



September 2024

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to playgroup! I hope you all managed to have a lovely summer, and are settling back in to the routine after the first week. We said a sad farewell to our friends who have left for School but we welcome all the new children who start this term; Delphi, Joe, Elizabeth, Aldous, Eliza, Amelia, Ayda, Dylan, Eddie-Lee, Lily, Louis, Magnus, Teddy and Daisy. I hope you will all find playgroup friendly and fun. There is a lot of information in this first news letter. Apologies to those of you who have read this before but it does no harm to have a reminder!

Over the next term we will be getting to know the new children and finding out more about our 'old' children. The first 2 weeks will be very much focused on settling in the new children and reminding the older ones of the playgroup routine. This time will give us a chance to spend time listening and talking to the children, getting to know their likes and dislikes and the things that are important to them. We will use the knowledge we gain of the children's interests to help us plan future topics and activities. There will be plenty of opportunities for the older children to take on the responsibility of helping the younger ones settle into playgroup.

Amberley Playgroup Term Dates 2024-25

Term 1: Wed 4th Sept -Friday 25th Oct

Inset days-Mon 2nd and Tuesday 3rd Sept

Term 2: Monday 4th Nov -Friday 20th Dec

Inset days Mon 6th Jan

Term 3: Wed 8th Jan-Friday 14th Feb

Inset day Mon 24th Feb

Term 4: Wed 26th Feb-Fri 11th April

Term 5: Mon 18th April-Fri 23rd May

Bank Holiday-Monday 5th May

Term 6: Mon 2nd June-Fri 18th July

(Inset day Mon 21st July)

Please make a note of the inset days in particular. Some of these are the same as Amberley School, but not all. These term dates will also be on our website www.amberleyplaygroup.co.uk under the 'useful information' section

Christmas show: **ADVANCED NOTICE.** We will hold our Christmas end of term show on Friday 20th December, at 9.30. The show usually lasts about half an hour or so and then there are refreshments. The morning session finishes early, once everyone has eaten enough cake and the raffle has been drawn for the luxury hamper! More details nearer the time but please book the morning off work if you can. All family members are welcome to come and watch the Christmas extravaganza that Andrea miraculously creates each year!

Parking: please keep the church forecourt free of cars. When parking on the road, leave enough space to allow emergency vehicles and Lorries to pass and don't block any driveways. Please also shut the gates for the children's safety and to stop the cows getting in. Note that there is also an unofficial 'one way' system along the road outside the school. Please try and avoid trying to drive up towards the school especially at pick up time on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon which coincides with school collection time. This is to try and avoid the dangers of people having to reverse up/down the road when the children are around.

Spare clothes: Children need to bring a coat (waterproof please) and spare clothes to each playgroup session: wellies are also great in wet weather but please remember to bring shoes or slippers for indoor wear. As we use our outside space in all weather, please make sure children are dressed in clothes you do not mind a bit of mud on and that they have outdoor coats that are warm and waterproof. Ideally clothes/bags and wellingtons will be left here during the week but they must be taken home at weekends as we need to leave the foyer clear.

Pegs and self registration: Each child has their own name peg with an illustration which matches the first sound of their name. E.g. Joe- Jumper/ Charlotte- Shells. We will be using these to develop the children's understanding of the sounds that the letters in their names make.

Collection of children: It is vital that you INFORM STAFF VERBALLY if someone other than yourself is collecting your child as we will not allow children to leave without this permission. This will be recorded by staff. You should only ask those who you have listed on your entry record form to collect children so please make sure this is up to date if circumstances change.

Key workers: All children will be allocated to one of five groups and will each have a member of staff as their key worker. During snack time the children sit in their groups; Monkeys; Andrea, Elephant; Cathy, Tigers; Michelle, Lions; Karan and Parrots; Debs.

Snack Time: Milk and water are offered, as well as a healthy and varied snack. If children could bring in an item of fruit that would be great; this is collected in a bowl by the entrance door and cut up/shared out along with our other snack items. Water is available for children throughout the morning using cups so water bottles are only required for children staying for lunch or if you would like them to have their own bottle available. We will have a notice board in the foyer letting you know what is snack for the day but this does sometimes change at short notice!

