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Dear Parents/carers,

**Warm welcome**

We would like to welcome some new children and their families who have joined us this term; Bow, Faith, Lucy, Odin and Peggy!

We sadly said goodbye to our friend Alonzo who has moved on to our other Little Gems setting in Chandlers Ford due to moving house.

**Topics for this term are;**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Letter** | **Number** | **Colour** | **Shape** |
| 17th May | Being healthy | Q | 17 | Silver | Triangle |
| 24th May | The Farm | R | 18 | Orange | Square |
| 7th June | Summer | S | 19 | Red + Blue | Star |
| 14th June | Things that move | T | 20 | Blue + Yellow | Rectangle |
| 21st June | Superheroes | U | 21 | White + Red | Heart |
| 28th June | When I grow up... | V | 22 | Red + Yellow | Semi circle |
| 5th July | Pirates and princesses | W | 23 | Red + Green | Hexagon |
| 12th July | *Tbc (Childrens choice)* | X | 24 | Black + White | Diamond |
| 19th July | Party and Fun! | Y & Z | 25 | Rainbow colours | Cone |

**Upcoming Events and Activities**

**Mini athletics Various dates from 14th May**

We are pleased to welcome Nicki Dack who runs mini athletics sessions to Early Years children. Nicki and her assistant coach Jessica will be running two sessions each afternoon with the assistance of Little Gems staff to small groups on the field adjacent to Little Gems planned on the following afternoons; Friday 14th May, Wednesday 19th May, Tuesday 25th May, Friday 28th May, Wednesday 9th June, Friday 18th June and Tuesday 22nd June. The first session today proved really popular!

We have tried to vary the days to ensure as many children as possible get to enjoy these additional sports activities. We will also be inviting Mini Athletics to get involved with our Sports day event on Friday 25th June.

**Paultons Park Tuesday 18th May**

We hope those of you who are going have a really lovely day out!

*Please remember to take your tickets we have issued to you! Any problems on the day please call Little Gems and we will endeavour to resolve it for you.*

***We are open as normal this day for the children who are not going to Paultons.***

**‘Mucky Bucket Farm’ Thursday 27th May**

Children who attend on Thursday anyway will get to visit the farm in small groups with members of staff. If your child does not normally attend on a Thursday we would like to invite you and your child to come and visit the farm which will be set up outside the front of the building.

***You will be emailed and invited to visit either at 11.45am or 12.10pm.***

**Family picnic and Sports day event Friday 25th June**

All being well with the plan for restrictions to ease on 21st June and hopefully with the weather on our side, we will be holding what has now become a Little Gems tradition… our Annual Summer Sports Day!

The plan for the day will be to have a pre-school morning session as normal and finishing at midday.

All Friday children to be collected at 12pm on this day please.

**12pm** All families (even those who don’t attend on Fridays) – please join us at 12pm for a big picnic on the field. Please bring your picnics, blankets, chairs, other family members (grandparents, Aunties and Uncles welcome!) Our café area will be open serving hot and cold drinks, cakes, ice creams and more.

**12.40pm** onwards – sports activities for the children to try as well as activities hosted by the Mini Athletics coaches.

**1pm**  Our Sports day begins with a variety of races

**2pm** Our presentation of awardsto mark the end of what promises to be a lovely social (and sunny) afternoon.

Should we be unlucky with weather or restrictions we will continue to try and reschedule the event for Friday either 2nd July or 16th July. We are determined the event should go ahead if it can!

**End of term Party and Leavers event Thursday 22nd July**

Our last pre-school sessions of the term will be on Wednesday 21st July.

Thursday 22nd July will be organised as an end of term party for all our children and the leavers presentation and goodbye to our children going off to school. Details and timings of this are still being discussed and finalised and we will share this with you as soon as we can.

**Other News:**

**Little Gems cardigans**

We are pleased to be able to offer Little Gems Pre-School purple cardigans. These cost £10, the same as the sweatshirts but are only available in sizes 3-4 years or 5-6 years (no smaller sizes unfortunately) Please collect and complete an order form or email if you would like to order any clothing. We ask for payment with order please.

**School visits**

For those children leaving us to go on to school, reception teachers have been communicating with us regarding your child’s transition. Some schools will be visiting us in a safe way over the coming weeks, others are communicating via telephone only. As you know, this year your children have been invited for transition visits at the beginning of September. This was found to work well last year. We are continuing to help children be school ready through our Sparkle time groups and our every day routines and expectations.

**Staffing**

Our newer staff member Miss Jessica Palmer is getting married on Saturday 22nd May. She will return to after her wedding on Tuesday 25th May as Mrs Jessica Evans. We wish her and her husband to be a lovely day and many congratulations. We hope the sun shines for them!

**Parent views**

We will be sending out a parent questionnaire in the coming days seeking your views and experiences of Little Gems. We use this valuable feedback to make improvements.

As always, please come and speak to us, call or email if you have any questions, concerns or ideas. We appreciate communication may not have felt so easy this past year.

N**otices and Reminders – (sorry some more of the same nagging reminders and some new ones!)**

* Due to children with nut allergies and egg allergies, please ensure no eggs (such as egg sandwiches) no peanuts or foods containing nuts are brought into pre-school.
* To avoid choking please ensure grapes and mini sausages are cut **lengthwise.**
* Please ensure packets are opened and snack containers are separate from lunch containers (not inside the other).
* FRUBES – we politely request to not have these brought into pre-school. Children use their mouths to try and open them and they are usually all wet and damaged by the time we are asked to help! They also get squeezed and spill everywhere! ***Please do send*** little yoghurt/fromage frais pots and a spoon instead if possible. (we don’t have spoons here, we will help ensure your child re-packs their spoon to bring home)
* Please ensure your child’s belongings are **clearly** **named**, including clothing & water bottles!
* Please do not bring in toys from home (including soft toys). It is difficult to monitor where these are taken/hidden/dropped) and if in their bags they obstruct the children’s access to other things they need. Also, for Covid reasons we request toys should not be brought in from home.

**COVID-19**

A big thank you for your continued support with all our COVID related measures.

We have been following the schools lead by asking parents to wear face coverings outside the pre-school. With some restrictions easing from Monday this is no longer necessary at Little Gems. Please continue to observe social distancing for the time being.

**Dates for your diary for the year ahead:**

***2021***

***Tuesday 18th May Trip to Paultons Park***

***Monday 31st May Closed for half term***

***Monday 7th June Back to Little Gems***

***Monday 21st June Inset day closure (in line with St James school)***

***Friday 25th June Sports day and family picnic lunchtime/afternoon – weather permitting Friday 2nd or 16th July Reserve dates for the Family picnic and Sports day event***

***Thursday 22nd July No pre-school sessions - end of term party and leavers event***

***Friday 23rd July \*Inset day closure\****

***As you can see we have lots planned for the rest of the term. Everything feels a bit brighter and with lots more to look forward to!***

***Mrs Akins, Mrs Boyes and The Little Gems Team X***