

## Acorn Playgroup and Pre-School Newsletter

### Autumn Term 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome our families, both old and new to Acorn for the 2024/25 academic year. The children have so far settled in well and are building great relationships and we have begun to implement our termly topics, starting the term off with 'All About Me' and 'Pirate Week'. The children have thoroughly enjoyed themselves and engaged in lots of new and exciting activities.



Our planned Topics for the Autumn Term 2024 are ...

23.09.24 Recycling

30.09.24 World Space Week

07.10.24 Autumn/Harvest Festival

14.10.24 Black History Month/People Around the World/British Values

21.10.24 Halloween/Diwali

#### October Half Term

4.11.24 Bonfire Night/Remembrance Sunday

11.11.24 Nursery Rhyme Week

18.11.24 Road Safety/Transport

25.11.24 Oral Health/St Andrew's Day

02.12.24 Hanukkah/Christmas

09.12.24 Christmas

16.12.24 Christmas



#### AUTUMN TERM DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Pick a Pumpkin from the Acorn Patch – 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October

Halloween Disco – Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 4-6pm

October Half Term – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October to Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November

Children in Need 'Spotty' dress up day – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November

Parent's Evening - Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 4:20pm-5:30pm

Breakfast with Father Christmas – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 10am-12pm

Save the Children Christmas Jumper Week – 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> December

Last day of Term – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 12pm

#### TERM DATES

Full details of our 2024/25 term dates can be located on our website at [acornwelwyn.com](https://www.acornwelwyn.com)

#### CHILDREN'S COLD WEATHER CLOTHING

With cold weather on the way children will need a warm coat, hat and gloves/mittens every day. Please remember to label your child's clothing to ensure we can easily return any misplaced items.

#### WELLIES

As we play outside everyday, even in the wetter months, please can all children have a pair of named wellies which remain at Acorn. Footwear will be changed for indoor play.

#### FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!



Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school has a Facebook page which we use to share our termly topic activities and events.

To access, simply copy and paste the following link into your browser

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/AcornWelwyn/>

## Government childcare funding



The Government has recently expanded their funded childcare allowance for working families. Children from working families are now entitled to 15 hours free childcare per week, during term time, from the age of 9 months alongside the existing 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

To apply for a childcare code each parent needs to be working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours a week at national minimum/living wage and under £100,000 adjusted net income per year. This means that each parent needs to earn from just over £8,600 per year to be eligible.

To check your entitlement, please complete the eligibility check as soon as possible via the following link <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working> **To enable the allowance to be utilised in the Spring term 2025 (Jan-March) term, the funding must be applied for and approved by December 2024.**

Where your application is successful, please forward your unique funding code and national insurance number via return email, prior to the end of term.

Other childcare support is available, including two year old funding for families receiving additional government support. Further information is available to parents on the Childcare Choices website at <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>, where you can explore the early education entitlements and other government help with childcare costs.

If your child's weekly hours exceed their government funded hours, the additional hours will be charged at our current rate of £7.70 per hour which will be invoiced half termly via your child's Tapestry account.

### PARENT SURVEY – SUMMER TERM 2024

Thank you to all parents and carers who completed our parent survey last term. Following your feedback, we have made a few changes, including...

- Parent suggestion box – this is located outside of the Acorn entrance. Any suggestions you have can simply be popped on a piece of paper and dropped inside. All ideas and feedback are warmly welcomed.
- Parent notice board – this is now located outside of the Acorn entrance to ensure clear visibility and contains our term dates, designated safeguarding officers, our Trustee team and how to contact them, Ofsted contact information, what to do if you have a safeguarding concern, termly topics and upcoming events.
- Daily Key worker communication board – this is a two-way communication board between key workers and parents/carers at drop off and collection times to ensure a smooth transition of daily information. This is a fantastic tool to further develop our strong parent partnership.
- Tapestry care diary – all keyworkers are now using the care diary within each child's Tapestry account to provide you with same day notifications regarding toileting accidents, nappy changes and reasons for wet/change of clothing.

