

September 2020

Autumn Term News Letter

Welcome to the start of a new year in the Nursery and Pre-school. We are all living in unprecedented times so I am sure, already you have noticed a change in our routines and in some elements of our practice in caring for and educating your children. The reasons why we have had to make these changes are explained in our ‘Critical Incident Plan’, ‘Measure of Control’ and Risk assessment for working during the Corona Virus Pandemic; these documents can be found on our website at: <https://www.steadysteps.co.uk/>

***‘Everything we do is always in the best interest of the children in our care’***

**Outdoor play:**

In our Critical Incident plan, we have identified the need for children to remain outside as much as possible. The benefits of outdoor play extend beyond minimising the risk of transmission of COVID-19, being outside is important for the absorbtion of Vitamin D. We all know that Vitamin D is essential for healthy bone development and growth, but Vitamin D also acts as a hormone and helps in regulating the immune system and the cell growth I am sure you will agree, anything that boost our immune system in the current climate has got to be a good thing. Between the months of March and July we were open to key worker children and later all children, these children did not have access to indoors other than lunch and to use the toilets, during this time we cannot recall having any child go off sick due to stomach upsets or any of the common illnesses we would normally see on a weekly basis (this includes headlice).

Another benefit to children being outside is the enhancement of the Early Years Curriculum, this includes physical development, social skills, problem solving and risk taking, imagination and language. We are confident that our out door learning offers children the opportunity to explore and be creative, they can access activities to support all areas of their learning without compromise.

As the weather begins to change the children will still have access to the gardens, we have adequate shelter from the rain (although the staff and children are big advocates of Rain doesn’t stop Play). If the children are appropriately dressed for the weather, the outside still remains the healthiest place for children, cold and flu virus thrive in warm enclosed buildings especially once we have to turn the heating on. All staff will be mindful of when the weather changes and if and when children need to be encouraged to come inside in the same way we do every Autumn/Winter. The Nursery children will soon have access to their indoor environment as they do not move around as much or as fast to maintain their core temperature. Please be reassured that staff will monitor the situation and act accordingly and in the best interest of your child.

**COVID – 19:**

A Social Distancing Statement will be shared on your child’s Tapestry account with this News Letter. If you are planning on going on holiday or have just returned from holiday you will be asked to complete a form asking where you went, dates and your return date.

If your child is unwell (not just COVID -19 related symptoms) please can we insist that they remain at home until fully recovered, when unwell children’s immune systems are already compromised so it is not advisable that they come into the setting. We will also be asking you to sign an agreement relating to our COVID 19 practices. We are taking children’s surface temperature (forehead) daily, we know a raised temperature is not conclusive to a COVID 19 diagnosis but it does indicate that your child is not completely well for what ever reason and you will be asked to collect them.

**Tapestry:**

We are now using Tapestry and our website to publish Newsletters and Information. Please make sure you have access to your account and read any notices as they are published. Paper copies will only be given out if requested. You will be signposted to any new publications via our Private Facebook page.

**Funding:**

If your child is eligible for the 2-year funding or 30-hour funding please make sure you provide your reference number/code on your funding application form, some of you have already completed this form others will be receiving their forms next week to sign and return asap. Do not forget to apply for the Early Years Pupil Premium if eligible. A copy of Hampshire’s Privacy Statement will be made available on our website.

**Fees:**

Invoices will be going out the week of 14th September, all fees must be paid in full on or before the due date shown on the invoice (usually 28th of each month). You are at risk of losing your child’s place in our setting if these fees are not paid in full).

**Change of Clothes:**

Please can you provide a change of clothes for your child. All belongings must be clearly marked.

**Juice Bottles:**

Thank you for providing your child with their own juice cup, they are all enjoying filling them up from the water cooler.

**Parent access to the building:**

We are happy for one parent at a time to meet with a member of staff in our Lobby, Mrs Duffield has worked hard revamping this area to make it a warm, inviting space where you can access information and meet with your key person or the Manager. You will be asked to use hand sanitiser and wear a face covering. Younger siblings are welcome to come in with you.

**School Dates:**

The school year Calendar will be published on our website, I have also provided a link to the document on our Private Facebook page. If you would like your own copy please let me know.

**If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me;**

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