

Information for New Parents

NOTICEBOARD – where to find information

Playgroup's Notice boards are located in the Parish Hall foyer - please make sure you check them regularly. In the foyer you will also find an Information File for parents (this contains our policies, copies of letters issued, topics of interest etc).

The Staff Notice board displays interesting articles and facts on child development, also, information on current themes and activities and Early Years Free Entitlement. To support our themes and activities we sometimes need extra resources – a list of items required is displayed here e.g. cereal boxes, bits of wrapping paper. We are very grateful for any contributions parents provide

The committee notice board displays details of meetings, parent's rota, fundraising events, outings and other playgroup matters.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE - how to make your concerns known

St Joseph's believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our playgroup. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate staff member or the Supervisor on the day(s) your child attends. Problems can often be sorted out simply by drawing attention to them.

If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns/complaints. You can find our policies on this website.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

We feel that discipline is not something to be imposed by adults on children, rather a system whereby people accept certain limitations on their behaviour to the good of themselves and the group. Rather than ensuring children obey orders we prefer there to be order. This requires rules whether for safety, to protect others or to protect property. The children learn from the adults so we ensure that we are all consistent. We actively encourage and praise good behaviour thus stressing the positive behaviour as well as addressing the negative. A copy of our behaviour management policy can be found on the website.

The following are “**Playgroup Rules**” which we promote during the session with the children:

- Good listening
- Good walking (in the playgroup rooms)
- Good sitting (keeping arms and legs to ourselves)
- We look after our toys
- We look after each other

If you have any concerns about your child and their behaviour or that of another child please talk to the playgroup supervisor or your child's key person.

SPECIAL NEEDS

St Joseph's welcomes all children and seeks to be an inclusive and safe place for all. If your child has any special needs it is essential that we are aware of it. No information is too trivial, the more knowledge we have about an individual's needs, the better equipped we are to provide the care required.

Special needs include anything which may mean that the child requires a little extra care and attentions, such as:

- Physical disabilities
- Learning or behavioural difficulties
- Visual or hearing impairments
- Illness or allergies
- Different cultural background or language
- Recent experiences which may cause emotional upset (such as bereavement).

Our Playgroup aims to have regard to the DFES Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. A copy of our Special Needs Policy is on this website.

PROCEDURES FOR THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Children enter with their parent/carer via the double red fire doors of the parish centre. They may then wait in the Parish Hall, firstly using the coat rack provided in the foyer for hanging coats and bags. Parents should note that they are responsible for their children before the session starts and the children are welcomed to playgroup. (FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY REASONS PLEASE DO NOT LET YOUR CHILDREN PLAY ON THE STAGE OR WITH ANY APPARATUS OR EQUIPMENT WHICH IS LAID OUT.)

Toys from home are not encouraged as this can be distressful for the child if they are lost or are unwilling to share. A special toy/item can be bought to show staff and then taken home by parent or either left in the home tray or on display as appropriate.

At 9.15/ 12.15 children are welcomed by a member of staff who also makes an entry in the register. At 9.30 am/12.30pm the doors are locked and latecomers must use the doorbell on the single red door (to the left of the fire doors) to gain entry. A Signing In/Out book is kept in the upper lobby for parents to sign their children in late. This book must also be signed if parents/carers collect their child before the end of a session. The parent helper and any visitors must also sign this book.

Parents leave their child in playgroup once they have been welcomed by a member of staff. Parents are always welcome to stay on should their child be unsettled on arrival.

Ten minutes before the end of a session staff will open the double doors to allow Parents/Carers to wait in the foyer. The children say their prayer and sing their 'goodbye' song and then wait for their names to be called before they may leave. A member of staff will tick the register to note the child's departure.

All parents sign forms agreeing to give written permission if their child is to be collected by anyone other than the parent/carer. Any change from the normal person collecting the child must also be noted in the Collection Book on that day (located on the table by the stage before going down to playgroup). A child will not be released unless prior permission has been given. If a child is regularly collected by someone other than their parent/carer a Regular Collection Authorisation Form should be completed (available from staff).

If your child is absent due to sickness or holidays please fill in an Absence Sheet available from staff. Absence for long periods of time (other than due to illness) may affect a child's funding

under the Early Years Free Entitlement system. We are required to keep a record of absences longer than two weeks.

Record Keeping

We keep records individually for all playgroup children. These will be focused on a child's positive development and noted improvements for the duration of their time at Playgroup. The records will be compiled from regular observations and also from general feedback from the staff noted on a day to day basis. Your child's Key person is responsible for collating a portfolio of their work and achievements and keeping you informed of their progress.

All records kept are confidential. Parents/guardians have free access to their child's progress record and at the end of their stay with playgroup the records will be handed on to you.

Parental Involvement

Being a parent helper provides an ideal opportunity for parents (or others) – we welcome fathers, mothers, other relatives, other carers including childminders - to participate in an ordinary playgroup day. As a parent helper you are invited to join in and enjoy the experience. The children in turn enjoy their parents' involvement. During the free play time you may wish to help with the craft, read stories or just be there for your child. We want you to feel comfortable and so will take our lead from you.

During the latter part of the session we greatly appreciate help with some routine duties which very much aid the running of playgroup sessions, such as clearing away after snack time and general tidying. A list of suggested duties is posted in the playgroup kitchen. Please check this when it is your parent helper day and if in any doubt please talk with a member of staff.

Parents with younger siblings are encouraged to bring these children along as they often enjoy the experience too. If you are unable to help at the session allocated to you on the parent rota please try and swap with another parent or let the Parent Help Rota organiser/a member of staff know.

