two weeks the children will also be learning about the Chinese New Year.

School Fund

We ask for a weekly contribution of £1 per family for school fund to pay for extras such as children's snacks, cooking ingredients, entertainers and photo processing. Please see Rena at the office if you still need to pay. You can pay weekly or termly.

Children's Special Books

It helps the staff build up a picture of your child if you contribute something your child has made or done at home to add to their folders each term and it is also an opportunity for your child to share something special with their key worker. You can give a picture, creation or photo of an exciting experience to your child's key worker to add to their folder or slip it in yourself. Photos can be photocopied and returned.

Security Matters

Please note that buggies and scooters left at the front of the building are your responsibility. There have been a couple of occasions when a child has gone home with the wrong scooter. Please make sure there is something on the scooter to identify it as belonging to your child, such as a special sticker or their name on the underside.

Children's Boxes

Please make sure that you look in your child's box at the end of the day for any pictures etc that your child has done in nursery. The children are proud of their work and always eager to share it with you.

Bottle Tops

We would like to collect as many plastic bottle tops as possible so that they can be used for things such as wheels for woodwork models. Please could you collect them and give them to your child's key worker. Cereal type boxes and yoghurt pots would also be welcome.

Attendance and Punctuality

For children to make the most of their time at nursery school it is very important that you bring your child every day. It is also important that you arrive and collect your child on time. Children who arrive late can miss out on play experiences because the other children have already started games with their friends before they arrive. Adult led activities have also already started.

'Slapped Cheek'

There seem to be a few children at the moment who have contracted 'slapped cheek'. It presents itself as a bright red rash on both cheeks. According to the NHS website it is a very mild viral infection that clears up in one to three weeks. Unless your child is feeling unwell there is no need to keep them away from school as by the time the rash comes out they are no longer infectious.

Head Lice

There have also been a few cases of head lice at the nursery so please check your child's hair and if you see eggs or lice please treat it with head lice solution from the pharmacist. Again, your child does not have to stay away from the nursery but treatment is crucial so that the lice are not passed to other children.

Dental Hygiene

We have received the following advice from the Oral Health team regarding children's dental hygiene.

- Children should visit the dentist twice a year
- Teeth should be brushed twice a day
- Children should NOT rinse their mouth out after brushing
- Children should NOT have a bottle beyond the age of 12 months

Sugary foods should be kept to mealtimes.

Letter Formation and Funky Fingers

Children will find it easier to develop the ability to form letters correctly if they are given lots of experience to strengthen the muscles in their hands and fingers and opportunities to join in with drawing, writing and cutting activities. At Low Hall the children are taking part in 'Funky Fingers' activities to help with this. These are fun activities such as threading pipe cleaners through holes in a colander, putting tiny pegs in holes or threading Cheerio's on dry spaghetti or laces. If you would like to do some of these activities with your children at home you can research them on the website 'Pinterest'

Please refer to the correct letter formation sheet attached to this newsletter. Our advice is to practice forming basic shapes beginning with lines, then circles. You can then suggest that they add things to the circle such as a face, legs (for a spider/person etc). Please encourage your children to have a go themselves rather than letting them talk you in to drawing it for them. You could show them by drawing a circle yourself first. Please also do not ask your child to trace over small letters you have written but instead encourage them to copy the letters (lower case apart from the first letter of their name).

Half-term Playscheme

We will be running the half term playscheme as usual. If you would like your child to attend please see Rena at the office for an application form.

Rena

We will sadly be saying goodbye to Rena in the office on Friday 3rd February. Rena has been here in a temporary capacity while we looked for a replacement for Mary. I am sure you will agree that Rena has been a real asset to the team and we will all miss her very much. I am sure you would like to join us in saying a big thank you to her for all her hard work. We have employed a new office manager, Androulla who will be starting at the beginning of February.

OFSTED of the Disability Enablement Service

The Disability Enablement Service (The borough's special needs and disability service) is undergoing an OFSTED at the moment. As part of the OFSTED they are coming to Low Hall this coming Thursday (26th January) to talk to Margaret (as the SENDCo) and Sandra. They would also like to meet some parents of children who have special educational needs or disabilities. If there are any parents who are available to meet them at 9.45am on Thursday please let Margaret know.

Dates

We have a few exciting events coming up before the Easter holidays.

Monday 13th February to Friday 17th February Closed for half-term (Playscheme will run as usual)

Thursday March 2nd World Book day (information including a Book Fair to follow)

Monday March 6th The 'Living Eggs' are arriving. These eggs arrive in an incubator and the children will be watching them hatch in to chicks

Friday 24th March- Red Nose Day. We hope all the children will come to nursery wearing **something red** on this day. We will also be having a collection and painting red noses on them!

Friday 31st March Last day of term.

And finally.....

In August, our head teacher, Sandra Campbell will be retiring after almost 40 years in the teaching profession including twenty five years at our partner school, Church Hill and four years at Low Hall. Governors would like parents to be involved in the recruitment of her successor. If you would like to join a parent's panel to meet candidates for the position and are available on **Thursday 2nd February** at **Church Hill Nursery School** please let Sandra, Margaret or the office know. Even though this panel will be meeting at our partner school we would really like the panel to be made up of parents from the two schools.