



September 2021

Registered Charity Number 1155711  
01372 721 111

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to all our returning children and families and a very warm welcome to our new children and families joining pre-school for the first time this year! We plan to make this a fun packed year for you all!

As parents and carers, there are a few things that you can do to help us.

### **How can you help**

- ✚ Please be aware that Club Vale share use of the building, so they may need to move past you when taking children over to the main school or bringing children back in the afternoon. Please allow them to do this safely!
- ✚ If you have to wait, please do not congregate in front of our entrance doors to allow others to arrive or leave the building safely and for others using the school site to be able to pass by on the footpath. Please can you queue alongside the building.
- ✚ It would really help us if you could talk to your child positively about the drop off procedures and say goodbye with a smile, even if they become a little sad. Please be assured that we always provide lots of comfort and distraction when children become upset. You can always give us a call for an update.
- ✚ Except for children starting pre-school for the first time, or who are very unsettled, please make every effort to avoid entering the building (a member of staff will let you know if you need to enter the building).
- ✚ If you need to enter the building, please be prepared with your facemask, and use the hand sanitiser in reception.
- ✚ Your child must not attend pre-school if they have the symptoms of Covid-19, particularly a high temperature, new continuous cough, a change, or loss in sense of taste or smell. If your child has any of these symptoms, please arrange for them to have a PCR test and let us know the result before your child returns.
- ✚ If someone in your child's household tests positive for Covid-19, please can you arrange for your child to have a PCR test too.
- ✚ Children will not require a personal bag, or spare clothes unless they are using nappies or have recently started potty training. If they need a bag, please ensure it is as small as possible, as our peg space is extremely limited!
- ✚ Please do not put open packets of wipes or nappy sacks in your child's bag. The pre-school will supply baby wipes, but if you would prefer us to use your own, please bring in a new pack which we will name and keep at pre-school. Please do provide nappies!
- ✚ Please make sure all your child's clothing, food bags/boxes and any other items are clearly named. Food bags / boxes should be named on the outside.

- ✚ Please ensure that you do not bring any unnecessary personal belongings for your child, or any toys from home.
- ✚ Please send your child to pre-school with a prepared healthy snack in a plastic box which is stored in an insulated bag (with a cool pack. A healthy snack might include - breadsticks, rice cakes, apple, pear, banana, dried fruit, cut grapes, berries, cheese. Please do not include any food or cereal bars that contain nuts, as we have children with allergies.
- ✚ If your child is attending Lunch Club, please send your child to pre-school with a healthy lunch in a plastic box which is stored in an insulated bag with a cool pack. If your child is staying for Lunch Club or all day, he/she only needs to bring one insulated bag, but it must contain two boxes of food. Please do not provide food that requires heating, as we are unable to do this.
- ✚ Please ensure we have up to date contact details for you.
- ✚ Be prepared to collect your child if he/she becomes ill at pre-school.
- ✚ Please do not give your child medicines containing paracetamol before coming to pre-school, without informing a member of staff.
- ✚ Please be aware that we cannot let parents/carers or members of the public into the building to use the toilets in the reception area. In addition, parents/carers must not enter the children's toilet area in Pre-School.
- ✚ Please be aware that there is no parking on the school site for any parent/carer, unless with prior permission in an emergency. The car parks belong to the main school and parents/carers with a blue badge can make an application to the main school office for permission to park.

### **Settling in and drop off procedures for new starters**

If your child is joining afternoon sessions, you will have already received a letter confirming your child's individual start date and the days they are attending. Whilst we re-open on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September, not all children will start this week. Please check your letter for your child's start date.

We understand that children may need to hold onto a special blanket, toy, or dummy to help them feel secure when they are away from their families. Although we ask you to avoid bringing in personal belongings; if your child needs to hold onto something when they first start Pre-School that is fine, and we would not encourage you to attempt to take it away. We can gradually encourage the children to store their comfort objects safely away in their book bag during the session.

For the first few sessions we do not expect new starters to leave parents at the main entrance. However, if you feel that your child is happy to leave you then we will support this. We are not expecting miracles!

Our doors will open at 12.15pm, after we finish showing the children out to their parents/carers from Lunch Club. Please be patient as we will try to avoid too many parents coming in at the same time, to avoid congestion.

- ✚ Please wear a facemask
- ✚ Please use hand sanitiser which will be available in the reception area.
- ✚ Please do not bring lots of personal belongings, you will not be able to bring them into the room.

- ✚ Please be aware that you must not use your mobile phone in the building or garden, including to take photographs.
- ✚ Please help your child to place their snack bag / box on the trolley.
- ✚ Please help your child find his/her name card which will be on the table in the reception area.
- ✚ Please help your child to find a peg to hang their name card on.
- ✚ If possible, please say goodbye to your child and leave him/her with a member of staff once their name card is on the peg.

We understand that leaving your child can be difficult and we will work with you. Please talk to a member of staff if you need to. We want this experience to go well for everyone. Eventually, as your child develops confidence, we would encourage you to allow him / her to enter through the main entrance independently. This has become part of our routine over the last year and has been extremely successful in supporting the children to develop independence when managing their own things and finding their own name card!

Often when children start Pre-School, they become upset, either straight away or after a few days or weeks. A common reason children struggle is because they do not understand that you (their trusted and loved adult) will return. Therefore, it can really help if you prepare your child by letting him/her know that you will leave, but that you will come back. You could say, mummy/daddy will go, you will play with the toys / play in the garden, you will have your snack, you will have a story or sing, then mummy/daddy/carer will come back. At Pre-School we use individual picture cards which illustrate what will happen next. You could do this by making drawings of the sequence.

### **Absence**

Please ensure that you inform us (preferably before 08.45) if your child is unable to attend Pre-School. If we have not heard from you by 9.15am (morning children) or 12.45pm (afternoon children) then we are legally obliged to contact you and find out where your child is. This obviously takes time out of session, so please do try to remember to call or text us. All absences are recorded to comply with safeguarding regulations.

### **Free Entitlement Funding for Two, Three and Four-Year Olds**

Your child will be eligible for funding from the beginning of the term after their third birthday. Nancy will issue you with the relevant form to complete each term. Please remember that a new declaration must be signed each term for all children who are eligible for funding. There are always tight deadlines to meet when submitting our funding applications, so please return your signed declaration forms to Nancy straight away. Some families may also be entitled to Free Early Education for their two-year-old. More information on this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/free-early-education>

### **And finally .....**

We realise that there is a lot of information on this newsletter! If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

We look forward to seeing you 😊

St Martin's Pre-School Team