



**We hope everyone had a lovely, if not slightly unusual summer break! We would like to welcome you to the first term of the new school year!**

A warm welcome to all our new children and their families! We are sure that your children will settle in quickly and hopefully enjoy their time at Betty Lewis Nursery. We will be sending out a termly newsletter at the beginning of each term highlighting important dates - please be sure to add these to your diaries. Each child has their own wall pocket in which all newsletters, reminders, your child's artwork etc is put so please check these regularly. We complete the white board daily with reminders and also a summary of the fun we have had at pre-school during the day.

Staff news

We welcome Mrs Charlotte Hanscombe who will be working with us in the Ladybird room and starting her Level 3 Early Educators qualification, and Katie Thomas who will be joining us as Bank Staff after some initial training. We will sadly be saying goodbye to Mrs Craig at the end of Term 1 as she moves on to pursue a career in social care. We wish her luck, but will miss her greatly and would like to thank her for her invaluable service over the last 9 years. We will all miss her!

Nursery News

In July we said goodbye to 30 children leaving us to start primary school. We hope they enjoy their time, and look forward to visiting them at their schools later this term.

We welcome 25 new children who join the 19 children who are already with us from last year.

Parent comments/suggestions

Each year we carry out a parent survey towards the end of the school year. We really appreciate parents taking the time to fill these in and provide us with their comments and suggestions for improvement. We aim to ensure all parents and children are happy with the service that we provide and always ask that you come and see either Michelle or Julie if you have any concerns at any time.

We aim to improve communication to parents this term, by using the website more to let parents know about events in the pre-school (please visit [www.bettylewisnursery.co.uk](http://www.bettylewisnursery.co.uk)) and also a daily communication board letting you know about the activities we have done that day.

*We are also looking at ways for parents to communicate with their child's key person as parents will not be coming into pre-school and quick and efficient drop off and collections will not provide much opportunity for daily conversation. We will communicate further on this.*

Learning Journey Files

Feedback from previous parent surveys was that parents wanted to look at their child's Learning Journey file more frequently. Folders will be sent home 3 times a year, in line with termly assessments (see section below), however you are welcome to take them home on an ad-hoc basis - please just ask your child's key worker as the files are used and updated regularly. We would very much like parents to contribute as much as possible to these files. At the end of your child's time at pre-school, the primary school teachers visit and find it very useful to look through the files to help them get to know your child, so they are an important transition tool as well as a lovely record of development over the time your child is with us. We would welcome any achievements/news to include (e.g. learning a new skill, learning to ride a bike, new hobbies, new words or phrases, anything that makes you think 'wow'). Feel free to take photos of achievements and we will happily add them to your child's folder.

My Unique Story & Progress Trackers

For the new children starting staff will be marking their 'starting points' on the progress tracker we use. This is an estimate as to where we believe your child to be developmentally and gives us an idea how to plan for your child individually. Key workers then record your child's progress on this progress tracker 3 times a year, in October, March & June. The data from the Progress Tracker is then collated and used to identify the development of different cohorts of children. This information is used by your child's key person when planning for the next stages of your child's learning. At these times we also write a brief 'report' about your child's development, called 'My Unique Story'.



Your input is also required for this and key persons like to meet with parents at these times to discuss progress and any concerns.

#### Progress Check at 2

Key persons will complete a statutory progress check on all those children that are 2 years old.

This is a tool to highlight any concerns we may identify early on and should be shared with your child's health visitor. The sooner potential delays are identified, the sooner we can put things in place to support children.

#### Special/Additional Educational Needs

Michelle Hollyer is the setting SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) and can make referrals to the Speech & Language service or Specialist teachers should they be required. We have a strong record of identifying children with additional/special needs and working with outside agencies to gain the support required in order to get them ready for primary school. If you have any concerns in this area, please speak to your child's key person in the first instance.

#### Designated Safeguarding Officer

Julie Casburn is designated person for any safeguarding concerns. All staff have completed an online 3 year refresher in basic child protection during the September break (2020). The lead and deputy for safeguarding completes detailed training every 2 years to ensure they are constantly up to date with all safeguarding issues. You are able to discuss any concerns in confidence.

#### Staff Training

Staff frequently attend courses and training for statutory reasons & for personal development to keep skills and knowledge up to date. All training is currently on-line and includes full 12 hour paediatric first aid training for 2 members of staff. This means we will have 8 members of staff trained in paediatric first aid.

#### Photographs

We arrange for local photographer to take individual photographs in November, and then group photos the following June. Further details will follow and social distancing will be observed.

#### Parking

We are fully aware that this is a topic which has been on-going since we relocated to the Annexe 7 years ago!

We need to make parents aware that the main issue with the car park is that it is owned by the Parish Council and the cricket club. It is also a 'public right of access' meaning that the school and pre-school have very little say in how it is used and the public have every right to use it.

However - the following guidelines will ensure that we do not run into unnecessary problems:

- Please ensure that you **DO NOT** enter the car park before 9.00am so that the school drop off traffic can clear. We know that parents do not observe this suggestion and it causes unnecessary congestion.
- West Malling school have a specialist unit attached to their school and up to 25 children arrive in private taxis from across the County to access the unit. These taxis need to drop children in the school grounds and therefore must be able to access via the vehicular access gate the end of the car park.
- Please park considerately and **DO NOT** block cars in.
- Please do not park in front of the blue vehicular access gate at the end of the car park.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

#### Donations

We are always looking for donations of paper - in any shape, size or colour for our children to use in their mark-making. We would be grateful for anything you can donate! We also use a lot of cardboard! If you can donate any empty cereal boxes we would be very grateful.



### Reminders

- **PLEASE** can you ensure children's coats, bags, lunch boxes and water bottles are **CLEARLY NAMED**. We have 40 children in the nursery every day and it saves staff a lot of time if items are named.
- **If your child brings in a rucksack or bag daily, please be mindful of what is packed inside and ensure it does not contain anything that could pose a choking risk to other children. We have a child attending the pre-school who is nil by mouth so it is imperative that no food items are stored in children's bags (only in lunch boxes which are stored on a trolley in the kitchen)**
- Under no circumstances must any medication be stored in a child's rucksack (e.g calpol)
- **Please can all children bring a NAMED water bottle to pre-school that we can re-fill for them. A sports cap style is best so that if it is knocked or dropped - it won't leak or spill**
- As the weather is still warm please can parents/carers ensure that children have sun cream applied **before** they come to nursery and that they have a sun-hat. If your child stays all day please supply a small named bottle of sun cream which we will apply after lunch if the weather is especially hot. Obviously if the sun is very hot we will limit the time the children have outside or keep them in the shade. Also can we request that children wear suitable footwear for running around. **No flip flops please.**
- **Packed lunches - please can we request that lunches do not include peanut butter or cereal bars containing nuts due to allergies. Small tomatoes, cherries, olives and grapes **MUST** be cut lengthways to reduce choking risks.**
- Lunchtimes are very busy and it would be very helpful to staff if all lunchboxes and drink bottles are clearly named.
- **We offer *limited* FF2 (Free for Two) places as well as EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium). If you think you may be eligible for either of these please let us know.**
- Please keep us informed of any changes in address, phone numbers, personal circumstances, as well as any changes to your child's medical conditions / allergies.

### Dates for the Autumn Term (Terms 1 & 2)

#### **Term 1**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

#### **Autumn Holiday**

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October**

#### **Term 2**

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

**We hope everyone has an enjoyable term and please keep us informed of any suggestions or improvements that we could make - our aim is to make Betty Lewis Nursery School an outstanding nursery for your children!**

**Michelle & Julie and all the team at Betty Lewis**

