



Dear Parents,

Welcome back everyone!. This term is also a busy one! Let's hope the rain has finally stopped for a while. We will be investigating the outside space for signs of spring, starting some growing activities, creating something special for Mother's Day and preparing for Easter. We will also have some fun for world book day, and our early spring show (see below for details!) We are delighted to have a new member of staff, Rachael, join us this term. We hope she will feel right at home and enjoy working with us. More details about Rachael are below!

New Staff!

We said a sad farewell to Michelle at the end of term after 6 years of working here at Amberley. We are hoping that she will join us at various points throughout the year to help with some gardening and growing activities which is one of her passions. We feel very fortunate to have Rachael Ruthers joining us. Rachael has many years' experience working in a variety of Early years settings, both Nurseries and more recently running her own childminding business. Her own children (now aged 11 and 12) both attended playgroup here, and she regularly attended our Toddler sessions through her work as a Childminder. She will be key person for Tiger Group, working similar hours to Michelle to start with. Once we have confirmed all our admissions from September, we will be able to look at any future staffing requirements as Andrea will then be leaving but at the moment our planning is based on 4 members of staff from Sept 2025.

World book day Thursday 6th March

No dressing up required!! The children are welcome to bring in a favourite book to show their friends (with their names written in please). They are welcome to bring these in all next week

Early end of term spring songs FRIDAY 21st March 11.30am start

Andrea is practicing some songs that we will perform a couple of weeks before the end of term! As explained in our last newsletter, Andrea is off to Australia from Mon 24th March until Wed 9th April for a family wedding. We finish for Easter on 11th April. Therefore, we are holding our spring song recital featuring the popular 'maypole dancing' a bit earlier than usual on 21st March at 11.30am This is a lower key 'production' than our summer and Christmas shows but still great fun. Everyone is invited, including any children who do not usually attend on a Friday. Bring family and friends along to watch if you can.

Outside Play and suitable clothing

We try and get outside to play as much as possible, especially now that the weather is hopefully improving. We will continue to use the play park as much as possible. We will also use our digging and planting area and ask that any coats the children wear to playgroup are as waterproof as possible and all clothes worn are ones you do not mind the children getting a bit grubby as they play outside. Wellies are also great but please include a pair of slippers or indoor shoes as it is not safe to have the children running in their socks. Please make sure all wellies are clearly marked with your child's name! Thank you.

Children's progress records and reviews

Around this time of year, we focus on reviews for our younger children, those who are still with us next year. The older children will have progress reviews later next term when we prepare their records ready to complete the transition forms that go to their new schools. We will be doing reviews for the younger children soon after we return from the Easter break, during the week Wednesday 7th May-Friday 9th May We can extend into the following week if required. There will be a signup sheet available towards the end of term

30 hours funding ,15 hours funding for 2 year olds and tax-free childcare.

It really is worth everyone taking a look at the childcare choices website www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to see what help with childcare costs may apply to you and your circumstances.

Please note the deadline to apply for this is 31st March in order to claim additional funding for the summer term. If you already claim the working parents extended hours funding, please remember to re-confirm your eligibility when prompted by HMRC as this needs to be done every 3 months to enable the codes to continue to be used.

In addition, we are registered so that parents can use their tax-free childcare allowance to pay for any childcare fees. This applies to children any age under 12. In order to set this up you need to open an online childcare account which you then use to pay playgroup directly for childcare. Upon registering your account, you will be given a reference number for your child which you will need to pass on to us so we can identify what payments refer to your child. All the information you need to check your eligibility and apply is on the childcare choice's website.

Packed lunches

Please remember to pack a drink for your child and any utensils they may need to eat with (teaspoons for Yogurts, forks for pasta etc). We are finding quite a few children are coming without these items. Children will need these items if they have packed lunches at school so it's good practice for all!

Reminders!

We realise parking can be an issue at drop off and collection. Please however always be mindful of not blocking drive ways and gates and making sure there is sufficient space for vehicles to get down the road if vehicles are parked on both sides.

Please close the main outside gate, especially as the cows are released on the common later in the year

Term ends for Easter Holidays Friday 11th April. We return on Monday 28th April.

Term 5: Mon 28th April-Fri 23rd May (bank holiday Mon 5th May)

Term 6: Mon 2nd June-Friday 18th July. (No afternoon session Thursday 3rd July. Inset day Monday 21st July)

Some Future dates for the diary!

- Thursday 3rd July: Sports 'day' on the green at 11.30 followed by optional picnic. No afternoon session that day.
- Friday 4th July: Teddy bears picnic in the park and music session (for those staying on a playgroup next year and new children joining in September) From 12.30
- Wed 16th July Dress Rehearsal for Summer show
- Friday 18th July 9.30am End of term show and leavers celebrations followed by refreshments

Love Cathy and the playgroup girls