



## Word from Windmill

September 2016

Welcome to a brand new academic year here at Windmill Pre-School and the first edition of *Word from Windmill*. We are really pleased to be welcoming back lots of familiar returning children and their families and also opening the doors to many new faces. We've got some great activities planned for the children plus some great fundraising opportunities for you to get involved with. We hope you enjoy the forthcoming year with us and look forward to having your support.

### Fundraising

Fundraising is an important role for the Voluntary Management Committee as it allows us to invest in additional new equipment and fund some fun sessions run by outside organisations that other settings may otherwise have to ask parents to pay for. Last year was a busy year and we are very pleased to be able to provide an update on what was organised and raised:

- Windmill was one of Waitrose in Berkhamsted's chosen charities of the month and as a result we received a very welcome cheque for £301. Thank you to everyone that shopped at Waitrose and popped the green tokens in to our charity box.
- In October and May, we held two family photo sessions with Photography by Carrie. This has, and continues to be a very popular activity and we have raised over £100 from sales and fee sessions this year. Carrie will return in October so watch this space for details.
- We held three Textile Recycling initiatives. The total of unwanted textiles converted in to over £120. This is a great achievement so thank you to everyone that donated unwanted items.
- Our Annual Sponsored Walk back in April brought in a record amount of £900. We were completely bowled over by the generosity of everyone that took part and supported our pre-schoolers as we walked around the villages and the National Trust Windmill.
- Our amazing Nativity event and festive visit from Santa, which was supported by the Committee by providing refreshments and a raffle raised over £200. Another great achievement by everyone involved.
- As always, you can help us raise funds for *free* when you shop online with *Easyfundraising*. It is a great way to raise money for Windmill Pre-School and doesn't cost you a penny! Shop online from over 2,700 retailers using the website [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and they'll give a donation to us every time you buy something at no extra cost to you or the pre-school. This year, we have received a cheque for £24 and with Christmas now fast approaching, and inevitably lots of things to buy, you really could help make a difference.

With the additional funds raised through Committee fundraising, we are pleased to have been able to purchase additional resources for the children to benefit from. Last year, this included a sandpit, a bridge for the outside space and storage sheds. We were also able to redecorate the interior of the building as well as replace the flooring in the main room.



We have also been able to fund additional activities on a regular basis. These are things that other settings would usually charge parents for, but we have been lucky enough to be able to cover the additional external costs. These activities have included Michaela's Music.

For this new academic year, we have organised a few little fundraisers to kick off the first term. We hope that parents and carers will support us throughout the year....

In October, back by very popular demand, we will be holding our regular pre-Christmas Family Photo Session with Photography by Carrie. This will take place on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> October and letters will go out very shortly inviting you to pre-book your photo session.

In November, we will be having our first Textile Recycling session which is a great opportunity to have a big clear out of clothes, bags and shoes that are then weighed and turned in to cash for Pre-School. The collection will take place on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November, and full details will follow in due course.

On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December we will be holding our annual Christmas Nativity at Pitstone Memorial Hall in the morning, followed by some Christmas fun and a visit from Father Christmas. You will also have the opportunity to order the children's own festive Christmas cards ready for delivery in early December and also enter our festive raffle to win some fabulous prizes.

### **Food allergies**

**We have a number of children at Windmill that have serious nut allergies. We would like to request that you do not put any kind of nut products in your child's packed lunch – this includes Nutella. Thank you for your co-operation.**

We would also like to request that you do not send your child in to Pre-School with sweets or chocolates on their birthdays as there are a growing number of children that are not allowed sweets or have dairy allergies.

### **Outside play areas**

Following an agreement made last year with Miss Douglas, Head at Brookmead School, we will continue to make use of their playing fields every morning between 9.15am and 10.15am – weather permitting. We will be exiting our premises through the back gate directly on to the Brookmead School field at the rear of the building. So, as the term progresses and the weather deteriorates, please can you make sure that you provide a suitable coat and outdoor footwear for your child to enjoy the elements.

