**May 2024 Newsletter**

With only 2 months left of this nursery year we have lots to fit in before summer!

Please take time to read this newsletter carefully, taking note of the dates of what’s happening when.

**Focus of interest for learning in May**

Physical skills – fine and gross, Minibeasts, Castles, Growth, Healthy Lifestyles, Media Initiative

**Castles**

Just a brief explanation as to why we have ‘castles’ in our focus of learning this month…

This month is our 57th birthday and we are built on the site of the Ballymena Castle which sadly is no more. The children will be learning about life in the days of castles as well as the history of our own castle. Don’t be surprised if you get a few requests to visit local castles before the end of the month!

\*Important Date\*

Friday 3rd May is the closing date for acceptance of places for both P1 and Pre-school. If you do not accept your child’s offer of a place by this date it may be lost and re-allocated to another child. Please don’t be late – it makes things more complicated and messy than they need to be!

Please inform your child’s class teacher of your child’s placement for next year so we can compile a list for the hallway & Tapestry and to prepare the children for their transition.

**School Fund**

For those who pay £20 school fund money monthly, May fees are now due. Please remember that although these payments are voluntary, they serve to enhance your child’s learning experiences by paying for visitors, treats, play resources etc

Thank you to everyone who has paid into the school fund so promptly and regularly this year. If you are in arrears and are struggling to pay these monthly contributions please speak to your child’s teacher who will arrange a suitable repayment plan.

**School Photographs**

Cool for school will be re-visiting nursery on Tuesday 7th May to take class photographs of the children together with their friends. If your child missed the opportunity to have an individual photo taken back in November and you would like it taken on that day please speak to your child’s class teacher so we can arrange it with the photographer. Please send your child to nursery in their school sweatshirt on that day.

**Colour Day (postponed due to Sun Hat & Shades Day)**

Our next colour day will not be until June . It will definitely be an easy one to finish with - As usual we ask that you don’t go to any additional expense for this event but instead encourage you to help your child find the appropriate colour to wear on the day and generally when out and about. Our colour for June will be ‘your favourite colour’. Play will be extra colourful on colour day! More details to follow.

**Our Journey towards Integrated Education**

As I wrote last month, the public consultation phase for our Case for Change of status is now complete and we are now waiting for the Department for Education to consider our Development proposal and subsequently make a decision regarding our change of status to become an officially Integrated Nursery School. This is an undefined length of time in the process – ‘how long is a piece of string?…’ While we know this will not dramatically change our practice here at Ballymena Nursery School as we consider ourselves to be already very diverse and inclusive, we welcome the opportunity to join the community of Integrated schools in Northern Ireland. We will keep you updated on our progress.

**Stay and Play**

Thank you to everyone who stayed and played at nursery over the past couple of weeks. Hopefully you enjoyed it as much as the children did and found it a great opportunity to see what nursery looks like for your child. If you weren’t able to join us at this time, maybe you will be able to join us for some of our other parent engagement days before the end of term.

**Calling all parents…**

The weather has been very unpredictable again over the past month and while we have managed to do some planting we will still have further opportunities to work with a small group of children to plant herbs and flowers in our garden. If planting is not really your ‘thing’ please be assured that we will also need painters & tidy-uppers. Please speak to you child’s class teacher if you feel you could help out and we will try to find a suitable time. Thanks

**Marvellous Minibeasts Roadshow**

We are excited to have booked a visit from Wee Critters for Friday 31st May. No-one will be expected to touch or hold any creature unless they feel comfortable with it! It looks like it will be a really fun, interactive experience regardless of whether your child holds a creature or not. If you feel your child will be apprehensive about this visit please speak to their class teacher so we can support them appropriately. Thanks.

**Sun safety**

Please see our Sun Safety Policy and remember to send your child to nursery equipped to play outside with closed in shoes, a sun hat and suncream applied.

<https://www.datocms-assets.com/28712/1595871984-sun20safety20policy.pdf>

**Hats and Shades Day**

Fundraising event to raise awareness of the importance of taking care in the sun while raising money for Cancer Fund for Children N.I. Please allow your child to wear their sunhats & sunglasses to nursery (names applied please!!) on Friday 10th May 2024

Suggested donation £1

**RNLI Visit**

As we think about spending more time outdoors and look forward to days out at the beach, river or lakeside, we are delighted to have someone from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute to visit and highlight the importance of staying safe near water. If you would like to donate a small amount towards the work of the RNLI, please send it to nursery with your child in time for our visit on Wednesday 29th May. Thank you.

**Dates for your diary:-**

Friday 3rd May Closing date for application acceptances (4pm)

Tuesday 7th May School photographs

Friday 10th May Sun Hats & Shades Day

Wednesday 29th May RNLI visit

Friday 31st May Marvellous Minibeasts Roadshow

**Please note Nursery will be *closed* on the dates below for Bank holidays and Staff Development Days**

**Monday 6th May**

**Thursday 23rd May**

**Friday 24th May**

**Monday 27th May**

Advance Notice

Fun Activity Day Friday 7th June @ 10.15am/2pm (more details to follow)

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Hopefully we will all be able to enjoy some sunshine this month. Have fun and stay safe.

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