



Footsteps Pre-School Playgroup

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News and Information

11th September 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope you have all had a lovely Summer and what a Summer it was with so much sunshine (which now seems so far away with the appearance of rain). We welcome you and your children to a new term at Footsteps.

A BIG welcome to all our new children and their families. We are looking forward to getting to know you all and play an important part in your child's early years learning and development. We are pleased to be welcoming back some of our children that enjoyed Footsteps with us last year too and we hope that they all enjoy spending time with us again. We have already noticed what good little role models they are to the new children.

SETTLING IN

The children are settling in very well, but if you have any concerns at all, please do not hesitate to discuss them with the Aunties or myself. We know and appreciate that this can be an anxious time for the children and their parents/carers and we want to do all we can to make their start a pleasant and happy one. Please find attached the EYFS Guidance for Parents booklet:-

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/09/4Children_ParentsGuide_Sept_2015v4WEB1.pdf which provides a very interesting and worthwhile read. If you have any questions about it, please speak with a member of the staff team.

IMPORTANT: for the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care, if someone other than yourself is picking up your child from Footsteps, please ensure we are aware of whom they are and they are on the 'pick up' list or we will not let your child go home with them. Please do not leave any plastic carrier bags inside childrens backpacks as the children have access to the cloakroom when they are getting their coats and it could be a danger to them. All medications need to be handed to a member of staff and the 'permission for medication to be administered' book signed and dated. We need to be aware of any allergies/medical conditions and we will ask you to complete a care plan please. We are a NUT FREE setting and take allergies and conditions very seriously where children are concerned. Please **DO NOT** open the doors at Footsteps to enter or leave as this is the staff's responsibility to keep all children safe. Thank you.

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NAMES IN COATS/SHOES

Can I please ask that parents/carers bring a coat/rain coat with attached hood for their child, as it is too cold to play out without one on some days. Could you also ensure that it is marked with the child's name or initials, helping to avoid any problems should there be two or more of the same garments in the cloakroom. Please ensure your child's initials are in their own shoes as they change their shoes on a daily basis to wear wellingtons and dressing up shoes. Even though we do have spare wellington boots, some children like to wear their own footwear so you may wish to bring a pair of wellington boots for your child to be kept at Footsteps as we do like to take the children outdoors in all weathers when safe to do so.

FEE PAYMENT

Fees are payable one week in advance by BACS or childcare vouchers. Please use the link below to find out more details about help with childcare costs that you may be entitled to.

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/tax-credits>

PLAYGROUP CLOTHES

Occasionally, children go home in preschool clothes. This is usually when they have had a little 'toilet' accident, having got wet in the water tray or at the sink or when they get covered in paint (despite wearing aprons!) The paints we use are washable paints and we add washing up liquid to help prevent staining of clothing. We have spare clothes available for the comfort of all the children, please help us to keep them clean and ready for use by washing and returning them to us as soon as possible to ensure we are not left without adequate spare clothes to change the children. We do accept clothes donations if you have any spare items, especially underwear and socks. Thank you.

THEMES

*Settling In *All about me *My family *Autumn

To help your child settle in at Footsteps it would be beneficial to your child if they had something at Footsteps that was familiar to them. As our themes are ourselves and our families, each child will make a book about themselves and their own family. Please could your child bring in a small photograph of themselves and photographs of members of their own family, i.e. parents, siblings, grandparents, pets during the next couple of weeks, (approximately 6 or 7 photos of 3' x 5' size). These books will help reassure your child and begin to form a strong link with Footsteps and their home life. These books will be kept in the book area at Footsteps for your child to look at and share with the Aunties and their friends.

Children sometimes like to bring a toy from home, we do try to discourage this due to toys getting tidied away, broken or lost which causes upset. However we are introducing weeks when all children will be invited to bring their favourite toy, teddy or book from home where they can share at 'show and tell' with the Aunties and their friends. If you are worried about your child having an attachment to a special toy/teddy, please speak to either myself or Auntie Michelle, Deputy Manager.

THE GOLDEN APPLE

Just to let you know that we have achieved the **GOLD** level of this award again last term and are very appreciative of the donations already received at the beginning of this term. The children have been bringing in fruits, vegetables, bread, breadsticks, cheese and crackers to share with their friends at snack time. It means they can try different foods along with fresh drinking water or milk. The children will be taking part in lots of physical activities, dance and movement to music e.g. sticky kids, healthy movers, the animal boogie, obstacle courses and daily outdoor play.

To meet the requirements of the gold level we need to continually provide the children with a choice of healthy snacks, drinks, fresh air and exercise. To help Footsteps continue this goal we welcome donations of fruit which can be brought in and the children can place them in the 'Fruit Basket'. Please note that the lunch club children should not bring their own drinks, we will provide drinks. We are hoping to reduce the intake of sugary drinks and also ask that the children do not bring chocolate or sweets in their lunch box either. Please remember to cut grapes in half longways to reduce the risk of choking.

BIRTHDAYS

Parents in the past have also supported us when celebrating the children's birthdays by providing fruit (strawberries, melon, pineapple, grapes etc.) which can be shared at snack time to comply with our healthy eating policy. We would ask that you do not bring in lolly pops/sweets/biscuits or cakes. We do have a metal Footsteps birthday cake with real candles so the children can blow out the candles so we can celebrate your child's birthday with them. Thank you for your support.

MOBILE PHONES

In line with our mobile phone and ICT policy to safeguard all the children in our care, all staff, students and visitors keep their phones away from the children in a labelled box in the kitchen area. We would therefore ask that parents **DO NOT** answer or use their phone within the **setting, our playground or whilst on the school grounds**. Thank you for your cooperation in this important matter.

ACCIDENTS AT HOME

If your child has an accident at home or on the way to Footsteps, we require you to complete an 'accident before Footsteps' form when you bring your child to Footsteps please. This will ensure your child's medical records are kept up to date and the staff can be aware of any changes in behaviour/character.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

1. OBJECTS THAT CAUSE CHOKING

Could all parents/carers please check the contents of their children's pockets as some children have brought in small chokable objects e.g. beads off hair bobbles, pennies and marbles in the past. Your child may not put things in their mouths, but many of our children still do, so for the safety of all the children, please do not let your child bring anything small into playgroup. Thank you.

2. **No cars should stop or park on the zig zag lines** - even momentarily, because in so doing, the drivers put the safety of all our children at risk. Please think about this when bringing your children to, or collecting them from Footsteps by car. One parent who considers only the needs of their own children can jeopardise the safety of many. **PLEASE ENSURE THAT ANYONE COLLECTING OR DELIVERING YOUR CHILD RECEIVES THIS INFORMATION.**

3. We do have some parents that display blue badges who are welcome to park in the disabled bay and on the yellow lines outside school. If you do not have a blue badge please do not park here. Everything we do at St Andrew's is for the benefit of your children and their safety.

PLEASE DON'T STOP ON THE ZIG ZAG LINES

Children should stay within sight of their parents/carers on the walkway before coming into Footsteps.

Please do not close the gate at the entrance of the school grounds when you leave at 12 noon due to the nursery children's parents/carers requiring access to drop their children off for the afternoon session at 12.30pm. Thank you.

Please keep us up to date with changes of address, home and mobile telephone numbers, change in circumstances etc. as it is important that we can get hold of you quickly should we need to.

We would very much appreciate your co-operation in these matters.

Thanking you all for your support.

**Karen Ramsay
Footsteps Manager**