



## **February Newsletter**

### **Staff**

We have some sad staff news this month. Gill will be leaving Sandy Bears next month to undertake her very own business adventure in care for the elderly. We are so sad to see Gill leave and wish her all the luck in world for her and her families' future.

Lauren is also going to be leaving us in April (but with a plan to return☺). Lauren is going over to America to take on a job at Camp America for the summer. This is an amazing experience for Lauren and we cannot wait to keep up to date with her travels. Lauren will be home in September and we hope she will be back with us then ☺

### **Upcoming Dates**

#### **Term Dates**

*Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February* – Half Term

*Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February* – Term Time children return

*Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April* – Half Term

*14<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> April* – BANK HOLIDAYS –CLOSED

*Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April* – Term Time children return.

#### **Theme Days**

Each month we will be holding a themed dress up day to raise funds for our outdoor area! Please send your child dressed up and with a small donation! Thank you ☺

**Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> March - World Book Day**

**Wed 19<sup>th</sup> April – Cartoon Characters**

**Tues 16<sup>th</sup> May – Animals**

**Mon 12<sup>th</sup> June – Kings & Queens**

#### **Stay & Play**

At Sandy Bears we actively encourage stay & play sessions with parents, grandparents and any other carers a child may be close too. In addition to our usual stay & play session we are starting 'Active Walks'. These are walks around Tattenhall to encourage children to be active so we are inviting parents and children on our sponsored walk. To attend this stay & play we just ask for each child to collect some sponsorship money and bring it with them on the day! This will go towards our outdoor area ☺

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February – 1.30-3.30pm – ACTIVE WALK**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 1.00AM-12.00PM – MESSY PLAY DAY**



Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April – 10.30am-12.00pm – **ACTIVE WALK**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June – 10.00am-12.00pm & Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August 1.30pm-3.00pm – **WATER PLAY DAY**

Thursday 24<sup>TH</sup> August – 1.30pm-3.00pm – **ACTIVE WALK**

### **Parents Committee**

Our next parents committee meeting will be on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 6.10pm. All parents and carers are welcome, please let us know if you will be attending 😊

### **Half Term**

We are fast approaching our half term holidays (20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> February). We are very full so if you need any extra sessions then please request these ASAP! Over this week we have so much planned including

### **Active Kids Vouchers**

We are once again collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers. We have a drop box downstairs just ask any member of staff to point this out or leave the vouchers in your child's book. In recent years we have bought so much equipment with these vouchers from balls, weights, magnifying glasses, basketball hoops and much more so please keep your vouchers safe for us 😊

### **30 Free Hours Childcare**

As many of you may know alongside the government scheme Cheshire West will be offering eligible parents 30 free hour's childcare each term time week. All ineligible parents will still be entitled to their 15 hours free term time hours. Parents will be able to check availability at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) from April 2017, the basic criteria for families living in England will be

- Both parents working (or the sole parent working) subject to the following criteria:
- Each parent (or sole parent) has a weekly minimum income equivalent to at least 16 hours at national minimum wage/national living wage and neither parent (or sole parent) has an income of more than £100k per year.
- Both parents are employed but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on parental, adoption, maternity or paternity leave, on statutory sick pay.
- One parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring.
- One parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based in receipt of specific benefits.

Once eligibility is confirmed you should receive a voucher code to give to a childcare provider to arrange your place. As we have limited availability for September 2017 any parents wishing to increase their hours at Sandy Bears to reflect their new free hours must put this in writing as soon as possible.

As we are a setting open 51 weeks of the year we are eligible to provide these free hours as 22.25 per week.

If you have any more questions regarding the free hours please do not hesitate to speak to Astone or Laura Y who have lots of information packs for parents that can be read or emailed 😊



## **Show and Tell Box**

Our Show & Tell box has been a massive hit with the children and allows them a safe place to keep their toys from home! However, it is jam packed! Please make sure you are collecting any toys that have been brought to Sandy Bears, Thank You!

## **Jolly Phonics**

A reminder that Pre-Schoolers Phonics 'homework' books have dates to be handed in to allow new work to be stuck in. If you have any questions about any elements of phonics or the reason we teach this then please speak to your Key Worker or Gemma our Phonics Co-Ordinator.