We have also made some physical changes to the setting and do hope you like our new rain shelter to protect you from the elements and our fabulous Autumn themed window art. We have also made some outdoor updates to our sensory garden including a fairy garden, all weather canopy and artificial grass flooring.

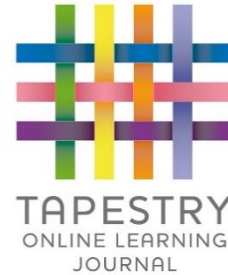
## TAPESTRY ONLINE LEARNING JOURNALS

We hope you are enjoying viewing your child's observations and photographs within their Tapestry account. Please do continue to send us photographs/videos of any special events, activities and/or outings that your child may have outside of Acorn. This is a fantastic way for your child's key worker to share and discuss these experiences with your child and build upon the connection between their life at home and Acorn.

Did you know Tapestry contains a section called 'All about me' and allows you add up to date information regarding your child including their likes and dislikes which we can use to incorporate into the setting. The information can be updated at any time in line with your child's ever-changing needs.

To access the relevant page; -

- Access your child's Tapestry account via the main web address.
- Select 'Menu' in the top left-hand corner of the page
- From the dropdown menu, select 'Children'
- Click on your child's name
- Select 'All About Me' from the dropdown box
- Select 'Edit about .... '
- Complete the relevant sections
- Select 'Save' at the bottom of the page.



Finally, if you have any questions about your child's Tapestry account, please contact us via email at [acornwelwyn@gmail.com](mailto:acornwelwyn@gmail.com)

### GENERAL ILLNESS

Please remember that if your child is poorly and you have given them Calpol or ibuprofen, then you should keep them at home where they can get better. If your child worsens after the medicine has worn off, they are likely to be sent home.

We would like to thank you for your continued support in keeping Acorn safe.



### CONTACTING US

Drop off and pick up times can be busy, therefore if you need to talk to your child's Key Person please don't hesitate to ask. We will always endeavour to organise a suitable time for you to discuss any concerns you may have. Our door is always open!

## SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

### CHILD COLLECTION

At Acorn, we ask all parents to provide us with a list of authorised adults who have your permission to collect your child from Acorn, alongside a unique password. All authorised persons must be aged 18 and over.

In line with our Safeguarding Policy, we will not allow a child to be released to an unknown person without your prior consent or where we cannot verify the identity of the authorised person.

Please may we ask that where an authorised person collecting your child is not familiar to all members of Acorn's staff, that they have photograph ID (passport/driving licence) and your child's collection password when they come to collect.

In the event of an emergency, where a person not listed will collect your child, please telephone us on 01438 840132 prior to the collection time.

### ANY SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS?

Roxanne Speede and Linda McLellan are Acorn's Designated Safeguarding Officers.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, regarding yourself; your child or another family, they are available to discuss these with you at any time.

### CHANGES TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

In the event of any change to yours or your child's information, e.g. contact telephone number; address; medical information, it is essential that we are advised of these changes as soon as they occur to ensure the correct care is provided for your child. This is best done via email to [acornwelwyn@gmail.com](mailto:acornwelwyn@gmail.com)

### FAMILIES IN NEED OF SUPPORT

We all experience difficulties at some point. Families First can help you find early help and information to prevent issues from getting worse.

If you need more help than your usual support network - for example your health visitor, school, doctor or family centre – Families First can work with you and your family to create a package of support. Please Ask for support.

- You can always talk to us and/or your Health Visitor if you have concerns about your child.
- Talk to your GP if you have health or wellbeing concerns.
- If you need help with any of the following, Families First are likely to be able to help.
  - Parenting
  - Mental and physical health problems
  - drug or alcohol dependency
  - domestic abuse
  - school related concerns – such as your child is not attending school
  - debt problems
  - risk of becoming homeless.



### WHAT IS FAMILIES FIRST?

Families First is the term used in Hertfordshire for services that work together to support families who need extra help - also known as early help services.

Families First is available to all Hertfordshire families with children under the age of 18 (25 if they have a learning need or disability) and further information can be found via the following website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/families-first/families-first.aspx>