



Dear Parents,

We hope you have settled in well since the start of the Spring Term... it is going so quickly and we have enjoyed getting to know our new families and catch up with our existing families!

Dates for your Diary

Our **staff training day** this term is **Thursday 29th February 2024**, when we will be **closed** for all children. Staff will do their annual Safeguarding training.

Thursday 7th March, we will be celebrating **World Book Day** and invite children to dress up as book characters. Children are welcome to dress up on other days too if they do not attend on a Thursday. Perhaps you would like to share a story with your child and upload it for us all to see on Parentzone?

11th – 17th March Science week Oaklea enjoys taking part in this week

Term Dates

And here is a reminder of the term dates:

Spring Term 2024

Half term week commencing Monday 19th February.

Term time restarts 26th February.

Staff Training Day – Thursday 29th February Closed for ALL Children

Good Friday: Friday 29th March Closed for All Children

Easter Monday – Monday 1st April Closed for All Children

Easter Break – Tuesday 2nd April – Friday 12th April inclusive

Summer Term 2024

Monday 15th April – Friday 19th July

Bank Holiday – Monday 6th May Closed for ALL Children

Bank Holiday – Monday 27th May Closed for ALL Children

Half term week commencing Tuesday 28th May.

Holiday sessions

Please can you email Amanda by the dates below, if you would like any holiday sessions:

Easter holiday by Friday 1st March 2024

May Half term by Friday 19th April 2024

Staff News

Congratulations to Mel, passing her level 3.

We wish Jade all the best as she begins Maternity Leave in March and look forward to meeting her new arrival.

Fees & Funding

As you know, we endeavour to keep our fee rates as low as possible. This is not easy given considerable financial pressures, such as increases to national minimum wage, increases to pensions and rents as well as a general uplift in operating costs. It is also well reported that government funding for FEEE does not cover the costs in any UK Early Years provision. The CIC directors closely monitor the impact of all these influences. As a not-for-profit organisation, the directors are always reluctant to increase fees. They are only implemented in order to sustain the business.

From 1st April 2024 the new fee rate (for hours outside of funded sessions) is:

Little Sparrows	£9.50 /hour
Squirrels (2-year olds)	£9.10/ hour
Owls (3 & 4 year olds)	£8.90 / hour
After School/Holiday Activity Days:	£10.50 / hour
Breakfast	£1.90
Lunch	£4.00
Tea	£2.60

Children will move from Little Sparrows to Squirrels the term after they turn two, and from Squirrels to Owls the term after they turn three. This is also when the relevant government funding can be applied from.

Funding

From **April 2024**, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours childcare support, per week for 38 weeks of the year.

From **September 2024**, 15 hours childcare support will be extended to eligible working parents with a child from the term after they turn 9 months old.

You can find out more information regarding funding available and tax-free childcare at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

APPLYING FOR FUNDING: It is the responsibility of parents to apply for extended or working families funding in the term before funding begins. It is also the responsibility of parents to reconfirm their eligibility every 3 months (Government requirement). Once you have a code, please pass this on to Amanda or the Setting Manager, along with your National Insurance number.

FUNDING START DATE: please note that all Early Years funding for working parents, and the universal government funding for 3 year olds starts the school term after the child's birthday and does not therefore apply immediately once a child reaches a certain age.

School Applications

School leavers will soon hear back about what school your child has got into (16th April 2024) – please inform us of what school your child will be moving to in September 2024. Your child's key person will catch up with you shortly about this and discuss with you, regarding their transition to school.

Refrain from using mobile devices whilst dropping off / collecting children.

Parents and visitors are kindly asked to **refrain from using their mobile phones** when collecting or dropping off their children. If you are found to be using your phone inside the nursery premises you will be asked to finish the call or take the call outside. The welfare, protection, and safety of every child in our care is of paramount importance, we take our

responsibility to safeguard children seriously. We have procedures in place which we as everyone to respect and to help promote the safety of the children in our care.

Illness

Please can we remind all parents to adhere to the following guidelines if your child is poorly (please see notice board for the up-to-date public health guidance). For sickness/diarrhoea children cannot attend until 48 hours after the last bout of illness. Please note, **we cannot issue unprescribed medication**. Additionally, we continue our policy of No Calpol, to reduce the risk of spreading illness – if your child is unwell, please keep them at home where they can rest and recuperate so they can return quickly to explore with their friends and teachers.

Parentzone

Your child is truly amazing and throughout your child's life they will make some mighty significant steps on their journey of development. Together we would like to show the children how proud we all are of these moments and celebrate their individual achievements. So, if outside of nursery your child has perhaps tried something new for the first time (food, drink, standing, walking, talking, using the potty), or maybe enjoyed a trip or activity, please upload a photo to us via the Parentzone app. By doing this your child's key person is then able to add this to your child's learning journey and use this as an interest for them to achieve and enhance their learning here at Oaklea.

EYFS – it is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.

With Best wishes from Dawn, Marie and the Oaklea New Town TEAM.