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**NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2022**

Dear Parents and Carers

We hope you are all enjoying a lovely half term!

**Learning**

So much learning went on last half term and we are really proud of the progress the children have made! They are developing really good relationships with each other; they have been working on sharing, taking turns and problem solving. The children understand how to be kind to each other, invite others to play and keep their play going by listening and responding to each other. They are developing their ability to empathise and see things from another perspective too.

The children have really enjoyed their imaginative play: Chinese restaurant; hairdressers; superheroes; babies and the home corner. They are developing their storylines and increasing their use and understanding of new words within their play. They are also enjoying mark making and creative activities -the children’s fine motor control is really improving!

**Healthy Lunchboxes**

At St Mary’s Preschool we promote healthy lifestyles and this includes healthy lunchboxes. We do not encourage children to bring cordial/squash in their lunchboxes and do not provide it ourselves, so we would really appreciate it if you could not put sugary drinks in their lunches such as squash. If your child needs a drink at lunchtime, we offer milk or water at no cost to you. A small treat is ok, but generally we would encourage children to eat the other elements of their lunch first, before any treats, such as chocolate, cake or crisps. If you would like any advice on healthy lunchboxes please ask a member of staff or visit the NHS Change4Life website, which has some good ideas:

Lunchbox ideas and recipes – Healthier Families - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

**We are also a nut free setting, so please do not send any nuts or nut products with your child.**

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**World Book Day – Thursday 3rd March**

This year St Mary’s Preschool will be taking part in World Book Day this will give the children (and staff) an opportunity to dress up as their favourite book character. All children will be given a £1 World Book Day book whether they take part or not.



**Red Nose Day – Friday 18th March**

This year we will be supporting Red Nose Day. The staff and children are invited to come to school dressed in red or silly clothes.

**Preschool Easter Church Service – Friday 22 April**

Because we break up early for Easter, the preschool Easter church service will be held after the Easter holidays on Friday 22 April. Please meet at Church at 9.00am. Parents are invited to stay for a short service and help us return the children to the Church Hall to continue the preschool session afterwards.

**Information updates**

Please don’t forget to inform us if you move address, change your telephone number or any other details change from your registration forms.

**Reminders:**

* Please remember to bring in spare clothes for your child – we often like to get wet or messy!
* Please ensure all your clothes are named – particularly coats/ hats/ gloves – it makes it much easier to find their owners at the end of the day!
* If you have borrowed any of our spare clothes, please can we ask for you to return them as we are getting short.

**Health and safety Policy:**

* If your child is generally unwell, please do not send them to pre-school.
* Any child that has sickness or diarrhoea must remain away from pre-school for at **least 48 hours** since their last bout of illness.

**30 hours childcare**

Please can we ask you to remember to re-check your codes if you are entitled to the additional 15 hours funding. You may also be eligible for tax free childcare. Please speak to Tracey if you have any queries or questions. If you need further information please go to:

[Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/)

**Hungry minds**

‘Hungry minds’ is a government initiative to encourage children to talk. In this modern world we can forget that children learn from basic interactions and that we can encourage vocabulary in simple ways such as talking to babies when in the supermarket or encouraging children to sing or talk about the things they see in the environment. This is such a helpful website and I would encourage parents/carers to take a look.

[Hungry Little Minds – Simple fun, activities for kids aged 0 – 5 (campaign.gov.uk)](https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/)

**Foodbank Voucher**

We can refer families for a voucher. If you feel this would help, please speak to Tracey or email her in confidence to stmarys5@hotmail.co.uk

Details of food bank locations and opening times can be found at [Bedford Foodbank | Helping Local People in Crisis](https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk/)

**Dates for your diary**

World Book Day – Thursday 3 March

Red Nose Day – Friday 18 March

End of Term Friday - Friday 1 April

Summer term begins – Wednesday 20 April

Preschool Easter Church Service – Friday 22 April (meet at St Mary’s Church at 9.00am)

May Day – Monday 2 May

Half Term - 30 May – 3 June

End of Term Friday 22 July

Autumn term begins – Monday 5 September (TBC)

We look forward to spending time with all of the children and have lots of Spring activities planned to help your children to learn and develop.

Take care and stay safe.

Tracey, Lina, Lorna, Allyson, Caroline, Michelle, Giuseppina and Katie