**SPRING HALF TERM NEWSLETTER**

** This half term…**

What a fantastic half term we have had at Pre-School! Our topic of ‘Fantasy creatures and animals in our world’ has been brilliant for the children’s imaginations and conversational skills. They have been asking lots of questions about the different creatures and we have all been finding out things we never knew before! In week one, we focused on dinosaurs. This was really interesting as we had to explain to the children that dinosaurs were real but that they were not around anymore. The children completed lots of digs for fossils, compared the different types of dinosaurs and did the ‘dinosaur stomp’ song. In week two, we discovered all about underwater creatures and mermaids. The children loved exploring our underwater ‘cave’ in the garden with their homemade oxygen tanks and jelly fish! We made our own life-sized mermaid to go on display too! In week three, we looked at minibeasts and monsters. Lots of bug hunts and drawings of insects were completed. We also made bug/monster symmetry printing pictures. Our monsters were all given a different type of emotion. This helped us to explore our own emotions, how our actions can affect others and what things make us feel happy, excited, sad, angry etc. The children were really good at expressing themselves and identifying times when they had felt certain emotions in their lives. In week four, we explored fairies and knights. The children made some impressive knight’s shields, built castles for the fairies and knights, did some fairy yoga and even made some magic potion for the fairies to keep pre-school safe at the weekend. In week five, we discovered unicorns and safari animals. We made ‘unicorn rainbow’ bath bombs. The children helped to mix the ingredients, chose two colours each and their favourite scent. They moulded them into a ball shape, waited for them to dry and took them home for bath time. We built conservation centres for the safari animals with junk modelling and talked about where they might come from and their different characteristics. In week 6, we have been exploring Chinese New Year, Dragons and Valentine’s day. It is ‘Year of the Ox’ so we have been learning about Ox’s, the story of Chinese New Year and made our own Chinese lanterns and dragons. We also explored Valentine’s Day and talked about who we love, why and how we show we care for people. The children enjoyed decorating some yummy heart biscuits. It has been wonderful to see the children’s creativity flourish during this topic and hearing the discussions emerging after each activity.

**Test and Trace in the holidays**

Although we are closed from Friday 12th February at 3pm until Monday 22nd February at 9am, we still need to be informed of any positive cases of coronavirus, if any families are self-isolating due to coronavirus symptoms or have been asked to isolate via the test and trace service during the half term break. Please send Jo a message via the Famly app with the details.

** Lateral flow tests for staff**

School and Pre-School staff have now been offered voluntary lateral flow tests as an extra precaution. These are being taken twice weekly and must be done in the morning for them to pick up if coronavirus is present. This may mean that we have to close the Pre-School at short notice if there was a positive case amongst staff. Please keep an eye on the app as this is how you would be notified.

**** **Family photos**

At Pre-School we have a ‘Pre-School Family Album’ which has a page for each child to add pictures of their families. This is great for us to get to know them, for settling them and for engaging them in conversation. It would be great for more children to get the opportunity to add to the album so, if you haven’t already, please either send in some printed photos of your child, their family, close friends and pets or email some to us at hello@newdigatepreschool.co.uk and we will print them off.

** .…****Next half term**

Our topic after the half term break will be ‘People who help us.’ This will have a particular focus on those services that have been of particular importance during the coronavirus pandemic. We will use a range of activities to explore these groups of people:

* Doctors, Nurses, Paramedics and scientists
* Teachers and parents (home-schooling)
* Shopkeepers and farmers
* Postmen, delivery drivers and refuse collectors
* Police officers and firefighters

We will use circle time activities, songs, messy play, arts, crafts, roleplay, stories and video clips to bring the children’s imagination to life.

The final week of the term will be EASTER themed.

** Breakfast club**

Miss Stanford and Miss Johnson run the breakfast club everyday from 8am to 9am. It costs £5 per day and is initially only for our 3- and 4-year olds. Due to the COVID-19 guidance to keep wrap around care groups to a small consistent group, bookings must be made for each half term in advance. We cannot have ad-hoc bookings at this time. In order to request a space, parents will need to message the manager (Joanne Johnson) on the Famly app, requesting the days you require, and she will reply to confirm whether there is a space available for your child. Due to the required adult to child ratios, places are limited.

**** **Pre-School fees**

A reminder that invoices are sent out half-termly. Fees will need to be paid in full by the end of each half term to ensure that your child retains their place for the next half term. **ALL FEES MUST BE PAID IN FULL BY 3PM ON THURSDAY 11TH FEBRUARY TO RETAIN YOUR CHILD’S PLACE.**

** World Book Day – Thursday 4th March**

World book day is on Thursday 4th March 2021 this year. The children who attend Pre-School on a Thursday are invited to dress up as one of their favourite book characters on this day. We will have a day of story book activities to enjoy.

** Nappies**

As we have such a large number of children in nappies currently, it is quite a considerable expense for the Pre-School to cover. It would be much appreciated if those families with children in nappies could contribute a pack of nappies and wipes as and when you are able to. The sizes we use are 4, 5 and 6. This will mean that we can spend any remaining funds we have on resources for the children.

**Children’s clothing**

Please can we remind you that all your child’s belongings must be labelled with their full name. Also, we spend lots of time outdoors all year round so please make sure your child comes into Pre-School adequately dressed for cold and wet weather. On colder days, hats and gloves would be great too. Please remember to replenish your child’s spare clothes if they have been sent home dirty.

 ** Timely collection**

Please can we remind you of the importance of the prompt collection of your children at the end of their sessions. The teachers have other commitments to get to after 3pm as well as extra cleaning to do due to coronavirus. For those children who attend the morning session only, a prompt collection at 12pm is vital. We are at full capacity for most sessions and if children are collected late then we are likely to go over our staff to child ratios which we cannot allow to happen**.**

** Key dates for your diary**

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| Half term | Monday 15th February – Friday 19th February |
| Back to Pre-School | Monday 22nd February (NOT an inset day for Pre-School) |
| World Book Day | Thursday 4th March |
| Individual Pre-School photos | Wednesday 24th March (subject to change due to COVID restrictions) |
| Spring term ends | Thursday 1st April |
| Summer term starts | Mon 19th April |
| Half term | Monday 31st May - Friday 4th June |
| End of Summer Term | Tuesday 20th July |