

Stepping Stones Pre-school Playgroup,

Avonway Community Centre

36 Shaftsbury Street.

Hampshire. SP6 1JF

Tel: 01425 653517

NEWSLETTER

November 2019

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Welcome back, we hope you all had a lovely break! We have lots of fun things planned for this half term and have included all the key dates at the bottom of the letter. We will be looking at ‘People who help us’ and are looking forward to a trip to Fordingbridge Fire Station. Look out for more information on Nursery Rhythm week later on this month. We will also be celebrating, Bonfire night, Remembrance Day and of course Christmas!

**Thank You!**

Thank you very much for all your harvest produce kindly donated last term. The members of the lunch club at the Avonway enjoyed the children’s singing and appreciated their harvest gifts. In return, all the children received a little loaf which we hope they enjoyed. Thank you for your support.

**Contact details**

Please can you make sure you tell us of any changes as soon as possible so we are always able to contact you during a session if we need to.

**Absence**

Please can you tell us if your child is going to be absent. We do miss them when they don’t come in. Also, a little reminder that children who have had an upset tummy need to stay off pre-school for 48 hours after the last episode occurs.

**Children starting school in September 2020**

Please note that if your child is due to start school in September 2020 you will need to apply for a place. This is not an automatic process. For more information on how to do this, please go to:

**www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions**

Here you will find information on the process and a link to apply for a school place on-line. It is very important that you do this within the set time frame in order for your child to get a place at school. The application process is now open and closes on January 15th 2020. If you have any queries at all regarding this, please do come and speak to a member of staff and we will do our best to help. If you do not have access to a computer, you are welcome to use one at pre-school.

**Forest Schools**

Forest Schools starts again on Friday 8th November. The weather has got considerably colder so please can we ask if your child is attending, that they have suitable clothing. Layers work well as they can be removed or put back on as needed. Hats and gloves are essential! Forest Schools runs in all weather but if conditions are too bad then we will make alternative arrangements.

**Indoor shoes**

In an attempt to keep pre-school a clean environment for children to play we will be introducing something new. In January we will be asking all children attending to bring in a named pair of indoor shoes which can be kept in pre-school. These could be slippers or pumps (the type you have for school p.e). We just ask that they are clean. We will provide a named P.E type bag to keep them in at pre-school. We will then ask the children to change into their indoor shoes on arrival and put their outdoor shoes in the bag. They will need to change into outdoor shoes for playing outside. Please can these be named too.

**Trussell Trust Christmas Box Appeal**

This year we will be collecting for the Christmas Box appeal. These gifts are taken to Bulgaria by the Trussell Trust themselves, to ensure that they get to the people most in need. Destinations can include orphanages, Roma communities, women’s refuges, rural schools, prisoner’s families and refugees. The age ranges they collect for are Male/ Female 0-1/ 1-3/ 4-6/ 7-10/ 11-15

This is completely voluntary with no obligation at all. We also realise that making up a whole shoe box can be expensive so if you prefer, we will be collecting single items that can be used to make up boxes or added to existing boxes. The Trussell Trust have come up with a list of ideas if you are not sure what can be included. They do tend to get more boxes for girls so ask you to consider including items for one of the male categories.

**Items can include:**

***Toiletries-*** *soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, facecloth, sponge, wet wipes, comb, brush, deodorant (roll-on only), razors, shaving foam*

***New clothes-*** *gloves, scarf, hat, underwear, socks, baby-grows*

***Stationery-*** *pens, pencils, notepads, erasers, colouring books*

***Toys-*** *teddies, jigsaws, balls, dolls*

***Other-*** *make-up (new only), sewing kits, candles, small household tools, sweets, hair accessories.*

*Please note that they are unable to accept foodstuffs (except sweets and chocolate), seeds, books, talc, aerosols, medicines or pills.*

Alternatively, each shoe box requires a £2.00 donation towards the transport costs. If you feel that you are able to contribute towards this instead or in addition we will pass this onto the Trussell Trust.

If you have any empty shoe boxes in good condition or Christmas wrapping paper, these will be gratefully received also!

If you would like more information, please visit. [***www.trusselltrust.org/christmas-boxes***](http://www.trusselltrust.org/christmas-boxes)

**If you would like to take part, bring in any items before Thursday 14th November- Thank you!**

**Cold weather**

We have been lucky that the weather has been very mild recently but we would like to remind parents of our emergency closure procedure should the situation change! Stepping Stones endeavours to open whatever the weather but in case of extreme weather conditions such as heavy snow, we may be forced to close for staffing or safety reasons. Where possible, we will try to call you to let you know of a closure but if you are unsure, please check the Hampshire County Councilwebsite and follow the instructions for school closures: [**www.hants.gov.uk**](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

**Warm Clothes**

Please can you make sure your child has some warm clothes and **a coat** to wear now it is getting colder. We won’t let them outside if they don’t and they do like to play outside whatever the weather. Hats and gloves are essential but please can they be named as they do have a habit of getting mixed up! We endeavour to keep track of all the children’s clothing but cannot be held responsible for any mix ups.

**Fire Station visit**

On Monday 11th November, as part of our ‘people who help us’ week, we will be taking the children to the Fire Station where Fordingbridge fire brigade will show us around the building, engines and equipment. This promises to be a fun morning! If your child is not in on that day, you are still very welcome to join us but will need to accompany your child. We will be leaving pre-school at 10.30am to walk to the station. If your child is in on that morning but you would like to come too you are very welcome. We will be back at midday for lunch and for those children being picked up.

**Children in Need**

Stepping Stones will be supporting this on Friday 15th November.

If you have any spare change, we will use this to cover a giant Pudsey Bear and donate it to the Children in Need charity. Children are free to dress up that day.

**Christmas in Fordingbridge:**

On Saturday 30th November, Fordingbridge high street will close to traffic as we start the festive season and the Christmas lights are switched on. As in previous years, Stepping Stones will be holding our infamous ‘Teddy Tombola’ in the Avonway Community Centre. We will also have Christmas decorations for sale. We hope you will visit as all the money raised from the event goes back into pre-school. **We will be there from 4pm until 8pm. If anyone is able to help for an hour during that day, we would really appreciate it.**

**Dates for your diary**

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| **Monday 11th November** | Fire Station visit. Leaving pre-school at 10.30am |
| **Thursday 14th November** | Shoe box appeal items in |
| **Friday 15th November** | Children in Need Appeal- Please could children bring in loose change to cover Pudsey Bear. |
| **Saturday 30th November** | Christmas in Fordingbridge event- Stepping Stones will be in the Avonway. |
| **Thursday 19th December** | **Christmas Party** and last day of term  Party details to follow shortly |
| **Friday 20st December**  **Monday 23rd December- Friday 4th January** | **Inset Day- No Pre-school**  **CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS** |
| **Monday 6th January** | Return to pre-school |
| **Wednesday 15 January 2020** | Closing date for all applications for a place at school in September 2020 |