Facebook and Whats app group: 'Amberley Playgroup and toddlers' is our Facebook page administered by staff and is a public page. We use it for giving information of some of the activities that have been going on during the week, or are upcoming and for making any announcements. It is a way of promoting playgroup and information sharing to a wider audience, including parents who attend our Toddler sessions on Tuesdays. Any photos are only displayed with permission for that specific page, and all relevant data protection legislation is adhered to.

Our committee are in the process of adding new parents to the current what's app group if they wish to join. You should receive an email asking if you would like to be added. This email should come through from amberleyplaygroupcommittee@gmail.com within the next week or so once staff have passed on all email addresses.

Website: Our website is www.amberleyplaygroup.co.uk. We are again updating the 'this month' section of the website (found on the menu on the home page) with photos and a short piece about some of the activities that have been happening. We will aim to add to this fortnightly (We know from past experience that a weekly update to unrealistic as it is quite time consuming!) At the moment we are just focusing on settling the new children so it may take a week or so to get this going regularly!

Reporting absences: if you know in advance that your child will be off playgroup, for example for a holiday, then either speak to any member of staff and/or email amberleypgcontact@gmail.com.

However, if your child is off sick and you need to report an absence on the day then please phone playgroup in the morning on 01453 872571 and leave a message if necessary. The email address may not be checked until later in the day and we have a safeguarding duty to follow up any unexplained absences with a phone call so by contacting us you avoid this having to be done.

Fees and invoices: Invoices for fees will be issued during the term, usually about a fortnight before the end of the term and are usually for a 6 or 7 week period depending on the length of the term. The usual method of payment is by bank transfer and the details will be on the invoice. Our current hourly rate is £7.00 per hour. Those whose children are over 3 will all have up to 15 hours free funding and are then billed for any remaining hours. This funding applies from the term after their 3rd birthday and the dates are on the notice board at the back of the hall. Playgroup will apply for this funding on your behalf. If your child is over 2 and you are working you may be able to also claim 15 hours funded childcare, which once a child is 3 then gives a total of 30 hours funded childcare for working parents. If you think this may apply to you, please speak to Cathy who will advise you how to check your eligibility and the time scales for doing this.

Packed lunches: If your child is staying for lunch, please make sure their food is not wrapped or packed in containers that they find very difficult to open, and don't forget a drink and spoons/forks if needed for yogurts or pasta etc. Please do not include any whole nuts and remember to cut grapes and cherry tomatoes at least in half (smaller for tomatoes) due to the choking hazard. If you could also remind your children not to share their food with other children (however kind they think they are being!)

Playgroup Hoodies and T shirts: you may have noticed some children wearing some rather lovely red hoodies and T shirts with our playgroup logo on. We have a limited number of these for immediate purchase at playgroup having bought a bulk supply when we changed our logo. The costs are £13 for the hoodies and £ 8 for the T shirts...or a special deal of £20 for both. If you would like to buy a set or individual items just let any member of staff know and we will have them available at pick up time. Cash is most welcome or we can arrange a bank transfer for payment.

Playgroup Committee: As a community playgroup and a registered charity, we have a fabulous committee of parents who are involved in running the playgroup alongside the staff and fundraising for all the amazing resources we have. We will hopefully have some new incoming committee who will be voted in at our next AGM. All parents are welcome to be involved and it is a great way to get to know families and have your say in how playgroup runs. Details of upcoming meetings will be sent out to parents or have a chat to Pennie (Poppy and Joe's Mum) who is our Chairperson. There should also be a letter from the committee attached to this newsletter.

Newsletter by email: When we completed our last parent questionnaire a couple of people asked about having the newsletter emailed to them. This is no problem, and if you would like to have a copy emailed then contact me via the email address amberleypgcontact@gmail.com and let me know. We will however also continue to give everyone a paper copy. The reason for this is that it is quite common for emails to go unread/undelivered/end up in spam and by physically giving every parent a copy we know that we have passed on all the relevant information that is needed to everyone! (it's then your decision if you read it or not!). The newsletter will also be on the website under the 'useful information' menu header.

Don't forget to look at the website www.amberleyplaygroup.co.uk. The playgroup policies, newsletters, and term dates are all available on the site (or will be in the next week or so!) under 'useful information'; and also make a note of our email amberleypgcontact@gmail.com

Thanks for reading!

Cathy and the Playgroup girls! (Karan, Andrea, Michelle and Debs)