



## February 2024 Newsletter

What a cold and miserable month January was! It didn't stop the children spending lots of time outside, though – playing in snow, wind and rain, and thinking about how we can help animals in winter by feeding the birds.



Half term break held lots of significant dates – Shrove Tuesday, Valentines Day, Lunar New Year...we hope you had an enjoyable week.

Another short half-term lies ahead, but this one is action-packed – World Book Day, a trip for the Pre-school year children, Mother's Day and Easter mean we will be very busy!!

### **Government Funding**

**30 hours funded childcare for 3- & 4-year-olds** – If your child turns 3 between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March and you are eligible, you need to apply for your 30 hour funding as soon as possible. If the code isn't in place before the 31<sup>st</sup> March, again the funding will not be valid.

**New Two-Year-Old Funding for working families** – this is due to begin from April, so if your child is already two – or turns two by 31<sup>st</sup> March – you may be eligible. This is the information we have had from North Yorkshire about how to apply:

As confirmed by the Department for Education, please be advised that as of 2 January 2024, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to apply to HMRC for a code for 15 hours of free childcare, starting from 1 April 2024. The Department of Education is recommending that parents start applying for their codes from mid-January onwards.

We recommend that regarding their eligibility, parents go to <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> in the first instance. This is the Government's parent-facing website which helps parents understand what entitlements they may be able to receive.

Please be aware that – just like 3- & 4-year-old funding, this new funding is available at the beginning of the term after your child reaches the eligible age. So children who have their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday after 31<sup>st</sup> March won't be eligible until September, at which point the eligible age will also cover under-tuos.

**Fees** – The committee has agreed that as the National Minimum Wage is increasing in April, fees will have to rise to balance this. Therefore, our fees will rise to £6.25 / hour from April.

**Trip** – Due to the number of younger children we currently have, coupled with the number of working parents, we have taken the difficult decision that we can't safely run a whole nursery trip this year. However, we don't want children to miss out, so we have devised a way of taking the older children out in two smaller parties, while leaving staff at Esklets with the remaining children. This means that only the children in their preschool year (going to school this September) will go on a trip this term. Don't worry if your child is younger – they will still have a fun day at Esklets and it will be their turn as they get older!



**Mini First Aid** – We have been approached by Victoria (works at Castleton School) who runs Baby & Child First Aid sessions for parents (flyer attached). She would be happy to put on a session at Esklets at a cost of £25 / person. If you would be interested let us know and if there seems to be enough interest we'll arrange a date.



**Committee** – As you know, Esklets is a charity run preschool. This means that we must have an active parent committee in order to operate. This is just an early warning that at the AGM – held in June – we will need to recruit some new committee members. It isn't an onerous task – we have one committee meeting / term, usually at the pub – and the committee usually aim to do one fundraiser each term. Do speak to staff if you would like more information.

**Bags to School** – Have you had a half-term sort out? We have a collection on 21<sup>st</sup> February.



Please bring clean, bagged clothing (no school uniform, workwear or dressing up clothes) to Esklets any day this week and leave them on the table in the 'big shed'. We are paid for the weight of the clothing.

**Cleaner** – Would you, or anyone you know, be interested in working as a cleaner for Esklets? We are looking to hire someone to come after the children leave, 2-3 days / week in term-time for around an hour, plus a potential day during school holidays. Anyone taking the role would need a DBS check. If you are interested please speak to Vicky to request an application form.



**Cloakroom** – Thank you to all those who responded to our plea for smaller bags! The cloakroom is already much more manageable. As well as their coat, all children need is one change of clothes (maybe extra pants and trousers if they are toilet training), enough nappies and wipes for the day if required, and a weather dependent hat. This should fit in a small bag or backpack. If you have more than one child please send them one small bag each rather than big bags with all their stuff jumbled together – as well as the space factor, this makes it much harder for children to access their belongings independently.



**Diary Dates:**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> March

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

Train trip for children in their preschool year.

World Book Day (bring your favourite story and dress up if you'd like to)

Red Nose Day – dress in something red or funny!

Break up for Easter

ESKLETS CLOSED FOR STAFF TRAINING

Return to Esklets for summer term

Thank you for your continued support