



7th September 2018

Welcome back to our families from last term and Welcome to our new starters! Children have settled very quickly. They are independently accessing all areas of learning, and keen to explore. Our routines are being followed very well new friendships are in the making! We welcome our new member of staff, Emily, who too has enjoyed her first week supporting the children.

Below is an overview of the planned activities and information for the Autumn term at First Step.

Autumn 2018

This term we will continue to focus on child led play with staff engaging with the children to progress their development 'in the moment'. To help inform us of new emerging interests your child has please complete and return the 'Parent/child focus form' if you haven't already done so. We will provide Autumn natural resources to our continuous provision for the children to explore, including conkers and leaves of different shades and shapes.

Tapestry

Your child's tapestry account will share a variety of observations, including teaching and learning where your child's key person has modelled play or given support. There will be observations to support your child's individual next step, observations to show what your child can do independently and some photos of play with a brief explanation. These will be added throughout the term in no particular order. Please continue to add comments and likes to your child's Tapestry account. It's also great if you can add your own observations from home to share with your child's key person, to further support working in partnership.

Family board

Following the success of our 'Family board' we are continuing with it again this year. Our family board is located in the book corner with photos of the children and their family. This helps promote identity in the setting and supports many areas of the curriculum. The children love to share their photos with their peers and adults. If you would like your family photo displayed on our board please bring a photo in and once it's laminated your child will add it to the board.

Supporting learning and interaction at home

Bradley Bear will begin his adventures again visiting your homes, all children will have the opportunity to look after him. When your child receives Bradley they can keep him for a week and add photos or drawings of their time with him in his journal. When he is returned we will then share the adventures at carpet time before he goes out on his next journey. We all love seeing what the children have been doing with Bradley

Our library book scheme has already started and children have chosen a book to take home and share with their family. These books can be returned at any time and your child can choose a new one.

Next Step Children

The Next Step session is all day Wednesday where we incorporate planned events and child-initiated play. We will start our 'Woodland Wednesday' outdoor learning approach for the next step children on Wednesday 26th September. Once again, we are fortunate to be able use the forest school area at Somersham School. We do however need parent helpers to ensure there is a high adult/child ratio. There will be a sign-up sheet at playgroup, please do help if you can, without extra adults we will be unable to attend.

The 'Next Step' children will also visit Somersham library on a Wednesday (date to be confirmed), they will have the opportunity to explore the library and the lovely volunteers who work there will read them a story. We also hope to visit the Christmas Tree Festival on Wednesday 28th November.

Fundraising Events

Fundraising is extremely important to provide new resources for the children. Our upcoming fundraising events include:

Bag2school is booked for Tuesday 2nd October, empty bags to be filled with unwanted clothes and shoes will be sent home the week of Monday 24th September. If you have any clothes you now longer need please consider supporting this fundraiser and return your filled bag to playgroup on Tuesday 2nd October. We regret we cannot hold bags before then due to space issues in the building.

Individual and sibling photos with Tempest photography on Tuesday 2nd October 3pm until 4.30. This is an opportunity to have your child's photo taken, with siblings, and you can purchase various prints and playgroup receive commission. A booking slot sheet will be available from Monday 10th September.

Christmas cards As per previous years your child will be designing their own Christmas cards. A copy of their design will be sent home from Wednesday 26th September for you to view and place an order should you wish to. All orders must be returned by Friday 5th October.

Children in Need We are supporting the Children in Need campaign and invite your child to playgroup dressed as an animal or 'Hey Duggee' on Friday 16th November. We will be offering 'Hey Duggee' activities throughout the day. If possible please donate to the charity, there will be a donation box available on the day. These donations will be paid the Children In Need charity.

Parent Fundraising Team

Many thanks to our parent fundraising team who have already held a meeting to discuss events to support playgroup, and some great ideas have been shared. Please consider helping out at events and meetings as 'many hands make light work.' Information regarding the fundraising suggestions can be found on our closed Facebook page.

Easy Fundraising If you shop online please sign up to Easy Fundraising and join First Steps Playgroup Somersham. <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/firststepssomersham/> Playgroup will earn commission from your purchases at no extra cost to yourself, you just need to shop through the Easy Fundraising site or app.

Planned activities

We do not necessarily plan themes as the ideas come from the children's interests, however there are some celebrations we will implement to support your child's understanding of the world around them.

These include:

Roald Dahl Day To support the love of books we invite the children to dress as their favourite book character (not compulsory) and we will have various activities throughout the day.

Talk like a Pirate Day We will provide pirate activities throughout the week.

Halloween We will provide pumpkins to explore the textures and print with pumpkins with a focus on Autumn rather than Halloween.

Bonfire night We will discuss fire and firework safety and offer a firework painting activity.

Diwali Activities will be offered on Wednesday 7th November to give children an understanding of a different religious festival.

Christmas Tree Decoration Children will have the opportunity to make a Christmas tree decoration to be displayed on our tree to be included in St John the Baptist Church's event.

Christmas Jumper Week We would like to invite all children and staff to wear their Christmas jumpers from 10th – 18th December. This will allow all children the opportunity to wear a jumper rather than just incorporating it on Friday 15th December. No donation is required for this, it's just a bit of Christmas fun!

Christmas Disco – All children are welcome to attend our end of term Christmas disco on Tuesday 18th December. If your child is not normally in session they may attend for 11am until 1pm. More information to follow nearer the time.

Superstar box

Please continue to use our superstar box. This provides us with valuable information we might not see in the setting, and of course your child will get a sticker and celebration from the group.

Clothing

As the weather gets colder please ensure your child has named outdoor coat, hat and gloves as we are outdoors in all weathers. Please ensure that your child's belongings are named, some of our younger children may not recognise their own belongings and clothes can easily become mixed up. If you would like your child to wear a uniform we have t-shirts, sweatshirts and fleece jackets available to purchase.

Illness

If your child is not attending playgroup for any reason please inform us on 01487 843358.

A reminder of our 'Managing children with allergies, or who are sick or infectious' policy, if your child has had sickness or diarrhoea please ensure they are excluded from playgroup for 48 hours after the last bout.

If you have had to administer Calpol or similar to your child before playgroup, please consider whether or not they are well enough to attend the session.

Thank you as always for your continued support. If you have any questions or concerns at any time please do not hesitate to speak to your child's key person or a manager.

Key Diary Dates

Thursday 13th September Roald Dahl Day

Monday 17th September Pirate Themed Week (Talk like a Pirate day Wednesday 19th September)

Wednesday 26th September Next Step Woodland Wednesday begins

Tuesday 2nd October Bag2school collection

Tuesday 2nd October Tempest photos

Friday 5th October Christmas card order deadline

Thursday 18th October Half term holiday

Monday 29th October Return to playgroup

Monday 29th October Halloween activities with pumpkin exploration throughout the week

Monday 29th October Firework safety and art throughout the week

Wednesday 7th November Diwali activities

Friday 16th November Children in Need – Dress as an animal or a Hey Duggee character.

Saturday 24th November Christmas tree display begins in St John the Baptist Church

Monday 10th December Christmas Jumpers until the end of term

Wednesday 12th December Proposed date for Christmas production – information to follow!

Tuesday 18th December Christmas Disco and end of Autumn term