Wednesday 6th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome back. We all hope you were able to make the best out of the Christmas situation and Happy New Year to you all.

It has been a bit of a strange start to the term with the pandemic clearly still dominating everyone’s lives, we were surprised to remain open to ALL children. However, we have had good support from parents. The Early Years Alliance have been gaining information to reassure us all as a setting. As a setting continuing care for the children, it is in the interest of the children and this outweighs the extremely low risk of this age range contracting the Corona Virus and spreading it into the community. I have attached the rationale for the Department of Education’s decision.

We will continue as normal to provide as always, a safe, secure, and stimulating environment for the children. Your responsibility as a parent is to help us keep our systems of controls in place, by following the Hands, face, and space rule in all circumstances and specifically at the drop off and collection times. If you are now bringing siblings to these times please keep them where possible and safe away from others, i.e. other parents and staff. Please continue to keep us up to date with any corona virus concerns and if anyone in your family is isolating.

On a lighter note, I am sure the children have been talking about our new pet and if not, you have. seen the pictures on Facebook. Stan is our new pet tortoises adopted by us from a member of the Community, we are so happy with this opportunity and we are looking forward to taking care of Stan and developing our new veggie patch for him here at Pre-School.

This term we are taking part in the Mile a day with the children, where we run around the field for 15 minutes a day, this is great for the children’s physical development and getting lots of fresh air and being out and about.

We are still offering our pre-school lunches for the small cost of £2.00 per day, this is a varied and healthy option we will be uploading the menu to Tapestry and the website by the end of the week. Please speak to a member of staff if you would like to book your child in for lunches.

The themes for the rest of this half term will be based around, New year and family, Weather, Technology, Around the world, story telling week and finally Valentines.

If your child is self- isolating, we will be sending home some home learning packs and some links for you to use for the children so watch out on your post boxes.

**Fourth coming events**

Valentines Lunch Thursday 11th February – menu will follow shortly but if you would like to book your child in for this additional lunch please let us know asap and this will be at a cost of £2.50 for the lunch and if you require the additional hours at our hourly rate.

We are really looking forward to the term ahead, please all stay safe.

Kind regards

Megan Josselyn

Manager

DfE provides update on rationale behind decision to keep early years providers open

On

Jan 5, 2021

The Department for Education has provided the Alliance with a response to queries on why early years providers have been asked to remain open during the national lockdown in England, while schools have been instructed to close.

**Following a meeting with children and families minister Vicky Ford earlier today, the DfE shared the below response:**

* The reason schools have been restricted is not that they are unsafe but because additional measures are needed to contain the spread of the virus. The wider restrictions in place as part of the national lockdown to contain the spread of the virus in the community enable us to continue prioritising keeping nurseries and childminders open, supporting parents and delivering the crucial care and education needed for our youngest children.
* Early years settings remain low risk environments for children and staff. 0-5 year olds continue to have the lowest confirmed rates of coronavirus of all age groups, and there is no evidence that the new variant of coronavirus disproportionately affects young children. Evidence shows that pre-school children are less susceptible to infection and are not playing a driving role in transmission. There is no evidence the new strain of the virus causes more serious illness in either children or adults and there continues to be strong evidence that children are much less susceptible to severe clinical disease than older people.
* PHE advice remains that the risk of transmission and infection is low if early years settings follow the system of controls, which reduce risks and create inherently safer environments.
* Early years settings have been open to all children since 1 June and there is no evidence that the early years sector has contributed to a rise in virus cases within the community. Early evidence from SAGE showed that early years provision had a smaller relative impact on transmission rate than primary schools, which in turn had a smaller relative impact than secondary schools.
* Early years childcare providers were one of the first sectors to have restrictions lifted last summer, in recognition of the key role they play in society. Childminders and nursery staff across the country have worked hard to keep settings open through the pandemic so that young children can be educated, and parents can work. The earliest years are the most crucial point of child development and attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children’s social and emotional development. We continue to prioritise keeping early years settings open in full because of the clear benefits to children’s education and wellbeing and to support working parents. Caring for the youngest age group is not something that can be done remotely.