

Tywardreath Pre-School Playgroup January 2021 Newsletter



Dear Parents/Carers of 'School Risers' (children due to start school in September 2021),

This newsletter includes information specifically for the families who have children in their last year at pre-school.

Applying for your child's school place – You must apply by January 15th, using the Cornwall Council website, using this link [School Admissions - Cornwall Council](#) or visit www.cornwall.gov.uk and search 'school admissions'.

School risers in the community – Usually in January and February, during the spring term, we take the school risers out on some local trips, either walking or on the bus or train, before we start forest school in the summer term.

This year, because of guidance and health and safety around COVID-19, we have decided to change our plans, with particular thought about avoiding high contact areas and public transport. We are pleased instead to start forest school in January and then review the safety around visiting outdoor public areas, after February half term.

Forest school will take place in two groups of 7/8 children, from the first week back, beginning week Monday 11th January 2021. Forest school will be held about a mile away from pre-school in private woodlands on a farm at Treemill. This is the amazing site that we used last summer, if you have a Facebook account please visit www.facebook.com.tywtreeschool to see photos of our forest school woodland.

Your child is in the **Wednesday** morning group. On this day they will need to be dropped to pre-school as normal, with a rucksack (with two arm straps) that they can carry comfortably themselves. It must contain a full change of clothes including a spare jumper, socks and a drink bottle with a drink. Your child will need a waterproof coat, we do have some spares we purchased recently and we will supply waterproofs and wellies (or your child is welcome to wear their own). We will supply the snack and will return to pre-school at about 12.30pm for lunch.

The forest school is a very short car journey from pre-school. We will be travelling with most of us in my 8-seater vehicle or in our staff member Tori's car. We both have business insurance. We are purchasing some brand-new car seats and will weigh your child to ensure they are travelling in the correct type car seat for them.

If you would prefer your child not to attend forest school for any reason and remain at pre-school or if you have any questions, please let me know.

We are very lucky to have been chosen as one of this year's three Co-op community funds and all the money we receive will be spent on outdoor play and learning. If you have a Co-op membership card, please support us by logging on to your account and choose us as your charity for this year, to help us with our funding.

We are hoping in the summer term that government COVID-19 regulations will allow us to visit Tywardreath School, which is where we usually hold eight weeks of forest school, one morning a week. This helps the children with their transition to school (our pre-schoolers who are not going to Tywardreath School are still welcome to attend this forest school). We were unable to visit the school in 2020, so will have to review and risk assess these events, closer to the time.

Pre-School and home shared leaning and development targets – Thank you for returning your target review sheets for your child’s key person (if you haven’t had a form please let a staff member know). A few parents have expressed an interest in their child developing their writing skills, in preparation for school. I would suggest only attempting pre-writing skills this term, such as correct pencil hold (tripod grip), drawing circles and lines and then moving on to drawing simple pictures, with increasing control, such as faces or houses.

Tywardreath School teach pre-cursive writing right from the first stage of the school. They adopted this in September 2019. Pre-cursive writing is the script of letters that has an entry and exit flick and is the basis for joined up writing. School teach this in a very specific way, so I personally recommend not teaching your child to write standard alphabet letters before they go to school. We have found, from experience, that children who can write some standard letters will have to relearn everything when they go to school and these children find it harder to do pre-cursive over the children who have never attempted to write letters. Therefore, pencil control will be an important skill to learn, rather than actual letter formation.

We will be looking at the letter sounds for each letter (rather than the letter name) before July 2021 with the school risers. When teaching phonics, we start with lower case letters recognition only (not capitals). We hope this information is useful to you, please feel free to chat to us about letters or phonics in person or by phone, anytime.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah O'Toole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear entry and exit stroke for each letter.

Sarah O'Toole, setting manager and SENDCo

On behalf of Tywardreath Pre-School Playgroup staff team