

# Newsletter

August 2020

## **Welcome back to our first Newsletter since February!**

As you can see it's quite long, but we have a lot to catch up on!

What an absolutely crazy time it's been, who on earth could have predicted a pandemic such as we have experienced? It has been such a scary time for all, and seeing some of the horrendous heart felt images that Coronavirus COVID-19 has caused has certainly changed our way of life. We hope you, your families and friends have been able to keep safe and well.

As you will have been aware, we closed the setting for 3 weeks at the beginning (as we felt we needed to protect our staff and children during the most critical time). Having had to furlough the majority of our staff, we re-opened in April for the children of Critical Key Workers.

We cannot say enough, how extremely proud we are of our staff who put themselves in the front line without complaint. We will never forget their unbelievable commitment to the care of the children and dedication to Dolphins. We have to give a special mention to Dawn and Lucy as they have kept Dolphins running with complete professionalism. As well as this, they have also been undertaking a large range of on-line training courses.

### 'At Home with Dolphins'

We hope you have enjoyed the weekly suggestions and tips for activities to help entertain your children. It has been lovely to see some of the children undertaking the activities through Tapestry.

### Up to Date:

Our plan is to be fully open for all children from September, but please be aware that this could possibly change if the Government guidance changes. You will also see from our updated Risk Assessment that we will continue with some restrictions until the middle of October. Although the Government has said that everything should be back to 'normal' - we feel we would just like to take a little longer with some of the safety measures - we hope you understand.

### What Have We Been Doing?

Keeping extremely busy! - although we have been living through such horrendous times, we have used it to our advantage somewhat, and have been able to get some long awaited jobs done. We have had a massive sort out of all the resources, equipment and toys. The setting has been cleaned to within an inch of it's life. We have had some vital work done on our roof. The large tree in our garden had been finally removed.

At present we are working on a complete over-hall of our Forest School Garden (and its looking amazing!) - the children are going to love it! - but we need your help ([see below](#))

We are also currently working on turning the small room within our Pre-School, into a 'Reflection Area'. A quiet place where children can deal with emotional issues, just have some 'time out' - or just gather their thoughts within a quiet and calm space.

We are also planning to develop an 'Outdoor Sensory Classroom' in a section of the Pre-school garden. We want to pack it with resources that stimulate the 5 Senses - sight, smell, touch, sound & taste (once again, we need your help - see below)

### Staff:

May we start by sending huge congratulations to Emily Huish-May on the safe arrival of her gorgeous baby girl Florence.

Most of our staff are now back working - with a couple of exceptions though (we are sad to say). Unfortunately we had to let Hannah go slightly earlier than she was due to (simply due to the situation and lack of children). We also had to let Robee go, for the same reason - but are extremely pleased to say that she will now be returning to her role within Pre-School.

We are sad to say that Karen Fraser will be leaving shortly. Karen is soon able to retire, and while on furlough has realised that she would like to be more available for her own family (while she is fit and well) - she will be sorely missed. Kelly will be coming out of the Nursery Room and taking over as Deputy in the Toddler Room.

Sarah will be returning from Maternity mid September, glad to have you back Sarah!.

Both Sarah and Dawn have new role titles -

Sarah - Assistant Manager & Support and Development Lead

Dawn - Assistant Manager - EYFS Lead and Supervisor in Pre-School and Clubs

Clare (cook) will not be returning till the middle of September due to having an operation next week.

Hopefully, we will all get back to a bit of normality as soon as possible.

### Changing Room Ages

Due to the numbers and ages of children we have attending, we have had to slightly amend the the rooms to which they will be in

From September - Nursery Room - will be for children up to 18 months of age

Toddler Room - is for children from 18 months to 3 years of age

Pre-School Room - is for children aged 3 years and over

### Dolphins App

From October we will no longer be using this App as we are able to directly contact all Parents through Tapestry.

### Tapestry

We understand that some Parents have been a little frustrated over the past few months as they have been unable to open certain documents. (which has then required us to download several versions). We have now learned that it's not actually the system, or the documents we add that seems to be the issue, it's the fact that documents do not automatically open if you are opening up on the app. (we are aware this is totally confusing). The app. Will only send you a message that something has been added, but it won't allow some devices to open it. You will have to go onto your child's Tapestry account directly.

### **Important info: -**

Please can you ensure that you have the 'memo notifications' turned on as this is how we will be contacting you with any up to date information. Please be aware that if you comment (put your own memo out) - this will be visible to everyone. If you want to privately comment, you can do this through your child's own account.

### Key Workers

New Key Workers will be in touch via a video on Tapestry.

August Bank Holiday - Monday 31<sup>st</sup> - we are closed

### Pre-School Leavers Party's

We are so glad we have been able to arrange a 'farewell' party for all our children that will be starting school in September. It will no doubt, be an extremely difficult time for them (as they have hardly been in pre-school - then going straight onto school). We wish them all the very best and hope it's not too stressful for them.

### Advance Notice - 2, 3 & 4 year olds.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January we will be charging a 'Consumables Fee' for all children accessing the Early Years Entitlement. The charge will be 20p per hour, for every hours they attend/claim.

The Early Years Entitlement funding is intended to deliver free high quality flexible childcare (which we provide). It is not intended to pay for the costs of - snacks, drinks, consumables, resources etc.

*The 'Consumables Fee' contributes to the use of snacks, drinks, sun cream, wipes, cream, art & craft supplies, messy play items, sand, soil etc, toys, games, stationary supplies, first aid items - to name but a few.*

For many years settings have been woefully under paid on the hourly rate, and are now unable to continue the level of loss the funding brings (our hourly rates for children not accessing the EYE include a contribution towards consumables). Parents/Carers in receipt of 'the Early Years Pupil Premium' will not be charged the consumables fee.

### New Menu

Our Winter Menu will begin from October - through to the end of March. I will add to Tapestry the end of September, copies will also be available from Reception

### Donations

We have some amazing ideas for activities and resources we would like to get for our outdoor Sensory Classroom, gardens and Forest School - but we desperately need your help!

We know you Mums, Dads, Nans & Grandads (and any other family members, and friends) have an amazing amount of stuff -

'bits & pieces' in your garages, lofts and sheds (we would imagine anyway ha).

**If you have, or could get hold of any of the items below - we would be eternally grateful!!**

Glass/Pebbles/Coloured Pebbles

Padlocks/Bolts/Latches

Strong Thick String

Gravel

Herbs/Plants

Artificial grass

Mirrors

Wind chimes - wooden & metal

Wash Board

Old Jewellery

Shells

Tin Bath

Light Switches

Windmills

Door Handles/Stoppers

Light Switches

Gate and/or Door Locks

Rope (not nylon)

Bark

Different grasses

CD

Fossils

Beaded Door Curtain

Hooks - all sizes

Trellis panels

Space Blanket

Tiles

Old Keys

Bike Wheels - all sizes

**Anything else you can think of - you might think it's junk, but we can use it for something!**

**Thank-you!**

Kind Regards

Sharon, Di, Michelle & the Team

We very much look forward to seeing you all in September!