### **Daily activity board and Manager's Blog**

As in previous terms, we will continue to provide you with an overview of our daily activities on the board located in front of the Pre-School building at pick-up times. Kate will make sure that this is updated on a session by session basis and she will also be continuing her Manager's Blog on the website which is updated on Friday afternoons.

### **Transitions for next year's leavers**

For all children leaving Pre-School next year in July 2017 to go to Brookmead or an alternative school in September, we will be introducing a number of focused activities starting after Half Term and these will run throughout the year to help prepare them for the next level in their educational journey.

### **Tapestry (on line learning journal)**

Tapestry will start again this week. If any new parents or carers would like some assistance on how to use the system, please speak to Kate and she will go through it with you.



### **Coffee mornings**

Back by popular demand are our regular Coffee Mornings. The objective of these sessions is to provide a forum for parents to meet on an informal basis as there is not much opportunity at drop off and pick up. The feedback has been very positive from previous sessions and everyone seemed to find it beneficial to meet other pre-school parents. Our next session will take place on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September straight after morning drop-off at The Children's Centre. We also have sessions booked in for Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October, Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November and Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Parent partnership**

Do you have an interesting job? Do you wear a well-known uniform to work? Or maybe you have an interesting hobby? We would love to hear from anyone that could come in and talk to the children about their job or hobby.

Also, could any parents spare a couple of hours to come and help out at Pre-School – either on a regular basis or just as a one off? Would you like to come and help out with some baking, messy play or gardening? Or maybe do some singing or reading with the children? We would love to hear from dads as well, so please do get in touch and speak to Kate.

### **Sickness**

Please be reminded that our policy on sickness is that all children are to remain at home for 48 hours after starting a dose of antibiotics. Also, any medicines or antibiotics that need to be administered during Pre-School hours by Windmill staff must be in the original packaging with the original pharmacist label attached along with the date of issue and dosage. Please also note that children must remain at home for 48 hours after they are clear of sickness or diarrhoea. If in doubt, please speak to Kate.

### **Creative and messy play**

We always provide daily messy as well as creative activities for the children to enjoy. Whilst we do encourage children to wear aprons, it is inevitable that many children will get in a mess – particularly when it comes to painting! We would also recommend providing a named change of clothes in their bags so that the children can change out of wet or muddy clothes when necessary.

### **Lost property**

As you can imagine, as the year progresses, we gain quite a collection of non-labelled clothing, lunch box containers, drinks bottles, coats and shoes that have been left behind. To avoid this, please can we remind you to label all items that your child brings in to the setting. This can be done either with a permanent fabric marker or by using iron on or stick on labels. We recommend labels from Mynametags which are very reliable and cost effective and for each pack purchased, if you quote School ID 50327 we will receive £1.

### **Reporting Absence**

We would like to remind parents and carers that you need to inform staff before the start of a session if your child is unable to attend. This is especially important for funded children as regular unreported absences could result in the withdrawal of a child's funding. The landline number is 661031.

### **Website and Facebook**

Our website [www.windmillpreschool.co.uk](http://www.windmillpreschool.co.uk) is a great source of interesting information, dates for your diary and fundraising events. We also have a 'private' Facebook group which is open to all parents and guardians with children currently attending Windmill. You can find us at:

[www.facebook.com/groups/windmillpreschoolpitstone](https://www.facebook.com/groups/windmillpreschoolpitstone). We share useful information, post Pre-School related news, events and competitions. Feel free to join us. You can also click on 'Find us on Facebook' which is located on our website to request to join our group.



### **Communicating with you**

Communicating with parents and carers is very important to us and we often do this via email and/or by traditional paper format. Wherever possible, we will try and be ecologically focused and email letters and updates, however from time to time where we feel communication is more pressing, a paper copy will be inserted in to your child's drawer. Please remember to check their drawer at the end of each session they attend so that you don't miss anything important. From time to time, you will also be contacted via an online survey called 'Survey Monkey' to provide your feedback on various aspects of Windmill Pre-School life such as the way in which we communicate with you and for new starters, the settling in process. Please take the time to respond to these short surveys so we can ensure we continually improve and continue to provide an 'outstanding' experience here at Windmill Pre-School.

Thank you for your support.

The Team

**Windmill Pre-School**