



PARENTS NEWSLETTER JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2016

MOBILE NUMBER FOR URGENT ENQUIRIES – 07415 265993
(Please back up any booking with an e-mail)

www.arkchildcare.net

NEWS

PARENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

I have dedicated this newsletter to replying to the comments made in the last questionnaire. I would like to begin by thanking the parents who participated in the questionnaire on the last newsletter:

Homework: It was requested that we could provide more assistance with homework for the After School Club.

Reply: We are able and do provide assistance with homework for the children and provide them with a quiet space to complete homework. If parents want specific homework completed then please speak to the staff otherwise it is down to the

children's personal choice. We would never make the children do homework as I feel that would probably take some of the fun out of them coming to the After School Club and may even make them feel that they don't want to come along.

Learning Journals: A comment was made that an update had not been received for a month. There were also comments regarding regular reports outside the journals and the publishing of planning.

Reply: Despite staff absence, the journals have taken a while for the staff to get used to, apart from the comments for each child there is a lot of work involved in tracking the curriculum areas covered. I am hopeful that this will improve given time if you feel that your child/children have not received a journal entry in an appropriate length of time please do not hesitate to contact the staff in the room or myself, the ultimate aim is that every child will receive a journal entry once a week, however, there can at times be extenuating circumstances that doesn't allow this to happen.

I will look at regular reports outside the journals once the journals have settled down, as noted previously they are taking time to bed in and are very time consuming although the majority of staff agree that they are the best way of recording especially as they allow for more accurate recording of the curriculum areas covered.

I am more than happy to publish the planning on the website, we are currently in consultation with Alves Primary School who are going to help us in the near future to ensure that our planning is the most effective it can be, depending on the outcome of these meetings I will publish some form of planning for parents to see, I would imagine it would be very difficult to publish weekly planning for all of the rooms but I would hope to be able to publish medium term planning in the near future.

Food: A request was made for more information to be published regarding food, particularly in regard to the food being Homemade.

Reply: We are all very proud of the food that is produced at Ark and are particularly pleased with the very many positive comments we get regarding the food. I agree that we should publish and advertise this more and I have started doing this through the website and Facebook. A further comment received was for us to review the puddings served with a view to making them healthier. We are working at reviewing the menus using the legislation setting the table and I am also willing to listen to parental comments, if you wish to add to the comments regarding food please contact me directly.

POLICIES: It was requested that our behaviour policy be made available to parents.

Reply: All of our policies are available both in hard copy at the front door of the Nursery and on the website. These are reviewed annually by me and re-published, it is also policy that they can be reviewed at any time should changes be identified by anyone who uses or works in the nursery. If any parents have comments or would like to see changes to our policies then please get in touch and we will review them as necessary. A parent's improvement forum has also been set up recently and part of their remit in the future could be to advise on and improve our policies.

PARENTS FORUM: It was requested that a Parents Forum be set up to meet regularly so that parents can have their say. It has also been suggested that parents are given more opportunities to participate in events in the Nursery

Reply: A Parents Improvement Meeting has now been held and was attended by 5 parents with the minutes being e-mailed out to all and with a copy being attached to this newsletter, the initial plan is to hold these meetings twice a year, once in May to discuss the improvements required and feed them into the improvement plan and once in the winter to review the plan and ensure that the plan is being followed. If the meetings are well attended and the parents feel that more regular meetings are required with a bigger remit then we will accommodate this. If anyone has any ideas for improvement please get in touch or come to the next meeting the date of which will be published nearer the time. If any parents have any ideas for events that they can participate in which would be beneficial to the Nursery we would consider running these.

I would also like to thank the parents who gave us very positive feedback about various aspects of the nursery including how happy their children were and how great the staff team were, these comments are greatly appreciated by the staff who work extremely hard to ensure that your children are well looked after and are given the best possible start to their early learning.

REGULAR REMINDERS

BREAKFAST CLUB - I would like to remind everyone who have children in the Breakfast Club that the last sitting for Breakfast Club is **8.20am** this is so that the children and staff are ready to begin moving to their rooms by **8.30am** and that the transport is ready to leave for the schools.

CHILDREN'S OWN TOYS - Please discourage your children from bringing in their own toys from home. Not only can they get lost and broken but it can also cause squabbles and upset between the children. Comforters are fine.

