



November 2023 Newsletter

We hope you had a lovely half term break – it was certainly full of exciting events for the children, with Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night!

September and October were spent welcoming and settling new children, exploring Autumn, and settling into this year's amazing learning! We had a fun Hallowe'en week before half term.

Over the next few weeks we will continue to follow children's interests to enable learning, and will begin another round of focus weeks, where we observe individual children closely to see how they best learn and develop. In December we will have lots of special Christmas activities and stories.

Our ethos is to be child-led.... Just to warn you that as a part of this we will NOT be queuing the children up to make a production line handprint card! Although these can be lovely for parents, there is very little learning for children in the activity. We WILL have resources and examples and will encourage all the children to make cards, but they will be individual and made by the children so please appreciate their work!

Thank you! – We are lucky to have had two generous donations this term – one from the Ainthorpe Trust which we are using to start a fund to purchase a new climbing frame, and one from the Dalesmen Singers which must be spent on music resources.

Coffee Morning – Our next fundraising event is running the Casleton Village Hall Coffee Morning. The committee are organising this and would like donations of raffle and tombola prizes. Do let us know if you would like to help on the day, but do please also support the event by coming along for a cuppa!

Sessions – All our sessions are now very busy, which is great for the nursery but means it is not so easy to be flexible and accommodate extra sessions. If you need an extra session do ask, but be prepared that we may not have space. If you are planning on changing or increasing sessions after Christmas let us know as soon as possible so that we can try to accommodate your requirements.

Cold weather – Esklets is not a warm building...although the classroom warms up well, much of the space is outdoors and the 'Big Shed', sandpit etc are unheated. We wrap up and go outside in all weathers, all year round, encouraging children to explore their world. Please enable them to enjoy these experiences by helping them to keep warm. Dress children in layers – eg vest, top and jumper – with plenty of extras for going outside. Thick welly socks can really help, as can gloves, hats and warm waterproof coats. We have plenty of wellies and waterproof trousers for children to wear. If your child comes to Esklets in their own wellies, could you please pack a pair of shoes or slippers for them to change into.

Weather Conditions and Possible Closures – In the event that Esklets has to close due to the weather conditions, a member of staff will contact you as soon as possible. Please make sure we have the right contact details for whoever will be bringing your child that morning or who will be collecting them. We will always endeavour to open and remain open, however the safety of our staff, the children and their families remains a priority.

Tax-Free Childcare and Government Funding – The Government's Tax-Free Childcare Scheme helps families with childcare costs. Visit www.childcarechoices.co.uk to find out if you are eligible. For every £8 you pay towards your childcare costs, the government will top it up to £10. You can claim this from when your child is born up to when they are 11. This website is also where you can find out about extended hours funding for 3&4 year olds, and the funding offer for some 2 year olds. If you claim 30 hours please don't forget to update your code when prompted, otherwise it can expire.

The new government funding for younger children starts to be rolled out next April but there is already information on the childcare choices website as – like the extended hours funding for 3 & 4 year olds – it is the parents responsibility to apply for this and have a code in place before the start of April.

Policies – Please take the time to read our updated policies on the website www.eskletspreeschool.co.uk They cover all areas of nursery – from what to do in an emergency, how we keep children safe, and what to do if your child is ill; to the way we change nappies, prepare food and educate your children. There is a paper copy available at Esklets if you can't access them online.

Christmas Shopping – If you do any shopping online, remember that you can raise funds for us through Easy Fundraising. To sign up for easyfundraising, go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> to register and choose your charity (hopefully Esklets!). You can then buy from lots of big name websites going via the easyfundraising webpage or app. Each time you shop it generates donations for us.

Christmas Afternoon – On the last day of term (Thursday 21st December), we are having a Christmas party afternoon that all children are welcome to attend. We will have Christmas fun, games, snacks and a visit from Santa! If your child doesn't normally attend on a Friday afternoon, please bring them at 1.30. We ask that – due to space – parents don't stay for the party. However, you are very welcome to come back at 2.30 for our visit from Santa, and (if all goes well!) a little song performance by the children.

Important dates –

Children in Need	Friday 17 th November – come ready for a spotty day!
Castleton Coffee Morning	Saturday 18 th November, 10 – 12am Castleton Village Hall
Christmas Jumper Day	Thursday 7 th December Although every day can be a Christmas jumper day at Esklets, we are joining in the National event and will pass on donations to Save the Children.
Christmas Party	Thursday 21 st December (this is the last day of term!) All children welcome – if it isn't their usual day your child is invited from 1.30-3.00 Parents are invited to come at 2.30 to see our special visitor!
Christmas Holiday	22 nd December – 8 th January (note WE ARE CLOSED for staff training on Friday 22 nd AND Monday 8 th January)

Thank you as always for your support.