



Worple Road, Epsom KT18 7AA
Registered Charity Number 1155711
01372 721 111

February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers



To celebrate Chinese New Year (which falls within half term) Angela came to pre-school this week in traditional Chinese dress and taught us how she celebrates the Chinese New Year, how to count to ten in Chinese and played Chinese music which the children danced to! We created Chinese dragons, made lanterns, learned how to write Chinese numbers, did Chinese calligraphy, and made firecrackers. The children also played a game 'pin the eye on the dragon' which they really enjoyed.

Finally, the children made a large dragon head, and did a dragon dance around the Pre-School. Thank you to Angela for organising these wonderful activities for the children!

Read, Write Inc. Phonics

A parent guide is available for you to look at by following the link [Parent guide to Read Write Inc. Phonics - Oxford Owl](#) and there are some useful videos for parents too.

Lunch Club Spaces

Our long-day sessions remain full; however, we have one or two spaces in our Lunch Club from 11.45am – 12.15pm (morning children only). Lunch Club helps to prepare your child for school in September, so please let us know if you would like your child to join this for the rest of the school year.

Tax Free Childcare

A [support guide on Tax-Free Childcare](#) for parents. Please do research Tax-Free Childcare, which the government introduced to replace the childcare voucher scheme. The pre-school accepts payments for fees, uniform and consumables using tax-free childcare and there are tax savings for families using this scheme.

Working Parents Entitlement to 15 Hours Per Week of Funded Childcare (for two-year olds)

From 1st April 2024, working parents will be eligible for up to 15 hours per week of funded childcare, over 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their child turns two years old. There are currently no changes for parents who are already in receipt of up to 30 hours per week of funded childcare for their three or four year old.

To find out if you are eligible for the new entitlement for two-year old funding, and from what date you can access funding, parents should visit the following information pages:

[Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)

[Working parents entitlement - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#).

If your child has their third birthday between 1st January and 31st March 2024, they will automatically be eligible for 15-hours funded childcare from the beginning of the summer term and you will not need to apply for a code. Nancy will organise the paperwork for you in April.

Reminder to Renew Your Code

If you are already in receipt of 30-hours funded childcare, please remember that you must renew your code with HMRC before the 31st March.

If you do not renew your code, then your child will fall out of eligibility for the remainder of the school year. This is out of our control, and so please do not forget to renew!

Learn, Play, and Thrive – The Toddler Years (Two-week Course)

This is a FREE online course over two weeks (2 x two-hour sessions) which will help you to understand how your toddler's brain develops and why toddlers do certain things in certain ways.

Understand your toddler's brain development and the effect that this can have on their behaviour

Learn how different parenting approaches can impact on behaviour and the developing brain

Learn how play can support your toddler's development and language skills

If you are a parent / carer or grandparent of a child aged 1 – 4 years old and living in Surrey, this course will help you learn about your toddler's development and behaviour.

For full details and how to book, please see [The Toddler Years - Online course - flyer](#)

Next half term we are looking forward to lots of celebrations and events!

Parent meetings

If you have not already had a meeting / phone call with your child's key person, we will arrange this for the week after half term.

Boogie Beats

Boogie Beats continues on a Monday morning for the second half of the spring term. The children have thoroughly enjoyed these sessions, which combine music, dance, story-telling, and drama.

St David's Day – Friday 1st March

We will include activities related to St David, Wales, daffodils and the Welsh language and culture.

World Book Day – Thursday 7th March

Children are invited to bring in a favourite story and to dress up as a favourite story book character.

St Patrick's Day – 17th March (we will plan activities for 15th March)

We will include activities related to St Patrick, Ireland, clover and the Irish language and culture.

Red Nose Day – also 15th March

Children may like to come to wear something red for Red Nose Day, or something green for St Patrick's Day! We will talk to the children about why we need to raise money for those less fortunate than us.

Mother's Day – Sunday 17th March

The children will think about their families and the people who look after them.

Please let us know if there are any celebrations or events that you would like us to celebrate or introduce the children to.

Please see below for a few requests / reminders from the team!

Wellies

Please can parents provide an alternative to wearing wellies in Pre-School. These are not comfortable for the children to wear for a whole session / day. If your child walks to Pre-School in wellies, please can you provide comfortable footwear for them to change into.

Book bags

Please remember to take your child's artwork out of their book bag when it comes home. Also, please only provide a separate backpack with spare clothes if your child regularly needs changing. Unfortunately, we do not have enough room in our book bag drawers, for there to be any clothing inside the book bags. Our peg space is also very limited, so please only send a small backpack if necessary.

Name your child's belongings!

Please remember to ensure all your child's belongings are clearly named – thank you.

Snack time

Please can parents provide fruit for their child's snack time (or an alternative healthy snack). We do not like the children to have crisps, chocolate, or biscuits for their snack time.

No popcorn please!

Please do not send in popcorn for your child's snack or lunch. Popcorn is a known choking hazard in younger children as it can easily become stuck in a child's airway because of its size and shape.

Have a lovely half term break! We return on Monday 19th February.

Best wishes

St Martin's Pre-School Team

Useful links

Home-Start – a local community network of trained volunteers and expert support helping families with young children through their challenging times.

[Home-Start UK](#)

Family Information Service – useful local information relating to services for children and families living in Surrey

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/families>

The Samaritans – support with ‘whatever you are going through’:

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

Crisis – for those faced with homelessness:

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

Eric - for help with potty training

<https://www.eric.org.uk/>

SEND Local Offer – Online hub for 0-25 year olds with Special Educational Needs or a Disability

<https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/home.page>

I Can – communication charity.

[I CAN, the children's communication charity](#)