We also welcome parents wishing to take part in a session by sharing their own interests, skills and experiences with the children e.g. musical ability, local events/history information, collections of usual things, etc. Previously we have had parents talking about nursing, being a policeman and their pets. The children have greatly enjoyed and benefited from these experiences. Please talk to a member of staff if you would like to do this.

Finally, we ask parents to remember the following:

- Respect the children's confidentiality, should they observe anything whilst helping in playgroup
- If there is a dispute between children please advise a member of staff rather than deal with it direct yourself
- Please note that parent helpers may not have unsupervised or sole access to children, e.g. taking children to the toilet.

Any parents who experience difficulty with any of the above please advise a member of staff.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Special biscuits or cakes may be brought for the children to take home at the end of the session. No sweets please. Please take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products.

TOILET

It is preferable that your child is out of nappies (day time) and is able to take themselves to the toilet. However, a member of staff is always willing to accompany them, encouraging their independence in this area, until they have the confidence to go on their own.

We appreciate some children have not quite mastered this and, therefore, pull-ups are acceptable. However, should these need to be changed during the session they will be returned to you as playgroup has no means of safe disposal of pull-ups. In accordance with the Statutory Framework for EYFS you will be asked to sign a book which informs you that we needed to change your child during the session. Please don't feel embarrassed about this – we know accidents happen and are happy to deal with them!

Playgroup has spare clothing available, which we will require you to wash and return, as necessary. You may provide spare clothes in named bag and hand to Playgroup staff if you wish.

CLOTHING

Our aim is to promote confidence and independence in our children, and to avoid any distressing accidents. Clothing that is easy to manage will help them achieve this i.e. pull-on trousers, no buttoned or tight cuffs, no belts with buckles, and dungarees only if the child is fully capable of taking them off and putting them on him/ herself (in order to go to the toilet themselves).

Whilst we do provide aprons for craft activities and messy play, sometimes clothing will get soiled, so we recommend that your child wears suitable clothing i.e. not 'best'.

Sweatshirts and T-shirts with the playgroup name on can be purchased through Playgroup. There is absolutely no obligation to buy these but some parents feel it solves the 'what to wear' dilemma and gives the children a sense of belonging especially when they see their older brothers and sisters wearing their school uniforms.

SICKNESS - We request that children must not be brought to Playgroup if they are suffering from any of the following infections:

Chicken pox	Conjunctivitis	German measles
Hand, foot or mouth disease		Impetigo
Measles	Mumps	Scabies
Scarlet fever	Slapped face	Untreated head lice
Vomiting and diarrhoea (with or without specified diagnosis)		Whooping cough

We need to consider other children attending, pregnant mothers, those on medication and those children with a poor immune system or special need.

In order to minimise the spread of infection, please keep your child at home for at least 24 hours if they have bad cold and 48 hrs in case of sickness or diarrhoea. For other illnesses advice should be sought from an appropriate health professional as to the recommended time the child should be kept away from Playgroup.

In the event of infectious diseases e.g. chicken pox, please let us know so that we can pass the information on to other parents. This also applies if you have had to treat your child for head lice, threadworm, etc.

If a child becomes ill during a playgroup session then a member of staff will contact the parent/guardian or, if unavailable, will be in touch with the child's named emergency contact. NB Please remember to keep us up to date of any changes in contact information.

If your child has been absent from Playgroup we would be grateful if you would fill in an Absence Sheet (located on the table by the stage before going down to playgroup) and hand to the member of staff registering the children.

Administration of Medicines Policy - please speak to member of staff. We only administer prescribed medicines.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

At St Joseph's Pre-School we believe that the health & safety of children is of paramount importance. We are committed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety & welfare of the children, parents, staff, volunteers and other visitors. We will, in so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that:

- We provide adequate control of health & safety risks
- Risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Information, instruction, training and supervision is provided for employees
- We provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- We consult with our employees on matters affecting health & safety
- Procedures are in place for safe handling and use of substances
- Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with current fire regulations
- We maintain safe and healthy working conditions, and
- We shall revise and review this policy as necessary at regular intervals

Overall responsibility for health & safety is that of the Committee. A designated member of the Committee is responsible for reviewing health & safety policies and procedures, carrying out the risk assessments and bringing other health & safety issues to the attention of the Committee. In addition a designated member of staff has day to day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is put into practice.

All employees, parents and visitors have a responsibility to:

- Co-operate with the committee and the designated member of staff responsible on health and safety matters
- Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health & safety
- Take reasonable care for their own health & safety
- Report all health & safety concerns to an appropriate person (member of staff)

Refer to the Health & Safety Policy for further details, available on request.

USE YOUR CAMERA AND VIDEO COURTEOUSLY CODE

A guide for parents who wish to use photography and/or video a playgroup event.

Generally photographs and videos for playgroup and family use are a source of innocent pleasure and pride which can enhance the self esteem for children and their families. By following some simple guidelines we can proceed safely and with regard to the law.

- Remember that parents and carers attend playgroup events at the invitation of the Management Committee and staff.
- The Managing Committee/Staff have the responsibility to decide if photograph and videoing of a playgroup performance/event is permitted.
- The Managing Committee/Staff have the responsibility to decide the conditions that will apply in order that children are kept safe and that the event is not disrupted and children and staff not distracted.
- Parents and carers can use photographs and video taken at playgroup events for their own personal use only. Such photos and videos cannot be sold and must not be put on the web/internet due to existing Data Protection legislation, which in such circumstance is likely to be contravened.
- Recording or/photographing other than for private use would require the consent of all the other parents whose children may be included in the images.
- Parents and carers must follow guidance from staff as to when photography and videoing is permitted and where to stand in order to minimise disruption to the activity.
- Parents and carers must not photograph or video children changing for performances or events.
- If you are accompanied or represented by people that the playgroup staff do not recognise they may need to check out who they are if they are using a camera or video.