



## January 2024 Newsletter

Wishing all our families a very Happy New Year. We hope you all had a lovely Christmas break. We had a super Christmas party to end our term. Well done to all the children for their amazing singing – we felt really proud of them!

January brings lots of cold (hopefully less wet!!) weather, so we will be outside exploring the environment in different weather conditions, and learning all about winter. Inside we have lots of winter stories in our cosy book area, and polar small world animals.

Thanks to the donation from the Dalesmen Singers we have a new Yoto music player for the children to access. Thank you also to Boulby Mine and The Eskdale for recent donations.

### **Government Funding**

**30 hours funded childcare for 3- & 4-year-olds** – Please don't forget to renew your 30 hour codes when sent a reminder email, otherwise the 30 hours code won't be valid and you will only be entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare.

If your child turns 3 between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March, you need to apply for your 30 hour funding over the next few weeks. 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.

**Tax-Free Childcare** – Do you know about the Government's Tax-Free Childcare Scheme? It is a scheme to help families with childcare costs. If you go onto the childcare choices website, you can find out if you are eligible. A lot of families don't realise they 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.

**Poor Weather 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.

**Clothing** – Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing to play both inside and outside. We wrap up and go outside in all weathers, 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. Thick socks can really help, as can gloves, hats and warm waterproof coats. 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.

As children get older we work with them to help them to become independent in their self-care (coats, shoes, toilet and dressing themselves). You can help them by making sure they come to Esklets in clothes and shoes that are easy to manage themselves (eg. leggings / tracksuit bottoms / velcro shoes).

**Cloakroom** – Our cloakroom is getting quite difficult to manage due to the number and size of bags some children are bringing. 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.

**Packed Lunches** – We have a duty of care to your children's health and oral health and we promote healthy eating at Esklets. Please could you ensure that packed lunches DO NOT contain sweets, chocolate or crisps. If you need any meal ideas please see our website. Remember – we can heat food up; so beans on toast, soup, pasta, etc. are good options.

**Poorly Children** – Please consider others if your child is poorly – we had some poor families who were unwell over Christmas; and we really struggled with staffing Esklets some weeks last term, due to illnesses passed around in nursery. If your child is sick or has diarrhoea they MUST remain off nursery for 48 hours after the last episode, whether you think it is a bug or for some other reason. If your child has a high temperature they should not be in, even if they have had Calpol to reduce their temperature.

**Car Park** – There are a couple of points in the day (around 9 and around 3) where there is a rush of people and the carpark gets really busy, to the point where people struggle to manoeuvre safely. If you arrive and the carpark is full please consider parking at the station and walking the last little bit.

*Diary Dates:*

*Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January*

*Deadline to apply for a primary school place for September 2024. Remember – if you live outside North Yorkshire you need to apply on your own local council website, even if you want your child to go to a North Yorkshire school!*

*w/c Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February*

*Half Term week – Esklets closed*

*Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March*

*World Book Day*

*Tuesdays 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> March*

*Train ride trip for preschool year children*

*We plan to go in 2 small groups so that some staff can remain here with the other children. We do not have enough adults to take all the children, but will ensure the younger children get their turn as they get older. More information to follow*

*Thank you for your continued support.*