LATE PICK UPS / EARLY DROP OFFS - Please be aware that there is a penalty which has been in force since last year. We have to timetable staff a week in advance so often if parents are late/early we do not have enough staff to cover which means I am often brought in at short notice to cover. This is really detrimental to our staff /child ratios so please let me know through the office if you are going to be late or need to drop your child off early. **Please ensure that younger children are picked up first.**

SPARE CLOTHING - Please ensure that your children have spare clothing with them in case of accidents, please return any borrowed clothes as our supplies are running low. Children should also have with them appropriate clothing for the weather conditions and sun-cream if necessary.

PAYMENT - A reminder that all bills are to be paid by the 1st of each month, if you fail to pay the bill by the 7th we will be unable to offer childcare. We are here to help in any way that we can and if there are issues or problems with the bills or the payment of them please speak to Alison or Steven at the earliest opportunity. A further reminder that Ad-Hoc bookings are payable immediately on booking. We are sending all invoices by e-mail now and if you don't receive your bill by the 20th please contact the office for another copy.

INFECTION CONTROL

As the Nursery Manager it is my responsibility to ensure that infection doesn't spread. I am aware that it can be difficult for parents when working to take time off work, however, it is imperative that if your child has been sick or suffered diarrhoea they are kept off nursery for 48 hrs after the last symptom. As a nursery we have no option regarding this as we are governed by the Infection Control Team, the repercussions for not following their policies can be serious for the Nursery. Other exclusion periods exist for other illnesses and details of these are held in the office and rooms.

MEDICATION

Parents are reminded that we will not administer medication to children who are ill, if your child is ill they should be at home, an exception to giving Calpol is if the children are teething.

COMPLAINTS - I realise that at times there may be an occasion where parents have a complaint about an aspect of the Nursery. I accept that this may be the case and you can make a complaint at any time, verbally or in writing. We have a policy with regards to complaints and I endeavour to respond in the time frames given. These policies are available for you to read at the front door of the nursery at all times. Alternatively you can complain directly to the Care Inspectorate and they can be contacted at:

**Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY**

Tel: 0345 600 9527

Email: enquiries@careinspectorate.com

Steven McIntosh
Manager

Our staff are here to help you in any way they can, however they have a right to carry out their work without fear of abuse or intimidation. Abuse or intimidation in any form will not be tolerated ARK Childcare has a complaints policy and if you wish to complain about any aspects of your child's care please bring this to the office where it can be dealt with in an appropriate manner for all concerned.

PARENTS IMPROVEMENT MEETING

Date: 23 November 2015

Minutes: Steven McIntosh

Attendance Jo Maunder, Kenny and Lydia Simpson, Vicki Jolly and Glen and Katie Blackman

Serial	Item
1.	Outdoor Activities – A range of outdoor activities were discussed and it was agreed that major improvements could be made to the overall running of the nursery by improving the use of the outdoor space. Major improvements have been made with regards to the immediate outdoor space at the nursery in the past year. Improved use of the nearby woods should be a priority for the next year.
2.	Curriculum and Planning – There have been many improvements since August with regards to the Curriculum and Planning, this important part of early learning will continue to be developed by the staff. As it is crucial to early learning these items will always be an integral part of the annual improvement plan.
3.	Journals - The electronic journals have been implemented throughout the Nursery since August, the parents who attended the meeting agreed that the Journals were an excellent facility for the parents to keep up to date with their children's learning. There are teething problems with the journals and they are quite labour intensive until the staff find their way around all options. It is hoped that the teething problems will be resolved by Jan 16 and regular postings will be made from then.
4.	Ideas and Help - Vicki asked that the nursery publish requests for ideas and help from the parents. These requests are made regularly through the newsletter and up to this point the uptake has been non-existent. We are always happy to hear from any parents who have ideas for improvements and from anyone who is willing to help as the work to improve the nursery can be time consuming and often has to be completed in the evening or weekends.
5.	Facebook – It has been suggested that the Nursery start a Facebook page in order to keep parents informed and to advertise the good work of the Nursery to the wider community.

6.	Parents/Open Days – It was suggested by the parents in attendance that open days be held to advertise the good work of the Nursery. It was agreed that these could be held and various parents volunteered to assist with this in the future.
7.	Improvement Plan – The main reason for this meeting being held was to involve the parents in the overall improvement of the Nursery. The Nursery must submit and Improvement plan to Moray Council in June of each year, so far only the management team and the staff have been involved in this process, the plan for June 16 is to also involve as many parents as possible, to that end the next parents improvement meeting will be held in late April 16 with the intention of have general discussions and feedback about the overall running of the Nursery and to gain feedback for the improvement plan.