Jolly phonics is done daily in Big Bears, with focussed and unfocussed sessions ranging from music to physical activities. We also do focussed writing throughout the day, encouraging children to form letters and shapes. These are not done as worksheets at tables but in fun and exciting situations – i.e. sending postcards home, making name badges, water writing, marking in messy play and much more. At Sandy Bears we feel giving children the opportunity to write without feeling 'forced' to develops a solid ground for their future independent learning.

## **Maths Training**

Next month our staff will be undertaking some weekend, in house Maths training. This will refresh staff knowledge and allow your children to be supported in all of their Maths development from Bear Cubs Room all the way into Reception Class. If you would like any more information on how we implement Maths then please speak to a member of staff 😊

## **Bring Your Pet To School Week!**

We are once again having a bring your pet to school week! We are looking for the ordinary to the extraordinary, chickens to cats to snakes! If you have a pet you would be willing to bring in and 'Show & Tell' in the week 27<sup>th</sup> February – 3<sup>rd</sup> March please let Astone or Laura know times you are free! Thank you so much in advance 😊 <3

## **Policy of the Month**

This month (as it is winter and we have lots of bugs going round!) we are sharing our Sickness & Illness policy. As it is quite extensive you can find a full copy on our website or in paper form on site. Important points to note are:

If your child is ill with a temperature, rash, sickness, diarrhoea or any other illness whilst at Sandy Bears your child key worker or manager will call to inform a carer and ask that they be collected.

If your child is ill we are not permitted to administer Calpol without Doctors advise (due to Calpol masking symptoms of more serious illness) – we can administer Calpol for a temperature if a carer is on their way to collect child.

We can administer prescribed medication if the child has been taking these for 24 hours without reaction and is generally well in themselves – a form needs to be filled in by carer at drop off and all medicine must be labelled with the prescription sticker and in its original packaging.

If your child is unwell please do not bring them to nursery to prevent the spread of bacteria (children naturally share germs) and lots of virus' and illnesses' are airborne too.



Each evening Sandy Bears is thoroughly cleaned after 6pm. Every 6-8 weeks a weekend deep clean is also undertaken. In addition toys are sterilised on a rota basis and all soft items ie blankets and pillows are washed after use onsite.

### **Bags**

Please do not bring plastic bags to Sandy Bears at all, we have recently found some plastic bags inside children's nursery bags, these are a hazard to children and we do not allow them in the rooms with children. As their bags are accessible by children we ask that you do not put plastic bags within their belongings.

In addition any medication and food that may be in their bags we also ask that this is handed to staff on arrival to prevent any children accessing this also. Thank You 😊

Bear Cubs have been struggling for space with lots of large bags been brought in, if you have wellies and wetsuits or sleep items please let staff know so these can be stored elsewhere leaving just bags with changes of clothes on the hooks. Thank you.

### **Staff Blog**

This month our blog is from Lauren who will be explaining about her decision to go to America and leave Sandy Bears temporarily...

"I have worked at Sandy Bears for almost three years, starting off as a student and working my way up to Room Leader. Sandy Bears is where I have grown and developed as a practitioner and also as a person.

I always wanted to go to University to become a primary school teacher but after doing a year's placement at Sandy Bears I didn't want to leave. I then decided that Early Years was where I wanted to work so when I was offered a full time job I could not refuse. I was lucky enough to start working in both rooms where I was able to build a great bond with staff and all of the children.

I have recently been thinking about my future and I have always wanted to go travelling and to see more of the world. When the opportunity came up for me to do Camp America I felt it was the perfect time for me to experience the world whilst still doing what I love, working with children. I am extremely excited about going to America for four months but devastated to be leaving Sandy Bears. I will be working on a summer camp in Florida for 12 weeks before flying to New York and starting my travels across to LA and the plan is for me to return to Sandy Bears nearer the end of the year.

Working at Sandy Bears, although challenging, has not felt like a job. I wake up in the morning and love coming into work and wondering what fun and exciting things your little ones are going to tell me. Although I have been a key worker to a small group of children I have formed a bond with every child to walk through the big red door and into Sandy Bears and I will miss them greatly.

The children and you as parents have always been so kind and lovely to me and made my time so amazing, for that I would like to thank you!

The staff have not only been my colleagues but have become my close friends. Laura and Astone have been so supportive throughout my entire time here and I cannot thank them enough.

Lauren x "